

# THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



Date: 06.08.25 | Saul Follows Christ  
Scripture: Acts 9:1-31

## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

### Middle School Students:

- God is eternal and has existed for eternity past and will exist for eternity into the future.
- Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is given a spiritual gift.
- Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to minister to God's people in a special way.
- The Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on our behalf.
- The Holy Spirit inspired and guided people to write the Bible.

### High School Students:

- God is eternal, and although He is not bound by time, He chooses to operate in it to relate to us.
- Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is endowed with a spiritual gift to be used to serve in the church.
- Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has come to convict, teach, comfort, lead, strengthen, and seal us, as well as to produce fruit within and through us.
- The Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on our behalf when we do not know how to or what to pray.
- The Holy Spirit inspired and guided people to write the Bible and used the personalities and voices of men to communicate the very words of God.



### MEMORY VERSE

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." - Acts 2:38-39

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

Leaders, bring pictures of yourself as a baby, toddler, young child, teen, young adult etc. to show the group. Talk to them about the ways you have physically changed over the years. Tell the students that not only have you changed physically, but on the inside as well. Share with your group your experiences with Christ through the years. What was your walk with Christ like at each of these stages? How has your relationship with Jesus changed and grown over the years? Tell the students that today we will learn about how a man named Saul met Jesus and how his life was changed forever!

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## BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

God's choice of an agent to spread the gospel to the "ends of the earth" was as unlikely as could be imagined. Saul of Tarsus was a zealous Pharisee. Unlike many of his peers who were content to dismiss the new sect of Christ-followers, Saul actively hunted them. Stephen's bold message convinced Saul that this new faith was a threat to Judaism. From his perspective, followers of Christ were apostate Jews undermining the purity of their faith. With the fervor of a fanatic, Saul dedicated himself to crushing the church.

His religious zeal is evident in his appeal to the Sanhedrin for authority to arrest believers in Damascus. These papers may have been extradition documents or letters of introduction to Damascus synagogues—possibly connected to converts from Pentecost or those scattered after Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 8:1). The execution of Stephen had not quenched Saul's rage. He was still threatening and speaking of murder against the disciples. Acting like a bounty hunter, Saul sought the authority to extradite and prosecute Jewish believers who had fled Jerusalem. Since Damascus was outside direct Jewish control, he needed formal permission to act.

Instead of extinguishing the church, Saul's persecution scattered believers who preached the word wherever they went (Acts 8:3-4). Ironically, Saul's efforts fueled the gospel's expansion.

The mission to bring the gospel to the Gentiles began to take clearer shape with Saul's calling. His conversion is recorded three times in Acts (9:1-30; 22:3-21; 26:2-23), emphasizing its central role in the church's development. Saul was a Hellenistic Jew—a rabbi trained in the Hebrew Scriptures, fluent in Greek, and immersed in Greco-Roman culture. He was uniquely equipped to bridge Jewish heritage and Gentile mission. Later, on his missionary journeys, Paul would take the gospel across the Roman Empire to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Saul considered himself a righteous Jew and a divine instrument against the heretical Jesus movement. He had approved Stephen's stoning and continued to terrorize the church, arresting believers (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2). But everything changed on the road to Damascus. As he neared the city, a blinding light from heaven forced him to the ground.

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A voice asked, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4). Saul’s persecution of Jesus’ followers was, in fact, an assault on Christ Himself.

Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?” and received the shocking reply: “I am Jesus” (Acts 9:5). In that moment, Saul realized everything he had believed about Jesus and His followers was wrong. Acts 26:13 describes the light as brighter than the sun, enveloping Saul and his companions. Though they saw the light and heard a sound, only Saul understood the message (Acts 22:9). This was no hallucination; it was a real, divine encounter with the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8).

Blinded and helpless, Saul was led into Damascus, where he fasted and prayed for three days. His physical blindness reflected his spiritual blindness. During this time, he likely wrestled with the weight of his past and the enormity of his encounter with Jesus.

Meanwhile, in Damascus, God called a disciple named Ananias to minister to Saul. Ananias hesitated, knowing Saul’s reputation. But God assured him, “This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles, their kings, and the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15-16). Ananias obeyed, laying hands on Saul. Saul regained his sight, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and was baptized. The scales that fell from his eyes symbolized his new spiritual clarity and understanding.

