

“Flow”

GO: You Have What It Takes- Part 1

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Introduction:

I love this video because it shows that a key element in effectively sharing Christ with others is to simply have a willing heart. *Hear I am Lord, send me.* And then I love this guys' example in the video. He's walking through his neighborhood and simply praying that God would use him. And, as he's praying- he's imagining how he could show love in practical ways. **He's looking to GO... to be on mission for His Savior.**

Today we begin a new series. And, I hope this is not just another post-card or 8-week message series at our church. I want this to be a series you remember for a long time. I want this to be a series that changes our church. I want this to be a series where we listen and discuss and learn and apply the principle to our lives and we are different because of it. I want to inspire you to be what God has made you to be. I want to motivate you to invest your life in what is most important, what is most fulfilling, *and what is most in line with what God made you to be... a missionary.*

At the end of his life, Jesus gave His disciples marching orders. He commissioned them. He defined what should motivate them from that point on. He said:

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

This is a passage most of us have heard before. For some of us, we've heard it so often we tune it out. For others of us, it strikes fear in our hearts. For others of us, we know this is what we are to be and do...but we've fallen short and when we hear it, we just feel guilty.

This series: GO- is designed to take the fear out of sharing your faith. It is designed to help you not have to feel guilty anymore. When you practice the principles we're going to talk about- you will be on your way to effective mission. I believe with all my heart that the most fulfilling way you can invest your time and your efforts on this earth is to be on mission for God. I want you to find that purpose. As we do this together, I look forward to seeing Jesus' promise: *I am with you always* be realized as we “GO” for Him.

Well- let's jump in. Today, I'm going to give you a key for effective mission. We're going to talk about one key that can help you get on the track to mission and start running. If you will do this...if you will practice this principle...you're going to see Jesus working in and through your life.

Let's learn together from one of the best missionaries ever. Paul writes:

1 Timothy 1:12-17

¹² I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, ¹³ even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them all. ¹⁶ But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen.

I love this passage because it is filled with rich doctrinal truth. God's mercy reached down to where we were—separated from God by sin—and saved us. Through salvation, God has remade the Christ-follower and bestowed on every Christian the grandest of callings. This is a passage full of great theology.

But, what I notice most about this passage is Paul's excitement over what Jesus has done for Him. He is so aware of God's goodness, so thankful for Jesus' work, so excited about God's calling...that *God's blessings **FLOW** out of him onto Timothy and whoever else would read this letter* (Bible readers down through the ages). What this passage really is—is public praise to God out of a heart overwhelmed by God's work- that has the potential to change lives.

Here's something that I believe to be true with all my heart. **Your best tool for being an effective witness for Christ is fall deeply in love with Jesus and let that show.** Your best shot at seeing loved ones come to Christ around you is to know Jesus intimately, revel in the spiritual blessings God has given us, and simply let that light show to others.

Big Idea: *Your most effective tool for evangelism is to be madly in love with Jesus.*

The good news is that this is:

- Something that you can control.
- Something every person can acquire. This is not out of reach for any person. This is not something that is only given to a few...this is available to anyone.

- This doesn't take any special skill or any special training or any of your money. It will take some time...
- This is something that will also benefit you. You can gear up to share the Good News but be blessed in the process.
- People can't shoot you down. People can argue with your theology. They cannot argue with your story- an experience of a changed life.

I hope you are encouraged as we begin this series. Jesus called us to GO... *but you have what it takes!* An intimate relationship with Jesus is something that you can attain! And, once you are walking closely with Him, others will see your light.

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

Here's the challenge. Here's the starting point. *Could it be that some of us struggle to be an effective witness for Jesus because we really aren't walking that closely with Him?* And, when we aren't really walking closely with Jesus- *He can't "flow" out of us!*

Ed Stetzer- an expert and writer on modern churches and culture—writes: *"People still respond to the things of God, when the things of God are viewed by us (Christ-followers) as important enough to talk about."*

*Could it be that we really struggle to talk about our faith with others because—really when you get right down to it—our faith is not that important to us? Now...you say... "Of course my faith is important to me". If it is—then you're investing in your relationship with Jesus. You're meeting with God. You're centering your heart on God's goodness. You're seeking out God's plans for you each day. IF you do these things...**I really think your light is going to shine to those around you. If we couple a vital walk with Jesus with the other things we're going to talk about in this series (worship, prayer, posture (how an effective evangelist acts), what to share, etc.)—I think you're going to see people coming to Christ because of your influence for Jesus.***

Let's look more closely at how Paul allowed his love for Jesus to spill out/flow all over those around him:

Paul's **Public** "Thanksgiving" Statements

(6 Blessings From God That Can "Flow" Through You To Others):

- **God, thanks for giving me strength to do your work (POWER) (vs.12)**

We've spent much time talking about the power of God available for the Christ-follower through the Holy Spirit living inside of us. This is God's power- (Ephesians 1:19) *His incomparably great power for us who believe*. Here in our passage today, Paul gives public praise to God for giving him strength for the day...strength to carry out his work for Jesus...strength to build a ministry that would impact the world of his day **AND** our world today.

How often do we thank God publically for the strength He gives us? God, thanks for allowing me to wake up today...my heart is still beating. God, thanks for the ability to work hard today. To love my family today. Thanks for answering my specific prayer for help in that hard conversation I had to have...

