

The Course of Ministry: Acts 16

Read: Acts 16:1-39

This account is very important for many reasons. But today we want to cover **Seven Lessons for Ministry:**

#1 Ministry is more about the **motion** of _____ doors of obedience, rather than a **casual** _____ for a clear calling. (16:6-12)

In life and ministry, God is not seeking to stir up a sitting man, but to steer a sailing man.

Ministry is about being in _____, already doing the 'obvious good' you know to do, and _____ the Lord to steer you further.

Ministry is much like the parable of the talents. God will give us small, obvious opportunities to be obedient. As we faithfully move into those small areas, larger opportunities will arrive.

#2 (A) Ministry requires _____ to God's direction when it is clear that he has _____ a door on a certain opportunity for the time being. (16:6-8)

Ministry is about being willing to walk away from a door that has clearly been _____.
Ministry requires caution and realizing when you are throwing 'pearls before swine'.

#2 (B) Ministry requires believing that when God shuts a _____ door it is because he plans to open a _____ door. (16:6-10)

Ministry is about being willing to walk away from a door that has clearly been shut...in order to find the door that has been flung _____ open.

#3 Ministry requires understanding that God's _____ for us on the path of obedience may be very _____ than our plan for us. (16:6-10)

The best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry. And leave us naught but grief and pain.
-Robert Burns

#4 Ministry requires understanding that God's _____ of working out his plan for us may be very _____ than the way we would have gone about it. (16:19-24)

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa 55:9)

Joseph, Job, Hosea and **Jesus** all had ‘good reason to doubt’ or ‘question’ the way in which God decided to work out his plan in their lives. Understandably they probably would have imagined a different or ‘better’ path.

But faith tells us that; if we only knew what God knows (everything) and if we only loved as God loves (perfectly) we would have gone about it the exact same way.

Ministry is about being willing to believe that God’s plan and God’s way of working out his plan is always right, always good, always best...**always better than what I had in mind.**

#5 Ministry requires understanding that God always accomplishes his _____, even if I fail to recognize them. (16:30-34)

Faith tells us that; in all the turns of life, high and low, God is up to something good in the life of the faithful believer. (Rom 8:28)

“...my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but **will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**” (Isa 55:11)

Ministry is about being willing to believe that God seeks to accomplish his purpose in all the _____ of my life.

#6 Ministry is about finding what God is up to in the midst of the _____ of life. (16:10, 16:27-28)

#7 Ministry is about _____ God in what he is wanting to do...not _____ our own path. (16:6-10)

Ministry is not about discovering or creating my own course, but rather _____ God’s purpose for the path that he has me on.

Follow up Questions:

- In what ways have you seen small obedience/door testing develop into something larger?
- Have you ever encountered what appeared to be God shutting a door of opportunity? How did you respond? Was it difficult to walk away? Was it evident later on why that door had closed?
- In what ways have you seen God do something in your life in a way that you would never have gone about it? How did it work out in the end? (Better or worse than your plan)
- Describe a time when you were possibly pushing in your own direction in ministry, in marriage, at work etc. and how God altered your course. What was the final result?
- In what ways have you learned to better identify what God is up to in your life during a specific situation?