

Evangelism Made Personal



**Motives, Perspectives, And Suggestions
For Personal Evangelism**

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Evangelism Made Personal

The Objective In This Study (What To Expect In The Lessons To Follow)

The approach taken in this study devoted to the subject of evangelism varies somewhat from what you might normally expect to find. **It is an effort to overcome the sort of problems that often follow special classes on personal work.** Such problems as:

- ◆ People losing their evangelistic zeal soon after the study is over, or soon after any efforts are made to try to reach others for Christ
- ◆ People who do not have the ability to teach being made to feel as though they are not as dedicated to the Lord as those who do teach
- ◆ People going out to teach before they are really prepared to teach, and often doing much harm in the process
- ◆ People who are unable to teach not being shown how they can greatly assist those who are able to teach
- ◆ Efforts in evangelism being carried out without being accompanied by a demonstration of the truth of the gospel in our own lives

In trying to overcome these and similar problems, **this study is based upon the following assumptions:**

- ◆ If people can be properly motivated and maintain a positive perspective, they will do whatever they can in this enterprise we call “evangelism”, both now and in the future
- ◆ The Lord does not expect everyone to be a “teacher” in the formal sense of the word (**Ja 3:1; 1 Co 12:29; Ro 12:3-8; 1 Pe 4:10:11**), and we fail to appreciate the diversity of function in the Lord’s body (the church) if we expect everybody to become a teacher
- ◆ Developing the ability to teach comes only with time, study, and training, which is far beyond the scope of any one course in evangelism
- ◆ Those who may not be able to teach can still do a lot to greatly enhance the opportunities for others to teach, if only shown how
- ◆ The most effective method of evangelism is one where the **verbalization** of the gospel is preceded by the **incarnation** of the gospel (i.e., demonstrating the truth of the gospel in our lives before we try to preach it to others)

All may not agree with some of these assumptions. Given more time and experience, I myself may change some of these views. But for now, and for the purpose of introducing this study, these remarks may help to explain the direction this study takes...

Evangelism Made Personal

Having The Right Motivation In Evangelism

(The “Steam” That Drives The Train)

With the right motivation behind our efforts in evangelism, the job will get done. Whenever evangelism does not occur, lack of motivation (or in some cases, improper motivation) is always at the root of the problem!

WHAT IS "MOTIVATION?"

As defined by Denis Waitley in his book, **The Joy Of Working...**

- ◆ “Motivation is an inner drive, an idea captured in the imagination.”
- ◆ “Motivation can be harnessed to an intense drive toward a goal.”
- ◆ “Men and women who are motivated push themselves forward, plow through the inevitable setbacks, heading ever onward to their dreams.”
- ◆ “Motivation is essential to succeeding in any endeavor you try.”

Motivation is like “steam.” Properly channeled it can move large objects, like a steam powered train. But without it, the train remains motionless. All the careful construction in preparation for travel is for nothing if there is no steam to propel the train.

So it is with us. If motivated and properly channeled, great things can be done in the area of evangelism. Unfortunately, many people, despite all of the spiritual education they have received on the subject of evangelism, still do very little with what they know. The reason? Lack of proper motivation!

What should be our motivation in evangelism? Well, what motivated Jesus? Certainly He was successful in reaching His goals. Since He is to be our example (**1 Pe 2:21**), whatever motivated Him should be the motivating force driving His disciples.

At least five things moved our Lord in reaching out to the lost. The first was . . .

COMPASSION FOR LOST SOULS

Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the mass of lost souls (**Mt 9:35-36; 14:14; 15:32**). Such compassion motivated Him to do two things.

- ◆ First, to ask His disciples to pray that God might “send out laborers into His harvest” (**Mt 9:37-38**).
- ◆ Then, to do something about it Himself (that is, to select and send out His apostles (**Mt 10:1,5-7**)).

Do we ever find ourselves filled with compassion for the lost? And doing something about it? If we can only have this same compassion for lost souls, we will not rest till we are doing something to save their souls!

How can we develop or strengthen this compassion for lost souls? The best way is **let God teach us to love**, as He did with the Thessalonians (**1 Th 4:9**). This He does through the example of Christ (**1 Jn 3:16-17**). Therefore, that the more we meditate upon God's love for us as manifested in His Son's sacrifice, the more we will come to love others!

It also helps to **be around people**. To love people, you have to get to know them. When we do, we can begin to appreciate the saying attributed to Will Rogers, "I never met a man I did not like." So beware of becoming "wrapped up in your own little world." Remember that Jesus was one to become involved with "the multitudes."

Have we allowed the love of God to fill our hearts with compassion for the multitude of lost and dying souls? Are we making an effort to be around people and getting to know them? Jesus also had...

A SENSE OF PURPOSE

This motivating force is seen in our Lord's conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. While speaking with her, his disciples marveled at what His motive might be (**Jn 4:27**). Jesus explained: "To do the will of Him who sent Me...to accomplish His work" (**Jn 4:34**).

He stated this same purpose in life on many other occasions (**Jn 5:30,36; 6:38; 17:4; 19:28-30**). And what was the will of His Father? To save a dying world (**Jn 3:16**). To "seek and save the lost" (**Lk 19:10**).

Do we have this same "sense of purpose" in our lives? To put first the Father's will? Jesus taught that we should (**Mt 6:10,33**). But people often have **different purposes** for living. The "workaholics" make their jobs their purpose in life. Many make their families, friends or hobbies the reason for living.

But the **right purpose** comes from studying God's Word. As we understand God's will for us, we learn that our purpose for being His special people centers around proclaiming the praises of Him who called us (**1 Pe 2:9-10**). One way we do this, of course, is through evangelism.

Have we let the Word of God develop within us the "right sense of purpose"? If not, our motivation will be inadequate!

Another force that moved our Lord was...

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

Jesus had experienced "the love of the Father," which prompted Him to love others (**Jn 15:9**). But it went beyond that. This "love" was such that He wanted to share it with others (**Jn 17:26**), even if it was necessary for Him to go the cross to make it possible!

Have we experienced “the love of the Father” in our lives? If so, how can we not be moved (motivated) to want to share it with others? Is it not worth sharing? Of course it is! But if we must confess that our sense of the Father's love is not as strong as we would like, how can we develop a greater sense of God's love for us?

