

## Notes



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### **Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes**

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#### **Week 31: Mission Matters (A topic study)**

Doubtless you know of the appalling physical and spiritual needs present in our world. But have you considered how it is possible for you to help alleviate them? Every believer has a part to play in Christ's church and its mission. Through these studies we'll see what's involved in being a missionary (Studies 2 and 3) and how you can help (Studies 4 and 5). But first let's see why mission is important.

#### **Day 1. 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'**

**Mark 16:15; Luke 24:17; John 20:21**

1. Put into your own words the task given to the church.
2. Why do you think the same commission is repeated in all four Gospels?
3. What would you reply to the sceptic who says, 'Christians shouldn't interfere with those who hold other beliefs'?
4. How would you answer the person who says he's too busy with the spiritual needs of his own land to care about other places?

Read Matthew 9:35-38. For what purpose does Christ send his people? Buy a world map and a copy of Operation World by P.J. Johnstone (STL) or some Operation Mobilisation prayer cards to help you begin to pray for other countries.

*'I know that I have opportunities of usefulness at home: nevertheless in heathen lands there is gross darkness and scarcely any gleam of light.'*

Thomas Gajetan Ragland.

#### **Day 2. Paul - a missionary in the making**

**Acts 7:54 - 8:4; 9:1-31; 13:1-3**

It's easy to put missionaries on pedestals and assume them to be especially holy types! But this is sometimes a way of evading God's demands on you. Today's study shows how a highly unlikely candidate for a missionary found his calling.

1. **Saul.** List what you know about his background and previous actions. Is he the 'type' you'd expect to become a Christian? Once converted, what natural gifts does he have that God makes use of?

2. **Crisis.** What happened to Paul was exceptionally dramatic, but what elements are common to everyone's conversion?
3. **Paul.** What new priorities does Paul have, now he's a Christian?
4. **Commission.** Can you work out the respective roles played by Paul, the local church and the Holy Spirit in determining Paul's career? Are there any hints in this study about what may constitute a missionary 'call'?

Think about what qualities are needed to be a missionary.

### Day 3. For the sake of Christ ...

#### **Galatians 1:11-24; Philippians 3:1-24**

The two passages today show something of Paul's attitude towards his missionary life, revealing his worries and goals. God did not insulate him from life's difficulties despite his key role in the church.

1. Where does the gospel come from? Note down the preparations Paul undergoes before starting his ministry (Galatians).
2. Make a list of those things which most dominated Paul's life. What might get in the way of commitment to Christ? List some of the priorities which should take the highest place in your life (Philippians).

*'There is nothing in the world worth living for but doing good and finishing God's work - doing the work that Christ did.'* David Brainerd.

Are there any aspects of your life that you aren't prepared to surrender for the sake of Christ? Why not read a missionary's life, such as the *'Biography of James Hudson Taylor'* by Dr and Mrs Howard Taylor (Hodder and Stoughton)?

### Day 4. How can I help ... now?

#### **2 Corinthians 1:8-11; 9:1-15; Philippians 4:10-20**

It's neither possible nor right for all of us to serve God overseas. But there are ways in which we can all help. Today's study investigates how.

1. 2 Corinthians 1:8-11. Why does Paul want others to know of his sufferings? What part to play have the people to whom he writes? In what ways could you support someone away from home for the sake of the gospel?
2. 2 Corinthians 9:1-15. Why should you give money away and to whom?
3. Philippians 4:10-20. How does God look at this and repay it? What kind of giving does God value most?

Get more information about our missions involvement as a Church from the Pastors. Find out about the individuals from our fellowship currently serving overseas, and start supporting them with your prayers, money and letter writing.

### Day 5. Being prepared

#### **Isaiah 6:1-10**

*No child of God can claim exemption from the directive to let the whole world know what Jesus has done. The initial call of Christ to his disciples was to 'Follow me' and its immediate result would be 'and I will make you fishers of men' (Matthew 4:19). So often we hear the question 'How do I know if God is calling me to his service?' The question should rather be framed 'Since God has called me to this tremendous task, what particular part does he want me to play?' Elizabeth Goldsmith*

1. Note down some of those things which Isaiah's vision teaches him about God's character and his own needs.
2. Why is Isaiah prepared to take on God's tasks?
3. Look at the message he's to take - will everyone accept God's message? Imagine what discouragements Isaiah will face.

Lord, help me to be prepared to do whatever you ask of me.

Read *'Going Places'* (IVP) a fascinating booklet by Elizabeth Goldsmith about Christian service.

### Weekend

1. Begin your prayers for the world by adopting one particular country of your choice. Find out all you can about it, such as: the number of local Christians and missionaries; what missions operate there; what the people are like; how the economy runs; how you can find up-to-date prayer information. You could compile a file of information on it. Don't forget that the country is an organic whole with real, live inhabitants! Perhaps get to know about the country of an overseas student or immigrant family that you know.
2. Mission also includes social action in its meaning. To view the relationship between telling the good news and social action read *'Evangelism and Social Responsibility'* edited by John Stott (Paternoster Press).