

PERSONAL EVANGELISM Supplemental Material

Twenty Passages from the N.T. Epistles Relating to Personal Evangelism

Questions to ponder: This past year, did I have a part in leading anyone to Christ? Did I share with anyone how to be saved according to the Bible? How many times was I able to share God's plan of salvation with a person who was in need of God's grace and forgiveness? Did I frequently confess Christ as my Saviour before the unsaved? Did I often pray for opportunities to share Christ and His gospel with others?

In our study of the Gospel of Luke we have been learning of the Son of Man who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). We have been learning of the infinite love and compassion that our Saviour had towards sinners. This compassionate Saviour is the very One who now indwells every blood-bought believer so that we can joyfully say, "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). The Christ who lives in me is still the One who seeks and saves lost ones! May we allow the Lord full freedom to seek and reach the lost ones *in and through our lives*.

The New Testament epistles have much to teach us regarding personal evangelism and our responsibilities with respect to those who are outside of Christ. May we reach out to them with Christ's love and with God's gospel in the power of the blessed Holy Spirit. May we carefully and prayerfully consider these passages, desiring that God would take His Word and make it a reality in our lives as we walk in joyful and faithful obedience to what our God has said.

In our trip through the N.T. epistles, we will be looking at one passage from each epistle that relates to personal evangelism (the three epistles written by John will be considered as one unit).

1. ROMANS 1:14-16.

I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile).

Notice the three great "I AM'S" of personal evangelism found in this passage:

1) **I AM DEBTOR.** Paul felt a great obligation. He sensed a "gospel duty." He had a debt to pay to every unsaved person. He "owed" the gospel to all men. At one point in his life, Saul of Tarsus felt an obligation

to **persecute** every Christian; but later he felt an obligation to **preach** to every creature (Mark 16:15). How can those who have been recipients of God's glorious good news not feel burdened and obligated to pass it on to others!

2) **I AM READY.** Paul was willing, ready and eager to preach God's good news. Though he was obligated, he did not carry out his duty reluctantly. Paul gladly and willingly and eagerly preached Christ. Paul was willing and desirous to preach the gospel; he was ready and prepared (did you ever start to give a tract to someone and then realize that you had none on you or with you?), and he did it eagerly and gladly!

3) **I AM NOT ASHAMED.** Paul boldly confessed Christ and proclaimed His message. May we never be ashamed of our Saviour and what He did for us. Paul was even willing to die for the sake of the gospel. May we not be *ashamed of the gospel* (Romans 1:16) and may we not be *a shame to the gospel* (Phil. 1:27). Some people disgrace the gospel of God by the way they live. May it never be! Instead, may we adorn the gospel!

2. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:33

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Compare also 1 Corinthians 9:22. Paul desired to "gain" and to "win" the lost to Christ. Paul was not a man-pleaser (see Gal. 1:10) but he did seek to please all men in all things that they might be saved. By nature we seek to please SELF. Paul did not seek his own profit. He was concerned about the eternal profit of his neighbor. Filled with the compassion and concern of Christ, Paul was able to get his eyes off self and to focus upon the spiritual needs of his neighbors. He was willing to sacrifice his own personal rights if doing so might help a person come to Christ. His attitude was this: "I want you to be saved--so much so that I gladly will sacrifice or suffer or surrender my rights if it will help you to be eternally safe." [Note: Paul was **never** willing to disobey God in order to help people come to Christ and he was never willing to compromise his testimony for the sake of evangelism. He knew that disobedience to God and unholy living hinders and does not help the cause of evangelism.]

3. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

We are new creatures in Christ, reconciled to God! We are ambassadors for Christ. We are His personal representatives. We need to represent Him well! God has given to every believer the ministry of reconciliation. God makes His appeal to sinners through us. God does not speak to lost men today except through His ambassadors. It is through His ambassadors that Christ urges people to be saved. "In Christ's stead" means "in Christ's place." The Lord Jesus substituted for us (He took our place) when He died on the cross; now that we are saved we substitute for Christ when we talk to others. He is not going to talk to them directly, but we in His place and in His stead talk to others about Christ. He represented us when He died on the cross; we represent Him as we share Christ with lost men.

“We pray you” means “we implore you, we beg you, we strongly urge you, we beseech you.” Christ by His death on the cross has made it possible for men, who are enemies of God (Rom. 5:10), to be at peace with God. We are to strongly urge men to “be reconciled to God.”

Sometimes we are too passive when it comes to personal evangelism. We present the great fact of the gospel to the unsaved and we preach Christ to them, but then sometimes we think this way: “I have done my job by presenting Christ and Him crucified, and now it is up to the person to respond in one way or another. This person will either believe or not believe, will respond to the gospel message or not.” This is all very true, but there is one more thing that we can do and that we must do. We must **urge** them to come to Christ and be saved. We can’t decide for them. We can’t believe for them. But we can certainly urge them and encourage them to be saved. “My friend, you need to trust Christ and I urge you to take God at His Word and receive Christ as your Saviour. Salvation is so important and you need to be saved. He is the only Saviour and I beseech you to be saved.” Does God ever urge people in such a way? Consider **Ezekiel 33:11** (“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”) and **Romans 10:21** (“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people”).