The way to experience the Father's love is to **keep the commandments of Jesus (Jn 14:21,23)**. A most important commandment in this regard is the one to love one another as Christ loved us (**Jn 15:12**). This is because loving one another is crucial to experiencing the love of the Father in our lives. As John wrote: “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us” (**1 Jn 4:12**).

Another way to increase our experience of the Father's love is to **make our love for Jesus stronger**. This is because the Father's love for us is directly related to our love for Jesus (**Jn 16:27**). How can one increase their love for Jesus? The best way is to spend time learning more about Him from the Word of God.

Have we experienced the Father's love by loving Jesus and keeping His commandments (esp. loving one another)? If not, we will not have much worth sharing, nor be motivated to share it!

We can also add to our list of the things that motivated Jesus...

THE TERROR OF THE LORD

Jesus was very much aware of God's “righteous indignation.” He taught that we should “fear” God (**Mt 10:28**). He warned of the judgment to come (**Mk 9:43-48**). Knowing the “terror of the Lord”, Jesus was willing to go to the cross that man might be saved. He even prayed for those crucifying Him (**Lk 23:34**).

Are we willing to make the effort to save others, like Jesus? We may not have to die for them...but are we even willing to speak to them? Or could it be that we don't take the “terror of the Lord” as serious as Jesus' early disciples did (cf. **2 Co 5:11**)?

How can we develop a healthy appreciation for “the terror of the Lord?” By frequent **meditating upon the Word of God**, especially those portions which describe God's judgments in the past (cf. **2 Pe 2: 4-9**), and that provide warnings of the Judgment Day to come (**2 Th 1:7-10; Re 20:12-15; 21:8**).

Have we, like many, become complacent to the fact that there will be a day of judgment and condemnation? Could it be we have not let the Word of God have its true affect on our lives? A lack of concern and involvement in trying to reach the lost for Christ would certainly imply this to be the case!

Finally, we see that the Lord was moved by...

THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM

As expressed by the writer of Hebrews (**He 12:2**), Jesus was motivated by the joyful prospect of being with His Father, at His Right Hand. Notice that this enabled Him to “endure the cross” and “despise the shame.”

Does not the prospect of spending eternity with God move us to do what we can to save souls? It must, if we also are to be willing to “endure the cross” or “despise the shame” that might be involved in evangelism!

To increase our level of appreciating what lies ahead for the faithful, **contemplation upon what God has prepared for us** as described in the Word of God is recommended. Especially helpful are those scenes pictured in **Re 7:13-17; 21:1-7**.

It also helps to **think of what God will do for those we reach**. Paul did, as he describes in **1 Th 2:19-20**; and it no doubt gave him great joy that helped him to press on teaching others.

CONCLUSION

The ability to press on...this is the **value** of proper motivation. Remember our earlier definition of motivation?

"Men and women who are motivated push themselves forward, plow through the inevitable setbacks, heading ever onward to their dreams."

Such was case with our Lord...He fulfilled His goals, being motivated by:

- ♦ **Compassion for lost souls**
- ♦ **A strong sense of purpose**
- ♦ **The love of the Father**
- ♦ **The terror of the Lord**
- ♦ **The joy set before Him**

Since Jesus is the **author** and **finisher** of our faith (**He 12:2**), we should be “looking unto Jesus” for the motivation we need to do His will. We should “consider Him” (**He 12:3**), lest we become weary and discouraged in doing God's will.

The early church looked to Jesus, and found the motivation necessary to grow as they did. We can do the same today!

It should be apparent by now that **the key** to developing and strengthening the proper motivation is to let the Word of God have its intended effect upon us. But if Christians are not daily reading, studying, and meditating upon the Word of God, **then how can we ever hope to stay motivated like Jesus, Paul and the early church were?**

If we **do** read, study, and meditate upon the Word of God, then we will be like **Jeremiah**...who at first might have made excuses (**Jer 1:6**), but as he fed upon the Word found great joy (**Jer 15:16**). So much so, that when ridiculed for speaking, he first tried to refrain, but found that he just couldn't keep it in (**Jer 20:7-9**)!

May we also allow God's Word and the example of Jesus to motivate us in evangelizing the lost!

Evangelism Made Personal

Perspectives For Success In Evangelism

(Maintaining A Positive Attitude)

It is important to maintain certain perspectives while engaging in the enterprise we call “evangelism.” Many people start out with great enthusiasm, but often get discouraged and in some cases become apathetic. This happens even to those who are highly skilled in teaching others.

The problem is one that Zig Ziegler might call “stinkin’ thinkin’.” Armed with the wrong perspectives (or way of looking at things), many personal workers eventually lose heart. Before long, evangelistic efforts dwindle and in some cases stop altogether.

What follows are some perspectives that have helped me to keep a positive attitude about doing personal work.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IS AT WORK!

In nearly every example of conversion found in the Book of Acts, God worked in some way to create the opportunity for the person to hear the gospel. For example, Philip was sent toward Gaza where he would meet the Ethiopian Eunuch (**Acts 8**). The Lord saw to it that Saul and Ananias would get together (**Acts 9**); likewise, that the household of Cornelius would have a chance to hear the gospel from Peter (**Acts 10**). The evangelization of Europe that started with the conversion of Lydia and the Philippian Jailor occurred after the “Macedonian Call” led Paul and his companions in that direction (**Acts 16**).

Granted, these circumstances are in keeping with the miraculous events in establishing the Lord’s church, but I believe they illustrate a principle that is just as valid for us today. That principle is this: The Lord, who knows the hearts of all men and seeks those who are seeking Him (cf. **2 Chr 16:9**), will make sure that those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” will somehow be “filled” (**Mt 5:6**).

This is where **the providence of God** comes in. When the Lord knows there are people who would be receptive to the gospel (e.g., those in Corinth, **Ac 18:9-11**), He will “open doors” to give those who are seeking the truth the opportunity to be reached by those who are prepared to do the teaching. It may not happen immediately, but I am persuaded that if there is someone who is “asking, seeking, and knocking” for the truth, the Lord will see to it that at some point in that person’s life they will have an opportunity to hear the gospel.

