

4

Relating to Your Call The Ministry of Missions



Introduction

In the broadest sense of the word, **Mission** refers to a specific task with which a person or group is charged. As descendants of Adam and Eve, all of mankind has a mission "to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it". For Christians, God has an additional, important, very specific mission:

To communicate the salvation that God is offering to every living person through His son Jesus.

This Study will focus on the mission that God has set before us. We will look at the task before us and contemplate the opportunities to minister that are present.

Target: All Peoples

God has always had a heart of compassion for all peoples of the world. Even in the process of setting up the nation of Israel as a people for himself, God made it clear that His vision was for all people to know Him. Consider God's promise to Abraham:

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 12:3

- Underline those whom God would bless through Abraham.
- *All peoples of the earth leaves no one out. Every group of people will be blessed through Abraham's descendant, Jesus Christ.*

As the nation of Israel matured, God continued to reveal to them that He wanted them to speak about Him to the nations of the world.

⁸ *Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.*

²³ *Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day.*

²⁴ *Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

1 Chronicles 16:8,23-24

- The Lord has done things that are to be proclaimed. Underline to whom those things should be made known.
- Circle that portion of the earth that was to "Sing to the Lord"
- Underline to whom His glory was to be declared

Jesus made it clear that his message was intended for a worldwide audience.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:14

- Underline to whom the gospel must be preached.

Some facts...

- > There are 6.2 billion people in the world (as of the year 2003)
- > Approximately 1/3 of the world's people claim to be Christian
- > Roughly 11% of the world's population are evangelical Christians.
- > One third of the world's non-Christians live in already reached people groups
- > One-third of the world's non-Christians live in un-reached people groups
- > There are 6800 spoken languages in the world
- > There are 2800 un-reached people groups in the world.

Peter understood the love that God has for all peoples.

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.

2 Peter 3:9



- Underline why God is patient with us.
- Circle what He desires for every person.

Results: Guaranteed

Because God loves all peoples, He has made some decrees concerning how people will respond to him.

All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.

Psalms 86:9

- Circle the ones who will come and worship before the Lord
- Underline that which the nations will bring to God.

David explains in more detail how the nations will respond to God's purpose.

²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, ²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.

Psalms 22:27-28

- Circle who will remember and turn.
- Underline who will bow down before Him.
- Frame how God relates to the nations in verse 28.

Mankind is currently in rebellion to God's rule. He allows nations to rebel, hoping that they will listen, repent and turn.

God makes it clear that he is not just dealing with nations as a group. He also has determined that individuals will be responsive to His greatness.

²² "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. ²³ By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.

Isaiah 45:22-23

- Circle the ones whom God wants to turn to Him.
- Notice in verse 23 the confidence and certainty of God's intent. He uses words like **swore, integrity** and **not revoked** to describe his promise.
- Underline the promise in verse 23 that God makes concerning all people.

Every person will ultimately acknowledge God by bowing the knee before Him. It would be tragic if they made the discovery of God's greatness on their way to Hell.

The fact that God has decreed that every person will acknowledge Him makes the task of sharing God's truth absolutely essential. Only those who believe in God's Son before they die will experience the eternal life freely offered by God.

Communication of the Good News to every living creature is the Mission.

The Mission: Tell Every Person

The New Testament states the mission in different ways, but the focus is always on every person:

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Mark 16:15

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

- In each verse, draw a circle around the target group.
- In each verse underline what the sent ones are to do.
- **Which verse seems most compelling to you? Why**

Who Will Respond?

Every disciple must seek God's guidance and direction in determining what part they will play in fulfilling the mission God has given. No one can tell you what your part is except the Father whom you serve.

God calls His servants to His work in many different ways. Elijah was told by God to select Elisha to succeed him as prophet.

¹⁹ So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. ²⁰ Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?" ²¹ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.

1 Kings 19:19-21

- Circle the method Elijah used to inform Elisha of his calling.
- Underline how Elisha responded in verse 20.
- Draw a frame around the actions Elisha took as a result of his call.

For disciples:

The disciples were the ones who first heard these instructions. They recorded these words for our benefit. Each generation has the same charge and the same responsibility. Those who are His disciples are responsible for carrying out the instructions.

Knowing God's Will is an essential ingredient for being a disciple. Learn more about determining God's will in the **vDRC** study entitled "**Knowing God's Will**" in the **Basics** section of the **vDRC** Discipleship Studies.

