

February 1, 2015

SETTING A NEW DIRECTION FOR LIFE

Taking the Steps Toward Renewal

Acts 9:17-31

The story of the transformation of Saul is a reminder of how God is able to bring His change into the lives of people and establish His direction for life. Yet Saul's dramatic change did not happen on his own – he needed assistance from others. We see in the continued story of Acts how God used the followers of Jesus to accomplish His purpose. We need to follow their example and allow the Lord to bring fresh life to His church.

1. We must be a healthy family.

“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.” Acts 9:17

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,”
Ephesians 2:19 (NIV)

2. We must be a safe gathering place for people.

“Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.” Acts 9:19-20 (NIV)

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not

only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Philippians 2:1-4 (NIV)

3. We must assist each other in life's struggles.

“After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.” Acts 9:23-25 (NIV)

“Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

4. We must come alongside to encourage and guide one another.

“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.” Acts 9:27 (NIV)

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

5. We must help each other to be used for the work of Jesus.

“So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.” Acts 9:28-30 (NIV)

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one

another on toward love and good deeds.” **Hebrews 10:23-24**
(NIV)

6. We must be ready for the next chapter in God’s plan!

“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.” **Acts 9:31 (NIV)**

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. ... because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, My chosen, the people I formed for Myself that they may proclaim My praise.” **Isaiah 43:19-21 (NIV)**

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

“If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross DAILY and follow Me.” **Luke 9:23 (NIV)**