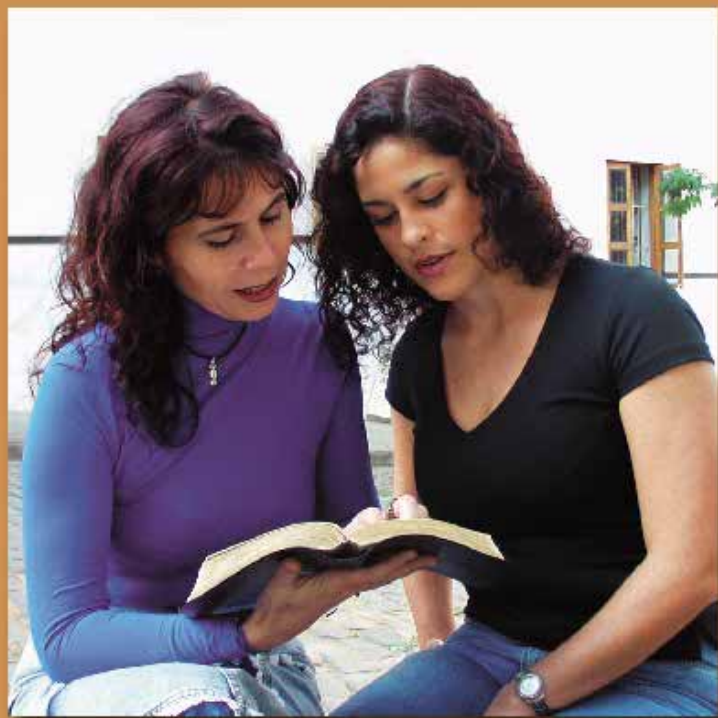


ONE HEART AT A TIME



ONE HEART AT A TIME

A Handbook for Changing the World

A Get Activated! Book

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By Shannon Shayler and Keith Phillips, for the *Get Activated!* series

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Famous Last Words

Few words ever spoken have had a more far-reaching impact on the world than Jesus' last earthly message to His disciples. For three and a half years they had watched and listened as Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, unlocked the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven, and lived and preached the love of God. Then, the Bible tells us, Jesus spent forty more days with His followers after He rose from the dead, further preparing them to carry on what He had begun.¹ On the final day, just before He ascended to Heaven, Jesus gave them what has come to be known as the Great Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the Good News"—the message of God's love and salvation in Jesus—"to everyone, everywhere."²

Their response? "They went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs."³ With His resurrection, His disciples had finally grasped what Jesus had been trying to teach them all along: that He and the truth He taught could set all men free.⁴

¹ Acts 1:3

² Mark 16:15 TLB

³ Mark 16:20

⁴ John 8:31–32

Jesus offers that same commission to His followers today, and He continues to work just as wonderfully through those who say yes. Would you like to show others how they can be part of God's kingdom and partake of His love and life? Would you like to do what Jesus asked His disciples to do—to bring His answers to a lost and lonely world? You can.

You don't have to be a theologian, preacher, priest, or one of Jesus' original twelve disciples to preach the Gospel. In fact, you don't even have to have much special training or know a whole lot about the Bible. What you are about to read on these few pages is enough to get you started, and Jesus Himself will teach you the rest as you go. What really matters is that you have found Jesus and experienced His life-changing love, and that you want to share His love and salvation with others. All you need is love—love for the Lord and love for others.

David Brandt Berg wrote: "The primary requisite for [Christian service] is the same driving passion that motivated the apostle Paul and all the apostles and all the martyrs and every great man or woman of God—in fact, that irresistible compassion which should motivate every child of God in everything he does, everything he says, everywhere he goes, with everybody—and which that great apostle summed up in these few famous and ringing words that have cried out from the hearts of true Christians in every good deed they have ever done: 'The love of Christ compels us.'"¹

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:14

If you feel you don't have that kind of love but would like to, why not ask Him for it right now? His Word promises, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it,"¹ and, "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."²

¹ John 14:14

² 1 John 3:22

Every Christian's duty

If the whole purpose of our existence is to receive Jesus as our Savior, then why doesn't the Lord just take us home to Heaven the minute we do?—Because once we're saved, we have a job to do; we have a responsibility. There are lots of other people who need to know Jesus, and we are the means by which He has chosen to make Himself known.

