

Determining your Tentmaker Potential

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*(A set of questions to help in assessing if a person is ready to enter a tentmaking situation)
Taken from "[Avoiding the Tentmaker Trap](#)" by Dan Gibson. This book may be purchased from WEC International (Canada). (Email: canwi-pr@cgcable.net or follow the links from <http://www.wec-int.org/>)*

Assessing your spiritual walk with God

1. How much time do you spend each day in prayer and personal Bible Study?
2. Do you find the majority of your spiritual momentum comes from:
 - Church meetings or fellowship with other believers?
 - Christian radio, TV, Cassettes, Music, Media?
 - Your own study of the Word of God?
3. Do you think you could feed yourself spiritually if put in a situation where there was no regular outside spiritual input into your life?
4. Do you think you could glean from God's word spiritual understanding and knowledge so that you could feed others?
5. How difficult would it be for you to do the following in your own language and culture?
 - Explain the gospel clearly to another person?
 - Work through biblical apologetics with an unbeliever? (e.g.: how could a loving God command Joshua to kill so many children, or how do you explain the doctrine of the trinity?)
 - Disciple a new believer in the Word, teaching him the basics of Christianity and practical Christian life (like how to pray or how to study your bible?)
 - Lead a bible study group in your home?

Assessing your spiritual gifts

1. Do you know what spiritual gifts you may have now?
2. Are you prepared for God to use you in ways that you may not feel gifted for?
3. Do you see yourself as a Pauline type tentmaker (involved in evangelism, preaching, and church planting)?
4. Do you see yourself as a Priscillan type tentmaker involved in supportive roles, role modeling, and individual discipleship?

Assessing your ministry experience

1. Have you had experience in witnessing to unbelievers?
2. Have you ever lead someone to Christ?
3. Have you ever disciplined new believers?
4. Are you prepared to be a spiritual leader or a supporter of others?
5. Do you see yourself as a shy withdrawn person? How easy will it be to approach people of a different culture? If you have a tendency to shyness, how easy would it be for you to meet and invite some new immigrants to your country to your home for tea or lunch?
6. Do you see yourself as an outgoing capable witnesser? Can you slow yourself down enough to meet foreigners and begin to understand them and their outlook on life before sharing with them the gospel as seen from your perspective?

Assessing your family background

1. Are you free to leave your family behind? Will your parents and other family members need your help or attention while you are away?
2. Are you prepared to leave the needs of your friends and family in the hands of others?
3. Do your parents or siblings strongly oppose or support your desire to be a tentmaker? Can you explain what you are doing to them in such a way that they will be supportive?
4. Is your church supportive? Have you clearly explained what you are doing?
5. Does your church see you as a missionary or as someone who is moving away to get work elsewhere?
6. Does your spouse wholeheartedly support your vision?
7. Do your children understand why and what you are doing?
8. Have you thought through how you will approach children's education?

Assessing your educational and work experience background

Most overseas jobs demand high qualifications. Nurses usually have to be nurse supervisors. Engineers usually need several years of experience in directly related engineering work.

1. Do you have a clear resume prepared? Does it adequately explain what you have done each year of your life?
2. Are you prepared to face interrogation by security police concerning each year of your life. (Especially in closed countries). They may want to know what a year spent at "Trinity College" means.
3. Do you feel reasonably qualified for the work you want to do?
4. Are you prepared that your profession might be seen as a "low" profession in another country? E.g.: Carpenters are not seen as highly skilled workers and are not paid as such in many countries.

Assessing your creativity and innovation

1. List on a piece of paper ten different types of work you could do. Think hard. What are some skills that you have that you could transfer to another culture?
2. Would you be prepared to teach at or open a small school to teach some transferable skill? (e.g.: Typing, sewing, computer use, drafting, etc?)
3. Prepare several resumes for yourself, each one depicting yourself in a slightly different role.
4. What are some things you could do now to give yourself qualifications or experience in several different areas of interest that you have? Can you turn that flair for interior decorating or gardening into something you might be able to offer? Can you get a certificate from a community college or work with a professional for a while and get a letter of recommendation? (E.g.: I met a school director once that was looking for an administrative assistant with a flair for gardening. The school grounds (some thirty acres of desert) needed a lot of work. This director was willing to go easy on the administrative assistant bit if he could get his hands on someone who could design and create the school yard.
5. Are you willing to spend some time learning the language and culture of the place you want to go to?
6. Are you willing to expand some of your "interests" in the target area? E.g.: Gardening: Taking time to learn about foreign plants and trees.

Assessing a job opportunity

A. Work Place

1. Will I be working with other expats or with locals?
2. Will I be expected to put in long hours?
3. Am I going to carry any significant responsibility for the project? Will this mean I will get tied down in the running of the project and robbed of quality ministry time?
4. Will I be provided with a car? Am I free to drive anywhere?
5. Will I be provided with a translator at all times? Is there anyway of meeting and talking with people without the translator present?
6. Will I be hired on a local contract bases or on a foreign contract bases? How will this affect my trips home?

B. Living Arrangements

1. Will I be free to choose my own living arrangements?
2. Will the company provide a temporary place for me to live while house hunting?
3. Is there any living or housing contracts that I must sign when I get there? Have I read and understood all my commitments?

C. Ministry Options?

1. Is there a language school that will offer night classes?
2. Will my employer support or pay for my language study?
3. Am I prepared to go “against the grain” by mixing with the locals?
4. Are there local churches I can attend?
5. Is there an International or English meeting where I can worship in my own language, where my kids can go to Sunday School and meet other Christian kids?

Assessing your support team

A. Home Church

1. Have I communicated with my pastor? Do I have a good relationship with him?
2. Does the missions committee understand what I am doing?
3. What opportunities will I have to share with my church?
4. Do I have someone to photocopy my prayer letters?
5. Is there someone who will host a weekly-monthly prayer meeting for me while I am gone?

B. Mission

1. Have I made contact with any mission boards?
2. Do I feel the Lord is leading me to join one of them?
3. Do I understand their philosophy of ministry?
4. Am I happy with the team I will work with?