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Leader Guide

The Beginning

April 9, 2023

Main Passage: Acts 9:1-12

Theological Theme

Jesus is the way to healing and salvation. He can do the impossible even with people who seem beyond reaching.

Introduction

- ❓ What type of makeover show do you like? Why? Why do you think transformation shows are so popular?
- ❓ What is the most significant makeover you have ever seen or experienced?

1. The Backstory (Acts 9:1-2)

At the start of Acts 9, Christians were facing extreme persecution. One of the leaders of this movement of persecution was Saul. He was described as a person that dragged men and women who followed Christ out of their houses and threw them into prison or worse. He had a reputation of bringing havoc to the church and sought to expand his attacks to Damascus.

- ❓ What does the description of Saul say to you about the kind of man he was? Why
- ❓ does it matter that Saul acted on authority from religious leaders in that day?
- ❓ Application: What in your backstory/life can be used to inspire or encourage others to place their faith in Jesus?

2. Meeting Jesus (Acts 9:3-6)

As Saul journeyed to Damascus intent on his plans, he was blinded by an exceedingly bright light. In another Scripture reference, Paul wrote that the light was “brighter than the sun” (Acts 26:13). Saul was confronted by his sin in a unique way. Later, he would refer to himself as the worst of sinners, who actively worked against the people of God (see Acts 26; 1 Timothy 1:15). Saul was wholeheartedly against the church of Jesus, but God gathered his attention in a way he could not ignore. Whatever the reason God chose this way to get Saul’s attention, the result was dramatic and powerful.

- ❓ Jesus stopped Paul in a way he could not ignore. What are some ways people might ignore God’s work in the world today?
- ❓ How would this situation have been disorienting for Paul, spiritually as well as physically? When was a time you felt like you were working for God but realized you may have been working for another authority?
- ❓ Application: What next step is God calling you to obey Him in today? How will you respond? Discuss with your gender based group this week (3-5 people).

3. Transformation and Healing (Acts 9:7-12)

After this stunning encounter with Jesus, Saul stood up but couldn't see. His companions who had heard the voice but saw no one were stunned. They had witnessed their leader, a powerful and fierce man, brought to his knees and incapacitated by the very One he worked against each day. Their only response was to lead Saul by the hand into the city as Jesus instructed.

- ❓ Think about how Saul's companions might have been impacted by this encounter. What does this say about why it is important to share the work God has done in our lives with others?
- ❓ For three days, Saul had to wait. Share about a time you had to wait on the next step from God.
- ❓ Application: How is He calling you to step out in faith for the sake of a gospel conversation with another person this week?

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

Conclusion:

Next Steps:

- Invite people to follow Jesus
 - Maybe plan a social/cookout and invite friends and neighbors. Let Easter be a discussion starter. Share about new clothes, hats, Easter eggs, then discuss the real reason for Easter.