

# Personal Evangelism

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,  
and he who is wise wins souls.”

**Proverbs 11:30**



**(Lesson # 1)**

## What Is The Work of The Church?

In Ephesians 4:11, 12 we have the work of the church set forth. The work of the church is three-fold: *Evangelism, Benevolence, and Edification*. Now let's remember, the church is a divinely established and divinely organized institution (Ephesians 2:10). The church must be satisfied with doing what God authorized for her to do through His Word and nothing more.

## Evangelism Is The Work of The Church.

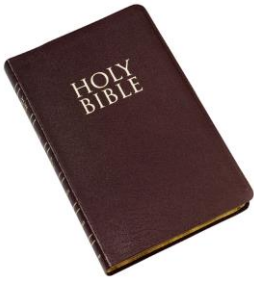
The work of the church is an extension and continuation of the work of Christ. His mission was to seek and save the lost. That is still a work that the church must engage in today. Since individuals are saved by the gospel (Romans 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14), the work of the church is to preach the gospel (Acts 11:22-24; Philippians 4:15-17, 2:25; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 8). These are all wonderful examples of local churches engaging in the action of evangelism. They were all evangelistic minded. I like especially the last example of the brethren at Thessalonica. They didn't simply do evangelistic work by sending money to evangelists who were afar, they evangelized their own community by telling people they came into contact with about Jesus. I would to God that we would ever try to emulate the church in Thessalonica and be actively involved in telling people about Jesus. Why isn't the church growing in some places? One reason is because we are neglecting to do the work of the church. We are keeping the gospel to ourselves, and that is not going save anyone. The gospel is meant to be spread (Matthew 28:19-20). If we truly believe in the gospel and its ability to save, we won't keep it to ourselves (2 Corinthians 4:13; James 1:21; Psalms 19:7).

This is what the parable of the sower is all about (Matthew 13:1-20). Of several lessons in this parable, one is vital: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. This is "the

parable of the sower" (Matthew 13:18), not just the hearers. For both His disciples and the multitudes, Jesus taught a basic lesson about His kingdom: its establishment and growth would be accomplished through teaching. Why? Because faith cometh by the word of God (Romans 10:13-17). LET'S PREACH THE WORD!

## **Questions**

1. List at least five reasons why some do not teach others and engage in personal evangelism?



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**(Lesson # 2)**

## Why Study Personal Evangelism?

Personal evangelism is important, and it is needful to raise this question, "Why study personal evangelism?" Certainly, if our time could be used more profitably studying something else we should do so. Congregation should be active in personal evangelism. If so, we should be thankful. Many local churches however are not active in personal evangelism. If you feel personal evangelism is mentioned or studied too frequently you might think about the admonition of Paul not to "grow weary in well doing" (Gal.6:9). Remember, the Lord's church is a saving institution (1 Tim. 3: 15). While religious denominations view the function of the church as primarily benevolent, political, social, or philanthropic, we should not succumb to such misconceptions. Jesus first and foremost came to seek and save the lost. While he was sympathetic to hunger by providing loaves and fishes, he rebuked those who followed him for that purpose. It is absurd to have and train fishermen who don't fish, or to have and train sowers who don't sow seed (Mk. 1:17; Lk. 8:11). Once more, "*For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world*" (Jn. 12:47). We need to study personal evangelism because that is in essence what being a Christian is all about.

## We Must Grow.

God expects us to grow and mature spiritually. "*... as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,*" (1 Pet.2:2). Growth must continue over a lifetime. Soul winning is one of many ways to grow and bear fruit. "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*" (Gal.5:22-23). What better fruit is there than precious souls being added to the Kingdom? The Lord expects his branches to bear fruit. "*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw*

*them into the fire, and they are burned"* (Jn. 15:5-6). The responsibility is placed upon each of us by the general teaching in the Great Commission to be active in personal evangelism.

The parable of the fig tree illustrates the Lord's disappointment when there is no fruit. He also spoke this parable: *"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'"* (Lk.13:6-7).

While preachers must indeed do their part, it is clear that every Christian has a role to play in the process of evangelism. It was Paul's admonition that we, *"... become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain"* (Phil.2:15-16). Soul winning should be the natural result of maturing in the faith.

### **We Must Keep Our Brother.**

God also expects us to care for others. When God asked Cain, *"Where is Abel thy brother?"*, Cain arrogantly challenged God saying, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* (Gen. 4:9). Society today echoes the sentiment of Abel. In a sense every man has a responsibility to take care of himself, true enough. And to some extent an argument could be made that someone who makes no attempt to take care of himself deserves to perish. Admittedly, it is an awesome task to take care of oneself. Every man is responsible for his own sins and we could not, even if we so desired, secure the salvation of another. In fact, it would be very wrong to make vows for someone else. But, to a very high degree, we are our brother's keeper. The fact that all of humanity is made in the image of God with an eternal soul places us in a unique position with respect to all humanity. In a real sense everyone under heaven is my neighbor.

"Since God is Father and men are His sons, they are therefore brethren of one another. As sonship is the most essential factor in man's right relation to God, so is brotherhood in his relation to his fellow-man. Brotherhood is first known as the relation between sons of the same parent, a relation of tender affection and benevolence. It becomes gradually extended to kindred, and to members of the same tribe or nation. And the Christian ideal of society is that a similar relation should exist between all men without limit or distinction. Agape, 'love' is the word in the New Testament that generally

denotes this ideal. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' is the whole law of conduct as between man and man (Mt. 22:39-40); and neighbor includes every man within one's reach (Lk 10:29ff), even enemies (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:35). Without the love of man, the love of God is impossible, but 'he that abideth in love abideth in God' (1 Jn 4: 16,20)" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

Yes, we are our brother's keeper. The whole example of Jesus teaches that we must "keep" (take care of) our brother. In fact, the Lord will call us into account as he did in the case of Cain as to the condition of our brother. Love requires concern for our brother.

### **We Must Care For the Lost.**

One of the greatest expressions of love we can show anyone is to tell that one about Christ. James put it this way, "*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins*" (Jas.5:19-20). Paul thought of himself as a debtor to anyone he had not reached with the gospel. "*I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. for the Jew first and also for the Greek*" (Rom.1 :14-16). According to W.E. Vine, the word debtor is from the Greek word *opheiletēs*, meaning "'one who owes anything to another,' primarily in regard to money" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 150). It is used metaphorically by Paul in Romans 1:14 in the matter of preaching the gospel.

