

Acts 9:1–19 CVC LIFE Group Guide

Before & After: The Transforming Encounter with Jesus

Main Idea: Jesus transforms people no one expects, includes people we might overlook, and continues changing us throughout our journey with Him.

Welcome & Prayer

Icebreaker Question:

What is your favorite "before and after" story (real life, historical, personal, TV show, home renovation, sports comeback, etc.)?

Recap

- Acts 7–8: Stephen's martyrdom and Saul's approval
- Acts 8: Philip's obedience and God's work through discomfort
- Several weeks or months have passed since Stephen's death

Part 1: BEFORE – Who Was Saul? Read Acts 9:1–2

Saul was:

- A Jewish Pharisee A Roman citizen A respected religious leader
- The church's most aggressive persecutor

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about Saul's character before meeting Jesus?
2. Why do you think Saul was so convinced he was doing the right thing?
3. Have you ever been completely convinced you were right about something and later discovered you were wrong?

Part 2: ENCOUNTER – Jesus Meets Saul Read Acts 9:3–9

As Saul travels to Damascus, Jesus interrupts his plans.

Key observations:

- Jesus initiates the encounter. Saul wasn't searching for Jesus.
- Jesus identifies Himself with His people:
"Why do you persecute Me?" Jesus confronts Saul without rejecting him.

Discussion Questions

1. What surprises you most about Jesus' interaction with Saul?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal Himself this way?

3. Saul thought he was serving God. What does this teach us about the danger of sincere but misplaced beliefs?
4. Jesus pursued Saul even while Saul opposed Him. What does that reveal about God's character?
5. Have there been moments when God interrupted your plans or changed your direction?

Part 3: AFTER – Ananias Says Yes: Read Acts 9:10–19

While Saul is waiting, God speaks to Ananias.

Ananias knows exactly who Saul is.

Imagine hearing:

"Go pray for the person who has been arresting Christians."

Yet Ananias obeys.

Discussion Questions

1. What fears do you think Ananias experienced?
2. Why do you think God gave Ananias so many details?
3. Who are the people we are tempted to give up on?
4. How can assumptions keep us from participating in what God wants to do?
5. What difficult person, place, or situation might God be asking you to engage instead of avoid?

Identity Transformation : Read Acts 9:15–16

Jesus says: "This man is My chosen instrument."

Saul's identity changes:

- Persecutor → Messenger
- Enemy → Brother
- Destroyer → Church Builder

Discussion Questions

Which transformation resonates most with your own story?

What "before and after" work is Jesus still doing in your life?

Response & Prayer

Prayer Prompts

Pray for:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • People who need an encounter with Jesus | Courage to obey difficult assignments |
| • Eyes to see others as Jesus sees them | Continued transformation in your own life |