Consider our unsaved loved ones and our unsaved friends and neighbors. May they never be able to say, “No one ever urged me to be saved. Those Christians that I knew never shared with me the urgency of being reconciled to God.”

4. GALATIANS 6:10

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

When God give opportunities, we need to seize those opportunities. We need to make the most of the opportunities that we have to reach out to the unsaved, to do good to them, to serve them, to love them, to show that we care, to lend a helping hand, to be interested in what they are interested in and to build friendships. This will then lead to further opportunities to speak of our Saviour, to share the gospel, to give a tract, etc. If the unsaved hear the gospel from us but we never lift a finger to help them in their time of need, will they be interested in our Christ? On the other hand, if we do good unto them frequently and be the best neighbors we can be but never speak a word to them of Christ, how are we helping them? The one should prepare the way for the other, but both are needed. Let us do good and preach Christ at every opportunity!

5. EPHESIANS 6:19-20

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Pray for **BOLDNESS** to speak and to make known the gospel (compare Acts 4:29,31). One of the keys to personal evangelism is this: We need to **talk to God about men** before we **talk to men about God**. The key to personal evangelism is found in one’s personal prayer life. Have you been praying for boldness and for

gospel sharing opportunities? Paul's prayer request was wonderfully answered even while he was in the Roman prison, as we learn from Philippians chapter 1.

6. PHILIPPIANS 2:15-16

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

God has placed us right in the middle of the mess! We are right in the middle of this dark world! We need to keep the light shining bright (cf. Matthew 5:16). The believer must maintain a bright testimony for the Saviour, and when this is done many opportunities for verbal testimony will arise. When a person really lives for Christ and shines for Him, then he will have a captive audience when he talks of Christ.

7. COLOSSIANS 4:3-6

Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Paul in this passage is again **praying** for opportunities, **praying** for open doors, **praying** for boldness to speak and **praying** that he would speak as he ought to speak. The **walk** of the believer is so very important (v.5) and prepares the way for the believer's **talk**. If we want the unsaved to listen to our talk, they must first observe our walk. We need to be redeeming the time, making the most of the opportunities which God gives. The passage says "*that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man,*" and this implies that people are asking questions. ***Our life ought to provoke questions; our lips ought to supply answers.*** Our verbal testimony is essential (the word "ought" indicates necessity and can be translated "must"). When God opens the "door of utterance" we need to open our mouth! We **must** give an answer, at the right time, in the right place to the right person at the right opportunity. But again, if our walk is not clearly presenting a silent testimony which points to the grace and glory and greatness of our God, then our words will mean little to the unsaved.

Those who shine for Christ must also speak for Christ. Our speech is to be always with grace. We need to share with the unsaved in a gracious, kind manner. Salt is used for seasoning, to make food taste good. We want the gospel to taste good. We do not want to compromise the gospel message (it does not say "seasoned with sugar"). We do want to present the gospel facts in a good way that might even make them hungry for it (cf. Psalm 34:8--"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him").

8. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:4

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Often our personal evangelism is crippled due to the fear of man. We are men-pleasers rather than God-fearers. We are far too concerned about what men will think, what men will say and what men will do. Does it really matter what they think of the gospel? What matters is that I know that it's God's message and that it is good news and that it is news that they need. I know this regardless of their response.

The God who tries our hearts has entrusted us with the glorious gospel of the blessed God. He puts the gospel message in my hand and says, "Be faithful to convey and to proclaim this message." I should thus ask myself this question: Can God trust me with the gospel? When I was saved I put my trust in the gospel message ("In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation"--Eph. 1:13). Now that I am saved God trusts me with the gospel. Am I faithful to this trust? I have been entrusted with a glorious message of good news which if men hear and respond to in the right way can make a difference in their eternal destiny. What an awesome responsibility!

9. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-2

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

Again we see the importance of **prayer**. Personal evangelism begins on our knees in our prayer "closet." Pray that the Word of the Lord might **RUN** (have "free course"), unhindered, and that it would be glorified. There is going to be opposition whenever a believer is faithful in presenting and preaching Christ. Paul is simply praying: "May God's Word run and do its work, and God, may You take care of the opposition!" Our God is totally sufficient for every problem that we will ever face in personal evangelism.

10. 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-6

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Why are we to pray for all men (v.1)? Why am I to have a prayerful concern for all men? The reason is because **GOD IS CONCERNED FOR ALL MEN!** He desires all men to be saved (v.4)! How do

I know God wants and desires all men to be saved? Because God Himself has provided a Mediator (the God-man), v.5, and God Himself in the Person of that Mediator has died for all men (v.6). I am to share God's concern for all men. "God so loved the world", and I need to share God's heart of love and concern for this world of lost men.

11. 2 TIMOTHY 2:10

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

The extreme Calvinist position is this: "The elect will be saved regardless! If God wants them saved, He will get them saved!" Paul's attitude was this: "I'm going to toil, sweat, sacrifice, suffer (v.9) if I need to, and be persecuted if need be...WHY? so that the elect MIGHT OBTAIN SALVATION!"

