

10 Ways to avoid becoming a missionary

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(Adapted from Stewart Dinnen's list in *How are you doing?* (Bromley: STL Books, 1984)

1. **Ignore Jesus' request in John 4:35 that we take a long hard look at the fields.** Seeing the needs can be depressing and very unsettling. It could lead to genuine missionary concern. (*John 4:35 "Do you not say, `Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."*)
2. **Focus your energy on a socially legitimate target.** Go after a bigger salary, better qualifications, a job promotion, bigger home, better car, or future security.
3. **Get married as soon as possible, preferably to somebody who thinks the "Great Commission" is what your employer gives you after you make a big sale.** After marriage, plunge into the socially accepted norm of settling down, establishing a career and raising a family.
4. **Stay away from missionaries.** Their testimonies can be disturbing. The situations they describe will distract you from settling in comfortably with the materialistic lifestyle of your home country.
5. **If you happen to think about unreached peoples, immediately focus on those countries where it's impossible to openly do missionary work.** Think only about North Korea, Saudi Arabia, China and other closed countries. Forget the vast areas of our globe open to missionaries. Never, never listen to talk about "creative access" countries.
6. **Dwell on your own past failures.** It is unreasonable to expect you will ever be any better. Don't even think about Moses, David, Jonah, Peter or Mark, all of whom overcame failures.
7. **Always imagine missionaries as talented, super-spiritual people standing tall on lofty pedestals.** Maintaining this image of a missionary will heighten your own sense of inadequacy. Thinking that God does not use *ordinary* people as missionaries will smother any guilt you may feel about refusing to even listen for a call from God.
8. **Agree with the people who tell you that you are indispensable where you are.** Listen when they tell you that your local church or home country can't do without you.
9. **Worry incessantly about money.**
10. **If you still feel you must go, go out right away without any preparation or training.** You'll soon be home again and no one can ever blame you for not trying!

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Fred Fullerton, former director, Nazarene Youth International

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