

Approaching God

Read Psalm 17 and begin with an opening prayer

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

(Psalm 17:6-8)

Prayer: Lord, help me to not care so much today about what others think of me. But help me to not even care so much about what I think of myself. Remind my heart that how you look on me you find me “in Christ,” and see beauty - the apple of your eye. Let me rest in that today. Amen.

Acts 9:19-30

Passage Introduction: Saul in Jerusalem

After his baptism, Saul began his Christian life with the church at Damascus. The irony continues as Luke shows us Saul, who had intended to hunt for Christians in the synagogues of Damascus, now entering the synagogues to preach Christian truth. Jesus, Saul proclaimed, “is the Son of God” (v 20). Luke presents this as a remarkable turn of events. Saul did not wait; he immediately began to show his fellow Jews that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of the Old Testament.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

Acts 9:19-30 - **19** 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. **21** All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” **22** Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. **23** After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, **24** but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. **25** But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. **26** When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. **27** But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. **28** So Saul stayed with them and

moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. **29** He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. **30** When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn about God in this passage and the power of the risen Christ?
- Are there any words, phrases, or themes that stand out to you as important or related?
- Who is Barnabas and how does he live up to his name in these verses?

Key Takeaway:

Are there any personal applications that are important for you to consider as a result of today's study? What lessons can you learn from the big change in Saul's life?

Close in Prayer:

Read Galatians 1:11-24 and use it as a basis for prayer.