

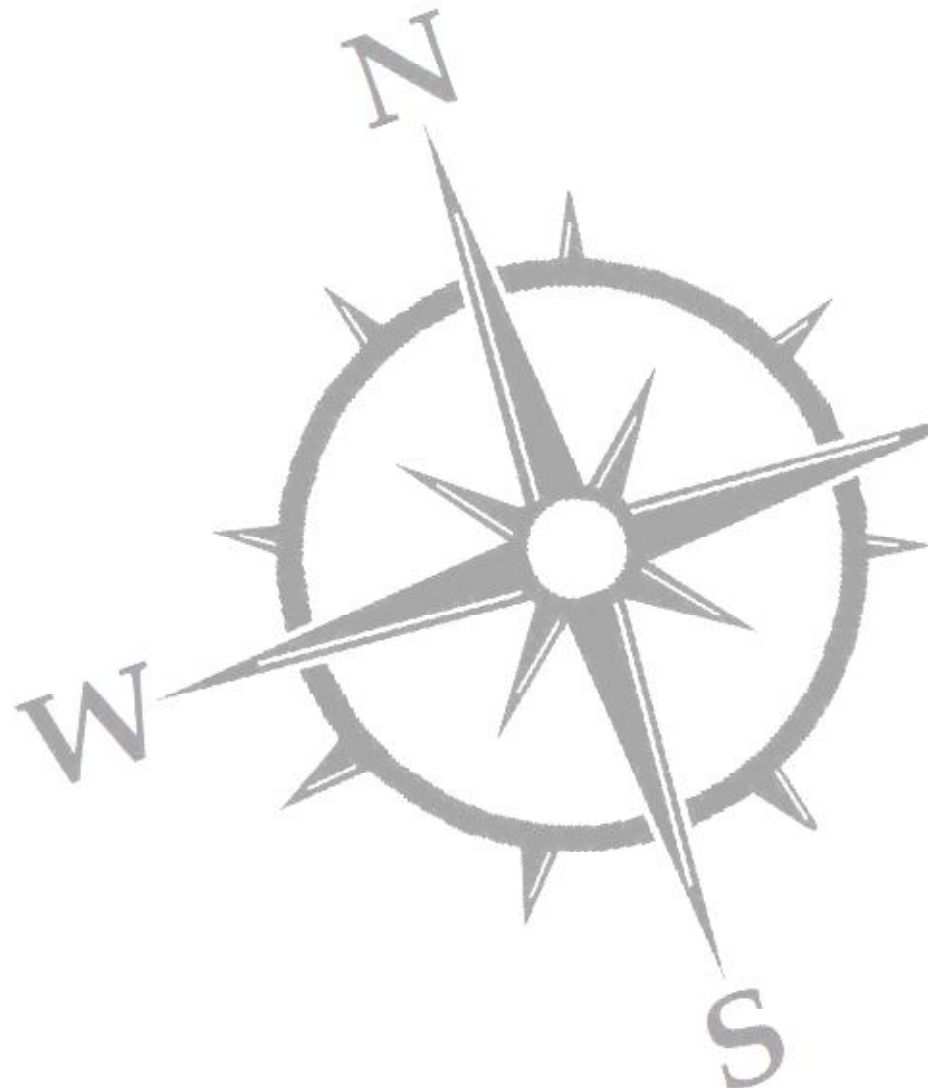
The Life of William Carey

(1761-1834)

Lesson: 4.5 – Preparation Missionary Spotlight Series

This story shows how God prepares a missionary by first saving him and then opening doors for him. God has a plan for each person who trusts Christ as his Savior. God prepares missionaries for their mission work long before they are on the field. He gives them opportunities and gifts to develop so that He might better use them on the field. God had some things that He wanted to do in William's life to prepare him for what lay ahead of him.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." - 2 Timothy 2:3







Who remembers where we left off last week?

(Read the last paragraph from last week's lesson to begin this lesson as a review).

The letter was from a man named Dr. John Thomas. Dr. Thomas had been a ship's doctor in India. He had been saved and soon after was so worried about the people of India that he left his ship and went to work with the people of India. Some English Christians who lived in India had given him money to keep doing what he was doing. Soon though, that money had run out, and he had returned to England to raise some more money to go back. When he arrived, he heard about me and the new missionary society we had formed.

