



stepping out

by Keith Glasgow

A training course for sharing the Christian faith

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*Sharing your Christian faith
with those around you*

Training manual for the local church

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HOW TO LEAD THE TRAINING CLASSES

1.

Expect a high level of commitment from the start of the training sessions. Explain to your class that they will only benefit from the training if they are willing to do their part. Have them all read through the commitment on page 7 and sign it.

2.

Organise the class into prayer partners for mutual encouragement over the duration of the course. Try to match the less experienced with those of the same sex who are more experienced.

3.

Class participants must complete the weekly assignment ("*Thinking it Through*" pages) during the interval between each training session. This assignment will reinforce the lesson and can then be the basis for discussion at the commencement of the following class, or before the next evangelistic event.

4.

The assessments are not to be completed in private as they are designed as simple tests to help the class measure how they are progressing. Give time at the commencement of each training session for the assessment to be filled in.

5.

Agenda for the Training Sessions:

- ◆ Introductory welcome and prayer.
- ◆ The assessment page is to be filled in by each participant. It is a simple test. Referral to the Bible or notes is not permitted. These tests are not designed to be marked, but to be a weekly challenge. The leader will talk through the test after time has been given for the class to complete it, asking different ones to volunteer the answers and memory verse(s).
- ◆ The Gospel outline, Bible verses and key questions to be memorised for each assessment are located on pages 27 and 28 under the Section "The Light We Carry".
- ◆ Opportunity should be given for participants to share with the class any witnessing opportunities they have had during the previous week. Limit these to about 2 or 3, and briefly discuss any significant points.
- ◆ Discussion groups (20 mins.) Divide into small groups of about 6-8 people, with previously selected group leaders. Discuss the assignment page from the previous week. Leaders are to hold back on their own opinions, drawing out the answers from their group members. Role-play when relevant.
- ◆ Teaching (40 mins.) The trainer should first review the major point(s) of the previous week's instruction before giving a lecture on the next lesson.

6.

If the material contained in any of the lessons is considered to be too much for one session, spread it over two weeks.

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C O N T E N T S

The adventure of sharing your faith

Every true Christian must surely want to share the good news with others. Most want to, but few do!

Most of us know it is our responsibility, but only a small number are proactive in telling others of the Saviour.

**If we want to share the Good News ...
and know we should share the Good News,
why don't we?**



Most Christians take the course of least resistance. It is a constant challenge to be willing to leave our 'comfort zones' and engage a friend or neighbour in a conversation about the Lord. We may want to be involved in a lively, witnessing church, but can miss the truth that a witnessing church is made up of witnessing people!

Evangelism is like a battle that must be fought, but most of the Lord's army have chosen to be hospital staff and ambulance drivers, instead of soldiers in the front line!

"The weapons we fight with...have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God..."
(2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

When Christians take their weapons (prayer and the Word of God) and venture to the front line, they find an amazing thing - it's enjoyable! They experience a new power and assurance. The Spirit of God gives a joy and peace that cannot be explained.

Sharing your faith as a way of life has great benefits in the Christian life. Faith grows strong. The Word of God comes to life, and provides answers to situations that arise. Prayer becomes specific, intense and rewarding. The ministry of the Holy Spirit becomes a much more important part of living. The crowning joy is to see people give their lives to Christ.

When we become proactive in engaging with others with a view to sharing Christ, we find our whole Christian experience is renewed and transformed.

- **there is a real adventure in seeking divine appointments;**
- **there is excitement in finding people who are open to listen because God has prepared them;**
- **there is the thrill of leading people to freedom and forgiveness in Christ;**
- **there is the wonder of being an instrument in the hands of God.**

THE FIRST STEP *(Motivation to witness)*

A woman who was a truck driver and had to work late at night decided to get a dog for protection. She answered an add in the local paper and went to see a one year old Doberman. He looked big and scary enough! The owner assured her: "He doesn't like men."

"Perfect," she thought, and bought the dog.

Then one day she was approached by two suspicious looking men in a parking lot. She called out to her canine bodyguard who was just behind her. But the dog ran and hid under the nearest car!

For many Christians, when confronted with the Lord's call to speak up for Him, and be a witness to friends, neighbours and work mates, we can have a similar reaction. We hide – not our bodies, but our light.

It has been estimated that 95% of born-again Christians in western countries do not witness for Christ consistently, as a way of life. Imagine the impact on the unreached if all of God's people were motivated!

Without the essential ingredient of motivation, Christians will keep their mouths shut. Yet, with the right kind of compelling desire, the most feeble and unassuming believer can be an instrument in God's hand to lead many to Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and door to door salespersons are all motivated! They do not have the Spirit of God, nor the authority of the Word of God, yet they are ceaseless in their efforts. How much more should Christians be moved to speak!

In 2 Corinthians 5:9-6:3 Paul lists several reasons we should be motivated:



1. A desire to please God

"We make it our goal to please Him" (v.9)

Paul was ambitious to please the Lord in all that he did. It was his aim in life. What pleases God most? Is it not the sacrifice of His Son on the cross? The Lord's sacrifice was a "fragrant (pleasing) offering ... to God (Ephesians 5:2).

Yet when we fail to tell the world that Christ died for them, the sacrifice of Christ for them is wasted. The whole purpose of Christ's death was that men and women should know of this great fact. Every time you witness for Christ you are pleasing God. Whether people believe or not, God is glorified.

2. The coming judgement of believers

"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ" (v.10).

Will you arrive in Heaven rejoicing and "carrying sheaves with you" (Psalm 26:5-6)? Will you be welcomed into the eternal habitations by friends in whom you have invested time and money during this life (Luke 16:9)? Paul said of his converts: "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes? Is it not you?" (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

The Lord is going to assess our lives at the "Judgement seat of Christ". The way we have invested our time and effort in this brief lifetime is going to effect the degree of responsibility and reward we will enjoy for a far longer time to follow. How comfortable will you feel standing beside men and women who have been slandered, rejected, imprisoned and martyred simply because they opened their mouths to speak of Jesus Christ? How difficult will it be to face the Lord on the day of judgement and see the nail prints in His hands? Will you try to justify your lack of courage before Him?

3. Understanding God's Nature

"Since then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men" (v.11).

God's holiness demands wrath and judgement on all sin. Paul knew God well from his study of the Scriptures. He was totally convinced of the awesome justice of a holy God. This knowledge moved him to go beyond just talking. He persuaded men of their need of Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

1

"So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation."

2 Corinthians 5:9 - 6:3

4. Understanding the cause of others mocking

“If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God...” (v.13).

If people say we are mad, or if we are called religious fanatics, extremists, or half-wits, because we seek to share our faith, we are not to take it personally. It is not us they are opposing, it is God. They can't crucify Christ again but they can crucify your character and laugh at you! If you witness for Christ in that environment you should rejoice that you are “counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name” (Acts 5:41).

Because Christ lives in us we will be treated the same as He was when He was here in the flesh. “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own...if they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also...they will treat you this way because of My name...” (John 15:19-21).

5. Constrained by love

“For Christ’s love compels us” (v.14).

Perhaps the most important motivation to witness is love.

a. His love for us

Having realised the extent of God's love for him, Paul could only respond by living for the Lord. “If The Lord from heaven gave up His life for me” says Paul, “I should no longer live for myself.” We have been made God's people in order “...that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).



b. His love through us

“The fruit of the Spirit is love...” (Galatians 5:22). Our hearts should be overflowing with love for others (John 7:38-39). The only way our hearts will be moved with God's love is for the Holy Spirit to fill us. Often we do not experience the Spirit-filled life because we have not dealt with sin or self-centred ambitions in our lives.

In John 20:21 we read our commission from Jesus: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Just as

love moved God to send His Son, now we are to be motivated by that same love as we look out on a perishing world.

6. A new outlook on people

“From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view” (v.16).

We can easily allow our minds to be governed by this world's values and ideals. People at work or in our neighbourhood who may seem unimportant or even a reject to others, have a very high value set on them by God. We should look at others around us through the eyes of God.

How should Christians view people?

a. The worth of people

One soul is shown to be of great value because of:

1. The dignity of being created in God's image (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:14).
2. The value God has put on mankind by sacrificing His Son to save “whosoever will” (Luke 19:10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
3. The words of Jesus in Luke 9:25 “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”
4. The response in Heaven over one sinner repenting (Luke 15:7,10).
5. The battle for possession of a person's soul (God vs. Satan: Luke 11:21-26).

“God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit...” (Romans 5:5).

b. The Condition of unsaved individuals

1. Mankind's spiritual condition

a. Spiritually dead

Mankind has been alienated (separated) from the life of God (Ephesians 2:1; 4:18). The relationship with God that existed at creation has been broken (Luke 15:24).

b. Lost

Because mankind's relationship with God has been broken, everyone is far away from Him, and ignorant of how to get right with Him (Luke 15; Isaiah 53:6).

c. Spiritually blind

The Bible describes people's resistance to the truth as hardness of heart, which in turn produces a wilful ignorance and a darkened understanding (2 Cor.4:3-4; Eph.4:18; 5:8).

d. Enslaved

Ephesians 2:1-3 shows that the unbeliever is enslaved to the world, the devil and the sinful nature. Those who commit sin, Jesus said, are slaves of sin (John 8:34; Rom.6:16,20).

e. Condemned

God has consigned (imprisoned) all men to the prison-house of disobedience in order to have mercy on everyone (Rom.11:32). See also Rom.3:19b,23; 6:23.

2. People's psychological condition

a. **No peace of heart** - restless and insecure;

b. **No power over sin** - even those trying to live a good life experience frustration;

c. **No purpose to living** - meaningless existence, no ultimate focus or direction in life.

c. The Destiny of unsaved individuals

Jesus spoke more about hell than He did of heaven.

Horror of separation from God and from all that is good (Luke 16:23);

Eternal punishment - there is no end and no relief (2 Thess.1:9; Matt.25:41,46);

Lost - outer darkness; a place where there is no love, joy or peace (Rev.20:11-15);

Lament - remorse over lost opportunity. There is no escape. Hell is final (Heb.10:27).

7. Transforming people

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..." (v.17).

The most significant thing that any person could ever do, is to bring people into a brand new life (James 5:20).

This results in -

a. God's glory

God's Name is not honoured among the nations, but when people turn to Christ it exalts the Name of God and brings honour to Him (Psa.108:5).

b. The persons welfare

To live God's way is the best thing people could ever do for themselves.

c. The influence on home and society

The new creation which God performs inside a Christian results in a new way of living. This is the only effective way to radically change society. It happened in the first century and it can happen today. Governments, psychologists and self-help gurus have high ideals, but do not have the power of the gospel to actually change people.



Alexander Marshall said:
"A soul saved, saves that soul from more misery, anguish and torment than has ever been suffered... for that soul has been saved from eternal punishment. A soul saved brings that soul into possession of more joy, peace and blessing than has ever been enjoyed... for that soul has been brought into possession of eternal joy"

If Christ was as committed to us as we are to Him, would He have suffered the rejection, shame and suffering of the cross?

8. Our responsibility as ambassadors

God has **“committed to us the message of reconciliation” (v.19).**

God has put in our trust the sacred duty of proclaiming His free offer of forgiveness. If He committed it to angels, heaven would be empty in a few seconds as they sped to do His will. Jesus gave a command: go, and make disciples” (Matt.28:18-19)! See also Acts 5:29. To fail to share our faith is to disobey Christ.

Blood guilt is taught in Ezel.33:7-9, and in Acts 18:6; 20:26. Will you be found guilty of the blood of neighbours and workmates because you didn't make an effort to share the gospel with them?

An ambassador represents his government in a foreign land. If a Prime Minister or President were to command his ambassador to deliver a message, they would be bound to do so, without adding to it, or taking from it.

In Romans 1:14-15, Paul called himself a 'debtor': "I am a debtor...and so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome". If you had been entrusted with a large sum of money which was to be passed on to a young woman when she turned 21, you would be under an obligation to pay that "debt" as soon as she comes of age. In a similar way, we are under an obligation to the people around us.

9. Our privilege of working with Christ

“As God's fellow workers...” (6:1)

a. The honour

A powerful motivation to sharing our faith is the knowledge that we are the mouthpiece of the Lord Jesus Christ. While living on earth Jesus went from place to place and from person to person, telling them the good news of the Kingdom. If He were still here, He would be doing the same. But He is not. You are His hands and His feet. His only way of speaking to your neighbours is with your mouth! We are called to go “in His Name,” with His Presence and His Power.

b. The joy

The Spirit of the Lord Jesus in our hearts witnesses with our spirit when we talk to others about Christ. He produces great joy in us if we dare to speak up for Him.

Witnessing is a key to spiritual life and vitality. The joy which comes from witnessing reaches high tide when someone you have helped comes to know Christ. As Jesus Himself said: “Sower and reaper rejoice together” (John 4:36).



10. The limited time and opportunities we have

“now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation” (6:2).

There is never any certainty that tomorrow will come for any person. We are to redeem the time! “Be prepared in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...” (1 Peter 3:15).

Thinking it Through _____ 1

1. What is the main reason I fail to witness; or, what is the biggest hindrance to me when I want to share my faith?

(Choose the two most significant to you)

- I fear people's reactions.
- I never think about it.
- I would not enjoy the same popularity I have now.
- I am concerned I will push them further away from me.
- I am not sure what to say or how to say it.
- I find it hard to get started.
- I am afraid I will be asked questions that I can't answer.
- I am not certain that I am a Christian.
- I am not living close to the Lord, and would feel a hypocrite to start witnessing.

Share your own hindrances with those in your group and then discuss each one, giving illustrations (where you can) from real life.

2. Am I willing to take the steps necessary to overcome the hindrances? Yes / No

3. What are some specific things I can do over the next six months to help me minimise the hindrances I face?

(Be as practical as possible).

a.

b.

c.

d.

4. Read through the list of ten motivating truths (from 2 Cor. 5:9-6:3), and choose the three which you regard as the most important.

a.

b.

c.

MY COMMITMENT:

I commit myself before God to overcome my hindrances to witnessing.

I will prayerfully seek to share my faith at least once a _____ over the next year, trusting God to lead me and help me.

In particular I will seek an opportunity to share the gospel with _____

and _____, whom I will pray for every day during the course of the year.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Personal Assessment

1. Write out memory verses:

2 Corinthians 5:17.

John 10:10b.

2. Write out key question: No. 1 (Learn from page 28)

3. Answer test question:

Why is motivation so important in personal evangelism?

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No.

PREPARED FOR THE JOURNEY

(Spiritual resources God has given us)

Christ has not sent us out to be His witnesses without giving us the resources needed for the task. Every Christian is called to witness, and every Christian has four great resources - God's Word, personal testimony, the Holy Spirit and prayer. However, only those who prepare themselves with these will be equipped for sharing their faith.

1. USING THE WORD OF GOD

The Lord Jesus Christ regularly used the Word of God in conversations with people. "Have ye not read?" (Luke 6:3), "It is written..." (Matthew 21:13; 26:24,31), "Ye know not the Scriptures" (Mark 12:24), are a few examples. He also made many indirect references, asked questions and stated principles which were based on the Scriptures.

