

“I’ve Become a Christian – Now What?” (Part 2)
Acts 9:19-29

Introduction:

1. How did Paul’s life change after He was saved? Paul said he was a pattern to those who would be saved after him (1 Timothy 1:16), so I believe we can look at what happened to Paul and learn a lot.
2. After you become a Christian, what can you expect?

You will begin to grow spiritually.

1. After Paul trusted Christ as his Savior, we see spiritual growth evidenced in his life.
2. The Bible teaches that when you are saved, your inner spirit receives God’s very life. You are regenerated. You are given a new spiritual birth in Christ. But all of us begin as baby Christians. 1 Corinthians 3:1 uses the phrase “*babe in Christ.*”
3. But a baby is expected to grow. Likewise, after salvation, a baby Christian should begin to grow. 2 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15
 - Although salvation is instantaneous, growth is not. The word “growth” infers a process.
4. What were some signs that Paul was growing spiritually in his Christian life?

First, Paul exhibited a desire to learn God’s Word. vs. 22

- Spiritual growth will not take place apart from the Bible.
- A baby must have food if it is to grow. The Bible is the Christian’s spiritual food. It feeds our spirit and gives us spiritual strength. 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14
- New Christians must be rooted in a foundational knowledge of the doctrine of Christ and other key doctrines. If not, they will begin to shrivel up as opposed to growing.
- As believers, we all need daily doses of God’s Word to teach us, instruct us, and grow us spiritually. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Second, Paul desired to tell others about Jesus. vs. 20

- We talked about this two weeks ago. A new believer wants others to know about Jesus and what He has done for them.
- All believers need to get to the point where they can witness and lead others to Christ.

Third, Paul desired to be with other Christians. vs. 19, 26, 28

- When Christ comes to dwell in a person, it is only natural for that person to want to be around other Christians.
- Paul didn’t need somebody to beg him and drag him to church. He sought to join himself to fellow disciples (vs. 26) and then was faithful (vs. 28). Paul sought to keep regular company with other believers.

- When a person trusts Christ and gets saved, he should begin seeking out a local church where he can learn God's Word and be around other believers.
 - Warning: Christians aren't perfect. They can hurt you and disappoint you, just like anybody else. None of us will be perfect until we get to heaven. But remember, you **need** your fellow believers, and they need you. God's plan is not for you to isolate yourself from other believers and be an island to yourself.
5. Paul manifested spiritual growth in three key areas of his new Christian life:
 - Knowledge – vs. 22; cf. Colossians 1:10 (inward)
 - Faith – Galatians 1:11-17 (upward)
 - Love for others – vs. 20; cf. 2 Corinthians 6:11, 13 (outward)
 6. Every Christian needs to endeavor to grow in these three areas.

You can expect problems.

1. When Paul told others about Jesus in Damascus, many of the people did not appreciate his testimony. It wasn't long before Paul actually received death threats. vs. 23
2. Paul discovered their evil plot, and some fellow believers helped him escape from Damascus. vs. 24-25
3. Paul then traveled to Jerusalem where he encountered more problems.
 - The disciples were all afraid of him. They didn't want anything to do with him. vs. 26
 - Finally, after getting that straightened out, he witnessed for Christ and more people tried to murder him (vs. 27-29). This time, he found out about their murder plot through prayer. Acts 22:17-18
4. As long as Paul was roaming the countryside threatening, beating, jailing, and killing Christians, everything was fine. But once he became a Christian and began standing for Christ, he had problems everywhere he turned.
5. It is very common for new believers to encounter many trials and problems after their salvation. Why is this?
 - A new Christian has been delivered from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13), and now Satan is his enemy and desires his destruction. Ephesians 6:11-13; 1 Peter 5:8
 - Many people will not understand nor appreciate your new life in Christ.
6. Satan was not happy about Paul's new faith, and many people were not happy about Paul's new faith. But aren't you glad that God is happy! He is the One we want to please!
7. Paul constantly warned new believers that they could anticipate problems. 1 Thessalonians 3:3-5

In Conclusion:

1. Why is it important that new Christians understand these principles?
 - Because many Christians enter their new Christian lives with false expectations
 - Because if we know what to expect, it is easier to meet the challenges
2. Whatever situations we may encounter as Christians, remember this: The blessings from God always outweigh the problems.