

JUMP RIGHT IN: Read **ACTS 9:1-9** and talk about the following...

What do you think this moment had to be like for Saul?

- Saul's life was radically changed that day.
- He went from being opposed to Christ, even though he had a form of religion, to fully surrendering to Christ and acknowledging Him as his Lord and Savior.

Saul was now identified with those who were “belonging to the Way”

(He is now one with the very people he came to persecute)

For the remainder of the JOURNEY GROUP talk about ...

How does one become a disciple? To answer this question, we can look at the instructions the Lord and His apostles gave to those who would be His followers. Looking to the New Testament, we can see that in order to become a disciple, an individual must:

- **They hear the gospel** – *“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation’”* (Mark 16:15). The gospel must be preached because people must hear it in order to respond to it. Jesus said, *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear”* (Luke 8:8).
- **They believe that Jesus is the Christ** – *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned”* (Mark 16:16).
- Not only is belief necessary for salvation, but Jesus specifically said that those who do not believe will be lost. He said elsewhere, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”* (John 8:24).
- Interestingly, the word *“He”* is not in the original Greek text but was added by the translators. Jesus' statement meant that we must believe that He is the *“I AM”* – the name that God called Himself when speaking to Moses out of the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). In other words, it is not enough simply to believe in the existence of Jesus; we must believe that He is Deity (cf. Colossians 2:9).
- **They repent of sins** – *“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3, 5). The belief that we are to have (previous point) must lead us to action. Repentance means to put away sin and begin serving the Lord. Jesus said elsewhere, *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me”* (Luke 9:23). When we make the decision to follow the Lord, we are making a commitment to serve Him *daily*.

- **They confess faith in Christ** – *“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation”* (Romans 10:9-10).
- This is the verbal affirmation of our faith. We must do more than mentally acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. In addition to repentance, we must also be willing to make *“the good confession in the presence of many witnesses”* (1 Timothy 6:12).
- **They are baptized into Christ** – *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”* (Matthew 28:19).
- Many people will push back on this point and try to argue that baptism is not necessary in order to be saved or to become a disciple of Jesus. Yet Jesus said that baptism is just as necessary for salvation as belief (Mark 16:16) and is an essential step in the discipleship process (Matthew 28:19).
- Those who reject this and have *“disbelieved”* Jesus *“shall be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). Paul described baptism as the act in which we put on Christ: *“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”* (Galatians 3:27).

When we become a disciple (like SAUL) we then ***belong*** to Christ. Peter explained this in his first epistle: *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession...for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God...”* (1 Peter 2:9-10).

- As “a people for His own possession,” we must be “zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14). In other words, we must continue to serve Him and do what is right throughout our lives.

We learn that Paul (very early in his new FAITH in Jesus **does 2 things...**

1. **He immediately shows witness of Christ in the Synagogues** (Went to tell the story)
 - Like him we all have a testimony to share with others!
2. **He gets alone with God.** WHY? Paul tells us in Galatians that he went into Arabia.
 - To catch his breath. To recalibrate. To resist and get ready for the journey ahead.
 - He had to be taught what surrender would look like, since he was so used to doing what he wanted and when he wanted to do it.