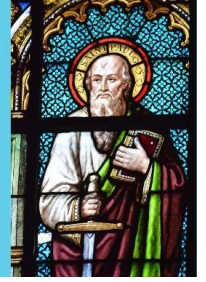




# Finding Purpose in Unexpected Places: The Story of Paul



[www.elim.family/paul](http://www.elim.family/paul)

## Becoming Like Christ: Paul's Guide to Spiritual Formation

Read Acts 9

Listen to the Message 'Becoming Like Christ: Paul's Guide to Spiritual Formation' (26<sup>th</sup> May 2024) at [www.elim.family/media](http://www.elim.family/media)

In this sermon, we explore the concept of spiritual formation through the lens of the Apostle Paul's life and teachings. Spiritual formation is the process by which we are shaped and influenced by our surroundings and the people we interact with. Paul exemplifies this transformation, moving from a persecutor of Christians to one of the faith's most influential leaders. His journey highlights the importance of community, personal time with Jesus, and discipline in our spiritual growth.

Firstly, the role of community in spiritual formation is paramount. Paul's early Christian life was significantly influenced by other believers like Ananias and Barnabas, who provided support and guidance. Being in fellowship with other Christians helps us grow and keeps us grounded in our faith. Long-term relationships within the Christian community are crucial, as they provide the support and accountability necessary for genuine spiritual progress.

Secondly, personal time with Jesus and disciplined spiritual practices are essential for deepening our faith. Paul spent time alone in Arabia to develop his relationship with God, emphasizing the importance of solitude and reflection. Spiritual growth requires intentional effort, much like physical training, pushing us beyond our comfort zones and helping us to mature in our faith. By committing to these practices, we move towards a more secure and authentic relationship with Christ, becoming individuals who reflect His presence in our lives.

### Questions for reflection:

#### Influences in Your Life:

1. Reflect on the people who have had the most influence on your life. How have they shaped your beliefs and actions?
2. Consider how you might be influencing others. Are you providing a positive example of faith?

#### Community and Fellowship:

1. How do you currently engage with your Christian community? Are there ways you can deepen these relationships?

2. Think about a time when the support of other Christians significantly impacted your spiritual growth. How did this experience shape you?

#### **Personal Time with Jesus:**

1. How do you spend personal time with Jesus? Are there spiritual disciplines (prayer, reading scripture, solitude) that you feel called to strengthen?
2. Reflect on a period when you felt especially close to God. What practices or circumstances contributed to that closeness?

#### **Discipline in Spiritual Growth:**

1. What spiritual disciplines do you find most challenging? How can you incorporate them more intentionally into your routine?
2. Consider areas of your faith where you feel you need more discipline. What steps can you take to grow in these areas?

#### **Group Discussion:**

1. Based on the sermon, what practical steps can we take to enhance our spiritual formation in the areas of community, personal time with Jesus, and discipline?
2. How can the group support each other in these areas? Discuss ways to hold each other accountable and encourage growth.

These questions should help deepen your understanding of the sermon and facilitate meaningful reflection and discussion.

If you have never accepted Jesus as your personal saviour and you would like to move from the margins to having a relationship with Him. Please speak to one of the pastors or leadership team, we would love to pray with you. Alternatively, go to [www.elim.family/ihavedecided](http://www.elim.family/ihavedecided) to find out more about giving your life to Jesus.

#### **Recommended Reading:**

Soul Keeping – John Ortberg - [Soul Keeping | Free Delivery when you spend £10 at Eden.co.uk](#)

Practicing the Way – John Mark Comer - [Practicing the Way 9780281086672 Eden](#)