

***I Will Build My Church***  
**PART 7: THE CHURCH & CHANGE**  
Acts 9:1-31

We mistakenly look for tokens of God's love in happiness. We should instead look for them in His faithful and persistent work to conform us to Christ.

-Jerry Bridges

**I. A Changed Heart**

## II. A Changed Life

### Into the Bible:

1. Paul is certainly a testimonial to the transforming power of the gospel of Christ. In Ephesians 2:1-7 he describes the change from being “children of wrath” to becoming “children of God”. Yet he describes himself using the present tense as the “chief of sinners” in 1 Timothy 1:15. Why do you think he characterizes himself using this terminology? The ex-slaver John Newton, who penned “Amazing Grace”, gives us some perspective on this: *“I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.”*

Compare that with 1 John 3:2.

2. Identity politics is the order of the day in our culture—are you red or blue, conservative or progressive? The New Testament makes clear that we are called to a radical unity that transcends these categories, firmly establishing our identity and unity in the common Lord we share—Jesus Christ. None of our political divisions however reach to the level of the divide between Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament world. Yet the Church was able (with difficulty) to bridge that divide. What do the following verses have to say about the power of the Gospel to break down barriers between believers? How should that inform our attitudes & actions today? (Ephesians 2:11-16, Galatians 3:26-28, Colossians 3:10-15)

3. We are introduced to Barnabas, “Son of Encouragement”, in Acts 4:36. His willingness to champion the redeemed new convert in Saul helped make the ministry of the Apostle Paul possible, as did his assistance as a companion of Paul on the early missionary journeys. How do the following passages expand on the nature of encouragement beyond the occasional giving of words of comfort? (Romans 1:11-12, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Ephesians 4:2-3, Galatians 6:2)

**For Families:**

4. Talk with your children about how to encourage each other in Christ.