



January 30, 2023

Can a person really change for the better? This question is asked so often, it is almost cliché. What is God's viewpoint on this question? Can a person really change? The Book of Acts gives an account of a person changing drastically for the better. At one point in his life, Saul (later referred to in the Scriptures as the Apostle Paul) was doing serious harm to the household of disciples, hindering the movement of God's Word. By the end of his life, he had changed so much that he not only helped the Church of God, but he, by God's direction, wrote a large portion of the New Testament and was one of the prominent leaders during the time period of the Book of Acts. Let's consider what changed Paul for the better. Then, like Paul, we can change for the better by going to God's Word and by surrounding ourselves with disciples who will help us direct our thoughts to God's Word.

The first mention of Saul is in the context of the execution by stoning of a wonderful believer, Stephen. Saul was not only present for that event, but he consented unto it. God's Word goes on to describe Saul's way of life.

Acts 8:3:

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Acts 9 describes how Saul changed. In the beginning of Acts 9, Saul was traveling to arrest the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ at Damascus and bring them bound to Jerusalem. During this journey, in a phenomenal display of God's power, Jesus Christ appeared to Saul and spoke God's Word to him and told him who God had called him to be.

Acts 9:3:

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

Some of what Jesus said is recorded in verses 4 through 6 of Acts 9; more can be read in Acts 26.

Acts 26:16-18:

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I [Jesus] have appeared unto thee [Saul] for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

After receiving this remarkable vision for his life and for what he was called to do for God, Saul's response was one of meekness to the Word: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Saul then received instruction to go into the city of Damascus, and he, along with his companions, obeyed the instruction given. Verses 9 through 17 of Acts 9 tell us that Saul needed healing and record God giving a disciple in Damascus named Ananias revelation to heal him and to establish what Saul had heard.

Acts 9:17-19:

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost [the gift of holy spirit in manifestation].

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

Saul needed the help of the local believers to help him rise up to the vision Jesus Christ had laid out for him. In the verses following, we see that he began to boldly teach and preach that Christ is the Son of God. People were amazed at the transformation!

What changed Paul? Two things were God's Word about who he was called to be and being with believers like Ananias who could help him and teach him the Word.

Throughout the rest of his life, Paul continued to learn more of God's Word and surround himself with believers who reminded him of God's Word. Like Paul, we can change for the better by going to God's Word and by surrounding ourselves with disciples who will help us direct our thoughts to God's Word. Not only can we change for the better, but we can be like the disciples in Damascus and help others change for the better too!

For more information, visit www.theway.org

© 2023 by The Way International™. All rights reserved.