

The Apostle Paul – Lesson 14: The First Mission (Return)

1 **John 2:3** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 13 (First Mission – Derbe and Lystra)

1. According to Acts 14:7, what was the first activity of Paul and Barnabas?
Answer: Preached the gospel.
2. According to Matthew 19:27, what is to be the role of the Apostle in heaven?
Answer: Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
3. Referencing Luke 17:19, What is the power of the miracle?
Answer: Thy faith hath made thee whole.
4. According to Acts 14:13, what was the reaction of the people to the healing miracle?
Answer: To worship Paul and Barnabas (sacrifice to them).
5. Complete the following scripture:
Matthew 19:26 With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

True / False

- False** Paul healed the lame man in Derbe. (ACTS 14:8 – In Lystra)
- False** Paul and Barnabas accept the honor for healing a man. (ACTS 14:14-17 – We are but men)
- True** Pride leads to destruction. (PROV 16:18)
- True** Satan only works six days a week. (1PET 5:8)

Lesson 14: First Mission (Return)

Some people are truly gifted that they can hear something and know it forever. However, most of us average people need to hear information several times before it takes hold within us.

I can clearly hear my mother exclaiming 'How many times do I have to tell you....?'

Little did my mother realize she was engaging in much needed follow up, as she reinforced key family or behavioral expectations into my core character – Of which I have held onto through the years.

As we follow Paul and Barnabas on the return trip, we will see opportunities for follow-up – often the most neglected part of witnessing:

Where we left off...

Acts 14:20-21 – The return trip is a follow up

(20) Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

(21) And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

The mission did not end in Derbe, but took on the next level of commitment: Follow-up.

This trek back did not take them through different cities or towns to demonstrate continued spreading of the word, but through the same route they came – And it is purposeful.

Acts 14:22-23 – Purpose

(22) Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Confirm:

- To establish as a truth
- To conduct a religious ritual

It is unlikely Paul and Barnabas were performing a rite, as there was not a religious practice for this act.

It is more likely they examined those who previously professed belief, to determine if their words were of the mind (in agreement) or of the heart (in faith).

Matthew 15:7-9 – Christ declares a nature of the worldly:

(7) *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,*

(8) *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.*

(9) *But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.*

Again – Talk is cheap (1 John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.)

Exhort:

- To strongly encourage or urge

Encouragement cannot be underrated, and it does not happen by itself. Bringing up others in the love of the Lord is an act of love in itself, and it is in keeping with the Lord's commandments:

John 13:34-35 – Christ declares the nature of a believer:

(34) *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

(35) *By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

The love of a believer is what defines a disciple of Christ – It is the credibility of the witness.

Follow-Up

People will often tell you what they think you want to hear, even if it is about God. Paul and Barnabas understand this truth and make it a point to reinforce their previous visit with a follow-up to achieve several points:

1. Verify the information received was clearly understood – As noted, people will often be agreeable just to 'get through' a situation, and not actually grasp the details, or even the message.
 - a. When bringing the gospel to someone for the first time, it may conflict with their current core values, and follow up reinforces the message of God's love.
 - Some have no actual 'moral compass' (no concept of God)
 - Some may be slave to a lie, believing they have to 'do something'
 - Some may have been conditioned from youth to yield to false doctrine
2. Build a relationship – The expectation is that the hearer will place their trust in the Lord, but it is also important that they trust you as a faithful and credible witness (they have to trust you first)
 - a. Follow-up is a key action to reinforce trust.
3. Setting expectations – Possibly the most challenging part is to communicate that his change is not simply an internal matter, that, if one truly believes in their heart, places their trust in Jesus Christ as savior, and accepts Him as Lord, there should be outward signs of this change, as the person is now a new creature (2 COR 5:17):

- a. Adapting behavior to establish oneself as a 'credible witness' – To become the one who will bring the testimony of Jesus Christ to others (shine the light)
Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- b. Aligning actions to meet the Lord's commandments – To follow the Lord in love
John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.
- c. Dedicating time to commune with the Lord – To seek His guidance
Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Paul and Barnabas did not simply seek acknowledgement, but fostered continuous growth as 'babes in Christ', to set the new believers on a good course that is in alignment with Christ.

(23) And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Paul and Barnabas take steps to introduce order

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Ordaining elders – A necessary responsibility, The role of the elder is to minister to the church body (not to rule in subjection, but to guide in love):

Titus 1:5-9 – The office of Bishop (elder)

(5) For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

(6) If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

(7) For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

(8) But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

(9) Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

The elder's responsibilities include (but not limited to)

Teaching – **2 TIM 2:15** Rightly dividing the word of truth

Preach – **2 TIM 4:2** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season

Guide – **1 PET 5:2** Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*

After praying / fasting – Paul and Barnabas exercise their faith: the Lord will be with the new body of believers:

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them

The interaction between believers needs to be more than 'hello' and 'goodbye' – As we are all members of one body, there is a necessity to ensure new believers have a strong connection to the path of growth, and this is entrusted to the mature believers by Christ – To strive to become an 'elder' In faith!

Next lesson, we continue on with Paul on the return trip – Almost home.

Lesson 14: First Mission (Return)

Study Questions

1. According to Matthew 15:8, why does Christ rebuke the worshipers?

2. According to John 13:35, what action reveals the believer as a disciple of Christ?

3. According to Acts 14:22, What two activities do Paul and Barnabas perform?

4. According to John 14:15, what demonstrates your love for Christ?

5. Complete the following scripture:

Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be _____, as the _____ of God

True / False

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | What you say is always from your heart. |
| T | F | Paul and Barnabas return to the cities they previously visited. |
| T | F | Paul and Barnabas established elders in the churches. |
| T | F | Elder is simply the oldest people in the church. |

The Route

1. Cyprus (Salamis and Paphos)
2. Perga in Pamphylia
3. Antioch in Pisidia
4. Iconium
5. Lystra
6. Derbe

(the return is the same in reverse)

