

A MISSION IN LIFE 1: HOW GOD MOVES US

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (Romans 10:14, ESV)

AS GOLFERS, IT’S EASY TO BE TEMPTED by the photographs we see in magazines of courses we haven’t played before, especially if they lie in storied or exotic places. Add a beach to the setting, and it gets even harder to say no.

But what if God were to call you, as it were, to China, South America, Africa, or some other region that holds no appeal for you? To take a week-long golf vacation at a comfortable resort is one thing, but to leave our known world and set up residence somewhere with a different language and unfamiliar customs—this seems as unnerving as, well, talking to your neighbor across the street about what Jesus means to you!

In truth, if you’re not ready and willing to talk to others about salvation in Christ near home, going far away won’t be any worse or better. It will still stir anxiety in you.

And yet, if you have read the book of Acts, you know how Paul, his companions, and his fellow apostles spent significant time “on the road,” taking the gospel message from Jerusalem to “the ends of the earth,” as far as they were known to stretch at that time in history. It is quite evident that they all took up the question that Paul asked the Romans: “How will people know the truth unless someone goes to tell them?” And it wasn’t a question they took up over coffee at the corner café. They took it up with the leather soles beneath their feet. Paul, we know, braved storms and shipwrecks, jailings and death threats, all because he believed the story of Christ was a story everyone needed to hear.

Often we think that a special calling is needed to “go.” But the Great Commission in Matthew 28, where Jesus told the disciples to “go and make disciples,” meant more literally “as you are going.” That is, no matter where you are, you are to open your mouth about the Jesus story as it lives in you. Someone told you about Jesus. In fact, hearing the gospel may be a fresh experience for you, something you have not yet finished processing. But you also recognize the dangers of being ignorant about the state of your soul. That’s God moving you to bring up Jesus, even if you think you have only a little to say. A little may be all your listener is ready to hear right now! So it doesn’t take a preacher; it just takes one willing to talk.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/nZayheL9QSM>.

Opening questions Where are some places in the world you would like to go to play golf? Are there other destinations that seem like too much of a challenge for your comfort level?

READING Acts 26:9-29

Paul’s testimony (verses 9-11)

What was Paul’s life like before he encountered God? How is our sin part of the story each of us has to tell?

Paul’s conversion and calling (verses 12-18)

How did Jesus get Paul’s attention? How soon did he direct Paul’s ministry? How “mature” in the faith must a person be before they are able to share the story of what God has done in their life? Would you say you qualify?

Speaking of Jesus (verses 19-29)

Who was included in Paul’s audience on this day? What was their response to what he had to say? What was the goal of his message? What are some of your own circles of influence, and with whom could you share in a manner like Paul did?
