

## "God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

### Section 34: God's Love Story Always Needs Follow-up.

In the last section we covered the Missionary Journeys of Paul's mission teams. They spread the gospel from Antioch to Rome, converting countless souls and planting many congregations. With all the new Christians responding to the Love Story of the Gospel, it would be necessary to follow-up on their faith to make sure they were growing in respect to salvation (1 Peter 2:2). This is the theme of the thirty-fifth lesson of the series, "God's Love Story Always Needs Follow-up."

Paul traveled extensively on the mission field and always made sure to follow-up with the work he had started. There were three primary ways which he carried this out to the early church.

#### 1. Paul made repeated visits to the congregations.

- a. He made repeated stops throughout Asia.
  - i. He went to Derbe and Lystra on at least three occasions (Acts 14:6, 16:1), working with fine converts like Timothy (Acts 16:1), Gaius (Acts 20:4), Lois and Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).
  - ii. He met with the saints of Ephesus on at least three occasions (Acts 18:19, 19:1, 20:16), working with people like Apollos, Priscilla, Aquila, Timothy and twelve unnamed fervent disciples whom needed a little guidance concerning their gospel message (Acts 19:1-6).

What was the results of these labors? *Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.*

- b. He made repeated visits throughout Europe.
  - i. He went to Philippi and Thessalonica on at least three occasions (Acts chapters 16 and 19). While there he followed up with the Christians, strengthening, encouraging and admonishing them in the ways of Christ. He worked with some wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ like Lydia, Epaphroditus, Eurodia, Syntche and a Jailer at the county prison. He made sure they were growing in their faith.
  - ii. He made at least two trips to the church at Corinth. There he met Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2-3). He would team up with them to make tents until Timothy and Silas arrived from Macedonia. Then for the next 18 months he worked with men like Titius Justus (Acts 18:7), Crispus, Gaius and Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:14-16). With them at his side he taught and lead many to the Lord and away from fornicating behavior.

Just try to imagine where those Christians would have been in their walks with Christ had Paul not followed through with the work. All these things would not have happened had Paul

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not made numerous visits to follow up in the work. This time which he spent with the new Christians not only stabilized in the faith, but also made them more evangelistic. There must always be follow-up visits to new Christians.

### 2. Paul instructed them through written correspondence.

- a. He sent at least two letters to the Thessalonians with instruction about the resurrection.
- b. He sent at least two letters to the Corinthian Christians with instruction about morality, humility, spirituality and charity.
- c. He sent a letter to the Galatian Christians with instruction about legalism and grace.
- d. He sent letters to the Ephesians and the neighboring Colossian Christians with instruction about grace, obedience, idolatry, manmade worship and the Spiritual Armor of God.
- e. He wrote a letter to the Philippian Christians with instruction concerning the gospel, prayer, loving one another and salvation.
- f. He sent a letter to the Roman Christians with instruction about the one church with both Greeks and Jews. This letter was actually sent before he even had visited them in the first place (Romans 1:11).
- g. He sent personal letters to men like Timothy and Philemon to encourage them in their walks with Christ, our freedoms in Christ and our relationships in Christ.

We must not forget the power of communications when it comes to following up with the new converts. Be willing to communicate with the written word in follow-up with new Christians.

- Write a handwritten letter and encourage them in their walk.
- Write out your prayers for them and send it as a “knee-mail”.
- Go to your computer and write them an email of loving instruction.
- Text them encouragement, letting them know they are loved and have great value in the church family.
- Give them a simple note in a card so that they will know you are keeping track of them.
- Send a Facebook message or twitter them to instruct of the upcoming opportunities which are available to them.

Paul was able to reach out to the various congregations regardless of distance through the power of the pen. The very letters we have in the New Testament today are simply collections of these handwritten correspondences. They resulted in eternally changed lives. We have many more ways to communicate than even Paul and can also change the lives of

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many. We must take advantage of this and follow-up with the kingdom through written correspondence.

### 3. Paul would plug them into the universal work of the church.

- a. In Acts 19:9 we find Paul involving the brethren in the campus ministry for two years at the School of Tyrannus. The result was that "...all who lived in <sup>b</sup>Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:10)
- b. While he was in Philippi he started and immediately pulled people into the prison ministry (Acts 16). He pulled Onesimus into the prison ministry in Philemon 10-11. He even made attempts to expand the prison ministry to the Praetorian Guard which were chained up to him during the first Roman imprisonment (Philippians 1:13) to the point where he could close out the letter by saying in *Philippians 4:22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.*
- c. The entire Third Missionary Journey involved the Gentile churches being involved in the benevolence ministry. He orchestrated a large collection of funds for the suffering converts in Jerusalem.
  - i. He said to the Roman church in *Romans 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.*
  - ii. He said to the Corinthian church in *1 Cor. 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.*
  - iii. He held up the Philippians as a model to all the churches concerning their generosity. He said in *2 Cor. 8:2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.*

No matter what the work was, Paul sought to connect them to meaningful ministries which would anchor them to Christ. People want to make a difference for others, but they must be connected to do so. Are we taking the time to connect others to the specialized work of the church? Are we willing to follow in the steps of Paul and connect people up with meaningful ministries in our attempts to keep them in the graces of God's Love Story? We must if we are going to take it seriously.

Conclusion: We need to make sure that we understand the gospel and why it is the Love Story of God for us today. We also must follow-up with Christians to hold them in Christ until maturity. Paul did so by making repeated visits to them, by writing often to them and by connecting them with meaningful ministries. He set an example for us to follow today. Your actions today will more than likely assure that God's Love Story will be strong in their lives tomorrow. Go and make the difference for the kingdom.