Immediately, Saul began preaching in the synagogues of Damascus, proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). His transformation astonished those who had known him as a persecutor. His powerful arguments confounded his opponents, who soon plotted to kill him. To escape, Saul was lowered in a basket through an opening in the city wall (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Corinthians 11:32-33).

Saul returned to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid. Only Barnabas vouched for him, recounting his conversion and bold preaching. The church cautiously accepted him. Saul again spoke boldly about Jesus, provoking opposition from the Hellenistic Jews, who attempted to kill him. The believers sent him to Tarsus, where he remained for several years (Galatians 1:21) until Barnabas brought him to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).

Following Saul’s conversion and departure, the church entered a time of peace and growth. Luke records: “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened... it increased in numbers” (Acts 9:31).

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Though absent from the narrative until Acts 11, Saul (soon to be called Paul in Acts 13:9) was being prepared for his future ministry. He would go on to become Christianity's greatest missionary. Paul later wrote to Timothy, reflecting on his past, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Paul's story is a powerful testimony to God's grace. No sin, past, or act of rebellion is too great for God to forgive. The same Spirit who transformed Saul transforms us when we surrender to Christ. His grace redeems, calls, and equips us to be part of His mission.

Luke concludes Saul's conversion story with a reminder: the gospel cannot be stopped. Even its fiercest enemy became its boldest ambassador. Through his story, we are reminded that God's grace is deeper than our sin and His power is stronger than our resistance.

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## LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Remind your group that we are studying the New Testament. The book of Acts is about God sending the Holy Spirit to permanently dwell within Jesus' disciples and other believers after He ascended back to heaven. With the help of the Holy Spirit, those who followed Christ told many people about Jesus, helped others, and started the first churches. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the message of Jesus began to spread all over the world.

**TELL  
THE  
STORY**



**Tell the story:**

The Bible shows us that nothing is too complicated for God! He parted the Red Sea, kept lions from hurting Daniel, and even brought people back to life. God can do amazing things and change people's hearts, too. Today, we'll learn how God changed a man named Saul. At first, Saul didn't believe in Jesus and was mean to people who did.

Read directly from Scripture, use *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, *The Biggest Story Bible*, or the summary provided in the lesson

After Jesus died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, people in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus were persecuted, or treated cruelly because of their faith. One of Jesus' followers, Stephen, was even killed. A man named Saul had watched with approval when Stephen was killed. Saul wanted to put an end to the church. He went into the believers' homes, dragged them out, and put them in jail. Many believers fled the city.



Saul headed to Damascus to arrest believers there, but a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him on the way. Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

**Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...**

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," He replied. "Get up and go into the city. Then you will be told what you must do.

The men who were traveling with Saul were speechless. They heard the sound but saw no one. Saul got up and opened his eyes, but he couldn't

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see! So the men traveling with Saul led him by the hand into Damascus.

Ananias, a disciple of Jesus, lived in Damascus. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision and told him to go to the house where Saul was staying. Ananias knew that Saul had hurt many believers and that he had arrested anyone who believed in Jesus. But the Lord said, “Go! I have chosen this man to take my name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites.”

Ananias obeyed. He found Saul and told him that Jesus had sent him to help.

Ananias put his hands on Saul, and Saul could see again. Saul got up and was baptized. For the next few days, Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus. He began to go to the synagogues to preach about Jesus. Saul told the people, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

The people were amazed. They recognized Saul and knew he had wanted to put an end to the church. Now he was one of them! The Jews did not like Saul’s message.

They planned to kill him, so one night Saul left the city. The disciples helped Saul escape by lowering him down the city wall in a basket. Later in the Bible, Saul is referred to by his Roman name, Paul.

Even though Saul tried to stop the church, God had a big plan for the gospel to continue to spread. God chose Saul, just like Peter and the other disciples, to share the good news of Jesus. When God saved Saul, everything changed, and Saul became someone who loved Jesus and wanted to tell the whole world about Him!

**Re-tell the Bible Story:** Have students retell the story as best they can

**Share the GOSPEL:** Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus called Saul, who was once an enemy to Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust in Jesus.

