

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends
Next Steps: Hearing God's Voice, October 13, 2019

The Big Idea

Comedian Lily Tomlin asks "Why is it that when we speak to God we are said to be praying but when God speaks to us we are said to be schizophrenic?" The fact is that God continues to speak, to lead, and to direct His people even today. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would speak to us, guide us, and bring glory to Christ. Our challenge is two-fold. First, we must live our lives in a way that we are able to hear and identify the voice God in an otherwise noisy and chaotic world. And second, we must commit to obey the voice of God speaking to us

Where we are in the Bible

We are continuing to journey through the book of Acts and this week we find ourselves in Chapter 9 – The Conversion of Saul. In this passage we begin to see the transition of the narrative as it turns from primarily a record of the ministry of Peter and the birth of the church to the calling of God on Saul of Tarsus (The Apostle Paul) and his missionary excursions to the gentile world. This chapter records that momentous occasion when God interrupted the lives of two incredibly different men in order to ensure the spread of the Gospel around the world.

Other scriptures to consider

Exodus 3:1 - 4:17
God's call to Moses to deliver Israel

1 Samuel 3
The Lord calls Samuel

Isaiah 6
God's call to the prophet Isaiah

John 16:5-16

Finding a bit of ourselves

- This story from Acts 9 records one of the most dramatic conversion stories we could ever imagine. How about your story? How did you hear about your need for God in your life? Whose voice was most prominent in bringing you to Christ?
- The story tells us that Ananias was a disciple. If someone came up to you on the street and asked you what a disciple of Jesus was, what would you say? How would you describe a disciple?
- Have there been times in your life when you have been totally convinced that God was speaking to you? How did you know? What did you do about it and what were the results?

Where do we go from here?

- Sometimes God's instructions to His followers may not make a lot of sense to us. Certainly Ananias had some initial doubts about God's leading here in Acts 9! What other times in the Bible did God's instructions sound a bit odd or even silly? What were the results of obedience (or disobedience) in those cases?
- God's first instruction to both Saul and Ananias is to "Go". The overwhelmed Saul seems to immediately obey, but the skeptical disciple Ananias has some initial reservations. What typically is your initial response to hearing from God? Why does even a devout disciple sometimes struggle with obedience to what the Holy Spirit reveals?
- Last week you were asked what changes you could make to your spiritual practices to tap into God's power. This week's question - What changes could you make to your spiritual practices to better hear



God's still small voice speaking to you? And then - what will you do with the leading and direction He provides?

Prayer focus

In the message we heard that disciples of Jesus must be FAT. As you pray this week, seek God diligently and ask Him to speak to you about your Next Steps needed to:

- Strengthen your Faithfulness
- Be more Available
- Become more Teachable