God's Word has the following unique characteristics:

- God's Word is the incorruptible seed which imparts eternal life (1 Peter 1:23, James 1:18). Just as the natural reproductive seed imparts life to the newly conceived baby, so God's Word is the supernatural seed which imparts God's life to the new believer.
- God's promises are like silver, refined and purified seven times (Psalm 12:6). His promises will never fail, they can be completely relied upon.
- God's Word is truth. It creates faith (John 17:17, Romans 10:17).
- God's Word revives (converts) the soul (Psalm 19:7).
- God's Word imparts light and understanding (Psalm 119:130).
- God's Word is like wheat which contains life, in contrast to lifeless straw. It is also like a fire and a hammer (Jeremiah 23:28,29; and Jeremiah 5:14).
- God's Word is an effective weapon against the Devil (Ephesians 6:17 Matthew 4:4).
- Christian growth is nourished by God's Word (1 Peter 2:2).

In God's record of the early church, the Word of God was the basis of all preaching (e.g. Acts 2:16 ff) and personal witness (e.g. Acts 8:35; 17:2,3). The work of evangelism is spoken of as: "The word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." The Christians at Berea were recorded as being "more noble" than others because they searched the Scriptures, and "many of them therefore believed ..." (Acts 17:12). Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and said that when they "received the Word of God" which they had heard from Paul, they accepted it "not as the word of man, but as it actually is, the Word of God, which is at work in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).



On this basis, therefore, we should resolve to make greater use of the Word of God in speaking with others. Unless we have hidden the Word in our hearts and made it a part of our daily lives, we cannot do this effectively.

We should not overwhelm others with a multitude of Scripture quotations, which could confuse. A single verse, if it is appropriate, may be more effective than a dozen.

2. POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT

The Lord Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer as a river of water flowing out for others to drink. He said: "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive" (John 7:38-39).

2

No human statement can equal the inherent power of the Word of God.

"The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

"So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth. It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

Our purpose is not to use God's Word as a verbal club to beat others into submission. We use it to show the authority we have for our message.

Scripture devoid of the Spirit of God is unable to convict.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners" (Isaiah 61:1).

The Holy Spirit gives courage

It was when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit that they spoke the Word with boldness (Acts 4:31; 6:5,8,10). Peter, who through fear of men cowered and denied his Lord, became a powerful and bold witness after Pentecost (Acts 4:13).

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power, of love and self discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord ... but join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God" (2 Timothy 1:7-8).

The Holy Spirit gives power

The disciples, after receiving the commission, were told to wait until they were "clothed with power from on high." That same power is ours today in Christ, who promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age. The Lord Jesus was filled with the Spirit from conception, but He received the anointing of the Holy Spirit as He was about to enter public ministry. This anointing was prophesied in Isaiah 61:1, and equipped Him for ministry. We are sent in His Name, and we also have "an anointing from the Holy One" (1 John 2:20). We are to rely on His anointing in our lives and on our witness, to make the witness powerful and effective .

How do we appropriate the Spirit's power?

God's Spirit already dwells in us (Romans 8:9).

God's Spirit can be grieved or quenched if we have unconfessed sin in our lives (Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19). If we confess our sins our close walk with the Lord is restored, we abide in Christ, and so bring forth fruit (1 John 1:7,9; John 15:4-5).

We must appropriate the Holy Spirit's fullness by faith. Trust Him to fill you with boldness and power as you witness.

The Holy Spirit guides

All through the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is seen to be in control of proceedings. He is the life of the early church. They were sent out by Him (Acts 13:1-3), and guided by Him (Acts 16:6-10). Someone has said that "The Acts of the Apostles" should be called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit"!

The Holy Spirit continues to guide us today. We may not receive direction in as dramatic ways as did the apostles, but we can learn to have an open ear to the Spirit's prompting. We should live in dependence on Him, becoming more and more sensitive to His quiet ministry in our lives.

3. PRAYER

Should we pray for the lost?

- a. Pray for them generally - Luke 23:34; Rom. 10:1; 1 Timothy 2:1.
- b. Pray for them specifically - Luke 6:28; Acts 7:60; John 15:7,16.

What should we pray?

Pray for God's providence in their lives (Acts 16:27-31)

Pray for God to control the circumstances in their lives, and to awaken in them a sense of need. God speaks to people through the emptiness of wealth and the guilt of sin's pleasures. He uses the traumas of financial pressure, health problems or the loss of a loved one to get through to hard-hearted people.

Pray for God's power as you witness (Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

Pray for God to work powerfully in their lives, using our weak and feeble attempts at witnessing to powerfully convict of sin or to illuminate their hearts.

Pray for God's protection (2 Thessalonians 3:2-3)

We are involved in releasing Satan's victims from the power and bondage of his kingdom, so we can expect him to oppose us. Satan uses people to attack us physically, to discredit us or to undermine our message. We are not immune to persecution as Christians, but we can pray for God to guard us from any harm that is not part of God's plan for our lives.

Pray for God's presence and help as you witness (Matthew 28:20).

Pray for opportunities to speak (Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3).

Pray for boldness to speak (Acts 4:29).

Pray against Satan ("resist" Satan - 1 Peter 5:9)

Pray against the spiritual powers of Satan's kingdom who were defeated at the cross and should be resisted in the all-powerful Name of the Lord Jesus (Ephesians 6:10-20, Matthew 26:18).

4. PERSONAL TESTIMONY - sharing your story

Your testimony is a brief account of your journey to faith in Christ and how He has changed you. It is not merely the story of how you became a Christian, but a first-hand account of God's work of grace and power in your life. Do not underestimate the power and effectiveness of your personal testimony.

The importance of a personal testimony:

- * It is biblical (Acts 26:1-29);
- * It supports and illustrates God's truth;
- * It silences the arguments of opponents (John 9:25; 1 Peter 3:15-16).

The Basic Ingredients of a Testimony:

a. WHY you became a Christian

What events, people and circumstances led you to become a Christian? What fears, problems or intellectual processes caused you to look seriously into the claims of Jesus Christ?

Don't spend too long in this first section of your testimony. Use it as a means to help others identify with you, or get a picture of the change that has occurred. Then move on to the more important sections.



b. HOW you became a Christian

Do not merely say "Then I trusted Christ..." or "then I became a Christian...". Use your testimony to present (in a non-preaching way) the simple message of the gospel. In the context of the story of your own personal experience, share the basics of the gospel. Include two or three Bible verses to lend authority. For example: *"When I realised that the Bible said 'The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life', I realised I did not have to earn my way to heaven".*

c. WHAT has changed since becoming a Christian

Share how you have "proved God", how you have experienced the reality of Jesus Christ in your life since trusting the Lord. For those brought up in Christian homes where the change at conversion may not have been significant, share honestly what part the Lord has in your life today. Speak of His grace and help in dealing with issues or problems (eg. loneliness, resentment, anger, selfishness). Make sure that they do not get the impression that you see yourself as a saint; talk about what the Lord is still doing in your life.



- * **Keep it brief** - 2 to 3 minutes only
- * **Be ready to give it** - anytime, anywhere (1 Peter 3:15)
- * **Keep on track and relevant** (adapt to suit the occasion)
- * **Keep it Christ-centred**
- * **Don't exaggerate** - stick to the facts
- * **Be personal** - do not be preachy
- * **Be gracious and sensitive** - never condemn others

The whole of the Christian faith rests on the reliable testimony of eye-witnesses

An example of a personal testimony is found in Acts 22:1-21

1. Before Paul became a Christian (verses 1 - 5)

Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.” When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

2. How Paul became a Christian (verses 6 - 16)

“About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’

‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.

‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked.

‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

3. After Paul became a Christian (verses 17 - 21)

When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’

‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’

Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’

Thinking it Through _____ 2

Prepare your personal testimony by writing it out as you would share it with a friend or relative. Come to the next session prepared to share it verbally in a small group.

1. Briefly share what led you to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (1 minute). What was your life like? What was your view of God, Christ and Christians? Was your path to Christ a struggle, or a search? What circumstances brought it about? In what way did God prepare your heart for the message? What was the biggest hindrance to your committing yourself to Christ?

2. Briefly describe how you came to trust Christ as your Saviour and Lord (1 minute). What brought you to the point of commitment? What Bible verses really spoke to you? What did you actually do?

3. Describe how your life has changed since Jesus Christ came into your life (1 minute). Did it feel different? Has there been any change in your character, values, attitudes and relationships with others? How have you "proved God" in your life recently?

GROUP CRITIQUE *(For verbal testimony)*

Was it clear? Yes/No

Did it point to Christ? Yes/No

Was it brief: Yes/No

Did it cover the 3 areas adequately? Yes/No

Was it conversational? Yes/No

Strong points:

Was it up to date? Yes/No

Were appropriate verses used? Yes/No

Did it seem real (true, authentic)? Yes/No

Was it gracious and sensitive: Yes/No

Improvements needed:

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses

Romans 3:23

Isaiah 59:2a

2. Key Question No.2

3. Answer Test Question

Which of the four spiritual resources do you feel is the most important? Why?

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

KEEPING IN STEP

(Following Jesus in our manner and approach)

What attitudes should control the way we approach witnessing? Some Christians are so timid they feel threatened by the thought of saying anything about Christ to their neighbours. Others are so aggressive they quickly shut the ears of those they so zealously seek to win.



1. WITNESS SHOULD FLOW NATURALLY FROM OUR WALK

Sharing as a way of life does not require:

- * Getting psyched up
- * Learning a 'sales pitch' or special techniques
- * Being a gifted communicator

When we talk about Christ we should be:

- * Perfectly natural
- * Unashamedly confident
- * Expecting a positive response

We are not recruiting new members for a church or trying to convert people to our "religion". We are simply sharing the good news.

Our approach to people should flow from a close walk with the Lord. Jesus is the Saviour, and He uses us when we keep in step with Him. Only when the Spirit of God fills us can we be more relaxed about witnessing.

2. WITNESS BEGINS WITH "BUILDING BRIDGES"

Both Christians and non-Christians are uptight about evangelism. We are to work hard at developing relationships with those around us in order to create an atmosphere where it is quite natural to talk together about personal matters.

a. Build the bridge of friendship

Very few people will come to Christ through impersonal methods alone. Preaching can only be done by a few gifted people, and bears little fruit without the personal witness of other Christians. Other methods such as gospel booklet distribution, evangelistic web sites and church outreaches have limited value without Christians first impacting friends and neighbour's lives personally.

Build a bridge of friendship with those you already know, and establish new friendships within your network of neighbours, co-workers and associates. The stronger the bridge, the more you can show the love of Christ and ultimately share the Gospel. Friendships should be legitimate (not just because you want an opportunity to share the gospel). Agenda-driven friendships are counterfeit.



There are three essentials for building friendships – time, mutual respect, and sharing in common interests. Time given to being with people is an investment in their lives. They see your faith fleshed out in real life. Many of those who spent time with Jesus eventually came to faith. We should expect that His presence in us should also be used by the Spirit to draw people to Him. Go out for dinner or coffee, enjoy sport together, exchange gardening ideas etc. But remember, befriending your co-worker or neighbour may make them more open to you, but, by itself, will never make them open to the gospel. Ultimately, faith in Christ is a work of God's grace and we are to trust Him in prayer for that miracle to occur.

3

Our witness is at its best when it is the overflow of our personal walk with Christ. To the extent that we "abide in Him" we will "bear much fruit" (John 15:5)

Abraham Lincoln said: "If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend."

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16)

Jesus is the friend of sinners, and He calls us to follow His example.

We are the salt of the earth only as we have vital contact with people.

You could be the only outward expression of God's love for them that they will ever see.

"Witnessing begins in the second mile"

Floyd McClung rightly says: "People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care"!

I. CULTIVATE MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIP

Jesus said: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men". What did Jesus do, which we must follow if we are to be fishers of men? He socialised with the 'worldly' people of His time so much that the religious leaders of His day rejected Him as a man of God.

Showing hospitality is one of the most effective ways to get alongside people. The Greek word means "lover of strangers". Don't invite your neighbours over in order to witness in the first instance (unless it just happens to naturally come up in the conversation).

Plan to relax with them, play a game or talk about things they are interested in. If they know you are Christians, they may be pleasantly surprised if you refrain from "talking religion", and may even invite you back to their place some time!

Walls are easy to build. One sentence or remark can separate you and your neighbour for a long time. Bridges are painstakingly slow and difficult to build. You have to win the right to be heard. Pray for wisdom to know when is the best time to speak.

II. DEVELOP FRIENDSHIP ON INCREASINGLY DEEPER LEVELS

The stronger your relationship with a person, the more likelihood of influencing their beliefs. You can tell when your relationship with someone is strong by the degree that they will confide in you.

- **Show interest** in what to you is ordinary but to them is important (their garden, car, music).
- **Relate on common interests.** Share experiences, technical data, newspaper clippings on subjects that you are both interested in.
- **Try to eliminate misconceptions** they may have which are barriers to faith in Christ. Show by your life and ordinary conversation that being a Christian is great!
- **Show them you are not a bigot.** You are interested in them as people and in what they believe. Do not compromise what you believe, but be willing to listen sincerely to their views.
- **Look for opportunities to have them help you**, especially in areas where they have good knowledge or interest.
- **Do not condemn what they do** (eg. swearing, gambling or watching questionable television programmes). It is only after people are saved that their consciences come to life and they begin to see the evil of things they do.
- **Don't criticise** (eg. their church or religion). If you want to gather honey, don't kick over the bee-hive!
- **Lend good books and DVDs** (not necessarily Christian).
- **Show empathy.** Remember that when you go through times of difficulty and sorrow, it is then that your Christian life shines best. Use these opportunities to witness to the reality of Christ in your life.
- **Be a good listener.** Most people are looking for someone who will show a genuine interest in what they have to say. You will be surprised how quickly you build relationships when you concentrate on listening rather than speaking. Learn to draw out the other person.
- **Scratch where they itch** - All people need Christ, but many do not realise it. We are to find out how the gospel is relevant to them as individuals, and then show that Christ is able to meet them in their need.

b. Build the bridge of trust

You will never be effective as a witness if your neighbours and workmates don't trust you. You can instill trust in the following ways:

I. SHOW GENUINE CARE

The command "Love your neighbour as yourself", should not be a lever to force open peoples mouths for a feed of the Gospel. The same love that prompts us to see them saved from judgement should also motivate us to show genuine concern over the practical concerns of life.

Ask God for opportunities to help them in some practical way. When sickness, sorrow, or financial trouble come their way, be ready and willing to "spend and be spent" for them. Going out of your way to look after their children, cook dinner, clean their house, mow their lawns, will show the genuine nature of your Christian love, and help open the way for you to share the gospel. Paul could honestly say to those he led to Christ in Thessalonica: "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well..." (1 Thess.2:8).

II. BE CONFIDENT

Your confidence in the Lord and the message you share will inspire trust in those you speak with. They will never be convinced of your message if they get the impression that you are not convinced yourself!

Reasons why we can be confident in witnessing:

1. We are not necessarily going to lead a person to Christ on the spot.

Aim to get a conversation started and take them one step towards Christ. If they are interested take them as far as they will go, but no further. Don't feel guilty if you don't get to share the gospel the first time.

2. Christ is the Saviour, not us!

It is His mission and His power (Matthew 16:18, 28:18;). He does all the saving from beginning to end.

We are only His hands and His feet ("Go...and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). We are 'channels only', and so we should not work up a sweat, trying to do God's work for Him. Pray and look for divine appointments (where God leads you to a person at just the right time). Expect some of those you share with to have been prepared by the Holy Spirit. As you make yourself available to the Lord in this way, you will be excited by the way He will use you!

3. What we are sharing is the truth.

It is normal to be a Christian, not abnormal. We are not trying to tell people that the world is flat! The "ring of truth" in the Gospel message has a strong, persuasive power which causes people to believe it. A witness who knows the Gospel, and is completely convinced of the truth of it's message, will share it with confidence.

