



# THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

## PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

### RADICAL CONVERSION

(Part 6, Relationship Series)

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The radical conversion of St. Paul (formerly named Saul) is proof that God calls and transforms people wherever and whenever God chooses. Paul changed from being a persecutor of Christians to a dedicated disciple of Christ. He was completely transformed when he had a profound encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus (Acts 9: 1-19). From then on, Paul dedicated his life to preaching the Gospel.

Likewise, a personal encounter with Jesus can change our lives drastically, too.

- A. Paul (Saul) was very angry with Jesus and the early Christians.
1. The Pharisees hated Jesus and Saul was a Pharisee.
  2. For Saul, Jesus was a blasphemer and a criminal who deserved to die on the cross.
  3. There was a growing group of Jesus' disciples and Saul believed that he had to destroy this movement before it destroys their faith.
  4. Saul was so zealous for his beliefs and their laws that he was bent on the destruction of the "Way".
- B. Saul's call began when Jesus interrupted his journey with a flashing light from heaven (Acts 9: 3). The Gospels referred to Jesus as the "light of the world" (John 8: 12). In Matthew 17: 2, it says that Jesus' face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light. Jesus called Saul's name twice (Acts 9: 4), implying deep emotion. Before Saul met Jesus, he believed that he was doing God's will by persecuting the believers. He then realized that it was God whom he was persecuting.
- C. Saul was directed to go to Ananias in Damascus (Acts 9: 6). In the same way, we, too, need to be guided in the community by those who are more spiritually mature than ourselves. We need the help of others to grow in faith and we need people who will correct our wrongdoings.

D. Ananias was called to do something that would take him out of his comfort zone and would require blind faith. God asked him to do something dangerous in meeting Saul, who was viciously oppressing believers. Despite his apprehensions, Ananias obeyed (Acts 9: 11-17).

E. Something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he was healed from his blindness, which was more spiritual blindness as much as physical blindness. He saw everything in a new light, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

F. Paul underwent true transformation. He changed his life in relation to the revelation he received. The "revelation" was the actual encounter with Jesus. He changed radically from being a Pharisee to a man of God.

True transformation can be seen in a change in character. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17). (1) Cheerful in Adversity - 2 Cor. 4: 8-9; 1 Cor. 10: 13; (2) Courageous - Eph. 6: 20; (3) Purposeful - Rom. 1: 13-15; (4) Indomitable; (5) Joyous in suffering - Rom. 5: 1-5; (6) Meek - 1 Cor. 4: 12-13; (7) Self-forgetful - 1 Cor. 4: 9-10; (8) Self-supporting - Acts 18: 1-3; (9) Tactful - 1 Cor. 9: 19-22; (10) Zealous - 2 Cor. 5: 11; (11) Ready for death - 2 Tim. 4: 6-7

**CONCLUSION:** When we look at Paul's conversion, we should remember that people come to know Christ in different ways. God has called each one of us differently and uniquely. Paul's conversion is an example for us all. We learn that no one in this life is beyond saving because God can convert the most unlikely of sinners. We also learn from Ananias' example to obey and follow God's leading, no matter how difficult, and to accept and show loving acceptance to new believers.

#### REFLECTIONS:

- (1) How did God call you?
- (2) Did God ever ask you to do something very difficult? What was your reaction?

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