



**Bible Training Center**

# **Personal Evangelism**

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# Personal Evangelism

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## The Call to Revival

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God's Holy spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the Word; but when the Spirit's power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God's Word, with the manifestation of His Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home, will be prepared to exert a healthful influence.” {1SM 121.1}

### **We Cannot Share What We Do Not Have**

We cannot share with others that which we do not have. Suppose that I do not have a well and you come to visit me at my house. You are thirsty. I cannot share water that I do not have. I can talk about it. I can describe how wonderful water is and how satisfying it is to drink when you are thirsty. I can describe the color and characteristics of water. But if I do not have a well, I cannot give you water.

This is an example of the work of evangelism. We cannot share with others that which we do not have. Suppose that I have not dug deeply in God's Word and I have not spent time with God. You come to visit me at my house. Something is missing in your life; though you may not realize it, you are thirsty for Jesus, the Water of Life. I can talk to you about God. I can share Bible verses with you. I can tell you what the pastor said in his sermon last week. I can tell you how wonderful Jesus is. But if I do not have a personal experience with Jesus, my

labors will not be effective.

Your work will cause problems in the church if you are not consecrated to God. Your first priority is to evangelize yourself. Learn how to be a disciple of Jesus. Walk in His footsteps. Follow His example. Allow the Holy Spirit to transform your character to be more like the character of Jesus.

### **Like A Fruitful Tree**

In our work of evangelism, we want to be fruitful like a flourishing tree. To be fruitful:

- We need to be constantly connected to a good water source. Jesus is the Living Water.
- We need to rid ourselves of self and put our trust in God. Jeremiah 17
- We need to find delight in God's Word and meditate on it continually. Psalm 1
- We need to recognize God as the source of all blessings. Daniel 4

### **Like A Fruitful Vine**

Jesus used another similar example to help us understand that a connection with Jesus is absolutely necessary. A branch detached from the trunk can no longer bear fruit. A branch cannot live for itself and flourish at the same time. To bear fruit and to remain flourishing, we must remain connected to Jesus, keep our focus on Him, and live for Him. To be fruitful we must:

- Abide in Jesus. John 15:5
- Let Jesus' words abide in you. John 15:7
- Be willing to endure persecution. John 15:20

### **God and His Word**

A study of God and His Word and character brings revival. If we want to be revived, we need to spend time with God and study His Word and His character.

- Revive me according to Your word. Psalm 119:25, 154

- Revive me in Your righteousness. Psalm 119:40
- Revive me according to Your lovingkindness. Psalm 119:88, 159
- Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word. Psalm 119:107
- O Lord, revive me according to Your justice. Psalm 119:149
- Revive me according to Your judgments. Psalm 119:156

God wants to revive us. But He does not just stay where He is and send us revival over a long distance. He wants to be Immanuel, God with us. He knows that when we are personally connected with Him, that our rough characters will be changed. He is eternal and is in a very high position, but He is also with those who are humble and contrite and brings them revival. Isaiah 57:15 If you are humble and contrite, God will bring revival to your heart.

If you find yourself in need of revival, spend more time in prayer and reading your Bible. Study the character of Jesus. Ask God for the Holy Spirit. Read the book *Steps to Christ*.

### **Lose Self-confidence**

But if you think you know a lot, if you think you have training now and can do it all yourself, you will fail. You will not be fruitful. When you put trust in yourself, you will be cursed like a dry shrub in the desert.

It is more important to rule your own spirit than to be mighty and conquer a city. Proverbs 16:32 Alexander found it easier to conquer the world than to conquer self. He died from intemperance.

### **EGW**

They profess to be followers of Christ, but they do not know him by an experimental knowledge. They do not practice religion. They do not seek to be Christians in the same way in which they would learn a trade. They profess to believe advanced truth; but it is evident that they keep it in the outer court; for it has no sanctifying power on life and character. They do not realize how much is at stake; for the salvation of their own souls and that of others is imperiled. They do not realize that in order to be a savor of life into life they must be under spiritual discipline and training, learning in the school of

Christ. Without this spiritual discipline, they become inefficient, ignorant, and undeveloped, and see no necessity for the spiritual training and knowledge which would qualify them to hold positions of influence and usefulness. If they do not consecrate themselves wholly to God, becoming learners in his school, they will do hap-hazard work that will result in injury to the church. {CE 136.1}

Before his hearers he exalted the Saviour and His matchless love. There was a revelation of the Son of God, and a revival began that spread through the churches of the surrounding districts. {GW 33.8}

## **The Call to Evangelism**

Matthew 28:18-20 gives us a universal and authoritative command to go. Who gave this command? Jesus. To whom did Jesus give this command? To his eleven disciples. How did Jesus give the command? With authority. How much authority? All authority.

Who are Jesus' disciples today? We are. Whose authority do we have to "go"? Jesus' authority. Do we need any other authority other than this? No, Jesus' authority is complete and over all other authority. The order has been given. We must obey our order.

But notice that we are not left to obey this order on our own. Often, when referring to this order, we use the word "commission." If we divide this word into to parts, we find "co" and "mission." God does not send us out alone. If I give you some money and say, "Go to the market and buy some tomatoes," I say that because I am busy or do not have time to go to the market and am asking for your help. But this is not the way Jesus operates. It is like He says, "Go to the market and buy some tomatoes, and I will go with you." Jesus wants to be with His people, and when He gives them work to do, He is right beside them to encourage them, to give them strength, and courage.