4. We can only see the outward, but God knows the heart.

Those who seem the least likely to be open to spiritual things are often hiding a deep, inner desire to know God. No one had any idea what was going on in the heart of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion (Acts 9). When God sent Ananias to meet Saul at the house on Straight Street, he was surprised to find a man in whose heart God had been working for some time (Acts 26:14b).

III. BEING CONSISTENT

Jesus' lifestyle was a demonstration of His teaching. He went about "doing good" (Acts 10:38).

1. Our testimony as individuals

Paul said of himself that he was "approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel" (1 Thessalonians 2:4). The word approved means to pass the test. Before entrusting the valuable gospel message into our hands, God wants us to conduct ourselves "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27).

- **A quiet life**

The Bible calls us to: "lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands ... so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders ..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

- **A clear conscience**

Satan, the "accuser of the brethren who accuses them before our God day and night", delights to frustrate our power and effectiveness in witnessing by continually reminding us of our failures. We are therefore encouraged to be like Paul who was able to say while sharing his testimony: "I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man" (Acts 24:16).

The apostle Peter says: "keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed ..." (1 Peter 3:16).



Not every peach on a tree is ripe at the same time. We must test each person gently to see if they are 'ready to be picked'.

The commission is more than a 'go mission', it is a 'co-mission'!

Our task is not to create a sense of need, but to uncover the need God has already created.

Jesus said: "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God..." (John 7:17).

Sharing the gospel while living inconsistently is like telling people that you have found a breath freshener that works as they move away from you to avoid your bad breath!



The distinctive character of a life that bears no grudges, takes no revenge and even loves its enemies, is more powerful in its effect than the most eloquent words.

- **A clean life**

“Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord”, says Paul, “must turn away from wickedness ... if a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, **useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work**” (2 Timothy 2:19-21).

David’s sin, once confessed and forgiven (Psalm 51) enabled him to say confidently: “Then I will teach transgressors Your ways and sinners will turn back to You”.

- * **A gracious life**

The apostle John recognized Jesus to be the Son of God because he saw the glory of His moral character: “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Likewise the dying thief, who at one stage reviled the Lord, turned and sought salvation from Him after hearing the gracious words of the Saviour, “Father, forgive them”. The thief knew that Jesus was crucified without cause, and no doubt was so taken by His selfless love, that he turned in faith and repentance to publicly confess Christ.

The Bible shows us that this gracious spirit will be likely to win the lost “without a word”. “Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without talk by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment ... instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit ...” (1 Peter 3:1-4).

To fail to have these qualities could result in the same condemnation that the Lord’s prophet levelled at the Jews in times past: “God’s Name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Romans 2:2).

2. Our testimony as the church

The Church is the body of Christ, and is “Exhibit A” to the world that the gospel is the power and truth of God. Jesus prayed that the Church would be one (completely united), “to let the world know that You sent Me...” (John 17:23).

It was when the Church was “enjoying the favour of all the people” that “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). In Acts 5:13-14 we also read: “they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number”. See also Philipians 1:27-28.

One of the greatest hindrances to the gospel is the failure of the Church. Each local fellowship should heed Paul’s challenge: “Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody” (Romans 12:17).



**PERSONAL
REVIVAL
LEADS TO
PERSONAL
EVANGELISM!**

Thinking it Through

3

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:12, 19-23

I. What are some modern illustrations of things which we sometimes have to put up with in order not to hinder someone coming to Christ (v.12)?

II. How does v.19 show that our attitude when witnessing has a direct bearing on the results?

III. How can you become “all things to all people” (v.22)?

2. How did Paul show the genuineness of his concern (1 Thessalonians 2:7- 9)?

3. When witnessing, what are some ways that people show us they do not want to pursue the conversation any further? (Verbal and non-verbal)

4. Read Luke 6:32-36

I. Explain how these verses show the way a Christian can still be distinctive among morally upright people.

II. How can we turn times of personal sorrow, hardship, and injustice into opportunities for witnessing “without a word”?

5. Who are our neighbours in today’s cultural setting?

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

Romans 6:23

Hebrews 9:27

2. Key Question No.3

3. Answer Test Question:

Describe the type of people you have in your sphere of social contact (e.g. rich, poor, businessmen, housewives, professional, working, farming, solo parents etc.) How does this influence your manner in approaching them with the gospel?

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

THE LIGHT WE CARRY (Our Message)

4

1. KNOWING WHAT OUR MESSAGE IS

The Gospel Outline (to be memorised)

STARTING A BRAND NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

1. Are They Interested?

Become a New Person 2 Corinthians 5:17

Receive a New Life John 10:10b

Share your Testimony

2. Do They See Their need?

Broken Relationship - Cause Romans 3:23 Isaiah 59:2a

Broken Relationship - Consequences Romans 6:23 Hebrews 9:27

Broken Relationship - Continues forever John 3:36 Rev. 20:14-15

3. Do They Understand How?

We cannot save ourselves Titus 3:5 Ephesians 2:8,9

We must turn back to God Isaiah 55:7 Acts 26:20b

We must trust Christ to save us

* **He is God/Man** John 1:1,14 1 Timothy 2:5

* **He died for our sins** Romans 5:8 1 Peter 3:18

* **He rose again** 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

4. Are They willing?

Do they believe Jesus is Lord (God) and risen? Romans 10:9

Are they willing to let Christ be their master? Romans 14:9

Believe and receive by prayer John 1:12 Romans 10:13

5. Do They Know What Will Happen if They refuse?

Eternal exclusion 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

KEY QUESTIONS (To be memorised)

1. ARE THEY INTERESTED?

"Are you interested in spiritual things?"

2. ARE THEY SURE OF GOING TO HEAVEN?

"Have you come to the place in your life where you know for sure that if you died tonight you would go to heaven?"

Also: *"Have you ever trusted Christ as your Saviour, or are you still on the way?"*

3. HOW GOD CAN ACCEPT US?

"If you were to die tonight and stand before God, and He were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into My Heaven?', what would you say?"

4. YOUR TESTIMONY

"May I share with you something that has changed my life completely?"

5. SOLICITING THEIR TESTIMONY

"Would you mind sharing with me how you became a Christian?"

6. DO THEY KNOW WHAT A CHRISTIAN IS?

"In your opinion, what is a real Christian?"

7. DO THEY KNOW THE GOSPEL?

"If I was dying and had only five minutes to live, and I asked you how I could be saved and go to Heaven, what would you tell me?"

8. DO THEY WANT TO HEAR THE GOSPEL?

"May I take a little time to explain from the Bible how you can be sure that you are a Christian and going to Heaven?"

2. KNOWING WHAT OUR MESSAGE MEANS

a. NEW BIRTH AND ETERNAL LIFE

New birth is an event which marks the time when a person receives eternal life. It is the commencement of Christ's dwelling in our hearts by His Spirit, and takes place when we respond in faith to the Gospel message. The Spirit of God and the Word of God are both involved in the transformation which occurs (1 Peter 1:23-24; Titus 3:5).

Jesus said that new birth meant being "born of the Spirit" in contrast to our natural birth, "born of the flesh". The word means "to bring again to birth".

New Birth is God's provision for our sinful nature. It is the point in time when we receive our new nature which is "created to be like God..." (Ephesians 4:24).

b. SIN

In today's world, sin is either:

Denied - "there is no such thing as sin,"

Ignored - "it doesn't matter if we sin,"

Minimised - "only really bad things are sins,"

Misunderstood - "only what is harmful to others is sin."

However, sin is an offence against God's moral law.

Words for sin used in the original New Testament have the following meanings:

Hamartia - missed the mark (God's standard).

Parabasis - transgress (to step over the line)

Paraptoma - to fall beside (should have stood upright).

Agnoma - doing wrong in ignorance (eg. Christ's crucifixion)

Anomia - lawlessness, unrestrained (being responsible to no-one except yourself)

Jesus said: "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again... Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:5-7)

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5)

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6)

"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17)

The Bible also shows sin to be:

- * Turning to our own way (selfishness) (Isaiah 53:6)
- * Rebellion (Isaiah 1:2)
- * Knowing to do good and failing to do it (James 4:17)
- * Acting other than by faith (Romans 14:23)
- * Not believing in Jesus (John 16:9)
- * Not seeking God (Romans 3:10)

All sins are ultimately against God: "The sinful mind is hostile to God" (Romans 8:7). David said, "against You, You only, have I sinned" (Psalm 51:4).

Jesus taught that the heart (our sinful nature) is the source of "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly" (Mark 7:20-23).

Sins are an offence to a Holy God. Many today do not regard sin as serious because their natures have been corrupted. They cannot sense the abhorrence God has for sin.

c. JUDGEMENT - DEATH

Death has the meaning of separation. God said to Adam and Eve: "the day you eat...you will die." The day they disobeyed God they did not physically die. But they were separated from God immediately, cast out of the garden, and kept from the tree of life. The Ephesian Christians were once dead through their trespasses and sins, and were "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 2:1; 4:18). They were "made alive" through Christ, which means they passed from a state of separation from God, into a living relationship with Him.

d. GOD'S ATTRIBUTES (Appropriate to sharing the Gospel)

* **Eternal**

God has always existed as the ever-present "I Am". He does not dwell in the realm of time. He inhabits eternity where there is no such thing as past, present and future. Everything for Him is a present 'NOW' (Psalm 90:2; Exodus 3:14; Revelation 4:8).

* **Changeless**

God may work differently at certain times, but His eternal nature means that both His character and His purposes never change (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). The God of Noah is the God of Moses, and also the God of the New Testament.

* **Infinite**

There are no limits to God. He cannot be fully understood, measured or known. All His other attributes are also infinite. No one can measure His wisdom. His love has no limit. His power has no boundary.

* **Love**

God is love. It is impossible for His love to waver, change or cease. God's love does not depend on the attractiveness of the object. Even those who crucified His Son were forgiven when they repented. God does not love us 'if'... or 'because'. In mercy, God does not give us what we deserve (judgement and hell), and in grace, He gives us what we don't deserve (forgiveness, Sonship, and heaven).

* **Wrath**

God's wrath is His settled attitude towards sin. God loves the sinner but hates the sin. All sin causes an automatic response of holy anger. God's wrath is not a vindictive, "heated" anger, such as we can have. It is His consistent antagonism to sin and evil.

* **Holiness**

This attribute is the one which demands punishment on all sin. God cannot look on sin approvingly (Habakkuk 1:13). His moral excellence, and His high and lofty position, make Him quite separate from sinful and lowly man (Isaiah 57:15).

* **Righteousness and Justice**

God does not show partiality or favouritism. He is fair in all His dealings with mankind. He is responsible to see that justice is always administered in His universe. As a just God, He could not 'let us off' our sins, so He had to provide the payment. He is therefore "just, and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). God's justice is an extension of His holiness.

"...from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2)

"I the LORD do not change" (Malachi 3:6)

"How unsearchable his judgements, and his paths beyond tracing out" (Romans 11:33)

"God is love... This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us..." (1 John 4:8,10)

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men" (Romans 1:18)

"I live in a high and holy place" (Isaiah 57:15)

"...all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4)

"I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21)

"The Lord is...not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9)

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6)

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21)

e. REPENTANCE

Repentance means to turn. It means to have a radical change in one's thinking and direction. Repentance changes the heart and mind, which then results in the "fruits of repentance" which John the Baptist called for. The fruits (new actions and good works) do not themselves constitute repentance, as that would mean salvation is obtained by works. The fruits are the practical and inevitable result of an inner change. Paul says the same when he preached that people should "repent, and turn to God, and prove their repentance by their deeds" (Acts 26:20). Faith is turning to Christ for salvation; repentance is turning from sin in order to trust Christ. The hand must let go of the dagger if it is to receive the free pardon.

Repentance is an essential part of our message, "repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His Name to all nations" (Luke 24:47. See also Acts 20:21; and 2 Peter 3:9)

Repentance not only relates to morality, but also beliefs. A Jehovah's Witness, Mormon or Hindu will have to turn from their past religious beliefs and practices if they are to exercise saving faith in Christ. The Thessalonians "turned to God from idols." Paul preached to the idol worshippers of Athens - "In the past God overlooked such ignorance (their beliefs) , but now He commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:31).

True repentance should be accompanied by some measure of sorrow, regret and hatred of the sins of the past.

f. THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is not about Jesus Christ - it **is** Jesus Christ! We are not merely sharing facts about a historical figure - we are introducing people to a Person. Our message is twofold: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:21-23; 2:2). Too often we talk only about the cross (central as it is to the Gospel) but fail to share Christ as a living, glorified Person, who is able to save us because:

I. HIS PERSON - He is the source of life and salvation.

He is the bread of life, the living water, the light, the door, the way. He does not show the way, nor merely make the way - He **is** the way.

Jesus Christ must be presented to the people as Lord. "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord..." (2 Corinthians 4:5). It is faith **in Him** that saves, not belief in a doctrine about Him! We don't preach "Him crucified" but "Jesus Christ (who He is) **and** Him crucified (what He did)."

II. HIS WORK - He is the sacrifice for our sins.

In the Old Testament, God required animals to die as a substitute for those who sinned. The animal was innocent and did not deserve to die, but took the place of the sinful person condemned by God. The blood of animals could never take away sin, but they were pictures pointing forward to the one great sinless sacrifice where: "Christ died for sins ... the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

The innocent took the place of the guilty, the sinless One was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; John 1:29; Isaiah 53:4-6).

The following words should never be used when sharing our faith, but need to be understood in order to communicate the truth of the gospel:

*** Justification**

In a court of law it is possible for someone to take the punishment of an offender, but they can never remove the guilt. Christ not only forgives us, through His death He reckons His own righteousness to our account! The only righteousness God can accept is His own, and through the cross we stand accepted and righteous before His holy presence.

"But now a righteousness from God has been made known...the righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:21-22).

*** Redemption**

Redemption conveys the idea of being purchased in order to be set free, or delivered. By nature we are slaves of the world, Satan, and our sinful nature (Ephesians 2:2-3).

Through the cross we are set free from all bondage. Slaves must be purchased in order to be set free. The price for our freedom has been fully paid by Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19). The Lord Jesus delivers us from the power and penalty of sin. Through the cross the kingdom of darkness has no claim on God's children.

*** Propitiation**

The word propitiation comes from "mercy" and the "mercy seat" over the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament. God's wrath must find appeasement if God is going to deal favourably with sinners. Christ took all the wrath which we deserve and now God can accept us in His presence.

*** Reconciliation**

Reconciliation is the bringing together of two hostile parties. By nature we are enemies of God (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21; James 4:4). The only way two opposing parties can be reconciled is to remove the cause of the hostility between them. Christ died to "bear away the sin of the world." He made the way open to "bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18). The Bible never talks of God being reconciled to man, only of man being reconciled to God.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, we see that God does the reconciling, through Christ. The gospel is a message of reconciliation and therefore we must speak to the world on behalf of Christ and call people to "be reconciled with God."

III. HIS RESURRECTION

The gospel messages given by Peter and Paul and recorded in Acts all present the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the focal truth to be believed. In Romans 10:9 Paul states that no one can be saved without believing "that God has raised Him from the dead."

Romans 4:25 teaches that Christ has been "raised to life for our justification." Also, in 1 Corinthians 15:17, Paul argues that if Christ had not risen from the dead, our faith would be futile and we would still be in our sins. If Christ had not been able to overcome the power of death Himself, He could scarcely save anyone else! But "He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through Him, because He lives forever..." (Hebrews 7:25).