We can almost hear the hyper-Calvinist rebuking the Apostle: "Paul, your theology is all wrong. Don't you know that the elect **will** come to faith in Christ? It's impossible that those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world will not be saved in the end." No, Paul's theology was not in error. He knew that the elect would be saved and that God would do His saving work. But, HOW DOES GOD DO HIS SAVING WORK? What means does God use? He chooses to use His church, His ambassadors, His believers. God uses our prayers, our preaching, our testimony for Christ, and no one is saved apart from those means. In this verse it's almost like Paul were speaking as if God's election depended upon him. A fervent evangelist once said, "Pray as though the salvation of the lost depends solely upon God, and then work and witness as though their salvation depends solely upon you!" God does His wonderful, sovereign, electing work, and He does it by involving us!

12. TITUS 2:10.

Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

We are to beautify the doctrine of God our Saviour by our life. The great emphasis of the epistles is not upon "winning souls" and "preaching the gospel." The main emphasis in these letters is upon the believer's walk with God. The best way to succeed in *personal evangelism* is to cultivate *personal holiness*. This is God's method. The world is very tired of those who name the name of Christ (T.V. preachers, etc.) and who talk holiness but who live immorality. May we not cause the Word of God to be blasphemed by our failure to live according to Bible principles (v.5). May God's truth be adorned and beautified by the way we live (v.10).

13. PHILEMON 10.

I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

Onesimus was a runaway slave who made his way to Rome. He ended up in prison and Paul was there also. The point: You could not be with Paul and not hear the gospel. This slave ran into prisoner Paul with the result that he was "begotten" and born again! If people run into us (they work with us, go to school with us, etc.), are they going to hear the gospel from us? Do the people you work with or go to school with know that you are a believer?

14. HEBREWS 5:12

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

You ought to be teachers! Every believer needs to be a teacher (though not every believer is gifted as a teacher), and needs to know God's Word and needs to be able to open God's Word and bring an unsaved person through the plan of salvation. Every believer should know the key salvation verses and where they are found and how to share them with an unsaved person. Every healthy, growing believer should be able to do these things. **TEACHERS YOU OUGHT TO BE!** It is our privilege to be able to share and teach God's good news!

15. JAMES 2:14,18

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

It is very important to **share your faith**. Here in this passage James is showing how important it is to **show your faith!** We must **SHOW OUR FAITH BY WORKS**, and then we can **SHARE OUR FAITH BY WORDS**. Both are needed.

16. 1 PETER 3:15-16

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: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Our relationship to the Lord provokes questions and we need to be ready to supply answers! Set apart the Lord in your heart! Make sure you are always right with the Lord. Make sure you have the right attitude before God and men ("with meekness and fear"). "Be ready always" means that we need to be right with God always. We can't afford to be out of fellowship with the Saviour. We can't afford to miss out on the present opportunity which God gives.

17. 2 PETER 1:9

But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

If we are going to be effective personal evangelists, we had better make sure that we never lose the joy and the thrill of sins forgiven. May we never forget what God has done and may we never lose the joy of our salvation. People need to see that we are excited about the God who saved us! We can't expect the unsaved to have a thirst for Christ if they see that we are not very excited about knowing Him.

18. 1 JOHN 4:14-15

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

If God really dwells in you, then “put a label on the can.” Confess Him! Be proud of the contents! Be proud of WHO LIVES IN YOU! Some believers walk around with this label: “TOP SECRET! I don't want you to know who lives in my life!”

19. JUDE 22-23

And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

This passage speaks of the compassion we are to have toward the lost, even Christ's compassion. As we reach out to the lost in compassion, we need to be **very careful** and make sure that as we love the sinner we hate the sin. We must not get contaminated and burned. Show compassion and show concern, but in no way should we compromise our testimony for the Lord as we reach out to the lost. We are in the world but not of the world. May we avoid all forms of “worldly evangelism” which are so common in our day (seeking to win the world by trying to be like the world). We must win the world not by being LIKE the world (Rom. 12:2), but rather by being like Christ.

20. REVELATION 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

This is a very interesting verse. The Spirit and the bride (the Church) both say, “COME!” The believer who is in harmony with the Spirit of God says, “COME LORD JESUS!” The word “come” is used in two different ways in this verse: 1) the believer cries from his heart, “Lord, come!” 2) the believer longing for the return of Christ also reaches out to the world and cries, “Sinner, come!” In harmony with the Spirit of God we cry, “Lord, come!” and also, “Sinner, come!” This is the twofold desire that the believer has: 1) that Christ will come to the world; 2) that the world will come to Christ. Our prayer is, “COME LORD JESUS!” but at the same time we reach out to the lost and beseech them and urge them, “COME TO THE LORD JESUS!” We want Him to come, and we want them to come to Him! We are ever looking for His coming and we are ever desiring men to come to Christ.

“MAY HIS BEAUTY REST UPON US AS WE SEEK THE LOST TO WIN; AND MAY THEY FORGET THE CHANNEL, SEEING ONLY HIM!”