



Missionary Characteristics and Challenges

Every missionary must be a believer and should also understand how he was saved. Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8-9.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26, NASB)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB)

He must know Bible doctrine by study. Doctrine is the basis for true motivation in missions. He must understand that all believers are in full time Christian service and that God has led him in that way. He must have enough doctrine (a developed edification complex) to apply Bible doctrine from his frame of reference in unusual circumstances.

He must be oriented to the plan of God from salvation, orientation to the grace apparatus for perception, and how spiritual maturity is achieved. He must be guided by the Word and God’s will for all unbelievers to become believers. He must understand the principle of divine guidance where God guides the missionary to geographical areas where there is positive volition. 2 Peter 3:9.

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)

They must be separated from the details of life to study the Word. There is also a need for separation from emotional believers and cult-apostacy movements. A missionary who claims to be evangelistic (evangelical) and is in the tongues movement is in apostacy and blasphemy. 2 Cor. 6:11-12; Rom. 16:17-18.

“Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.” (2 Corinthians 6:11-12, NASB)

“Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.” (Romans 16:17-18, NASB)

He must be acclimated to his field. He must be adjusted to all circumstances such as weather, customs, language, etc. Must train his converts to go out and witness to their own people on the indigenous witnessing principle.

The Holy Spirit is responsible for appointing spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the placement of personnel in the mission field. No matter how sensational, personable, how much human ability man may have, if a person is not appointed by the Holy Spirit for the mission field, and he goes into this field, he is in the wrong slot. Missionaries are chosen by the Holy Spirit, not the local church.

Missionaries must be taken from the leadership spiritual gifts of evangelism and pastor-teacher and they must qualify on the basis of maximum amount of Bible doctrine known. There must be a stable local church for effective missionary work. He must have the prayer support as well as the financial support of the local church to function properly in the mission field.



The Missionary Must Be Spiritually Mature

Missionaries must be born-again and understand the plan of God. The missionary must exercise his spiritual gift of evangelism and any other gift he has been given by the Holy Spirit. The spiritual gift of Evangelism is a divine ability given at the moment of salvation and developed through preparation. He must be spiritually mature. That is, he must be familiar with the whole counsel of God's Word. He gets mature by study! 2 Tim. 2:15.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB)

In 2 Timothy 2:15, "Be diligent" is aorist active imperative of σπουδάζω (spoudazō) and means to be industrious, eager, to be diligent, to make every effort, to exert oneself to the point of sweating. This is a command. It actually is a way of life which includes the proper mental attitude and motivation to learn Bible doctrine daily. It is positive volition to Bible doctrine.

"To present yourself" means to make every effort to represent yourself and concentrate on being objective to Bible doctrine. They must give complete priority to the Word of God. The whole reason for a missionary going to the mission field is to live Bible doctrine and bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people! By doing so, they live the life of Christ.

"Approved" is δόκιμος (dokimos) and means to pass an exam with emphasis on succeeding, not failing. You must study to be a successful missionary. You must apply what you study. This is the real test for all believers, not just missionaries.

Your study should include testing the accuracy of what you teach every day. As you study, you are tested, did you study today? As you apply Bible doctrine are you using a grace viewpoint or legalism? Are you depending upon man or God? Can you iron a shirt or prepare a meal to His glory?

"Workman" is ἐργάτης (ergatēs) and means an agricultural worker, a laborer, a routine worker. This work speaks of the one who is involved in the mundane, routine, humdrum, distasteful, ordinary, and dull things of life. In the ancient world, it meant to feed the cattle, milk the cows, clean out the barn, hoe weeds, prepare ground, etc. The emphasis here is on doing small, routine things as unto the Lord.

Everyone today wants to do great things for God and then get written up in some Christian magazine. You may think that leading the chief of a tribe to Christ is more spiritual than giving a cup of cold water in the Lord's name. No! The Christian life is fantastic where any task however small or mundane can be done as unto the Lord. You must be in fellowship, taking in the Word daily and staying out of emotional revolt.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, "who does not need to be ashamed" is a triple adjective and means a workman that is not ashamed. You don't have to be ashamed of your station in life if it's an honest vocation. Whether you are a pea picker, tulip farmer, or a purple thumb carpenter you are in full time Christian service. A missionary must not despise the small things of daily living. He must keep on being grace oriented.

"Accurately handling" means to cut straight, to cut a straight path. No deviation into the cults, no deviation into the tongues movement, keep with accurate interpretation and application of the Word of God. Literally, to stay with the Word of truth. This is the enabling of a life with no detours, hang-ups, or blind alleys to divide it with the Word of God, Bible doctrine.

The corrected translation is, "Making every effort to represent yourself approved to God, an irreproachable worker cutting a straight path with the Word of truth."



The Negative Volition Test

The missionary must be able to stand the test of negative volition on the part of those to whom he ministers. Acts 13.

