

Ready to Proclaim the Good News

ACTS 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) **27** So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship **28** and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. **29** Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' **30** So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' **31** He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. **32** Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

33 In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

34 The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' **35** Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. **36** As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' **38** He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. **39** When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. **40** But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.



What made it possible for Philip to be effective as an evangelist in this situation?

Evaluate your own readiness to share the gospel. Are you

- +/- "I have a heartfelt desire to share the good news of Christ"
- +/- "I have regular social contact with non-Christians"
- +/- "I can effectively explain the message"

If yes, circle the +, if no, circle the -. Be honest and realistic.

Evaluate your own readiness to share the gospel.

Motivated	Available	Equipped	Evangelism Diagnosis
-	-	-	Sequestered
-	+	-	Apathetic
-	-	+	Academic
+	-	-	Frustrated
-	+	+	Daunted
+	-	+	Isolated
+	+	-	Reckless
+	+	+	Engaged

Although people are more complicated than a simple plus or minus would indicate, we can construct a diagnosis based on the analysis of the three areas: motivation, availability, equipping.*

Now find your diagnosis in the chart below*:

Diagnosis: SEQUESTERED

View of Evangelism: not interested

Symptoms: Faith is adopted rather than personal

Type: Cultural Christian—completely isolated from the secular world

Treatment: Make a commitment of faith apart from the Christian subculture.

Diagnosis: ACADEMIC

View of Evangelism: Sees evangelism as an intellectual exercise.

Symptoms: Knows the gospel and sociological trends; doesn't know a non-Christian.

Type: Cloistered Christians

Treatment: Pray for love; take concrete actions to build bridges to the secular world.

Diagnosis: ENGAGED

View of Evangelism: Giving away the faith

Symptoms: Shares the gospel effectively, using a biblical approach; available to people who do not know Christ; motivated by love

Type: All types

Treatment: Keep following Christ.

Diagnosis: APATHETIC

View of Evangelism: "My religion is a personal thing."

Symptoms: Sleeping giant of the church world; no functional difference from non-Christians in the world.

Type: Churchgoer who does not see evangelism as important.

Treatment: Embrace your faith and come to know Christ's love for others; look at what the Bible says about sharing with others.

Diagnosis: FRUSTRATED

View of Evangelism: Confused by what to say and to whom to say it

Symptoms: Has a heart to share Christ

Type: Many church members

Treatment: Look for a mature Christian role model, learn a biblical approach to evangelism and build bridges to the secular world.

Diagnosis: DAUNTED

View of Evangelism: frightening or tiresome

Symptoms: in a strong position: knows the secular world and basics of the gospel; lack of motivation hinders efforts

Type: The fearful or burned-out; many full-time Christian workers

Treatment: Dare to share.

Diagnosis: RECKLESS

View of Evangelism: Exciting job to be done

Symptoms: Motivation and contact with the secular world give real potential; may support manipulative evangelistic schemes

Type: Excited new Christians

Treatment: Become equipped by developing a biblical approach to the secular world and a biblical knowledge of the gospel message

Diagnosis: ISOLATED

View of Evangelism: Wants to share, but has five church potlucks this week.

Symptoms: Could engage the world, but doesn't know non-Christians on a social basis
Type: Busy church workers

Treatment: Gain an audience; become available. Take steps to make friends with a non-Christian.

DOES YOUR diagnosis make sense to you? What can you do to begin to make steps to grow?

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What made it possible for Philip to be effective as an evangelist in this situation?

- Philip was listening to the HS and obeyed when the HS told him to go, even though the command would have made very little sense, as it was a wilderness road, and he had just been having an active ministry in Samaritan villages
- Philip is willing to enter a potentially awkward situation
- Philip is willing to ask a question to discern openness/responsiveness
- Philip is able to explain the scriptures and is ready to explain the gospel of Jesus
- Philip is willing to trust that God had been at work in this man before Philip met him and would be at work after Philip left him

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+/- **Motivated** "I have a heartfelt desire to share the good news of Christ"

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*Both charts adapted from J. Mack Stiles, *Speaking of Jesus* (InterVarsity Press, 1995), p40-41.