Jesus is our Example. He gives us an Example to follow. He is God, yet He became human so that we could better understand God's character and share it with others in the work of evangelism. Jesus was sent on a mission. As He was sent, so we, His disciples, are sent. John 17:18; 20:21

Today we will look at Jesus' commission, and then look at how our commission is similar.

## **Jesus' commission**

Jesus was sent at a specific time in history, and in a strategic geographical region or place, Jesus was anointed, and was filled with the Holy Spirit to begin His ministry.

### **The time for Jesus' work**

First of all, the work of Jesus' commission was set to begin at a precise time in history. This had been planned for thousands of years, and even before Creation (Revelation 13:8). His official ministry was to begin at His anointing, predicted in the seventy week prophecy (Daniel 9:24). Jesus was to minister for the first half of the last week in this time period, or for three and a half years. Jesus came exactly on time.

### **The place for Jesus' work**

Secondly, Jesus' ministry was designed to take place in a certain geographic region. Long before, Micah predicted that Jesus would be born in a small town in Judah called Bethlehem and that He would minister to and feed His flock who would be the remnant of Jacob,

*“among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples.” Micah 5:2,4,7*

Daniel also foretold that Jesus would minister to God's special people in Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:24) Indeed, Jesus ministered to the Jews in Jerusalem and in the immediate surrounding area of Palestine. Jerusalem, the center for trade for much of the world, was indeed 'in the midst of many peoples.'

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

A third observation is that Jesus' mission officially began with His anointing service, or baptism. (Luke 3:23) We often associate anointing with pouring oil onto somebody's head. Jesus' anointing did not involve oil, but it did involve the Holy Spirit represented by a dove. In Scripture, oil often refers to the Holy Spirit.

*“John bore witness saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained on Him.’” John 1:32*

God the Father was very pleased by this public demonstration of a full surrender to Him. Jesus realized the significance of this anointing relative to the tasks of His ministry here. He became “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and was “led by the Spirit.” (Luke 4:1) The Spirit immediately led Him into the wilderness where He was tempted by Satan. He suffered severely for us there. Wild beasts were around Him, but angels from heaven ministered to Him. (Mark 1:12-13)

### **The Holy Spirit for Jesus**

Fourthly, Jesus understood His important work of helping us to better understand the character of God, and that He had received the Holy Spirit for accomplishing this work. One day He was teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth and decided to read the following passage from Isaiah 61:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

Then He remarked,

*“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:18-21*

Why did He receive the Holy Spirit? It was to enable Him to do the work that God had for Him to do. It was a multi-faceted work involving all areas of human need. And toward the end of His earthly ministry He said,

*“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do... I have manifested Your name...” John 17:4,6*

By relying on the Holy Spirit, Jesus lived a life of complete surrender to the Father's will.

### **The Action of Jesus**

By becoming human, Jesus chose to be as helpless as we are to do God's will. But He accomplished much by relying on His Father's gifts

and infinite resources. Speaking of Himself, Jesus said,

*“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner... I can of Myself do nothing.” John 5:19, 30*

By copying His Father, Jesus showed that His success was a result of dependence on God. He lacked nothing He needed for His work. Look at this amazing list of things that were given to Jesus.

- Power to forgive sins.....Matthew 9:6, 8
- All authority in heaven and earth.....Matthew 28:18
- Authority to execute judgment.....John 5:27
- All things.....John 13:3, 5; 17:7
- Wisdom to do mighty works.....Mark 6:2
- Life in the Father.....John 5:26
- Works.....John 5:36
- People to give everlasting life to.....John 6:38-40;  
John 17:11, 24
- Words for salvation of people.....John 17:8-9
- Glory.....John 17:22, 24
- A cup to drink John 18:11

Jesus’ commission is indeed amazing to study. His mission was to commence at a certain time in history and in a specific geographical region. The beginning of His official ministry was marked by His being anointed by the Holy Spirit. His life was filled with the Holy Spirit, and He was given whatever resources He needed to carry out the works specified in His commission.

### **Our Commission**

*“You are My witnesses,’ says the Lord.” Isaiah 43:10*

Just before Jesus returned to heaven at the end of His mission trip to Earth, He left His disciples with instructions. This “Great Commission” applies to us as much as it applied to them. Jesus said,

*“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all*

*things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20*

As we look at this Scripture and others, we will discover similarities to Jesus’ commission. Each of us are to take part in fulfilling this commission at a specific time and in a certain region. Just as Jesus did, we will need to depend completely on the Holy Spirit to successfully carry out the details of this commission.

Remember the definition of “missionary” we read earlier: “one who is sent or appointed by authority to perform a service.”

- Somebody is sent:  
*We are sent.*
- Somebody is appointed:  
God appointed *us* by God’s authority.
- A service is being performed:  
*We are to do the will of our Father* in heaven.

### **The Time for Our Work**

God’s plan for each person is to be fulfilled on a precise time line, and Jesus is not the only person to be born exactly on time. Take for example the prophet Jeremiah. God told him,

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” Jeremiah 1:5*

God had a plan for Jeremiah and designed that he would be born when the nations needed a prophet. God sees the future and every soul to be born.

*“Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Romans 8:29*

*“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” Ephesians 1:4*

*“[God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling ... before time began.” 2 Timothy 1:9*

Wow! God may not have put a time in the Bible about you or me as individuals, but He knew when you would live as surely as He knew when Jesus’ mission trip would happen. God has you on this Earth for

a specific purpose. When He says “Go therefore,” do not question His command. Simply obey. Now is the time to obey His command because now is when you have been given the gift of life.

## **The Place for Our Work**

While Jesus’ ministry took place in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, He planned for His disciples to extend their circle of influence.

