

# Following God's Lead

## Lessons From Philip's Life

**Introduction.** Philip first comes to our attention in Acts 6 as one of the seven chosen for the work of benevolence in the early church. These men were of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (v. 3).

But Philip wasn't content to simply "serve tables." When persecution arose scattering the disciples, he went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ (Acts 8:12). But when Philip was having great success, God called him away to teach one sincere, searching soul (vv. 26-27).

We tend to think that these examples are beyond our reach because these were inspired men or because, like Philip, they were instructed by the Holy Spirit. But this isn't the case. There are good lessons to learn from Philip on the proper attitudes to have and the proper techniques to use to reach others.

### ***I. Proper Attitudes to Reach Others***

#### **A. Obedience.**

1. When God commanded Philip to leave Samaria and go to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza, he obeyed without question, even though he had great success in Samaria. When he was commanded to leave, he went.
2. It may have sounded somewhat strange and irrational, but he was a man who knew that God's way was best.
3. If we're going to be effective workers for Christ, we have to be submissive. This means, at all times and at all costs, doing what God wants us to do, not what we want to do. God's will always takes precedence over our will (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15).

#### **B. Willingness.**

1. God commanded Philip to leave the multitudes in Samaria and travel about 50 miles for one lost soul. That dedication takes real love.
2. One soul is a large enough crowd to be concerned about. Luke reported the teaching of Jesus as leaving the "ninety-nine" and bringing that one lost soul back into safety (Luke 15:4-7).

#### **C. Impartiality.**

1. The Ethiopian, though a proselyte, was still considered an outcast in the full sense of the word (Deuteronomy 23:1).
  - a) Since he wasn't entirely Jewish, he was in the same category as the Gentiles. No ordinary Jew would talk to him about his soul.
  - b) It took a miracle for Peter to go into a Gentile's house and teach the gospel (Acts 10:9-16, 24-25). Yet, without hesitation, Philip was willing to teach a Gentile (Acts 8:27).
2. We can be like Philip.
  - a) It's possible to be prejudiced in several ways when doing personal evangelism (John 4:9, 27; James 2:1-7).
  - b) Since neither God nor Christ shows partiality, why should we (Acts 10:34-35)?

- c) All need salvation (Romans 3:23), therefore, all need the gospel, God's power to save (Romans 1:16).
- D. Urgency.
  1. When the Spirit told Philip to "Go near and overtake this chariot," Philip "ran to him." He knew the urgent need and he didn't waste time.
  2. This kind of enthusiasm is desperately needed today. The early church was very zealous to save as many people as they could. We need to restore that same kind of zeal today (Acts 8:4; 11:22-23; 13:1-5; 18:24-25)

## **II. Proper Techniques to Reach Others**

- A. Ask questions.
  1. Philip asked the Ethiopian a question to get the discussion started: "Do you understand what you are reading?" (v. 30). Not only did it serve as an "icebreaker," but also it showed real concern.
  2. If we would do the same, we'd increase our opportunities. Questions arouse greater interest in study and discussion. Here's some you can ask:
    - a) Do you believe in God and Jesus?
    - b) Do you believe the Bible is from God?
    - c) What religion do you believe in or follow?
    - d) Have you been saved by Jesus Christ?
    - e) What do you know about the New Testament church?
    - f) When did you choose your faith?
- B. Know and use the Scriptures.
  1. When the Ethiopian asked him about a certain passage in Isaiah, Philip knew to whom the Scripture referred (vv. 31-33). If we're to be effective teachers, we have to know the Scriptures.
  2. You can't remain ignorant of God's Word and expect to convert people (Hebrews 5:11-14). No one expects you to know everything, but only the Word of God will save people (John 8:32; Romans 10:17; James 1:21).
- C. Preach Jesus.
  1. After reading Isaiah 53, Philip began to "preach Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:34-35).
  2. We're not to teach opinions, think so's, and feelings. The only message that can save is Jesus for He alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:68; 14:6; Acts 4:12). He's our drawing power (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32) and His Word our message (John 12:48-50).
  3. When you look online, on sites such as Quora and Reddit, there are hundreds of posts with thousands of comments about how Jesus Christ has changed people. What do you need to tell people about Jesus?
    - a) He is our Savior.
    - b) He is our Lord.
    - c) He is our guide.
    - d) He is our example.
    - e) He is our hope.
    - f) He is our judge.

D. Look for more opportunities.

1. Philip wasn't content in winning just one soul to Christ. After baptizing the Ethiopian, he went on his way preaching to others (Acts 8:40; cp. 21:8).
2. If we're going to be successful "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17), we're going to have to cast our nets again and again. And there's a lot of dead ends, but we keep on trying to enlighten people and get them to taste the heavenly gift (Hebrews 6:4).

**Conclusion.** We all need to be like Philip. He wasn't an apostle or as famous as Paul or Peter, but he was a dedicated, effective servant of Jesus. We can be like him and be effective workers for the Lord.

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