

Reaching Your World for Christ

- **Day One** Read John 15:5; Philippians 4:10

Are you the kind of person who tends to think of yourself as a “somebody” or a “nobody”? While the former needs to focus on the fact that she can do nothing apart from Christ (John 15:5), the latter needs to focus on the fact that he can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:10).

Pray – Ask God to help you develop humility with respect to yourself and confidence with respect to God.

- **Day Two** Read Acts 16:6-10 and Colossians 4:3

Paul developed the ability to perceive how God’s Spirit was going before him and preparing the way for the gospel. He was able to discern “open” and “closed” doors. What clues would you look for that someone is open to hearing about Jesus? How do you think praying for open doors would increase your ability to perceive them?

Pray – Ask God to make you perceptive to open doors where you could share your faith. Make a list of people you feel called to reach in your “world.” Pray for open doors with them.

- **Day Three** Read Acts 17:16-19; 1Corinthians 11:23-28

Describe how intentionality and persistence were important to Paul’s success in penetrating the world with the gospel. Write down one intentional step you could take in bringing the gospel to your “world.” Name one obstacle you might have to overcome.

Pray – Ask God to make you intentional and persistent in talking about Jesus.

Significance of a Nobody

A.D. Series #8

Acts 9:15-22; Galatians 1:11-23; Philippians 3:4-12

Acts 9:15 (NIV) ¹⁵ “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Acts 9:19-22 (NIV) ¹⁹ Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

Galatians 1:11-12, 18 (NIV) ¹¹ I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. ¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ... ¹⁸ Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.

1. God prepares the person

Philippians 3:4-6 (NIV) ⁴ ...If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

Acts 22:2-3 (NIV) ² When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: ³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Philippians 3:7-12 (NIV) ⁷ But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith... ¹² I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

1Corinthians 1:26-31; 15:9

2. God prepares the way

Synagogues • Roman roads • Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:5, 9-11 (NIV) ⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven... ⁹ Parthians, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs...

3. God's person acts in faith

Open doors

Colossians 4:3 (NIV) And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ....
2Corinthians 2:12; 1Corinthians 16:8-9

Public forums

Synagogue. **Acts 14:1** (NIV) At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue.
Acts 17:1-2; 18:1, 4

School. **Acts 19:8-9** (NIV) ⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

Marketplace. **Acts 17:16-18** (NIV) ¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him...

Acts 17:19 (NIV) ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"

Private Households

Acts 16:13-15 (NIV) ¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.
Acts 16:29-31; 18:7-8

Hardship

2Corinthians 11:23-28 (NIV) ²³ I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

4. The world is changed

Paul's Missionary Journeys • Ripple Effect Revisited

2Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV) ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
2Corinthians 5:9-10