It’s Not the Christian Life if You Don’t CONNECT January 14, 2024

*Acts 9:10-19, 26-31 Series: The Christian Life Is a 3-Legged Stool*

Perfect love may cast out fear, but fear is remarkably potent in casting out love. — P. D. James

Intro: It’s almost as if there’s a family resemblance

1. It’s by connecting that you learn how to see
2. Ordinary people can be given extraordinary assignments

v. 10 *Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias.*

v. 10 *The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”*

1. Deep connections are essential for your growth

v. 11 *go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul*

v. 12 *he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight*

1. Other people help you with your blind spots

Acts 18:26 *[Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

Proverbs 27:17 *Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.*

* God could have healed Saul’s blindness Himself. Why do you think He chose to work through Ananias?
* In addition to his prayer for healing, why did Saul need Ananias? What might have happened to Saul without him?
* How can other people help us grow in discernment, maturity, and self-awareness in a way that we can’t on our own?

1. It’s by connecting that you learn how to love
2. Jesus doesn’t just love His enemies, He calls us to, as well

v. 13 *But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.”*

v. 14 *And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.*

v. 17 *So Ananias departed and entered the house.*

v. 17 *laying his hands on him*

v. 13 *“this man”* > v. 17 *“Brother Saul”*

v. 18 *And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight.*

1. There will be bumps along the way

v. 26 *And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.*

1. Jesus teaches us to love people as they will be, not as they are

v. 15 *But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.”*

* How would it have felt for Ananias to go and pray over Saul?
* When does fear get in the way of you taking steps to establish or grow in fellowship?
* If you were Saul visiting the church in Jerusalem, how would you have felt at the reception v. 26 records?
* What are some of the challenges you’ve experienced from others when you’ve tried to take steps of fellowship?

1. It’s by connecting that you receive God’s protection
2. You’re in a spiritual battle

v. 23 *When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him …*

v. 24 *They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him …*

1. Eventually, we all need the cavalry

v. 25 *but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket*

vv. 29-30 *But they were seeking to kill him. And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.*

Hebrews 10:25 *Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

1. Are you trying to love God without the people?

Acts 2:42 *they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

John 17:21-23 *That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me ...*

* Why might Saul have been tempted to think that he didn’t need the fellowship of other believers?
* Why do we find it easier to love God than love other believers?
* Where do you most need to grow in the area of fellowship?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Acts 9:19-25.

Notes