

# **The Family of God**

“Living Large”, part 10, Insights from Acts 9:1-22

Pastor Bob Johnson, June 25th, 2023

## **Five Surprise Family Members:**

### **1. A group of Priests**

(Acts 4:1-3, Acts 5:40, Acts 6:7)

### **2. A group of Samaritans**

(Acts 8:2, John 5:39-40, John 4:3-4, 34-35, Luke 9-10)

### **3. A group of Ethiopians**

(Deuteronomy 23:1, Acts 8:26-40)

### **4. A guy named Saul**

(Acts 9:1-22, Acts 26:9-12)

### **5. A group of Gentiles**

(Acts 10:1-48)

## **Two Family Realities:**

### **1. We all ...**

(Isaiah 64:6a, Romans 3:23, Hebrews 12:25-29)

### **2. We all ...**

N.T. example: (Matthew 10:2-4)

O.T. example: (Jonah 3:10-4:2)

## **Two Keys To Struggling Less:**

### **1. Remember ...**

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

### **2. Renew ...**

(Romans 12:1-2)

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## **This Week's Discussion Guide**

Welcome to our tenth and last week of our Spring Small Group Season :). Each week of our ten week study and discussion we have been discussing and digging a little deeper into our current Sunday series at GPC called, "Living Large". In this series, we are slowly unpacking the Book of Acts.

It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships as part of our vision at GPC to raise up committed Christ followers in a healthy church community.

### **Getting Started:**

Each week, we typically start out with a few lighter questions to get us warmed up :).

Last Sunday's message ended with an encouragement to look past the 'stone' in front of you to the potential 'sculpture' that God can form in them if he or she became a Jesus follower.

Speaking sculpturing and other artistic endeavors, :) ... what form of art did you like doing in 'art class' back in the early days?

What project do you remember making that you were proud of?

Now that this Spring Small Group Season is wrapping up, how has meeting together encouraged you, stretched you, helped mature you ... or something else?

In Acts 9, we read and reflected on the beginning of Saul's story.

Think of a person who has hurt you, betrayed you or left you fearful or frustrated.

What would be your first response if you saw that person walk into one of our services at GPC this next Sunday?

- What are they doing here?
- No, not them. I know what they have done.
- That's never going to last!
- Wow, the Lord must be doing something in their life.
- Praise God! I'm glad they are here.
- Other ...

### **Reviewing and Reflecting on last Sunday's Passage:**

Let's read the passage from last Sunday. (Acts 9:1-22)

After reading these chapters and looking back on our notes from Sunday, was there a particular thought, verse or comment that caught your attention, encouraged you, challenged you or raised a question for you?

## **Digging Deeper:**

1. One of the “Family Realities” from last Sunday’s message was, “We all don’t get to choose our brothers and sisters?” Let’s read the four chapters of Jonah and reflect on his struggles as God prompted him to reach out to the Ninevites.

What are some possible reasons Jonah was angry at the Ninevites?  
What didn’t Jonah understand about God that caused Jonah’s anger?

What are some hurdles that you might face in wanting those you struggle with and/or you don’t enjoy being around to know God and receive His love and forgiveness and be part of His family?

2. How might the two passages below help us overcome those hurdles and welcome others into the family of God?

Titus 3:3-7  
1 Corinthians 1:26-30

3. In Matthew 5:44, Jesus encourages his followers to “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

If you were to pray for someone who you struggle with, what would you pray for them?

4. One of the keys to struggling less in loving those God calls us to love is to have a renewed mind. Renewing our minds focusing on what God desires and thinking like Jesus rather than like the world, culture or our own natural way of thinking.

How do the following passages reinforce the idea of being like Jesus by renewing our minds?

Romans 8:5-6  
Ephesians 4:22-24  
Colossians 3:7-11

Is there an aspect of God’s character you can set your mind on that will help you to better love someone who is difficult to love?

## **Wrapping Up:**

What is an application from what we read or discussed together that you would like to practice in the coming days? Is there anything that came up from this week’s sermon or discussion that you would like prayer for? Is there anything else that you would like to express prayer for?