

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

EMPOWERED

Session 7 – Empowered for Transformation

Acts 9:1–22

SESSION PURPOSE

This session explores how the Holy Spirit transforms lives through encounter with Jesus, conviction, surrender, healing, and ongoing spiritual formation. Participants will examine the dramatic conversion of Saul and reflect on how the Holy Spirit continues transforming ordinary people today.

The goal of this session is not simply to discuss dramatic conversion stories.

Instead, participants should begin understanding that transformation is central to Spirit-led living.

The Holy Spirit does not merely:

- inspire people emotionally,
- improve outward behavior,
- or create religious activity.

The Holy Spirit transforms lives from the inside out.

This session also helps participants reflect honestly on:

- resistance to change,
- spiritual growth,
- conviction,
- and the ongoing nature of transformation.

Acts 9 reminds believers that no person is beyond the reach of God's grace and no life is beyond the possibility of transformation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Understand transformation as the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit
- Recognize the difference between behavior management and spiritual transformation
- Reflect honestly on areas where growth or surrender is needed
- Explore the role of conviction in spiritual life

- Understand how God often works through community and relationship
 - Recognize that transformation is usually gradual rather than instant
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KEY PASSAGES

Primary Passage:

- Acts 9:1–22

Supporting Passages:

- Ezekiel 36:26–27
 - John 16:7–8
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Philippians 1:6
 - Galatians 6:1–2
 - Hebrews 3:12–13
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SESSION LENGTH

60–75 minutes

(Adaptable depending on discussion depth and group dynamics.)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible (print or digital)
 - Participant Study Guide
 - Pen or journal
 - Comfortable discussion environment
 - Optional whiteboard or notepad for themes
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FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before leading this session:

- Read Acts 9:1–22 slowly several times
- Reflect honestly on areas where God has transformed your own life over time

- Prepare for participants carrying:
 - shame
 - discouragement
 - fear of failure
 - frustration with slow growth
 - or painful past experiences

Important:

This session should NOT feel:

- condemning,
- emotionally manipulative,
- or focused on dramatic emotional experiences.

The focus is:

- grace,
- surrender,
- honesty,
- and ongoing transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Avoid presenting transformation as instant perfection.

Acts presents ongoing formation, not immediate completion.

SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and reconnect briefly to the previous session.

Suggested transition:

“Last week we explored how the Holy Spirit stretches believers beyond fear and familiar boundaries. This week we explore how the Holy Spirit transforms lives from the inside out.”

Open with prayer.

Suggested prayer focus:

- openness

- humility
 - healing
 - surrender
 - and willingness to grow.
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2. OPENING REFLECTION: CAN PEOPLE REALLY CHANGE? (10 MINUTES)

Invite thoughtful and honest discussion.

Discussion prompts:

- Why do people often struggle to believe deep change is possible?
- What kinds of experiences shape people over time?
- Why is transformation sometimes slow and difficult?
- What is the difference between behavior change and deeper transformation?

Facilitator Guidance:

Allow participants to reflect honestly without pressuring personal disclosure.

Avoid simplistic answers like:

“Just pray harder.”

The goal is helping participants think honestly about growth, change, and spiritual formation.

3. READING THE PRIMARY PASSAGE (5 MINUTES)

Read Acts 9:1–22 aloud slowly together.

Encourage participants to notice:

- Saul’s condition before the encounter
- how Jesus interrupts him
- and how transformation begins unfolding.

Optional Reflection Prompt:

“What part of this story stands out most strongly to you?”

4. MOVEMENT 1 – THE HOLY SPIRIT OFTEN INTERRUPTS PEOPLE UNEXPECTEDLY (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

Transformation often begins when God interrupts ordinary patterns, assumptions, or direction.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 9:1–9
- Ezekiel 36:26–27

Key Truths:

- Saul was not seeking transformation
- Jesus interrupts Saul's direction completely
- No person is beyond the reach of God's grace

Key Emphasis:

The Holy Spirit often begins transformation in unexpected moments.

Transformation is not primarily self-improvement.

It begins with encounter and surrender.

Facilitator Insight:

Many people assume transformation only happens to:

- spiritually mature people,
- emotionally healthy people,
- or people actively searching for God.

