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# WEST VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

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9:30 am Bible Class—all ages	Phone Number: (623) 695-5623
10:30 am Sunday Worship	Website: <a href="http://www.wvcochrist.com">www.wvcochrist.com</a>
5:00 pm Proverbs study (online)	Email: <a href="mailto:wvchurchofchrist@gmail.com">wvchurchofchrist@gmail.com</a>
7:00 pm Wednesday Bible Class	Facebook: West Valley church of Christ

January 9, 2022

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## How to Become an Evangelist

While it comes very easily for some, many Christians find it difficult to discuss their faith with others. If this describes you, please know that you are not alone. Still, whatever challenges you face in communicating the Gospel simply must be overcome. While not everyone can or should become a public teacher (1 Corinthians 12:29-30; Ephesians 4:11; James 3:1), every Christian is expected to grow to the point that he or she can communicate the basics of the Christian faith (Hebrews 5:12ff). In fact, no Christian is exempt from the command to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). When persecution caused everyday Christians living in Jerusalem to scatter, the Bible says that they – not the apostles or other public teachers alone – “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). No one was excluded from that statement.

The term “preaching” in Acts 8:4 is actually the verb form of the English word “evangelist.” Literally, those early Christians went everywhere evangelizing. While we sometimes use the term “evangelist” to reference a full-time minister or someone holding a public teaching position, the term doesn’t demand either thing. “To evangelize” is literally “to proclaim good news”; an evangelist then is anyone who performs that action by teaching the Gospel to others. Those Christians who were scattered abroad were all evangelists; and, frankly, every Christian should eventually become one.

So how can a person become an evangelist? An early Christian named Philip was described by the Bible as “the evangelist,” possibly to differentiate him from Philip the apostle (Acts 21:8; cf. Matthew 10:2-4). Philip isn’t first introduced as an evangelist though. How did he become one?

Before Philip was known as an evangelist, he was “one of the seven” (Acts 21:8), that is, one of seven men who had been selected by the church in Jerusalem and appointed by the apostles to oversee the work of caring for that congregation’s widows (Acts 6:1-6). To qualify for this job, one had to have a “good reputation” and be “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (6:3).

While being filled with the Holy Spirit is a fairly dynamic concept in the New Testament with more than one meaning, I believe the description in Acts 6:3 relates to that aspect of being filled with the Holy Spirit that we control. Paul told the Ephesians, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). Just as drinking alcohol is a choice, being filled with the Spirit is a choice; Paul commands us to avoid the former and fulfill the latter. Since Paul goes on to specify that instructive singing is one way to achieve this command (5:19), it stands to reason that being filled with the Spirit in this sense is simply being filled with the teaching of the Gospel, the “word of Christ” (Colossians 3:16).

Philip was filled with the Gospel to the extent that he knew how to apply it (“wisdom”) and was living it (“good reputation”) (Acts 6:3). However, in between this description and becoming an evangelist was the beautiful work of service he did for those widows. Luke doesn’t describe how Philip and the others discharged their responsibilities, but he does record three outcomes: 1) the church grew (6:7); 2) Stephen, one of the seven, became a preacher (6:8-10); 3) Philip also became a preacher (8:5). Benevolent and humanitarian work can’t replace evangelism, but for at least two knowledgeable Christian men, the path to learning how to care for spiritual needs started with learning how to care for physical needs.

Let me say it one more time: every Christian should become an evangelist. If you don’t feel comfortable talking to others about the Lord, take the path that Philip took. Fill yourself with the teachings of Jesus. As you do so, don’t see yourself as being filled with information but as being filled with the influence of the Holy Spirit Himself. You’ll find as you do so that your life will improve and your wisdom will grow. Take that first step by doing “good to all” whenever you “have opportunity” (Galatians 6:10), and don’t be surprised when you find it easier and easier to spread the good news of Jesus just like any other evangelist.