Paul felt a strong debt to deliver the gospel message to the lost. He responded to this indebtedness by sharing the gospel with others. So much so that he told the Ephesian elders he was free from the blood of all men. " *... how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house ... Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men*" (Ac.20:20,26). Paul really saw no alternative to reaching the lost. "*For if I preach the gospel I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!*" (1 Cor.9:16).

George Stebbins penned these words to challenge the unfruitful: "Must I go, and empty handed, Thus my dear redeemer meet? Not one day of service give him, Lay no trophy at his feet? Must I go and empty handed? Must I meet my savior so?

Not one soul with which to greet him: Must I empty handed go?" Really, we have no choice. We cannot help but be soul winners. Jeremiah thought once he might not speak of the Lord. *"Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name.' But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones ;I was weary of holding it back, And I could not" (Jer.20:9).* Yet, it was in his bones to teach others about the Lord.

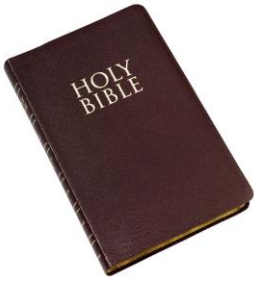
## **We Must Be Teachers.**

God expects us to be teachers. The author of Hebrews had in mind some who had not developed as they should. He wrote, *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (Heb.5:12).* We must seek out faithful men and encourage them to learn to teach others. *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).*

## **Questions**

1. What is, and is not, the mission of the Lord's church?
2. Discuss the situation of a fisherman who will not fish and a sower who will not sow.
3. How does personal evangelism relate to bearing fruit? Are there some other ways that one can bear fruit in the kingdom besides converting people?
4. How does the Lord react when He finds no fruit at all?
5. List some ways in which I am **not** "my brother's keeper."

6. List some ways in which I **am** "my brother's keeper."
7. What responsibility do we all have as "sons of God" toward our fellow-man?
8. What benefit comes from converting a sinner from the error of his way?
9. Why would Paul consider himself a debtor to those who had not heard the gospel?
10. What was Paul's assessment of his effort of preaching the gospel at Ephesus?
11. How did Jeremiah react to his responsibilities to teach the wayward?
12. What was the fundamental problem with some Christians in the NT according to Hebrews 5:12?
13. Describe how the chain of teaching works based on Paul's instructions in 2 Timothy 2:2.
14. What four responsibilities are discussed in this lesson which encourage us to do more personal evangelism?



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**(Lesson # 3)**

## Evangelism and Purpose

Personal evangelism certainly is important. In fact, a congregation of God's people cannot hope to be accepted by Him and neglect this important area. On the day of Pentecost Peter gave emphasis to this responsibility. *"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' ... Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them ... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:38,41,47). The procreation of the kingdom of God depends on evangelism. The Apostles' task on the day of Pentecost was to evangelize. That task was driven by a primary purpose. Their purpose was conversion. You see for men to be saved they must be radically changed. It is good that brethren recognize that purpose and settle on the noble objective of reaching the lost. When they do this they will reach their community as a field white for the harvest. Jesus said,

*"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"* (John 4:35).

## What Is Our Purpose?

However, to have tunnel vision and ignore the broad scope of the Lord's work by focusing in on evangelism alone is counter-productive. By such improper focus a congregation so doing neglects to build the base needed to nurture and cultivate its fruits. To improperly focus on evangelism while ignoring other areas would be like the person Paul spoke of who had all faith, yet was nothing because he did not have love. *"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all*



*knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13: 2).*

The apostle Peter reveals the various facets of the New Testament church in Acts 2. Study the chart on the next page and notice how each area of responsibility is designated. Then note the purpose of each area along with the task of carrying out each purpose.

<b>Jerusalem Church</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Acts 2:42,47</b> They devoted themselves to the...breaking of bread and to prayer...praising God.	<b>Exalt God</b> Heb.13:15 Rom.15:11	<b>Worship</b> 1 Cor.11:23-29 Eph.5:19
<b>Acts 2:42,44,46</b> They devoted themselves to the... fellowship. All that believed were together...And they continued daily with one accord.	<b>Encourage</b> Eph.4:16 1 Cor.12:12-27	<b>Fellowship</b> 1 Jn.1:7 2 Cor.8:4
<b>Acts 2:42,44,46</b> They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching.	<b>Train &amp; Equip</b> Eph.6:10-16 2 Tim.4:1-4	<b>Edify</b> 2 Tim.2:2 Heb.5:12 1 Tim.3:15
<b>Acts 2:44-45</b> All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.	<b>Relieve</b> Anxious- Phil.4:6 Fearful- 1 Jn.4:18 Poor- Mt.26:11	<b>Service</b> Mt.25:33-46 1 Cor.16:1-2 Rom.15:26
<b>Acts 2:38,41,47</b> Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. ... Those who accepted his message were baptized,...and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.	<b>Evangelize</b> Mk.16:16 Mt.28:19-20	<b>Convert</b> Acts 3:19 Mt.18:3

The work of the church is threefold: edification, benevolence, and evangelism (Eph. 4: 12). The five purposes detailed chart fit into these three categories. If not,

they would be unscriptural. It would serve a congregation well to consider its purpose before a strong program is planned, even in personal evangelism. One congregation might be strong in personal evangelism, but have a poor Bible class program, be indifferent to ministering to the needy, or conduct a worship service that is not as reverent and holy as it ought to be. And all the while this same congregation may be totally indifferent to the gospel being preached anywhere except in the immediate area.

The sad thing is that some churches are recognized as being "commendable works", yet closer examination reveals that they are often doing well in only one of the five purposes listed above. For instance, you may find a church that has a tremendous worship service with an accomplished song leader and pulpit speaker (see task number one).

At the same time, you may find another congregation that is known for its close fellowship as the members worship together and edify one another (see task number two). Perhaps they have strong teacher training programs, training classes for the men to learn to make talks, preach and serve, and even a ladies' Bible class that affords the women the opportunity to be encouraged by the fellowship of one another.

Then, there may be a church that has an ambitious Bible study program, complete with trained teachers following a well-planned curriculum and access to activities obtained from a well equipped resource room (see task number three).

Or, you may come across a congregation that is known for its ministry (see task number four). This type of congregation is often in a community that has a lot of members that hurt in various ways. Some members may be poor, while others could be handicapped or even lonely. A mind to work and minister to these brethren is evidenced when the members meet to sing and read Scripture at the local nursing homes. The church may even have a "prison ministry" in progress as well.