Jesus alone saves, but He doesn't want to save us alone. He wants to save the whole world, but in order to do that He needs us to tell others about His love, to give His love and message of salvation to the whole world.

Jesus told His closest followers, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). He says this still to His followers of today, calling them to give their lives daily in loving concern and care for others, to share His heart and love with those who are seeking for "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). He came to love the world and He calls us to do likewise.

Will you answer His call? Will you do what you can to win others to Him? Will you spread the Word, spread the message, spread His love?

—D.B.B.

You can be an apostle!

An apostle is “one sent with a message.” If you’ve answered God’s call to share the message of His love and salvation in Jesus with a lost and lonely world, then you’re one of His apostles and tops in His book! God puts apostles at the top of His list—“first apostles” (1 Corinthians 12:28). You’re also His ambassador, representing the King of kings, the One who runs the universe. There’s no calling in life that’s greater than that!

—D.B.B.



“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Joel 2:32). How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Isaiah 52:7).

—*The apostle Paul (Romans 10:13–15).*



Jesus has no hands but your hands, and He has no lips but yours, and He has no eyes but your eyes, for you are His Body for whom He died, that you might live and love others as He loved you.

—D.B.B.

A Sample, Not a Sermon

The famous American evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) once said, “The only Bible most people will read is the one bound in shoe leather.” Some say that what Moody meant was that most people won’t so much as open a Bible, so the only way they’ll hear the Gospel is if someone takes it to them. Others say he meant that most people form their opinions about Christianity and what it has to offer them not by reading the Bible, but through their interactions with Christians—through Christians’ personal examples, in other words. Possibly he meant both, because both are true.

People need to hear the Gospel and have it explained, but they also need to see an example of someone living it. The words are necessary, but to be most effective, witnessing¹ must go beyond words. Only the Holy Spirit can work in people’s hearts to help them decide to receive Jesus and be

¹ To witness means to talk to others about God’s love and salvation in Jesus; a witness is someone who does.

saved, but to understand what God is offering them and to believe that it can happen to them, most people need to see how He has already worked in someone else's life. You could talk for hours about all that God could give or do for the people you're witnessing to, but unless they see an example of those things in you, your words would probably fall on deaf ears. They need to see that He has changed your life for the better and given you something that they don't have and can't get on their own.

If you ask any group of people what they want out of life, most of them will say things like love, happiness, security, and peace of mind. Sure, they may first say a million dollars, their dream house, or the perfect husband or wife, but when it comes right down to it, all of those are only means (or supposed means) to get the things of true value, like love, happiness, security, and peace of mind. And the wonderful thing is, when we receive Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit, those truly important things are available to us and can be manifested in our lives. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."¹ When those you are witnessing to see you being loving and understanding, compassionate, gentle, kind, patient, and considerate—especially if they know you weren't always that way before you found the Lord—they will want what you have.

¹ Galatians 5:22–23

“Show me!”

The only love of God that people can see is the love they see in His children. So if Christians don't show others a love they can see and feel, they're going to have a hard time believing that there is Someone up there who they don't know, and that He really loves them.

In winning people, you often have to inspire their faith in you before they can believe in God or receive Jesus, because they probably won't be able to understand or believe what you have to say about God unless you show them by some visible tangible work that puts your words into action and your faith into effect, that makes it fact and not fiction, a sample, not just a sermon. You must show them His real love and manifest it by genuine proving action.

—D.B.B.



Why us?

Why do we Christians have to be the ones to tell others about Jesus and salvation? Why doesn't God just send around some angels and let them tell them? God uses fallible, sinful human beings like us to reach others because He knows that people can relate to people better than angels, and that because we are also prone to human weaknesses and shortcomings, we will show people even more understanding, patience, love, and mercy than the angels would. Think of that!

—D.B.B.

The difference is real

There is a true story about a Christian and an atheist who were walking down the street together, discussing God. The atheist, of course, was ridiculing God and said, "If there were a God, there would be some proof. There should be a difference between us that people could see. If you really have God and I haven't, that beggar there, for example, should know just by looking at us. Let's see who he asks alms of." And as they walked by, the beggar leaned clear across the atheist who was walking closest to him and stretched out his hand to the other man, and said, "Oh man with God in your face, please give!" People need to see Jesus in us. We need to let the light and love of His Spirit shine through. The way to do that is to stay close to Him, constantly loving Him and thanking Him for all His goodness to us.

