

The Example of Philip

Introduction

1. Philip first comes to our attention in Acts 6 as one of the seven chosen for the work of benevolence in the early church.
 - a. Such a man was to have been of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. (Acts 6:3)
 - b. Philip was not content to simply “serve tables.”
2. When persecution arose scattering the disciples, he went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ.
3. When Philip was having great success, God called him away to teach one sincere, searching soul. (Acts 8:26-27)
4. There are many lessons we can 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. (Acts 8:26-27)
 - a. “He arose and went.”
 - b. He obeyed God without question.
 - c. Even though he had great success in Samaria, when he was commanded to leave, he went.
 - 1) It may have sounded somewhat strange and irrational.
 - 2) He was a man who knew God’s way was best.
2. If we are going to be effective workers for the Lord, we must be submissive.
 - a. We must, at all times and at all cost, be willing to do what God wants us to do not what we want to do.
 - b. The will of God must always take precedence over our will.

B. A willingness to teach one as well as many.

1. God commanded Philip to leave the multitudes in Samaria and travel about 50 miles for one lost soul.
 - a. He was willing to travel that distance, more if necessary, to achieve God’s mission.
 - b. Such dedication takes real love.
 - c. He, like Jesus, was willing to leave the crowds for one individual.

2. We must understand that one soul is a large enough crowd to be concerned about.
 3. We must be willing to leave the “ninety-nine” and bring that one lost soul back into safety. (Luke 15)
- C. Unprejudiced.
1. The Ethiopian, though a proselyte, was still considered an outcast in the full sense of the word. (Deut. 23:1)
 - a. Since he was not entirely Jewish, he was in the same category as the Gentiles.
 - b. No ordinary Jew would dare talk to him about his soul.
 - c. It took a miracle for Peter to go into a Gentile’s house and teach the gospel. (Acts 10)
 - d. Yet, without hesitation, Philip was willing to teach a Gentile. (Acts 8:27)
 2. We must be like Philip.
 - a. We must be color-blind in doing personal evangelism.
 - b. We should look at the condition of the soul not the color of the skin or the size of the pocketbook.
 - c. Since neither God (Acts 10:34-35) nor Christ (Mark 16) shows partiality, why should we?
 - d. All need salvation (Rom. 3:23), therefore, all need the gospel, God’s power to save. (Rom. 1:16)
- D. An urgency to reach others.
1. When the Spirit told Philip to join himself to the chariot, Philip “ran to him.” (Acts 8:29)
 - a. He knew the urgent need the man had.
 - b. He did not waste time for there is none to waste.
 2. This kind of enthusiasm is desperately needed today.
 3. As the early church was very zealous when it came to soul-winning, we need to restore that same kind of zeal today.

II. Proper Techniques

- A. Ask questions.
1. Philip asked the Ethiopian a question to get the discussion started. (Acts 8:30)
 2. Not only did it serve as an “icebreaker,” but also it showed a real concern.
 3. If we would do the same, we would win more souls to Christ.
 4. Questions arouse greater interest in study and discussion.

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. (Acts 8:31-35)
2. If we are to be effective teachers, we must know the Scriptures.
 - a. We cannot remain ignorant of God's word and expect to win souls. (Heb. 5:11-14)
 - b. Only the word of God can bring about salvation. (John 8:32; Rom. 10:17; Jas. 1:21)

C. Preach Jesus.

1. After reading Isaiah 53, Philip began to preach "Jesus" to the Ethiopian. (Acts 8:35)
2. We are not to teach opinions, "think-so's" and feelings.
3. The only message that can save is "Jesus" for He alone has the words to eternal life. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
4. Jesus is to be our drawing power and His word our message.

D. Look for more opportunities.

1. Philip was not content in winning just one soul to Christ.
 - a. After baptizing the Ethiopian, he went on his way preaching to others. (Acts 8:40)
 - b. If we are going to be successful "fishers of men" we must cast our nets into the "deep" again and again.
 - c. The whole world lies in need before us.

Conclusion

1. We need more "Philips." We all need to be more like Philip.
2. He may not have been an apostle or as famous as Paul or Peter but he was a dedicated, effective servant of Jesus Christ.
3. We too can be and must be effective workers for the Lord.