It is encouraging to know that we are not alone in our efforts to lead the lost to Christ. God will see that every soul who has an honest, good, and seeking heart will one day come across someone who is prepared to explain the Gospel to him or her. Indeed, when we engage in evangelism, we are “God’s fellow workers” (**1 Co 3:5-9**).

Of course, how useful we can be to the Lord leads us to the second perspective for success in evangelism...

GOD “OPENS DOORS” FOR PREPARED WORKERS!

The Scriptures often speak of the Lord “opening doors” for His servants who are ready to serve Him. Paul wrote about an “open door” of opportunity that prompted him to remain longer at Ephesus (**1 Co 16:9**). He even wrote of one occasion where there was an “open door,” but circumstances were such that he did not take advantage of it (**2 Co 2:12-13**).

From the Lord’s remarks to the church in Philadelphia, we learn that the Lord opens doors for those people He can use (**Re 3:8**). The implication regarding evangelism is this: *If we desire to be used by the Lord in His providence to reach those who are seeking the truth, then we must prepare ourselves to be useful* (cf. **2 Ti 2:19-21**)!

The principle of preparation applies to both individuals and congregations. Individuals must prepare themselves to be able to teach, or to lead souls to those ready to teach. But congregations must also be ready to assimilate new converts into the family of God where they can be nurtured and protected during a vital stage of their newfound life.

Many congregations may not find “open doors” to reach others because they have not prepared themselves to be a place where “babes in Christ” will be cared for properly. Do we really believe that the Lord through His providence would “open doors” for a congregation filled with “carnal Christians” who would only devour the new Christian? The Lord might often have to wait a long time before providentially working to see that a truth seeker has an opportunity to hear the gospel. Of course, we would anticipate in such cases that the Lord would use His providence to spare the truth seeker's life until there are people ready to teach and receive him or her into the family of God.

Whether or not the last point is true, the following is still valid and encouraging: *If we will “prepare” ourselves to be useful to the Lord, His providence will “open doors” of opportunity for us to reach those in our community who have honest and good hearts that are seeking for the truth.*

An important part of preparation involves another “perspective”...

PRAYER IS THE “CATALYST” IN EVANGELISM!

If the providence of God is at work and it involves the lives of those who are prepared to be used as well as those who are seeking the truth, it should be easy to see that prayer would play an important role. In the conversion of Cornelius, it was his prayers that prompted God to take notice (**Ac 10:1-4**), and it was a man given to prayer that the Lord chose to use in order to reach him (**Ac 10:9**).

Sometimes much preparation for evangelism is not too different from preparing to make a sales pitch. It is almost as though people think that if you follow the right procedure with anyone, the desired results must necessarily follow. Certainly that is no one's intention. Yet, prayer is not often stressed in many books on how to do evangelism. In contrast, we find Paul teaching the Colossians to pray that God would open a door for the Word (**Co 4:3**).

Think of prayer as a “catalyst,” one that starts the process of God's providence in bringing together the lost but seeking soul with the prepared and seeking servant of the Lord. When we have prepared ourselves to be useful to the Lord and then diligently pray “Lord, lead me to some soul today,” doors will open and we will begin to find souls who themselves have been praying and who will be receptive to the gospel!

Now for some “perspectives” that are especially crucial to maintaining a high level of enthusiasm and persistence in evangelism. From **The Parable Of The Sower** and elsewhere in the Scriptures we can learn some more things that can help:

- ◆ Remove the discouragement and prevent the apathy that paralyzes so many today
- ◆ Instill enthusiasm in serving as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord!

The parable itself is found in **Lk 8:4-8**, and the explanation is found in **Lk 8:11-15** (please read). The first principle we can glean from this parable is that...

THE POWER IS IN THE SEED (WORD)!

The Word of God has always been capable of influencing people, accomplishing its intended purpose (**Isa 55:10-11**). As the author of Hebrews wrote, it is both “alive and powerful” (**He 4:12**). This is especially true of the **Gospel of Christ**, the “power of God unto salvation” (**Ro 1:16**).

If people are going to be truly converted, it will not be through smooth speech or fancy presentations involving “hi-tech” equipment, but through the life-changing truth of the gospel. We can certainly use modern aids to present the gospel, but we must make sure that they are faithfully communicating the Word.

True conversion (which involves a spiritual regeneration) will occur only if we plant the proper “seed.” Perhaps we don't get the desired result, because we don't sow the right seed!

But even when we plant the proper seed, we often do not see the desired results. Understanding the reason why helps one to maintain the right perspective...

THE RESULTS DEPEND UPON THE TYPE OF SOIL!

In the Parable of The Sower, we see that the same seed, when sown, produced different results. One result was no reaction whatsoever. Two others had only temporary success. Only one out of the four resulted in bearing fruit!

- ◆ Where lies the blame?
- ◆ Upon the SEED? No!
- ◆ Upon the SOWER? No!
- ◆ Upon the TYPE OF SOIL? Yes!

This illustrates where the area of responsibility lies. The **sower** fulfills his responsibility by sowing the seed (**Eze 3:17-19**). If the **soil** rejects the seed, the soil is responsible; the sower should not feel accountable (**Mt 10:14-15; Ac 13:44-46**).

The positive implication is this: *Every time we sow the seed, we are successful! If a person rejects it, we have not failed, they have!*

What is the significance of this perspective of evangelism? We need to learn the **joy** of sharing the Word for its own sake! There is joy in sharing Christ with others (we've got **good news!**), whether or not people accept Him (we are glad to serve our Lord in this way!). Of course, we are delighted when someone believes and truly accepts Jesus as the Lord of their lives, but we should consider it as the "icing on the cake." Even if we don't experience the "icing," we can still enjoy the "cake!"

Another significance of this principle concerns our **goals**. They should center on **how many are being taught, not converted!** Too often, we make the number of baptisms (conversions) the measure of success or even faithfulness on the part of the teacher. But even the most faithful teachers may find themselves in circumstances like Jeremiah or Jesus, where very few people gave heed to their message. Shall we count them failures? Rather, let us count them faithful, if they have faithfully sowed the seed!

Closely related to all this is the perspective concerning...