—D.B.B.

“What’s in It for Me?”

Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere,”¹ Doing that well takes salesmanship. You need to sell people on Jesus and His incredible free offer: salvation.

As any psychologist or salesperson can tell you, it’s part of human nature for people to think mainly in terms of what’s good for them or those they care about. That’s why every sales pitch is designed to answer one basic question: What is this product going to do for me? The prospective buyer must be convinced that he or she needs whatever product or service is being offered. That’s the secret of selling anything.

In witnessing, as in all salesmanship, a good salesperson must be able to see things from other people’s points of view and talk in terms of their needs and desires. Find out what they want and help them get it. Spell out the benefits. Explain how their lives can change for the better by receiv-

¹ Mark 16:15 TLB

ing Jesus. Tell them how He improved yours in ways that they'll want to experience too.

Here are a few benefits that will probably be near the top of most people's list of things they most want or need:

- ✓ Forgiveness for past wrongs
- ✓ Happiness and contentment
- ✓ Peace of heart and mind
- ✓ Answers to life's big questions
- ✓ Understanding of spiritual things
- ✓ Freedom from worry and fear
- ✓ Assurance that they are loved for who they are
- ✓ Someone who will always be there for them, no matter what
- ✓ Assurance of eternal life and a place in Heaven
- ✓ Power to overcome life's difficulties
- ✓ Purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in life
- ✓ More love and understanding for others
- ✓ To be a better person and better meet the needs of loved ones
- ✓ Someone to turn to for guidance when faced with difficult situations and tough choices
- ✓ Comfort in times of sorrow and loss
- ✓ Hope for the future

Universal need, universal answer

What everybody needs is love—love they have never known before, true love, sincere love, genuine love, the truly great love of their life, the love of all loves from the Lover of all lovers, who alone can satisfy that deepest yearning of every human soul for total love and complete understanding.

People's hearts are the same the world over. Their longings, loves, hunger for God and His truth, for joy and happiness and peace of mind are God-created and universal. People can never be happy with a heavy heart, a troubled mind, a discouraged spirit, and an unsaved soul. The human soul can never be completely satisfied with anything but utter union with the great and loving Spirit that created it. Flesh can satisfy flesh, but only Spirit can satisfy spirit.

Do you want the key to every heart?—Try love! It never fails, because God is love, and it's impossible for Him to fail!

Ah, sweet mystery of life, at last I've found thee!
Ah, at last I've found the reason for it all!
Ah, 'tis love and love alone the whole world yearns
for,
And 'tis love that bids us heed Thy call!

—D.B.B.

(Paraphrased from "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life," by
Rida Johnson Young [1869–1926]).

Who to?

As a born-again Christian, you should have love and compassion for everyone, not just your own—young or old, rich or poor, strong or weak, friend or foe, even if you don't like them—"everyone, everywhere." (Mark 16:15 TLB). However, God's Spirit will lead you especially to those who really need your loving help and who will respond in loving appreciation, just as it will also lead them to you. God goes where there are open and receptive hearts that are hungry. He seeks the low and the humble and the contrite heart, but resists the proud. His Word says, "He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich [or full] He has sent away empty" (Luke 1:53), for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

It's much more difficult for people who are self-satisfied or set in their ways to see that they need the Lord in their lives. "No one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better'" (Luke 5:39). But for those who are seeking, hungry, unhappy, and yearning for the spiritual, this is their day!

Jesus said that new wine must be put into new wineskins (Luke 5:38). And that's exactly what He did: He poured His very new wine into very new wineskins who could expand their receptivity sufficiently to take it, accommodate it, and even rejoice in it, for it spoke their language.

—D.B.B.

To sell well, be sold yourself.

The key to good salesmanship is to be sold on your product. You must really believe in your product to sell with conviction, and to believe in your product you must first put it to work in your own life and experience the benefits firsthand. When you're really sold, your sincerity, honesty, and enthusiasm about your product sell it to others.