*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8*

A quick geographical analysis of this statement enables us to observe concentric circles. Jerusalem was nearby, Judea and Samaria were bordering, and the end of the earth was everything else.

Perhaps here lies a principle of starting to be a missionary where you are. Do not wait for a special call to travel to some far land, but begin to be a missionary now where you are. Minister to your family and close friends. Branch out to your neighbors. And as God leads, increase your circle of influence to areas further from home.

The Great Commission tells us to go and to make disciples of *all* the nations. It does not include only the ones that are the easiest to access. It does not include only those that are politically stable. It does not include only the most popular or glamorous. It does not include only those places with a comfortable climate. It includes all inhabited regions of the world. Are you thinking, “Do we not have missionaries in most of the countries in the world? Are we not doing very well as a church in our mission work?” If that is what you are thinking, it is time to get a more realistic view of our responsibility to God. The special end-time messages carried by the three angels of Revelation 14 have an associated domain. Look here at verse 6.

*“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people...”*

Jesus did not die for the salvation of nations—He died for the salvation of individuals out of those nations.

*“You are worthy... ..for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”*

*Revelation 5:9*

God died for each person in each nation, tribe, language, and people group. Our job in general as Christians is to carry the message of salvation to *everybody*. The work may be easy or hard, fun or boring, safe or dangerous, cheap or expensive, cold or hot, highlands or lowlands, social or solitary, but we have a duty to spread the gospel.

God knows where He wants you to work, and He knows how to enable you to be most effective in that area. Jesus’ place of labor was Palestine, far from His heavenly home. Your place to be a missionary may be in your home town. Or, God may be calling you to work for Him in a more distant area. Do not quickly dismiss that thought. Perhaps if you are too old to travel, or if you have some other physical limitation, God’s work for you is in a nearby region. However, if you are younger and physically capable, seriously consider God’s command to “Go.” It is a command that few people seem impressed with, despite its universal applicability.

### **Our Baptism**

The third similarity between Jesus’ commission and ours is baptism. The baptism of Jesus, our Example, at the official beginning of His ministry is significant to us as missionaries. Jesus gave us an example of complete commitment. Baptism is a publicly performed symbol of a person’s decision to completely surrender their will to God. They decide to leave behind the life run by their natural selves, and to bury it completely by immersion in the water of baptism. The new person who comes up out of the water is one who will let God control their will completely. (Romans 6:4-6) While Jesus was not a sinner, and thus did not leave a life of sin, He did, through baptism, show His 100% commitment to following God’s will for His life. As missionaries for God, we must dedicate more than a fraction of our lives to God. He wishes for us to surrender to Him everything that He has loaned us—possessions, money, time, health, the power of thought, and even life. Another word for this 100% commitment and surrender is conversion.

We find another example of an anointing at the beginning of ministry with the story of King David. He was anointed by Samuel at God's command.

*“And the Lord said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is the one.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward...”*

*1 Samuel 16:13-14*

David was anointed and he became possessed by the Spirit of the Lord. His anointing prefaced his official labors as a servant to the people he ruled.

### **The Holy Spirit for Us**

Closely connected with baptism is receiving the Holy Spirit. When John the Baptist saw the dove descend on Jesus at His baptism, he recalled what God had told him:

*“Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” John 1:33*

*“Be baptized... ..and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38*

We should

*“...be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18*

We cannot maintain a 100% commitment to follow Jesus on our own. We have to rely on continuous help, and that is one role the Holy Spirit is ready to fill. He will gladly help us to maintain our commitment to God, if only we ask for His help and are ready to accept it.

Jesus says,

*“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you.” Luke 24:49*

What is this promise?

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” John 14:26 (see also John 15:26; 16:7)*

How are we sent?

*“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you... Receive the Holy Spirit.” John 20:21-22*

“Workers are needed now. As a people, we are not doing one fiftieth of what we might do as active missionaries. If we were only vitalized by the Holy Spirit, there would be a hundred missionaries where there is now one. But where are the missionaries? Has not the truth for this time power to stir the souls of those who claim to believe it? When there is a call to labor, why should there be so many voices to say, ‘I pray thee, have me excused’?...” *Counsels on Health* p. 507

## **Our Action**

Lastly, we are sent to do the same things that Jesus did while He was here. Look again at this passage from Isaiah 61:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

Since we are sent as He was sent, we have similar tasks to perform in our ministry.

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See *Gospel Workers* chapter 1.

## **The Urge to Witness**

You are a witness. You are either a witness for Christ or against Him.

When we become true, converted Christians, we will have a burning desire to witness. You will want to share with others what you know because it is so wonderful. This desire comes from the Holy Spirit. {OHC 105.4}

Exercise: Take a deep breath. Hold it in. Keep holding it. What do you want to do? You want to breath it out. Now breath out, but do not breath back in. Now what do you want to do? You want air. If you only

inhale, you eventually die. If you only exhale, you eventually die. To be truly living, you must both inhale and exhale.

When we are truly Christians, our desire is both to receive and to give light that God wants to give us. We desire truth and our desire is to share truth with others. If we only give or only receive, we quickly become dead spiritually.

Jeremiah 20:9 He tried to not speak of God anymore. But it was like fire in his bones. He had to speak.

Matthew 5:14-16 A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Acts 4:19-20 Peter and John could only speak of the things they had seen and heard.

John 1:36-49 The disciples told their friends or family and invited them to “come and see” Jesus.

### **What Does it Mean to Witness?**

Acts 4:20 says they spoke of the things they had seen and heard. They were witnesses.

Acts 22:15 They were witnesses of what they had seen and heard.

