

A TRUE DISCIPLE

“On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them....” —ACTS 14:27

In the days of the book of Acts, churches are being planted and rapidly expanding throughout the Mediterranean world. The overwhelming fact the book of Acts teaches us is that evangelism is the work of God. In working with God, we are the means He uses, but in working for God, we simply do our best in orchestrating our own plans. To depend on the measure of our own techniques and ingenuity will be the measure of our powerlessness. We may be able to persuade a few into a Christian position, but we will never make true converts or disciples of them.

Neither should we be inclined to think one size fits all; just anyone, anywhere, anytime, because that isn't the case. If there is no spark that is responsive the timing is wrong. Many people are searching, but in the wrong places, and we can be quick to criticize them for that, rather than seeing the heart that is searching. Jeremiah 29:13 says, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” This is because God is also seeking, and He puts within our hearts that appetite to seek Him and know Him. In working with God, we learn to recognize His voice and be keen observers of the opportunities He opens to us to witness for Him. He knows which hearts are ready, and it is His Spirit who draws them.

We live in a complex, pressure-filled world, so the problem for many of us is that we miss opportunities because of hardships we are facing ourselves. We tend to be upset and so engrossed in our own situations that we are no longer on the lookout for God-given opportunities. In

Philippi, Paul and Silas had been arrested, severely flogged, cast into prison and put in stocks, yet were praising God. They saw their painful situation as another opportunity to advance the Gospel, which it did. God is not outwitted by any circumstance, and in troubling situations, we very well might be in the right place at the right time for God's purpose.

Salvation is always a work of God. As Christians, we need to make ourselves available to Him at all times, even in hardship, and in prayerful dependence upon Him we'll begin to see things happen. Sometimes we'll sow the seed, sometimes water it, and other times we'll reap a harvest. Regardless of our problems, however severe they are, like Paul, we'll be able to report all that God has done, and that's a true disciple!

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, help me to be so in tune with You and your agenda that I will recognize your voice and act at your calling. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I working together with God even in my hardships?