

How the Holy Spirit changed lives in history and to this day

Acts 9: He will change your heart and attitude towards life

Saul, who later was called Paul, is one of the most outstanding examples of how God, through His Holy Spirit, can completely transform a life. When the apostles saw the transformation that had taken place in Saul, they were amazed. This man who had once been a threat to their own personal safety and to the message they preached, had now become a Christian! In **1 Sam.10:6** Samuel says to Saul who was an ordinary boy, that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him and that he would prophesy and be turned into another man. It sounds impossible but that is what the Holy Spirit can do. Right now we need men and women whose lives will be completely changed, whose ways will radically be re-aligned for the purpose of God's kingdom. Firstly we need to be willing to be such a man or woman ourselves. Secondly, we need to cry out night-and-day that God would touch lives of political leaders, gang leaders, satanists, sangomas and many more, so that they and their followers would consider following Christ. Are you open that God may choose to rearrange your life to be of more benefit to Him? Furthermore, are you willing to play a part in helping someone else find his or her way when God touches them?

Father of mercy, we ask that You will make us willing and able to be changed by Your Word and through Your Holy Spirit so that the purpose of our very existence can be accomplished to Your glory. May Your will be done in us.

Acts 10: He will challenge the way you think about certain traditions

Peter's vision on the rooftop was of God lowering four-footed animals, reptiles and birds in a giant sheet. God told Peter to kill and eat them. Peter, a man bound by tradition, said "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean" (**Ac.10:14**). The Lord answered, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (v.15). There was not a lot of time for Peter to consider whether he agreed with what God just told him or not before the Holy Spirit told him to go downstairs and meet three men who were looking for him. He had to go with them without hesitation for God had sent them (v.20). As in Peter's case, there are also people in our lives that we would rather avoid. Not only because we do not like to be with them, but also because our doctrines, beliefs and preferences are not in line with what we know and see in them. Right now we need people who would disregard certain things that are very important to them in obedience of the truths of the Word of God and His Holy Spirit. Are you willing to teach others who are hungry for God about Him without despising them? Without fear of them contaminating you? Think about your own life. God had to drag many of us from despicable circumstances to be where we are today. Are you willing to be used by God in a similar way?

Father of glory, we confess that we very much want to be used by You, but that we have serious reservations about the way we want You to use us. Lord, grant us grace to submit to the leading of Your Holy Spirit and to be able to hear You when You speak to us about things that are not in our normal frame of reference.

Acts 11: He will change the way you view things

At times the Holy Spirit will reveal the future in preparation for trials and struggles coming your way. We find one instance of that in **Acts 11:27-30** ... *prophets came ... and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world ... Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.* These days many people proclaim that they have a word from God and it is very difficult to discern what really comes from God as they often contradict each other. Still, we can never turn a deaf ear to these claims, because God still speaks today and if we hear His voice, also through others, we have a responsibility to help those who might be in danger or trouble. Have you had a bad experience concerning revelations of this kind and are you now determined that you will not allow this to happen to you ever again? Many Christians feel this way, but we have to speak to God about it, as it can disable us in His kingdom at very strategic times and seasons when our hearts are hardened through disappointment, rendering us unable to hear His voice. We need men and women who will not point fingers at those who disappoint them, but who will run to God for healing and deliverance from the hurt, pain and loss they suffered, because they wholeheartedly wanted to believe. We need men and women who forgive others for making mistakes and move forward in faith, who remain in the race to hear God's voice supernaturally and trust in the unseen. Do not allow anything to rob you of your faith, for faith is the substance of the things we hope for, the evidence of things not seen. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible (**Heb.11:1-3**). If you lose your faith, you lose your hope, even of being a Christian.

Father, heal our hearts from disappointment. Help us not to point fingers at people who are also just human and who make mistakes. We choose to forgive and forget these terrible disappointments and once more put our trust in You to lead us into truth and faith so we will remain obedient and of use to You in all our ways.

Acts 12: He will change your prayer life

It is really impossible for us to develop a prayer life if we are not led by the Holy Spirit. **Romans 8:26-27** says: *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* In Acts 12, when the Believers heard that Peter was in prison, constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church (**Ac.12:5**). They learned what it meant to pray without ceasing, until the answer came and Peter was delivered from prison by an angel. The chains fell off and he walked out of prison. This divine intervention by God had even Peter wondering whether it was real or a vision! O how we need such intervention in our lives! That we might be set free from the prisons of our minds that tell us miracles never happen to us and the sick are only healed when someone else prays for them! Christians know they should pray, but spend so much time feeling guilty for not praying that they do not pray at all. God, through the Holy Spirit, searches our hearts all the time; we might just as well speak to Him about that which He already

knows! Make your prayers simple – it is really only God listening and He knows everything already, but He loves it when His children speak to Him.

