



MAIN SCRIPTURES: Acts 9:1-22 Ephesians 2:10 MAIN POINT: The more you know your Creator the more you'll discover your identity and purpose.

JESUS CONNECTION: It's not about becoming a good person, it's about being transformed by Jesus.

@HopeHSM

1. READ Yessss! We are glad you are here because taking time on your own to study God's word is an amazing way to grow in your relationship with Him. Life with Jesus is the best life! Take a moment to pray and ask God to lead you as you study this Scripture; then read the Scripture (*from your Bible or it's on the back*).

2. OBSERVE	3. INTERPRET	4. APPLY
The Straight Facts	What Does the Text Mean?	Getting Personal
Who:	Research answers using trusted sources like a Study Bible, BibleProject.com, BlueLetterBible.org, and/or Bible.org	How do you relate to any of the characters, events, or words in this Scripture?
What:	What is the historical and/or cultural context of this Scripture? Acts is a book of the Bible that details the	Has knowing Jesus brought any transformations in your life?
Where:	beginning of the church. In this chapter we see the beginning of Saul's transformation from a Jewish leader who persecutes Christians to one of the major church	
Why:	leaders who writes over half of the New Testament. To mark this transformation he changes his name to Paul. What else do I know about the author, audience, or context of this passage?	What truth(s) from this Scripture can you apply to your life right now?
How:		
	What other Scripture might help me interpret this text?	
What is Repetitive?		What is God saying to you through
Highlight it	What is this text's clearest meaning?	this Scripture?
What is Contrast?		
Underline it		
	I	

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Acts 9:1-22 NIV

"Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "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.

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."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. 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 spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah."

Ephesians 2:10 NIV

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." NOTES

DOODLES





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MAIN POINT: The more you know your Creator the more you'll discover your identity and purpose.

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THE WHAT

WHAT are we talking about and WHY does it matter to me? (2-3 min)

ME

WHO ARE YOU?

- Who am I? It's a question we've all asked. We don't usually just ask it once, though. It's a question we'll ask, and probably ask again, and maybe even continue asking for our entire lives.
- We all want to know, deep down, who we are, what we're good at, what we're not-so-good at, what makes us unique, and why we matter.
- How you answer this question matters.
- Your answer will reveal what you believe about yourself. It will influence the kind of people you hang out with. It will impact your hobbies, your interests, and which skills you choose to develop. Your answer to this question will affect your decisions about school, relationships, money, and even your future career. And it will have a pretty big impact on your faith, too.

• So who are you? That's what we are talking about this series. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: LOOK IN THE MIRROR

- Before your program, prepare a copy of the handout for each student. Place one copy on each seat, along with a pen. If you don't have time to prep or you are virtual, ask students to use a blank sheet of paper or pull up a blank note on their phone.
- To get started, take just a moment or two to think about your identity. Take that sheet of paper from your seat. What do you see when you look in the mirror? Take a moment to write five to ten things that you really like about yourself. Give your students a chance to write. Now write five to ten words that you don't exactly love about yourself. Give your students a chance to write.

WE

- We all have mixed feelings about our identities. Maybe you're not even sure who you are yet.
- There are things you probably take great pride in, but there are other things you might dislike or even be ashamed of. Sometimes, it's not easy to look in the mirror.

TRANSITION

Sometimes we look in the mirror and wonder, "Who am I?"

NOTES

THE WHAT CONTINUED

TRANSITION CONTINUED

- The past two weeks we've talked about how we are searching to discover who we are and how sometimes we look in the wrong places. Sometimes we even change who we are in order to impress or fit in.
- It's not always easy to know who you are, everyone struggles with that. In high school, discovering who you are is a HUGE part of your phase of life. But rest assured God made you an AMAZING person, with an GREAT purpose, who always has a place to BELONG.

SO WHAT

So WHAT does this mean for my faith and life with God? (5-6 min)

GOD

EPHESIANS 2:10

- If you want to understand who you are, you should look to the God who created you.
- An early follower of Jesus named Paul wrote a letter to a group of Christians over 2,000 years ago. That was a long time ago, but Paul's words are still true today.
- READ EPHESIANS 2:10.
- Since it's a short verse, consider asking a few different students to read different translations ahead of time.
- If Paul is right, then God didn't just create you, but He created you for a purpose. That makes sense, right? After all, no one creates something for nothing. Everything that has been created was created for a reason. The same is true for you.
- But it gets better. Not only did God create you for a purpose, but He has that purpose already planned for you! So does that mean God wants to tell you exactly what to eat for breakfast every day for the rest of your life? Probably not, but it does mean God has a big vision for your life.

ACTS 9:1-22

- PARAPHRASE ACTS 9:1-19.
- As soon as Paul met Jesus, he got to work and started preaching about the Jesus he had just met. Listen to what happened next:
- <u>READ ACTS 9:20-22.</u>
- Paul went on to be one of the most important voices in the history of Christianity. He led people to Jesus, invested in local churches, and wrote tons of letters packed with wisdom, beliefs, and advice that eventually made their way into the Bible we have today.
- Paul made a significant impact on the world and he became more like the person he was always made to be. But it all started when he met His Creator and turned away from the person he thought he was.
- Paul thought he had everything figured out. He was sure of it. But then he met Jesus and discovered he had God, and himself, all wrong.

WHO DOES GOD SAY YOU ARE?

