

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOD'S GRACE

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Paul inspires us with his example. "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1). Be careful what you imitate. What you imitate is what you will become! What you become, you will exemplify to others. If we imitate Christ, we will become like Christ.

I. What Paul was. In I Tim. 1:13, Paul refers to himself prior to his conversion to Christianity as a blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious person. He was a sinner.

II. What Paul experienced. In Acts 9:3-18, we have a record of Paul's conversion. He saw the Lord on the road to Damascus. The transformation Paul experienced began in his mind. He now knew that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah. Paul had to think, "he's my savior too!" He was instructed by Ananias concerning what he must do to be saved (Acts 22:16). Paul was baptized into Christ (Acts 9:18; Gal. 3:26,27). He experienced the grace of God (I Tim. 1:14,15).

III. What Paul became. Paul displayed an obedient faith and became a child of God—a Christian. He immediately began to proclaim Christ in the city of Damascus (Acts 9:20). His transformation was evident to all (Acts 9:21). Eventually, Paul would return to Jerusalem where he identified with the Christian community (Acts 9:28,29). Later, he returned to his hometown of Tarsus and taught the gospel. Afterward, he joins Barnabas at Antioch in Syria and launches the first of three missionary journeys. Paul faithfully served the Lord for 33 years and when the time came for him to die, he faced death with the courage and conviction of a true soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 1:13; 4:6-8).