The resurrection is convincing proof that the claims of Jesus are true - He is God's Son. If He had been a religious con-man or a deluded fool, then God would not have raised Him up. The Bible says that He is: "declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

g. FAITH

Faith is one of the most important concepts in the New Testament. The word is used 98 times in John's Gospel alone. It is insisted on as essential to the Christian life from beginning to end: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...for in the gospel a righteousness of God is revealed that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:16-17). Important as faith is, most people do not really understand it.

- * Some think faith is a mystical quality that certain people are endowed with: "I wish I had your faith!"
- * Some think of faith as a belief in God which you either have or don't have: "Oh, I have faith!"
- * Some think faith is a head belief, independent of their moral conduct. "I believe in God!" or "I believe that Jesus died and rose again!"
- * Some think faith is something they did when they prayed a prayer, repeated a doctrinal statement, or joined a church.

True faith is the appropriate response of a person to God's revelation of love and grace (in the Bible, and supremely in Christ). All the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 acted in a "faith-response" to what God told them. Their faith in God's Word was to them "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

*** Faith involves knowledge**

You cannot believe what you have never heard or cannot understand. "How can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14).

In the parable of the sower, the seed that fell in the good soil met with the right kind of response. The various soils represent people's hearts. The good soil, Jesus said, represents those "with a noble and good heart, who hear the word and retain it" (Matthew 13:23; Luke 8:15).

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17)

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17)

“Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame” (Romans 10:11).

“It is faith alone that justifies, but the faith that justifies can never be alone” (Calvin).

* Faith involves mental assent

If we read and understand the Bible, it will lead us to Jesus Christ who is the object of faith. Faith can be progressive - gradually developing over a period of time until it focuses completely on Christ.

Jesus said: “The work of God is this, to believe in the One He has sent” (John 6:29).

Faith is more than believing that Jesus died for our sins. It is faith “in the Name” of the Son of God (John 3:18; 1 John 5:13). “The Name” represents all that Christ is revealed to be: (who He is, and what He has done). We must believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son (He is God), that He died for our sins, and that, risen from the dead, He alone is able to save all who trust in Him.

* Faith involves commitment

The Greek word for faith used by the New Testament writers is found in other Greek literature of the time. It often conveyed the sense of entrusting something valuable into the hands of another (eg. a letter into the hands of a courier).

This aspect of faith is crucial. If I am dying of a disease and a physician is available to cure me, mere head knowledge will never save my life. I can know of him and even believe in his ability to cure me, but only when I commit myself to his care, trusting him to heal me, will I be saved from death.

Paul said: “I know whom I have believed and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

Forsaking

All

I

Trust

Him

The commitment aspect of faith leads to a life of obedience. The Bible clearly shows that genuine faith is shown by obedience: “The obedience of faith...” (Romans 1:5). “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:17).

The invisible quality of faith can be seen by God, but it is hidden from our eyes. The only way we can tell a person has faith is by the fruit that it produces. Obedience does not save (that would be salvation by works), but it must accompany genuine faith.

Thinking it Through _____ 4

1. Use the “Personal Contact Questionnaire” this week (at the back of this book).

2. Describe in your own words (in a way that unchurched people could understand) the following aspects of the gospel:

1. Being “born again”

2. The sinful nature

3. Redemption

4. The blood of Christ

5. Saving faith

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

John 3:36

Revelation 20:14-15

2. Key Question No.4

3. Answer Test Question

Why is it important to know the character (attributes) of God when sharing the gospel?

4. Did you have an opportunity of witness this week?

Briefly explain what happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

THE LIGHT WE CARRY (Part 2)

2. KNOWING WHAT OUR MESSAGE MEANS

An explanation of gospel verses

1. ARE THEY INTERESTED?

a. Become a new person

2 Corinthians 5:17

Paul has just been talking about the Christian's new attitude towards others (v.16). This radical change of thinking, says Paul, is evidence of the transformation which occurs inside anyone who is "in Christ". It is not a clean-up of the old life, but the implanting of a totally new creation. The word "new" in the Greek means "new in nature" (different rather than recent).

b. Receive a new life

John 10:10b

In this verse Jesus is making a comparison between Himself and other religious 'shepherds'. Their only concern was themselves, not the sheep. Jesus came to give life; to ennoble and enrich life. Jesus did not please Himself, but came to be the Good Shepherd (good in the sense of true) who willingly laid down His life for the sheep.

The word "full" has the meaning of "super-abundance". It portrays a life that is so full that it overflows; a life that cannot be contained or stagnated.

2. DO THEY SEE THEIR NEED?

a. Broken relationship - the cause

Romans 3:23

We tend to make distinctions between good and bad people. Paul makes no such distinctions. Hitler's sins may differ greatly from those of a kindly neighbour, but both are just as guilty of breaking God's law. God makes no distinction when condemning all mankind, but neither does He in His offer of pardon (Romans 10:12-13; 11:32).

The words "fall short" mean to fall behind in a race, with no hope of winning the prize or "glory". There is no hope of any person winning the glory of heaven. We have all lost the race of life!

Isaiah 59:2

The context of this verse is important. Israel was defeated and made captive by an enemy superpower. The Israelites had prayed and fasted (Isa.58:2-3), but God had not answered them. God knew that they were only sorry for the consequences of their sins.

In chapter 59:1 Isaiah declares that God's lack of response to their prayers was not due to lack of power ("Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save"); nor was it due to lack of concern ("nor His ear too dull to hear"). The reason for their predicament was that their sins had produced a separation between them and God. God could not save them, no matter how much they prayed. The relationship between Israel and God was broken.

b. Broken relationship - the consequences

Romans 6:23

The idea behind wages is not so much penalty, as the inevitable consequences of an action. A man who works for a boss expects to receive a wage. It is his due; he deserves it. In the same way sin pays wages. Death is deserved by a sinner - it is his due, and is paid out whether the sinner wants it or not.

Note that the verse does **not** go on to say: "but the wages of righteousness is eternal life..." The contrast is intended. We have earned death, but we cannot earn life! God freely gives eternal life to all who come "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Hebrews 9:27

The word "destined" or "appointed" means it is our lot. Death and judgement are unavoidable - they are "laid up in store for us in the future". This verse has a similar meaning to Romans 6:23 - "the wages of sin is death." We cannot escape judgement any more than death. The reality of death, proves that judgement also is a reality.

5

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come"
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10b)

"There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
(Romans 3:23)

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you"
(Isaiah 59:2)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"
(Romans 6:23)

"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement"
(Hebrews 9:27)

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him” (John 3:36)

“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14-15)

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy” (Titus 3:5)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon” (Isaiah 55:7)

“I preached that they should repent and turn to God, and prove their repentance by their deeds” (Acts 26:20b).

c. Broken relationship - continues forever

John 3:36

The coming of the Lord Jesus as the full revelation of God (verse 19) forces all people to respond to Him in one of two ways. The person who believes has (now as a present possession) the gift of eternal life. But the non-believer remains an object of God’s displeasure. Far from seeing life, they will continue to experience God’s wrath forever. The word “remains” or “abides” means that the wrath of God will not fade away.

The verb “reject” indicates a continuing attitude of rejection, implying that those who once rejected but who repent and believe are able to be saved from the wrath of God.

Revelation 20:14-15

On the day of judgement, the Judge who sits on the throne is Jesus Christ (John 5:22). The records of each person’s deeds will correspond with their own memories: “while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse them ... on that day when ... God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (Romans 2:15 - 16).

Another book is mentioned - the book of life. Ancient cities used to have roll-books, similar to our electoral rolls today, in which were written the names of each citizen. The roll book of heaven is called the “Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27). Only those who have received eternal life through faith in the Lamb of God (Jesus) are citizens of heaven.

Although death and Hades (the dwelling place of the dead) will be forever destroyed, another death will simultaneously commence - a death from which no one can be saved. It will be a final and eternal separation from God - “the second death”. The lake of fire (another name for the second death) is a place of eternal torment (v.10).

3. DO THEY UNDERSTAND HOW?

a. We cannot save ourselves

Titus 3:5

Our salvation does not “spring out of our deeds done in righteousness” (the meaning of the Greek). The only righteousness which God can accept is His own. As we are not righteous, our deeds are unacceptable. God’s mercy implies our state of total helplessness. When we were unable to save ourselves, “Christ died for the ungodly.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

God in grace has provided salvation. There is no need to contribute anything towards it. To make salvation in any sense a reward given in return for good works would give ground for proud boasting.

The verb “have been saved” is in the perfect tense and speaks of a saved state already accomplished for each of us. Our salvation, though not complete in time, is complete in the mind of God. Those whom He calls and justifies, He also glorifies (Romans 8:30)!

“By grace” is clearly contrasted with “by works ...”. Both grace and works are mutually exclusive. You cannot go east and west at the same time any more than you can be saved by both grace and works (Romans 11:6).

The gift of God is not faith, but salvation. The dominant subject of the two verses is salvation. “This (salvation) is not your own doing”, Paul says, “it (salvation) is a gift of God.”

b. We must turn back

Isaiah 55:7

Before God will pardon sinners there must be a willingness to forsake their sin and turn to the Lord. God’s call is to abandon evil, both in outward life (“let the wicked forsake his way”) and also the inner direction and attitudes of the heart (“and the evil man his thoughts”). “The Lord knows the thoughts of men” (Psalm 94:11).

Repentance is not just negative (turning from). The positive side of repentance is: “Let him turn to the Lord”.

Acts 26:20b

Repentance involves a recognition that the kind of life we have been living is not right, and a whole change of direction is needed.

Turning to God means that indifference and rebellion must be replaced by a willingness to listen and obey the Lord. The Lord must now influence our decision-making and behaviour. We can easily fool ourselves that we have changed, but our actions will demonstrate the reality of genuine repentance.

c. We must trust Christ to save us.

I. HE IS GOD AND MAN

John 1:1,14

Only God existed before the beginning. The moment God first created was the moment that time began. The Word already existed before the beginning. The imperfect tense of the verb "was" means: "In the beginning already was (continually was) the Word". Also, the essential nature of the Word is nothing less than God - "The Word was God".

In verse 14 God reveals that the Word remained God yet became flesh. God cannot cease to be God! But He permanently became a human. He will always be a man.

These truths enable us to interpret the problem passages in John's Gospel which are used by Jehovah's Witnesses and others to refute the deity of Christ. Because He became flesh, He voluntarily chose to live in continual dependence upon the Father, and could only do and say what the Father initiated. Even in His glorified state in the future, Jesus will still "be subjected to Him" (1 Corinthians 15:28). The voluntary submission of Jesus to His Father does not mean He is less than His Father in nature. Wives are equal with their husbands in nature and worth, though they are subject to them.

Although the Word became flesh, He nevertheless displayed a glory of which the people of that day were witnesses; the moral glory and excellence of Jesus Christ. He was "full of grace and truth". This glory is the kind which clearly shows Him to be the "one and only (unique) Son of the Father".

1 Timothy 2:5

God is: "not only the God of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also, since God is one" (Romans 3:29). If, as some falsely claim, there really does exist a variety of gods and a number of saviours (mediators), there would never be found any ground for uniting all mankind. But all humans were made by the one God and all must come back to the one God by means of the mediator He has provided, Christ Jesus.

When two hostile parties are in conflict, a mediator is sometimes brought in to reconcile them. The uniqueness of Christ is seen in that He alone can represent God, because He is God; and He can also represent man because He is man! Only He can bring man and God together because He "gave Himself a ransom for all men" (verse 6).

II. HE DIED FOR OUR SINS

Romans 5:8

In verses 6 to 10 Paul shows that we are powerless to save ourselves. We are "ungodly" (without love for, or likeness to God), "sinners", (transgressors of God's law), and "enemies" (whose whole nature is hostile to God).

It is a rare thing for someone to die for another. When it does happen, it is done for someone regarded as worthy of such a sacrifice (v.7). God's "own love" is amazingly different. He could find nothing in us worthy of dying for, because we were His enemies. But His love for us is shown (proven, demonstrated), in that Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18

* **Christ's death was an atoning sacrifice** (Christ died as a sin offering).

The word translated "for sins" in our Bible is the same one used for "sin offering" in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Christ willingly gave Himself to God on our behalf.

* **Christ's death was a substitutionary sacrifice** (The righteous for the unrighteous) We are the unrighteous ones, so we deserve to die. He is the righteous one and therefore did not deserve death. The only way our sin could be paid for, was for Christ to receive the wages of sin (death) for us.

* **Christ's death was complete** (He died once for all)

His sacrifice was once for all time, and once for all sinners. His words "It is finished" spoken from the cross literally mean "the transaction is complete, payment has been made in full".

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only (Son) who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14)

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5)

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18)

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

“If you confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”(Romans 10:9)

“For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living”
(Romans 14:9)

* ***Christ's death was reconciliatory*** (To bring you to God)

Forgiveness and cleansing are not ends in themselves. God's ultimate purpose in the death of His Son is to bring people and Himself together again. The word “bring” was used in New Testament times of special officials whose responsibility was to introduce specially approved people to a king. Christ “brings” to God all who trust in Him.

III. HE ROSE AGAIN

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

The Christian gospel is based upon historical facts. Paul and the other apostles passed on the eyewitness reports of the events that took place. They presented them as truths to be believed in. Paul is writing here about the gospel (v.2). When reduced to its essential elements, the gospel is: Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the third day - all in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. This summary statement of the gospel is of “first importance”, says Paul. It is the central core of the message he preached.

The Old Testament Scriptures teach both the death and the resurrection of Christ (Isaiah 53:5,6; Psalm 22; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-12).

Old Testament references show that:

- * Christ's death and resurrection was not an afterthought of God, but, part of His “set purpose and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23);
- * These facts are revealed truths which must be accepted by faith. To reject them is to reject the Word of God, both Old and New Testament;
- * No one could manufacture the events to fit ancient prophecies. Jesus alone is the fulfilment of all the prophecies about 'the Christ'.

Christ's burial was important as it is proof of both the validity of His death (He didn't just swoon), and the reality of His resurrection (an empty tomb)! Christ's resurrection is the main theme of all the gospel messages recorded in the Acts. The perfect tense (v. 4) literally means: “He has been raised and continues raised for ever”.

The witness of Old Testament Scripture to the resurrection of Christ is supported by a list of personal witnesses in verses 5-8, including Paul himself.

4. ARE THEY WILLING?

a. Do you believe Jesus is Lord (God) and risen?

Romans 10:9

The word “confess” literally means “to agree with”, and relates to a belief which others hold. Here it means to agree with the teaching of the early Church (which the Apostles taught). The clear confession of the Church was “Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:11). This belief was not arrived at by natural means (Matthew 16:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3). It meant that Jesus of Nazareth, the Galilean carpenter, was none other than God in the flesh.

“And believe in your heart that God has raised Him...” Although the cross of Christ is not mentioned here, it is certainly implicit in the verse. The emphasis on resurrection is in keeping with the main thrust of the New Testament. This verse should be seen as implying the cross of Christ, giving “the part in place of the whole”. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the great proof that He is who He claims to be, and will do what He promises to do (Romans 1:4; Hebrews 7:25).

Belief in the resurrection of Christ, and a confession (issuing from belief) that Jesus is Lord (God), are absolute imperatives if we are to be saved.

b. Are you willing to let Christ be your Master?

Romans 14:9

In the context of the passage Paul is attacking the way some Christians “lord it” over others by a critical and judgemental spirit. Paul is saying in effect “We are not lords over one another - for all of us are to be subject to the one Lord (Jesus Christ)”. He had just shown in verse 8, that we are owned by the Lord.

