

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

Studies in the Book of Acts

“Saul & Jesus on the Road to Damascus” – Acts 9:1-31

FELLOWSHIP

The conversion of Paul was the biggest game changer in the history of the early church. So significant was the moment of Christ's appearing to then Saul, that the writer Luke makes sure to recount the story three times in Acts. Saul's zealotry, education, and pedigree in first century Judaism placed him at the top of their communities' religious and political ladder. Saul took personally the responsibility to protect the integrity of the Jewish nation. He was the spearhead of his generation, having inherited several centuries of war and conflict over their identity and freedom. The rabbi Jesus and his followers were now a legitimate threat to the old guard, and Saul moved from frustration to rage to murderous fury. But this level of pride is really just a sample of mankind's problem. From Cain and Abel, to tribes and clans, to empires, humanity has warred and murdered. Might and power always seems to be the way things get settled once diplomacy doesn't offer a clear winner. But there is only one way to disrupt and change the sin that laces the human heart. The condition of the world is so bad, only divine intervention could bring change. Once Jesus is introduced phrases like, "born-again" or "a new life" begin to do justice to Saul's highway experience. At a minimum, a name change to Paul was appropriate since his conversion was so radical. If we didn't know his testimony and only had his New Testament writings, it would be hard to imagine how awful he had been. The witness and call to love that became Paul's trademark in his preaching and correspondence, reveal the fingerprints of our Savior:

*And yet I show you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing.*

READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together **Acts 9:1-31**. The encounter with Jesus stopped a local mission of hate, and launched a worldwide movement of love. Discuss how this story could be applied to our lives.

Acts 9:31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

- *Why was Saul worth the effort for God to personally appear on the road to Damascus? What do we learn about God's grace in light of who Saul was? Why did Jesus say that Saul was persecuting Him personally? What might have been the spiritual significance of Saul being blinded for three days? What do we learn about God's patience from his conversation with Ananias?*
- *God wants to use His church as the means to reach the world. Why does becoming an instrument for God take so much shaping and refinement? What was the process that began Paul's discipleship in Damascus? How did that continue in Jerusalem? What did it mean that Paul was "kicking against the goads?" How can we help each with areas that might be hindering us from God's calling on our lives?*
- *The political climate is charged and polarized in America. The political left, right, the parties, action committees and the media all seem to be encouraging confrontation. The church is faced with a morally loose culture, political campaigns, and even its own doctrinal weaknesses. What should be the response to this social climate? How can we be more like Paul and less like Saul?*

PRAYER & TESTIMONY



Community Group Discussion Guide

Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen's message from February 18, 2018.

Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/the-spirit-the-church-and-the-world/video/saul-and-jesus-on-the-road-to-damascus/>