If we speak this way to God and allow others to hear... or speak this way to others and give public praise to God in the process...*others hear God's goodness...they see God's goodness through our lives and words.*

People need joy. People need help. People need strength to go on and face life's challenges. If they see you as having an unlimited, pure, FREE source of these things—chances are sometime they will be a point in their lives **where they will want what you have!**

Psalm 70:4-5

⁴ *But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness in you. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "God is great!"*

⁵ *But as for me, I am poor and needy; please hurry to my aid, O God. You are my helper and my savior; O LORD, do not delay.*

- **God, thanks for entrusting me with your work (PURPOSE) (vs.12)**

Paul- *He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him*. Paul was almost giddy with thanksgiving to God because God had chosen Paul to do His work. Paul found His purpose in serving God and spreading the good news about Christ. It was the defining focus of His life.

Acts 20:24

²⁴ *But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.*

What if we verbalized to others how excited we are to live another day and serve God with the time that we have? What if we woke up believing that God has left us on earth today to carry out vital tasks for Him?

What if we spent each moment searching for God's will in that particular situation and our hearts were alive each day with the realization that we are part of God's grand scheme to redeem the world?

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Sometimes, we have to be reminded who we are. You're not just surviving the daily grind. *You have great tasks to carry out for the Creator of the world and the Savior of mankind.* You're not just an average person. *You are an ambassador for the King of Kings.*

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

What if we shared with others our excitement over being used by God for His glory?

- ***God, thanks for not counting my past against me (MERCY) (vv.13, 15-16)***
Paul is saying that God is using him...*even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief...* ¹⁵ *This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them all.* ¹⁶ *But God had mercy on me...*

I wonder if you think of yourself this way: ***You are a conduit by which others see God's mercy.*** When I realize where I have come from and factor in God's goodness to me despite my sin- I come to understand God's mercy. *God wants us to share that with others.*

Maybe we need to spend more time thinking about our own sinfulness. Maybe we need to spend more time imagining where we would be, right now, in life without Christ. Because as we focus in on where we were and what life would be like without Jesus' forgiveness, grace, mercy, love, salvation, hope... a sense of great thanksgiving builds in our hearts for what Jesus has done for us. And, *when it builds it will compound and eventually it is going to flow...*

There are a lot of people living around us that really believe that God cannot or will not save them. They are hung up in a thinking pattern where they feel that what they have done (or are doing- present) is so bad that God can't or won't forgive them. **God wants us to be living examples that this is not true.** *When we know from where God has brought us- we can express to them, as Paul did, how He can rescue them as well.*

- *Have you accepted God's mercy?*
- *Are you reveling, daily, in what He has done for you? Do you verbalize this?*
- *What do you get from the laser focus of Jesus' life: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" ...*

• ***God, thanks for satisfying my soul like only You can (FULFILLMENT) (vs.14)***

¹⁴ Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus.

What does a person "filled with the faith and love that come from Jesus" look like? What a combination! Paul said God was gracious and generous because He filled Paul "with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus."

This is the kind of person I want to be. The kind of person I need to keep asking God to make me into.

A person filled with faith:

- Trusts God's promises
- Their hearts are alive and excited about being on mission with God,
- Revels in God's spiritual blessings,
- Pursues knowing God deeply
- Is confident of God's goodness even on dark days
- Is fulfilled and satisfied because they understand they are loved

A person filled with love is:

- A peacemaker
- A forgiver
- A servant
- Puts others' needs before their own

Anyone driven by faith and love will stand out in the crowd. Others will be drawn to this type of person. They will be curious about their faith and they will crave their love. Jesus described this person in **John 7:37-40:**

³⁷ On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" ³⁹

(When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him...)

When others see us...and they are watching...they should see faith and love. They should see a satisfied and joy-filled soul.

- **God, thanks for making me an example of your best work. (TRANSFORMATION) (vs.16)**

¹⁶ But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners.

We said before- you are a conduit by which others can see God’s mercy. But, Paul paints an even fuller picture here. The redeemed Christ-follower is a prime example of God’s patience with any sinner. God takes darkness and transforms it to light. He takes an enemy and transforms him into a friend. He takes a slave to sin and makes him a slave to righteousness. He takes what was dead and gives it new life.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus...

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

You are new. You are beautiful. You are a living memorial to God’s love and power and perfect plan of redemption all wrapped up into the miracle of YOU.

- *Are you living as an example of God’s patience?*
- *Am I publically thankful for God’s mercy? Illustration: Dave Anderson at bus garage. “How are you today, Dave?” Answer: “Better than I deserve”. ☺*
- *Am I showing God’s mercy to others? In how I talk about them. In how I forgive them? In how I show grace?*
- *Others will see and notice these things.*

- **God, thanks for drawing others to your hope by using me. (MISSION) (vs.16)**
Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

Think about what Paul is saying here: *by watching you...by listening to you...by seeing what God has done in your life...by seeing how you live, work, talk, make choices, treat your family, serve others, verbalize your faith—there are those that will watch you and believe in Jesus and receive eternal life.*

Are you flowing all over those around you?

- Verbalize what God HAS done for you.
- Verbalize what God IS doing for you.
- Verbalize how you are handling trials by God’s help and grace.
- Verbalize faith struggles.
- Verbalize small and large blessings throughout the day.
- Verbalize how you see God in creation.
- Verbalize things you learned in your time with God today.
- Verbalize a blessing you received through a worship song you listened to on the way to work.

When we live in love and thanksgiving to Jesus, it will “flow” out onto those around us. We will share what Jesus has done. We will thank God publicly for what He is doing. Others will see Jesus’ goodness in us and they will hear of God’s goodness from our lips.

Illustration: *Rory- “What’s good today?”*

Conclusion/Application:

Who Is Your ONE?