

Awaken | The God Who Transforms

INTRODUCTION:

Last week we saw the Jesus movement explode outside of Jerusalem into Samaria and other parts of the ancient world. We talked about the fact that Jesus' mission is unstoppable, and that it's for every tribe, tongue and nation. This week we see Jesus pursue the very antagonist who helped launch the persecution, abuse and murder of first century Christians. In Saul's conversion we see with clarity that God not only pursues--but absolutely transforms people in a way that allows them to live in freedom and take risks for the Kingdom as they multiply the movement of God in their cities and around the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What typically occurs when something or someone is transformed?
2. Who are you, Lord? In Acts 9 Saul asks this simple question when he encounters Jesus. It's a great question. Take a moment to reflect and then answer; who is Jesus to you?
3. Review Acts 9:1-31. This is a seminal moment in the life of Saul and is viewed as his conversion experience. Why do you think Jesus would choose a man like Saul to lead a movement of Him and take the gospel to non-Jewish nations?
4. Sometimes we can be guilty of wishing we had a conversion experience like the one Saul encountered. However, not long after Saul's conversion moment, what began to take place in his life? Acts 9:31 says the church lived in the fear of the Lord and was encouraged by the Spirit. What does it mean to live in the fear of the Lord? How does this understanding impact your daily life?
5. Do people still have conversion experiences today? Can God still transform someone? Can He transform anyone?
6. Read Romans 12:1-2. What are some key insights about sacrifice, worship and transformation based on these verses? Are you being transformed on a regular basis?

TAKE A STEP

Saul went from persecuting others to the one being persecuted. Sometimes we assume that once we begin following Jesus we won't face persecution or trials in our lives. I think we sometimes miss the point about the transformation God is seeking for us. The transformation isn't something that happens externally, but rather, one that happens within. What change have you been seeking lately? Do you consistently hope for a transformation from without in within? Take a moment. Pray Romans 12:1-2 each morning before you start your day, but state it with personal pronouns. Write down what God taught you at the end of the week.

REMEMBER & MEDITATE

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)