

What are some goals that you strategize for in life?

What changes do you need to make in your life to accomplish these goals?

Why do you plan ahead for these things? How many goals would be reached if you just played things by ear and hoped for the best? Why?

Do you think Jesus had strategies for his ministry? Explain.

Teacher's Note: Jesus developed incredible strategies for ministry, what he taught at various stages, who he taught and who he developed as leaders. Below is merely a very rough sketch of some of his strategies.

- Jesus identified with John the Baptist's ministry so people understood where he stood with regard to beliefs
- Jesus started ministering locally, calling people to listen to his teachings
- He encouraged people to follow him as disciples
- He recruited 12 disciples to train them to be future leaders (apostles)
- Jesus expanded his ministry across the Jordan River
- Jesus expanded his ministry influence to Jerusalem
- Jesus gave his disciples direction as how to expand his church to the world, after his death and resurrection

What sort of things might Jesus have had to give up in order to have accomplished his mission? Why do you think he did it?

Do you think the Apostle Paul developed strategies for his mission impact? In what ways?

- Paul specifically chose to focus on reaching Gentile territories where the gospel had not yet been preached
- Paul focused on urban centers and places where people were likely to gather
- On his first missionary journey he mapped a course, which he travelled with Barnabas, planting churches over a one year period
- On his second missionary trip he travelled for three years planting churches but also discipling other leaders who would, in turn, also build up churches.
- On his third missionary journey he went to various towns to strengthen the disciples. He stayed longer in Ephesus to equip that church to be a supporting church to others in the area.

What sort of things do you think Paul might have had to give up in order to have had such a mission impact? Why do you think he did it?

If you are truly to have a mission impact in the world around you, what might you have to change or give up?

Why might you do this?

We often feel ineffective and inadequate to be kingdom builders. In the following passages look at the various types of people God used as **Salt**, **Ambassadors**, **Image** and **Light**.

A SERVANT GIRL

2 Kings 5:1-3, 15 (NIV)

¹ Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. ² Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

¹⁵ Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel."

The girl was a slave, forcibly taken from her home in Israel. Why do think she was willing to help Naaman?

What similar opportunities might we be able to take advantage of in our circles of influence?

There may be people who are struggling with health issues, marriage breakdowns, emotional problems that could really use some prayer and advice. If you do not feel adequate in these areas, there are probably people in your church God could work through to bring healing to their lives. Consider how you could connect hurting people in your circles to the broader body of Christ to gain support.

Because of this young servant girl seizing an opportunity, one of the most powerful men in Aram became a follower of God.

A HITCH HIKER**Acts 8:26-31 (NIV)**

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." ³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. ³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:35-38 (NIV)

³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁷ ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Have you ever had a prompting from God to witness to someone? If so, share your story.

What principles can you learn from this story regarding witnessing?

A FRIEND**John 1:45-49 (NIV)**

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." ⁴⁸ "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

What did it take for Philip to convince Nathaniel to follow Jesus?

What principle can we take away from this passage?

A DEBATER**Acts 19:8 (NIV)**

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

Acts 17:2-4 (NIV)

² As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. ⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

Why was Paul so effective in outreach?

What can we learn from Paul?

A HOST**Luke 5:29 (NIV)**

²⁹ Then Levi [Matthew] held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.

What approach did Matthew use to bridge his friends to Jesus?

How might we apply this principle today?

Do these stories give you greater confidence in any way? If so how?

Do you think the church grows most when it has dynamic outreach programs or when every day Christ-followers represent Christ within their circles of influence? Why?

What does this teach us about individual or team roles in building the kingdom?

The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest evangelists of all time, gives us some tips on connecting others to God.

Colossians 4:2-6 (NIV)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

1. DEVOTE YOURSELVES

NOTE: Paul is concluding his letter where he has discussed several different issues. When he tells us to be watchful, the question is what are we to be watching for? It could be referring to false teachers, but the context of the paragraph seems to focus more on being watchful for opportunities to represent Christ. This also fits with Paul's introduction which is focused on the gospel increasingly bearing fruit.

Why did Paul feel he needed to encourage us to devote ourselves to prayer and being watchful for opportunities?

What would it mean practically for us to devote ourselves to this?

2. PRAY FOR AN OPEN DOOR

What did Paul mean by an "open door" and why did he ask us to pray for one?

How are we to recognize an open door?

Does an open door imply we have no responsibility to create opportunities? What are your thoughts on this?

An open door simply means that people will be receptive to the opportunities we either seize or create to present the gospel.

3. PRAY FOR CLARITY IN COMMUNICATING

Have you ever blundered your way through telling someone about Christ?

Paul was an incredible teacher; why do you think he felt he needed prayer help for communicating the gospel clearly?

4. BE TACTFUL

Paul says:

To be wise in the way we relate to non-believers
To make the most of every opportunity
To be full of grace in how you talk, seasoned with salt

What does it mean to use grace in how we communicate?

What does Paul mean when he says to season our conversation with salt?

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

If the only reason God has not yet brought judgment and placed believers on a new earth is that he is waiting for everyone to hear the gospel, what does that say about how we align our life priorities?

As you evaluate your life, are you able to identify some mis-ordered priorities? How far down your list of priorities has sharing Christ dropped over time?

**We encourage you to be strategic and intentional in sharing your faith with others.
There is nothing else you can do in all of creation that will have eternal impact.**

Daniel 12:2-3 (NIV)

² *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake:
some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

³ *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens,
and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*