

12-EVANGELISM-04

WITNESSING LIKE JESUS

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"The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men." (E. M. Bounds)

To be a witness for someone is to share his life with another; to stand in his place as best you know how; to show others what that person is really like and what he does.

You do not have to learn to be a witness. You already are a witness! You are a witness to whatever or whoever is foremost in your life. You are telling the world right now what god you really belong to. You cannot live life without showing the world your real interests. Your words and your life are tied inseparably together; you will always convey to others around you what you really love and live for most. Your words will either prove this, or call you a liar. Anyone who watches you closely, who follows you around for a day, can tell if you really mean what you claim with your lips.

Every day you are witnessing. What are you witnessing to? Your witness is the total package of your attitudes, character, and actions. It does not lie. No careful observer is fooled. What are you witnessing to?

Whatever your god is, you will show the most interest in. If it is anything but Jesus, your closest friends already know. It will be the thing you like to talk most about, read most about, center your life on, love and live for. Say - could you get to heaven on the testimony of your next-door neighbor?

If you call yourself a Christian, you have already been witnessing - for or against Him. If you have claimed to belong to Him, but your life does not back up your words, men and women have rejected Christ and the Gospel because of you. That is why Jesus said, "He that is not for Me is against Me; and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad."

I know of no Bible plan that will enable you to present Christ to others without your own life being Christ-like. True Christianity is Christ! You can present another philosophy or religion without its founder by a "canned" plan, and change a few words to sell soap just as effectively with it; but you cannot present Christ to another until you properly represent Him and His love. If you would be His witness, you must really KNOW Him to show Him.

Motive

The Lord Jesus viewed the winning of one soul as worth more than the whole world. He spent much of His time talking with one person at a time about his relationship to God. True soul winning is impossible without concerned, personal contact. Jesus put the life and the love of His Father on exhibition to the world. This is true witness. When the world is lost and running

from God, He must go looking for men to convince them of His love and concern despite their sin. He wants to do this by living His life through and in men and women who will yield to His direction, and this more-than-human team seeks out lost sinners to bring them the message of reconciliation and forgiveness.

To be Christ-like in attitude means to be real - absolutely real. God hates phonies. If you have any other reason for wanting to witness to others apart from a genuine concern and love for them and for God, forget about trying to "witness." You will do more harm than good. LOVE is the only acceptable motive for the witness - an honestly unselfish concern for the highest good of God and His wayward creation. It involves a level of concern that made even Christ cry. (Matt. 9:36) Love is not primarily something you feel; it is something you DO, and is directly measured in unselfish sacrifice.

Witnessing like Jesus means Christ-likeness in conduct. The world is full of selfish people, who basically think only of themselves, care only for themselves, and live only for themselves. God's new people are to be totally different - they are to live like Jesus. It will do you no good to say to the sinner, "I'm full of sin and iniquity, look only to Jesus!". He has every right to say, "But I can't see Jesus. I can only see you. And if He hasn't helped you, what makes you think He can change me?" The Lord Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He is no longer in the world but He is risen and left us as His witnesses. "As My Father has sent Me, so send I you." (John 20:21) "You shall be My witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8 ASV) To be effective witnesses for Jesus we must

live above the world's standards and values, so that unbelievers will take notice and ask us what the secret of our lives is. We must live our lives so that with Paul we can say, "Those things which you have both learned and received and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil. 4:9) Men must be able to be followers of the Lord and us at the same time. (I Thess. 1:6) Think of the victory over sin Paul experienced daily when he could say, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." (I Cor. 4:16) This was no boast; it was simply the statement of a holy life founded upon the witness of the Holy Spirit as the source of his strength. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1)

God's blueprint of Christian witness for youth is outlined in I Timothy 4:12. There is no real reason why a young person cannot be as effective for God as an adult, provided there is a basic understanding of what is involved and a consistent life. We are to be examples by word (what we say - speech); conversation (what we do - actions); charity (why we do it - motives); spirit (where we do it - led and directed by); faith (when we do it - obedience to the word of God); purity (how we do it - a clean channel through which Christ can operate). God is mobilizing youth in this last generation for the mightiest awakening history has ever seen.

Witnessing like Jesus means consistency, the ability to be the same all the time. To be like Jesus, the indwelling Holy Spirit in a humble walk of faith must keep changing us. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God and this is a daily matter.

Christianity is not a set of rules, but a fellowship with a living, loving Person. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) In this life of grace and faith, we are to be marked by the sign that sin shall not have dominion over you. (Rom. 6:14) Christianity is Christ; resurrected, real, and bringing to the new living heart peace and power. (2 Cor. 3:18)

To keep effective for God three things must occupy our attention if we are to maintain the glow.