And finally, you may have a congregation that is very active in evangelism (see task number five). The members may have several trained Bible teachers who are capable of using the Jule Miller or other series. Someone there may even be able to present home Bible studies. Their preacher may have made several trips to other countries, while the congregation supports preachers outside the local congregation and sometimes even preachers in other countries for example.

## **Are We Balanced?**

It is unusual to find a congregation that functions well in all of these areas and fulfills completely the purpose of the Lord's church in all five areas detailed in Acts 2. If the congregation continues a program that is so out of balance it often becomes the victim of the temptations and dangers of such direction.

Concentrating on the worship service improperly and neglecting the other areas have led to solos and choirs and undue exalting of preachers. Concentrating on Bible classes improperly and neglecting other areas have led to competitive classroom "decorations" and a waste of the Lord's money. An undue concentration on ministry has led to a "Red Cross" concept of the church seeing the relieving of the physical pains of the world as the church's primary objective. Those unduly focusing on evangelism at the expense of other purposes lead to the cultic movements that enslave members to follow members for evangelism and condemn harshly those who fail to meet their man made quotas.

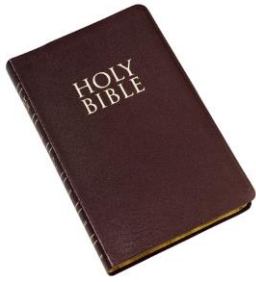
Putting personal evangelism in the right perspective requires balance. It recognizes that God intended His church to be evangelistic, to be edifying and to be sensitive to the hurting. God also desires the assembly of the saints to be a grand occasion to worship God. An intense effort should be made by the congregation to fulfill God's purpose in every area, not just personal evangelism.

Most of us would concede that all of the five purposes mentioned in the chart on the previous page are scriptural and are the responsibility of the local church (assuming they are not abused and carried out at the expense of other areas). The difference comes when we examine what a congregation is actually DOING. *"Wherefore you shall know them by their fruits"* (Mt. 7:20).

## **Questions**

1. The procreation of the kingdom depends upon what?
  
2. What was the Apostle Peter's task on the day of Pentecost?

3. What is the danger of becoming too focused on personal evangelism?
  
4. What is the three-fold work of the local church?
  
5. Give the five purposes of the church listed in the chart and the scriptural reference where they are found in Acts 2.
  
6. From the chart, identify the task of each purpose and give the content of at least one passage that identifies that task.
  
7. Define evangelism and give several examples of local church evangelism.
  
8. Define edification and give several examples of local church edification.
  
9. Define benevolence and give several examples of local church benevolence.
  
10. Explain how a congregation might well enjoy a good reputation among brethren, while not having the favor of the Lord. Refer to points made in the lesson and Rev. 2: 1-4, 3: 14-18.



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**(Lesson # 4)**

## Discipleship

When Jesus began his earthly ministry he chose disciples. These early disciples later became the twelve Apostles designated for a special work. Jesus later described all his followers as his disciples. The Greek word *mathetes* from which we get our word disciple means "a learner." It "denotes 'one who follows one's teaching,' as the 'disciples' of John, Mt. 9:14; of the Pharisees, Mt. 22:16; of Moses, John 9:28" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 171). The Apostles were prepared for a special work. They were to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts. 1:4,2:1-4) and bind on earth what had been bound in heaven (Matt. 18:18). Jesus spent three years with the Twelve teaching and training them for a commission that would be described as sitting upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28). Today, under the banner of "discipling," some have mistakenly sought to subjugate men to their charge by teaching that converts must subject themselves to their religious leaders just as the Apostles were subject to Jesus in His day. Two things are wrong with this assumption: (1) today's religious teachers are not the Lord Jesus Christ who in the days of the NT chose the Twelve, and (2) the special work the Apostles were called to do has already been done.

The disciples in the NT, who were not Apostles, were simply "learners," following their "teacher" the Lord Jesus Christ. This is clear from the results that came from preaching the gospel in the book of Acts. *"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"* (Acts. 6: 7).

## Love of the Savior

First and foremost, a disciple must have a love of the Savior. The apostle Peter emphasizes this attribute as a prerequisite of those who would prepare themselves

to teach others. *"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"* (1 Pet. 3:15).

We are sometimes ineffective in rallying others to be workers for the Lord because we seek to get others to tell about a Lord that they do not know themselves. Those who love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind will have no problem sharing their faith with others no matter how awkwardly their message is presented. When a young man proposes to the one he has chosen to share his life with, she understands his message even if poorly presented. His love for her is apparent and she is graciously complimented. Similarly, a disciple of the Lord who has sanctified Jesus in his heart, will present the risen Lord well (assuming he has made preparation no matter what lesson he presents, Bible study or otherwise). When we love the Lord we wind up talking about Him.

Disciples who love the Lord cannot help but teach others about Him. They will feel as Jeremiah did in his day. *"O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay"* (Jer. 20:7-9).

## **Faith in the Message**

Second, a disciple must have a deep faith in the message of the gospel to become an effective personal worker. This message is eternal. While God, man, sin and the devil have not changed, society and technology continue to change. But among these changes, our mission to seek and save the lost cannot change. Our methods of presenting the message will change from time to time, but a different method may not necessarily be better. What is "better" is what is right and what works. The message is to be taught whether it is accepted or not. One great encouragement is knowing that not everyone will accept it. Jesus, near the close of his personal ministry found it necessary to explain the apparently small response to his teaching. He reminded the people of Isaiah's prophecy that the day would come in which the workers would wonder aloud, "Who hath believed our report?" In other words, they were saying to Jesus, "Lord, is this all?" Yet Jesus was a complete

success in what he did. The increase of converts is the Lord's part. We plant and water, the Lord gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

Ezekiel was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. He was not sent to those of a strange language or culture. He was told that they would not hear him, yet he was to go anyway. If he failed to teach the wicked he would perish with the wicked. If he taught the righteous he would save himself as well as his hearers. But whether they chose to hear or they chose to forbear they would know that there had been a prophet among them (Ezek. 2:5; 3:4-7,17-21).

J.B. Phillips' translation of 1 Corinthians 1: 17 reads this way: "*Christ did not send me to see how many I could baptize, but to proclaim the gospel.*" Some in the NT era reacted with angry hostility to the preaching of the gospel (Ac. 9:23, 25; 18:5-6; 19:8-9, etc.). Others were interested, but did not immediately obey (Ac. 24:25; 26:27-28, etc.). Many believed and obeyed the gospel (Ac.2:41; 4:4; 5: 14; 6:7; etc.). All three reactions are found in Acts 17:32-34. It is clear that if we teach the gospel, whatever the apparent results, we will please the Lord. If we do not teach it, we can only expect condemnation.