Father, forgive me for not just speaking to You in a simple way. Forgive me for trying to make something of prayer that it is not. Through Your Holy Spirit, will You teach me to pray, to make intercession, to worship and also be silent in Your presence? Let the issue of time and time spent in prayer become irrelevant in my encountering You continually through the working of Your Holy Spirit.

Acts 13: He will confirm your calling

Our calling is not an occupation chosen by trial and error or a decision that is self-motivated. The Bible is filled with such testimonies. In **Acts 13:2**, during a service at the church at Antioch, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". The church fasted, prayed and laid their hands on them before sending the evangelists off. Too often today people move or act on what they heard God telling them, without also properly submitting their decisions to their spiritual authority or mentors. Directional guidance such as one's calling is quite different (not more important – all decisions are important in our Christian life) than hearing from God, for example whether to take a course or not. There is only one way to know God's direction and leadership for your life. Continue to seek the Holy Spirit until He makes your calling sure – and remember, the Holy Spirit speaks through the Scriptures and through godly people, as well as directly. Rather take some time to fast and pray and hear God's voice like it was done in **Acts 13**. So many businesses were started, missions were undertaken and decisions were made without waiting on God to also hear from Him the right timing and about people to join in the vision. This has caused much pain for many sincere Christian Believers. Do not be afraid that you are being disobedient if you are not sure exactly what God is saying to you. That is a trap for many sincere Believers. God might not always give you all the details, but He will not have you doubt if it is His will for you. He is light and in Him there is no darkness.

Father, forgive me for blaming You when things work out differently to what I perceived You had told me. Forgive me for not always waiting on You long enough to also tell me the time and season for what You want me to do. I open my heart to You and ask that through Your Holy Spirit, You would teach me to not only hear Your voice but to wait on You to confirm Your calling on my life.

Acts 14: He will give you clear understanding on how He works

As Paul and Barnabas ministered from city to city, there was power in their preaching and authority and confirmation to their words and deeds. In Lystra, a man crippled from birth heard them speak. His faith came alive and Paul perceived that he had faith to be healed and said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on you feet." The crippled man began to walk. Paul must have been watching the man while he was preaching, but waited on the Holy Spirit for the right timing before speaking to the man. We have few mentors today in guiding us in the very practical ways of obeying God through His Holy Spirit. Much of what is presented to us is not always pure and often focuses more on man than God Himself. Yet, do not let this discourage you. The Holy Spirit is so very able to guide and lead us in all things.

You only have to ask Him. Also ask God to have trustworthy mentors cross your path from whom you can learn. There are many of them who have learned the ways of God and they are often right under our noses, but they are often difficult to recognise because of the very fact that they are so inconspicuous.

Father, our hearts are hungry and thirsty to learn and really know Your ways. Speak to us like You spoke to Paul in this passage. That we would come to know the times and seasons to pray for BOTH something simple and significant so Your Name may be glorified!

Acts 15: He will help you make the right decision

One of the greatest benefits of walking with the Holy Spirit is that I don't have to make decisions alone. I have a Teacher, a Guide and a Counsellor to help me every step of the way. He is more than an advisor. He is a partner in settling every issue. When the church at Jerusalem sent a letter to the Gentile Believers at Antioch they wrote something of profound importance. They said, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (**Ac.15:28**). Allow the Spirit of God to become more than a Companion. Allow Him to participate in your decision-making. Young Christians are the most wonderful to observe as they go to God with every decision, even decisions that seem unimportant to us! Yet part of this innocent and complete dependence upon God and the leading of His Holy Spirit is exactly what needs to remain in our lives, even when we are older in years or more mature Christians. Do you still wait on the Lord before taking action? Not every decision requires a 40-day fast or a whole night of prayer, but all decisions require yielding to the Holy Spirit to keep us from making decisions that might be harmful to ourselves or others. Will you not take a moment to consider the way you make decisions in your own life?

Father of glory, how much I desire to be able to completely surrender every decision in my life to You! That all Your Spirit leads me to do would also seem good and right to me. I pray that You would remind me to pause and wait for Your instruction every time I take decisions, from the simple to the extremely difficult ones!