



## Week One

We are spending the next three weeks focused on Jesus' desire and ability to change our lives. Story after story of transformation. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit [prov.church/signup](http://prov.church/signup) and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this prayer together:

*God, we are called to be followers of your son Jesus Christ. We are not always good at being followers. Remind us of who we are and whose we are in these days of confusing allegiance and motivation. Give us pure hearts for the cause of Christ. Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 9.1-6

*Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.<sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"*

<sup>5</sup> *"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.*

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

- Saul was on his way to Damascus to continue his persecution of the followers of Jesus. Some changes in life can be subtle and gradual, but generally they require a point in time when a person is stopped in their tracks. Jesus may stop you in order to begin changing your life. Have you ever been so overwhelmed by the presence of Jesus that you fell to the ground? Have you ever been stopped in your tracks by the holiness of God? Describe.
- *Pray that you would hear the voice of Jesus even if it causes you to stop the journey you are currently on?*

## TUESDAY: ACTS 9.7-9

<sup>7</sup> *The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.*

- Saul was processing what he had just experienced. His traveling companions could confirm that they heard what he also had heard, but they didn't see where the voice was coming from. It's interesting that his encounter on the road to Damascus didn't prevent him from going to Damascus. It was the place where Jesus needed him to go in order to repent and receive new life. Have you ever headed out for a destination that you thought was your own, but ended being the place where God needed you to be all along?
- *Pray for big and small encounters with God that keep you on the path of the Way of Christ.*

## WEDNESDAY: ACTS 9.10-14

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

<sup>11</sup> *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. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."*

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

- Jesus was orchestrating another encounter for Saul. This time with a disciple named Ananias. He was asked to heal Saul (a known leader of murderous mobs) of his blindness. Ananias understandably questioned this request, after all, Saul was coming to harm people like himself. Have you ever been in a position to offer healing or forgiveness to an enemy? How did you respond?
- *Pray to heart and mind of Christ when facing enemies.*

## THURSDAY: ACTS 9-15-19

<sup>15</sup> *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. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."*

<sup>17</sup> *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.”<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,<sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength.*

- Imagine how the light associated with scales falling from Saul’s eyes might have seemed like the light of heaven in verse 3. Notice also how Saul was baptized before regaining his strength. Others must have needed to help him to the waters of baptism. He can see, he is filled with the Holy Spirit, but he doesn’t yet know his mission. Have you ever felt the power of the Holy Spirit and also felt like you were waiting for your marching orders?
- *Pray with gratitude and patience--God wants to change your life for a reason.*

FRIDAY: EPHESIANS 4.22-24

*<sup>22</sup> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;<sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds;<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

- When Jesus changes your life you may still see the old life from time to time. Paul (formerly Saul) is teaching us to “put off” our old life and claim a mind and self that is being renewed day by day. If you are a disciple Jesus, how would you say you are learning to put away your old self?
- *Pray for the strength and resolve to give yourself to this new life in Christ--more and more.*

SATURDAY: 1 JOHN 3.2

*<sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

- John invites us to consider what it means to at once be transformed into Christ-like-ness and yet not know what that will look like when we appear before him and see him fully. Our lives are being changed by Jesus and what that will look like is...Jesus. In whom have you seen Jesus shine? How do they give you a glimpse of what is to come?
- *Pray for increasing faith that the God of transformation can be trusted.*

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- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Jacob shared a bit about the stories of three Providence members who were baptised last year as an outward expression of how Jesus had changed their lives. View their stories at [prov.church/jesuschangedmylifestories](http://prov.church/jesuschangedmylifestories).
- How do these stories impact the way you view your own faith journey?
- These questions were in Jacob's sermon notes, answer them with your small group:
  - Maybe you feel stopped right now. Is it Jesus trying to speak to you?
  - Maybe you feel blinded and without strength.
  - Would you believe Jesus could make scales fall from your eyes? That he could give you strength?