### **Concern for the Lost**

Third, a disciple must have a deep concern for the lost people who are lost in sin and who face eternal torment. We should be horrified at the thought that someone we know is going to hell. Jonah did not go to Nineveh because he was afraid of them. Examine what the record says: "*Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?*" (Jonah 4:10-11). Jonah was afraid that the Ninevites might repent and God would spare them. We need to be careful about wanting the wicked to get their due. **Our lack of personal evangelism indicates that we do not really believe people are lost and that we will be lost if we do not take the gospel to them.** More of our prayers seem to be "Come Lord Jesus" rather than "Just a little longer ... please Jesus ... just a few more days to get our loved ones in." Paul expressed his attitude this way: "*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you*" (Phil. 1:23-24).

A young man who died of exhaustion after pulling a number of people to safety after a terrible ship wreck, asked, "Did I do my best"? When reassured that he had saved 17, his dying reply was, "I know, but If I could have saved just one more." In a spiritual way this should be the goal of every Christian ... **Just one more!**

## **Mind of the Spirit**

Finally, a true disciple must have a mind of the Spirit, that is, he must be spiritual or spiritually minded. True disciples walk "after the Spirit" and have the "mind of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4,6). Paul said that the lost were best approached by the spiritual (Gal. 6: 1). He would say that you who are spiritual are going to be those that are his disciples. A spiritual person is at peace with his own heart. *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 In. 3:19-21).* If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

Spiritual people are those in which spiritual interests prevail in their lives. Spiritual people spend a large portion of their lives hearing gospel preaching, reading the Bible and related materials, caring for the needy, visiting those that are in the hospitals and nursing homes, associating with those of like precious faith, talking about spiritual things and issues and, yes, seeking the lost. That is not to say that they don't enjoy a ball game now and then or recreate in some way, or even a party once in awhile. They may even read a good novel or go on a picnic when time permits. It is just that their whole lives are not dominated by ball games, movies, TV, parties, novels, and picnics. Brethren, if the thrust of our life is focused on carnal things, even if those things are not wicked within themselves, then we are just not spiritual. We must have our priorities according to God's order. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt.6: 33).

## **Questions**

1. What does the word disciple mean?
  
2. Give two reasons why we cannot parallel the calling and training of the 12 Apostles with discipling as it might be found in the church today.



3. Give some other names that would be appropriate for disciples in the church today.

4. What must one do before he prepares himself to give an answer to someone who asks about his faith?

5. How could one go about "sanctifying the Lord" in his heart?

6. How should sanctifying the Lord in the heart affect one's behavior and pattern of life with respect to the lost?

7. Identify what has changed and what has not changed in our teaching of the lost today.

8. What occasion in the life of Jesus encourages us when we see few souls obeying the gospel?

9. What do we learn from Ezekiel when we are discouraged with few apparent results from our labor?

10. Was Jonah afraid to go to Nineveh? Why didn't he want to go?

11. What indicates that we really don't believe people are lost and that we will be lost for not teaching them?

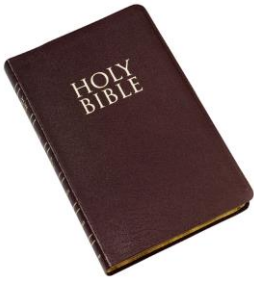
12. Why might the prayer, "Come Lord Jesus" not manifest the best attitude on our part?

13. What are some characteristics of the lifestyles of brethren who are spiritual?

14. What is characteristic of a lifestyle that is not spiritual?

15. What four attitudes discussed in this lesson are necessary for each Christian to be an effective personal worker?





## Personal Evangelism

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,  
and he who is wise wins souls.”

**Proverbs 11:30**



**(Lesson # 5)**

### Can you do personal work?

The odds are you can't do personal work! This seems like a strange thing to say in a series of lessons devoted to stirring up people to do personal work. Even if there are brethren who really can't do personal work, is it not discouraging to talk about what they cannot do? Why not help those who can and let those who can't sort of fall in their own place? You see, it is not that brethren do not have the necessary skills or innate ability to do personal work, but rather there is simply no place made for personal work in the current interests and lifestyles of many brethren. One may be extremely devoted to the Lord in his prayers and Bible reading, but the truth remains, "You can't be in two places at one time." The reason you cannot do personal work is most likely because you cannot keep your current lifestyle and do personal work at the same time.

### Personal Workers Love People.

First of all, a genuine personal evangelist is a lover of people - all kinds of people - poor people, hurt people, sick people, neglected people and lonely people. The lesson of Gideon illustrates the Lord's interest in identifying the workers who have the right spirit to enter into battle for the Lord (Judges 7: 1-8). So, who has the right spirit for personal work? The "people person" is the one who becomes a personal evangelist. Because this kind of person is sensitive to the hurts of others, he can empathize with the plight of those hurt with sin and can effectively lead them out of their imprisonment.

Yet, many brethren are insensitive, cold and uncaring toward others. Here is something to think about. Personal workers often produce converts that are just like them in character. What would an insensitive, cold and uncaring personal worker produce? Could an accumulation of converts to that mind set eventually produce a congregation that is insensitive, cold and uncaring? Yes, very possibly it

could. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves"* (Matthew 23:15).

## **Personal Workers Love Brethren.**

A congregation that is insensitive, cold and uncaring cannot become evangelistic without going through some major reconstruction. It is fruitless and counterproductive to worry about the lost, when there is very little love shown toward the brethren. The apostle John writes about the absolute necessity of showing love toward our brethren (1 John 2:7-11; 3: 15-16; 4:7-8,11-12,16,19-21). A congregation of brethren who do not meet their responsibilities to visit those in need (shut-ins, those in the hospital, the elderly, the lonely, the bereaved, those wrestling with difficult problems) have no business at all trying to reach the lost. On the other hand, those Christians in a local church who are concerned about their needy brethren, will become the kind of people who show their love for the lost, and non-Christians will seek out these loving Christians to lead them to Christ.

Some Christians seem to think that if they send a card or make a phone call they have completely discharged their duty to "visit" those in need. Someone has said that brethren ought to rename "visitation," to "call-ation," because most brethren don't truly visit, they just call or send a card. Cards and phone calls certainly have their place and many of us have been cheered by the thoughtful words of a brother or sister. However, there are times when a card or phone call just isn't sufficient. Sometimes a brother needs a person-to-person visit to share his hurt. Perhaps the priest and the Levite were of the mind set to call or send a card, but the "good Samaritan" was the true neighbor (Luke 10:30-37).

