

Circle Group Questions

The Right Kind of Risk - Acts 9

Icebreaker: Can you remember a time when it seemed like life's circumstances suddenly changed? Explain.

Acts 9:1-9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

Pastor Dave: God always has one more move.

1. Describe the ministry of Saul before he saw the light. What did he hope to accomplish?
2. How might it be fitting that Saul was made blind?
3. What did Saul mean when he called out "Lord"?
4. How might Saul have felt realizing that he had given his life to a wrong view of God?
5. Was there a time before you became a Christian where you felt bewildered and lost?

Acts 9:10-16 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the

house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." 13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

6. What does the Lord tell Ananias? How does Ananias object (four things)?

7. Who is Saul to proclaim the name of Jesus to? What does the Lord show him? How do you think Saul must have felt when he was shown?

8. People are called to difficult situations to follow God every day. Can you think of someone you know called to a difficult situation? What can you do to help?

Acts 9:17-19 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

9. What does Ananias call Saul (v. 17)? How is Ananias treating Saul? What does this mean about Ananias' trusting God?

Pastor Dave: Godly Risk is Always Right - Our fears are legitimate! But faith drives out fear. When we let fear drive our lives...there's a word for that...the word is faithless. Faithless. You only believe to a point, then you choose self, instead of dying to self. In this moment, God is calling Ananias to die to his self-preservation and meet with Saul.

10. What risks is Ananias taking by talking to Saul? How should we be bold in talking to others?

11. How is fear legitimate for us to feel? Are there times our faith will overcome

fear? How do we know? (Romans 8:38-39; 1 John 4:18; Lamentations 3:26)

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV) 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 4:18 (NIV) 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Lamentations 3:26 -26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Acts 9:20-22 At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21 All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" 22 Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

12. What was Saul's new message (v. 20)? What did those who saw him say? Why was Saul puzzling to society? How did your friends and acquaintances respond when you came to faith in Christ?

13. Who are the Sauls in our society? Are there people who change so dramatically that they are puzzling?

Acts 9:26-31 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. 30 When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Pastor Dave: Don't Miss Out on Your Barnabus Moment

14. When Saul went to Jerusalem what was the reaction? Who was afraid of him? Did that include the apostles?

15. What did Barnabus do that was different from everyone else? How can we be a Barnabus to those around us?