Acts 9 reminds believers that God often works unexpectedly.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do people often resist change?
- What kinds of experiences interrupt people's assumptions or direction?
- How does Saul's story challenge hopelessness about transformation?

5. MOVEMENT 2 – THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS CONVICTION BEFORE CLARITY (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit reveals truth in order to bring healing and transformation.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 9:8–9
- John 16:7–8

- Psalm 139:23–24

Key Truths:

- Saul experiences blindness and disorientation
- Conviction exposes what needs healing or surrender
- Conviction is different from condemnation

Key Emphasis:

The Holy Spirit convicts because God desires transformation, not shame.

Facilitator Guidance:

Be especially careful here.

Some participants may carry deep shame from unhealthy religious experiences.

Avoid:

- guilt-driven teaching,
- emotional pressure,
- or legalistic language.

Emphasize:

- grace,
- honesty,
- and healing.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the difference between conviction and condemnation?
- Why do people often resist uncomfortable truth?
- How can honesty become part of spiritual growth?

6. MOVEMENT 3 – THE HOLY SPIRIT OFTEN WORKS THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

Transformation frequently happens within community and relationship.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 9:10–19
- Galatians 6:1–2
- Hebrews 3:12–13

Key Truths:

- God sends Ananias to Saul
- Transformation often involves encouragement, prayer, and relationship
- Christian community helps nurture growth and healing

Key Emphasis:

The Holy Spirit regularly works through ordinary people who are willing to:

- encourage,
- pray,
- listen,
- and walk alongside others.

Facilitator Insight:

Many people want transformation privately without vulnerability or relationship.

Acts presents a more communal vision of spiritual growth.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is vulnerability often difficult?
- How can healthy Christian community support transformation?
- Who has helped strengthen or encourage your faith?

7. MOVEMENT 4 – THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS PURPOSE, NOT JUST BEHAVIOR (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit redirects lives toward new purpose and identity.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 9:20–22
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Philippians 1:6

Key Truths:

- Saul's life direction changes completely
- God redeems and redirects people's gifts and passions
- Transformation is ongoing throughout life

Key Emphasis:

The goal is not becoming spiritually impressive.

The goal is becoming increasingly open to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

Facilitator Guidance:

Avoid presenting transformation as:

- instant perfection,
- emotional intensity,
- or spiritual performance.

Transformation is often gradual and ongoing.

Discussion Questions:

- Where do people most long for transformation?
- Why can slow growth become discouraging?
- How does trusting God's ongoing work create hope?

8. SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHT (5 MINUTES)

Key Insight to Emphasize:

The Holy Spirit transforms lives through:

- encounter,
- conviction,
- grace,
- surrender,
- community,
- and ongoing formation.

Transformation is not:

- instant perfection,
- religious performance,
- or self-improvement alone.

It is participation in the ongoing work of God.

Key Takeaway:

No person is beyond the reach of God's transforming grace.

9. FINAL REFLECTION & PRACTICE (5 MINUTES)

Final Reflection Question:

Where do you most need openness to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit right now?

Practice for the Week:

Encourage participants to:

- Read Acts 9:1–22 daily
- Pray honestly about areas needing healing, surrender, or growth
- Reflect on ways God has already been shaping them over time
- Encourage someone else this week who may feel discouraged or stuck

Suggested prayer:

“Holy Spirit, continue the work You have begun in me.”

Encourage attentiveness rather than pressure.

CLOSING PRAYER (FACILITATOR-LED)

Pray for:

- healing
- openness
- surrender
- patience
- and ongoing transformation

Suggested emphasis:

Ask God to continue shaping participants into people who increasingly reflect the character of Jesus.

FACILITATOR REMINDER

This session should feel:

- hopeful,
- grace-filled,
- honest,
- and grounded.

Do not allow the discussion to become:

- shame-driven,
- emotionally manipulative,
- or centered on dramatic experiences alone.

The goal is helping participants recognize:

- transformation is possible,
- growth takes time,
- and the Holy Spirit continues working in ordinary people every day.

If participants leave:

- more hopeful,
- more honest,
- and more open to the ongoing transforming work of the Holy Spirit,

then the session has succeeded.

Keep the tone:

- pastoral
- reflective
- grace-filled
- and centered on Spirit-dependent living.

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