Luke 2:20 The shepherds spoke of the things they had seen and heard.

In this class we will be discussing more practical ways to witness.

### **Need of Personal Experience**

In order for you to witness, you need something to witness about. You need a personal experience with things you see and hear before you can share. If I see an accident, I can be a witness and share what I saw and heard. But if I did not see the accident, I cannot be a witness.

Why were the early Christians so active in evangelism? Because their Christian experience was authentic.

Romans 1:16 Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.

1 John 1:3 Their fellowship was truly with God, and that is why they were strong witnesses.

“In the very family, the neighborhood, the town where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries for Christ. If we are Christians, this work will be our delight. No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.” {DA 141}

Do you delight in this work? Are you a Christian? Are you shutting up what you know in your heart?

Jesus continues: As you confess Me before men, so I will confess you before God and the holy angels. You are to be My witnesses upon earth, channels through which My grace can flow for the healing of the world. So I will be your representative in heaven. The Father beholds not your faulty character, but He sees you as clothed in My perfection. I am the medium through which Heaven's blessings shall come to you. And everyone who confesses Me by sharing My sacrifice for the lost shall be confessed as a sharer in the glory and joy of the redeemed. {DA 357.1}

He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And "whosoever shall deny Me before men," He says, "him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." {DA 357.2}

## **Cycle of Evangelism**

Let me tell you a story about a farmer. He and his friends decided that

they wanted to plant a field. They gathered a little bit of money and some seed. But they did not know how to handle the seed. Some of it they knew, but some they did not. They spread it out in the field. They buried some of it deeply, and other seed they did not cover at all. The ground was dry and hard, as the rainy season had not yet begun.

Some seed landed on a good place and took root. The farmer was so happy about the plants that came up. "I have 50 squash plants," he announced to his neighbors. But the farmer was weary of the work he had done. Planting the seed had been hard. But he was so happy that he had 50 squash plants. He wrote this information down in his notebook.

But he failed to care for the plants. The sun came up each day and beat down on the plants. The cows came by, but he was not there to keep them from trampling some of the plants. Worms ate a few others. An eventually, only a few plants remained. They did not do well, for he did not fertilize the ground.

In the end, one or two squash plants survived. But they were weak and could not produce very good fruit.

Friends, this is a parable of the situation of our church. It seems that many of us understand the cycle of how to plant and harvest rice and sorghum and squash. But somehow, we seem deficient in knowledge about how to plant the Word of God and harvest souls. We seem ignorant of the cycle of evangelism.

In the work of evangelism, we like to pick and choose the easiest parts of this cycle. Which is the easiest? Planting. Which is the hardest and longest? Cultivating or preserving. We usually neglect even the preparing of the ground. We like to throw seed and skip most of the other steps. Then we wonder why so many people leave the church.

We can have lots of baptisms that remain in the church. Failed evangelistic series are avoidable. It is true that Satan is working against us. But how hard are we working against him? How hard are we working for God? How closely are we following His pattern?

Study the parable of the sower. It is found in

- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
- Mark 4:1-9, 13-20
- Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

### **Step 1: Prepare the land (preparer le terrain)**

The land represents the heart or the person. Luke 8:12 We cannot change hearts, but the Holy Spirit can use us in His work of changing hearts.

One way to know whether or not a person is ready for the Word of God is whether they are hungry and thirsting for it. If they are asking questions and are interested in spiritual things, their hearts may be already partly prepared. Matthew 5:6 If not, perhaps you need to help prepare them to accept the Word of God later.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” {MH 143.3}

Take for example the story of the Samaritan woman found in John 4. Jesus did not start communicating with the woman by giving her a Bible study or by preaching to her. He simply asked her for a drink of water. She replied with a question of surprise. Notice that Jesus did not just answer her with a standard response. He was watching for signs that this woman might be ready to accept truth and he made a comment to test her interest in spiritual things. Indeed, the woman is interested in what Jesus has to offer. Her response showed that her heart was ready for the seed of the word of God. She was thirsty.

Practical ways to prepare land:

- Be friends, be social
- Be respectful to government officials
- Develop their confidence in you
- Listen and be sympathetic
- Help with needs where you can
- Courtesy visit, or house-to-house visits

- Relieve the poor
- Care for the sick (medical missionary work)
- Comfort the bereaved
- Teach health and healthy food preparation

When I go to the market, I like to buy the same thing from the same person each time. For example, I usually buy onions from the same onion vendor, and flour from another vendor. This is a simple idea, but it enables me to develop relationships with people on a long-term basis. With time, I sometimes get opportunities to have spiritual conversations with some of them.

Properly preparing the land is a very important step in evangelism. In my weekly group Bible studies, I encouraged people to be active in evangelism. One student felt convicted that she was not being active in sharing truth with others. So she got her Bible and walked over to the neighbors' house and said, "I'm here for evangelization. I have come to share with you the truth about the Sabbath." She proceeded to share the fourth commandment. The response from her neighbors was cold and unfriendly. She was eager to plant the seed, but did not understand the importance of preparing the ground.

## **Step 2: Plant the seed (semer les grains)**

The seed is the Word of God. Luke 8:11

Pray for wisdom to know how and when to share the seed. God will give you words to speak in season. Isaiah 50:4

The people will not hear unless somebody shares. Romans 10:14-15

Some methods of planting seed do not include preparing the ground. For example, I can leave tracts in the bus or here or there and hope that somebody picks them up and reads them. This is not necessarily bad. Ecclesiastes 11:1 But generally, it is good to sow your seed wisely. Matthew 7:6

God has given you the talent of speech. How will you use it for Him? Which is of more value in God's eyes: to say how to build a table or to say how to find salvation?