Like Saul, God has chosen us in Christ. God desires to change our hearts so that we live in such a way that we are willing to rejoice when others persecute us for our faith. Jesus is worthy of having our lives changed inside out as we no longer live for ourselves but for His glory.

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## QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

### Who was Saul throwing into prison?

Saul had approved of Stephen's death, and he was on his way to Damascus to continue persecuting the church. It seems that Saul had no plans to trust in Jesus, but Jesus appeared to Saul, and everything changed. **Who did Jesus say Saul was persecuting? (Acts 9:4-5).** Jesus said Saul was persecuting Him! **How was Saul persecuting Jesus?** We've learned that the church is the body of Christ, so for Paul to hurt the church was the same as hurting Jesus.

### Why did Jesus come to Saul on the road to Damascus? What special job did God call Saul to do? What in the story showed that this was all part of God's plan?

Even though Saul was hurting Jesus and His church, Jesus sought Saul out, like a Shepherd who searches for a lost sheep. Jesus had a plan for Saul's life, and in His grace, He saved Saul. **What happened to Saul after his encounter with Jesus? (Acts 9:8-9)** Saul couldn't see. Even though he had his heart opened to the truth, his physical sight was lost.

### Is there anyone too bad to be saved by God?

Jesus sent Ananias, a Christian in Damascus, to help Saul see again. Saul was baptized and even spent time with the other disciples- people he had planned to persecute! Saul demonstrated a life changed by the gospel. **What did Saul begin to do that showed he had changed? (Acts 9:20-22)** Saul began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God, proving that Jesus is the Messiah. A man who once hated Christians was now proclaiming the gospel he so violently opposed!

**Read Acts 9:23. What did Saul face shortly after preaching the gospel?** Saul's preaching resulted in Jews wanting to kill him. He once persecuted the church, and now he was being persecuted. Saul continued to preach the gospel, even when it meant he would suffer, because he wanted others to know and trust in Jesus.

**What can we learn from the disciples who welcomed Saul in Damascus?** Saul stayed with the Christians in Damascus for some time. They did not let fear keep them from helping Saul. God's power in us through the Holy Spirit changes us so that others around us see how we've changed.



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**What is your personal experience with the gospel?**

**How has Jesus changed your heart from being lost to being a follower of Jesus?**

**After Saul encountered Jesus, he wanted to tell everyone. When have you told someone the good news about Jesus?**

**In what ways is God growing and continually changing you to be more like Christ?**

**What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?**

**What does the story teach me about myself?**

**Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?**

**Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?**

**How does this story help me live on mission?**

Application (include Mission Measures where applicable) - See Attached Application Questions. Choose the questions that work well with this section of scripture and tailor them to fit the age group of your students.

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## PRAYER PROMPT:

Thank You, God, for sending Your Son to earth so that we can be forgiven of our sins. Change us inside and out, just like Paul. Help us tell others about Jesus. Amen.

## MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

Our Creek Families will collect money in the funnel for United Christian Ministries in May and June.

## REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

**Acts 2:38-39**

**38** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

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## ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**ATTENTIVE** - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

**COMPASSIONATE** - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

**CREATOR** - God made everything. He is uncreated.

**DELIVERER** - God rescues and saves his children.

**ETERNAL** - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

**FAITHFUL** - God always keeps his promises.

**GENEROUS** - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

**GLORIOUS** - God displays His greatness and worth.

**GOOD** - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

**HOLY** - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

**IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING** - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

**INCOMPREHENSIBLE** - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

**INFINITE** - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

**JEALOUS** - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

**JUST** - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

**LOVING** - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

**MERCIFUL** - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

**OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY** - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

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## ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**OMNIPRESENT** - God is fully present everywhere.

**OMNISCIENT** - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

**PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING** - God is untiring and bears with His children.

**PROVIDER** - God meets the needs of his children.

**REFUGE** - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

**RIGHTEOUS** - God is always good and right.

**SELF-EXISTENT** - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

**SELF-SUFFICIENT** - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

**SOVEREIGN** - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

**TRANSCENDENT** - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

**TRUTHFUL** - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

**WISE** - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

**WORTHY** - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

**WRATHFUL** - God hates all unrighteousness.

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## Application Questions

### LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

### LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

### LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

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## Application Questions

### LOOK OUTWARD >>>

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

### LOOK FORWARD >>>

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?