ACTS: Advance "Four Steps to Greater Impact" (Acts 9:20-31)
For the week of February 21, 2016

Testimony

Have a volunteer share their testimony (5-10 minutes) if there is still anyone who has not had the opportunity to share.

Tell the Story

Tell the story of Acts 9:20-31. Then read the passage. Discuss any missing details from the telling of the story. Finally, rebuild the story as a group.

1. Acts 9:20. Some Christians counsel new believers to wait until they are thoroughly grounded in their faith before attempting to share the Good News. Saul spent time with other believers to learn about Jesus before beginning his worldwide ministry but he did not wait to witness. How would you counsel a new believer on when to share their faith? How and when is training important?

2. Acts 9:21. Saul was brilliant and surely could argue powerfully but people were most impressed with the transformation of his life. People knew what Saul taught was real because they could see evidence in the way he lived. Can people see your changed life by the way you live? List some evidences or characteristics of your changed life:

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

3. Acts 9:20-22. Has Christ ever radically changed your perspective on something? If so, what was changed and what/who did He use in your life to do so? Compare how Saul's mindset was changed from Acts 9:1-2 with Acts 9:20-22.

4. Acts 22-23. The phrase "*When many days had passed…*" indicates God prepared Saul for service. Read Galatians 1:15-18. Many interpreters believe that these three years in Arabia and Damascus came between verses 22 and 23, while others believe it was between verses 25 and 26. Think back to when you were a new or newer believer. How did God prepare you for service? What training or life experiences has God used to use you for His glory?

5. Acts 9:26-27. It's difficult to change your reputation and Saul had a terrible reputation with Christians. Fortunately, Saul had Barnabas who became a bridge between Saul and the apostles. New Christians need sponsors; people who will come alongside, encourage, teach and introduce them to other believers. Have you been a Barnabas to a new believer? Share with the group.

6. Barnabas is known as the "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). Who has been the greatest encourager in your life? Share with the group what part this person has played in your life.

7. Acts 9:28-31. A final look at Barnabas. Barnabas was the key so that Saul was able to relaunch his ministry and be accepted by fellow believers. Listed below are some characteristics of Barnabas. Look at these characteristics and comment three ways – 1) Which of these characteristics have you used to help others? 2) Which of these characteristics have been used by others to help you? 3) Which of these characteristics have you seen others use to help others?

- Giving a word of encouragement
- Confirming others' gifts
- Reconciling believers with believers
- Taking a risk for Christ in human relationship
- Promoting the ministry of others
- Rejoicing in another's success

Bottom line: God mightily used men and women like Barnabas for His glory!

Prayer

"O God, prepare us as you did Saul. May we accept with joy a similar work in our own lives, willingly allowing our Father in heaven to teach us, prepare us, mold us, protect us, humble us and continually remind us how much we need Him without whom we can do absolutely nothing. In Jesus' name, Amen."