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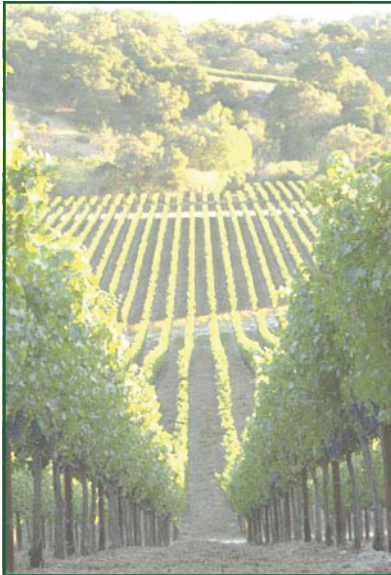
Servants of Excellence

Encouraging pregnancy care center volunteer & paid staff

The incredible power of a changed heart

By Kirk Walden, Publisher of The LifeTrends Connection

“Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.” — Acts 8:1



We can theologize, summarize, categorize and rationalize Saul’s actions all we want, but when it came to persecuting Christians, this man was a stone-cold killer.

There is no excuse, no way around it. Stephen’s stoning was brutal. It’s hard for any of us to imagine what it might have been like to watch such a horrible crime take place. Yet Saul of Tarsus reveled in it.

But—to understate the obvious—something happened to Saul.

On the road to Damascus in Acts 9, Saul ran into Jesus. The Christ. The messiah whom he had been persecuting.

Jesus asked a question: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

Saul’s answer? “Who are you, Lord?”

Then Jesus introduced himself. Paul was never the same, but why?

Because Paul changed his heart. Immediately he understood that his religious opposition to Jesus was all wrong. Jesus *was* the way, the truth and the life, just like he had said. In Saul’s conversion to becoming the apostle Paul, we see no tears, no weeping and no gnashing of teeth. This may have happened; but the writer Luke doesn’t see this as important enough to relate.

What we *do* see is a new mission in Paul’s life; a new direction. He started by fasting for three days, then visited a disciple named Ananias who took Paul into his home. From there Paul would learn from others, then launch out on journeys that changed the world.

When a client comes into our office we may see someone who is bent on ending her pregnancy. Or, we may see someone totally opposed to our message of faith and hope.

When this happens, let’s remember Saul. Who would have dreamed in a million years that the worst persecutor of the church; this vicious and zealous man with hatred for anything related to Jesus Christ . . . Would be the very person who would bring the good news to the Gentiles? Anyone?

Let’s look in her eyes, or his. Let’s see beyond the surface and ask that we would be allowed a window into the heart. That wall of anger could be masking the heart of a lion that will one day change the world. When we see with the eyes of Jesus, we may be able to see beyond the Saul and into the Paul. And a life that seems hopeless may find a new direction that we never dreamed possible.

Servants of Excellence is a LifeTrends publication

If you have a question for Publisher Kirk Walden, contact him at kirk@lifetrendsonline.com