

Called to Follow Christ

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Sometimes we allow our background (family, culture, education, experiences) and our training to determine the boundaries of our “call to follow” Jesus. Can you identify how this may be true for you? Can you identify how Jesus may be inviting you to allow Him to set those boundaries and that might change your response to Him?**
- 2. Has God ever called you to do something good that scared you and called for some courage? How did you respond?**
- 3. Paul “wrote off” his significant credentials as a Jew in favor of his complete trust in the grace of Jesus Christ. What human status symbols or accomplishments do you take the most pride in? How easy or hard is it for you to “write them off,” and find your ultimate identity and confidence in your status as a child of God?**
- 4. God used other people, including Ananias and Barnabas, to help Paul see and understand his call. Who has God used in your life to help you see and understand your call to follow Jesus? Are there people for whom God is using you in a similar way?**



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Paul the Apostle...who is this guy?



Acts 22:3a

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia..."





**Acts 22:3b "...but brought up in this city,
educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to
the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being
zealous for God as all of you are this day."**



Paul the Apostle...who is this guy?



**How has God been working to form you
and prepare you doing God's work in the
world?**



Saul the Persecutor



Galatians 1:13–14 *ESV*

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.



Acts 8:1,3 *ESV*

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.



Paul's Conversion



Acts 26:12–15 *ESV*

“In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.




Acts 9:8–19 *ESV*

Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”



And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.”

 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."



So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.





What is your story of coming into a genuine relationship with Jesus?



Ministry Begins and Desert Years



Acts 9:23–25 *ESV*

When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.



Galatians 1:15–18 *ESV*

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.



When do you take time away to grow in your understanding of God and what it means to be a follower of Jesus?



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Philippians 3:4–8 *ESV*

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.



But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.



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