We should be the greatest salesmen in the world. After all, we have partaken of the best product on earth: God's love and salvation in Jesus—made in Heaven, guaranteed forever, and free! How could anyone pass up a deal like that?—And how could we not be excited about offering it to everyone we can?

—D.B.B.

Getting Started

How you start your witness will probably vary greatly, depending on how well you know the person, the immediate circumstances, whether you've talked with him or her about the Lord before, and so on.

As in every aspect of witnessing, the most important thing to remember to do is pray. Send a quick prayer up to the Lord, asking Him to show you the best way to strike up a conversation with the person you want to meet and witness to, or, if you already know the person, how to begin talking to him or her about the Lord.

Getting started can be like standing on the high diving board, preparing to take the plunge: Worries and fears that weren't there a moment ago are suddenly very present and very real. Will the person think you're being too forward or even a bit weird, or that you're after something? What you need to remember is that the Lord has the key to that person's heart. He knows exactly what he or she needs, and how He and you can best meet

that need. Pray and keep praying, step by step and moment by moment, and the Lord will give you the right words and guide the conversation.

For some people, the most difficult thing about witnessing to people they don't know is how to start a conversation. Here are a few tips: Greet them with a smile and a cheerful word; pay them a compliment; offer a helping hand if you see they need one; ask for directions; comment on the weather, an item in the news, or something else you have in common. Help the other person relax and warm up by asking a few simple questions—the kind that you would probably think too trivial or obvious. With someone you already know, it's usually easier. Even if you've only met the other person once, you already have something in common that you can use to open the conversation—your first meeting.

The search

So many people are searching for love—some little ray of hope, some salvation, some bright spot, some relief. If you can show them that love exists, then they can believe that God exists, because God is love (1 John 4:8). So the first and most important thing to show others is that you love them.

Even the little things you do can mean a lot. A little bit of love can go such a long way! The light of your smile or the kindness of your face can have an amazing effect on people you might think would be the least likely to be impressed. When they feel your love and you tell them it's God's love, they feel like, "Maybe Somebody up there does love me!" It can change their whole outlook!

—D.B.B.



You can't judge people by their outward appearance or personality. The Lord doesn't judge us by our past sins or even by our present ones. The Lord looks at the heart, and so should we.

—*Maria David*



Witnessing needs to come from the heart, out of love and concern for the other person. Start there, and the rest will follow.

—*Francisco Lopez*

Your Personal Story

Recounting your own experience is one of the most persuasive arguments you can give, because when you tell others how you found Jesus and what a difference He has made in your life, they've either got to say, "I don't believe you," or, "It must be true, because you say so."

The apostle Paul was a tremendous witness, and when he was brought before governors or magistrates or kings to answer the accusations of those who opposed him and his message, he took the opportunity to try to win them to Jesus—and he started with his own personal testimony: "This is what happened to me!"

Some people won't listen to anything else. They don't want to hear you read or quote from the Bible. You could use all the finest rhetoric and offer every erudite answer and explanation you think they might need, and still they wouldn't listen. But when you start telling them your own personal experience in the matter, instantly you have their attention.

People are interested in people. Everybody loves a story, and nine times out of ten, if you say it with sincerity in the power of the Holy Spirit, they will believe that you're telling the truth. Your own testimony is one thing they cannot deny. And the moment they acknowledge that it happened to you, then they have to admit that it's possible for it to happen to them. If it happened once, it can happen again. Once they admit that possibility, there's a spark of faith. If they believe you, they can believe in God.

The best advertisement is a satisfied customer. You're the proof of the pudding. You are a product of the Gospel. Tell others how His love has transformed your own life and let them see your own happiness, and they will want what makes you that way.

Using the Word

You will probably usually begin with light conversation or your account of what Jesus has done for you. That's important to help spark people's interest in the Lord and His Word. But if they are to grow spiritually, in the long run God's Words will be far more powerful than our own and will work more deeply in the hearts of those you're trying to win to Him. Jesus said that the words He speaks are "spirit and life,"¹ and the apostle Paul said that faith comes by hearing the Word.² The Word is the life-giving seed of faith.

