

## FOLLOW: LESSON FIVE (Leaders Guide) Obeying the Great Commission Daily

### BIBLE CONVERSATION

*Read Acts 8:26-40*

- 1) Why do you think the absence of the apostles lead to so much ministry? Can you share about a time when the absence of “professional ministers” lead to more ministry in your church?**

This is how Christianity in 300 years spread from this little handful of people into every nook and cranny of the Roman empire, until it even converted the leadership and made that old pagan culture into a Christian society. Why did Christianity triumph in a world of dozens and dozens of competing religions and philosophies with far more and far more influential adherents? Every Christian evangelized wherever they went.

Apparently, when the Christians were all together under the powerful and gifted leadership of the apostles, they had been fairly passive in their ministry. They had simply brought their friends to hear the “great preaching” at the church in Jerusalem. But when they were scattered, away from their leaders, they gathered up the courage to communicate themselves what they had learned. The result was that, though they were probably less eloquent than the apostles, they were in the end more effective. Why? Because lay people (being 100 times more numerous than “professionals”) can reach more folk, and because a lay person’s testimony often has a more authentic ring to the listener than a well-polished articulate speech.<sup>1</sup>

- 2) Reread vs. 26-29. How does this passage teach us *how* and *when* we should share our faith? What opportunities have you noticed lately in your life?**

God’s word tells us that we should expect such “divine appointments” to happen in the course of our day. We don’t need a scheduled time or place to talk to someone about Jesus, we just need to be looking for the opportunities that God has prepared. We don’t have to create opportunities – we must be obedient when they come (vs. 27 “And he arose and went”)

- 3) What does vs. 27-28 tell us about *who* to share our faith with? What’s the significance of this man being an Ethiopian and a Eunuch?**

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, Acts. Pg. 73

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This Ethiopian was a God fearer and was seeking the God of Israel even though he himself, a gentile, was not of the people of Israel. In addition to his ethnic exclusion from God's people, he was a Eunuch, a person castrated in his youth, so that he could work in the royal court without distraction (this was common in those days). The law (Deut 23:1) forbids a Eunuch from going inside the temple. This story marks the first time, in Acts, that a gentile has come to faith in Jesus. The gospel is going to all people groups. The gospel tells us that no one has an advantage when it comes to following Jesus. We are all sinners in need of a savior.

**4) Why do you think he was reading from the book of Isaiah? What does Isaiah foresee will happen when the messiah comes? Read Isaiah 56:3-6.**

Isaiah foresees (56:3-6) a time when Eunuch's will be brought into God's temple and will be apart of God's family. Remember Eunuch's could not biologically have children and this was probably a reason why they were outcasts (Genesis 15:18 – the old covenant depended on having physical offspring). But Isaiah 56:4 says that there is coming a day when Eunuch's "will be given a monument and a name better than sons and daughters...an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." This must have given hope to his man who wanted to badly to be included in God's covenant and with God's people. And perhaps he is wondering if it was through this suffering messiah from Isaiah 53.

**5) In verse 30, we see that Philip began a conversation with the Ethiopian man by asking a question. Why is it more helpful to start with a conversation rather than a presentation? What does this teach us about how to have gospel conversations?**

The Conversation begins with the Ethiopian. A presentation begins with me. We when sharing Jesus with others we need to begin with where they are. Look for people's passions and pains. For Philip this man was passionate about trying to learn what Isaiah meant. But maybe for you it's a passion for art or music. If we believe God has made everyone in his image, we can say, "I think God made you like that – that's amazing!" Everyone also has pains – things they are struggling with. Once we listen, and empathize with someone in their pain, we should look for opportunities to share about how Christ has help us in our own pains. "I've never been through what you're going through, but I have been through something similar. Can I share with you what gave me peace?" Present the gospel as the answer to the questions people already have about life.

**6) Vs. 35 – This verse says that Phillip took the opportunity to share with this man the Good News (Gospel) about Jesus. How would you articulate the**

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**gospel in your own words, if given the opportunity?**

Teacher be prepared to share in your words if no one shares first. FAITH evangelism. Four essentials of the gospel (God, Man, Christ, Response). Four spiritual laws. The 3 Circles.

**7) What is the most challenging thing for you when it comes to obeying the great commission on a daily basis? Where do you need to trust God more?**