

“Evangelism”

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“Getting Prepared” and “Taking Action”

- Prayer is the “Catalyst” in Evangelism!

Prayer is not often stressed in many books on how to do 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. Remember ... In the conversion of Cornelius, he prayed that God would send someone to teach him, and Peter prayed for the Lord to use him. (Acts 10). Paul taught the Colossians to pray that God would open a door for the Word (Colossians 4:3).

When preparing for evangelism, start with prayer!

Preparation for evangelism is like preparing to make a sales pitch. People think that if you follow the right procedure, the desired results will follow.

- The Power is in the Seed!

The Word of God has always been capable of influencing people and accomplishing its intended purpose (Isaiah 55:10-11). As the author of Hebrews wrote, it is both “alive and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12). This is especially true of the Gospel of Christ, the “power of God unto salvation” (Romans 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 use modern aids to present the gospel, but we must make sure that they are faithfully communicating the Word. True conversion will occur only if we plant the proper “seed.” We may not 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 us maintain the right perspective...

- The Results Depend Upon the Type of Soil!

In the Parable of The Sower (Matthew 13:1-23), 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?
- Upon the Sower?
- Upon the Type of Soil?

This illustrates where the area of responsibility lies. The sower fulfills his responsibility by sowing the seed (Ezekiel 3:17-19). If the soil rejects the seed, the soil is responsible; the sower should not feel accountable (Matthew 10:14-15; Acts 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!*

Naturally, we are delighted when someone believes and truly accepts Jesus as the Lord of their lives, but we need to learn the joy of sharing Christ with others, whether or not people accept Him.

Instead of being concerned with the number of baptisms, how should we measure success? Our goals should center on how many are being taught, not converted!

- The Place of the Sower

We are simply “seed-throwers” and “water-boys” (1 Corinthians 3:5-7). One may plant the seed, another may water, but it is God who gives the increase! Because of this, there is no place for boasting about numbers of people being converted.

God can even use “defective” seed-throwers (Philemon 1:15-18). Defective in experience. This is because the power is in the seed, not the sower!

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 (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

- The Principle of Sowing and Reaping:
 - In the Parable of The Sower, only one out of four produced favorable results.
 - In sales, the ratio of success is often much higher.

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. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

If we increase the level of sowing, the level of reaping will rise proportionately.

To avoid discouragement, we need to set goals on how many are taught, not on how many are converted!

- Quite Often, One Sows and Another Reaps!

Winning souls involves both “sowing” and “reaping.” (John 4:35-38).

Sowing is preparing hearts for the reception of the gospel; and when the hearts are first introduced to the gospel and its principles.

Reaping is the actual “harvesting” of what has been sown. It occurs when souls who have had the Word planted in their hearts, decide to obey it!

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 sometime 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 are ready and anxious to obey the gospel with little effort on your part. In this case, you are reaping what others have sown!

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 we can maintain the positive attitude necessary to persevere until Harvest Time is no more!

❖ Taking Action:

The first step is doing things which make for a caring congregation, because it will help to confirm our claim to be true disciples of Jesus Christ (notice John 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!

Our love makes us useful to the Lord! He will “open doors” for those that can be useful to Him. If we are that kind of church, we 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!

If we are not a place where new Christians can grow spiritually in an atmosphere of love, will the Lord lead us to souls who are seeking 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?

The first thing to do is make sure that as a church we provide the right kind of loving and caring spiritual environment.

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!

- **Make a List of Souls You Would Like to See Taught**

Making a list utilizes a very helpful technique used by people successful in all walks of life. It helps us focus our attention upon those we hope to reach for the Lord.

In making up this list, start with those who are close to you and work outwardly:

- Family
- Friends
- Coworkers
- Neighbors
- Casual acquaintances (mailman, store clerk, etc.)

Limit this list to five or eight souls. Husbands and wives might best just have one list.

Give priority to those who are the "unchurched".

- **Pray for These Souls on Your List Daily**

Pray that God will work together with you....

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

Also, pray 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. Though we may work as though it all depends upon us, let us pray as though it all depends upon God!

- **Do Things Which Demonstrate Your Love for Them**

“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 (1 Peter 2:12). 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.

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”, they will be more likely to believe in the “verbalization of the gospel”.

- Invite Those on Your List to Attend Services

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.

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.

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 the lost!

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.!

Next Week: “Building Courage To Tell Others About Christ”
(Overcoming the Fear of Rejection)

- ✓ Tools that are non-threatening to ask someone to have a bible study.
 - ✓ Tools to use to guide you through a bible study.



HOW TO KILL A CHURCH

- Don't Evangelize
- Regularly Criticize Leaders
- Attend Services Infrequently
- Refuse to Volunteer
- Neglect the Youth
- Complain More Than Encourage
- Stop Taking the Bible Seriously
- Value Personal Preferences Over Souls