While people need to see a sample in you of what Jesus can do for them and it's often faith in you that leads them to believe in God, ultimately their faith needs to be based on God's Word. You could be here today and gone tomorrow—then who or what are they going to believe? You can fail them, others can fail them, the whole world can fail them, but God's Word never fails. "Heaven

¹ John 6:63

² Romans 10:17

and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”¹ “Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven.”²

When it comes to leading a person to Jesus, showing him or her a few well-chosen verses is more effective than a whole slew of verses. If you use too many verses, the person probably won't remember any of them. Some witnesses think they need to stack up a whole lot of evidence—the more verses they give the better—but that's not necessarily so. The fewer verses you give the better, because then you can keep repeating them until the person really understands and remembers those verses. It's better for the person to walk away knowing four verses than not knowing forty!

Whether you win them to the Lord or not, try to give those you witness to some Word to keep, to strengthen their faith—a tract, a Gospel of John, or a New Testament, for example. Or if they already have a Bible, suggest certain passages for them to read, and write them down so they'll remember.

Some of the people you witness to may already be saved. With them, your witness will be for the purpose of encouraging them to have a deeper, more meaningful, and more rewarding relationship with the Lord, and inspiring them to do more for Him. Here is where it's important to know more Bible than just a few good verses on salvation.

In order to use God's Word in your witnessing, you have to first familiarize yourself with it. The more you study and absorb from the Word yourself, the more tools you'll have to get the job done. (For

¹ Matthew 24:35

² Psalm 119:89

more on the subject of witnessing to those who are already saved, see “Taking Care of the ‘Baby’” on page 81, and “Verses to Use in Witnessing” in the Appendix on page 93.)

Also, through the printed Word you can witness to those that you don’t have time or opportunity to witness to in-depth personally. Give them each a tract, *Activated* magazine, or other publication with the message of God’s love for them. If they are not yet saved, point out or mark the passages that explain how to receive Jesus, so they won’t miss His most important message. The printed Word can sometimes travel greater distances and get into places that people can’t. Never underestimate the power of the written Word!

(If you would like tracts to use in your witnessing, you can order them from your local *Activated* distributor or view and download the texts from the *Get Activated!* Web site at www.activated.org, and print them yourself.)

The Word of God is the foundation of faith.

How do you get faith? It is a gift of God, and it's available to you or anyone else who wants it (Ephesians 2:8). You just have to want it and ask for it. The problem is, most people don't want it until they need it, and then they suddenly find they don't have the faith they need because they have no background of faith or trusting God's Word, no foundation. After all, how can they have faith in something they know little or nothing about?

Faith comes, it grows, by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Just as no good building is without a good foundation, there is no faith without the Word, because faith in God is built on His Word. So if you [or the people you're witnessing to] are weak in faith, there's a simple cure: God's Word.

—D.B.B.



Oratory?—Or evidence?

When we witness, our own words are like the arguments a lawyer offers in court; the Word of God is like the hard evidence. Our words can be persuasive and effective, but even the best lawyer can't win a case with oratory alone.

—Shannon Shayler



The Bible is generally respected, even by people of other faiths or no faith. Most people have a certain respect for holy books, or are at least interested in what those books have to say. Used wisely, the Bible can add considerable authority to what you say.

—D.B.B.

Fill your heart and mind with the truth of God's Word.

The more Word you take in, the easier and more natural it will be for you to pass it on to others. You've got to have it in before you can give it out. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). If you'll be faithful to read, study, and memorize His Word, then He can bring it to your remembrance whenever you need it (John 14:26).

Even witnessing the Word to others is not as important as getting the Word into yourself. You'll never have the spiritual strength and stamina to get out the Word unless you drink in the Word and get spiritually nourished and strengthened by it yourself first. You cannot do the Master's work without the Master's power—and to get it, you must spend time with the Master.

—D.B.B.



If you want to see the Word really come to life, share it with others! As you see it touch and transform other lives as it has yours, as you see the Lord manifest Himself to them through His Word like He has to you, your faith will grow even more.

You may not realize how much you're learning from the Word while you're reading it or even when you try to apply it to your own life, but you'll be absolutely amazed at the wisdom and insight you've gained from the Word once you begin to use it to help others with their problems and point them to the Answer Man—Jesus!