THE PLACE OF THE SOWER

As illustrated in the parable and elsewhere, we are simply "seed-throwers" and "water-boys" (cf. **1 Co 3:5-7**). One may plant the seed, another may water, but it is God (through His Word in a receptive heart) Who gives the increase! Because of this, there is no place for boasting about numbers of people being converted.

But there is another significance to this. God can even use "defective" seed-throwers (cf. **Ph 1:15-18**). Not only defective in **motive** (as seen in the text), but also in **experience!** This is because the **power** is in the **seed**, not the **sower!**

Therefore we should not feel like we have to be an accomplished salesman to present the Gospel. Even those who tremble and may not be eloquent can be used by the Lord to reach others (cf. **1 Co 2:1-5**).

And then there is...

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOWING AND REAPING

In **2 Co 9:6** we find this principle stated, and it easily seen in many different areas of life:

- ♦ In **sales**, the ratio of success is often one sale out of nine calls.
- ♦ In **acting**, the ratio can be as high as one job out of thirty auditions, even for successful actors.

- ♦ In **The Parable Of The Sower**, only one out of four produced favorable results.

Successful people in different walks of life understand that the key to success is to increase the number of their efforts. The conclusion for us is obvious: If we desire to **reap** more, we must be willing to **sow** more! Many people fail in the area of evangelism because they “sow sparingly” and get discouraged by the meager results.

If we increase the level of **sowing**, the level of **reaping** will rise proportionately. But again, to avoid discouragement, we need to set goals on how many are **taught**, not on how many are **converted**!

Finally, one last perspective for success in evangelism...

QUITE OFTEN, ONE SOWS AND ANOTHER REAPS!

Winning souls involves both “sowing” and “reaping.” Jesus used these terms in talking to His disciples as recorded in **Jn 4:35-38**. Exactly what is the difference between “sowing” and “reaping?”

Sowing is the work necessary to one day being able to reap! In agriculture, sowing involves preparing the soil and planting the seed. In winning souls to Christ, sowing likewise involves preparation and planting:

- ♦ In which the hearts are being prepared for the reception of the gospel
- ♦ In which the hearts are first introduced to the gospel and its principles

Reaping is the actual “harvesting” of what has been sown. In agriculture, reaping is the collection of the fruits which have produced by the sowing. In winning souls, reaping is that harvesting which occurs when souls who have had the Word planted in their hearts decide to obey it!

What is important to appreciate is the statement quoted by Jesus in **Jn 4:37**, “One sows and another reaps.” Those who sow do not always witness the reaping that may one day occur. And many times those who reap are benefiting from the efforts of those who did the sowing before them. In evangelism, this means that oftentimes you will be sowing the seed and it may appear that you are not getting any results. But some time later those souls you were trying to reach may decide to finally obey the gospel and another Christian may actually do the reaping in your place! Then again, there will be times when people just sort of “fall into your lap,” ready and anxious to obey the gospel with little effort on your part. In this case, you are reaping what others have sown!

The point to keep in mind is that evangelism involves both “sowing” and “reaping,” and there will be times when what you sow will be reaped by someone else. Let this be an encouragement to you when it appears that you are not reaping as you would hope. You might actually be making it much easier for some brother or sister in the future!

CONCLUSION

An important element of success in personal work is perseverance. Those who persist in sowing the seed eventually bear fruit. The problem with many people is wrong perspectives and negative attitudes. That translates into failure, no matter what the task is at hand.

It is hoped that the perspectives shared above can help us maintain the positive attitude necessary to persevere until Harvest Time is no more!

Evangelism Made Personal

Increasing Opportunities To Share The Gospel

(An Approach That Works!)

The importance of sharing the gospel of Christ with those who are lost cannot be overemphasized. Jesus wants everyone to hear the good news of salvation (**Mk 16:15-16**), and has provided the gospel as God's power to save all who believe it (**Ro 1:16-17**).

But what is the most effective way to reach people today? The Institute For American Church Growth asked over 10,000 people this question: **“What was responsible for your coming to Christ and this church?”** Their replies were:

- ◆ I had a special need - 3%
- ◆ I just walked in - 3%
- ◆ I liked the minister - 6%
- ◆ I visited there - 1%
- ◆ I liked the Bible classes - 5%
- ◆ I attended a gospel meeting - 0.5%
- ◆ I liked the programs - 3%
- ◆ **A friend or relative invited me - 79%**

What can we learn from a survey like this? It does appear to confirm that gospel meetings as traditionally held have lost their effectiveness in reaching the lost. It also seems to justify churches' concern to pick their preachers carefully and to give special regard to the quality of their Bible classes.

The obvious point of the survey is this: **If churches are to grow, it will be through the efforts of individual members!** Preachers, programs, classes may help, but in most cases they will only maintain the size of the congregation. Such congregational efforts are worthwhile, however, for they can reach people with whom we might otherwise never come in contact. But the fact remains: **The greatest potential lies with those people who have some contact with members of the local congregation.**

Each of us have daily contact with tens of people who need the gospel of Christ. In addition to efforts designed to reach people "en masse" (via television, radio, mail), we need to utilize the contacts made through the members. In other words, the ideal would be to provide a **“two-pronged” approach** to evangelism. Unfortunately, when a special effort is being made to reach out to the masses, the tendency in most congregations is to neglect the opportunities to follow up contacts made through the members.

Two fundamental things are needed to utilize the contacts made through individual members of the congregation:

- ◆ **Concern** for the lost by those members (**Mt 9:36-38; Ro 9:1-3; 10:1**)
- ◆ **Knowledge of how** we can increase our opportunities to share the gospel with those with whom we frequently come into contact

Assuming that the concern is there, what follows are suggestions with accompanying “action steps” on **how** anyone who is a Christian can increase opportunities for the gospel to be shared with their relatives, friends, neighbors, and others. These suggestions will be based upon observations of what has consistently proven fruitful in other places and are confirmed by the results of the aforementioned survey.

The first suggestion, along with its “action steps,” is to . . .

DO THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR A CARING CONGREGATION

This suggestion is important if our efforts in evangelism are going to be fruitful in the long run. First, because it will help to confirm our claim to be true disciples of Jesus Christ (notice **Jn 13:35**). Correct doctrine, organization, worship, etc., are certainly important; but it is our love for one another that the Lord intended to convince the world that we are truly the disciples of Christ!