Practical ways to plant seed:

- Preach a sermon
- Give a Bible study or give an invitation to a Bible study
- Door-to-door work
- Sing a song
- Live your life as a Christian
- Distribute tracts or books
- Radio ministry
- Dorcas ministry
- Give your personal testimony

### **Step 3: Cultivate (sarcler or cultivier)**

This is probably the longest stage of evangelism. But it is a stage often nearly entirely neglected. But it is a necessary stage. You put work into the garden because you want it to produce fruit at the end of the season. By properly following this stage, people will realize that you have their eternal interest in mind and will be much more likely to bear fruit.

Ask audience: How do you grow tomatoes/salad/sorghum/etc? What factors are most important: weeding, water, nutrition, depth of seed, ground preparation, etc.?

A lettuce garden needs water, nutrition, weeding, and protection.

- Rain. The Holy Spirit is compared to the rain. Pray that the Holy Spirit will rain heavily on the new convert.
- Nutrition. Encourage regular spiritual nutrition and teach the how to avoid spiritual malnutrition. Help them apply God's word in their lives.
- Weeding. Encourage them to eliminate habits or practices that hinder growth. Show them how to deal with addictions and temptations.
- Protection. Share truth with them at the right pace. God does not lift the sun to overhead in the morning. He lets the sun gradually brighten until noon.

Practical ways to cultivate:

- Pray continually for the person you are studying with.
- Study the Bible with them.
- Share in a balanced way how to follow truth – not as a list of necessary duties but as a love-response to God.
- Lead them to make decisions to follow truth.
- Socialize at church; be a friend.
- Be supportive as the experience challenges.

Remember that people are like plants. Different plants take different amounts of time to develop. Do not grow impatient with or neglect people who take a longer time to mature spiritually.

- Lettuce takes about two months
- Millet takes about three months
- Mangoes take at least three years

We do not know the backgrounds of various people. God knows their hearts. Jesus worked with His disciples for three and a half years, but they still didn't understand the kingdom of God until after He was gone. We work patiently.

#### **Step 4: Harvest (récolter)**

Acts 2:41 People were baptized after believing the preaching of the apostles.

How do we know when people are ready for harvest? Often people are baptized with almost no ground preparation and very little cultivation. The seeds of truth are thrown at them, some of the truth sticks, and they are baptized.

How can we know that the truth has “stuck” or taken root?

- He is no longer a slave to sin. There is a change in the life. Romans 6:6
- The plant bears fruit. Mark 4:20 The fruit of the Spirit is showing in their life. Galatians 5:22-23

When you put a peanut seed in the ground, you do not expect to see that same peanut again. The old peanut will die, and from it comes a new plant that will yield new peanuts. You put one peanut in the

ground, and during harvest, that one peanut yields many peanuts.

In baptism, we are not buried to continue with our old ways. Baptism is a symbol of death and new life. The old ways die. And it is not baptism that causes the old ways to die. It is not baptism that changes the person. It is not baptism that saves a person. Baptism is a symbol of the change that has already taken place in the person as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

When you plant a peanut, you do not see that peanut again. It dies in the ground. But from that peanut grows a plant and eventually that plant gives many more new peanuts. You do not eat the same old peanut that you planted; you eat the new peanuts. In the same way, God wants to completely replace our hearts of stone with soft hearts. Our lives will be changed when God is working. A person not willing to change sinful habits is not ready to be baptized.

### **Step 5: Preserve (conserver)**

Tomato plants often need a stake or some support. If we suddenly remove the support, the plant falls down. We need to support new Christians in the various challenges they are sure to face.

This preserving step is crucial for the success of the work of evangelism. Part of our command is to make disciples. This is in addition to baptizing. The work of baptizing is not sufficient.

In Acts 1:8, the people were sent out as witnesses after receiving the Holy Spirit. They didn't just receive the Holy Spirit and remain inactive. They became witnesses.

Acts 2:42 The early believers continued how? In doctrine, fellowship, eating, and praying.

Combine inreach and outreach. Do not forget to encourage believers while reaching out to non-believers.

Here are some ideas for preserving newly baptized converts and for encouraging and discipling new members.

- Develop a plan to repeat and reinforce doctrinal instruction. Start weekly doctrine class during Sabbath School or during

the week.

- Track attendance and visit members who are absent.
- Encourage them to develop their relationship with God. Give them books like *Steps to Christ* or pamphlets. Give them a Bible reading plan.
- Meet one-on-one for Bible studies together.
- Help the new people to feel comfortable in their new family of God. Socialize together, eat together, continue being friends.
- Give each new member a work to do. Help them feel needed.
  - Help sweep, visit sick, Bible reading in church, personal ministry, etc
- Teach them the cycle of evangelism, how to witness. They must share in order to remain flourishing and for their faith to remain strong.
- Plan camp meetings (or conferences).

(Ideas in this section gleaned from: an article by Mark Finley in September 2009 *Ministry* magazine and a document from AOYM “The Cycle of Personal Evangelism”)

## **How to prepare and present Bible studies**

### **Methods of Giving Bible Studies**

In preparing a Bible study, try to think about what method you will use. Often people think of a Bible study as an official meeting where we sit at a table with our Bibles. That is good, but there are other ways to study the Bible. For each method, think about how, when, and where you can practically implement the method for your situation.