—Jason Rae

Personal Witnessing: Four Simple Steps

In-depth personal witnessing usually follows these four basic steps:

1. Ask questions.

Good conversationalists have one thing in common: the ability to help the other person open up and talk. That's certainly true of witnessing. You need to show the people you witness to that you're interested in them, that you consider them and what they have to say important. That's an important part of showing them love. And unless you ask questions, you're not going to understand them well or know how to relate to them. You're not going to know what they need and how to best help them unless you ask them and get them to talk.

Ask about their background, their work, their family, their likes and dislikes, and so on. Try to get them to talk about themselves. With most people, that isn't very hard. Most people are starving for attention and appreciation, so when you express interest and concern for them personally, they know they've found a friend and someone they can confide in. Don't be surprised if before long even perfect strangers start telling you their problems and confiding in you as though you were an old and trusted friend. The Lord and the Holy Spirit will go to work in their hearts and show them that you really are concerned, and this will cause them to open their hearts to you.

2. Listen to the answers.

Half of being a good witness is being a good listener. In fact, that's often what people want most: someone to listen to them and sympathize, someone to talk to and tell their troubles to. If they feel you understand them, it helps them to communicate better and more freely.

You need it too. To be an effective witness, you need to get on people's level, to put yourself in their shoes, to empathize—and the only way you can do that is by listening carefully to their answers. As the conversation gets deeper and your questions weightier, send up a silent prayer for the Lord to help you understand their hearts, as well as their words. Ask Him to help you see them as He does and to show you how you can best reach them with His love.

Be like Jesus—listen.

Take a lesson from Jesus. When you take your problems to Him in prayer, does He just listen for a moment and then interrupt? Rarely. He's always there, always available, and always ready to hear from you. He's always willing to hear you out—to listen to your side of the story. He gets down on your level. He listens carefully to your words, but He also hears the muffled cries of your heart. You know He understands.

Jesus looks at your motives, not at whatever mistakes or messes you may have made. He's never harsh or condemning. He always holds out mercy and hope and forgiveness. No matter how far you've strayed, He never stops loving you.

Listening—really listening—conveys love. It conveys not only your love, but also the Lord's love for the person, which is unconditional, forever, and perfect in every way. Let others see Jesus in you by trying to be as loving a listener as He is, and you won't have a hard time winning their hearts to Him.

Listening is a talent that can be cultivated. It begins with a sincere desire to understand others in order to better love and help them. Ask Jesus for the gift of empathy, and then ask Him to help you learn to put it to good use helping others and loving them into His heavenly kingdom.

—Keith Phillips

You can encourage them by nodding in agreement, or guide the conversation by saying a few appropriate words from time to time, but resist the urge to expound on what they're saying or using it as an opportunity to make a point of your own. Be careful to not cut them off; let them get everything out. Listening is not only one of the most important parts of being a good witness, but it's also one of the most difficult. It's only natural to be eager to supply answers to people's problems and questions when those answers are so clear to you, but don't do so prematurely. You may end up getting someone's whole life story, but keep listening. This is another important part of showing them love.

Listening also has this important side effect: Once you've shown yourself to be a good listener, others are more likely to be more interested in and receptive to what you have to say when it's your turn to talk. They'll be less defensive and more open to new ideas and views, and they will be more understanding themselves.

3. Give God's answers.

Once people have had a chance to unburden their hearts and you have come to understand their problems and needs, you're in a position to give them God's answers—the main one of which, of course, is accepting Jesus as their Savior so He can then better help them with all their problems.

Tell them how He helped you when you were going through the same thing or something just as bad, or tell them how He helped others. Then show them in the Bible where the Lord promises the needed

Faith and understanding: How much does it take?

How much faith do people need, or how much do they need to understand about God or the whole salvation process before they can be saved? Surprisingly little, actually!

Jesus said that unless we become as little children, we can't enter into the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:3). Babies don't understand all about their mothers or fathers or how they were born or all about life. They just feel their parents' love and accept and receive it.

And that's all people need to do to receive Jesus and be saved: feel God's love in Jesus, knocking at their heart's door, and reach out in childlike faith to open the door and invite Him in.

