

South Bay Church Plant Sabbath School

5 – Becoming Missionaries

Missionaries to Samaria

Acts 1:8 provides an overview of the entire book of Acts. The gospel begins in Jerusalem, goes into Judea (the province where Jerusalem was located), then Samaria (a province in Palestine), and finally to the ends of the earth (the Roman Empire). This week we will be looking at how God started the process of sending the early church members as missionaries.

What does the term “missionary” mean to you?

Acts 7:54-8:8

As the Christians fled persecution, they took the gospel with them, and it rapidly spread from Jerusalem throughout Palestine.

What made people pay attention to Philip? (8:4-8) What might be some of the ways that we can get people to pay attention today, without being sensational?

“In the cities of today, where there is so much to attract and please, the people can be interested by no ordinary efforts. Ministers of God's appointment will find it necessary to put forth extraordinary efforts in order to arrest the attention of the multitudes. And when they succeed in bringing together a large number of people, they must bear messages of a character so out of the usual order that the people will be aroused and warned.”—[Testimonies For The Church 9:109 \(1909\)](#).

Acts 8:9-25

What similarities and differences do you find between Philip and Simon in how they attracted the attention of people? What lesson did Simon need to learn?

How might doing mission work be as selfish as the way Simon approached it?

Acts 8:26-27

What was unique about this man?

This African man of a foreign nation, was a eunuch. Based on a misunderstanding of the Mosaic law, eunuchs were generally excluded from Jewish worship, and considered to be “half-men” because they could not bear children. Yet, this man had still gone to the temple to worship.

Acts 8:28-34

Philip would not have automatically sought out such a man, but an angel directed him to the road to Gaza. Once there, he found God already at work in a man reading the Scriptures and asking questions.

How does knowing that God is already at work in people’s lives change how we do evangelism?

Acts 8:35

How easily could you share with someone the good news about Jesus? How readily could you explain the prophecies that point to Jesus?

Seventh-day Adventists have a long history of being able to share Bible truths with others. However, over time, we have come to depend on professionals to do this, such as evangelists and pastors. Philip is not presented as a professional. He is someone led by the Holy Spirit and open to sharing Jesus and the Scriptures whenever he is given an opportunity.

Acts 8:36-40

Some people take this story to mean we should baptize people immediately as soon as they accept Jesus. Based on this passage, how would you respond to that idea?

We must be careful of taking exceptional situations, such as the thief on the cross, or a man leaving that day for another country, to draw conclusions about how we should regularly treat baptism. However, even within this story there are clear indications of prior knowledge and of a bible study teaching truth before the baptism takes place.

As you consider these two stories of Philip, what made him an effective missionary?

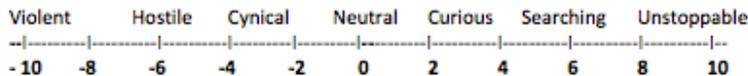
Acts 9:1-7

How could someone so zealous for God have not realized that he was working against Him? How difficult would it have been for Paul to admit that he was wrong? How does knowing this help us to deal with people who appear to be hostile to what the Bible teaches?

Acts 9:10-19

How would you have felt if you were Ananias?

Evangelists sometimes talk of a scale of receptivity. Look at the scale below. Where was Saul/Paul before his journey and where was he afterwards? What was the appropriate response to Saul before his conversion? What was the appropriate response after his conversion? This teaches us that we should not approach everyone in the same way. Our goal is simply to try to move them along the scale, even if it is only a slight move in the right direction.



Not all conversions are as dramatic as Saul/Paul. “Conversion typically results from a ‘chain’ of experiences,” George Hunter declares. “The number of significant experiences in that chain is typically about thirty links.” Norman and David Geisler make this conclusion: “Our goal in gospel encounters need not be to get the whole Gospel message out at one time (and possibly alienate those we’re trying to reach)... *Rather, we should take the long-term view and leave that person with the desire to continue the conversation.*” *Conversational Evangelism*, p. 24. How does this approach help you in doing evangelism?

What mission was given to Paul in verse 15? How might this mission apply to our church plant.

Acts 9:19-31

What role did Barnabas play in helping the new believers to accept Saul/Paul? How might God be asking us to play that role in helping new believers come into the church?

What do you fear most about being a missionary? How can verse 31 help you?

Ellen White on the Task of Every Believer (Repeat from an Earlier Lesson)

Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.—[The Desire of Ages, 195](#).

God expects personal service from everyone to whom He has intrusted a knowledge of the truth for this time. Not all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, but all can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods.—[Testimonies for the Church 9:30](#).

Christ was standing only a few steps from the heavenly throne when He gave His commission to His disciples. Including as missionaries all who should believe on His name, He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” God's power was to go with them.—The Southern Watchman, September 20, 1904 ([The Review and Herald, October 6, 1896](#)).

To save souls should be the life work of everyone who professes Christ. We are debtors to the world for the grace given us of God, for the light which has shone upon us, and for the discovered beauty and power of the truth.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:53](#).

Every soul whom Christ has rescued is called to work in His name for the saving of the lost. This work had been neglected in Israel. Is it not neglected today by those who profess to be Christ's followers?—[Christ's Object Lessons, 191](#).

There is something for everyone to do. Every soul that believes the truth is to stand in his lot and place, saying, “Here am I; send me.” [Isaiah 6:8](#).—[Testimonies for the Church 6:49](#).

He who becomes a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost.—[The Ministry of Healing, 105](#).

All may find something to do. None need feel that there is no place where they can labor for Christ. The Saviour identifies Himself with every child of humanity.—[The Ministry of Healing, 104](#).

Those who have united with the Lord in the covenant of service are under bonds to unite with Him in the great, grand work of soul saving.—[Testimonies for the Church 7:19](#).

So vast is the field, so comprehensive the design, that every sanctified heart will be pressed into service as an instrument of divine power.—[Testimonies for the Church 9:47](#).

Men are instruments in the hand of God, employed by Him to accomplish His purposes of grace and mercy. Each has his part to act; to each is granted a measure of light, adapted to the necessities of his time and sufficient to enable him to perform the work which God has given him to do.—[The Great Controversy, 343](#).