

Discussion questions

- a. Who are the world's inspirations and role-models? Why do you think they are?
- b. Who inspires you the most, and why is that?
- c. Who is, or has been, a great role-model for you? How have they positively impacted your life?
- d. Have you had a "Damascus Road" experience? What happened?
- e. Who has been unexpectedly gracious to you? What impact has that had on your life?
- f. Have you been baptised? If "yes", when and why? If "no", why not?
- g. Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? If "yes", when and why? If "no", why not?
- h. If you have a "life verse" what is it, and why did you choose it?

Acts 9:1-22

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*"

⁵ "*Who are you, Lord?*" Saul asked.

"*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,*" He replied. ⁶ "*Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.*"

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "*Ananias!*" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "*Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.*"

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "*I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.*"

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "*Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.*"

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "*Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.*" ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, *“Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?”*

²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

“Two heroes: Saul and Ananias”

Saul – the church’s worst nightmare, v1

Who are the Lord’s disciples? v1

Why *“the Way”*? v2

Saul called Jesus *“Lord”*, v4

An attack on any disciple is an attack on Jesus, v5

Jesus is *“I AM”*, v5

Saul’s spiritual journey

Acts 4:13, 16, 17; 5:38-39

Sincerity is not a substitute for truth

Saul’s struggle over his identity

Saul’s first foundation stone, Matthew 5:3

Life found only in Jesus – obedience, patience and trust, v6

Ananias, a model disciple, vv10-17

Attuned to Jesus, v10

Listened to Jesus, v11

Honest conversation with Jesus, vv13-14

Jesus’ gracious response, vv15-16

Suffering and glory, Luke 9:23

Obedient to Jesus, *“Ananias went”*, v17

Gracious to Saul, *“Brother Saul”*, v17

Confident in prayer, *“Saul could see again”*, v18

Dependent on the Holy Spirit, v17

Saul’s conversions:

To Christ

To Christ’s Church

To Christ’s Cause

Will we choose to follow Ananias’ godly example?