

Dealing With a “Paul” Personality

Intro: We think of Paul as an extremely talented man with an extremely soiled heart chosen perhaps for both those reasons--to do a job no one else was qualified to do and to be the ultimate example of God's grace. But the scriptures paint the picture of a man with a good-soil heart who, upon believing in Jesus, had to completely reinvent himself.

- I. What Barriers Did God Have To Overcome To Convert Paul?
 - A. His pride for who he had become. (Phil. 3:5, 6; Gal. 1:15; Phil. 2:3)
 - B. He was self-righteous. (Phil. 3:6)
 - C. He was patriotic. (Rom. 9:1-3; Phil. 3:18; Rom. 10:2-4)
- II. The Answer To How God Softened Paul
 - A. It was on the road to Damascus. (cf. Acts 9:1-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18)
 - B. That's not to suggest God hadn't already been working on his heart. (cf. Luke 16:31; Luke 8:15)
 - C. The contents of that vision changed his life.
- III. In the Process of God Tearing Down Paul's Barriers He Finds a Small Seed In Each That He Keeps and Grows In Him
 - A. God found an insecurity in Paul that he could use.
 1. We tend to assume God chose Paul because of all his talent. (Acts 14:12; 2 Cor. 11:6; 1 Cor. 1:19, 21; Phil. 3:4-8)
 2. The most ambitious Christian was also insecure. (1 Cor. 15:9, 10; 1 Cor. 4:9; Phil. 3:12-15; Col. 1:28, 29; 1 Tim. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 4:9, 10)
 3. Paul does not have an “inferiority complex” in spite of his insecurity. (1 Cor. 15:9 10; 2 Cor. 11:5, 6; 1 Cor. 4:3, 4)
 - B. God tore down his self-righteousness but fed the fire of his righteousness. (Acts 9:1; 17:16; 2 Cor. 12:20, 21; Titus 1:10-16; Romans 7:15-20; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 7:8, 9)
 - C. God tore down his patriotism and replaced it with a broader appreciation for souls. (Acts 9:4; 18:10; 2 Cor. 5:20)

Conclusion: How is it that Paul can be insecure before God and we can be doing so little? How could he be so zealous for righteousness and we blame everyone and everything else? How could he fear souls and we ignore them?