

# **“A.D. The Bible Continues”- Week 8**

## **“Undeniable: What Even Skeptics Believe”**

*New Life Community Church*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One undeniable sign of God’s power is the transformation of believers’ lives. Perhaps the most miraculous transformation occurred in Saul (also known as Paul). As Chapter 9 of Acts begins, we see Saul pursuing Christians, intent on their destruction. But by the end of this chapter he has become the greatest advocate and defender of the faith. It is only through the power of the risen Christ that such a dramatic change is possible. Not only in Saul, but in everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. As we examine his life, we find the kind of undeniable evidence that causes even skeptics to believe.

### **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

Have you ever taken a journey that was unexpectedly redirected, but drastically improved over the original plan?

### **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

#### **A Radically New Mission in Life**

##### **Q1. Read Acts 9:1-9, 15-21**

Saul began his journey to Damascus intending to bind the believers and return them to Jerusalem for judgment. But the resurrected Jesus stepped into his path and redirected his zeal. He was in fact God’s chosen instrument to carry His Name to Gentiles and Jews (v.15) How would you say your first encounter with Jesus redirected your life’s path? Put yourself in Saul’s place - from the time of his blinding encounter until he received his sight, why do you think he didn’t eat or drink? When you sense God assigning you a new mission in your life, how do you seek to confirm what you are hearing?

#### **A Total Change of Character**

##### **Q2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17; Acts 8:3; 2 Timothy 2:24-25**

The promise of 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that in Christ we are new creations. Compare the description of Saul (Acts 8:3) with Paul’s advice in 2 Timothy 2:24-25 as he neared the end of his life. If Paul were in fact displaying the characteristics described, then his transformed character would be evident to all who knew him. Who do you know that is an example of the characteristics Paul describes? Which of those characteristics would you most like to see changed in you?

#### **A Change in Personal Relationships**

##### **Q3. Read Acts 9:19b, 28; Philippians 4:1; 1 Peter 4:3**

As a believer, Paul experienced a change in his personal relationships that we too should find. He spent time with those who could teach him more about Christ (Acts 9:19, 28) and developed a deep affection for other brothers in the

faith (see Philippians 4:1). Who we spend our time with often reflects what we choose to do as well. What are some activities Peter refers to that we leave behind in 1 Peter 4:3? Some times leaving those activities behind means leaving old relationships behind as well. Has your faith made any old relationships more difficult to maintain, and if so, what kind of boundaries did you have to establish? What would you say are your most spiritually edifying relationships?

### **A Willingness to Suffer for Christ**

#### **Q4. Read Philippians 3:10; Romans 8:18; 2 Timothy 1:8**

As greatly as Saul had heaped abuse on the Christians, he too suffered for his faith. In Philippians 3:10 we see that Paul sought to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, but realized that to do so, he would participate in great sufferings. What is it that made that suffering worthwhile? (see Romans 8:18) Paul invites Timothy, and all believers, to join in suffering for the gospel. What do you consider some modern-day ‘sufferings’ that we might be called to experience ourselves?

### **WRAP-UP**

A changed life, like that of Saul’s, is undeniable evidence of God’s power. After his conversion, God redirected Saul to a new mission in life- to spread the gospel. As Paul’s heart was changed his character became a reflection of God’s character, a change that should be seen in all believers. He developed a deep affection for, and spent time with those who shared his faith. And he willingly accepted great suffering in exchange for the greatest treasure of all, knowing Jesus Christ.

### **Memory Verse**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*

*2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV*

### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space) \_\_\_\_\_

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*Challenge: Find someone who knew you before you came to faith in Christ and ask them what changes they have you seen in you.*