—Adapted from D.B.B.

solution or change. Quoting or paraphrasing verses from the Bible is good, but with most people, getting them to read those verses themselves, straight from the Bible, is even better. Help them to base their faith on the Word right from the start.

You may talk with a hundred people and approach the subject of salvation from a slightly differently angle with each one, depending on their background, problems, and needs. You may even use the same basic Bible verses with most of them, yet each time the Lord will help you tailor His answers to that person's particular needs.

4. Get a decision.

Once you've clearly explained the gift of salvation, then you need to bring people to the point of decision by asking them if they would like to invite Jesus into their heart and life, and offering to pray a simple prayer with them. Then if they say yes, you can continue: "It's simple—you can just repeat after me." And then you begin a short salvation prayer.

This point may be where your faith will get tested, because you probably won't be sure what their answer to your invitation to pray will be, and you won't want to risk offending them. But if you've done your best during the first three steps, then you need to trust the Lord that He has been working in their hearts and will help them make the right decision.

You can't always win people, but you can always get a decision—either a "yes" or a "no" or a "maybe later," which, sad to say, is often as good

as “no.” Some people say “later” because they feel embarrassed: They either don’t know how to pray, or they feel too self-conscious to pray in front of you. Others want more time to think about it. But the fact of the matter is, there is usually no time when they’ll be more ready than they are at that moment, right after you’ve boosted their faith with God’s Word and a large dose of His love and encouragement.

Should you risk offending people by asking them more than once to make the decision to pray and receive Jesus right then and there? What if they say they don’t think they’re quite ready, or that they want to go home and think it over? Should you be “hard sell” or “soft sell”? A lot has to do with how receptive they have been to what you’ve told them and how close they came to praying with you, but a good rule of thumb is this: If you’re sure you will be seeing the person again and will have another chance to pray with them, soft sell. If it’s unlikely that you will see them again, then this may be their last chance to get saved, so don’t give up too soon—be a bit more hard sell. If after several promptings they’re still not ready to pray with you, be sure to at least give them a tract with the salvation message and prayer. Maybe they will be ready to receive Jesus once they’re alone and don’t feel so put on the spot, or after they’ve had a little more time to think about it.

There is an old saying: “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” That’s true of people too. You can lead them to the truth, but you can’t make them receive it. You can show them God’s love, but only the Spirit of God can help them

make the right decision. Ultimately, the choice is theirs.

Even if they don't pray with you to receive Jesus then and there, you can offer to pray for them as you wrap up your witness. This may help convince them of your sincerity and concern, if they still need convincing. It can also serve as an example of how easy and natural it can be to talk to Jesus in prayer.

You should also try to follow up on people who were receptive but didn't pray to receive Jesus on the spot. Maybe they just needed time to think it over. If you call or visit them the next day or the next week, they may be ready to give Jesus a try—or you may find out that they've done so in the meantime.

Soul Doctor

Finding Jesus and getting saved is the beginning of the cure for whatever ails people. But until they have met Him and had that experience, it's difficult or impossible for most people to believe that such a cure-all exists. So even though you know the answer to their problems and could immediately prescribe the cure, they probably won't be very eager to trust themselves into your care unless you give them a chance to explain their symptoms. How much faith would you place in a doctor who tells you right off the bat that he knows just what you need, before you've even told him what your problem is? Even if the patient is covered from head to toe in visible, outward symptoms that positively identify the problem, any doctor knows to start by asking questions.

Asking questions is more than a mere formality, courtesy, or ploy to gain the patient's trust. Even though the problem may seem obvious, no doctor in his right mind would begin treatment based solely on what experience or his medical books tell

him. By listening carefully to the patient's explanation of the problem and its symptoms, the doctor is able to confirm his diagnosis and learn important information that will later help determine the treatment, dosages, etc. Some patients are very forthcoming and open in their answers to even fairly personal questions, while the doctor needs to draw the answers out of others.

Unlike with physical illnesses, it's sometimes hard for people to recognize or admit that their spirits are "sick," but until they do, they are not going to accept their doctor's advice and prescription. As their soul doctor, you need to help them see that there is something wrong, but the more you can let them come to that conclusion themselves, the better—especially if you were the one to initiate the "checkup."