- small group
- one-on-one
- casual (conversational)
- formal (sit-down with Bibles)
- SMS

### **How to find students**

- Pray for God to lead you to somebody.
- Visits
- House-to-house work
- Business interactions
- Neighbors
- Family
- Medical ministry
- Classmates
- Somebody who has just experienced a major event in life
- Somebody with whom you had a spiritual conversation
- Somebody who has asked you spiritual questions
- Consider both rich and poor
- Consider both city-dwellers and country-dwellers

Think about where each person is in the cycle of evangelism.

### **Preparation of you**

- Spend much time with God, studying your Bible and praying. Ask God to show you any sin in your life that might be keeping you from Him.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to go ahead of you and prepare the hearts of the people you will be studying with.
- Ask God to give you wisdom and to set up appointments for you.

### **Preparation of the study**

- Be sensitive of the student's heart condition. Is he ready to accept the Word of God?
- When deciding which topic you will study, start with common points of faith, and build trust. Do not invite arguments or debate. Build their trust in the Bible by studying topics you both agree on. As time goes on, their confidence in Scripture will build and they will be more prepared to accept new Scripture truth.
  - "God's ministers should not count the opportunity of

engaging in discussion a great privilege. All points of our faith are not to be borne to the front and presented before the prejudiced crowds. . . . The truths that we hold in common should be dwelt upon first, and the confidence of the hearers obtained.” *Testimonies vol. 3, p. 426*

- Organize your thoughts and notes well
  - Create your own study
  - Or modify somebody else’s study
- Understand the topic. Try to find answers to anything that is not clear to you before trying to teach a topic.
- Preempt questions. Try to think of questions your students may have and include answers in your study.
- Remember to include personal application. Knowledge doesn’t help us unless we use it.
- Prepare a personal appeal for the end of the study.
- Prepare or copy a list of verses to give to the student so he can focus on the study, not on writing and copying letters and words
- Try to think of nature lessons or object lessons or illustrations to help clarify your topic
- Be able to back everything up with Scripture.
- Study with the same gender. If you are studying one-on-one, study with the same gender. If that is not possible, bring a friend along to the study, or pick a time when the spouse of the individual can join the Bible study.
- Include some social time. Friendship evangelism is effective. A good friendship allows for better communication. People are more likely to listen to friends than to strangers. Especially at the beginning of the series of studies, social time is a great icebreaker. However, don't let the social time take over the study time. Try to keep it to 5-10 minutes, and then merge into the study.
  - Try to have the social time before the study so that at the end, people can leave with thoughts of the application

- question.
- Plan some profitable social events not centered around formal Bible study.

## Presenting the study

- Always pray before you begin the study. Explain that we want God's guidance and His Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and to help us to understand Scripture. We must have assistance from the Holy Spirit to properly understand Scripture. Praying also helps clarify the transition between social time and Bible study time.
  - “The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life.” {DA 671.4}
- Establish the Bible as authoritative. Answer questions with a Scripture text whenever possible. This way, people will understand clearly that the Bible is your authority.
  - It is easy to argue with another friend. But it is hard to argue with God.
  - Have the student read texts
- Hold to the affirmative. Do not strengthen opposition by meeting it with argument. Avoid discussions on subjects not revealed.
- Give time for Holy Spirit to work. Try reading the text before “explaining” it, and give some time for thought before continuing. Ask the student to respond from the verse.
- Have an attitude of a learner. Even if you know a lot about Scripture, you only really know a small fraction of what there is to know. You might think that you know a lot, but you are really deficient in some areas. {1SAT 48.1}
- Be flexible. Do not feel that you must stick to a strict outline. Every person learns differently and comes to the study with different life experiences. Stay on topic, but be willing to flow

where the need is.

- Don't stay too long. Forty-five minutes to an hour is often a good length. If the studies take too long, the student may regret the time commitment and want to cancel. It is usually best if you leave them eager for the next study rather than with a feeling of “Whew, we are finally finished; now I can get some things done!”
- Be attentive to your student.
  - Help him to find books in the Bible or verses if he is not familiar with his Bible. Wait to read the verse until he has found it in his Bible.
  - Do not rush ahead of his understanding. Pause to explain a difficult verse or to give the definition of a word. Ask if he understands. It is better to cover a little well than to cover a lot with only shallow comprehension. Do not share too much at one time.
  - Encourage questions.
    - Say, “Thank you for your good question.” Or, “That is an interesting question.”
    - Show them how to find the answer. With further questions, lead them to conclude the response in their own minds rather than give them a pre-digested answer.
    - If the student asks a questions, he will often have a reason for asking it. Ask, “Why do you ask this question?”
- Ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. This will help you judge the level of understanding in your student. If they give a wrong answer, don't tease them. Encourage them to look again at the verse, or ask the question in a different way.
  - Have you been in a situation like this before?
  - How does this verse apply to us today?
  - What does this verse mean?
  - What does this verse say about \_\_\_\_\_?

- Summarize the main points of the lesson at the end. Or ask them to summarize it in their words for you to evaluate.
- Give an appeal. Encourage the student to make a decision based on what they learned in the study. This can be something simple, but make it practical.
  - What will you do differently in your life now?
  - Are you willing to make a commitment to ...?
  - Do you want to ...?
- Pray a focused prayer. Don't pray randomly about the weather and sickness or whatever.
  - Pray for God's help to reinforce the decision made.
  - Pray for strength and courage to continue faithful obedience.

### **After the study**

- Consider limiting your conversation when you leave to allow the Holy Spirit to continue deepening conviction in their minds.
- Pray to God and thank Him for helping you.
- Continue praying for your student.

