

**THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW**  
**Christianity In The Making: From Jerusalem To The South Bay**  
**Acts 20-21**

**Digging deeper in personal study and reflection.**

In this week's sermon, Bill talked about Paul's high impact life. Paul invites us to join him in living a life that God can use to influence other people.

**1. Read Romans 12:1-8**

Paul gave some foundational principles for living a life of influence. What insights do you see in this passage about the kind of people God uses to have an impact on others?

As you look at your own life, how well do you think you're doing at not conforming but being renewed?

How well do you understand and use the gift(s) God has given you to build up the church?

2. Paul had a special relationship with the Ephesian Church and its leaders. He had a strong desire to see them grow in their Christian faith and expressed this desire in two different prayers he wrote in his letter to that church. Read these prayers and note how those prayers reflect what he desires to see happen in their lives.

**Ephesians 1:15-21**

**Ephesians 3:14-19**

Which of the things he mentioned would you most like to see be true in your life?

**Read Acts 21:1-6** What are some practical steps you can take to help you continue to run your race faithfully and to finish strong?

Paul was determined to finish the race that Christ had set out for him. Write your own obituary about what you would like to have said about your life at the end of your life?

What are some practical steps you can take to help you continue to run your race faithfully and to finish strong?



One of the people Paul had a big impact on was Timothy who was a companion of Paul's and later became the pastor of the church at Ephesus (which Paul started). Paul wrote two letters to him full of encouragement and instructions for his role as a pastor (1 and 2 Timothy). In these two passages there is input that is extremely applicable to our tough economic times. What wise counsel and encouragement do you see in these verses?

**1 Timothy 6:6-10**

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

**Read Hebrews 10:24-25.** Why is it important to gather together with other believers? In light of Acts 20-21, what indicates that Paul made this a priority even when he was traveling? What indicates that these believers really loved one another even though they disagreed? Pray that you might recognize the importance of gathering together with other believers.

**For discussion with your small group, an accountability partner, your spouse, or for your own reflection.**

1. Who has served as a spiritual role model for you? What about that person has rubbed off on you?
  2. Parting is sweet sorrow. What in your life is sweet and sour these days?
  3. What was one of the most raucous crowd scenes you have ever been a part of?
  4. If someone watched you this past year, what would they assume the Christian lifestyle to be like? How would you like to change so you can give a more accurate picture?
  5. Who makes up the "flock" for whom you are responsible? In what specific way can you shepherd them?
  6. How would you complete the sentence: The one thing I must accomplish at any cost is \_\_\_\_\_?  
How does that relate to Paul's goal in Acts 20:24?
  7. In the race of doing God's will, are you in the front of the pack, one of the stragglers, or an onlooker?
  8. When have you made decisions against the wishes of people you admired and trusted? What happened? In retrospect, were your decisions wise ones?
- How do you decide when you should bend for the sake of others, and when you should stand on your principles?