When Elisha destroyed his plowing equipment and slaughtered the oxen, he was making a distinct break with the past. Those were his tools for making a living. He chose to leave his former life in order to learn from the one who called him.

Isaiah had a direct experience with God when he was called.

¹ *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple...*

⁵ *"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."* ⁶ *Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.* ⁷ *With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."* ⁸ *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

Isaiah 6:1, 5-8

- Circle the one who appeared to Isaiah in verse 1.
- Underline the Lord's question to Isaiah in verse 8.
- Circle Isaiah's response in verse 8.
- Notice that God did not ask Isaiah to go for him. He simply asked a question and Isaiah volunteered to go.

Paul and Barnabas had a different experience in their calling to the mission. This event occurred during a worship service in Antioch.

² *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* ³ *So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.* ⁴ *The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.*

Acts 13:2-4

- Circle the one from whom the call originated.
- Underline the message that the Holy Spirit gave.
- Draw a frame around the activities the church used as they sent off Paul and Barnabas.

God's approach to calling His servants varies from one person to the next. He might reveal himself as he did to Isaiah. He might speak to a godly person as He did with Elisha. He could speak through an entire congregation as He did for Paul and Barnabas. However He chooses to make His will known, it will always be clear to the one being called that it is God who is doing the calling.

All Have a Part to Play

Everyone who is a disciple has a part to play in the mission. Your mission may be your family, or your neighbors. It might be the people with whom you work or those who attend your school. Or, it may be to a people far away.

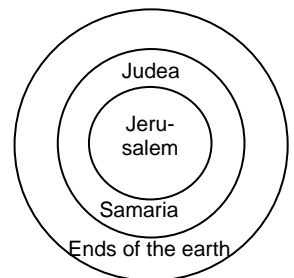
Some are called to be professional missionaries. That is, their income is derived directly from their missionary activities. Others earn their living through work that is not directly mission related. Both kinds of workers are essential to the fulfillment of the mission.

Those who are professional missionaries need prayer and financial support from those whose work is not directly mission-related.

Coming into the presence of God caused Isaiah to have an intense sense of his sin. While the method used to cleanse Isaiah of his sin is unusual, we have the blood of Jesus that cleanses our sin.

The **vDRC** study "Assured Forgiveness" will help you understand the method God prescribes for cleansing from sin. You'll find it in the Discipleship studies in the Getting Started section of the **vDRC** website.

Acts 1:8 gives the pattern for accomplishing the mission. Start where you are (Jerusalem) and expand ever outward.



Prayer Support

Paul knew the importance of prayer to the success of his mission:

¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Ephesians 6:19-20

- Draw a box around Paul's prayer request in verse 19.
- Underline Paul's prayer request in verse 20.

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.

Colossians 4:3-4

- Draw a box around Paul's request in verse 3
- Underline Paul's request in verse 4.

Those who prayed for Paul had a significant effect on the words Paul used! When you pray for a fellow Christian, you are joining them in the work they do and the fruit they bear. Prayer enables God's power in those doing God's work.

Financial Support

In the Old Testament, God directed the people to support the ones responsible for the work within the temple.

"Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.'"

Numbers 18:24

- Circle the gift to be given to the Levites.
- Notice that the giving of the tithe was an offering to the LORD. The people gave it to the LORD and the LORD gave it to the Levites.

Paul was deeply appreciative of the support he received from the Philippian Church.

¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:16-19

- Circle in verse 16 what they sent Paul.
- In verse 17, underline the thing for which Paul was looking
- Paul believed that the gift the Philippians gave was **credited to their account**. In other words, their gift was recorded in the record that God keeps!

The Tools section of the **vDRC** website has some lists that may help as you pray for the missions of others.

As you receive prayer letters, be sure to support those who are enlisting your aid by praying for their requests.

Levites were descendants of the tribe of **Levi**, one of Israel's 12 tribes. They were singled out to be priests in service to God. They are comparable to present day professional missionaries.

To learn more about the benefits of generosity, look at the study on **Generosity** in the **Character** section of the **vDRC** Discipleship Studies

Review

In the space that is provided, summarize the teachings of each section of this study.

Target: All Peoples

Results: Guaranteed

The Mission: Tell Every Person

Who Will Respond?

All Have a Part to Play

Application

What has God spoken to you about in this study?

What do you think your need is?

What is it that God wants you to do?

How are you going to check-up on yourself?

Don't Skip the Application

Applying God's Word to your life is the most important part of study.