Our brother in Christ may need someone to prepare a meal, offer a prayer, read a scripture, or be with him. He needs a real, live brother or sister who has left home, driven to his house and said in effect, "Here I am for you, at least for awhile." Many brethren are not willing to do that. Although they may offer a friendly smile and a hearty handshake at services and say, "If you ever need me be sure to call;" they seldom open their homes to anyone or sacrifice themselves at other times. That is one reason why many congregations are not growing. Brethren who are hurting don't need our money, cards or phone calls as much as they need us! They really don't need the food we bring as much as they need to eat a meal with us.

## **Personal Workers Love Personal Evangelism.**

It has been said that, "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care." Those who truly care have genuine opportunities to lead people to the gospel. The move to do more personal work has two obstacles that must be overcome: (1) a resolution to give more attention to those who are hurting; and, (2) clearing the schedule to make time for visiting. Some make the resolution without clearing the time. Initially, one night a week would certainly be a reasonable amount of time set aside for personal work. It is this time slot that will be available for personal evangelism once you have become established as an effective personal worker. If you are unable to clear a time slot then you will be unable to do personal evangelism because you cannot do personal evangelism without time to do it. If you really care, you will find the time.

The step to make time for personal work is vital. If this obstacle is not overcome the rest of the study becomes basically theoretical, idealistic and of little practical value. The lifestyles of many of us must change and change dramatically if we are to become useful in personal evangelism. Obviously, there is no program that will fit everyone. All this author can do is suggest the magnitude of the change. Each Christian will have to develop his own plan utilizing his own conscience and relationship to the Lord.

## **Personal Workers Love the Lord.**

Brethren, personal work can be a radical change. Typically, Christians not wanting to make more time for the lost will rationalize their selfish, materialistic lifestyle to which they have grown accustomed, and then lash out at others who question their current lifestyles.

No, odds are we can't do personal work. Not because we aren't talented enough or not able to teach someone, but because we simply don't care enough about people and we are unwilling to make the time to teach them. Obviously there is a choice. It is a choice that must be made by those who are serious about doing personal evangelism and sincere in their love for the Lord. Little can be done by a congregation in the area of personal evangelism until a sizable number in the congregation make a commitment in this direction.

## **Questions**

1. Is the failure to do personal work usually because of a lack of skill, ability or something else?
  
2. What do personal workers need to demonstrate toward all people?
  
3. What could happen when an insensitive, cold and uncaring Christian goes out to convert someone through personal evangelism?
  
4. What do personal workers need to demonstrate toward their brethren?
  
5. What does the apostle John say about love of the brethren?
  
6. What are some practical ways in which we demonstrate love for the brethren?
  
7. What point is made in this lesson about visiting vs. calling?
  
8. Why are true "visits" important?
  
9. How can having the proper love and caring for our brothers and sisters in Christ prepares us for personal evangelism?

10. What problems can result from waiting until a brother or sister in Christ has a tragedy or crisis and then we try and step in and help them without knowing them beforehand?

11. How is what we know often affected by how much we care?

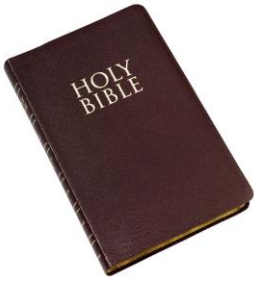
12. What two obstacles must be overcome before we can become effective personal workers?

13. What should a family do that really wants to alter its lifestyle for the Lord? How would one go about accomplishing such a radical change?

14. What is the typical reaction of those who do not want to give up their selfish, materialistic lifestyle?

15. What important choice must be made by each member of the local church?

16. List ten of your typical daily activities where you are doing personal work or where opportunity may present themselves?



# Personal Evangelism

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**Proverbs 11:30**



**(Lesson # 6)**

## What can I do?

When the topic of personal evangelism is announced, the most frequently asked question is, "What can I do?" A more meaningful and relevant question is, "What can I prepare myself to do?" Never before has there been so much available material to equip the personal worker to do his work. Able and proven personal evangelists have published their materials in every form of media (books, videos, handouts, etc.). An inexperienced worker who wants to get started doing personal evangelism can now have access to materials already tested by faithful men whose desire is *"to teach others also"* (2 Tim. 2:2).

## What Is Personal Evangelism?

What personal evangelism really is and what brethren think it is are often two entirely different concepts. Many view personal evangelism as a kind of socializing. In other words, the personal worker visits the homes of various brethren or visitors in order to be friendly and to interact in a social way with them. Usually when a personal evangelism program is announced, interested brethren will meet at the building and divide up a series of visitors' cards that have piled up over the last six months and volunteer to give each visitor a "visit." While several of the volunteers may be good Bible students, they may not be prepared to teach a specific lesson on this visit. The visit usually consists of getting acquainted, swapping small talk and maybe even refreshments.

If by chance a Bible topic is brought up, an "off-the-cuff" and unprepared response may do more harm than good. How so? First, prejudices may be created and/or "doors" closed because the personal worker did not take the time to properly **lay down the necessary foundation for a good study.** Second, the Bible topic which was raised by the prospect may be too advanced or irrelevant for a beginning study - a lesson designed to bring the person to Christ. Even correct scriptural positions



"blurted out" without foundation may close doors to any further studies and create prejudices and alienation in the prospect. These prospects are not even "babes" yet. *"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Heb. 5:14) (cf. I Pet. 2:2). If meat will choke a baby, it certainly will choke an unborn. Yes, there are times when a simple social visit to invite a prospect to services or to get to know them better is the best thing to do. However, if that is the entire design and intent of an organized (or in this case disorganized) "personal work program," the effort is woefully inadequate.

### **Who Is Involved in Personal Evangelism?**

Every member of a congregation should be involved in personal evangelism in some form or another. Paul emphasized that the human body is made up of many members with each member fulfilling a vital purpose (I Cor. 12: 14-27). He compared the human body to the local church. Thus, every congregation has a mixture of young and old, experienced and novices and members with varying talents. In order to tap the many talents available, the entire membership must be convinced that they are needed. There is something that ALL can do. Reaching the lost is not just the responsibility of a select few. The leadership must motivate members, provide proper training and make available various teaching resources. With proper training, each member of the congregation should be able to contribute his share to the collective effort of teaching the lost.

