

ANANIAS: A MAN GOD COULD USE *Acts 9:10-17*

by Francis Dixon

One of the most humbling truths revealed in Scripture is that God uses believers to accomplish His divine purposes. Ananias, who was wonderfully used by the Lord, was the man who sought out and led Saul of Tarsus into fullness of blessing. We read of him only twice in the New Testament, in Acts 9:10-17 and 22:12-16, but he is presented to us as the type of Christian whom God can use. Consider the following points, some of which were emphasised in a previous study:-

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ The opportunities to speak at churches around Australia. This allows us the privilege to encourage believers in their Christian walk, and how they can use the paper locally and prayerfully to impact their communities
- ★ Another young journalist (Ainsley Gaebler) coming into the Challenge office, working two days per week
- ★ The number of responses we continue to receive from the various editions of the African Challenge
- ★ All the folk who give on a regular basis to the work of Challenge

THE MAN GOD USES MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

God works through those who by the miracle of the New Birth and the baptism of the Holy Spirit have been made members of His Church, which is His Body (1 Corinthians 12:13). In Acts 9:4 the Lord told Saul of Tarsus that in persecuting Christians he had been persecuting the Lord Himself, for believers are members of the Body of Christ. He is the Head and they are members of the Body – therefore, the disciples of the Lord and the Lord Himself are one. During His earthly ministry Jesus had an earthly body and worked through that, but now His body is the Church, and from Heaven He (the Head) works through the individual members of that body. Ananias was a member of that body, and if you and I are to be used by the Lord we too must be members of that body. This is the first qualification of a successful soul-winner.

THE MAN GOD USES MAY BE A VERY ORDINARY PERSON

When God reached Naaman He did it through “a young girl” (2 Kings 5:2). When God wanted to lead Saul of Tarsus into the assurance of salvation He used Ananias. But who was he? He was a disciple (Acts 9:10) – not an apostle, not an outstanding man, and not necessarily a leader. The fact that God delights to use ordinary people should be a great encouragement to many – look up 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

THE MAN WHOM GOD USES MUST BE LIVING A DEVOUT, CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIFE

In Acts 22:12 we read that Ananias was “devout” and “highly respected by all the Jews”. This means that his life was above reproach, his conduct was blameless and there was no insincerity about his testimony; he showed forth the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in his actions and words and made “the teaching about God our Saviour attractive” – look up Titus 2:10. God will only use those whose lives are consistent and glorifying to Him. Is yours?

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THE MAN GOD USES MUST BE AVAILABLE TO THE LORD TO DO WHATEVER HE WANTS

Some Christians are not at the disposal of the Lord; if He told them to invite their neighbour to church they would not be willing to do it; if He told them to give a certain portion of "their" money to His work they would not be prepared to do it. Ananias, however, was wholly at God's disposal. How do we know this? Verse 10 tells us that he was living so close to the Lord that he could hear Him speaking to him. Read verses 10-14, and notice the note of intimacy in this conversation between Ananias and the Lord. He was on speaking terms with Him. Are you? Also, Ananias was

willing to obey the Lord without question. It is true he did ask the Lord some questions, but immediately God told him that his job was to "go" (verse 15) we read that Ananias "went" (verse 17). Instant obedience!

THE MAN GOD USES MUST BE FULL OF TENDER AFFECTION AND LOVE; HE MUST BE A CHRIST-LIKE MAN

Notice from verse 17 that Ananias did not go to Saul and say, "You're a wicked persecutor of the Church! You have done much evil!" (verse 13). No – he put his arms round Saul and said, "Brother Saul..." – and surely there was emotion in his voice and compassion in his heart when he said this! Here is a great test: when another Christian has hurt you, are you able to go to him and say, "Brother..."? Your answer will determine whether God can or cannot use you.

THE MAN GOD USES MUST BE WELL-INFORMED.

We infer this from verses 13 and 14 – and look up and compare 1 Chronicles 12:32 and Esther 1:13. There is, however, a yet more important knowledge that we must possess if we are to be ready for God to use us in soul-winning service, and this is indicated in 2 Timothy 2:15. We must know how to use our Bible in pointing someone to Christ. Can you turn to the portions and verses which show why we need a Saviour...why Jesus Christ is the Saviour we need...why He is the only Saviour...and how, when and on what conditions He saves...keeps...and satisfies...?

THE MAN GOD USES MUST BE QUALIFIED TO LEAD OTHERS INTO FULLNESS OF BLESSING

Look at verse 17. On the very threshold of his new life Ananias led Saul of Tarsus into the fullness of spiritual blessing, for he showed him how to be "filled with the Holy Spirit". Ananias was obviously in the enjoyment of this fullness himself, and he knew how imperative it is for any Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit if he is to live graciously and serve effectively -- Ephesians 5:18. Are you enjoying the blessing of a Spirit-filled life?

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PRAYER needed for

- ★ Support of existing projects around the globe and for long term funding commitments
- ★ Our team at Challenge that we may always operate with one heart and mind and vision
- ★ The move of our partner organisation Multi Ministries in South Africa. Pray as the team (directors are Cobus and Christa Britz) work out the best location for the Challenge office, as MM will be moving one hour out of Johannesburg.
- ★ Our Impact Africa team, June 28 – July 18. Pray for their health and their preparations



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