Also, our love makes us useful to the Lord! From **Re 3:7-8** we learn that the Lord knows the true condition of His churches, and that He will “open doors” for those that can be useful to Him. If we are a church that can be used by Him to:

- ◆ Reach others with the gospel
- ◆ Assimilate them into the family of God
- ◆ Nurture them in their spiritual growth

. . . then He will “open doors” for us as well!

But suppose we are not a place where new Christians can grow spiritually in an atmosphere of love? Do we seriously think that the Lord will use His providence to lead us to souls who are seeking for the truth? Even if we did reach souls for Christ, would they receive the spiritual nourishment necessary to remain faithful and strong in the Lord’s service?

Then finally, it is important to practice hospitality towards Christians because it prepares us for the kind of personal work that is the most effective in leading others to Christ. I am referring to “friendship” evangelism (also known as “relationship” or “lifestyle” evangelism), which will require a willingness to be hospitable and giving to those we are trying to reach. If we are unable (or unwilling) to practice hospitality towards our brethren, what makes us think we will practice it towards the lost?

So the first thing to do is make sure that as a church we provide the right kind of loving and caring spiritual environment. Here are some "action steps" that one can take:

- ◆ Make it a point to get to know **all** the members and regular visitors by name

- ✓ Get a church directory and begin to place names with faces
- ✓ Try to learn someone new at each service until you know them all
- ◆ Practice **hospitality** towards the members and regular visitors - **1 Pe 4:8-9**
 - ✓ Invite them into your home, or out to eat (set a goal of one new family or member per month)
 - ✓ Visit other Christians each week (esp. the sick, shut-ins, new members, absent members)

When a congregation is filled with loving members who care for its own, it is ready to be used by the Lord to reach out and care for others!

Where does one begin in trying to reach the lost? Try this...

MAKE A LIST OF SOULS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE TAUGHT

Making a **list** may not seem important, but it is! It utilizes a very helpful technique used by people successful in all walks of life (i.e., having a **things to do** list). For us, it helps to focus our attention upon those we hope to reach for the Lord, and not neglect them.

In making up this list, one should observe the following suggestions:

- ◆ Start with those who are close to you and work outwardly:
 - ✓ Family
 - ✓ Friends
 - ✓ Coworkers
 - ✓ Neighbors
 - ✓ Relatives of fellow church members
 - ✓ Regular visitors to the services of the church
 - ✓ Casual acquaintances (mailman, store clerk, etc.)
- ◆ Limit this list to five or eight souls (a list with too many and you will not be able to focus your efforts effectively).
- ◆ Give priority to those who are the "unchurched"
 - ✓ I.e., who are not active members of any denomination or particular religion
 - ✓ Active members of a denomination or religion are often very satisfied with their human traditions and are not as receptive to the pure and simple gospel of Christ

- ◆ Husbands and wives might best just have one list (as the suggestions to follow will require their joint cooperation)

Keep this list where you will see it daily. This will help you to be constantly reminded of these people and thereby more likely to do the things mentioned next...

PRAY FOR THESE SOULS ON YOUR LIST DAILY

Why pray? First, that God will work together with you....

- ◆ To give you **opportunities** to do good for them - **1 Co 3:5-7; Co 4:3**
- ◆ To give you the **wisdom** to make the most of those opportunities - **Co 4:4-6**
- ◆ To give you **boldness** to say what needs to be said - **Ep 6:18-20**

Also, that those on your list will...

- ◆ Have the opportunity to hear the truth
- ◆ Have honest hearts to be open and receptive to the truth

Remember, it is **God** who gives the increase when it comes to evangelism. We are but servants whom God can use in His providential workings. So though we may work as though it all depends upon us, let us pray as though it all depends upon God!

The next step will take the most time in effective evangelism...

DO THINGS WHICH DEMONSTRATE YOUR LOVE FOR THEM

The importance of this suggestion is seen in the following statement: **“People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care!”** A demonstration of love will make a person more likely to be receptive to the gospel of love when it is shared (cf. **1 Pe 2:12**). By observing our good works they will more likely “glorify God” by obeying the gospel when they hear it. In other words, our love and good works will help prepare the “soil” to be as receptive as possible when the “seed” is finally sown.

Some “action steps” to take might be...

- ◆ Invite them into your home for a dinner or snack
- ◆ Visit them, especially in times of trial or sickness
- ◆ Do things with them on a social level

In other words, simple **hospitality** and **neighborliness** will go a long way in giving you the opportunity to do good towards them. And when they see the “incarnation of the gospel” (the principles of the

gospel lived out in the flesh), they will be more likely to believe in the “verbalization of the gospel” (the truth of the gospel in spoken or written word).

After you have spent some time being hospitable and becoming better acquainted, the next step is to...

INVITE THOSE ON YOUR LIST TO ATTEND SERVICES

There are several good reasons for wanting them to attend the services of the local church...

- ◆ They will (or should) have an opportunity to see a caring congregation in action
 - ✓ Combined with your own demonstration of love as an individual...
 - ✓ ...the demonstration of love by others should make a lasting impression!
- ◆ They will more likely have an opportunity to be presented with the gospel of Christ (more on this, shortly)
- ◆ If they are attending regularly before conversion to Christ, they will more likely continue to attend after their conversion

As you prepare to invite these souls to attend services, be sure to spend time first in prayer...

- ◆ Asking for **wisdom** to invite them in the best manner
- ◆ Asking for **boldness** to offer the invitation to attend

Of course, you will more likely have people accept your invitations if they are among the “unchurched,” but oftentimes even the “churched” are dissatisfied with where they are attending and are willing to investigate a different church.

The next couple of steps become increasingly important, one being to...

DEMONSTRATE HOSPITALITY TOWARDS THOSE VISITORS WHO DO ATTEND

This would apply to all visitors, whether they were invited by you, someone else, or are simply “walk-ins.” Some “action steps” might include:

- ◆ Greeting them, letting them know they are welcome
- ◆ Inviting them home or out for a dinner or snack
- ◆ Calling or visiting them after they have attended the services

Showing such love towards those who may even be “strangers” is the true meaning of hospitality, a virtue that ought to characterize Christians (cf. **He 13:2; Ro 12:13b**). Plus, in doing such things, you are preparing their hearts for the gospel! How?

