

## REVIEW: Philippians 2:10-11.

How did you do this week in your pursuit of Minimizing Self principles? Any progress? (Form triads and share with each other. If you really did not work on any this week, share which one would you like to improve on and why.)

Don't be **afraid** to address **problems**.

Be **unselfish** in all your dealings.

Develop a **learning** spirit.

Be **open, transparent** about your own struggles.

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## Maximizing Service!

Remember that we are not only helping our disciples learn and do these things, but we must be sure that we are consistently growing in these areas as well. Admitting our weaknesses emphasizes the first principle under **Maximize Service**—the category of principles we are looking at today. Read through the following list of principles.

### Maximize Service

1. **Depend** upon God.
2. **Set goals and plan** your work.
3. **Be assertive.**
4. **Know your culture** and use it for ministry.
5. **Learn to be orderly** and **methodical** in your reporting and teaching.
6. **Be determined**, seeing through the problems to the prize.
7. **Seek out fruit.**



### 1 **Depend** upon God.

Paul gives us 7 principles that can help us **Maximize** our **Service** and that of our trainees for God. The first thing we see is that Paul had a humble trust in God that He would do the work. Notice how . . . (Match the statement with the verse by putting the letter of the verse in the blank.)

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| _____ He came without eloquence.   | A. 2 Timothy 4:16-18     |
| _____ He felt he was nothing, realizing that God gives the fruit.            | B. Phil 1:1; Col 1:23    |
| _____ He felt that only through God's grace he was least of the apostles.    | C. Ephesians 6:19        |
| _____ He believed he was not competent in himself—only through God.          | D. 2 Cor 10:12-18; 11:30 |
| _____ He gave no room for boasting.  | E. 1 Cor 2:1-5           |
| _____ God's grace was sufficient, His power made perfect in Paul's weakness. | F. 1 Cor 3:7             |
| _____ He desired the prayers of all believers.                               | G. 1 Cor 15:9-11         |
| _____ He considered himself a servant.                                       | H. 2 Cor 12:1-10         |
| _____ He realized that it was God who gave him strength.                     | I. 2 Cor 3:4-6           |

Why was Paul able to maintain this dependence on God and not self? First of all, he really did have a proper view of who he was—nothing without God. Second, look at 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 —

**Paul resolved not to go in human wisdom . . . to know only Christ . . . to go only in the Spirit's power.**

We need that kind of resolve. Then we will **depend** on God as we should and not try to do things in our own strength.



## 2 Set Goals and Plan Your Work.

Paul was goal-oriented; he made plans. In the graph below look at the action verbs or phrases that demonstrate Paul's planning, and determine his purpose, reason, or result of the plans that he made. Then talk about how this might apply to you.

| Passage       | Action verbs and Phrases | Paul's Purpose/Reason or Results of Plans |
|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| Acts 20:7     | "intended to leave"      |   |
| Acts 20:16    | "had decided"            |   |
| Acts 20:22-24 | "I am going"             |   |
| Acts 21:14    | "not dissuaded"          |   |
| Rom 1:13      | "planned"                |   |
| Rom 15:20     | "ambition to preach"     |   |
| Rom 15:24-26  | "I plan"                 |   |
| Rom 15:28-29  | "I will go"              |   |
| 1 Cor 16:5-9  | "I will come/stay"       |   |
| 2 Cor 1:15-17 | "I planned"              |   |
| 2 Cor 5:9     | "make it our goal"       |   |
| 2 Cor 13:1-2  | "will be/not spare"      |   |

1

What does this mean for us?

2

Are we planning like Paul did?

3

Do we have purposes similar or dissimilar to his?

3 **Be Assertive.** Paul was also assertive; a self-starter; an initiator. What is a self-starter? Dr. Howard Bixby defines a self-starter like this: "One who knows what needs to be done and gets at it without others ordering, manipulating or rewarding him to do it."<sup>1</sup> Read the passages that reveal Paul's self-starting tendencies and write what he **didn't** do.

<sup>1</sup> In a personal interview with Howard Bixby in 2006.

| Passage       | What Paul <i>didn't</i> do . . . |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Acts 9:20     |                                  |
| Acts 9:26     |                                  |
| Acts 15:25-26 |                                  |
| Acts 26:19-20 |                                  |
| Acts 27:10    |                                  |
| Acts 28:17    |                                  |

Notice words like “straightway”—he got right at the task at hand. In several cases, too, he could have sat back and done nothing, but he saw what needed to be done and got to it.