(1) We must be **CLEAN** - Continually turning away from all obvious sinful and harmful indulgence; confessing and being forgiven and cleansed from every sin. Sin as a manner of life is always referred to in the past tense in the Christian. (1 Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:3) The true child of God must take up his cross daily and follow Jesus, (Luke 9:23), and be able to say with Paul, "I am dying daily." (1 Cor. 15:31) There is no true salvation without repentance from all known sin at the point of conversion, but sin has a subtle way of working itself into our hearts again unless great care is taken. And Satan paints a pretty picture of the past. It is often so easy to go back, because we have Christ's treasure in earthen vessels. Such a state of retreat brings defeat in which effective witness is impossible. God directs us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1) We have His promise, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1) and "if we confess

our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Without this daily cleansing, witness will be worthless. Is it not highly embarrassing, to say the least, to plead with a sinner to give up his sin, when we are holding on to some as well? Salvation is salvation from (not in) sin, and we had better show it in our lives.

(2) We must be **UNCHOKED** - We cannot afford to waste time. The sin of wasted time has trapped more Christian people than any other sin today. Satan knows that no sold-out young man or woman of God would ever deliberately do some gross sin. Knowing this, he works the quiet way. He persuades them to waste a little time on the pretense of relaxation or legitimate entertainment. You cannot tell a vision with too much television. The harmonies of heaven are too often drowned out by the hard rock of the casual radio. Many a soul has gone to Hell as a Christian read his comics. Many a young man or woman has gone down the moral drain with too much time on his or her hands! Every Christian must dare to discard all questionable and unprofitable activities for the warfare of soul winning! "No man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. 2:4) Many things do not seem sinful in themselves, but we may find ourselves so hung up in them that time is crowded out for Christ. This is what Jesus meant by the parable of the sower:

"The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Mk. 4:19)

The use we make of our lives in Christ is largely up to us. There are all kinds of vessels in a large house - gold, silver, wood, and clay. If we are willing to purge (thrust out, clean out) ourselves from what is unworthy or unclean, we shall be "vessels unto honor, set apart, meet (highly useful) for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. 2:21) We must cut off every excess weight, put priority on the things that count most and conserve the cream of our time and energy for that special task Jesus has set us.

(3) We must be CHRIST-DEPENDENT. Jesus is our power, our strength, and our wisdom. Salvation is an impossible thing - but with God all things are possible! Jesus said, "Without Me, you can do nothing." (John 15:5) Where can you get the wisdom necessary to lead souls out of darkness into light? In Him is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col. 2:3) Hebrews 12:1-2 sums up the secret of spiritual victory:

"Let us lay aside every weight (be unchoked) and the sin which doth so easily beset us (be clean, especially from that particular form of sin you find the strongest temptation to) and let us run (steadfastly, determinedly, doggedly keep on running) the race lying before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith!" This is

simple to say, very difficult to learn, but astonishing in power. Jesus Himself is the secret of power over sin. Jesus Himself. His love. His Presence. His power! You can't fight sin in your own strength. The more you struggle with it, the greater its power grows over you. But you may look to Jesus and experience instant deliverance! No definition of power over sin will work for you until you learn to extract power from your Savior. Looking unto Jesus!

God commands: "Don't be a mass-product of this age; but let God renew your mind and transform (transfigure) your life." Christ looked to His Father and He was transfigured so that His face "did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." (Matt. 17:2) The same word is used in 2 Cor. 3:18 where "We all, with unveiled face beholding for ourselves as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being (continually) transformed (or transfigured) into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit of the Lord." Christ, personally revealing Himself to our minds and spirits through the Holy Spirit, will keep us safe and change us continually closer to His own image. We are the only Bibles this careless world will read We are the sinners' gospel; we are the scoffers' creed

We are the lord's last message, given in deed and word

What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

Message

[www.gospelcom.net/moh/WinkPrat/DTM/These Are The Facts](http://www.gospelcom.net/moh/WinkPrat/DTM/These%20Are%20The%20Facts)") (*see Salvation Study*)

Now God can offer forgiveness, full pardon, and restoration to His family on two conditions:

(1) Repentance - That the sinner is willing to forsake his previous selfish way of life, whatever the cost to his plans, his pride, or his public image before men.

(2) Faith - That he is willing to (from that point on) trust Jesus Christ as his Substitute for the penalty of sin, and love and obey Him as Lord and Master forever.

This surrender is one of the heart (the ultimate choice) and centers around one particular point of obedience.

This is usually the one thing the sinner is most unwilling to do. When this is yielded, a transforming climax from selfishness to love occurs, which the Bible calls being born again, (John 3:3) or salvation.