### **What Can I Do in Personal Evangelism?**

Many conversions are the result of relationships. Often Christians will tell you they were converted because someone cared enough about them to gain their confidence and guide them to an opportunity to obey the gospel. Today, few people obey the gospel during gospel meetings. Even when they do obey, usually it was because someone had laid the groundwork ahead of time and the gospel meeting just happened to be a convenient time to do so. Thus, it behooves us, if we really want to get started in personal evangelism, to be alert to those around us in order to peak their interest in learning the gospel. So, what can I do in personal evangelism?

• **I Can Offer A Simple Invitation.** Next to actually teaching someone the gospel message, you will probably never do anything more helpful to influence someone for the Lord than to get them to services. Every member should be on the alert for prospects to invite to services. Many congregations have cards printed up that have

the times of their services along with the names and phone numbers of the preacher or elders. This card might even give a map showing how to locate the building. Every member should keep a supply of these cards available at all times and be ready to distribute them. Do you have any with you to give to others?

• **I Can Offer a Bible Correspondence Course.** Offering a Bible correspondence course can become an avenue whereby each member of a congregation can engage in personal evangelism. Several excellent Bible correspondence courses have been published by brethren and are available at a nominal cost. Some congregations make mass mailings offering a Bible correspondence course. Cards could be prepared offering an invitation to services, a map showing directions to the building and a tear-off section to be returned requesting enrollment in a Bible course. When such mass mailings are made, many members are utilized in preparing the mailings. Many get involved in grading the lessons that are returned, and others participate by contacting those who take the course. Each member of the congregation should be alert for opportunities to enroll prospects in these courses. We can also offer our Bible Questions web site course.

• **I Can Present a Prepared Bible Series.** There are a number of prepared Bible lessons available for personal workers. Those who are more experienced Bible teachers (such as elders and preachers) sometimes prefer to put their own lessons together. Brethren generally do a better job presenting a Bible lesson they have arranged themselves. However, it is an enormous task to put together a series that is well thought out and developed. It usually is much more productive to learn to adapt a series that has already been prepared by an experienced teacher. Some that come to mind are the Jule Miller series or *In The Same Hour Of The Night series*. The Miller series is now available on video tape. Most homes have video tape players, so not a lot of equipment has to be carried by the personal worker. Members are now able to invite their friends into their homes to view these tapes. Booklets with questions about the scriptures in the lessons are also available to study following the viewing of the tapes.

• **I Can Show Hospitality.** An area where members can be most effective in personal evangelism without actually doing any teaching themselves is by being hospitable. Even experienced teachers need time with the prospect in order to get acquainted and establish credibility. The initial contact of a prospect with a congregation is very fragile. The prospect is in a strange place with strange people and usually he is uncomfortable or nervous. He may never come back to services again, especially if something or someone makes him uncomfortable. Being prepared to invite someone home or to take them to lunch after services can go a

long way toward breaking down these barriers. Inviting visitors to dinner some evening can also be effective. In this way one is able to play a very vital role in personal evangelism without necessarily being the primary teacher. The primary teacher will never have an opportunity to teach unless the prospect is around to be taught.



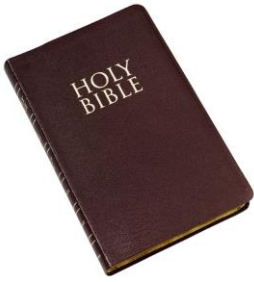
## **Questions**

1. What question is more meaningful and relevant than "What can I do?"
2. How do some brethren define "personal evangelism"?
3. Give two reasons why it is not a good idea to discuss the topics of the prospect or give an "off-the-cuff" response to these topics on the first visit.
4. According to 1 Cor .12: 14 ff, how important and how necessary is each member of the body?
5. What application does 1 Cor. 12: 14ff have to personal evangelism in the local church?

6. Is it wise for a congregation to settle on one method of personal evangelism? Explain your answer.

7. How important is a personal relationship between teacher and prospect?

8. List the four things discussed in this lesson that you can do in personal evangelism.



# Personal Evangelism

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**(Lesson # 7)**

## Whom Should I Teach?

Consider for a moment 1 Peter 3: 15 as it applies to personal evangelism. The passage says: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. "The apostle Peter said to (1) sanctify the Lord God in the heart (get right with the Lord); (2) always be ready to give answer or defense (study your lesson); and (3) give answer to everyone who asks (teach somebody). Note the last point again. We are to be ready to give answer to everyone who "asks." So, "Whom should I teach?" The answer is: I should teach those who "ask." This lesson is about teaching those who ask us about our faith in God.

## Teaching Those Who Have Asked

- **Teach Visitors.** Do you realize that visitors, in a way, have already "asked" for some answers? After all, they have made the effort to get their families ready and have brought them to church services. Visitors often appreciate the fact that someone noticed their presence and cared enough to visit them and learn about them. This type of follow-up visit provides an excellent opportunity to arrange a Bible Study.

- **Teach Friends and Family of New Converts.**

Sometimes the very best prospects are found in the friends and family of new converts. These prospects are often "asking" new converts about their conversion. Have you noticed that once someone is converted, they seem to want to share their joy with everyone they know? Their mother or father may be lost. The case could be the same with brothers or sisters of the new convert. And once this person is converted to Christ, they realize people they work with are lost too and need to be taught. These new converts are often very zealous in trying to reach those close to

them. What about the rest of us? Do we know anyone who is lost? We need to work with new converts to arrange Bible studies with their friends and family.

- **Teach Large Groups.** Contacting people using a mass media approach (like Bible correspondence courses) can give a large group of prospects an opportunity "to ask." As with any approach, there are definite pros and cons to such a program. Sometimes the mass media approach is inefficient, expensive and time consuming. On the other hand, reaching one soul would make all the expense and work worthwhile. Consider for a moment one disadvantage of this approach. While mass media campaigns initially generate a lot of activity among the members (lessons are sent and returned to be graded, classes are set up and taught, religious people are encountered), working with mass media prospects can challenge the patience of even the most dedicated and zealous personal workers. Studies have shown that prospects responding to a non-personal, mass media program often hear or complete a lesson, but they resist certain elements needed for conversion (such as repentance or baptism). These same prospects like to study while lessons are being sent to them, but they often resist attending worship services. They also may have a great deal of difficulty accepting the uniqueness of the Lord's church and the necessity for them to become a Christian. Mass media programs may function well within a personal work program, but understand that they do have some disadvantages.