- ♦ By demonstrating love as a congregation of Christians...
- ♦ ...they will be more likely to believe in the love of God demonstrated in the life of Christ! - **1 Pe 2:11-12**

Finally, we are ready for the most important step in all our efforts...

SEE THEY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR THE GOSPEL

Ideally, this will come AFTER witnessing a demonstration of the gospel in our lives...

- ♦ By our love, hospitality, etc.
- ♦ Both as individuals and as a congregation

If you feel confident in discussing it with them, then approach them yourself and suggest some sort of Bible study. Either of these two suggestions may be effective:

- ♦ A Bible study with them in their home (using aids like video tapes, charts, or simply an open Bible)
- ♦ That they study on their own with the aid of a Bible correspondence course (like Gene Tope's "Know Your Bible" course, or Robert Harkrider's "How To Understand The Bible" course)

If you do not feel you are yet confident in approaching them concerning a study, or in conducting it yourself, there is still much good that you can do:

- ♦ Bring it to the attention of members who are able and willing to teach
- ♦ Provide opportunities for the teacher and the prospect to become better acquainted, and the teacher can take it from there

CONCLUSION

These suggestions are offered with **a firm conviction** that if they will be carried out, opportunities to share the gospel and save souls will be greatly increased! Also, with **the hope** that you will accept the challenge to implement these suggestions.

This approach is not only **the most successful** in saving and keeping souls, it is also one of **the most natural** and easiest ways to reach the lost for Christ! Remember the survey by The Institute For American Church Growth? One does not even have to be able to teach to be effective in leading others to Christ! One simply has to be **a friend** to Christians and to the lost!

And even if we do not convert a single soul...

- ♦ We will have fulfilled our obligation to share Christ with others

- ◆ We will have done it in such a way as to become better **Christians**, a better **congregation**, better **friends**, better **neighbors**, better **coworkers**, etc.!

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY A CONGREGATION OR A FEW INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS...

Have those interested in being involved meet together on a weekly basis

Encourage one another to **set goals** for the coming week

- ◆ Share ideas for goals; for example . . .
 - ✓ Having over or visiting one person or family from the congregation
 - ✓ Making a list of souls for which to begin praying
 - ✓ What you plan to do to demonstrate your love and concern for those on your list
 - ✓ Who you will invite to services
 - ✓ What visitors you will call, visit, etc.
 - ✓ Who you will offer to have a study, or put in contact with someone who will follow-up with a study
- ◆ Write the goals for the coming week down
- ◆ Pray about them, together and on your own throughout the week

At each weekly meeting...

- ◆ Share and discuss how the goals are being met
- ◆ Set new goals for the coming week
- ◆ Write them, pray about them

This simple program should easily increase opportunities to share the gospel and bring many souls to Christ!

Evangelism Made Personal

Building Courage To Tell Others About Christ

(Overcoming The Fear Of Rejection)

After lack of motivation, a major reason why more people do not engage in personal evangelism is **the fear of rejection**. Afraid of being turned down, laughed at, or looked upon by others as “religious fanatics” has hindered many Christians in their efforts to tell others about Christ.

How does one overcome the fear of rejection? The following thoughts may be helpful...

TRY TO PLEASE GOD, NOT MAN

We should keep in mind the words of the apostle Paul, who in **Ga 1:10** wrote:

*“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men?
For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”*

If we are serious in our desire to be the servants of Christ, then we must make sure it is God we are trying to please, and not man. This is not to suggest that we give no thought as to how to be more pleasing in our demeanor or presentation of the gospel, but it does mean that we should be more concerned about what God thinks, rather than what people may think.

PRAY FOR BOLDNESS

Paul was one who wrote about his own fears when it came to sharing the gospel with others (cf. **1 Co 2:1-3**). But he believed in the power of prayer to provide boldness and solicited the prayers of others as well in this regard (cf. **Ep 6:18-19**). In this he was not alone, for when Peter and John had been threatened, they returned to their company and together prayed for boldness, and the Lord answered their prayer (cf. **Ac 4:29-31**)!

So as we prepare ourselves to engage in personal evangelism, if we find ourselves lacking courage, then let our preparation include diligent prayer for boldness. Even as you walk up to the door, or approach someone you plan to invite to services or to offer a Bible study, say a short prayer asking God to give you the boldness necessary to say what you have planned to say.

The suggestions which follow are based on material presented by **Brent Hunter** in “**Personal Work 101**” which I found to be very practical...

STEPS IN BUILDING COURAGE TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST

STEP ONE - Start out sharing Christ in a way which will not bring you face to face with people.

Select some tract or tracts you feel are good and carry them in your pocket, purse, or car.

- ◆ When you go into a public restaurant, leave it on your table with your tip.
- ◆ When writing letters to friends, relatives, drop a tract in the envelope. Include one even in the bills you pay!
- ◆ Leave a tract in a phone booth, at a Laundromat, on the seat of a taxi or bus, in a rest room.

What happens to the tract may no longer concern you; you've sown the seed and done what you are supposed to do. It may be thrown in the waste paper basket and the custodian may fish it out and take it home and his neighbor may come over and read it. A custodian was cleaning a bathroom, saw a tract and read it. He later obeyed the gospel and is today a gospel preacher! Another case involved a woman who was visiting her daughter, saw a tract on the coffee table that had been sent through the mail, read it and contacted the person who sent it, later obeying the gospel (even though her daughter, the original recipient of the tract, had no interest in it!). This is one way that the written word lasts longer than the spoken word!

STEP TWO - Let your light shine naturally when around non-Christians (Matthew 5:16).

