

The Old Paths

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“Suggestions For Personal Evangelism”

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In considering a Christian's duties before God, we understand that part of our duty is to spread the gospel to other people. Christ told His apostles: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). Paul wrote to Timothy, instructing him to teach others. He said, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

We know these passages well. Perhaps we have quoted and thought of them often. Yet, there is still some reluctance on the part of many to tell others about Christ. What keeps us from doing what we ought to do and teaching others?

Is fear keeping us from obeying the Lord's command? Some fear rejection by others. Some have the fear of saying the wrong thing. Related to this is the fear of being asked a question to which you have no answer. While these are legitimate concerns, we must not allow such worries to paralyze our efforts to talk with others. We must not allow fear to control us. This is a tactic of Satan.

Is ignorance keeping us from speaking to others about their salvation? Perhaps, instead of fearing we might not know the answer, we are SURE we do not know the answer! In such a case, let us understand that overcoming ignorance with knowledge and wisdom is a command of God. Paul told the Ephesians, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). How does this wisdom come?

It is through reading God's will that we can be wise (Eph. 3:4). It is the Scriptures which make a man “wise unto salvation” (II Tim. 3:15; Ps. 119:98-100). Ignorance of the Bible (or anything else) can be overcome if we're willing to work at it!

Perhaps some are not willing to tell others about the gospel because they say they cannot speak in public situations. While it is true that not all people are cut out for “public” speaking, can we not speak to someone one-on-one? This is what Andrew did (Jn. 1:40-42). Philip did this as well (Jn. 1:45). Much of our Lord's teaching was done in “private” settings, wherein there were one or two, or a few people present to hear Him speak. Can we not speak to a family member, or co-worker about the Lord, or will we allow fear to stop us? Perhaps all we do is get the sinner in contact with someone able to teach them. Yet, this work will not go unnoticed by God! To be interested in a sinner and be responsible for that person hearing the truth is something that must not be taken lightly.

Having said these things, and dealt with some common problems in teaching others; let us consider some suggestions to help us in our personal evangelism.

SUGGESTION #1: Remember To Whom You Belong.

Forgetting whom you serve is a major contributor to fear. Remember, we “serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:24). We are citizens in His kingdom (Col. 1:13), and joint-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17). We are serving the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (I Tim. 6:15). How can someone *not* get excited about that? How can one keep such wonderful news from others? We're not trying to sell someone a car, or trying to

get them to commit to some get-rich-quick scheme! Our purpose is to tell them about Christ, and their need for becoming His child while there is still time and opportunity (II Cor. 6:2). Therefore, let us remember to whom we belong, and tell others how they can belong to Him, too (Mk. 16:16).

SUGGESTION #2: You Must Have Faith In God's Word.

There is no question that we must have faith in Christ (Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6), but we must also have faith in the gospel to save (Rom. 1:16). Do we really believe the words of Paul that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation”? If we do, then we understand that there is nothing else that will save men. With this knowledge, then let us tell others about the only thing that will lead them to Christ and salvation — the gospel!

Many do not have faith in the gospel. How do I know this? It is apparent when we find people using gimmicks, games, food, ball teams, skits, dramas, and other carnal appeals in order to “bring in” people. While such things might attract the masses, it will never convert them to the truth. The only thing that will convert and save people from their sins is the gospel of Christ — the word of God that is revealed on the pages of Inspiration (Rom. 1:16)! Anything else is vain!

The word “gospel” means, “good news”; and can we think of any better news than the news which tells dying sinners what to do to be saved and have eternal life? You and I were once in that situation ourselves until someone taught us the truth. Why not return the courtesy, and tell someone the truth today? Tell them that the gospel is God's power to save, and by obedience to His word, one can have the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 5:8-9)!

SUGGESTION #3: Live As A Christian.

We will never get started if people we know and love do not see us living what

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we say we believe! In both Old and New Testaments, we find examples of those who first obeyed, and then taught others to do the same. One example is Ezra (Ezra 7:10), and another is Christ (Acts 1:1). Both are examples of people who first did (obeyed), and then taught! This is what the world needs to see in us!

Jesus made it clear that our example and influence have a profound impact on people. Christ said, *“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matt. 5:13-16). Please, note that we’re not talking about people who merely wish to “be seen” by others, and have people talk about how “pious” they are. When we sincerely allow our light to shine before men, the world will know that we truly believe what we are teaching, and they will be more inclined to listen. One who is hypocritical will not be respected by others! If we wish to have success at personal evangelism and leading souls to Christ, then *don’t* be a hypocrite!!

SUGGESTION #4: Persevere!

Don’t be fooled into thinking that each and every person you talk to will automatically listen and obey the gospel. How I wish that this were so, but it is not like this. In the parable of the sower, Christ spoke of only one of four “grounds” that brought forth fruit (Matt. 13). Our Lord did not have 100% success at teaching others, so let us not give up when people will not listen right away! People make their own choices, and they will be judged accordingly (II Cor. 5:10). Yet, let us not give up before we start,

thinking that “_____ will never listen.” This is the wrong attitude to have! Let us persevere, and if the first one does not listen, then go to the next, and then the next, and the next until someone will listen. This is what Christ told His disciples (Matt. 10:13-14), and He also promised that the honest soul is out there, and wanting to know the truth if we will just take the gospel to them (Jn. 4:35-36)! If this were not true, He would have never told His apostles to go and preach to “*all nations*” and “*every creature*” (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15)! Therefore, let us be strong, dedicated to the Lord’s work, and not lose heart (Gal. 6:9)!

SUGGESTION #5: Pray!

We’ll never get anywhere without communication with our Father. (I Thess. 5:17) Therefore, let us pray for opportunities to teach (as Paul did, Col. 4:3; II Thess. 3:1) as well as pray that we might say the right thing and lead a lost soul to Christ. Prayer is absolutely necessary to successful personal work! With this in mind, let us do as Christ said. Let us pray for others, and for opportunities to teach “*and not lose heart*” (Lk. 18:1)!

SUGGESTION #6: Give God All The Glory.

Let us remember that without God, we are nothing. Therefore, whatever success we might have in personal evangelism, let us remember that God deserves the credit, and not us! God placed us here (Gen. 1-2), and it is God’s plan we are teaching (Rom. 1:1, 16). Therefore, let us not be “puffed up”

and proud concerning our efforts to teach, but be humble, realizing that we are simply doing what God expects us to do (Lk. 17:10; I Pet. 5:5).

Conclusion

Perhaps these suggestions will stir us up to do the work of the Lord. Let us resolve that we will not allow another week to pass without talking to friends, co-workers, or neighbors about the gospel. Some may not listen, but some might! Some might turn you away, but then again, some might say, “I’ve been thinking about the Bible and my soul lately. Let’s talk.” You’ll never know until you try.

The disciples’ personal evangelism and their taking an interest in the souls of others is what caused the Lord to add to the church daily in the first century (Acts 2:47); and it is what causes growth in the Lord’s body today! That fact has never changed. We all have responsibilities along this line, and all have work to do. Therefore, let us be about doing it! We can work alone, or perhaps someone is needing a little “spark,” and you’re just the one to help! Perhaps you could get a Bible study started with a friend, and invite someone from this congregation to help you. Now, two are involved, and perhaps the one you invited to help will begin to think of others who need to learn the gospel as well. All this does is cause the Lord’s people to grow (spiritually and numerically). Let’s all be involved in the work of leading lost souls to Christ, be fervent in prayer concerning this effort, and may God receive all the glory.

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