

OPO

June 5, 2011

One of the coolest things I have ever done in ministry happened last year by accident. It's funny how that works sometimes, right? I would have never planned it ... it just happened.

We were on the Dominican Mission Trip. It was Sunday, and I was scheduled to preach (through an interpreter).

Then the interpreter got very sick. He said, "Tim, the Haitian minister knows some English, I think he can interpret for you ... you just may have to go extra slow."

So ... we all headed to church, and I was prepared to preach EXTRA SLOW.

We got to church; they were having an all church Sunday School. It was 3 different classes going on in the same room at the same time. Very hectic.

The Haitian minister pulled me out of class ... And through very broken English, he told me, that he didn't think he could interpret for me ... he then said, "But I want you to pray for my church." I said, OK ... we have a church back in Indiana that LOVES to pray, we will pray for your church.

He said, "No, I want YOU to pray for my church." I said, OK grab my hand, I like to hold hands when I pray." He said, "NO ... I want YOU to pray for my church!"

I said, "I'm trying to ... but you keep saying NO."

Then He described how he wanted me to stand in front of his church and pray for his church ... then I said, "OH! I can do that ... I would love to pray for your church."

And He said, "Thank you". Because he thought that I had finally understood him.

But I still didn't understand ... YET.

I sat up front, the service was in French, so I didn't know anything that was going on ... I just waited for his glance to indicate it was my turn to say my 1 or 2 minute prayer.

After some music and some Bible reading ... he gave me the glance ... I went to the microphone and I prayed a very heartfelt prayer for the Haitian church. There was no interpretation ... so I don't think anyone out side of our group had any clue to what I said.

After I got through praying ... I was almost ready to sit down, when an usher brought a woman up to me as I stood in front of the church. He gave me the universal prayer sign and pointed at her ... he wanted me to pray for her.

So I did. I opened my eyes again, and now there were 2 more people standing in front of me. I kept praying ... and for 30 minutes or more, every time I opened my eyes ... there were more people standing in line to be prayed for.

I forgot to mention that it was 90 degrees outside with about 80% humidity, and the church was a rickety, old metal building. So literally, I am praying up a sweat.

Guessing right now, I probably prayed for 60 or more people that day. And even though I couldn't understand them ... and they couldn't understand me ... that service was full of energy ... and is right there at the top as **one of my all time favorite services.**

Why do I tell you that story? Good question. I am wondering if we can re-create that kind of dynamic in our service this morning?

We do not have the language barrier ... minus my southern accent. But even with that, you usually understand 95% of what I am saying ... I think.

Today, I want to build off of where we stopped last week. We concluded by talking about an O.P.O.

O.P.O. standing for ONE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE.

If you remember, the O.P.O. was Dean Trune's terminology. His O.P.O. is to "spend quality time with God every day."

And despite the The Bazillion SECONDARY Objectives he knows he has to hit his OPO to truly function as a servant Christ.

After a lot of thinking and much prayer ... I begin to wonder if we have OPO's?

Do we hit life square in the face each morning ... or does life hit us first? See ... if we are not careful the Bazillion Secondary Objectives' take over ... and drown out the ONE PRIMAY OBJECTIVE.

So this morning ... I want to give you a shot at beginning an OPO. I am going to quickly cover 14 different Bible verses.

And then by the end of our service I want you to choose one of the passages to direct your life this coming week or however long you choose.

THEN at end of our service ... I have requested a few people to come to the front ... and they are GOING TO PRAY for you to LIVE out God's Word this week.

My hope is that each one of us chooses a verse ... and then we each have someone pray that verse over us.

Review: I am going to share some verses that you can choose as a beginning OPO or Life Verse (you can call it what you want to call it). But over the next week, over the next month ... this verse is going to become a part of your life. You are going to read it, over and over. You may memorize it. You are going to try and figure out how to LIVE it daily.

You choose the verse.

Then at the end of the service you will be prayed for; with your particular verse in mind.

Got it? Let's try this.

Verse 1: **Mark 12:30-31**

And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. ³¹ The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.

I do not have time to go into much detail with each verse ... so I will focus on giving you some highlights.

Here, Jesus was asked, "What is the most important thing I can do with my life?"

And what you see here, is Jesus' answer. LOVE is what God wants from mankind.

Can we obey God without love? Maybe, a little. But it will not be enjoyable.

But if we truly love God, obedience WILL follow. How we love others, is directly influenced by how much we love God ... Life is absolutely empty unless we love God first.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 2: **Philippians 4:13**

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

In context with it's surrounding verses, this doing EVERYTHING is tied to Paul's contentment; contentment EVEN in suffering. It's not really talking about being a SUPER Christian. But you may try more SUPER type things, if you're not worrying about suffering. This would make a great OPO!

Verse 3: Proverbs 3:5-6

***Trust in the LORD with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
⁶ Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.***

A hidden little spiritual secret ... being self-dependant, being self-sufficient is the way to ruin your relationship with God. The GREAT sin of humanity is to try to live independently of God.

Most of us will say that we are BELIEVERS this morning ... but what are we really trusting Him for?

If you desiring to be in a better place with God ... THIS would make a great OPO for you!

Verse 4: 1 Corinthians 16:14

And do everything with love.

In chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians Paul starting talking about the importance of spiritual gifts, then at the end of chapter 12 up to this point in chapter 16, he says, "Now let me tell you what is really important ... L.O.V.E."

Love should be our motive. It should be what drives us. Understanding how much He loves us ... should drive us to love Him, then it should lead us to live a life of love for others.

What's your motive? Being good enough? That's not a good enough motive.

Living righteously, trying to be perfect? That's not a good enough motive.

Love is the only motive that is good enough.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 5: Psalm 71:17

***O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood,
and I constantly tell others about the wonderful things you do.***

This verse is pretty self-explanatory. The author has grown up knowing of the greatness of God ... and now he desires to tell others of the wonderful things that God does.

This would make a great OPO for someone who desires to speak up about God. In other words you WANT to live up to this verse ... so you claim it as an OPO, which will then lead you to speak and tell others about the greatness of God.

Verse 6: 1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses.

Paul is letting Timothy know that there is SO MUCH that he could do with his life ... but I recommend that “fight the good fight for the true faith.”

Go against the flow.

It has a military kind of feel. These are his marching orders. They are not going to be easy ... but if you really want to make a difference it will take you standing up for what you believe.

God called Timothy to it ... but Timothy also chose it for himself. It is good for us to remember both callings.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 7: **Matthew 28:19-20**

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.

So ... our Lord and Savior COMMANDS us to “GO and make disciples of all the nations.” There it is in black and white.

Looking at it another way, you need special permission to STAY PUT!

Henry Blackaby says it this way –

“We can convince ourselves that Jesus does not really want us to adjust our lives, pointing to the success we are enjoying right where we are. Yet Jesus often told His disciples to go elsewhere in spite of the success they were experiencing. Peter had just pulled in the greatest catch of fish of his entire career when Jesus invited him to leave everything (Lu 5:1-11). Philip was enjoying astounding success as an evangelist when the Holy Spirit instructed him to go to the desert (As 8:25-40). Success where we are, can be our greatest hindrance to going where Jesus wants us to be.

If you become too comfortable where you are, you may resist Christ's invitation to go elsewhere. Don't assume that God does not want you to go in service to Him. He may lead you across the street to share the gospel with your neighbor or to the other side of the world. Wherever He leads, be prepared to go.”

WOW! That would make a great OPO!

Verse 8: **1 John 4:19**

We love each other because he loved us first.

Verse 16 (earlier in this chapter) told us that “God is love.” Now, we should understand if we want God to be a part of our lives ... LOVE must be a part of our lives.

Now ... Some respond to love with a sense of superiority – I am such a good person, that’s why God loves me.

Some respond to love with doubt – how can God love ME?

Some respond to love with wickedness – God LOVES me, so I can do whatever I want.

Here we fully understand that God wants us to love like Jesus did.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 9: **Micah 6:8**

***O people, the LORD has told you what is good,
and this is what he requires of you:
to do what is right, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God.***

It’s not a mystery what God wants from us. He wants us to do what is right ... this means simply to live in obedience to God ... to not just show mercy, but to LOVE mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

Being humble is recognizing your position in comparison to God’s position.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 10: **Philippians 2:5**

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Attitude is LIVED OUT! It is not something you have as “head knowledge”. There is a huge difference in believing in Jesus and daily believing Jesus. This would make a great OPO!

Verse 11: **Romans 12:1**

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

Why do we live lives of active Christian obedience? Because of what He has done for us!

What is a LIVING sacrifice? It is an ongoing sacrifice. It’s a lifetime not a onetime.

“Acceptable sacrifice” here is tied to aroma. You find it all through the descriptions of sacrifice in the Old Testament. Some things smell very good when they are burnt ... other things really smell bad.

When you are living for God ... do you pass the smell test? Would others agree?

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 12: **Galatians 2:20**

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul realized that on the cross, a great exchange took place. Their Jesus gave Paul the “Christ life”; and Paul gave Jesus, the “try-to-be-good-enough-life”.

If Paul is correct, and I think he is ... this mean that He (WE) are now just managing these new lives that Jesus gave us.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 13: 2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

Paul must have seen some kind of fear in Timothy. Now ... he is trying to remind Timothy what God has really placed inside of him. Paul wants Timothy to know that fear doesn't come from God ... so the first step in overcoming fear is to understand what God REALLY gave us.

This would make a great OPO!

Verse 14: 1 Timothy 4:12

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.

At the time of this writing, Timothy is probably somewhere between 20 and 30 years old. PAUL is 70ish.

What is the message to Timothy? YOU can live such a life of faith, that you can impact people at any age!

If you stay close to Jesus ... you can be an example by the way you talk to people, by the way you behave, by the way you love, the way you are faithful, and in your personal purity.

Now here's the thing about personal purity ... it's not going to come up usually in conversation unless you speak up and say there is something you will not do; or are uncomfortable doing.

Here's how it may set an example ... others may have never even have thought of it as being wrong until YOU say, "I'm not comfortable with this."

This would be a great OPO for a young person.

OK ... that's the 14 ... I now want you to choose ONE. And it doesn't have to be one of these ... you may have another close to your heart. If you have another ... look it up in your Bible and bring it to the front with you.

Choose one ... and then choose one of our prayer volunteers to pray this verse OVER you.