Not to make a spectacle of yourself, but to quietly confess through your actions and normal speech that you are a Christian. There is a difference between doing things to be seen of men (condemned by Jesus), and doing things that are seen by men (commanded by Jesus). Some examples:

- ◆ When you eat in public places, offer thanks for your food. This can be done silently, with a bowed head.
- ◆ Keep a Bible with you at all times and don't be ashamed to be seen reading it. At work on your desk, keep a Bible; in your purse, pocket or coat, keep a New Testament and read it as you have opportunity.
- ◆ In our conversation we can identify ourselves with Christ. Casually make mention of things which indicate your faith in God. A friend at work has confided in you with a problem; tell him in all sincerity, "I will keep you in my prayers." In everyday conversation you might mention some pertinent point made by the preacher, Bible class teacher, or what you gleaned from your own private study. In making plans with others, use the expression "Lord willing..." Give credit to the Lord when the occasion calls for it ("I thank the Lord for my good health").

Casual conduct and expressions like these (when done sincerely) not only help to build courage, they often serve as "door-openers" for people to inquire about your faith.

STEP THREE - Identify who you are and personally hand your friend (prospect) a tract, cassette or video.

You are not directly teaching yet (only using "indirect" teaching methods), but you are beginning to face people. Some examples of how this can be done:

- ◆ Give a tract to a friend and say, “This is a short explanation of the gospel of Christ. We've been friends for sometime now and I would like for you to read this and tell me what you think.”
- ◆ Ask them if they are interested in studying the Bible on their own time, at their own pace, in their home, through a correspondence course.
- ◆ Offer to give them a cassette or video tape of a sermon and ask them if they would be interested in hearing what the Bible says about...

CONCLUSION

At this point you are actively involved in sharing the gospel with others, even though you may only use **indirect** methods. From here, you may decide to try to set up home studies to be taught by yourself, or to set up studies for others to teach. In either case, you are doing much for the Lord!

Evangelism Made Personal

Principles For Teaching In Evangelism

(Tips To Remember When Trying To Teach Others)

Should you decide you are ready to begin teaching others, having an idea of what material and method (multi-lesson, one-lesson, etc.) you plan to use, there are several principles to keep in mind that can increase the likelihood of success. For example...

BE "CLASS" CONSCIOUS

Rather than getting into religious discussions when it is not convenient (such as at work), always think in terms of turning religious inquiries into an opportunity to set up a class or home study with the person. There are several advantages of doing this:

- ◆ Those who are not seriously interested in spiritual matters will not consent to a study; therefore this will distinguish between the truth seekers and those who are not
- ◆ It gives you time to carefully prepare your lesson(s)
- ◆ A discussion of religious matters is more productive when there is ample time, and the Bible is open to answer any questions
- ◆ There will be fewer hindrances should the person decide to obey the gospel at that time

Setting up a class is easy, just ask! If the person says no, then just leave them with an open invitation to a class anytime in the future.

SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD

This principle is key to any effective communication, whether it occur in business, family relationships, or religious discussions. Applied to teaching others, it would involve:

- ◆ Asking questions, then listening carefully to what the other person is saying
- ◆ Occasionally repeating what they say, to make sure you properly understand them
- ◆ Endeavoring to know their own doctrine as well if not better than they do themselves
- ◆ Trying to put yourself in their place, imagining what they must feel like to have their cherished beliefs challenged

This will not only improve your ability to effectively communicate with them, but will also increase the likelihood they will reciprocate by carefully listening to you!

DISAGREE WITHOUT BEING DISAGREEABLE

People will frequently disagree with you, though some may later change their minds. How can we disagree without being “disagreeable?” How can we discuss religion without getting into arguments that generate a lot of heat but little light? Here are suggestions based upon the Scriptures:

- ◆ Maintain a spirit of gentleness and humility; but for the grace of God you would be lost too! (**Ga 6:1**)
- ◆ Refuse to be drawn into religious quarrels; if a discussion degenerates into one, admit your own faults and suggest the study continue at another time (**2 Ti 2:23-24a**)
- ◆ Don't try to teach until you are able to teach (**2 Ti 2:24; Ja 3:1-2**)
- ◆ Be patient; some people take longer than others (**2 Ti 2:24**)
- ◆ If necessary to correct someone who opposes you, do so with humility (**2 Ti 2:25**)
- ◆ Remember the wisdom of Solomon: “*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.*” (**Pro 15:1-2**)

It might help to maintain patience and humility, if we keep in mind that Paul says those in error are in “*the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will*” (**2 Ti 2:26**). The only way they can escape is through the proper and delicate use of “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*” (**Ep 6:17**).

ANSWER QUESTIONS BY LETTING INQUIRERS READ IT FOR THEMSELVES

When people ask questions, it is best to answer them with the Scriptures. Use **an open Bible** to answer their questions. Better yet, have them read it out of their own Bibles. There are several reasons for doing this:

- ◆ They are more likely to understand the point you are trying to make if they can both read and hear it
- ◆ It is hard for them to disagree with what they can read for themselves in their own Bible
- ◆ You gain their respect and confidence that you are only teaching the Word of God, and not the ideas of men

So as often as possible, let them answer their own questions by having them read it for themselves!

USE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS TO SET UP FUTURE STUDIES

A fear many people have in teaching others is that they will be asked a question for which they do not know the answer. But such questions can be advantageous if handled properly! Here is how:

- ♦ Don't try to bluff your way through a subject you are not prepared for; gain respect for honesty by admitting your need to study further
- ♦ Use that difficult question as a reason to continue the study on another occasion; explain that to give an answer the question deserves, you will need to study more and come back at another time

What might at first appear to be a stumbling block to a teacher can actually be an a stepping stone for increased opportunities!

CLOSE EFFECTIVELY

After you have presented the material in your lesson(s), you need to ask for a response. This can often be the most difficult part of teaching, for now you are asking the person to make a judgment about the truthfulness of what you have been saying, and to make a decision as to whether they will obey it. To close effectively, you might ask the person the following questions...

- ♦ “Does this make sense?”
- ♦ “Is there anything I have said that you do not understand?”
- ♦ “Have I been teaching you anything other than what the Bible teaches?”

Assuming the person answers favorably, you then need to make the actual request. Some approaches often sound like subtle ways to move someone to do something they really don't want to do (sort of like a salesman trying to make a close with someone who is really not sold on the product!). Since conversion occurs only when our faith is working in cooperation with God's power (**Co 2:12**), it is absolutely necessary that the prospect has truly come to faith and repentance before they are baptized.