I was so excited. I couldn't wait for our next meeting to share the letter with the other pastors. Could God have sent us our first missionary so soon? The other pastors were just as thrilled as I was about the letter. Andrew Fuller wrote a letter back to Dr.

Thomas and asked him to come to our next meeting on January 10, 1793. Dr. Thomas accepted the invitation.

As the meeting began, Dr. Thomas was not there. Just as we were about to finish the meeting, there was a knock at the door. I rushed over to open the door. I wanted to be the first one to shake a real missionary's hand. It seemed like Dr. Thomas and I were old friends. We were both so excited to talk about sharing the gospel with others in foreign lands.

Although I had written the longest book about missions, I wanted to ask some questions from this real-life missionary to see how it had worked. How much money did someone need to stay in India? Could Dr. Thomas say anything to me in Bengali? Did he have any of their language written down? How many people had been saved in India? How much did it cost to build a mud hut in India?

With every answer that Dr. Thomas gave, I became more excited. Finally, Dr. Thomas pulled out a letter from three Indian scholars. The letter was asking for someone to come and translate the Bible for them. I felt like my heart would explode. God had given me the ability to read and understand other languages very quickly. Here was someone begging to have the Bible written in their own language.

Dr. Thomas said that it shouldn't take long to get set up in India, and then a person should be able to get a job and provide for himself. I had written the same thing in my book. I believed that a mission society should pay for a person and his family to get to a

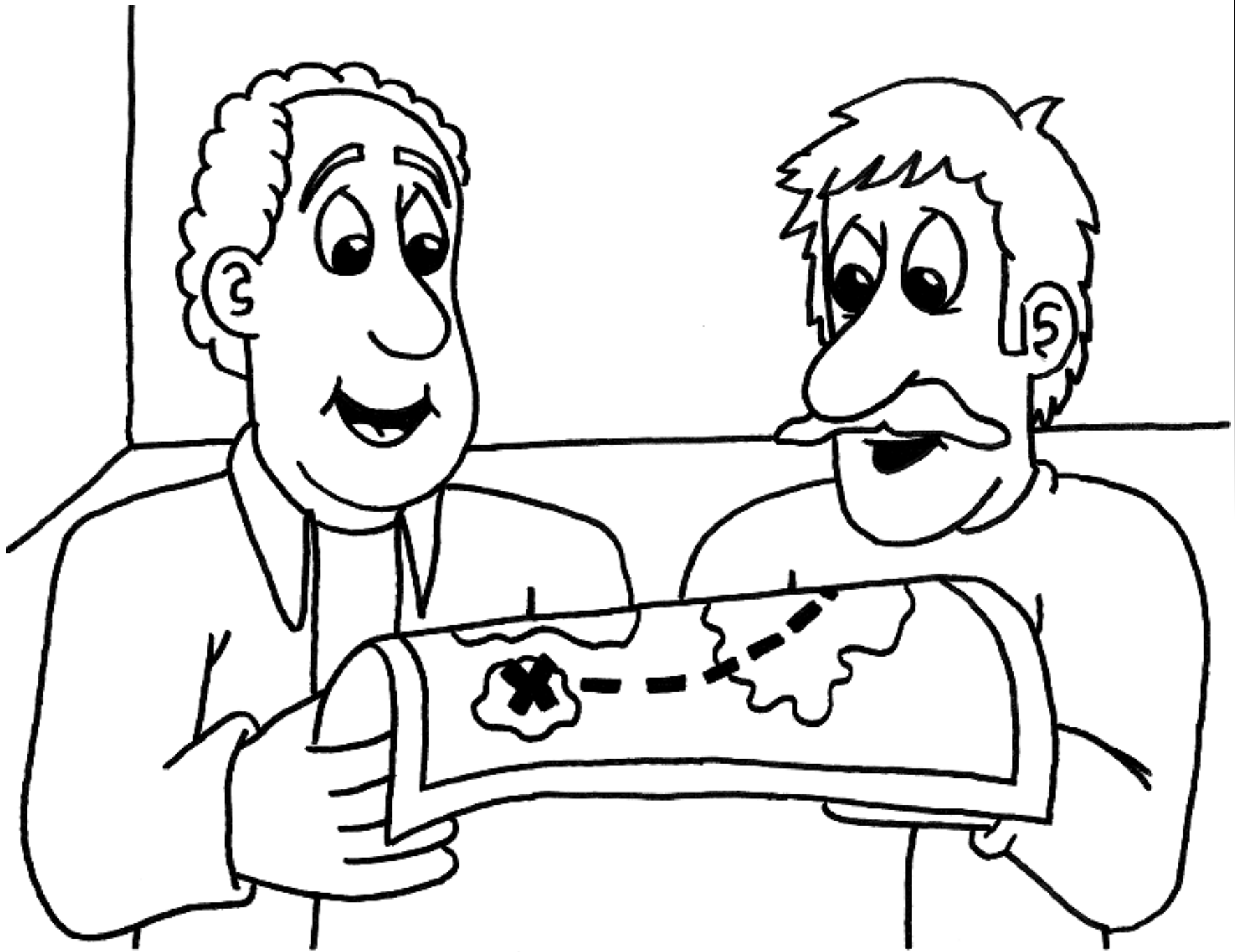
country, and then that person should find a job there so that they could provide for their family while they worked on sharing the gospel.