Method

In most witness, daily contacts with others will create the chance for a personal word. As you show the fruit of the Spirit and live the life of Jesus Christ in you, His Spirit will draw those who need help across your path. Ask God for this. Your task is to be alert to see them and be ready to help them.

Don't try to scheme how you will lead talk around to spiritual things. Honestly, sincerely be concerned about them. Listen! Find out their real problems and needs. If you try to keep in mind some canned plan or presentation, they will sense that you have something on your mind that isn't related to what they are saying -

in other words, they may think you don't really care about them at all. If you listen carefully, God will show you their point of need, and also what needs to be surrendered for salvation.

The best way of bringing their attention to Jesus when the opportunity occurs is to raise a question at a point of interest. This was Christ's way of witness. He either created a situation that made the other person ask a question, or directly asked one Himself. They were always loving, geared to the sinner's basic need, and never offensive. It was a question that could not be answered with a yes or a no and created interest for further ones. He answered these in the same way, encouraging the sinner to open up his problem, face his sin, and give Him their trust. Here are some that have been used with effect by others:

"Have you ever seriously considered Christ's claims on your life?"

"Are you interested in spiritual things?"

"Have you ever thought about becoming a real Christian?"

"If someone were to ask you, 'What is a true Christian', what would you answer?"

"Have you ever personally discovered Jesus Christ, or are you still in the process?"

"Do you think it is possible to know for sure before you die that you are going to Heaven?"

"How did you personally give your life to Christ? (For a sinner posing as a Christian)"

"Some day when you stand before God, what reason are you going to give Him as to why He should let you into His Kingdom?"...

Fear in witness is created by 3 basic factors

- (1) Inadequate training or preparation;
- (2) Self-consciousness from insufficient prayer or concern for the other person;
- (3) Not knowing what might happen when the truth is presented.

A vast load lifts off the mind when you realize there are only 5 basic attitudes a sinner can adopt when witness occurs:

(1) Indifference - The worst attitude! Prayer, care, a loving but firm warning from the Word of God coupled with an invitation to further consideration is your only tools here.

(2) Curiosity - A sign of an awakened hunger for reality or further consideration. Present as simply as possible God's claims on his life. Use love, smile at yourself now and then, but be in firm and concerned earnest. Ask questions to make sure they understand what you say.

(3) Hesitancy - Often a sign of sin being exposed. If questions come here, use them to center back on his personal responsibility to God, answering them as briefly as possible. If you feel they are only some kind of excuse, show them you understand it is just an excuse and that in giving it they are not sincere. For example: "How do you know God isn't just imagination?" "You are giving the same kind of excuse I did when I lived for myself... I knew God was real all the time, but I didn't

want to live for Him and I found it more convenient to deny His reality than to answer His claims on my life."

"Yes, but He might only be real to you; He's not real to me!"

"Of course He is not real to you; He never will be as long as you keep on serving and living for yourself. You only find He is real when you quit living in sin and honestly face His call."

(4) Acceptance - Usually a sign that the person has already been dealt with by the Lord for some time beforehand. Check very carefully to make sure that they fully understand what they are doing. (Do not witness to those on drug or alcohol highs, unless specifically directed!) Make sure they have counted the cost of total surrender to Jesus. Be suspicious of quick decisions made without question and without signs of struggle, surrender, or resultant change after prayer.

(5) Rejection - When the truth is fairly and fully faced, the cost counted but finally rejected. They should first fully understand what they are doing to God's offer of mercy and love and what they are choosing forever as their final destiny. Show your grief and concern that they have thus chosen. Sometimes a final clarification has brought home the terrible finality of rejecting Christ and His Gospel, and the soul has at last surrendered.

Man

Blowing Up Barriers.

When the truth comes home in power to the heart of the sinner, prepare for barriers of defense.

They usually take one or a combination of these four basic forms:

(1) Mental - Argument - Don't argue back! Answer by raising a further question like:

"What evidence do you have for that?" Or by further defining what you have just said. Answer with facts, don't raise your voice, get angry, or sarcastic, or ridicule him. If you know he is making an excuse, smile and point that out. Stick to the basic points, keep pressing them home and don't get side tracked by his smokescreens.

(2) Physical - Attack - You may be physically assaulted in your witness for Christ. This is rare in countries with Christian backgrounds if your witness is not offensive or belligerent, but it may happen. In this case, you are under direct command to "resist NOT" evil. (Matt. 5:38-48; 10:34-39; Rom. 12:21; Tit. 3:2; Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:2) You may not be able to control your feelings of hurt or anger if this happens, but you can cry out inside to Christ to help you make the right choice and not hit back, This is showing true love.