### **Teaching Those Who Have Not Asked**

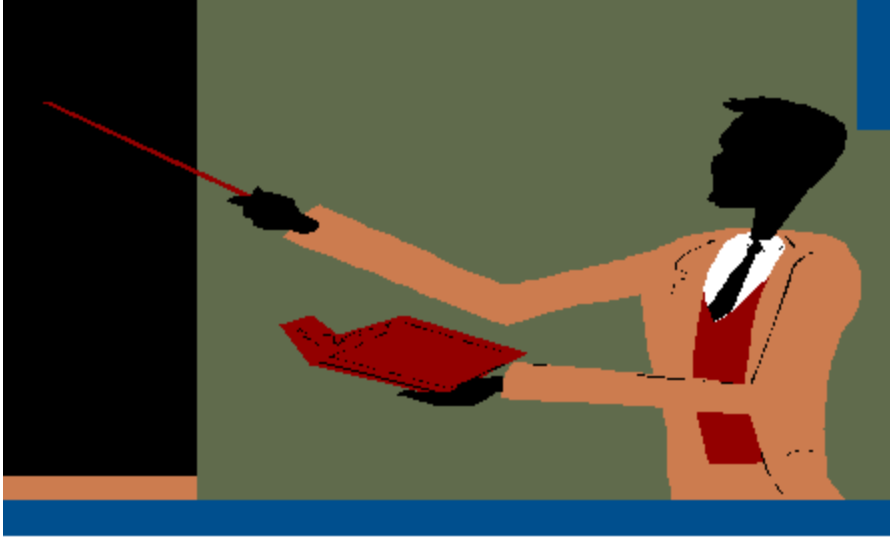
- **Teach Co-Workers.** When we try to answer people who haven't "asked," we sometimes become discouraged. Our efforts to teach someone may deteriorate into a heated argument and relationships can be damaged in the process. For example, brethren often become frustrated with unsuccessful attempts to discuss the gospel with their co-workers. Perhaps they have tried to discuss some aspect of the plan of salvation. Or, maybe a fellow worker has questioned the use of instruments in the worship service. Not only can such efforts to teach fail, but often relationships with the colleague can be damaged in the process. Usually, this is because brethren often try to teach those who haven't actually "asked." And even if they do "ask," the workplace is not the best place to teach the gospel. Time is limited and people are occupied with their work tasks. When the teacher is unable to lay the necessary foundation for understanding the Bible topic under discussion, the whole effort often ends up an argument. In order to teach effectively, one must have credibility and a setting in which to lay the foundation for what is being taught. Usually,

neither of these conditions is present in the workplace. Yes, teach your co-workers the gospel! But choose the right time and place to do it.

• **Teach New Contacts.** We have contacted the visitors, we have tried to teach our friends and family and we have even offered a Bible Correspondence Course to many at once. So, where do we go from there? How do we get others whom we don't know yet to "ask" that we may give an "answer"? Perhaps we need to meet some new people, make some new contacts. We need to break out of our "comfort zone" of usual acquaintances, tear up our old prospect list and begin fresh from time to time. We must get to know new people and let them get to know us so they can observe enough of our lives to be influenced by our godly living. Cultivating such relationships can produce opportunities to interest people in the gospel. Credibility must be established before people can be influenced to attend services or listen to a lesson. Some are fortunate enough to have businesses that put them in contact with new and different people. Public service organizations such as the PTA, the Rotary Club, women's groups and charity drives can also provide great opportunities to teach.

If the Lord's work is to go forward, each member must organize his life in order to maximize the opportunities to interact with people and influence them with the gospel. Each daily contact with others must be viewed as a potential opportunity for someone to be influenced in order to save their soul. No one should be overlooked or passed over. The book of Acts records the conversion of people whom we most likely would not even put on our "prospect list." There was Saul, a murderer (Acts.9: 1ff), Cornelius, the Roman soldier (Acts. 10:48), Simon the Samaritan magician (Acts. 8:13), the Ethiopian government official (Acts 8:38), the Roman proconsul of Cyprus (Acts. 13: 12), the jailer at Philippi (Acts. 16:31-34), a Greek intellectual who was a member of the Athenian high court (Acts. 17:34) and a leader of the Jewish synagogue with a bitter history of opposing Christianity (Acts 18:8).

Every day (Acts 2:46), everywhere (Acts 8:4) and every house (Acts 20:20) must be our battlefield upon which we fight the Devil for the souls of the lost. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph. 6: 12).

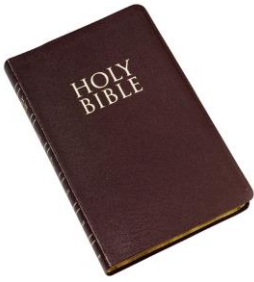


## Questions

1. List the three phrases in 1 Peter 3: 15 discussed in this lesson and explain how they relate to personal evangelism.
2. What can be done to teach visitors?
3. What can be done to teach the friends and family of new converts?
4. What can be done to teach the lost using the mass media?
5. List the advantages and disadvantages to the mass media approach.
6. Are there any undesirable results that might occur from using the mass media approach?



7. Why is the workplace not a good occasion to have a Bible study with someone?
  
8. Describe the "comfort zone" that many Christians are in, and what they should do about it.
  
9. Give some examples of opportunities that Christians have to make new contacts for teaching.
  
10. List some "unlikely prospects" who obeyed the gospel in the book of Acts.



## Personal Evangelism

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**Proverbs 11:30**



**(Lesson # 8)**

### Fear...An Enemy of Personal Evangelism?

Perhaps one of the more frequent hindrances to personal evangelism is a sense of fear. We need to recognize that in the ultimate sense, Satan is the author of fear. It is important to recognize this emotion and then work to overcome it.

### Fear Can Come from Many Sources.

Fear associated with personal evangelism can come from a number of different sources.

- **Fear of Not Knowing How.** A person can simply be unfamiliar with how to do personal evangelism. But this lack of knowledge can escalate into fearfulness and unwillingness if we are not careful. Just like many things in life, knowledge of how to do personal evangelism can be learned.
- **Lack of Confidence.** You can have knowledge of a subject and still have a fear of speaking to others about it because you lack confidence. The Ten Spies lacked confidence (Num. 13:25-33). So did Moses (Ex. 4:10-17). And just like learning to play a sport or musical instrument, practice is needed to build not only one's skill, but also one's self-confidence.
- **Fear of Driving Others Away.** “What if I say the wrong thing?” “What if I upset them?” “What if they never come back?” A lack of tact or a wrong approach can result in driving others away from Christ. But that should not prevent us from trying with all good intentions. Ultimately we need to recognize that not everyone will be receptive to the Gospel message. Even Jesus the Master Teacher had people who turned away from Him.