### **Helpful tips**

- What if I don't know the answer to a student's question?
  - Do not be afraid to say simply, "I do not know the answer. I can study it and come back next time with a response."
  - Emphasize those things that are clear.
- How do I deal with off-topic questions and distracting comments?
  - Do not allow distractions. If the question is on a topic you will cover later, postpone the response. If it is completely off topic, offer to give a response at another time. In any case, stay focused on truth.
  - Romans 16:17-20 Avoid questions that cause division or that are not profitable. Be wise in what is good and simple concerning evil.

- How to I deal with questions the Bible does not address?
  - A man asked EGW one day about her thoughts on the salvation of infants. She responded, “That does not concern you or me.” {1SAT 48.2}
  - We all have imaginations, and some of our imaginations are large. But we must not waste time discussing what is not revealed.
- Pay attention to the condition of people’s hearts.
  - Matthew 7:6 Do not throw pearls to pigs. Sharing too much truth with somebody when they are not ready will only frustrate you and harden their heart.
  - John 16:12-13 Do not feel like you have to share all the truth at once. People are ready for certain truth at certain times.

(Some information in this section was gleaned from Staci Osterman’s AOYM document on giving Bible studies.)

## **How to Make and Appeal**

Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. "The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As laborers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened. . . . Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the Testimonies of His Spirit." [VOL. 5, P. 134 (1882).] {5T 681.3}

## **Developing your Personal Plan of Evangelism**

On a sheet of paper, make an outline of the five steps of the cycle of personal evangelism. Ask God to help you think of people you can minister to. Maybe you know somebody at each stage of the cycle.

Write down their names and what action you will take in each step. Be specific in how you will reach out to them.

Pick a friend to keep you accountable. Meet with your friend regularly (at least once a week other than Sabbath) to compare notes, share experiences, study the Bible, and pray together. This will encourage both of you.

Next class period we will call on some people to share their plan publicly. Here is a sample plan:

<b>My Personal Evangelism Plan</b>		
Step	Person	Activity
Prepare	Philip, my old neighbor	I plan to fix his broken door for him, and offer to help him with other things he can't do anymore.
Plant	aunt Merci	I am going to sing her the new song I learned recently. I will also
Plow	Charles	I will pray that Charles will be receptive to the Holy Spirit. I will encourage him to stop drinking alcohol.
Baptize	Abraham	I will work with my pastor to study with him. If he is ready, we will choose a date for baptism.
Preserve	Abraham	After he is baptized, I will continue visiting him at his house. I will offer to continue Bible studies with him. I will encourage him to attend social events at our church.

## **Evangelism and the Great Controversy**

Satan is not happy when we do God's work. The more committed we are in doing God's work, the more strongly Satan will attack us. But God gives us what we need to do His work, and we have nothing to

fear.

Do not be surprised when you make a commitment to follow the Great Commission and you face trials. Perhaps your family will reject you. Or people will think you are strange.

- 2 Timothy 3:12 All who live godly will suffer persecution.
- James 1:2 Count it joy when you face trials as they lead to perfection.
- 1 Peter 5:8-10 Satan is like a roaring lion looking for who he can devour. Resist him, remaining firm in your faith. Others suffer as you do. You are not alone.
- Matthew 10:32-42 We must follow Jesus at any cost, even if relatives turn against us.

2 Peter 3:9 God is not willing that any should perish but wants all to have eternal life.

2 Peter 3:11 We can hasten Jesus' coming. He could have come by now, but His people were and are not ready. Let's get busy and do our part to hasten Jesus' coming!

## **Personal Preparation (handout)**

This section is a collection of ideas and thoughts from the book Gospel Workers chapter 3. It is not well organized, but hopefully you can glean some helpful thoughts.

### **Mindset and character development**

The work of ministry is not an inferior work. True, the salary may not be as high as other work. But when we think of it as inferior, we are thinking the same thing of Jesus—that He is inferior. Ministry, in its various forms, is the highest and most important work we can do.

The measure of capacity or learning is far less important than the spirit in which you work. God is not searching for people with wonderful preaching talents, and for people with extra intelligence. He is searching for people who are willing to give themselves to Him and His work.

Learn good work habits. Lazy people are not good ministers.

Never cease to be learners.

Never present to God a sacrifice that has not cost you study or prayer.

God needs people who have an intense spiritual life. God is looking for people who go forward with faith and hope where God leads. God's Word abides in the consecrated worker.

Ask God to give you a love for souls. Pick somebody and pray for them and work for them. Understand the danger and risk in a sinner's life. He may die at any moment and lose out on eternal life. Pray for those who are convicted of truth.

Acknowledge the divine superintendence in preparing fields of labor and in the cycle of evangelism.

## **Young People**

1 John 2:14 Young men are strong. They have the energy. God calls youth to use their strength and energy in His work.

Youth must then not live selfishly or for themselves. They should not be searching out amusement. Their motive for work is the salvation of souls.

2 Timothy 2:15, 22

1 Timothy 4:12

Older people must educate the younger people. Younger people must respect older people and be willing to learn from them.

A good character is built up brick by brick. The youth can obtain characteristics for God's work by:

- Diligent exercise of their faculties
- Improving every advantage Providence gives them
- Connecting with the Source of all wisdom
- Not being satisfied with a low standard

Everybody has opportunity to develop character. Anybody can fulfill God's plan for His life.

## **Importance and need of training**

Do do any job well, we need to learn how to do that job. Take any opportunity you can get to get further training in God's work.

You should stretch your brain and work hard to learn God's work. You should always be learning and trying to become more qualified. But nothing good can be accomplished without God working with us. Without consecration and self-sacrifice, you will not be successful.