Then in verse 9 he goes on to explain that it was for the very purpose of securing lordship over His people that He died and rose again. His victory through His death and resurrection gives Him the indisputable right to rule over us as Lord. If we, as God's creatures, must submit to Him as our Creator, how much more should we submit to Him who is also our loving Saviour! He has been given absolute right over His people whether they be dead or living.

Nothing can remove us from the sphere of His rule, not even death. He is Lord, and thus a person who receives Him is indwelt by a new Master.

NOTE: We are saved by grace alone. Submission to the Lordship of Christ must be held in balance with His grace. We cannot earn salvation by submission to His Lordship, nor can we say a person is not saved where there is no evidence of that submission. No Christian can say he has always fully submitted to His Lordship, especially in the early part of the Christian life! The key is "willingness". In a similar way to repentance, we must be **willing** to submit to Christ as Lord.

c. What must they do?

I. BELIEVE IN HIS NAME

John 1:12

Jesus Christ was unrecognized by the world He made (v.10), and unwelcomed by those who were His own people (v.11). The thought in these verses can be illustrated by the reaction of musicians if Beethoven were to come back to life and perform in public. The majority of people may not recognize him (or his music), and the musicians who have studied his works may not receive him (when, of all people, they are the ones who should)! Only a small group may receive him for who he is. Likewise, when Christ came into the world He was not recognized or received for who He was.

To receive Christ for who He is (to "believe on His Name") is to believe:

His Person - He is God, the Son;

His mission - He is Saviour through His death and resurrection.

He must be personally trusted ("received" - like you would take a gift). He must be trusted to do what He claims to be able to do - He "gives the right to become children of God."

II. RECEIVE BY PRAYER

Romans 10:13

This verse which Paul quotes from the Old Testament (and Peter also in Acts 2:21) shows how we actually receive Christ as our Lord and Saviour. It teaches us to "appeal" to Him - to cry out and pray for Him to save us.

In the Old Testament the expression "call on the Name of the Lord" is often used by someone in special need - "In my distress I called upon the Lord..." (Psalm 18:6). "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15).

On the subject of salvation, Isaiah writes from God, "before they call, I will answer" (Isaiah 65:24). God says through Jeremiah, "call unto Me and I will answer you" (Jeremiah 33:3). To ask the Lord to save us is a prayer He has promised to answer (John 6:37; Luke 11:13). The Name we are to call upon is the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Peter illustrates calling on the Name of the Lord when he sank in the water and cried out to Jesus: "Lord, save me".

5. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THEY REFUSE?

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Jesus Christ the Saviour is also Jesus Christ the Judge. Those to be punished, though condemned by their wicked deeds, are identified in these verses as people who wilfully refuse to know God, and who refuse to accept God's free offer of pardon and grace.

The "everlasting destruction" could be translated "endless ruin". It is not annihilation. They will continue to exist, but in a ruined state (like a toy which is thrown on the trash heap - it exists, but no longer fulfils the purpose for which it was made).

To be "shut out of the presence of the Lord" is to suffer the eternal and irreversible consequences of sin. This time it will not be banishment from a paradise garden on earth as Adam and Eve were. It is to be banishment forever to a place where there is no light, no joy, no life and no peace.

The gospel is God's last word to man, and our response to the gospel seals our eternal destiny. It is final.

"To all who received Him to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)

"And everyone who calls upon the Name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13)

"He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

Thinking it Through _____ 5

1. Read John 3:1-16

a. What kind of person does Nicodemus portray?

An atheist

A person who resists the truth

A wicked sinner

An upright religious person

A good-living neighbour

A self-righteous person

A religious hypocrite

b. Why was it to this type of person that Jesus spoke about the need for re-birth?

c. What aspect of new birth was Jesus illustrating when He spoke of the wind in verse 8?

d. How would you paraphrase (expand) verse 6?

2. Is this statement correct - "If there was no God, there would be no such thing as sin"?

Yes/No

Give reasons for your answer:

3. Give three reasons why you believe (or don't believe) in Hell.

4. Which of the following are true of repentance:

- a. A feeling of sorrow for sin
- b. A willingness to turn from wrong ways
- c. Praying for God to make me a better person
- d. A change of beliefs
- e. Good works which accompany salvation
- f. A “new birth” experience
- g. (a), (b) and (d) above.

5. Why is it important to believe who Jesus is?

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

Titus 3:5

Ephesians 2:8-9

2. Key Question No.5

3. Answer Test Question

What are the five main headings of the gospel outline?

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

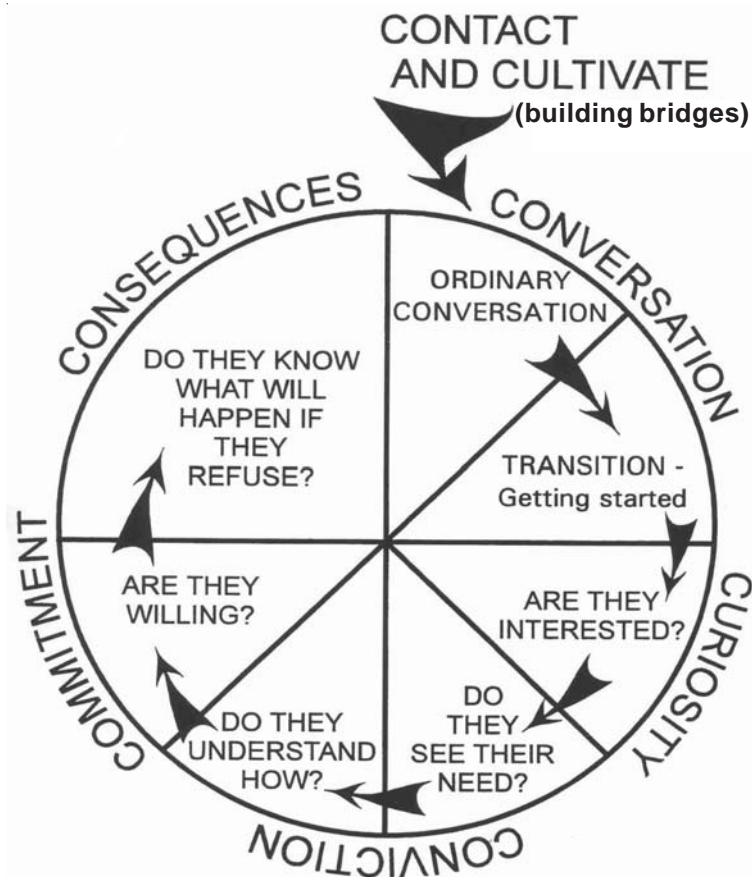
What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH

(The process of leading a person to Christ)

There is a process involved in leading a person to faith in Christ. Having established a relationship with someone, and having come to the place where you are wanting to share the gospel, the following diagram illustrates a normal progression from ordinary conversation to their commitment of faith. This whole process seldom occurs in one event, as the person may not be ready to make a commitment on the first occasion.



1. CONVERSATION

If we have to communicate the gospel by word of mouth, we must develop the art of being good conversationalists. We can do this by consciously taking every opportunity to talk with people. For those who have difficulty conversing, a simple formula can be helpful:

*** Ask**

Ask a question that will prompt the person to talk about a subject. (eg. You could ask: "What did you do on the weekend?")

*** Listen.**

Try to find something in the reply that you can pick up on, and comment on. (eg. The person could answer: "Oh, nothing much, I did a bit of gardening and took the kids to the pictures")

*** Comment**

Comment on the subject which you have picked up on (eg. "It must have been hot work out in the garden! I washed the car, and that was enough for me!")

*** Ask another question**

Ask another question immediately following on the comment just made. (eg. "You must like gardening?")

By following a simple sequence of question, listen, comment and question, you can develop the art of conversation. Never be afraid to talk about things they are interested in, as most people are more than happy to tell others their experiences and thoughts.

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CONVERSATION:

"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

TRANSITION:

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

CURIOSITY:

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

CONVICTION (NEED):

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband."

CONVICTION (TRUTH):

Jesus declared, "...You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."

COMMITMENT:

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am He."

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (Excerpts from John 4:7-39)

a. Ordinary Conversation

Take every opportunity to talk to people you know or meet. Talk about anything and everything. The more you talk, the more likely you will touch on a subject that can be used to introduce spiritual things.

SURVEY THE MOUNTAIN

As you converse with people, try to detect which approach would be the easiest means to share the gospel. Witnessing is like climbing a mountain. We must first survey the whole mountain to see which slope will be the easiest to scale. In other words, find out where they are itching before you begin to scratch. This can take place in ordinary conversations which are non-threatening and natural.

SOME SLOPES TO CLIMB!

- * Fear of the future - economic recession, nuclear war, etc.
- * Sense of lack - something is missing, futile pursuit of peace and satisfaction.
- * Restlessness and anxiety - problems of life and other pressures.
- * Sense of guilt or inner conflict.
- * Intellectual perplexity - "What is life all about?" "Who am I?"
- * Death, sorrow, suffering, illness.
- * Loneliness or boredom.
- * Hunger for truth.
- * Loss of trust in governments, financial institutions, or people in general.
- * Purposeless living - no meaning to life.

Make sure you have earned the right to speak about Christ. The time this takes will differ considerably, depending on the situation (e.g. a 15 minute encounter with a fellow bus passenger compared to a ten year old relationship with your next-door neighbour). Once you feel confident you can share your faith, move your conversation towards an area which could possibly provide an easy transition into talking about spiritual things. Always be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting.

b. Transition

This is the art of moving the conversation from everyday topics to talking about spiritual things. We are constantly making transitions in ordinary conversations, but in witnessing it means to change the subject to spiritual things without too much of a jolt (like a smooth gear-change when driving a car).

HOW TO TRANSITION:

1. Begin to move the conversation towards a desired transition point.

Introduce a suitable topic to the conversation (eg. death, problems in the world). There is a difference between moving the conversation and manipulating. Never use underhanded or deceitful methods when sharing the gospel. Always be open and honest. However, be sensitive to the taboo many people have about talking "religion". The steps which move a conversation toward a transition should flow naturally.

2. Look for a connective point

Be ready at any point to make a connection between a point in the conversation and a spiritual issue.

3. Link the connective point to a new direction in the conversation

Make references to the conversational point (to show you are listening and that the new subject being introduced is relevant), before turning the conversation to spiritual things. (e.g. "I used to believe that at one time, but...". "I agree the future seems uncertain, however...").

RESPONSES TO YOUR TRANSITION:

Reactions you may encounter after you have made the transition could be:

*** Warm interest.**

This type of person has been prepared by the Holy Spirit and is ready to talk about spiritual matters, and may even receive the gospel message gladly.

RESPONSE:

Gently continue with the conversation moving to a more personal approach. Find out their thoughts about Jesus Christ (or eternal life, getting right with God, going to heaven, etc...)

"Were you in the action during the last war?" ...

"Did you have any near misses?" ...

"Tell us about it!" ...

"Did you have any of your close mates killed?" ...

"I suppose there were times you really wondered about what happens after death?" ...

***Cautious interest**

They are positive in their response, but indicate by their manner or words that all is not plain sailing yet.

RESPONSE:

As you share with this type of person, try to discover where their roadblock is. It is sure to come out at some stage, but try to identify it early. It may simply be that they don't know you well enough to have confidence in you. There is a possibility they could also suspect that you are trying to recruit them into your church.

*** A facade of disinterest or opposition**

They show evidence that, despite their negative response, they are interested. These ones may put up normal objections, but show a real appetite for the answers you give. The facade may be due to a friend who is nearby. Or they may be in the habit of responding negatively.

RESPONSE:

Continue sharing carefully and try to get together at another time if you cannot go very far on the first occasion. Give a tract or gospel to read.

*** Those who are not interested at all (as far as we can judge)**

When people reject the truth, they have to have a reason for doing so. Therefore they fall into a variety of categories:-

A. The Rationalist - someone who has all the arguments and, even when you show good reason for a change of mind, is determined not to believe.

RESPONSE:

Try to motivate rationalists to read a Gospel (or the New Testament) for themselves, and to prove to their own satisfaction that the resurrection of Christ is not true.

B. The Uneasy - someone who is emotionally upset, normally shown by nervous gestures, facial expressions or language. To persevere may do more harm than good.

RESPONSE:

Try to find out why talking about spiritual things upsets him. Say "I can see that this subject makes you uneasy - I am sorry if I upset you". Try to get a response - "May I ask why you feel uneasy about these things?" If further talk seems futile, try to develop a friendship by spending time together without talking about spiritual things.

C. The Lame Excuses - As someone has said, "A lame excuse is a reason stuffed with a lie". Being too busy, too old, too young, have my own religion, not the religious sort, etc. They imply that they would be interested if it were not for this or that "reason".

RESPONSE:

Try to work around the excuse and keep on with the conversation about spiritual things. This will test the depth of interest. If you are able to do so without causing offence, face them up to their lack of interest being the reason for not wanting to talk, not the excuse they have given.

D. The Change of Subject - Some people instinctively change the subject the moment they get talking about spiritual things.

RESPONSE:

Try to move the conversation back into the spiritual area again, and if they do the same thing, they are not ready to hear. Pray for them.

E. The Chip on the Shoulder - Some blame parents, or church leaders or Christians in general for past failures or injustices. They criticise the hypocrisy of the Church. In so doing they are shifting the focus from themselves and putting it on someone else, and at the same time they try to justify their own lack of faith or devotion to God.

RESPONSE:

Ask them if they know any people who are real Christians. Then put them in the shoes of a church leader: "If the worst person in your district came to your church, would you tell him that he's not good enough to attend?" Go on to explain that church is like a hospital - it is a place where people go when they realise they need help. People, even Christians, can let you down, but Christ will never do so. Someone has called the church "Sinner's Anonymous"!

F. The Honest - Some will honestly admit that they are not interested because they think the Christian life is too demanding, or they may lose friendships or job promotion, etc.

RESPONSE:

Try to reason with them, (e.g. the brevity of life, and the Bible's teaching about the after-life Mark 8:36).

With all these, and with others who show disinterest or antagonism; be courteous, and respect their point of view.

1. Encourage them to be honest. People sometimes are not aware of their illogical and untruthful reasoning.
2. Try to discover why they have become the way they are.
3. Try to find an underlying need that could be a door to their hearing the gospel.
4. Above all try to persevere in conversation with them, but always leave them with the door open for further conversation at a later date.

REMEMBER - pressure is not pressure until they feel it. Go as far as you can with them, but be sensitive.

Thinking it Through _____ 6

A. Choose one of the following situations and write out the way you would try to move the conversation to talk about Christ. Get in touch with your prayer partner and prepare to act it out in a role-play. (Use a separate piece of paper for writing)

1. You pick up a couple of hitchhikers with the Canadian flag on their packs.
2. You have your neighbours over for morning coffee and they start criticising the government for their poor financial policy.
3. You are flying only a short distance, and you have only an hour to talk with the person next to you who is reading Watchtower magazine.
4. You are driving in heavy traffic and you pull over to help a woman fix a flat tyre.
5. Your "church-going" aunt invites you to dinner.
6. You're waiting at a bus stop and an 80 year old man is standing beside you.
7. You bump into an old school friend at the shopping mall.
8. One of your work colleague constantly uses the Lord's Name in vain.
9. Your non-Christian brother who, in the past, always avoided talking to you on anything remotely religious, has suddenly begun to show interest.
10. You stop at your usual petrol station and the attendant who normally serves you looks downcast. You find out she has just learned that she has to have tests for cancer.