• **Fear of Ridicule.** Will people sometimes make fun of you for speaking out for God? Yes. Jesus was ridiculed. The Apostles were ridiculed. Faithful Christians will be ridiculed from time to time for standing up for their beliefs. Remember the words of Jesus in Mt. 5: 11, 12 “*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*”

• **Fear of Failure.** Success in personal evangelism should not be measured in numbers of converts. Your role is to “plant the seed”, not to make it grow. No active soul winner really fails. The real failures are those that do not try. Jesus failed to win Judas Iscariot, the rich young ruler, the people of Nazareth, and the rulers in Jerusalem.

### **God Commands Us to Overcome Fear (2 Tim. 1:7-8)**

Fear often motivates us to do what is wrong. From this perspective, God frequently commands “Fear not”. To Abram, God said “*Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*” (Gen. 15: 1). To Israel in captivity, God said “*Fear not, for I am with thee*” (Isaiah 41: 10). “*Fear not*” said the angel first to Mary and then later to Joseph. “*Be not afraid,*” said the angel to the shepherds. To the disciples at night, Christ said “*It is I; be not afraid*”. “*Fear not,*” said Christ to Paul in the storm. “*Fear not, I am the First and the Last,*” said Christ to John.

Christ said, “*Be not afraid of them that kill the body.*” (Mt. 10:28). The fearful will have no excuse in the Day of Judgment. (Rev. 21:8; Mk. 8:38). At the same time, we need to have a healthy fear of and respect for God that motivates us to do what is right. As Solomon said in Eccl. 12:13, “*The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments.*”

### **How Can We Conquer Fear?**

There are a number of ways to overcome fear. As I Jn. 4:18 says, “*...perfect love casteth out fear.*” First, we need to have a deep and abiding love for God. We see this in the example of Paul (II Cor. 5:14, 15), Stephen (Acts 7), and the Apostles (Acts 5:28-29, 41). This love should manifest itself in a reliance on God's promises (Jn. 4:36; Daniel 12:3; Mt. 28:20), in constant and persistent prayer, and in a love for studying God's word.

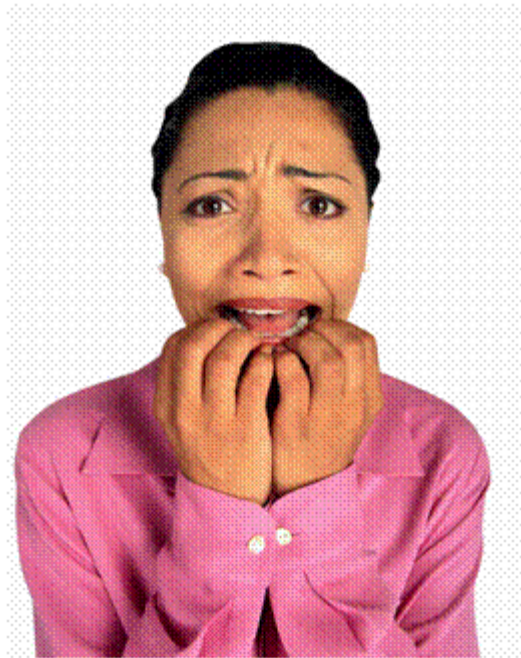
Second, we need a deep and abiding love for souls that motivates us to spend our time and effort to reach out to the lost.

As President Roosevelt encouraged during World War II, "The only thing to fear is fear itself."

### **Don't Forget That Your Prospect May Also Have Fears**

Just as we need to recognize fear in ourselves and work to overcome it, we also need to recognize the fears that others may have. They may be afraid of having to tell you about their religion when they know very little about it. They may be afraid you represent some kind of "fly-by-night" religion or cult. They may be afraid of needing to make a change in their life.

We need to be sensitive to the fears our prospect may have and work diligently to overcome them as well.



### **Questions**

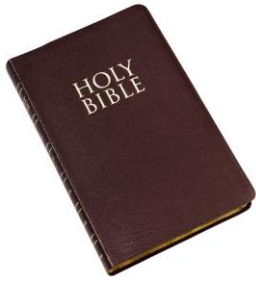
1. What synonyms do you think of when you hear the term "fear"?

2. Of the sources of fear mentioned in the lesson, which tend to be the more common? More challenging to overcome?

3. Can you think of any other sources of fear in addition to those mentioned in the lesson?

4. People often have to confront some form of fear, reluctance, or hesitation in their lives in any number of areas in addition to personal evangelism. What have you learned from these other areas that could be applied to this lesson?

5. What other examples from the scriptures can you cite for overcoming fear?



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**(Lesson # 9)**

### Parable of the Sower, and Results of Our Personal Evangelism

As Jesus went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 4:17,23), He did not always find a receptive audience. Even where He did mighty works, some did not repent - Mt 11:20-24. Some sought to trick Him, so they might have reason to accuse Him - Mt 12:9-14. It was for this very reason that Jesus began teaching publicly in “parables” - Mt 13:10-13

The problem Jesus faced was that many people, though they had ears to hear, their ears had become “hard of hearing” - Mt 13:14-15

To illustrate this problem, Jesus told a parable that has come to be known as “The Parable of the Sower”. It can also be properly called “The Parable Of The Four Soils” or “The Parable Of The Seed”. It was told by Jesus to illustrate different reactions to the gospel message

The parable is recorded in Matthew 13: 3-9, Mark 4: 3-9, and Luke 8: 4-8. It is explained by Jesus in Matthew 13: 18-23, Mark 4: 14-20, and Luke 8: 11-15. It is one of the few parables in which we actually have Jesus’ own interpretation of the parable. (Please read)



## **Questions**

1. In what part of Palestine was this parable spoken? Do you think that would have any particular significance in relation to the content of the parable?
2. What four types of soil are referred to in the parable?
3. What resulted when the seed fell on each type of soil?
4. What does the “seed” represent? Why, in your estimation, is this such an appropriate figure?
5. What does the “way side” soil represent?
6. What does the “stony” soil represent?
7. What does the “thorny” soil represent?
8. What does the “good” soil represent?
9. What do you believe is the main lesson to be learned from this parable?

10. How should we view the results of our personal evangelism?

11. If we do not get the desired results from our personal evangelism what should we do?

12. How does 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 apply to personal evangelism?

