

Week Four – True Purpose
Acts 9:1-19

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you were trying hard to impress a group of people or achieve some measure of recognition and acceptance for others? Describe how you felt and why that was important at the time.
2. Do you still feel that way? If so, why is that important to you? If not, what changed?
3. Read the assigned Scripture. Who was Paul trying to please? Why?
4. Paul was from Tarsus. Although he was a well-trained Jewish leader, Tarsus was far away from Jerusalem, the seat of influence. How might that have contributed to his driven nature?
5. Read Galatians 1:13-17. What additional information does Paul provide about his status before becoming a Christian?
6. Paul, who was an outsider in the Jewish community, became an outsider in the Christian community after his conversion. How can that perspective serve God's purpose? Have you ever felt the same? Explain.
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a better understanding of how God can use your life experience in a unique way to help others find God.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Why was Paul on his way to Damascus?
9. Acts 7 describes the accusations and stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. Read Acts 7:57-60. What additional information do we learn about Paul's previous life as a zealous advocate for Judaism?
10. Is passion for God a good thing? What made Paul's passion a dangerous thing?
11. Much is said today about Radical Islamic Terrorists. Most consider their devotion to be misplaced passion to their faith. How is it possible for a godly person to turn so destructive in the name of God?
12. Although they may not be as extreme, have you witnessed evidence of misplaced passion among Christians? Discuss.

13. Our pastors have said, “Other Christians may be wrong on a lot of Biblical teaching, but if they preach Jesus Christ as God’s only begotten son who lived, died and rose again as our Savior for the forgiveness of sin; I’m a fan.” Do you agree? Is there too much or too little division in the ranks of Christians?
14. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for well-intended but misguided people who use faith to hurt others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Re-read Acts 9:1-19. What was Paul’s purpose in life before his trip to Damascus?
16. What was his purpose after his trip to Damascus?
17. What do you believe is your primary purpose in life? Does the expenditure of your time, energy, and possessions align with your primary purpose?
18. If someone posed this question to you, “If it were against the law, and you were arrested for being a devoted Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?,” how would you answer?
19. If anyone asked your colleagues at work, your neighbors, or your extended family what they thought were the three greatest priorities of your life, what would they say? Would they be right?
20. Read Acts 9:1-19. What helps people recognize our purpose?
21. If you could change your life to mirror your primary purpose, what would you need to change?
22. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a greater alignment between your faith and your daily activities.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

23. What question did Jesus ask Paul after knocking him off his horse? Read Matthew 25:34-40. How often do you think people associate their behavior towards others with behavior towards Jesus?
24. Why did Jesus allow Paul to be blind and go without answers for three days? Have you ever had to wait on God to answer a prayer or provide direction in your confusion? What benefit comes from waiting?
25. Paul’s companions did not experience the appearance of Jesus in the same way that he did. What does that suggest to

us about faith and conversion? Is that significant? In what way?

26. When God came to Ananias, why was Ananias reluctant to get involved?
27. Read Acts 9:15. What purpose did God have in sending Ananias to Paul other than restoring his sight?
28. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 1 Timothy 1:15-16, and Galatians 6:10,11. Some believe Paul's famous "thorn in the flesh" was continuing eye problems as a constant reminder of his conversion. What purpose does ongoing hardship serve in the life of Christians?
29. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that you would gain greater trust in God's love and provision despite the hardships you face and those times that God seems distant.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

30. Re-read Acts 9:17-19. Ananias knew who Paul was and what he had done in persecuting other Christians. How difficult is it to overlook an offense, instead of wishing those who hurt others would feel the consequence of their actions? Do you pray for your enemies? What do you pray?
31. How do you think Paul felt to be shown kindness and compassion by those he considered his enemy and an enemy of God?
32. When you realize you have been wrong about someone or something important, how do you overcome the guilt?
33. As a trained Pharisee, Paul was an expert in Jewish laws and customs. See Acts 9:22. Why would God take someone so skilled in working with a certain group of people and designate him as a missionary to others? In other words why was Paul asked to be a witness to the gentiles, not Jews? (Acts 9:15)
34. Verse 17 says that Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? See 1 Corinthians 12:3. Do all Christians have the Holy Spirit? Do you believe all Christians have the same measure of the Holy Spirit?
35. Why would God take an enemy of the Church and use him as a chief spokesman for the faith? What implications does that have for us today?
36. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a more gracious spirit towards those that make your life so difficult.