



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

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BIGGER : Stretched

Acts: 9:10-19

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

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into action what we are discovering in God's word.

REVIEW

- How did you intentionally become second over this past week?

LESSONS TO EXPLORE

1. Stretch yourself
2. Why this matters today and how it will impact your future
3. God doesn't need you to do stuff
4. When your busy life gets in the way

INTRODUCTION

When coming in second feels like First Place for Losers rather than a call to humility and service to others, our heart needs transforming.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Mike talks about stretching in a physical sense but Mike is still youngish and only knows conceptually that remaining physically active will serve him well when he is 50,60 and beyond. What are your thoughts and personal experience on this topic?

- a. Why is it critical to stretch your faith as you navigate life as a Christ Follower? Describe what this might look like for you.

- b. You may go to a Cross Fit gym every day, or you may play on a softball team. How does this translate to your spiritual workout?

2. How would you coach someone who just met Jesus and has made that decision to Follow Him?

- a. What would you ask that new Christ Follower to do every day or every week?

- b. What would happen if they asked you to join them in this process and become their spiritual workout buddy?

3. Mike reminds us that "God doesn't need you to do work for Him." How do you interpret this statement?

- a. Think of a time when God called you to do something, talk about that and the outcome and impact that it had on you.

- b. As we look at the story of Saul and the Damascus Road experience this was Saul's conversion moment. Jesus literally spoke to Saul and Saul heard Him. How clearly have you heard God's voice? Share that story with the group.

4. As Mike continues the story of Saul the primary focus is on a Greek Christ Follower named Ananias. Why is it significant to note that Ananias was Greek?

- a. God speaks to Ananias in a vision. Previously we saw Jesus Himself appearing and speaking to Saul who is later renamed Paul. But here Ananias receives instruction from God in a vision. Why are the details in both stories significant to what Mike wants us to consider? Read Acts 9:10-19 and look at the dialog that ensues and the events in this story. Unpack what you see and hear in this passage.

- b. How busy is your schedule and why does your answer here matter?

- c. Both Saul and Ananias dialoged with God and their stories are interwoven. Mike wants us to consider why dialoging with God is so important. How and where do you dialog with God? Have you seen your story woven into someone else's story? If so, where did you see God in that process?

d. If what God is asking you to do makes your nervous, what's your next question?

Making it Real

- *Take some steps to simplify your life in order to hear God's voice.*
- *Allow the Holy Spirit to redirect your focus back toward God.*
- *Ask the next question.*
- *Expect bigger things than what you can see in the moment.*

