

Life of Paul - Week 3
God's Plan and Calling
7/12/2026

God can transform the most unlikely person into a powerful witness for His glory. No one is beyond redemption, and true conversion always produces change.

Galatians 1:15-16

Paul reminds us that God had a purpose for his life before he was born. Even while Paul was actively opposing Christ, God was still working out His plan.

Important Truths:

- God has a purpose for every person.
- God's calling is based on His grace, not our performance.
- Paul was not searching for Jesus when Jesus revealed Himself to Paul.
- Many people look for faults in others, but God calls us to seek the Savior.

Application: Ask yourself: Am I coming to God seeking Him, or am I focused on judging others?

The Wilderness Before the Ministry - Galatians 1:17 Before launching into ministry, Paul spent time in Arabia. Scripture does not tell us exactly how long he was there, but it was part of the three-year period before meeting Peter in Jerusalem.

What Was Paul Doing? Paul explains that the gospel he preached was received through revelation from Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12).

During this time, Paul was likely:

- Studying the Law and the Prophets through the lens of Christ.
- Understanding how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.
- Preparing for the ministry God had called him to.

Biblical Pattern: Several key leaders experienced God in the wilderness:

- Moses received God's revelation before leading Israel.
- Elijah encountered God's direction in the wilderness.
- Jesus spent time in the wilderness before beginning His ministry.
- Paul also received revelation and preparation in the wilderness.

Application: God often prepares us privately before He uses us publicly. Time alone with God is essential for spiritual growth and direction.

Changed Identity - Acts 9:19 The disciples Paul joined in Damascus were not the original twelve apostles. They were believers who had fled persecution following Stephen's death.

The Transformation of Saul

- Saul traveled to Damascus to arrest Christians.
- After meeting Jesus, he became one of them.
- The people he once opposed became his spiritual family.

Application: A genuine encounter with Christ changes our identity, relationships, and priorities.

Jesus Is the Son of God - Acts 9:20 Paul immediately began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God.

Understanding "Son of God" In Jewish culture, a son represented the authority and identity of his father. When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, He was declaring equality with God.

Supporting Scriptures: John 10:30 "I and the Father are one." **John 14:9** "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Why This Matters: The very message Paul once opposed and persecuted was now the message he boldly proclaimed.

The Power of a Changed Life - Acts 9:21 People were astonished by Paul's transformation.

Their Questions:

- Isn't this the man who persecuted Christians?
- Didn't he come here to arrest believers?

Paul's dramatic change became evidence of God's power.

Application: Your testimony may be the strongest evidence of Christ's work that others see.

Growing in Strength and Influence - Acts 9:22 Three important truths stand out:

1. Saul Grew More Powerful - God empowered Paul as he faithfully shared the gospel.

Lesson: Spiritual growth often occurs as we actively serve and share our faith.

2. Saul Baffled the Jews - Paul's extensive knowledge of Scripture, combined with his revelation of Christ, allowed him to effectively defend the gospel.

Lesson: Time spent learning God's Word prepares us to stand firmly in truth.

3. Saul Proved Jesus Is the Messiah - Paul demonstrated Christ's identity through:

- The Scriptures.
- His transformed life.