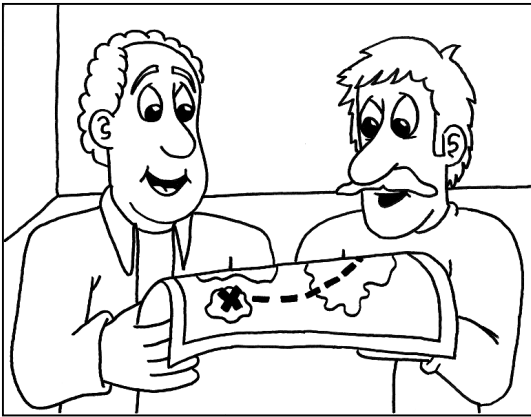
Andrew Fuller finally spoke up and asked Dr. Thomas what he wanted from us. Dr. Thomas said that if we would pay for him, his wife, and his daughter to get back to India and pay for his first year there, that he was willing to go back and continue what he had started there. All of us in the room nodded our heads. He continued by saying that he would like to have someone to go with him. The two of them could do much more than just one person could. Again my heart felt like it would explode. I stood to my feet and said, "I will go!"

Andrew Fuller rushed over and shook my hand. He told me to go after the gold mine of souls that were in India. I told them that I would go down into the mine if they would hold the ropes and support me. Andrew Fuller, John Sutcliff, and John Ryland pledged to support me until the day they died. As I looked at each one of them, I knew that there was no turning back.

Dr. Thomas and I talked late into the night. We would have to leave on April 1. It would take about 5 months to sail to India. If we left after May, the winds would be blowing in the wrong direction. We had about three months to get ready. As I walked home, I wondered what Dolly would say. I also thought about my parents and my church congregation. What would they think of me going halfway around the world to share the gospel?

"That's a crazy idea!" Dolly said





when I told her my plans. Dolly had never been farther than thirty miles from the house she was born in. We were also going to have another baby soon. She told me that she would not be going and that I would have to go without her. A lot of explorers and soldiers in that day left their wives at home while they went out exploring. It was decided that I would go to India with Felix, my oldest son. I planned to get things set up there, and then I thought that I would come back and see if Dolly and the rest of my family would come with me. The missionary society said that they would support my wife for the first year after I left.

Next, I decided to write a letter to my father about my plans. I was glad that I had mailed a letter. My sister told me later that my father had been very angry when he read my letter.

The following Sunday, I announced my plans to my church. Everyone was very sad. Our church had grown since I had become the pastor. I had often preached about missions, and many in the church were praying that God would send us a missionary

to send out. I guess they did not think it would be me, their pastor. Soon, the church began to be excited that God had called me to go as the church's first missionary.