B. How did Jesus speak with people?

Look up the following narratives from the gospels and write down at least one notable characteristic of the way Jesus conversed with people. Look for the way He led them to the truth or challenged their beliefs and practices.

1. John 4:4-26

2. Mark 10:17-23

3. John 8:1-11

4. John 3:1-7

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

Isaiah 55:7

Acts 26:20b

2. Key Question No.6

3. Answer Test Question

Name three conversational topics which can easily lead to a transition.

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH (Part 2)

2. CONVICTION

Part of the process of becoming a Christian is the effect of the truth on the minds of the unbelievers. Before anyone can trust Christ as Saviour, they must become convinced of the truth and of their need of Christ. Our responsibility is to present the truth in such a way that they will believe it. In Acts 14:1 Paul and Barnabas "**So spoke** that a great company believed."

a. Convinced of their Need

People are not interested in trusting Christ personally until they experience their need of a Saviour. Sales people are taught: "People don't buy the product; they buy how they imagine owning the product will make them feel." In other words, people buy the fulfilment of a need which they believe the product will supply. We are not selling, but the principle remains true.

All people need Christ, but often they do not feel that need. In their eyes He is not relevant to their lives. They may have very real needs which they are trying to satisfy, but do not see Christ as the answer to those needs. Our task is to show that the Lord Jesus is relevant, without compromising God's message. Though we may relate Christ to aspects of daily living, our primary responsibility is to present the seriousness of sin and the gospel of God's grace. The power of the cross saves people, not a Jesus who will solve all their problems! We must also be careful not to over-promise for God.

Jesus Christ is relevant to people's needs today:

- * Children need security and something to believe in.
- * Teens need security, acceptance, hope for the future and an ideal (something worth living for).
- * Over thirties need security, practical solutions to life's complex problems, hope for the future and fulfilment.
- * Older people need security, a sense of being needed and hope for the future.
- * Everyone needs love, acceptance and security.

* Security

Most people are aware how fragile life is. There are no guarantees of avoiding bad health, financial loss, war, redundancy, or loss of loved ones and friends. These are areas where people have little or no control. Yet most want to be in control!

The message of God's Word to insecure people is that God **is** in complete control. The smallest and the greatest concerns of our lives concern Him also. The only way to live securely is to let Him control us! As we yield to His rule in our lives, He can be trusted to control all circumstances, to only allow those things which He plans for our ultimate good (Romans 8:28, Psalm 34:4-10, Matthew 10:29-31).

* Fulfilment

There are many ways people try to find fulfilment, but they all fail. Money and possessions, power, entertainment, education, career, family and home all go a distance towards giving fulfilment, but they cannot satisfy the deep inner desire of the human spirit.

We are made up of body, soul and spirit.

- * Some try to satisfy the bodily desires (eg. food, alcohol and sex).
- * Others try to satisfy the soulish desires (eg. intellect, music, social acceptance and close relationships.)
- * Then there are those who also try to satisfy the spiritual desires (eg. religion, meditation and prayer).

Jesus told the Samaritan woman (John 4) that her thirst would only find a temporary fulfilment in worldly things ("If you drink of this water you will thirst again"). The only answer is the Living Water (Jesus Christ) who will satisfy the deepest and most fundamental need. This does not mean that Christians cease to have normal human desires. Rather, they will find an underlying fulfilment in Christ that will lead to inner contentment and peace.

7

Christians have a message that answers the great basic needs of the human race.

* Truth

People today are wanting to find the truth. They don't want a religious tradition or dogma. They want to know what to believe, and why. A recent survey of Americans who had converted to Islam from being nominal Christian or non-religious, gave some surprising reasons why they became Muslims.

They said:

Islam is **Simple** (Christianity is not as easily understood by them).

Islam is **Practical** (The Islamic laws do not complicate living).

Islam is **Rational** (The Islamic doctrines seem to be credible).

To these we would add the probing question: Is it True? But even if we have all the evidence that our message is true, we must keep it simple, practical (life-related) and credible.

The Christian message is not a myth, a legend or a system of belief. God revealed His Word in an indisputable, unchangeable way. He used historical events which cannot be erased or ignored. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives His claims solid grounds for credibility. All the truths of the Bible, though profoundly deep, can be understood by a child. The message we have is not the problem! We have to present Christ simply.

* Freedom

Another need people experience is being bound by sinful desires or habits. Some have set standards of behaviour for themselves and find they do not have the power to attain them. A man can be a successful company executive and yet be a failure in his own home. A woman can maintain her beauty and attractiveness, yet be incapable of keeping her heart from envy, greed, resentment and hatred.

The message of Jesus Christ is a powerful answer to mankind's quest for freedom. He alone has lived a life of perfect freedom, and He offers that same life to all who will come to Him. "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

* Love

One of mankind's greatest desires is to be loved - genuinely loved. God loves everyone with an unconditional, impartial and never-failing love. This love may seem unbelievable to an unbeliever, unless they first see it being lived out in the lives of Christians. Practical love is to treat a person as more important than yourself. The love we have for one another (in the church and the home), and the love that we have for our neighbours, will make our message of God's love more credible.

b. Convinced of the truth of the Gospel

If someone should say to you "Tell me in one sentence why I should become a Christian", your reply could be "Because it is the truth". We must present the gospel in such a way that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, people will become convinced that it is the truth.

How to bring conviction:

I. USE GOD'S WORD

The majority of people have never seriously read the Bible.

1. For some, the authority of the Bible will go unquestioned, leaving you an open hand to show from the Scriptures the message of salvation.

2. For others, the authority of the Bible will be accepted, but your interpretation of certain passages will be questioned. This is normally due to others teaching (a minister, priest or cult member). With these people, you would be wise to:

* Ask them if they had been taught their interpretation, or had arrived at it themselves.

* Work on the principle "the Bible interprets itself". Never dispute another's interpretation by merely saying "That is wrong". It may be helpful to point them to Acts 17:11 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21, explaining that when we hold an interpretation of a Bible verse that is not supported by other Bible passages, we must be willing to change our view to line up with the Word of God. Show other passages where the Bible clearly cuts across their interpretation. Let them argue with the Word of God, not you!

Basic rules of interpretation are:

- a. The passage must be understood in the context of the chapter and book in which it is written.
- b. The interpretation of the passage must not cut across teaching elsewhere in God's Word.

Having convinced them of their need of Jesus Christ, we can lead them to become convinced of the truth of the gospel.

The Word of God is our sole authority when we lead a person through the gospel.

- c. The unclear passages must be interpreted in the light of the clear passages of the Bible.
- d. The passage should not be spiritualised unless the literal sense makes no sense.

3. For some others, the authority of the Bible is not accepted. To them you must produce convincing proof that the Bible is the Word of God.

a) The historical accuracy of the Bible

Historical accuracy is important because the truth of God was revealed in historical events (eg. the life, miracles and resurrection of the Lord Jesus). You cannot remove an historical event which has been recorded by eyewitnesses. It remains a certainty forever.

b) The unity of the Bible.

Over 40 authors wrote 66 books over a period of about 1500 years, yet there is a unique harmony of mind and purpose.

c) The prophetic nature of the Bible.

The supernatural fingerprint of prophecy is indisputable proof of the Divine origin of the biblical writings. Bible prophecies are not vague or easily predictable. Some prophets such as Jeremiah preached an unpopular message in their day. Some at first did not accept them as God's messengers. But later as their prophecies were perfectly fulfilled, they were recognized as being true prophets of the Lord.

2. USE QUESTIONS

The Lord Jesus was always asking questions. He knew every thought in their minds, but used questions to bring them to see the truth for themselves. We do not know people's minds as Jesus did, so we are even more dependant on the use of questions.

Without questions you cannot be sure whether people are following your train of thought. Even nods and verbal acknowledgements can deceive you. Some may be too embarrassed or too proud to admit they have not understood what you have said.

Questions are used to:

1. Engage the mind

Jesus forced the Pharisees to think by asking. "David calls Him (Christ) 'Lord'; how can He be his son?" (Luke 20:44). His question engaged their minds. Well-worded questions help people to rethink their beliefs and apply their minds to the truths you are sharing.

2. Awaken the heart

When Jesus said, "Who do the crowds say that I am?", and then, "Who do you say that I am?", He was leading the disciples to see for themselves the truth concerning Himself. Afterwards He said, "This was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven" (Matt.16:18). On another occasion Jesus asked, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" As a result Peter verbalised an inner belief that Jesus alone had the words of eternal life.

3. Activate the conscience

In John 7:19 Jesus asks those who opposed Him, "Why are you trying to kill Me?" Although they had the intent in their hearts to put Him to death, this question was an instrument to face them up with the evil of their designs.

4. Analyse the depth of interest

"Do you want to get well?" asked Jesus of the man who had been an invalid for 38 years. Jesus drew a response from the man that led to faith and then salvation for the man.

By use of tactful questioning, we can discern any who may not really be interested but, through courtesy or novel interest, are "going along" with your gospel presentation.

5. Ascertain the willingness to make a commitment

In Mark 5:30 Jesus asked the crowd, "Who touched My clothes?" The woman who had been healed by that touch was forced to make a clear, public confession. (The Lord did not need to be told who had touched Him). Jesus also asked the blind man He had healed, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?". As a result the blind man publicly confessed his belief in Jesus Christ.

When leading a person through gospel verses, questions are extremely important. A preacher dispenses information, but a personal worker leads prospects to see for themselves.

Questions force people to think about an issue, and reveal how much they have understood.

To ask an atheist, "Can you prove there is no God?" could do far more than months of fruitless dialogue.

When you are challenged about why God allows all the suffering in the world, a simple question could awaken the unbeliever's heart to the gospel: "Why did God allow His Son to suffer and die."

Using questions to lead a person through a Bible verse:

When sharing a gospel verse, ask a few simple questions that will require the person to look into the verse for the answers. This will keep their mind in gear with what you are sharing, and force them to think through what the verse is saying.

EXAMPLE:

"Would you read this verse please Mary?" (Romans 6:23)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

"What's your job, Mary?"

"I'm a pharmacist at the hospital."

"Do you receive a wage?"

"Yes I do".

"What do you have to do, in order to get your wages?"

"Work".

"OK. Now let's think through what this verse is saying ... What do we do in order to receive the wages of sin?"

"Sin".

"Have you and I sinned?"

"Yes".

"So we deserve to receive the wages of sin?"

"Uh Huh".

"Right. Now, what wage do we receive when we sin?"

"Death".

"Good. The Bible also says 'The soul that sins it shall die.' Now whose sin is it talking about?"

"Everyone's".

"Yes, and this includes ...???"

"Me".

"Right - and me too! And who receives the wages of sin?"

"Me".

"Right. Now would you please read out the second half of this verse again?"

"...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"How is a gift different from wages?"

"You work for wages, but a gift is given freely".

"Good. What then is God's gift to you?"

"Eternal life".

"And who gives you this gift, according to the verse?"

"I'm not sure".

"It says 'through' someone".

"Through Christ Jesus our Lord".

"Would you like to receive God's gift?"

"Yes, I would".

When using questions in conversation, avoid those which are:-

- * Ambiguous - which are capable of two or more meanings.
- * Derogatory - which insult the intelligence of the other person or "put down" someone.
- * Closed-ended questions - which call for a one-word response (mostly "Yes" or "No").
- * Controversial - opening up conversation which is likely to cause emotions or barriers to arise unnecessarily.
- * Tactless - insensitive to the person's feelings.
- * Irrelevant - unnecessary for the subject being discussed.
- * Cross-examination - where there is a long barrage of questions without any comments or snippets of small talk in between.

Make sure that non-verbal communication (body posture, gestures, facial expressions and pitch of your voice) is maintaining an atmosphere of a quiet chat - not a courtroom!

Thinking it Through _____ 7

1. Interpretation

Imagine going through the gospel with a young man, and finding that his interpretation of 1 Cor. 15:44 is that Jesus was not physically (bodily) raised from the dead, but was raised "spiritually". Write a brief summary of how you would respond.

2. Questions

Show the purpose behind the following questions in the Bible:

- a) Genesis 3:9 "Where are you?"
- b) Job 38:3-5 "Where were you...? Tell me if you understand!"
- c) Malachi 1:8 "...is that not wrong?...would he accept you?"
- d) Luke 24:17 "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"
- e) John 5:6 "Do you want to get well?"

3. Prepare four to six questions relating to each of the following verses, which could be used to help a person understand what the passage is saying.

- a. John 1:12

1

2

3

4

- b. 1 Peter 3:18a

1

2

3

4

(Come to the next class prepared to role-play a witnessing situation where you would lead a person through one of these verses by use of your questions)

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

John 1:1,14.

1 Timothy 2:5.

2. Key Question No.7

3. Answer Test Question

Give two reasons why it is important to use questions when sharing the gospel.

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH (Part 3)

3. COMMUNICATION

Good communication has been described as a meeting of meanings. That is, the meaning which the speaker attaches to his words is the meaning which the hearer receives from them. The speaker may say "Pass me a screwdriver". But different people in the room will think of three quite different things. A marine engineer will think of a tool the size of a carving knife. A watchmaker will think of a very small tool. But a barman will think of a vodka and orange drink!

Ways to improve our communication skills:

1. Choose appropriate words

Christian terminology (jargon) often gets in the way of meaningful communication. There is nothing wrong with jargon itself, as it enables good communication between those who know and use it. Every group has their jargon. Computer buffs talk of icons, ram, rom drives, program configuration and printer defaults. For those who are already involved in computers these terms are understood. However, when communicating the way a computer works to the average person these terms would either have to be explained, or replaced with other words.

Even well known words need to be explained or replaced, as many people have attached incorrect meanings to them. For example, sin often communicates the idea of excessively bad behaviour such as murder or rape. This misconception can result in some people thinking that they are not sinners. People attach incorrect meanings to words such as faith, grace, salvation and "Son of God". Most would have no idea what the words redeemed, justified, spiritual and eternal mean.

2. Illustrate

Use anecdotes and similes to help people picture the truth in their minds. When Jesus was communicating the need for Nicodemus to receive new life from God, He used an earthly illustration (birth) to picture a spiritual truth. Even then it was not easy for Nicodemus to understand (John 3:12). Jesus constantly used parables. If the Master teacher felt it necessary to communicate with verbal pictures, how much more do we!

We can also illustrate by drawing (eg. the "Bridge" illustration) or by dramatizing (using your Bible to represent a wall between man and God).

Key Illustrations:

SIN

Can you imagine the builder's supply merchant sending a beam to a construction site which is one metre short of the distance between the walls. The builder returns the beam and asks for another one at the correct length. The new beam arrives only to be 1 cm. short. Even though one beam was much nearer the required length, both fall short and cannot be used. We all fall short of God's standard. Some more than others. The best living person as well as the worst all fail to meet God's requirements.

SINFUL NATURE

A lemon tree always produces sour fruit. All the sunshine, fertilizer, special care and attention will not cause it to produce sweet fruit. It is the nature of the tree to bear sour fruit. We produce sinful thoughts, words and actions because we have inherited a sinful nature from our parents and forefathers, right back to Adam.

FREEDOM

a) When a train gets off its tracks it may think it is free. No longer restricted by the tracks it can go in any direction it pleases. However, trains were designed to run on tracks, and they will only function properly when restricted by them. We were designed and made to live within the restrictions of God's law. By refusing to obey God we get off track, and the freedom we seek ends up not being freedom at all. Like the train, we need to find the true freedom of operating the way God designed us to operate.

b) An eagle in the garden bar of a pub in Australia was a great attraction. It was chained to a pole in the centre of a grassed area. One day a British tourist saw the huge bird walking around in the circular rut created from years of captivity. The man was filled with pity for the poor bird, and paid a huge sum to purchase its freedom. After the deal was settled, he loosened the fetters from the eagle and placed the free bird on the top of the pole it had been chained to. Everyone stood back expectantly. But the creature hopped down from the pole and once again began walking around the path as it had done for so long!

