

Who is your Saul?

Ready:

“So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’” -Acts 9:17

Set “No way. Are you kidding me? What??” Those were my responses when someone told me news I never thought I would hear. It had been right after I’d finished up speaking at a college FCA Huddle several years ago. One athlete, who I thought would never enter an FCA meeting, showed up to the Huddle. This player had been antagonistic to the things of Christ and was as mean-spirited as anyone I’d ever met. If there was a fight in practice, he was in the middle of it. If there was foul language being shouted out on the football field, it usually came from him. In my estimation, this kid was as far from becoming a Christian as LeBron James was from winning Wimbledon. In my mind, it was just not going to happen. In Scripture we read about a man named Ananias who received a vision from the Lord. His vision was very clear, but Ananias was not fully sure of what God was asking him to do. You see, he had heard stories about Saul the “Christian killer.” Saul was legendary for his persecution of believers, but God sent Ananias to a street called Straight to lay hands on Saul and restore his sight and infuse him with the Holy Spirit. I wonder if in the back of his mind Ananias was wondering, “Saul—a follower of Jesus Christ now? You’ve got to be kidding! How, when, why did this happen?” Regardless of his questions or opinion, Ananias was faithful to fulfill the Lord’s plan from the vision. And, when he arrived, Ananias’ first statement to Saul spoke volumes. He called him “brother,” which was a term not thrown around lightly in those days. Ananias had to believe in what the Lord had told him or he would not have led with such highly regarded and warm opening words. Ananias may have doubted Saul, but he did not doubt the Lord. After I finished my message at this Huddle meeting, I asked several other athletes why this athlete was in the room. To my amazement, they shared how he’d come to Christ at a retreat earlier in the spring. I’d had no idea, and I am embarrassed to say that I could hardly believe it. As the crowd left the room, the athlete approached me and gave me the biggest hug. I told him how happy I was that he’d come to Christ, and he told me the story of how several teammates never wrote him off and continued to share God’s love with him. Eventually, God had spoken to his heart and he’d made the choice to surrender to Him. After our conversation, I prayed with him and left for my car. Once I was alone in my car, I broke down into tears. I asked the Lord to forgive my unbelief. I had written this kid off in my mind. I’d never turned my back on him, but I’d never really thought he would find the Lord. That night, I learned a valuable lesson: God is always using people to bring the unloving, the unruly, the uncontrollable, and the unbelieving to Christ. In this young man’s case, it had been his teammates. I think all of us have a Saul-type person who we just don’t think will ever change, let alone come to Christ. Everyone might have written him or her off already, but I want to encourage you today not to throw in the towel. God is working and moving even though you might not see it. Joseph didn’t give up on his brothers. David didn’t give up on King Saul. Hosea didn’t give up on Gomer. And God may be asking you not to give up on your Saul. Today, whoever your Saul might be, give them a chance. Continue to invite them to

church, FCA or Bible study. Maybe even call them a brother or sister. Do what it takes to continue to show the love of Christ and trust that, one day, God will reach their heart.

Go 1. Have you ever been surprised by someone's turnaround for the better in sports, life or faith? Why were you surprised? 2. Why was Ananias greeting to Saul so powerful and gracious? 3. Who is your Saul today? How can you encourage him or her and continue to show them the love of Christ?

Workout Acts 9:1 Timothy 1:16-17 John 1:9



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