How can we be self-starters? You may say, “It’s just not my personality.” Start by asking God to help you. Then take one daily task that you don’t like to do. Put it down *first* on your calendar. Make yourself do it. Discipline yourself. Develop a calendar/to do list and make yourself look at it. Keep yourself accountable to it.

#### 4 Know Your Culture and Use it for Ministry.

Paul knew the culture (and leaders) of his target people, was flexible, adapted to it, and used it to further the Gospel. (His head was not in the sand!) Read the following passages and ask yourself what Paul knew about his culture and how he used that knowledge or the culture itself. Then try to brainstorm ways your culture could be put to use in ministry.



| Passage                        | What did Paul know of the culture? | How did he use it? | Is there a lesson for us? |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Acts 17:16-34<br>Titus 1:12-14 |                                    |                    |                           |
| Acts 18:3-5, 19                |                                    |                    |                           |
| 1 Cor 9:19-23                  |                                    |                    |                           |

5 Learn to be Orderly and Methodical in Your Reporting and Teaching. These all show how Paul was orderly and methodical in teaching. Examine the passages, discuss, and determine how Paul demonstrated orderly methodical reporting or teaching in each passage.

| Passage                      | How was Paul orderly or methodical in his reporting and/or teaching?        |
|------------------------------|---|
| Acts 21:19                   |   |
| 1 Cor 7                      |   |
| Eph 5/Col 3:18-4:1           |   |
| Titus 1; 2:1-9; 3:1-2; 1 Tim | Gave the necessary teaching to Timothy & Titus to do the jobs he gave them. |
| Corinthians                  | Deals with many topics—introduces each new one with “Now, concerning...”    |
| 2 Halves of Ephesians        | Doctrinal in 1 <sup>st</sup> half, practical in 2 <sup>nd</sup> half, etc.  |

**6 Seek Out Fruit.** Just as Paul organized himself for optimum fruitfulness, he also sought to minister where he could be most fruitful. The following passages show Paul shaking off the dust. But it wasn't just to show them or go off and pout. To where (and what) did Paul go when he left each negative setting?

| Passage          | What Positive Outcomes did Paul Experience as He Left Negative Ones? |
|------------------|--|
| Acts 13:51; 14:1 |  |
| Acts 18:6-8      |  |
| Acts 19:9-10     |  |

Paul didn't waste time in a non-productive area. He sought a fruitful venue.

## **7 Be Determined, Seeing through the Problems to the Prize.**

Paul was not easily daunted; he was persistent. Read the seven passages below one by one, and note how that, even with the previous difficulties, Paul kept on preaching, pushing forward through difficulties—even suffered beatings. What happened next in each situation as he kept going?



| Passage             | What Happened Next? |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Acts 14:4-6         |                     |
| Acts 14:19-20       |                     |
| Acts 14:21-23       |                     |
| Acts 16:6-10        |                     |
| Acts 16:25          |                     |
| 1 Thes 2:1-2, 17-18 |                     |
| Philippians 4:12-16 |                     |

Paul was determined, seeing through the problems to the prize! He and his colleagues even went back to previous towns where they had been persecuted—chased out of town—so that they could strengthen the believers. These men would not quit! Why? Why did Paul keep going? How could he keep at it even though he faced so many difficulties? The answer is in **Romans 8:18, 22-25**.

## Why?

Paul was convinced that the present sufferings could not compare with the future glory, and so he waited patiently. That's not the type of waiting we normally think of. What it means is that he hung in there. He kept at it even in adverse conditions, waiting (looking forward to) the time when he would be with Jesus.

The term in Portuguese (and other Latin-based languages) “esperando por” literally means “waiting for,” but it carries with it the idea of eagerly, actively waiting. That's what Paul was doing in his suffering. We need to be determined...not easily stopped. This is a significant principle for discipleship and church ministry.

Some have said, “Church work would be great if it wasn't for the people.” Church work **is** people. Discipleship is people. But people will let you down. Determination is vital if we are not going to quit. In Western Europe (and other difficult places), the ones who have made it were determined to stick it out no matter what. They didn't let problems stop them. It seemed like nothing would ever happen, but over the long haul, (20 years and more!) with determination, great things have been accomplished.



**MEMORIZE:** This week, put all of Philippians 2:5-11 together.