

What about Your "One?"
Acts 8:39-40

Dr. Steve Horn

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At the beginning of 2008, I issued two challenges. The first was to join me in reading through the Bible. For those of you who will complete that challenge this week, I say, "Congratulations." I hope that your continued reading and study of the Bible will be enriched as a result of taking a year to read systematically through the Bible.

The other challenge was called "The One." Remember that? I encouraged every person **to make a specific commitment to reach at least one person for Christ in 2008**. I received correspondence from as far away as Tennessee and Michigan to let me know of their commitment to pray for, build a relationship with, and engage in spiritual conversation with their one. I am happy to report that as recent as two weeks ago, someone called to report to me that their **ONE** had made a commitment to Christ. So, for those of you still praying, still waiting, don't give up on your **ONE**!

So, today, I think it is appropriate to go back to that same text and end the year asking the question, "What about your one?"

Acts 8 gives us the account of Philip, a deacon in the early church, being led by the Spirit of God to a road in the desert. On the road, the Spirit further leads Philip to go to a man riding in a chariot. Philip goes to this Ethiopian eunuch and tells him how to have forgiveness from sin, a relationship with Christ, and eternal life through Jesus Christ. But, that's not the end of the story about Philip. We read that in verses 39 and 40.

Text: *39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.*

The text tells us three things that happened as way of summary to this story. First, in miraculous fashion the Holy Spirit swept Philip away so that Philip and the Ethiopian never saw each other again. (It must have been a grand reunion in Heaven.) Just as the Spirit of God initiated this encounter, the Spirit of God controlled Philip's next movement. Second, the Ethiopian went away rejoicing. There is always rejoicing when a person comes to faith in Christ. Third, Philip didn't stop. He continued to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Let's make some practical application this morning. I want to call you to do four things today in relation to your **ONE**.

Re-Visit the One

At the beginning of 2008, we examined this story of Philip and the Ethiopian in some detail. I pointed out to you several basic principles.

1. God uses His Spirit to bring people to Himself.

The work of the Spirit of God is evident throughout this passage. First, the Spirit of God *scattered* the Church throughout the region. Then, the Spirit of God *spoke* to the heart of Philip and *sent* him to a specific location to intercept the Ethiopian. Then, God *set up* the Ethiopian riding in the chariot by having him read from the prophet Isaiah. The point is that the Spirit of God is continually at work. We can be certain that God is at work drawing people to Himself. This fact ought to give us great enthusiasm and great confidence as we seek to reach the world one person at a time.

2. God uses His People to bring people to Himself.

The second guiding principle to this strategic plan is that God uses His people to bring people to Himself. God could have had another plan, but His plan was for believers in Him to share with those who are not yet believers.

3. God uses His Word to bring people to Himself.

The third guiding principle is that God uses His Word to bring people to Himself. This is why I want both believers and unbelievers to read God's Word. As unbelievers read the Bible, the Spirit of God will use the Word of God to bring people to Himself. As believers read the Bible, we become better equipped to do as Philip did—start with the Scriptures and preach Jesus.

Re-Connect to Your One

For those of you who have not had contact with your **ONE**, today is a reminder to re-connect to your **ONE**. Don't give up. Double your efforts in praying, building relationship, and seeking to engage in some kind of spiritual conversation.

Some of you have joined this year and this is brand new to you. That's o.k. Find a **ONE**. Commit to praying for, building a relationship with, and engaging in spiritual conversation with **ONE** person in 2009.

For those of you who have seen your **ONE** establish a relationship with Jesus, maybe this year God wants to use you to help that person deepen the relationship with Jesus. Maybe your **ONE** has not followed through with baptism. Maybe your **ONE** has not connected to a church. Re-connect to your **ONE**.

Rejoice over the One

The Bible says in Luke 15 that there is rejoicing in Heaven when a person turns away from sin and to the Savior. Why wouldn't there be? Another person freed from Hell and going to Heaven. We ought to have that same kind of rejoicing.

There's another kind of rejoicing that is sometimes missed. There is also the joy of the person finding faith in Christ.

As you close out this year, perhaps taking some time to reflect on the good things of this year, I trust that you will be able to rejoice over your own relationship with Christ and maybe even the relationship that you have seen begin in someone else's life.

Re-Commit to Another One

There's one last truth in this text. Primary to the end of this story is that Philip did not stop with the one Ethiopian. In fact, the summary of his life is that he continued. We need to do the same—re-commit to another one.

We only encounter the name Philip one more time in the Bible. The only other statement made about Philip is in Acts 21:8. *8 On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.* The phrase evangelist does not seem to refer to him as a title, but rather a description of his life.

A mother wrote Dear Abby: "My daughter was driving on a busy street when she noticed an older gentleman in running shorts lying on the median. She stopped, turned on her hazard lights and went to help. He was unresponsive, but breathing. When she called 911, she was told that more than 100 motorists had reported a 'dead man' on the street, but no one had stopped to check on him."

We all want to say, "I would have stopped!" We are mad. We want to know who those one hundred were. We want to lecture them. We want to tell them, "That was someone's friend, spouse, father, or grandfather." Yeah, we would have stopped.

Wouldn't we have stopped? The evidence suggests that the answer is not so clear.

I see an analogy to evangelism in the mother's letter. Most people want to make a call for someone else to go; few are willing to stop and personally get involved. Like the 100 callers, we certainly see those around us as who are spiritually dead. We acknowledge that somebody ought to go talk to them. Maybe the preacher will go. Maybe the missionary will go. Maybe the traveling evangelist will go. It's not so much that we don't want unbelievers to hear the truth, because we know that those who do not know Jesus will spend eternity apart from Him. We want them to know. We just don't want to be the one to go.

That's why Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." Most every day, God places in our path someone, spiritually speaking, lying in the street. Will you stop?