“While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”” (Acts 13:2, NASB)

“So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.” (Acts 13:4, NASB)

Nothing tests the missionary more than nonresponse on the part of those to whom he ministers. Paul began his first missionary journey roughly 10 years after he was saved. At this time, he was spiritually mature.

Negative Volition of a False Teacher (Unbeliever)

Like the witchdoctor in a tribe, the false teacher seeks to keep others from believing. Correct the situation by using the direct approach. Acts 13:6-13; Acts 13:10.

“When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus,” (Acts 13:6, NASB)

“But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.” (Acts 13:8, NASB)

“and said, “You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10, NASB)

Negative Volition of Religion

Religion is different than Christianity. Religion opposes grace and opposes the correct teaching of the Word of God. Religion’s negative volition includes being filled with envy as they were jealous of Paul because of the positive response of the people.

Religion’s negative volition also includes mental attitude sins that fabricate lies and run down doctrinal believers who attend churches that adhere to the Word of God from the original languages. These are the most vicious.

In Acts 13:45, “began contradicting the things spoken by Paul” means they spoke against Bible doctrine and didn’t like it being taught verse by verse. They didn’t like Christ being called the Messiah. They didn’t like Paul’s authoritative teaching. They were the religious bosses and controlled everything religiously in a given town. In contrast, there were many who were following Paul’s teaching. Acts 13:43

“But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.” (Acts 13:45, NASB)

“Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.” (Acts 13:43, NASB)

In Acts 13:46, Paul and Barnabas “spoke out boldly” means to speak dogmatically with authority and confidence. It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to the Jews.

“Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you



first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46, NASB)

“Since you repudiate it” refers to the negative violation of the Jewish religious unbeliever who judged themselves “unworthy of eternal life.” Paul and Barnabas left them and went elsewhere to places of positive volition and had great results. Acts 13:48-49.

“When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.” (Acts 13:48-49, NASB)

Negative Volition of Believers

The negative believers were not negative to the salvation message, but they were negative to categorical Bible doctrine. They believed that circumcision as a religious work was needed for salvation. Acts 15:1-2; Acts 15:5.

“Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.” (Acts 15:1-2, NASB)

“But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”” (Acts 15:5, NASB)

Negative volition in the believer is caused by dragging human works into God’s plan of grace by doing something for God. Well, aren’t you supposed to do good works? We are to stay in fellowship and let the Holy Spirit work through us to produce divine good instead of human good.

The solution is a strong stand for the grace of God. Never give in to the legalists. Missionaries must understand the doctrine of volition, both from its positive and negative standpoints! Acts 15:7-11.

“After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. “And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? “But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”” (Acts 15:7-11, NASB)

Spiritual Endurance

Paul is an illustration of spiritual endurance in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and in Hebrews 11:32-40.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:7-8, NASB)

“And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.” (Hebrews 11:32-34, NASB)



“And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.” (Hebrews 11:39-40, NASB)

The Enemy of Spiritual Endurance

The enemy of spiritual endurance is brittleness of the soul. Hardship is a vocabulary term for spiritual endurance or having iron in the soul. The enemy of spiritual endurance is brittleness of the soul. 2 Tim. 2:3; Prov. 27:17; Jer. 13:14.

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 2:3, NASB)

“Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17, NASB)

““I will dash them against each other, both the fathers and the sons together,” declares the LORD. “I will not show pity nor be sorry nor have compassion so as not to destroy them.”” (Jeremiah 13:14, NASB)

In the ancient world, they understood the concept of the shattering of a dried out wineskin. In Jeremiah 13:14, “I will dash” is the piel imperfect of **נָפַח** (naphats) and is very strong. God indicates destruction of soul at the end of the verse “to destroy them.” This is talking about the disintegration of the soul, the shattering of the soul, the destruction of the soul of an individual as in Proverbs 6:32.

““I will dash them against each other, both the fathers and the sons together,” declares the LORD. “I will not show pity nor be sorry nor have compassion so as not to destroy them.”” (Jeremiah 13:14, NASB)

“The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it.” (Proverbs 6:32, NASB)

In the context of Jeremiah 13, the soul becomes brittle when the believer fails to respond to doctrine and either goes into idolatry where religion is substituted for Christianity or into sexual sins. There is a fundamental type of religion, a conservative religion, and a liberal religion.

When the believer goes liberal toward Bible doctrine, they are often prospered by the devil, although they attribute it to the blessing of God. As such, they conduct a frantic search for happiness. For example, Solomon, even though out of fellowship was prospered materially, yet in his frantic search he found nothing to satisfy him. The Book of Ecclesiastes covers this.

In this context, when you drink the from jug of this life, not only does the jug shatter in your face, but so does your soul. This is called the sin unto death. 1 John 5:16.