8

Meaning is given to the message by the hearer, not the speaker.

It is not what we say, but what they hear, that is important.

We are by nature slaves to sin. But the Lord Jesus has paid for our freedom with His blood. He can set us free if we trust in Him. When we are set free, we can still choose to live as we have done in the past; but we need not, for we have been set free to live in victory.

SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF CHRIST

An Indian tribe living in the northern reaches of the American continent, had difficulty finding enough food to last the long cold winters. They would store up meat and vegetables in a store house under the snow and ice. Gradually they would ration out the meagre supply over the winter months. One year they discovered a quantity of meat was regularly being stolen. The chief called the whole tribe together and asked what the penalty should be if anyone was caught. They all agreed that the thief should receive 50 lashes of the whip.

A couple of weeks went by without any meat being taken. Then a person was caught red handed. But it was the chief's elderly mother! The chief was at a loss to know what to do. The law had been set, and he could not show favouritism to his mother. But he knew that she would not be able to survive the 50 lashes. Finally the time came for the punishment to be given. He could find no way to prevent it, so he gave the word for the people to tie her up and punish her. He could not watch, but paced back and forward in his tent. Finally he ran out of the tent calling out "Stop! Stop!" The people thought he was going to be unjust and let his mother off, but he said "untie her and let her go. I will take the punishment for her. Tie me up and give me the 50 lashes as hard as you would have given the worst criminal".

FAITH

Suppose you were dying because of a brain tumour which was inoperable and beyond treatment. Imagine hearing of a physician in Germany who had developed an effective way of treating brain cancer! You would be willing to travel to Germany and allow the doctor to treat you, because he is the only person on earth who can save your life. You would trust in the doctor to do what no-one else is able to do.

Faith involves trusting Christ to do what we cannot do ourselves. Faith is trusting in the Name of Jesus. Just as a sick person would trust in the name of a physician to cure him of cancer, so we trust in the only One qualified to take away our sins.

3. Review

Good communication involves assessing whether the hearer is 'with you'. As you progress through the gospel, check their understanding. When you have covered a major point and are about to move on to a new one, ask a question or make a brief summary statement to keep the person on track.

4. Keep it SIMPLE!

The great task for a witnessing Christian is to make the message as simple as possible. The more complicated we make the gospel, the harder it will be to lead people to Christ.

In order to keep it simple:-

Start at their level of understanding. The only way to do this is first to find out what their level of understanding is! Try to improve their grasp on what they already do know before moving them on to new knowledge.

Maintain a straight line of thought from the beginning of the gospel to the end. Each point flows out of the previous one, and leads on to the next. You are leading the listener along a path, and you must help him to grasp the whole story in order to see the relevance of each new point.

Thinking it Through _____ 8

Come to the next training session prepared to share one section of the gospel outline (e.g. "Do they see their need?") as if you are leading a person to Christ. You and another person will assess one another along the following lines. (*The person assessing you must fill in the critique below*)

Section of the gospel outline shared: _____

The kind of person you are sharing the gospel with: _____

Assessed by: _____ Date: _____

1. STRUCTURE

Was the presentation:

- orderly
- disorderly
- confusing

Was there a progression of thought? **Yes / No**

Were there any reviews to check understanding? **Yes / No**

Were illustrations:

- sufficient
- appropriate (relating to the point)
- too long
- overdone
- just right

Were there sufficient questions? **Yes / No**

Were Bible verses:

- sufficient
- explained clearly
- explained correctly
- applied to hearer
- too many

2. CONTENT

Was the presentation logical? **Yes / No**

Did it build on the person's existing knowledge (or lack of it!) **Yes / No**

Were words used which unchurched people would not understand? **Yes / No**

Were these words critical to their grasping the message? **Yes / No**

Were you convinced by what was said? **Yes / No**

Was the message adapted to the felt-needs of the person? **Yes / No**

Was the language:

- correct (grammar, etc.)
- ambiguous
- lacking vividness
- wordy
- lacking variety
- picturesque

Did the choice of words add to the effect? **Yes / No**

Did you feel that the message had value - that it would cause you to want to act upon it? **Yes / No**

Did it touch your emotions? **Yes / No**

OTHER COMMENTS:

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

Romans 5:8

1 Peter 3:18a

2. Key Question No.8

3. Answer Test Question:

Write out the main headings of the gospel outline (next week you will be required to write out the whole outline)

4. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

5. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS

(Responding to Objections)

At any time during the witnessing process you may encounter roadblocks. However, if a person understands their need and God's solution, yet is still unwilling to make a commitment, there must be a hidden objection.

It may be one of the following types of roadblocks:-

a. Practical Objections

Does Christianity work? The conduct of many so called Christians could produce doubt. Also an awareness of their own weakness may be in their minds.

b. Moral Objections

Why does God allow suffering? What about all those who have never heard of Christ? Will my late father go to hell?

c. Intellectual Objections

How do we know Jesus rose from the dead? Can you prove the Bible is God's Word?

d. Emotional Objections

- * fear of the unknown
- * past religious experience
- * natural inclination to procrastinate
- * confusion due to numbers of different religious groups.



How do we handle objections?

1. Welcome objections

If genuine roadblocks are not brought out into the open, we have no means of dealing with them. Objections indicate the type of support or proof the person needs.

2. Hear them out

As they talk, try and gauge how genuine the objection is. Some people present objections simply to justify their unbelief, while others are sincerely seeking the truth.

Determine what aspect of the gospel needs to be clarified, emphasized or answered. For example, if a person says, "I'm good enough as I am", you will need to clarify what sin is, and how serious it is in the sight of God. Then the truth of salvation by grace will need to be emphasized.

3. Share their feelings

Never give the impression that you resent people's objections. In their minds the objection is valid and logical. Never verbally or non-verbally question a person's intelligence. Cushion the objection with an empathetic statement such as:-

"I can understand how you feel ..."

"I'm not surprised to hear you say that ..."

"I appreciate your concern ..."

"You've brought up a good point ..."

"I think if I were in your shoes I'd feel the same way ..."

"There's a lot of truth in what you say ..."

Ask: "In addition to that are there any other things which stand in the way ...?" (Often the real roadblock is not advanced first)

4. Convert the objection to a question

Say something like:

"You've brought up an important question ..."

OR, "That's a question many people ask ..."

Then restate their objection in the form of a question:

"The question is, 'How can a good and loving God be consistent in allowing pain and suffering in the world?'"

OR, "The question is, 'How can you ever hope to live a Christian life when you know how weak and powerless you are over temptation?'"

Use this to clarify the person's thinking, and also your own understanding of the objection.

5. Answer the objection as best you can

Be honest. Do not promise something which God does not! If the person is happy with your answer (even if you feel it is inadequate) do not offer further information (books etc.) at this stage. However, if there is a need for a more detailed answer, promise to look into it and get back. Also, you could lend a book or cassette.

Helping the person to make a decision.

Once you have dealt with objections, you should look for a commitment. Do not be afraid of asking for a decision. Give a person a choice of alternatives:- e.g. "Would you prefer to pray out loud or silently in your heart?"

Show them the importance of verbalising their faith in a specific prayer to God. A good idea is to get them to write a prayer in their own words and then pray it after you have gone over it with them.

Some people's decision will be to do nothing about it. Having heard the gospel, they are held accountable by God. Paul said some powerful things about those who refuse to obey the gospel (2 Thess.1:8-9). Caution them lovingly, but always leave the door open for further conversation about spiritual things. Often you can come back to a person a couple of weeks later and say:- "You remember our conversation a while back? Well, since then I have thought of something which may be of interest to you ..."

Thinking it Through _____ 9

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Answer each of the following objections in the way outlined in the notes. Come to the next training session prepared to discuss the truths which need to be clarified, emphasized and answered.

OBJECTION: “I’m sure God’s not going to send good-living people to hell; I’ll take my chances.”

Share the person's feelings:

Convert to a question:

Answer as best you can:

OBJECTION: “I think I’ll leave it for now - perhaps another time I might consider it again.”

Share the person's feelings:

Convert to a question:

Answer as best you can:

OBJECTION: “I’d like to follow Christ, but there’s too much to give up - the cost is too high for me ”

Share the person's feelings:

Convert to a question:

Answer as best you can:

OBJECTION: “There are too many hypocrites in the church.”

Share the person's feelings:

Convert to a question:

Answer as best you can:

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

2. Answer Test Question:

Write out the whole gospel outline without references. *(next week you will be required to write out the whole outline along with the references for each point)*

3. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

4. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

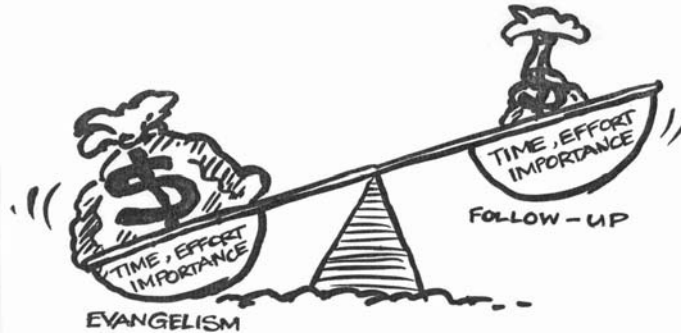
THE ROAD AHEAD (Follow up)

The whole of the New Testament bears witness to the importance of the follow-up and discipleship of new Christians.

The Lord commanded us to make disciples by:

- * Baptizing them as an outward confession of faith.
- * Teaching them to observe His commandments (not just know them!)

Paul's attitude towards follow-up is seen in the way he returned to the groups of new believers he had led to Christ in order to strengthen and help them grow (Acts 14:21-23 and 15:41). He even went to the extent of saying that if the Thessalonian believers did not go on in their Christian lives he had "laboured in vain!"



We spend long hours and huge amounts of money on evangelism but often fail to give the same degree of commitment to follow-up.

Success in follow-up requires:-

1. A Personal Relationship



Be involved in their lives

Become their friend. Be open and honest with them, willing to share your own struggles and failures as well as joys and victories.

Write a note of encouragement occasionally.



Spend quality time

Show an interest in all areas of their lives, not just in a regular Bible study or other church-related activities. Take them fishing, shopping, to a sports event etc. Show hospitality.

Persevere when they encounter problems.

Make your faith and conviction become a strength to their own. They will look to you for a model of the right way to handle their problems now that they are Christians.

Be a leader

The Christian life is new to them and they will expect you to give specific guidance in certain areas. Don't be afraid to give direction.

2. A Period of Time

Do not expect to complete your task of follow-up in a few weeks or months. You must see yourself as a permanent source of help and direction to the new believer.

Some new Christians grow very fast. At times they may need to be held back in case their pride or self-sufficiency ("I've made it") causes Satan to trap them (1 Timothy 3:6-7). Others are painfully slow and need reassurance and encouragement. Still others will take a few steps forward and then regress a few steps before going forward again. You are to be the stable influence in their Christian growth. Show them that you have confidence in them (Philippians 1:6).

10

Paul was not guilty of the blood of the Ephesian Christians, not because he led them to Christ, but because he also taught them the whole counsel of God (see Acts 20:26,31)

A new believer will follow your life much quicker than they will follow the printed page!

3. A Programme of Teaching

* Aim to teach “the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27)

This does not mean that your disciple should end up a theologian! You must, however, lay a comprehensive grounding of all Bible truths. Bible study should be consecutive, constructive and relevant.

* Show consistency in your life

You should be able to say, “Be an imitator of me, as I am of Christ”. Be aware that the new believer consciously or subconsciously regards you as a guide to the way Christianity is fleshed out in the real world. Your response to difficulties, your attitude to church leaders, your care for the hurting, and your evangelistic zeal will have more effect on their minds than a whole year of intensive teaching!

Expect obedience!

The whole point of growing in knowledge is to live in line with what they know.

4. A Positive Environment

A living, accepting and warm church fellowship is the kind of “spiritual hot-house” where new Christians thrive. It may take some time before they begin to attend the church services. Try at first to get them involved in a home Bible study group or a low-key church activity. Make them sense that they belong to the church fellowship, even if at first they do not attend.

Involve a few others in the fellowship with you when doing something with your new disciple. Encourage other Christians to show them hospitality. The new Christian will be attracted to the people in the church, not to the church itself.

5. Prayer

Do not forget to pray for new believers. Several times the apostle Paul mentions that he “...does not cease to pray...” for his spiritual children.

Pray for God's Spirit to continue stirring their hearts towards the Lord.

Pray for God to plant in them a desire for His Word.

Pray that God will strengthen them to be bold in their witness, and wise in the way they share the good news with others.

Pray for protection against the attacks of the Devil.



THE PROCESS OF FOLLOW UP

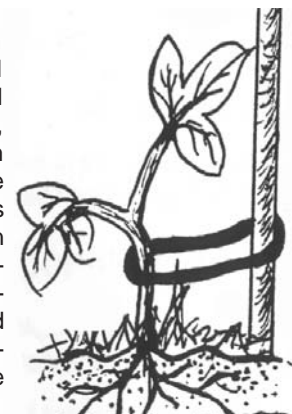
Follow up = relationship + truth

a. Develop a relationship

Don't just view follow up as a “teaching exercise”. You must be willing to invest yourself in the person, and show genuine care.

b. Assurance

The next step is to confirm them in their faith. They are to be “rooted and grounded in Him.” The Blood of Christ makes them secure, but the Word of God makes them sure. Passages on assurance are: 1 John 5:12-13; Romans 8:38-39; Hebrews 7:25; John 10:28-29. Don't think that because they have heard the gospel before that they will know and understand it! Go over the gospel carefully and reinforce the major truths.





c. Obedience

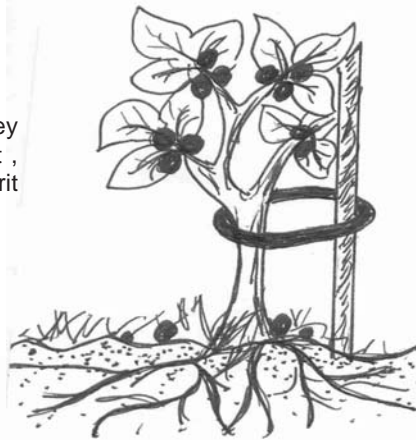
Encourage a teachable spirit. Show them that the commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). Because God is good, loving and wise, when we obey Him we are doing the best thing for ourselves, even though at the time it may not seem to be so.

Work hard at getting them into a routine of having a personal time alone with God every day. They may only be able to cope with a few minutes in the early stages of their Christian growth. Emphasize the need to apply God's word to their lives.

If you can, get them to write what they learn in a quiet-time diary each day, and you do the same. Then, when you meet you can share one or two of the blessings or challenges you received from the Lord over the past week. With some people it may be necessary for you to become a model for them to follow - to show them how to have a meaningful quiet time. You could meet with them each lunch time for a week so they can observe you having your quiet-time.

d. Bear Fruit (Christlikeness)

Fruit is only going to appear as they yield to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and as they observe the fruit of the Spirit displayed in our lives.



e. Independence

When they can stand alone, let them! You are not to become a crutch for them in their Christian experience. Encourage them to study the Bible for themselves, get involved in worship, and find a way to begin serving the Lord.

f. Reproduction

Help them reach out with the gospel to their own friends. Help them see that Christians are expected to share the gospel with others. The first two or three years in the Christian life will be the most productive in witnessing, as they are still very close to their unsaved relatives and friends.