- Maybe there are some things about yourself you've gotten wrong, too. Take a minute to look back at what you wrote a few minutes ago.
- I don't know for sure, but I'm going to guess that some of the things on that paper don't exactly line up with who God says you are. He probably even has a few things to say about you that you haven't even discovered yet.
- So who does God say you are? Well, for starters, I think He would say you are His handiwork. His masterpiece. He'd say you're loved.
- Maybe He'd also say you're kind, or smart, or generous. He might tell you you're a gifted writer, or athlete, or musician, or teacher. I don't know what God has to say about you, but I know it's good. Aren't you excited to find out?
- <u>How God defines you is more important than how others define you.</u> Your Creator's opinion of you is more important than anyone else's.

NOTES

SO WHAT CONTINUED

JESUS CONNECTION

- We don't become who God created us to be on our own strength. It takes being and growing in our relationship with God to grow into who we were created to be.
- To be in a relationship with God, you must know and believe that God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue you from your sin and death; you are not saved by doing good things but by having faith in Jesus Christ.
- Romans 10:9-10 says, "⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."
- Once you believe in Jesus, you start the exciting new journey of becoming who God made you to be: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" – 2 Corinthians 5:17

TRANSITION

- PS Paul wrote those two Bible verses.
- Paul embraced the life Jesus had for him and he encourages us to do the same.

NOW WHAT

NOW that we know, HOW can we live this out? (2-3 min)

YOU

THE MORE YOU KNOW YOUR CREATOR THE MORE YOU DISCOVER YOUR

IDENTITY AND PURPOSE.

- Here's what I find so interesting about Paul's life (and what I think is true for our lives, too). Paul didn't truly discover his own identity and purpose until He first discovered His Creator.
- But a second thing is true, too. The better Paul understood himself and his own identity, the better he understood his Creator. The more he preached, and traveled, and lived out his calling, the better he understood the God who made him.
- I think we can say it this way: Discovering who you are is connected to knowing your Creator.
- The more you get to know God, the better you'll get to know yourself. And the better you get to know the person God created you to be, the better you'll get to know Him and love Him.
- Share an example from your own life: share one specific way that getting to know God has helped you better understand who God created you to be (have you become more patient, compassionate, generous, etc.)?

WE

 God has tons of great plans for me, for you, for us. Let's grow closer to Him together so we can discover more and more who He created us to be.

PRAY

- Close your time together in prayer, thanking God for creating you with purpose for a purpose!
- As you close, consider playing or performing (or asking someone else to perform) the song "Good Good Father" by Housefires. Tell your group you are playing this song because although they may not fully know who they are or what their future holds, they can fully know they are loved by the God who created them.

NOTES





MAIN SCRIPTURES: Acts 9:1-22 Ephesians 2:10

— WEEK 3 —

MAIN POINT: The more you know your Creator the more you'll discover your identity and purpose. JESUS CONNECTION:

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LEADER CORNER

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to realize they get to know God the more they know who they were created to be.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Sometimes, in our desire to encourage students to live lives of integrity, we encourage them to be the same person at church that they are everywhere else. While this is good advice in some ways, it can also fail to take into account the fact that it's a normal part of the high school phase for students experiment with different interests, styles, and activities as they search for their own identities. And that's not a bad thing! It's actually a healthy part of growing up. So, while our integrity and character should be consistent everywhere we go encourage your students it's ok to try out different interests, styles, and activities as they figure out who they were made to be.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

- 1. Share one word that describes yourself (maybe not your wholeself, but a part of who you are).
- 2. Now describe the person to your right in one word (you must use a different word than they used to describe themselves). If you are meeting virtually, call one student at a time and tell them who they are describing pro tip, pick an outspoken student to go first.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is it sometimes difficult to find out who you are?
- 2. Do you tend to think yourself using more positive words or negative words? Why do you think that is?
- 3. What are some ways our desire to belong can be dangerous?

READ EPHESIANS 2:10 and answer the following questions:

- 4. In your own words, what do you think Paul meant when he wrote that you are God's "handiwork" or "masterpiece," according to your translation?
- 5. What do you think it means for God to have a "plan" or "purpose" for your life?

READ ACTS 9:1-22 and answer the following questions:

- 6. How did God show Himself to Paul?
- 7. How did Paul change?
- 8. What's one way getting to know God can help you get to know yourself better?

NEXT STEP

What is one thing you can do this week to know God, and yourself, better? Have your students brainstorm and share their goals together.

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

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BONUS LEADER RESOURCE

Game Idea

Who Am I: Celebrity Version

IN PERSON INSTRUCTIONS

- Write celebrity names on a post-it notes, make sure you have one for each student.
- (2) Put the post-it on each student's head so that they don't see the name. Have them hold the post-it on their forehead to keep it there.
- (3) Have students walk around and they can ask each other yes and no questions – for example, "Am I a singer?" They can not ask open ended questions like "What am I known for?" or "Who am I?"
- (4) Give them 3-5 minutes to figure out who they are, then have them share who they think they are and see who got it right.

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Come up with a list of celebrity names. Have 2-3 students volunteer to be "the it celebrity" for a round.
- (2) Have one of the students who is "the it celebrity" leave the Zoom call for 2 min. Tell all the other students which celebrity the "it" student will be.
- (3) Let the student back in the Zoom call and tell them they can ask 10 yes and no questions to figure out which celebrity you picked for them to be for example, "Am I a singer?" They can not ask open ended questions like "What am I known for?" or "Who am I?"
- (4) Repeat with your other "it" students.