(3) Social - Avoidance - This is one of the most common barriers. Let your witness strike home, and the sinner will try to steer clear of you. Don't trail them around if this is happening. Just happen to be there at key times. It is not really you they are trying to hide from, it is God. They may avoid your words and eyes, but you might be able to get across to them that they cannot avoid your love and prayers. (Jn. 3:16-21; 12:44-48)

(4) Spiritual - Assurance - He may assure you that they are already saved; they belong to a good church; they

have their own religion, thank you very much! You can clarify the religious sinner's stand before Christ by asking them about the events leading up to the time of their conversion and what took place. Point out the essential difference between a true Christian and a religiously selfish person. Missing in the latter, of course, is a true devotion to Jesus Christ and the Christian love that marks the unselfish life. This is the hardest kind of barrier to crack because often the front is strikingly similar to true faith. Use the appropriate "Counterfeit Conversion" tract.

Convicted - But Not Converted

There is always some reason for a convicted sinner not yielding to God. You must find it, bring it out, and deal with it. Many times they know what it is, but try to hide it from you. Other times they are self-deceived and will not see the reason. Ask these questions:

"Have you done something wrong you are not willing to make right?"

"Is there something you are not willing to give to God?"

"Is there an idol in your life you are not willing to forsake for Christ?"

"Has someone hurt you that you are not willing to forgive?"

"Did you do something in the past you don't want to confess?"

"Are you prejudiced against some person?" (Christian with a poor witness?)

"Are you waiting for God to do something before you will?"

"Do you think you have committed the unpardonable sin?"

"Have you been playing with spiritual powers outside of Jesus Christ?"

If you meet hesitation, confusion, or silence on any of these, and you can probe deeper. Usually it is on just one thing God strives with the sinner to yield. The moment he gives in, just because God asks him to, true conversion begins. Sinners often ask, "Will I have to give up...?" (Some pet sin or idol). Tell him plainly, "Yes." It is probably the only thing they have to give up, because it is their god. Don't yield an inch to make it easier. Give him all the promises of Christ for provision and power, but if God is dealing with him on one point, don't compromise or pass it by, or he will get a false hope and a sham experience. Jesus didn't give in with the rich young ruler although He loved him. If the young man had been allowed to keep the god of his possessions, he would have felt relieved, called himself a true disciple, joined the church and still gone to Hell. Don't try to make it easier than God has.

Help him through to Christ by suggesting what he should honestly tell the Lord: "Lord Jesus, please forgive my sin. I admit to you honestly today that all my life I've lived for myself. I want to give up all rights to my life right now. I am ready to follow you whatever the cost, no matter how much it may take to get right with others I have wronged and hurt. Forgive me - make me your child. Be my 'Boss' from this moment on, in everything I say or do. Amen."

Maintenance

DON'T SAY

(1) "Now you are saved!" Why not?

(a) Because you don't keep the Book of life - God does. He knows if a prayer was from the heart or not. You have no right to tell him what God alone can assure him of.

(b) If he discovers a change of life for himself, it will strengthen his faith. If it is real, it will stand.

(c) If you tell him, it is your word he relies on. You may just find that he is your convert, not God's! Life will prove whether it was experiment or an experience. Let God grant him the assurance. If he doesn't have it, he is not properly saved.

(2) "How do you feel?" The Christian life is entered by a choice, not feeling. Teach him his duty, feelings or not. If what he has is real, feelings will follow in short order.

(3) Too much! Keep some instruction for another time. A few things at a time.

DO ASK

If he will pray and thank God for his salvation. If it is real, you can discover it here for this may expose doubt. If he still doubts, there is still duty to be done. It almost always shows an incomplete consecration. Don't be afraid to dig deep. Tell him it must be sin to have reason to doubt, and also sin to doubt without reason. (Rom. 14:23) Leave him uncertain, and he will be at best a sickly, shaky convert. (1 Jn. 5:11-13)

TEACH TO

(1) Enjoy God's love and favor. This will not mean that he will always be excited, nor always directly thinking of God. But his heart should be at peace and enjoying the blessing of Christ. Give him the idea it that won't matter if he loses the sense of God's smile, and when, through

your fault, he backslides don't be surprised. Sin should cause doubt and worry in the Christian, so that he will tearfully go back to God to confess his wrong. The only real evidence of salvation is to obey God from the heart. (Luke 6:43-49)

(2) Get in with other Christians who love Christ wholeheartedly. Don't put him in with a lot of backslidden hypocrites or he may get his standards from them. He should want to be with God's people or there is something wrong with his salvation. (1 Jn. 1:7)

<http://www.gospelcom.net/moh/WinkPrat/DTM/WitnessingLikeJesus.htm>