When they have the joy of leading a friend to Christ, help them follow up the person.



"Growing to Please Him" can be used as an effective aid to personal follow-up (available from keithglasgow.com).

Thinking it Through _____ 10

How would you deal with the following problems that arise in follow-up?

1. Your disciple stops meeting with you regularly, giving weak excuses for doing so.
2. Your disciple is a young man who falls back into his past life-style, and feels he has failed as a Christian and God wouldn't accept him now.
3. Your disciple grows very fast for the first few weeks or months, then begins pulling out of things, or losing interest in the Word of God.
4. Your disciple has a real fear of witnessing.
5. Your disciple is undisciplined as a way of life, and doesn't bother with having a quiet-time.
6. Your disciple is involved in a weak or unscriptural church.
7. Your disciple wants to grow as a Christian, but has to face opposition and severe restrictions from parents or spouse.

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

Romans 10:9

Romans 14:9

2. Answer Test Question:

What is the ultimate aim you would have for a person whom you lead to Christ?

3. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

4. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

11

WALKING TOGETHER (Practical methods of evangelism)

1. DOOR TO DOOR VISITATION

a. The biblical basis

Jesus sent His disciples out two by two. They went to the villages and towns with the gospel of the kingdom. They were instructed to go to the houses and seek entry to speak. Matthew 10:11-14. Paul also went from house to house with the gospel (Acts 20:20).

b. The benefits of door to door evangelism

I. It is effective.

Though people are sick of being pestered by cults at the door, Christians from a local church, once identified, can have a good reception. If approached the right way, people can open up and reveal an interest in spiritual things.

II. It reaches people personally who may not be reached in any other way.

III. It shows people that the Christians in the local church are interested in their welfare.

c. The Object of door to door visitation

I. To make contact with people who are open to spiritual things, and gain their confidence to let you (or another) follow them up at a later date.

II. To be an 'Ambassador for Christ' to people confused by so many voices claiming to have the truth.

III. To cause people to talk about spiritual things, and to bring out into the open their personal beliefs and opinions.

e. The way to go about it

I. A pre-visit letter or leaflet can help prepare the way.

II. Go alone or in pairs. If alone, never enter the house if the occupant is a member of the opposite sex.

III. Always take something in your hand to give them, and have a specific purpose in going, such as:

- * An Invitation to a service or home Bible study, etc.
- * Informing them of some new church activity.
- * Taking a survey, etc.

IV. Always smile and be enthusiastic as soon as they open the door. Speak as if they really do want to hear what you have to say. This is hard to do when the likelihood is that they are not interested. Yet for the ones who are, it is VITAL!

V. Introduce yourself, where you are from, and the purpose of your visit.

VI. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and to the type of person you meet. You are on their turf. You are the visitor at their door. Be gracious, kind and considerate.

VII. If they assume you are one of the regular cult visitors, try to remove the barrier by saying "Don't worry, we're not here to push religion down your throat. We don't like that ourselves! We are Christians from the XYZ church, and we are here to invite you to..."

VIII. Try to convince them that:

- * You are sincerely interested in them and not in the growth of your church.
- * You know God personally and are excited about being a Christian.
- * You are an ordinary person like them.

IX. If there is any interest in the Lord, ask them if they would like to have a weekly Bible study in their own home on a trial basis for one month. Alternatively, offer to come around one evening with the "Jesus" video, and watch it with them. This may lead on to them being interested in a Bible study.

DON'TS

Don't let them get you into an argument.

Don't carry a big Bible. A small New Testament in a carry-bag is best.

Don't get into a long discussion with someone who is only interested in an intellectual debate. Test their sincerity. If people skip from one subject to another, they probably are not really listening to your answers.

Don't do anything that would hinder another Christian's witness - someone you may not be aware of.

Don't go visiting without prayerfully depending upon God to guide you to the right people and to empower your words.

2. EVANGELISTIC HOME GROUPS

It is very difficult in our culture to get our neighbours and friends into a church building. People do not like being "preached at". Some are open to attend special meetings or dinners, but many are not. Yet, many people are interested in knowing more about God.

Home Bible Discovery Groups are designed to help Christians share their faith with neighbours and friends in a non-threatening environment. A home is a place where they can relax and feel comfortable. A small group does not frighten them.

Reasons for it's success:

1. It is less threatening to get friends into a home than into a church building.
2. The group should only run for a few weeks, which is a reasonable commitment to ask of non-churchgoers.
3. The study material should be interesting and easily understood by people who know very little about the Bible.
4. The discovery groups are a good means to motivate Christians into reaching out to their friends and neighbours.

Method

1. Organize host homes

Find those families or individuals in the church who are willing to host a group in the lounge of their home. These people do not need to be the leaders of the groups.

2. Arrange partners

Host families should link with one other couple or individual, who will pray and help run the group.

3. Appoint leaders

If the host or partner both feel inadequate to lead the discussion, find another person in the fellowship who can join as the leader. However, your friends and neighbours will respect you and accept your leadership much more than another. They will not be wanting someone who "knows it all", but will be more interested in what you believe!

4. Prayer

The hosts and partners should get together for prayer before any friends and neighbours are approached, and pray specifically for people they plan to invite.

5. Introductory Get-together

Plan an introductory evening which is a social event. Perhaps a coffee and dessert evening, or a pot-luck dinner. The people who are invited should be told it is a social evening, but that at some time during the evening they will be told about a Bible discussion group commencing the following week in the same home.

3. EVANGELISTIC COURSES

Another alternative is to invite them to see the "Jesus" video, which is a two hour film based on the actual text of Luke's Gospel.

An alternative for evangelistic home groups is to use tools such as the Alpha Course, Christianity Explored, Christianity Explained, Introducing God, Starting Point, and The Open Table

These DVD courses can also be organised and run in a local cafe, community building

or at the church.

4. APPOINTMENT VISITATION

A small team meets once a week (eg. Monday nights) and, after prayer, splits into pairs in order to visit people in their homes. These visits are not “cold turkey”, as appointments will have been made prior to the evening, with the people expecting a visit from a couple of the church members.

Those visited could be:

- * Fringe members belonging to the church, but not regular attenders.
- * Families or partners of church members.
- * Contacts of the church, and families of children who attend children’s outreaches.
- * Visitors who turn up at the Church for Sunday services.
- * Names of people supplied by church members.

a. Appointments

A suitable person can be organised to be the visitation co-ordinator, preferably a young lady with a pleasant voice and telephone manner. She is to phone the prospective people to request a visit. She would say something similar to: “Hello, I’m Katie from the XYZ church. Your son attends our church youth group. As a church we like to get out into the community and meet people, especially those in any way connected with us. It’s just a social visit to say “hi” and get to meet you. I was wondering if it would be OK with you if one or two church members drop in for a short visit on Monday night?”

b. The Team

Only those who are suitably gifted and trained should be involved in this form of outreach, as great harm can be done by tactless, over-enthusiastic or heavy-handed people. It is best to hand pick a few key people and then gradually add a few trainees as the team gains experience and confidence.

c. The Visit

Be relaxed and show interest in their family, work, home, personal pursuits etc. Chat about anything that seems to interest them or make them feel comfortable.

Look for an opportunity to make a transition in to sharing the gospel, and judge whether they are interested or not. Do not pursue a conversation about spiritual things if they show signs that for them it is inappropriate. If after making a transition you feel you should abort the spiritual topic, say “If you ever become interested in these things, we want you to know that you are welcome to come to our church”.

You must leave without the people thinking that you have crossed over from a pleasant conversation to preaching your “religion”. As you get a good name for your visitation technique, others in the church will provide more and more opportunities for visits. If you betray their confidence, just once, it will be very difficult to restore that trust.

Thinking it Through _____ 11

Develop a series of questions relating to Psalm 23 which would stimulate discussion in a group of unchurched people who have no knowledge of the Bible. Come to the next training session prepared to lead a small group in a discussion on part of the psalm.

1.

2.

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12.

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

2 Thess.1:8-9

2. Answer Test Question:

Write out the gospel outline in full.

3. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

4. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

WALKING TOGETHER (Part 2)

5. EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH COUNSELLING

12

a. The Attitude of the Counsellor

* Be prayerful

God does the work so depend fully on Him for wisdom and help. Also, Satan needs to be resisted in Jesus' Name in order to break his influence in people's lives.

* Remember the importance of your work

A counsellor can be of great value or can do serious harm. A preacher cannot know what the listeners are thinking, or what problems they have; but a counsellor can help each individual specifically.

* Be courteous, patient and gentle

Follow the way Jesus dealt with people who were slow in understanding. Don't feel you have to restrict your counselling to the one session. The outreach meeting may be the means of bringing you and the inquirer together, but the person may need many sessions before they make a real and intelligent commitment to Christ. However, it is preferable to have them trust Christ at the time they are moved by the Spirit.

* Stop an interruption as soon as possible

People nearly always forget what was said prior to a distraction, so repeat as much as you feel necessary when interrupted.

* Aim to befriend the person

Don't be impersonal. Show you are interested in them. This speaks more than the cleverest arguments.

b. Introducing Yourself

a. As a rule choose people of your own age and sex. If it is necessary for a man to counsel a woman or girl, safeguard yourself by getting another counsellor or Christian to sit with you.

b. When the inquirer responds to an appeal, come forward immediately and stand with them.

c. Sit alongside - not opposite.

d. Put the person at ease, smile - ask and remember the name. To assist your memory, use the name a couple of times in the first few sentences of your conversation.

e. Only counsel one person at a time. If you are forced to counsel more, you will need to continually ask questions of each one, in order to make sure they are with you.

c. The Process of Counselling

I. DIAGNOSIS

(be like a doctor who does not assume anything about a patient's illness, but asks questions and does tests to find out what exactly is wrong.)

* Never assume you know why they came for counselling

Without prompting, determine if they came for :

Salvation

Restoration - a believer who has backslidden

Assurance - a believer who has no assurance

Inquiring - a person seeking information

Prayer (for problems)

* Ask open-ended questions (where the answer is not a mere yes or no)

For example, do not ask "Do you go to Church?"; rather ask: "How often do you go to Church?"

*** Be a good listener**

Listen closely, especially in the early part of the counselling session. Try and judge their depth of sincerity, and areas of knowledge which need instruction.

*** Let them unburden any problems**

They may need to share their concerns (unemployment, broken relationships, health etc.) and yet, at the same time, be seeking a right relationship with God. Pray for their need before bringing them back to their need of salvation. Assure them of your confidence, and keep it! Do not believe everything that is said, as some may be trying to arouse pity in order to obtain financial or material assistance. Ask God for wisdom and discernment. Hold everything they say about themselves very loosely and bring them back to the central issues of the gospel message. Later you will find out if the story they told you is true or not.

If they come forward desiring prayer for illness, financial problems or home difficulties, pray for them, and then ask if there was any other reason why they came forward. It may be that they were moved by the Spirit, but in response to your request they could only think of their immediate problems. Don't suggest they may have also come forward for salvation. Let them tell you if that is so, otherwise you may be leading a person to call upon the Lord before they are ready to do so.

*** Don't side-step vital matters**

If you can't answer, seek advice from a supervisor or church leader. If you have no answer, don't be afraid to say so.

*** Do not put any pressure on the person**

If inquirers do not wish to go any further, make it clear that they are free to go. Try, however, to make a date to meet them on another occasion.

II. SHARING FROM GOD'S WORD

Use their Bible if they have one, and get them to read their own name into the verse. For example, "For God so Loved Mary Brown...." Do not use too many verses.

A. Salvation:

Fact of sin	- Romans 3:23, James 2:10,4:17, Isaah 64:6
Penalty of sin	- Romans 6:23, John 3:36, Romans 5:12
Christ died for sin	- Romans 5:8, John 1:29, 1 Peter 3:18
Christ rose again	- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Hebrews 7:25, Romans 1:4
Our response:	- John 3:16, Romans 10:9-13
a. Faith	- John 1:12
b. Repentance	- Acts 17:30, Acts 26:20b

When you are sure they understand the basics of the gospel and they are ready to trust Christ, simply ask them if they would like to do so. If they waver or say they are not ready, first try to find out why (fear of opposition at home etc.). If they want to put off the decision, have them read Mark 8:36, and Hebrews 2:3.

Do not force or coerce them to trust Christ. Confront them with the fact that the Christian life calls for obedience and total commitment. Give them an "easy out".

THE PRAYER

Invite the inquirer to pray aloud. List four things to pray for in their own words:

1. Admit they are guilty of sin and cannot save themselves.
2. Be willing to turn from sin.
3. Trust Jesus to forgive their sin because He died for them.
4. Ask Jesus to indwell them by His Spirit.

Pray after the inquirer has, thanking the Lord and asking Him to bless and help this new believer.

Don't tell them that they are saved; ask them if they are saved, and how they know why. Give follow up material, explaining each piece of literature.

Encourage the new believer to tell someone immediately what they have done.

B. Restoration

Make sure there has been an original genuine conversion. A decision is not necessarily "repentance and faith".

Ask pointed questions: When did you begin to backslide? Why did you? (What temptation or hindrance was involved)? What are you prepared to do? (restoration, forgiveness, reconciliation with others)

Point out the seriousness of backsliding (dishonours God and causes others to fall). Emphasize that our communion with God can be broken, but not our union.

God will forgive and cleanse us when we confess (1 John 1:9).

We are called to offer our bodies to God, as instruments for Him to use (Romans 6:11-13,12:1).

C. Assurance

Read 1 John 5:11-13, and emphasize "Know" (verse 13).

Read John 10:27-28, and point out that it is not us holding on to God, but God holding on to us.

Show the security of God's children from Romans 10:13 and John 6:39.

Explain faith in terms of His trustworthiness. It is not the amount of our faith that is important, but the object of our faith - the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:12).

Thinking it Through _____ 12

1. Why is the role of a counsellor such an important part of a gospel outreach?

2. How would you make a person feel at ease when you begin your counselling?

3. Name some of the consequences when a counsellor fails to do the job properly.

4. How does a counsellor act like a doctor?

Why is this important?

5. What differing reasons may cause people to come forward for counselling?

6. If a person came forward to be restored (a believer who has backslidden), how would you determine whether or not they were truly saved to begin with?

Personal Assessment

1. Memory Verses:

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

2. Answer Test Question:

In your opinion, in what way is the role of counselling a person after a meeting more important than the role of the preacher?

3. Did you have an opportunity to witness this week?

Briefly describe how it happened:

What did you learn about him/her?

4. Did you meet with your prayer partner this week? Yes/No

Personal Contact Questionnaire

Set up an appointment with someone in the community. The person should have no strong church links, preferably a person who claims to not be a Christian.

Your approach should be: *"I am involved in a training course at my church, and I am required to interview a person who is not a Christian. Would you mind allowing me a few minutes in order to ask you the 5 questions on this survey?"*

1. Can you give me your definition of a Christian?

2. If being a Christian means having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, much like marriage is a personal relationship with a spouse, how do you see yourself:

- Not interested?
- Interested in getting to know Him?
- Casually acquainted?
- Engaged?
- Married?
- Divorced?

3. What role do you think a person's upbringing plays in whether or not they become a Christian?

4. What has been your previous experience of Christianity, and was it a positive or negative experience for you?

5. Do you know people who are committed Christians, and how have they influenced you?

6. If you were to give us some advice about sharing our Christianity with others, what would that be?