The missionary society did not have enough money to send Dr. Thomas, his wife, his daughter, Felix, and me to India. It was decided that Dr. Thomas, Andrew Fuller, and I would travel around England to other churches and ask them for money to help us get to India. While we were there, we would try to sell copies of my book. In Birmingham, we were promised two hundred pounds to help out. In the town of Bath, the offering plate was passed around, and we got only one penny. The church was very embarrassed and passed the plate again. This time they raised 20 pounds for us. Some churches promised us a lot of support, and others said there was a lot to do in England without sending someone halfway around the world.

In the town of Hull, I met a man named William Ward. William was a printer who printed the local newspaper. Remembering Dr. Thomas's letter, I told William Ward that if all went well, we would need someone like him to print Bibles in India once we had translated them. I said that I hoped that he would think about joining us someday. We shook hands, and I was off to my next meeting. William Ward never forgot our conversation, and little did I know that we would meet again someday.

After several weeks, we had raised enough money to buy our passage to India, provide money for my family to stay in England for one year, and buy a load of

metal goods that Dr. Thomas said we could sell in India to raise money for our first year there.

While we were out traveling around, two very important things had happened. First, France had declared war on England. This meant that the seas and oceans around England were filled with French ships called privateers. The Privateers had been attacking English ships and taking their goods. The other thing was even more important. Queen Elizabeth I had given some wealthy Englishmen permission to set up a company in India called the East India Company. The East India Company controlled all the trading between India and England. They also had the power to say what English people could come and go to and from India. They had made it clear that they would not give a permit to any teachers or missionaries to stay in India. Even if we were able to get past the French Privateer ships and make it to India, we could be fined and shipped back to England or put in jail by the East India Company. What should we do?

Dr. Thomas had been the ship's doctor on a ship named the *Earl of Oxford*. He talked with Captain White who said that he would take us to India without a permit. We would just have to figure out a way to stay once we got there. It wasn't the best idea, but it was all we had.

On April 4, 1793, Dr. Thomas, his wife, his daughter, Felix, and I stood on the deck of the ship. I was on my way to the mission field. Captain White explained that because of the war he would have to wait for more English ships at the Isle of Wight. If





English ships traveled in packs, the French ships were a lot less likely to attack them. When we got to the Isle of Wight, we found out that a group of ships had just left, and it would be almost a month before enough ships would be ready to go again.

We sailed back to a town called Portsmouth to wait. It was here that Dr. Thomas started acting kind of funny. If someone knocked on the door, he would go hide in a back room and peek out through a crack in the wall. He would ask if any mail came for him several times a day. When he did get a letter, he seemed afraid to open it. After three weeks in Portsmouth, Dr. Thomas left to take care of some urgent business back in London. While he was away, a man came by and told me that Dr. Thomas owed him one hundred pounds. When Dr. Thomas came back, I found out that he owed people a total of five hundred pounds! No wonder he was acting weird! That was a lot of money.

A week later, Captain White got a letter that said that the East India Company knew that he had some male passengers on board and that if he took us to India that the

East India Company would have his captain's license taken away. Dr. Thomas said that one of the people he owed money to had probably spoken with the East India Company about us. He decided to go to London to find out. The rest of us hurried down to the docks just in time to see the *Earl of Oxford* taking all of our luggage off of the ship and getting everything ready to sail. Captain White said that he could take Dr. Thomas's wife and daughter, but not us. A few minutes later, we watched an amazing sight as all of the ships let down their sails and sailed out of the harbor. Dr. Thomas's wife and daughter were on their way to India, and Felix and I were not.

I hired someone to take our bags back to our room, and then Felix and I got on a stagecoach and headed back to London. Once we got there, we went straight to where Dr. Thomas was to break the news to him. Dr. Thomas said that he was sorry over and over again for the big mess that he had got us into. He told me that he would do everything he could to find us a way to get to India. We talked about several other ways to get to India, but many of them were very dangerous and would take a long time and money. Money was something we did not have a lot of. Captain White had refunded some of the money, but not all of it.

