

Sermon Based Small Group Guide

January 24, 2021 sermon:

EMPOWERED (Acts): "The persecutor becomes the persecuted"

Warm up: (Questions for discussion)

Chick-fil-A...been there yet? Why or why not? ☺

Besides salvation, what is the biggest "change" you've made in your life?

How forgiving/believing are you when someone else says they've changed?

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes)

1. Imagine the world's best known atheist showing up at Olivet, professing to be an evangelical Christian, and asking if he can preach a sermon. Shortly after the Damascus road confrontation and Saul's conversion, he shows up in synagogues in Damascus and starts to speak about Jesus. Read [Acts 9:19b-21](#) again, what is their reaction to his straightforward message about Jesus? Talk about this: What does someone need to hear, understand, and ultimately believe about Jesus to truly become his disciple?

2. When someone begins their relationship with Jesus, we often see (and should see) a passion and excitement that leads them to share their faith (though their understanding may be limited) with others. It is unfortunate that "more mature" believers often dampen this enthusiasm and tell them to "wait until they know more" before they share. The balance here can be tricky, but what does the Bible say about us sharing our faith and what "conditions" may apply?

Matthew 4:19-20

Philemon 1:6

1 Peter 3:15-16

2 Timothy 1:7-8

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Colossians 4:5-6

3. Barnabas is a tremendous New Testament example of someone who believed in God's ability to change people and the importance of those people having a real friend who would walk through life with them for a period of time (short or long). Take some time to talk about the importance of solid Christian friends who walk with you through the thick and thin of life. What does God's word say about this?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Proverbs 27:5-6

Proverbs 27:17

Colossians 3:12-14

Romans 13:8

John 15:12-17

Apply it: (10 minutes)

God's transformation of a person is both instantaneous and ongoing. We should be able to point to a moment in time when we surrendered to the lordship of Jesus (the "day and time" not required!), and should be able to track our growth and progress as we continue to walk with him. Do you have any questions about this? Any concerns about your relationship with Jesus or your growth in him? Hopefully this small group is a place where you feel safe sharing these things, then close in prayer.