God calls everybody, both commanders and soldiers. But when some rush into the work without proper training, their effectiveness is diminished. You need to be taught before you can teach.

The training cannot come from just listening to sermons. Part of training comes from working. Hard study and hard work will bring success. We have to be constantly cultivating the gifts that God has given us.

Some people try to preach and they know little of the Bible. If you are deficient in an area, improve what God has given you. If you can't read God's word, don't do it in public. Learn to read better. Practice reading at home until you can read more smoothly.

## **Attitude**

Some people get discouraged in the work of God and look for another work. If these people would just work slowly but consistently, not giving up but pushing forward, they could do a great work.

Others feel like they know a lot and can do it themselves. These people cause trouble, too. They try to do God's work with their own strength and fail to do much. Those who feel this way are in the most need for training.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in God with all your heart. Not in your own understanding.

God makes humble men mighty. But the proud, He lowers.

Great men will be men who realize that they are nothing and that God is everything. They will be praying men. They will be men who have conquered self and depend on God for everything.

If you are young or inexperienced, look for somebody older or more experienced to help mentor you.

## **Practical skills**

To be well prepared to be a worker to God, you need practical skills. Start small. Study the Bible together with a friend or two for a while before trying to lead a group study. Lead some group studies before trying to preach a sermon. When you study with others, they ask questions that force you to study and help you to grow in your knowledge.

Start by teaching what you know well, even if it is only a little.

Do not be afraid of hard work. You may be called to work in some very difficult places. Strength comes by exercise.

Learn to speak with good volume without stressing your voice. Sometimes people pray in such a mumble and with such a low volume that their prayer cannot be understood. Speak plainly and clearly.

Build your knowledge by studying your Bible every day.

## **Qualifications (handout)**

This section is a collection of ideas and thoughts from the book *Gospel Workers* chapter 3 and *Evangelism* chapter 19. It is not well organized, but hopefully you can glean some helpful thoughts.

### **Consecration**

“In order for a man to be a successful minister, something more than book knowledge is essential. The laborer for souls needs consecration, integrity, intelligence, industry, energy, and tact. Possessing these qualifications, no man can be inferior; instead, he will have a commanding influence for good.” {GW 111.1}

Jesus was consecrated and focused on His mission. Luke 2:48-49

Abraham went when he was called. Genesis 12:1; Hebrews 11:8. {GW 112.1}

Paul went when he was sent. Acts 22:21 {GW 112.2}

The worker must learn self-surrender every day and allow God to work on his character.

Jesus did not offer His disciples a good pay or other honors. Matthew did not ask for a salary. He followed Jesus without question. {GW 113.2}

Peter and the others immediately left their nets and followed Jesus. They did not ask how their dependent friends or their families would survive. They obeyed their call and lacked nothing. Luke 22:35

God could use many different people. But their family ties, their traditions, their culture, have such a strong influence on them that they will not obey His voice. God would do more for and through us if we were consecrated to Him.

### **Sense of our need**

Elisha didn't ask for riches or honor. He wanted a double portion of the Spirit. He knew that was the only thing that could fit him for work. {GW 116.2}

### **Tactfulness**

Jesus never suppressed the truth. But He always spoke it in love.

Paul was careful how he presented truth to people. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 {GW 117}

He didn't arouse their prejudices and tell them all the bad things they were doing wrong. He led his hearers little by little. He varied his labor according to the situation and location.

By not being tactful, we can close the doors to those who may otherwise be interested.

### **Courtesy**

Be pitiful and courteous. 1 Peter 3:8 Love will do what arguments cannot. We should try our best to be like Jesus was when He lived on earth.

We need to replace rough and harsh temperaments with kindness.

Isaiah 50:4 Know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace.

Joking and worldly conversation do not have a place in God's work.

## **Helps in Gospel Work (handout)**

Read *Gospel Workers* chapter 7.

Bible study, secret prayer, faith, courage

## **Conditions of Success (handout)**

**How can we be sure of success? (word search for "succes\*" in *Evangelism*)**

When we work with energy and faith. {Ev 18}

When we plan wisely {Ev 19}

No half-hearted efforts will be successful. {Ev 59}

Spending money needlessly is not necessary for success. {Ev 66}

When we work two-by-two {Ev 72, 74}

Doing work in a less cheap way would bring more success. {Ev 75}

When we work in order and harmonious action. {Ev 93}

When we recognize that other's ideas may be different than ours. {Ev 100}

When we allow varied gifts in various people to work together. {Ev 103}

When we work with a more experienced worker. {Ev 109}

When lay members pray for and labor with their pastor. {Ev 110}

When church members pray for the success of evangelism. {Ev 111}

When pastors train lay members for evangelism. {Ev 114}

When lay members are trained with discipline and order. {Ev 115}

When we imitate the order and harmony of the angels. {Ev 115}

When we use more tact and wisdom. {Ev 125}

When we are well-trained. {Ev 128}

When we do not boast in ourselves, our learning, our position, our numbers, our talents, or our will. {Ev 131}

When we continue simply without display. {Ev 139}

When we do not depend on worldly plans for success. {Ev 148}

...

The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles, and the testimony of their enemies was, "Ye have filled all Jerusalem with your doctrine." {PC 168.3}

In a town in New England a well was being dug. When the work was nearly finished, while one man was still at the bottom, the earth caved in and buried him. Instantly the alarm was sent out, and mechanics, farmers, merchants, lawyers, hurried breathlessly to the rescue. Ropes, ladders, spades, and shovels were brought by eager, willing hands. "Save him, O save him!" was the cry. {ChS 94.1}







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