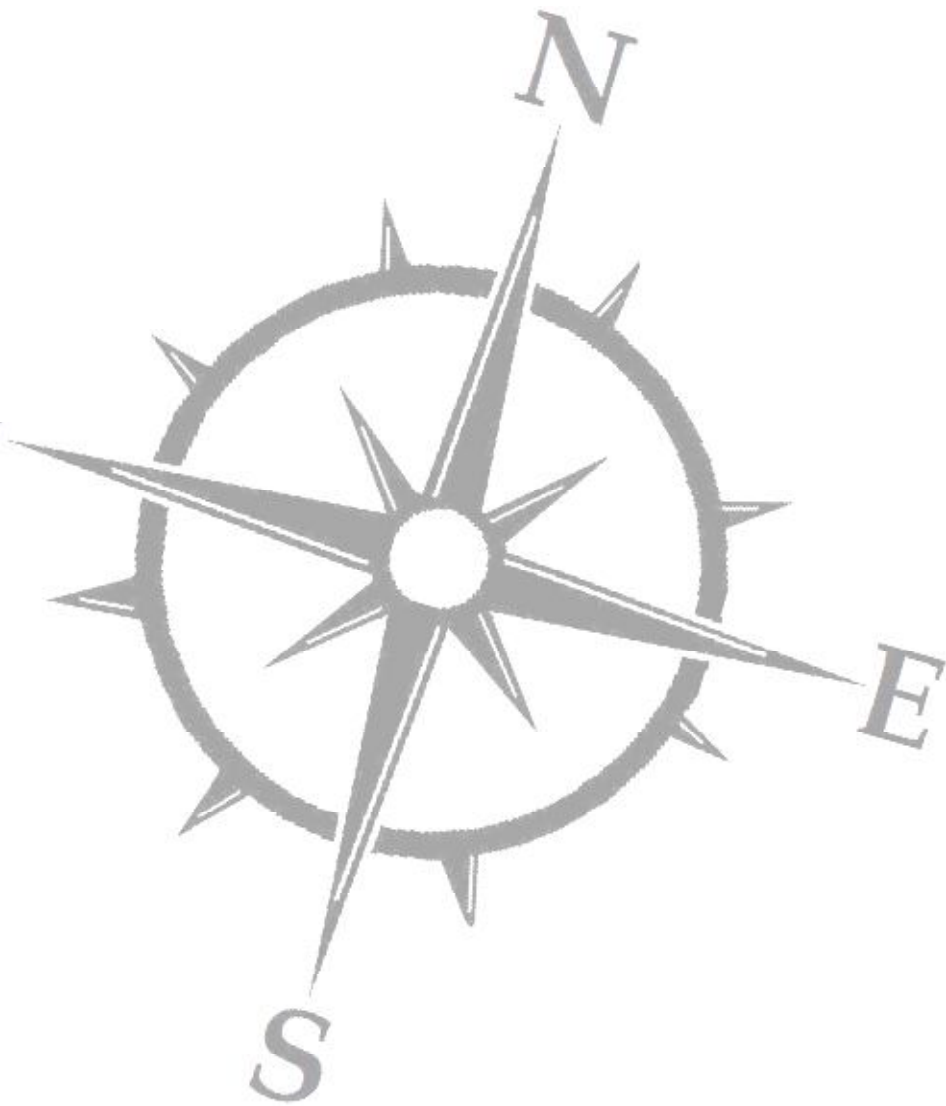
As we sat silently in the room many questions and thoughts raced through my mind. I thought for sure that God wanted me in India. Why had God not allowed us to go? Would I ever get to India? Should I write a letter to Andrew Fuller and the rest of the missionary society? If I did, what would I

even say to them? This didn't look good that the first missionary attempt had been a complete disaster. What about Dolly? Had our baby been born yet? I would love to talk with her again and see my new baby.

Suddenly, the door slammed shut. I look up, and saw that Dr. Thomas had gone! I hurried to the window in time to see him disappear around the corner. Where was he going in such a hurry?

Why do you think Dr. Thomas left so quickly? Where do you think Dr. Thomas was headed? To find out come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to **lesson 4.5 on page 136** in your *India Expedition - Leader's Guide*).*



References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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