

Ice Breaker (in groups of 2 or 3 for larger groups)

Which of the five senses would be the worst to lose (sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch)? Why?

Talk About it!

1. Read **Acts 9:1-9**

a. What is striking to you about Saul (we know him as Paul) and what God does with his life? How has God done something extraordinary to get YOUR attention and engage YOU in transformation?

2. Have you considered some people to be beyond God's reach? How does this story confront that assumption? Who do you know who was like the Apostle Paul, seemingly beyond reach when they came to Christ?

3. Read **Acts 9:10-12** and **Acts 22:11-12**

a. What kind of person was Ananias? Based on these scriptures, what kinds of practices make it likely or possible to receive a vision from God?

4. Read **Acts 9:13-16**

a. Did Ananias have a valid reason for distrusting Saul? What changed? How do our prejudices and presuppositions distract us from the Great Commission? Is there anyone in your life that you may be overlooking because of your assumptions?

5. Read **Acts 9:17-20** and **Acts 22:12-16**

a. What did God call Paul to do? What was the role of Ananias in helping him get there?

b. Who has been like an 'Ananias' to you in your spiritual journey? Are you willing to be the Ananias to the people like Saul around you? How are you doing in loving those around you who do not like what you stand for? And how could you grow in this?

Scripture Reference

ACTS 9:1-20 NIV

*1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest
2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.
6 "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.*

10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"; "Yes, Lord," he answered. 11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20 At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

ACTS 22:11-16 NIV

*11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.
12 "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. 14 "Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'*