

## How to be Used When You're Not in the Spotlight

Of all the character traits I love in my husband, humility has got to be at the top of the pile. [He works his tail off](#) to meet his goals, yet has never been one to shine the light on himself without first thanking those who helped to make it all possible.

While we were in college Brandon enjoyed a pretty successful football career and was often interviewed by our local paper. **He'd answer their questions but always gave credit to the teammates who blocked and made a way for the touchdowns.** Those guys--the offensive linemen who lumber around and grunt and smash--were largely unseen. The announcer didn't spout their names over the loudspeaker and the photographers didn't track them down after the game.

But *their* sweat made the numbers light up on the score board.

I believe the same can hold true for all of us who are not in the spotlight.

### What we learn from New Testament believers

This year I've been part of a local BSF class studying [the book of Acts](#) and the epistles of Paul. As the story of God's church bloomed amidst promises and persecution, I have been amazed at the way obscure people changed history.

#### Two things stand out to me most:

1.

**God *needs* those who are not in the spotlight to support and encourage those who are, and...**

2.

**We non-spotlighters still have an important role to play and *must* choose to act.**

In Acts 21 Paul is making his way to Jerusalem in true "planes, trains, and automobiles" fashion: hopping boats, enduring shipwrecks, walking, staying with strangers, and depending completely on the kindness of others for his needs.

Out of the shadows, in verse 16, is the one-and-only mention of [Mnason](#), "a man from Cyrus and

one of the early disciples."

**Wait-- what? *An early disciple?*** Meaning one that had been around for awhile...but one we had never heard of before?

Mnason opened his home to Paul and Luke and allowed them to stay there. He offered shelter and protection. We might presume they shared a meal together or washed the dust off their feet in his presence. Yet why is there *no other mention of this man? This "early disciple?"*

**Because he wasn't a spotlight guy.** Maybe he didn't hang out with Philip and Andrew or James and John. But nevertheless, **he was a guy who made himself available to do the work he was called to do at the exact time he was called to do it.**

**Next, entering stage left, is Paul's nameless nephew in Acts 23:16.** In fact, he's not even called "nephew", he's referred to as "the son of Paul's sister." Springing to action, this young man literally saved Paul's life from the Sanhedrin who were out to kill him. Overhearing their plot, Nephew risked his own life by going to a Roman commander and divulging information that would get Paul transferred to Caesarea under the cover of night.

**Wait--did you even know Paul had a nephew??** (me either!) Like Mnason, he was never mentioned before and is never mentioned again. Yet his singular act of bravery arguably changed the course of Paul's life! **He wasn't a spotlight guy, but he was a guy who made himself available to do the work he was called to do at the exact time he was called to do it.**

## If you're not a spotlight person either

You can be a powerful force in the lives of other while acting in near anonymity. How?

- **Practice hospitality:** open your doors to someone in need or make a meal for a family recovering from medical issues.
- **Be an helper:** the spotlight people can't do it alone. Anyone who's ever tried to find nursery volunteers at church knows this is true! We see it all over in scripture and know that the quiet helpers make everything possible.
- **Thank someone *in the spotlight*:** your pastor, your child's teacher or principal, your boss, the person who disciplined you and brought you to faith in Christ. Mail a letter or thoughtful card and say thanks!
- **Be a giver:** if you hear of a need and are able to fill it, *DO IT*. Don't think about what you may be sacrificing in order to give; consider only the joy that the recipient will feel when they find their need filled, and be mindful of the fact that you are entering into their story in a profound way by giving.

Hebrews 6:10 "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."

***How do you make yourself available to God even if you're not in the spotlight?***