

On the night of December 19, 1903, fourteen-year-old Sundar Singh prayed, "O God, if there is a God, reveal thyself to me." Why did he pray so agonizingly? His mother had recently passed away and he blamed the "god" he had been learning about at his missionary school. He acted out on his anger by throwing dirt on his Christian teachers and disrupting their classes. One day, while out on the playground, he made a fire, ripped out each page of his Bible, and burned it.

However, these behaviors only made him feel worse thus he vowed to throw himself in front of a train that was set to pass by his house at 5:00 AM the next morning unless God showed up. After seven hours of intense seeking the room began to radiate a bright light. A man appeared and asked, "How long will you deny me? I gave my life for you." Sundar saw the man's hands, pierced by nails and in that very moment gave his life to Christ. He eventually became one of India's greatest evangelists.

We have seen tons of supernatural transformations thus far in the Book of Acts. The most famous of which is that of Saul of Tarsus. While hunting down Christians on the Damascus Road, he met the Risen Christ, and that encounter transformed him from Jesus' persecutor to Jesus' proclaimer and from church destroyer to church builder.

### **Bay Point's Vision**

Jesus is still in the transformation business and our vision is to introduce as many of the 450,000 Sarasotians, Venicians, and Nokomites to him as possible. But what happens after they (and us), give their lives to Jesus? Let's find out as we continue our Supernatural Church series in Acts 9:6-9

6 [Jesus said] "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So, they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything.

### **Help! I Need Somebody Help!**

Saul's transformation on the Damascus Road opened his spiritual eyes but blinded his physical ones. Nevertheless, his new-found Lord tells him to continue to Damascus, this time not to persecute Christians but to partner up with them. With the help of his traveling companions, Saul, gets off his keister and resumes his journey. Once in Damascus, he hunkers down in a Motel 6 and still dazed and confused, prays that God would send someone to help him. Three days later his prayers are answered (10-12)

10 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."

### **Ananias**

The person God called to partner up with Saul was a man named Ananias. In a vision God gives him GPS coordinates to a place called, "Straight Street." Jesus' instructions are simple, "Lay your hands on Saul and restore his sight." Because of Saul's reputation, however, Ananias was reluctant to go there. But following Jesus means getting out of our comfort zones. Ananias responds emphatically (v13-14)

**No Way, Hosea! I heard reports and have ministered to brothers and sisters who have fled Jerusalem because of Saul's persecution. Now he is here poised to wreck more havoc. Lord, is this a trick or trap? If you want me in heaven right now, just go ahead and beam me up!**

Ever have an argument with God? Ever win? Probably not. Jesus patiently listens to Ananias' objection and responds, "No! Now Go!" But then he explains (v15)

**15 [Saul] is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.**

### **Ministry to and for Others**

Ephesians 2:10 tells us that every Christ follower has a divine call on his or her life

**We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,  
which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

The one who has "called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9) has an amazing /life plan for each of us. However, it is imperative that we partner up with other Christ followers so they can help us be all that we can be and do what the Lord has called us to do.

### **Saul-Ananias**

Saul's call was to take the message of Jesus to the lengths of the Roman Empire. To that end, he planted dozens of churches, wrote 13 books of the New Testament, and became the church's leading theologian. All told, he traveled over 10,000 miles by foot, beast, and boat, but mostly by foot. I don't believe; however, Saul would have accomplished nearly as much as he did if Ananias didn't go to Straight Street and partner up with him on that day. V17-19 tells us what happened once he did

**17 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 with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.**

Saul was "Blinded by the Light" but after Ananias prayed for him, "He can see clearly now the 'scales' are gone." He then publicly declares his allegiance to Jesus through water baptism.

### **Wesley-Boehler**

John Wesley, Oxford Don, Anglican priest, best-selling medical author, and founder of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Methodist movement, was of the all-time greats of church history. However, we would have never heard of him if he hadn't partnered up with Peter Boehler. Although he was already in ministry, Wesley felt something was missing from his life, so he went to Boehler to figure out what it might be. Boehler diagnosed that Wesley was on the performance plan with God, not the grace plan, and when he explained to Wesley that we are not only saved by grace but are also sustained by grace and that the entire Christian life is an experience in grace, Wesley's heart was revolutionized. Empowered by this amazing grace, Wesley traveled over 250,000 miles on horseback, preached over 40,000 sermons, and planted hundreds of churches throughout Western Europe and frontier America.

## **Conclusion: Partner Up & Down**

The Beatles were popular for singing, “I get by with some help from my friends.” Since we are the sum-total of our five closest friends, that may or may not be the case, especially if we have Garth Brooks type of friends, you know, the ones “in very low places” (lol). Millennia ago, King Solomon, the wisest of all the wise guys pointed out the benefits of partnering up in (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10,12

**9 Two are better than one...10 If one falls his friend can help him up. 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.**

God’s plan is to bring someone in your life to help you better do his plan for your life and for you to help others do likewise. With all that is at stake, let me encourage you to proactively partner up and down, with a few other Christ followers that love you, are more experienced in the faith than you are, and that will encourage and challenge you.

To date, I have four such partners and I don’t know what I would do or where I would be without them.

Let us pray that you get some and that I find more.