

LIVING SENT

Week Nine: Leading Someone to Christ

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians are familiar with the scene in Matthew 4:18-22 where Jesus called his first disciples. As Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he called them using language from their profession as fishermen,

»»» *“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*

We often fail to think about how Jesus’ call extends to us through those first disciples—what it means for us to be “fishers of men.” Yet, that is exactly what we are commissioned to do as Christians: to follow Christ and lead others to follow him.

BIBLICAL MATERIAL

In Acts 8:26-40, Luke records a detailed account of a Christian, Philip, leading an unbelieving Ethiopian official to Christ. Having encountered the official as he traveled through Samaria, Philip obeyed Jesus’ call to be a “fisher of men.” As they discussed the scripture the Ethiopian official was reading, Philip led him to Christ.

From this passage, we can make several observations regarding what it takes to lead someone to Christ: First, this was a divine appointment. Philip realized that he and the Ethiopian official were brought together by God at this specific time and place.

Second, to lead the official to Christ, Philip was first following Christ in trust and obedience himself (v. 29, 1 Cor. 11:1). Philip was a disciple-making disciple. It was his duty as a Christian to lead others to faith in Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-20) and that task was one of importance and urgency (Jude 23).

Leading someone to Christ simply means leading them to trust Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and the salvation of their eternal soul.

Third, notice that Philip did not do anything extreme—he simply had a conversation with this man (v. 30). As we’ve discussed, sharing the Gospel is a relational task. Philip demonstrates that relationships can be built in a matter of moments.

Fourth, consider what they discussed: a passage of scripture from Isaiah. Philip had an open life, now it was time for an open Bible and an open mouth. Using scripture, Philip shared the Gospel with the Ethiopian official, explaining to him the realities of his sin and his need for a Savior (v. 35). Through the years, Christians have used many methods (such as the “Romans Road to Salvation”) to walk unbelievers through the Gospel. Tools such as these may be helpful, but they are not absolutely necessary. Philip makes it simple, keeping the main thing the main thing: he shares the Gospel with the goal of winning the official over to trust in Christ.

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Finally, Philip realized he was not leading the official to Christ alone. Each step of the way he demonstrated dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Philip obeyed when God sent him to witness. He realized that God was already working in the official's heart as he read scripture. He trusted the Holy Spirit to convict of sin and convince the official that Christ was the Savior he needed. Philip did not save the man, God did.

MISSIONARY TASK RELEVANCY

Chances are, you will never hear Jesus audibly call you to be a "fisher of men," or tell you to go witness to someone specifically as Philip did. However, we do have a biblical record of Jesus' commission to all Christians throughout the ages:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ."
(Matt. 28:19-20)



Nations are comprised of individuals. Any Christian can, and is called to, lead someone to Christ. As C.H. Spurgeon observed, "every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter."

LIFE APPLICATION

In order to lead someone to Christ, you must be following him yourself. A disciple-maker is a disciple first. Reflect on your own discipleship. What action steps may you need to take to develop as a disciple who leads others to Christ?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. Remember how you once were lost and God used someone to lead you to Christ. Consider how He might use you to lead someone else to Him.

Consider the methods which were employed in leading you to Christ. Are there elements you would like to replicate? Elements you would prefer to replace?

Read 1 Peter 3:13-17. Consider your willingness to lead others to Christ. What are your hesitations? What are your motivations?

Discuss the basics of the Gospel in a group setting. Could you explain it to a nonbeliever?

Discuss how you can intentionally build relationships in order to lead others to Christ. Is there someone in your life you could begin leading to Christ today?

It has been said that "nothing of eternal significance happens apart from prayer." Pray for divine appointments and opportunities to lead someone to Christ. Pray that God will help you identify and build relationships with individuals who do not yet know Christ as their Savior.