“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.” (1 John 5:16, NASB)

Brittleness of soul can become a way of life for the believer. When enough believers in a nation are in this shape, the country goes into terrible divine judgment as did Judah in Jeremiah 13:19.

“The cities of the Negev have been locked up, And there is no one to open them; All Judah has been carried into exile, Wholly carried into exile.” (Jeremiah 13:19, NASB)

This is the pursuit of happiness apart from divine provision and divine design! Brittleness of soul is the antithesis of the edification complex of the soul. A brittle soul is an unfulfilled soul. It must be fulfilled



by the Lord and His Word. Instead of grace orientation, the brittle soul of a believer has legalism, human viewpoint, self-righteousness, self-justification, pride, is critical of everyone, is an irritable character, has a super sensitivity, and accepts no authority but themselves.

Instead of the mastery of the details of life, the details master them. This leads to cheap substitutes! Instead of a relaxed mental attitude, a brittle soul has mental attitude sins of bitterness, jealousy, hatred, and cruelty. Instead of capacity to love, a brittle soul has pseudo love, a sticky-sweet love, boredom and instability. Instead of perfect happiness, the brittle soul has depression, frustration, and instant stimulation followed by constant misery.

The Mechanics of Spiritual Endurance

At salvation, the soul is saved, but has no stability yet. The daily intake of doctrine stabilizes the soul and gives endurance of soul and takes the brittleness out of the system. This is the edification complex of the soul.

Men who have the communication gifts of evangelist and pastor-teacher have three purposes in teaching the Word. In Ephesians 4:11-12, “equipping of the saints” is καταρτισμός (katartismos) in the Greek and means face to face teaching for the purpose of perfecting or training and equipping for combat in the Angelic Conflict. “Work” is ἔργον (ergon) and means inner unseen production of divine good from the right lobe of the soul. The Word of God dominates the soul. This is in contrast to ἀγαθός (agathos) which is overt or visible divine good.

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;” (Ephesians 4:11-12, NASB)

“Service” is διακονία (diakonia) means spiritual service and refers to the universal ministry of the believer. The accumulation of *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul plus the consistent filling of the Holy Spirit is the basis for the production of divine good. “Building” is οἰκοδομή (oikodomē) and means edifying or to build a structure, the edification complex of the soul, to spiritual maturity. This is for all Church Age believers - the entire Body of Christ.

The corrected translation of Ephesians 4:12 becomes, “Face to face (teaching) for the equipping and training of the saints for combat, for the production of the ministry (inner and overt) for the edification of the Body of Christ.”

The Three Objectives of the Ministry

The three objectives of the ministry of the pastor-teacher are unity of the faith, full knowledge of God (completion of the edification complex of the soul), and spiritual maturity. These objectives are summarized in Ephesians 4:13.

“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13, NASB)

“Until” means the objective is now summarized. Until all believers attain. All believers must be under the authority of some local church to grow spiritually. When you find organizations floating loose who are not under local churches and where the pastor communicates doctrine, you are looking at the flotsam and jetsam of the spiritual life.

“Attain” is καταντάω (katantaō) and means to reach a goal, to arrive at a destination, to arrive at an objective. “To the unity of the faith” is not brotherhood unity. It refers to the fact that everyone arrives



in the same way. The pastor communicates doctrine and the congregation takes in the Word under the grace apparatus for perception and erects their edification complexes. That is unity. It refers to the objective of the faith or Bible doctrine as a system of categorical *epignosis* in the heart or right lobe of the soul. *Epignosis* is believed Bible doctrine or full knowledge of the Word of God. This includes the application of that Bible doctrine in personal rapport *phileo* love toward God and unconditional mental attitude *agapao* love toward mankind.

In Ephesians 4:13, “to a mature man” is τέλειος (teleios) and means spiritual maturity, completion of the edification complex. A Christian in spiritual maturity is a part of Christian nobility. “Measure” is μέτρον (metron) and means to the standard. “Stature” is ἡλικία (hēlikia) and means full age or prime of life of the fullness of Christ and refers to His completed edification complex, Christ’s spiritual maturity. “Fullness” is πλήρωμα (plērōma) and is Jesus Christ having an edification complex of the soul as the result of the function of the grace apparatus for perception. Luke 2:40; Luke 2:52; John 1:14.

“The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” (Luke 2:40, NASB)

“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52, NASB)

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14, NASB)

The corrected translation of Ephesians 4:13 is, “Until we all arrive at the objective (through the faithful teaching of the pastor-teacher) with reference to the unity of the faith (system of doctrine) and the *epignosis* (full knowledge) of the Son of God unto the mature nobleman, unto the standard of the prime of life of the full development of Christ.”

The last characteristic a missionary must have is iron in his soul, a soul of endurance, a soul free from any brittleness, a mature soul.