

Used by God

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision; Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

Acts 9:10

There are several thousand people named in the Bible many of whom serve a prominent place in Biblical history. While the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles occupy the more significant roles throughout the development of God's plan for all mankind, others may be less well-known yet appear in scripture as they fulfill God's purpose. Some of these individuals of great importance are referred to as *a certain man* or *a certain woman*. Though these individuals have a relatively fleeting appearance in the scriptures, the significance of their role is not diminished. Just as there are many unrecorded works that Jesus did, these individuals who appeared briefly continued to work out the Lord's will for the rest of their lives in obscurity. Only eternity will reveal the complete account of the lives in this tapestry of individuals. This serves as a reminder and an encouragement that each of us plays a unique part in God's eternal plan.

What do we know about Ananias? There are a few scriptures that give some insight about this man who helped to set the Apostle Paul on the course that would change the world for Christ. Nothing is mentioned of how or when Ananias was converted to become a disciple of Jesus. A resident of Damascus, he responded to the Message of the risen Savior as it emanated from Judaea. Later in Acts 22, when Paul recounts his conversion, the account states that Ananias was a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews who dwelt there. In today's text, when the Lord speaks to Ananias in a vision, he quickly responds by saying: *Behold, I am here Lord*. Ananias doesn't seem to doubt the mission of going to lay his hands on Saul so that he may receive his sight, but the thought of going to the one who has been wreaking havoc on the early Christian church produced some apprehension. Hearing God say that Saul was a chosen vessel, Ananias responds to the call while asking no questions. After Ananias's encounter with Saul, he disappears from the Biblical narrative; but the results of that encounter are recorded in the remaining chapters of Acts and also through two thousand years of history.

Ananias's response can teach and inspire us to do the same. His devout relationship with the Lord put him in a position where he was sensitive to hearing the Lord speak. Though he may have felt some caution concerning his mission, he nonetheless goes obediently. Ananias seems to have no doubt concerning laying his hands on Saul so he could receive his sight, for Ananias fully knew that he was merely the messenger and God was the healer. Surely, when he first trusted Jesus as the Messiah, Ananias had no idea that his life would one day intersect with Saul of Tarsus.

Today, we have no idea whose life the Lord may cause to cross our path. If we are in tune with the Lord, we can sense His leading and then obey in all that He directs. From our perspective some of His directions may seem unreasonable; but if we trust Him, we can be assured that He will work out His will in our lives. Only God knows what the continuing effects will be from those missions.

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