Therefore, a simple and direct question is all that is necessary: **“Would you like to obey Christ now and be baptized for the remission of your sins?”**

If the person says no, you might ask why not, and depending upon the answer, study some more or set up a time for future study. In any case, let the person know that you are always ready to study further should they be interested, and that you are always available should they decide to obey the gospel. Remember, what you sow today may take time before it finally brings forth a harvest.

Finally, a thought or two about...

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Certainly we should ever be ready and willing to answer objections that are raised. It is proper to prepare oneself to answer objections that are commonly given. But again, unless “*you believe with all your heart*” (**Ac 8:36-37**), God's blessings provided in baptism will not be found! Therefore, we need to be careful not to apply undue pressure. While we want to encourage others to obey the gospel, we must make sure that the decision is theirs.

So be careful to let gospel of Christ be the converting power, not “*persuasive words of human wisdom*” (1 Co 2:4). If a person understands what the gospel says, a simple request accompanied with an earnest plea for obedience to Jesus Christ should suffice.

Evangelism Made Personal

Available Resources For Teaching Others

(Summary Of Tools That Can Be Used)

There are many different ways to effectively communicate the gospel to others. What follows is a brief summary and description of various tools that may be helpful. In using them, try to be flexible, asking God for wisdom as to which approach to use depending upon the particular circumstances.

VIDEO STUDIES

“How To Understand The Bible” by Robert F. Harkrider (five tapes)

This is a five-lesson series that presents a survey of the Bible, salvation, and the New Testament Church. It includes study guides for each lesson. Designed for those who have at least a “basic” knowledge of the Bible.

“The Visualized Bible Study Series” by Jule Miller (five tapes)

Another five-lesson study, presenting a survey of the Bible, salvation, the New Testament Church, and the history of the church. There are also study guides that accompany the tapes. This study might be more appropriate for someone with virtually no concept of what the Bible is all about.

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

“Know Your Bible” Correspondence Course by Gene Tope (six lessons)

The six lessons in this study include such topics as:

- ◆ Introduction To The Bible
- ◆ Sin And The Blood Of Christ
- ◆ What Must I Do To Be Saved?
- ◆ The New Testament Church
- ◆ Denominationalism
- ◆ Baptism

This series has been used on a number of occasions where the lessons were simply given to a friend, and they taught themselves the gospel.

“Jesus, The Way” by Sewell Hall (seven lessons)

The seven lessons in this study include such topics as:

- ◆ Jesus, The Way (Introduction)
- ◆ Finding Jesus, The Way
- ◆ Jesus, The Way To A Better Life
- ◆ Jesus, The Way To Forgiveness
- ◆ Jesus, The Way To God
- ◆ Jesus, The Way Out Of Religious Confusion
- ◆ Jesus, The Way To Heaven

The first lesson is designed for mass mailing, but can be used as a regular correspondence course.

TRACTS

“Facts You Need To Face” By Haun Publishing Company

A simple tract (reading time is five minutes) that presents the following "facts":

- ◆ You Need To Be Saved
- ◆ Christ Died For You
- ◆ To Be Saved You Must Accept Christ
- ◆ You Can Be Just A Christian

“The Gospel Of The Grace Of God” By Leslie Diestelkamp

A medium-length tract that covers:

- ◆ Man's Unworthiness
- ◆ The Gift Of God's Love
- ◆ What Grace Does Not Do
- ◆ Grace And Salvation
- ◆ Grace And Security

"The Way Of Christ Without Denominationalism" By Samuel Dawson

A good sized booklet that discusses:

- ◆ The Harm Of Denominationalism
- ◆ Fellowship With God

♦ Fellowship With God's People

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Evangelism Made Personal

Being Doers Of The Word, Not Hearers Only

(An Aid To Doing Things That Make For A Caring Congregation)

Action Sheet 1

SHOWING HOSPITALITY TOWARDS CHRISTIANS	
GOALS TO BE SET	DATE MET
Names Of People I Will Learn:	~
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
Those I Will Call, Visit, Or Write:	~
-	
-	
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-	
-	
People I Will Invite Or Take Out:	~
-	
-	
-	
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-	
-	
-	

Evangelism Made Personal

Being Doers Of The Word, Not Hearers Only

(An Aid To Reach Others For Christ)

Action Sheet 2

PROSPECT LIST

NAME:
Status: Acquaintance ___ Family ___ Visitor ___
Begin Praying For This Person Daily (Use The Weekly Checklist Below To Start)
Sunday ___ Monday ___ Tuesday ___ Wednesday ___ Thursday ___ Friday ___ Saturday ___
Do Things Which Demonstrate Your Love For Them (List What You Do Below)
-
-
-
Extend Invitation To Services: Accepted ___ Declined ___ Already Attending ___
Offer Them A Study (With You Or With Someone Else): Accepted ___ Declined ___
BCC ___ Video ___ Tract ___ Home Study ___
Final Results: Not Interested ___ Taught ___ Obeyed The Gospel ___
Comments:

NAME:
Status: Acquaintance ___ Family ___ Visitor ___
Begin Praying For This Person Daily (Use The Weekly Checklist Below To Start)
Sunday ___ Monday ___ Tuesday ___ Wednesday ___ Thursday ___ Friday ___ Saturday ___
Do Things Which Demonstrate Your Love For Them (List What You Do Below)
-
-
-
Extend Invitation To Services: Accepted ___ Declined ___ Already Attending ___
Offer Them A Study (With You Or With Someone Else): Accepted ___ Declined ___
BCC ___ Video ___ Tract ___ Home Study ___
Final Results: Not Interested ___ Taught ___ Obeyed The Gospel ___
Comments:

Evangelism Made Personal

Concluding Remarks

It is hoped that the thoughts presented in this series might serve in some way to encourage all those who desire to lead others to Christ and His church. The emphasis has not been to stress one approach above others, nor to say that everyone must be doing the same thing in this enterprise we call “evangelism,” but rather to motivate, encourage, and offer suggestions of a general nature that might help anyone do whatever they can, according to the ability and opportunity God has given them. If it helps but one person to be more diligent in their efforts, then the effort has been well worth it.

To God be the glory!