

"FINDING OPPORTUNITY"

Acts 8:26-40

Steven had told me about seeing a Dollar store in a good location where he thought he could do an outreach then got permission. Did an outreach there and had 10 saved. Reminded me of an important dimension of discipleship: Finding opportunity. Seen in Phillip.

I. THE NEEDED DIMENSION

A. The great questions of discipleship: *What makes a man of God? What does it take to be used by God?*

1. The Bible records stories of real people to give us understanding
 - a. Here: A man who seized opportunity – outside the 4 walls
2. The Bible records some stories of men who ventured outside the group – or group events
 - a. Jonathan – attacking Philistines
 - b. David – attacking Goliath
 - c. Here: Phillip – reaching Ethiopian
3. Tells of a crucial factor in discipleship/being used by God: Self-motivation *Phillip is on his own*

B. The factors of finding opportunity

1. **Being able to find the mind of God:** What is it that God wants you to do?
 - a. In every city – a man must find the mind of God for his situation:
 1. Who does God want to save?
 2. How can you reach the ones God wants to save?
2. **Able to hear from God – respond to promptings:** *V26 An angel of the Lord spoke, saying...*
 - a. Our problem is we expect God to speak with an audible voice – with GPS directions
 1. Real truth: Most of "God speaking" comes in the form of impressions/thoughts!
3. **Recognizing opportunity:** *V29 go to this Chariot...*he was looking!
 - a. You have to have an eye for where people are to witness
 - b. You have to have an eye for where people gather currently – for an outreach
 - c. You have to have an eye for where people could likely be drawn to an outreach
4. **Being willing to try – with no guarantee of success**
 - a. *Imagine God leading him to desert...him imagining telling his friends later: What was there? Nothing!*
 1. We see the outcome: But Phillip didn't know how it was going to work out
 - b. Many men fail to develop because they won't put their pride on the line: Risk failure

C. Is there anything you are doing on your own?

1. *Do you ever witness on your own – apart from scheduled outreach?* 2. *Are you doing any outreaches?*

II. THE BLESSING DIMENSION

A. Think of all the blessings that come from men finding opportunity – and responding

1. **Someone is saved:** *The Ethiopian was saved/baptized*
 - a. Never miss the personal element of outreach: *Not numbers – but lives/desperate situations/eternal destiny*
2. **People groups are unlocked:** An Ethiopian – the first Gentile saved in Acts
3. **You are impacted:** You learn lessons you'll use – forever!
4. **An example is set:** We are inspired by Phillip 2,000 years later!
 - a. *You might inspire another disciple/new convert/young person*
5. **God is pleased:** That someone is saved – that we love Him enough to obey

6. **You are guided into further ministry:** *Acts 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.*

- a. You can't move on into other areas/dimensions – unless you learn this lesson of finding opportunity

III. THE DISCIPLESHIP DIMENSION

A. The essence of discipleship is self-motivation

1. Some men struggle when they go out because no one is there to give them instructions
 - a. *They have to find the mind of God/hear from God/see opportunity... by themselves!*
2. This is not something you want to start learning when you get out!

B. Discipleship is what you make of it

1. The deception is that being launched will magically change me into what I need to be
 - a. *NO! You'll simply be a more expensive version of what you are now*
2. Men who do well are usually men who had things already at work in them before they were chosen
 - a. David already was fighting battles/responding to needs before he was chosen by Saul

C. So discipleship involves self-examination

1. *Are you currently finding opportunities?* 2. *Are you hearing from God?* 3. *Are you trying things now?*