



We all probably have a clear idea of how we picture what we want our future to look like. [\[Leader Note: Reference the included opening activity here. If you haven't allowed time for students to share their vision boards with the group or their small groups, please do so now.\]](#) But what happens when our dreams and ideas get flipped upside down?

Have you ever seen that show *Undercover Boss*? Will someone explain to me what that show is about? [\[Wait for responses.\]](#) That's right. A boss secretly goes undercover, so they can see and experience what it's like to be an employee in their company.

[\[Leader Note: This may be a good place to show a clip from \*Undercover Boss\* that would interest your group. Other ideas would be clips from \*Freaky Friday\* or \*13 Going on 30\*.\]](#)

These bosses want to see things in their company more clearly. They strive to get a better perspective about their business.

As followers of Jesus, we should always be striving to have the perspective of Jesus. How would He see people? What decisions would He make if He were standing in your shoes?

In the Book of Acts, we read about a man named Saul. Saul was a guy that persecuted, beat, and killed people who were followers of Jesus. Earlier in Acts 9, he had a miraculous encounter with God that changed the course of his life forever. He was so changed that he was a different person altogether. To mark that change, his name was changed from Saul to Paul.

Sometimes, that's where we stop Paul's story until we fast forward to the large number of letters he wrote in the New Testament. But we have to think about that season right after he chose Jesus. Wouldn't that role reversal have been difficult for everyone involved? Not only for Paul, who was learning to live with a completely different compass, but also for everyone that knew him (or knew of him) before he changed. Was Paul for real? Was this really Saul trying to trick a bunch of Christians into further identifying themselves?

Think about it for a second. If you were a Christian in that time, and you had heard of this mean person that tortured and killed Christians, would you trust Paul's story of a changed life?

Immediately after Paul's decision to follow Jesus, he began preaching. People didn't have smartphones and laptops in those days, but there were other ways to communicate. We know that the religious leaders in Damascus and Jerusalem would have kept up with one another through letters. So, when the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, which was like a ruling body made up of religious Jewish leaders, saw Saul (Paul), what do you think they would have thought? I bet they were dumbstruck to see him preach about Jesus instead of helping to end this religious rebellion. What a role reversal!

Let's check out what the Bible records of Paul's first handful of days as a Christian:

*Acts 9:19b-26 (NLT)*

*Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days. And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!"*

*All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?" they asked. "And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?"*

*Saul's preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn't refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. After a while some of the Jews plotted together to kill him. They were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him, but Saul was told about their plot. So during the night, some of the other believers lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the city wall.*

*When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe he had truly become a believer!*

## **1. Failing to see clearly may lead us to make poor choices.**

What we believe about Jesus shapes everything about us.

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