

Personal Evangelism

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God expects His followers to be soul-winners and to show men and women how to find pardon, peace, and eternal life. We want to look at personal evangelism by noting three factors.

1. WHY CHRISTIANS ARE NOT BUSY IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

(a) **Unsundered lives.** The most likely reason Christians are not personally leading others to Christ, is because they are not fully surrendered themselves. For many people, things are neither black nor white, but just a hazy gray. The Bible speaks about this condition in **Revelation 3:15-16**: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Let’s not be afraid nor ashamed to surrender completely to Jesus Christ, and to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God (**Romans 12:1**). When we are fully surrendered to Christ, then and only then, will **Matthew 6:33** be experienced in our lives.

(b) **Unclean vessels.** Another reason why Christians are not personally leading others to Christ is because our vessels are not clean. God is not going to take the pure water of life to thirsty souls in dirty pitchers! **2 Timothy 2:19-22** says, “And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity ... if a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” **2 Corinthians 6:17** says, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.” God uses separated Christians (not isolated and withdrawn persons), but those who are in the world yet not of it. Desires for money, pleasure, fun, sports, and amusements keep Christians from being available for God’s use. Deliverance from sin is free, but deliverance from the world demands the cost of separation.

(c) *Unconvinced faith.* Many times those who are vitally interested in soul saving and are fully surrendered and spiritually on fire — lack faith to talk to, and witness to, and invite lost souls to Jesus. The prospective soul-winner sometimes says, “They’ve been invited many times before; they know they ought to do something about their souls.” And so, many times we simply don’t bother confronting men and women with Jesus Christ. But we must faithfully sow the seed and let God take care of the increase. **1 Corinthians 4:2** says, “Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.” The soul-winner must be convinced that sharing the Good News with others is necessary.

2. WHY WE SHOULD BE ENTHUSED IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

(a) *The joy of witnessing.* Sharing the Gospel is a joy, not a job. It is a delight, not a drudgery. Think of the joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repents (**Luke 15:10**). Remember the joy when you received Jesus as your own Saviour and Lord? One minister says, “I have seen a whole church suddenly come alive with joy as we have had people receive Christ Sunday after Sunday in the services.” Even as Christ did not come into the world to be ministered unto, but to minister — just so, the greatest joy in the Christian’s life is the joy of sharing his personal faith in a personal Christ with another person in a personal way. **Proverbs 11:30** says, “He that winneth souls is wise.”

(b) *The compulsion from the heart.* Every saved person this side of Heaven ought to be vitally concerned about every lost person this side of Hell. Paul had this concern when he said, “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (**Romans 9:2, 3**). L. R. Scarborough once said, “Winning one person creates the hunger for more, and on it goes until the soul winner is consumed with a burning passion to win others to Christ.” Paul had this burden when he said, “Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.”

(c) *The constraint of love.* In **2 Corinthians. 5:14** we read, “The love of Christ constraineth us.” It compels us. The mother-in-law of one of the deacons of a congregation was in a church service for the first time. The people of that church had been praying for her. That night the preacher trusted the Lord for the words needed to touch her heart. After the service, the minister met the woman at the door. So constrained was he that he began to witness to her. She said that after the kind of life she had lived, she was sure there would be no God. But all over the church, Christians had gathered in small groups and were praying while the minister talked to her. They were weeping and so was the minister — for one dear lady. She was amazed when she saw the people praying, but still would not believe. On the way home she asked

her son-in-law why the people were crying. He said, “Because they love you so much.” Those words broke her sudden will and she opened her heart to Christ.

(d) *The command from Heaven.* Today we build big, beautiful church buildings with cushioned pews, air-conditioned auditoriums, robed choirs, new educational wings, well-trained preachers — and then advertise, “Come and hear.” But all the while, God says, “Go and tell.” The Christian does not need to pray about whether he should witness or not. The command has been given. It needs to be heeded and heard. The Great Commission says, “Go ye therefore.”

(e) *The cry from Hell.* **Luke 16:27-28** tells about the unrepentant rich man who pleads, “I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house, for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment.” A preacher startled his congregation one Sunday morning by saying that every one of his members “ought to go to hell.” After a pause, he continued — “for five minutes” — to get his heart fired up to witness for Christ. A good look at Hell (as the Word of God describes it), can do just that for us today.

3. HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PERSONAL EVANGELIST

The information which follows centers around the word “personal.” These instructions are intended to help us become better witnesses for Christ.

(a) *P is for prayer.* The most important ingredient in personal evangelism is prayer. Paul says in **Romans 10:1**, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” He says to **Philemon**, “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.” The Bible says that the Lord is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” It is our duty to pray for lost people, and to ask God to give us boldness to speak to them. All true believers should have and use a prayer list. It is necessary to pray each morning for even unknown persons we might meet during the day. We should pray for a person before we speak to him about his soul. Why? So that the Lord’s will might be done and the Holy Spirit might help us say the things that will bring conviction and will lead to Christ. Our prayer should be, “Lord, give me at least one soul to whom I can speak today.”

(b) *E is for example.* One writer says, “What you are, speaks so loud, that the world can’t hear what you say.” Paul writes to Timothy and admonishes, “Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believer in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (**1 Timothy 4:12**). The world today is filled with hypocrisy, false pretense, and make-believe. The world is looking for something real, secure, and satisfying. Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 3:2**, “Ye are our epistles...known and read of all

men.“ A young girl, in school, yielded to the temptation to cheat. The Holy Spirit (dwelling in her) convicted her of the sin, and she confessed all to the teacher. Upon this confession, the teacher remarked that this was the first time she had ever seen that Christianity works. A characteristic of salt is that it will make one thirsty. When a personal evangelist is being led of the Lord, his exemplary life will make others desire his kind of life in Christ.

(c) *R is for read.* **Acts 17:11** says, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Just as we feed our physical bodies at least once every day (and usually more often), so we must feed our spiritual appetites at least once every day. A born-again child of God will have a time set aside every day for the study of God’s Word. One of the office-jobs of the Holy Spirit is recorded in **John 14:26**. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” If we read and memorize portions of Scripture, the Holy Spirit will then be able to lead us to say the right words. Important verses in the Bible that every soul-winner should memorize are sometimes called “the Roman Road”: **Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9; and John 1:1; 3:16; 5:24**. Many Christians are poor personal evangelists, because they spend so little time daily reading God’s Word. In **2 Timothy 2:15** we read, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”

(d) *S is for speak.* We should see every soul as one for whom Christ died. **Matthew 10:32-33** reminds us, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.” See also **Mark 8:38**. **1 Peter 3:15** says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” The Gospel needs to be shared by word of mouth. We need to be constantly on the alert for opportunities; we must speak to the point.

(e) *O is for offspring.* Where should we begin in this great work of personal evangelism? **Acts 1:8** tells us, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Begin at home! Parents need to realize that the jewels God has entrusted to our care are passing through our homes on their way either to Heaven or to Hell — and that destination (while it is their decision), will largely be determined by us, the parents. **Deut. 6:6-9** tells us how to diligently teach our children. It is tragic when we put material and physical interests

ahead of the spiritual training of our children. Insincerity and inconsistent living on the part of parents has often destroyed the faith of children.

(f) *N is for neighbor.* Listen to the song: “If you cannot cross the ocean, and the heathen land explore: you can find the heathen nearer; you can help them at your door.” **Acts 1:8** says we should go first to those nearest our family. Sit down and write the names of neighbors within a radius of two miles from your home and see a wide-open door ready for personal evangelism. A man moved to a new home and lived there three years before one person came speaking to him concerning his soul. However, he had been there only a few days, before the milkman, insurance man, and the mailman were there. Let us pray for our neighbors — help them, visit them, invite them to church, and invite them to Christ.

(g) *A is for acclaim the Gospel.* **1 Timothy 6:2-3** declares, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing.” What shall we acclaim? **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** says, “How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day.” The Good News that men need to hear is that Someone loves them and has paid the penalty for their sins.

(h) *L is for lead to Christ.* Don't ask if they'd like to be a church member. Give them the Gospel. Use the previously-mentioned Scriptures and tell men and women how to be saved! Use Gospel tracts freely and let the Word of God bring conviction of sin and lead the sinner to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Invite the individual to accept Christ upon his hearing and believing the Scriptures. A freshman at Bible School presented the claims of Christ to another, and then asked if he would like to become a Christian. “I sure would,” was the reply. Surprised, the student said, “You would?” “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

*O ye saints, arouse, be earnest;
Up and work while yet tis day;
E'er the night of death o'ertake thee,
Strive for souls while still you may.*