ACTS 9:19-31: Week 20

Nobody Follows Jesus Alone

You don't become who God wants you to be alone. Following Jesus is personal, but it was never meant to be private. We need people who help us grow, hold the ropes, believe in us, help us discern our next step and pray for us.

GROUP LEADER NOTES

This conversation may surface feelings of loneliness, rejection, isolation or disappointment in relationships. Create space for people to be honest without pressuring anyone to share more than they are comfortable sharing.

The goal of this discussion is not simply to convince people to add another activity to their calendars. Help your group recognize the kind of relationships God uses to form us and consider both sides of the equation:

Who do I need in my life? Who can I be for someone else?

Remind your group that a healthy Christian community is not about finding perfect people. It is about following Jesus together.

ICEBREAKER

Growing up, who was someone outside of your immediate family who had a meaningful influence on your life? What made that relationship significant?

READ TOGETHER

Read **Acts 9:19-31** together.

As you read, pay attention to the different people God uses in Saul's life.

MESSAGE RECAP

Saul's transformation was dramatic. He encountered Jesus personally and immediately his life changed. But even after such a powerful encounter with Christ, Saul still needed people.

He spent time with the disciples in Damascus. Others helped him escape when his life was in danger. Barnabas believed in him when others were afraid to trust him. Believers helped him discern his next step. Ananias prayed for him at a critical moment in his life.

The message identified five kinds of people we need:

1. **People who help us grow**
2. **People who hold the ropes**
3. **People who believe in us**
4. **People who help us discern our next step**
5. **People who pray for us**

The message also challenged us to consider that drifting rarely happens all at once. We can drift gradually, and one of the easiest places to drift in our culture is isolation.

Nobody follows Jesus alone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you most from this week's message?

Was there a particular statement, Scripture or story that stayed with you?

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2. The message said that drifting rarely feels like rebellion. It happens “gradually and then suddenly.”

Why do you think that is true?

Where have you seen that happen in your own life or in the lives of people around you?

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3. Our culture often celebrates independence and self-reliance.

Where do you see the pressure to “do it yourself” in our culture?

How can that mindset make its way into our relationship with God and with other people?

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4. The message said, “Following Jesus is personal but was never meant to be private.”

What is the difference between having a personal faith and trying to live your faith in isolation?

Why do you think following Jesus requires community?

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5. Saul grew after coming to faith, but his formation took time and involved other people.

Who has helped you grow spiritually?

What did they do that made such a difference in your life?

THE FIVE PEOPLE

1) **People who help you grow**
- Who are the people in your life who challenge, encourage or inspire you to become more like Jesus?
- Is there someone whose wisdom or example you need more of in your life right now?

2) **People who hold the ropes**
- The message asked, **“Who is on the other end of your ropes?”**
- Who could you call in the middle of the night if you were facing a crisis?
- Are you allowing yourself to build those kinds of relationships before you need them?

3) **People who believe in you**
- Barnabas stepped in when Saul was caught between two worlds. He believed in what God was doing in Saul and was willing to put his reputation on the line for him.
- Have you ever had a “Barnabas” in your life?
- How did someone else's belief in you affect your confidence or courage?

4) **People who help you discern your next step**
- Sometimes Saul needed people to tell him the truth, even when it may not have been what he wanted to hear.
- Who has permission to speak honestly into your life?
- How do you typically respond when someone gives you advice that is difficult to hear?

5) **People who pray for you**
- The message asked: Who knows your story well enough to pray for you?
- Not simply someone who says, “I'll pray for you,” but someone who will stop and pray with you.
- Do you have people who know what you are carrying right now?

- What keeps us from allowing other people to know what we really need prayer for?

APPLICATION

Which of these five kinds of people do you most need right now?

- Someone to help you grow
- Someone to hold the ropes
- Someone to believe in you
- Someone to help you discern your next step
- Someone to pray for you

Why did you choose that one?

Which one of these comes most naturally to you?
Are you someone who:

- Prays with people right away?
- Challenges people to grow?
- Shows up in a crisis?
- Believes in people when they struggle to believe in themselves?
- Helps people discern their next step?

How might God want to use you in someone else's life?

THIS WEEK'S NEXT STEP

Encourage everyone to choose one intentional step:

Receive: Reach out to someone and ask for the kind of support you need.
Give : Identify someone who may need you to help them grow, hold the ropes, believe in them, offer wisdom or pray with them.
Connect: If you have been trying to follow Jesus in isolation, take a meaningful step toward Christian community.

It took a group to form Saul. It will take relationships for God to form us too.

PRAYER

Take time to pray specifically for one another.

Consider using the five categories from the message as a guide.

Pray that God would:

- Surround each person with relationships that help them grow
- Give them people who will hold the ropes when life becomes difficult
- Send encouragement when they need someone to believe in them
- Give them wise people who can help them discern their next step
- Place people in their lives who know them deeply enough to pray for them

Close by thanking God that salvation brings us not only into a relationship with Him, but into a family.