Only after all that is the doctor in a position to prescribe the treatment—and that's as far as the doctor can go, really. It's then up to the patient to believe the doctor and take the prescribed medicine or follow through with the prescribed treatment or therapy. The patient must decide what to do with the doctor's diagnosis.

Lifeline

Kumiko is 24 years old. Her older brother was killed in a car accident a few years ago, and her parents divorced. Because these things happened, she decided not to believe in God anymore. When I met her, she was very discouraged and only talked negatively about her life and other people.

She started phoning me whenever she was having a hard time with her friends or colleagues. Most of the calls were after midnight and lasted for over an hour. Sometimes she would cry and say, "I should kill myself. There's no use in living." I would listen and try to encourage her, and tell her that no matter what others said about her, Jesus loved her and saw all her good points. I told her that someday her tender nature and other gifts would win out, so she shouldn't let them get clouded over by the seemingly bad things. I also told her that I would pray for her, and I did. Then one night she prayed with me to receive Jesus as her Savior.

After that, Kumiko gradually changed. Eventually she told me that she had started crying out to Jesus whenever she had troubles or felt low. We saw each other again recently, and she was so different! She could laugh about her immature reactions to things that had upset her so terribly before. Then she told me something that touched me deeply: About a month earlier, she had been in the depths of despair and had decided to end her life. At midnight she had driven to the sea, and was about to throw herself in. But suddenly she thought of me, and started praying to Jesus. She changed her mind and made it safely home. I was so happy and relieved to hear that!

Often it had not been easy for me to listen to Kumiko go on and on about her problems, especially when I was really tired or trying to finish some pressing work

before bed. (I translate publications from The Family into Japanese.) At first, she didn't seem to be changing or growing spiritually, but the Lord kept telling me that she didn't have anybody else to encourage or help her. Through this, I think I learned more than Kumiko about the greatness of Jesus' love. He is teaching me to have more love, patience, and mercy for others, especially those who are lost and looking for real love and answers for their questions.

—Akiko Matsumoto

Leading Someone to Receive Jesus

There will of course be times when it either isn't possible or practical or necessary to get into a long, involved conversation with people in order to try to lead them to the Lord—times when you won't follow those four steps of personal witnessing. Perhaps the Lord will show you to tell some people right off the bat that He loves them, or to give them tracts to read. Maybe that's all there's time for. Or maybe you already know someone well enough that you can start your witness by telling them about how Jesus changed your life when you received Him, and then suggest that they try Him too. In any case, the goal remains the same: to lead people to receive Jesus at some point.

Whether people pray with you or pray on their own later, all they really need to know about salvation in order to receive it is these four simple truths:

1. God loves people and wants to be with them now and forever. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”¹

2. People need forgiveness. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”² Until they get saved, they are separated from God because they are not perfect like He is. They make mistakes and commit wrongs—what the Bible calls “sin.” But God wants to forgive their sin so they can be with Him. He wants to forgive them and show them His love.

3. Jesus can bridge the gap. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty for their sins and made a way for them to be reunited with God. “He [Jesus] personally carried the load of our sins in His own body when He died on the cross.”³

4. Salvation is a gift. It can’t be earned through our good works. No one could ever be good enough to go to Heaven. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”⁴ “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁵ All they have to do to experience salvation is open their heart’s door and receive Jesus as their Savior. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”⁶

¹ John 3:16

² Romans 3:23

³ 1 Peter 2:24 TLB

⁴ Ephesians 2:8–9

⁵ Romans 6:23

⁶ Revelation 3:20

The challenge: Put Jesus to the test.

A lot of people who say they don't believe in Jesus simply haven't made a final or informed decision because they haven't had a real chance to know the truth. They have doubts or questions that need to be answered before they'll be convinced, but if they're sincere and really want the answers, if they really want to know Jesus, He will show Himself to them. They can put Him to the test and prove He is who He says He is. They just need to put Him in a test tube—and *they* are the test tube!

You can tell them, "Either Jesus is who He claims to be—God's Son, the embodiment of God's love, and the way to salvation—or He's a liar and a fraud. If you want to find out which, just put Him to the test. He says He wants to come into your life in a very real and personal way: 'Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him' (Revelation 3:20). Invite Him in. Put Jesus in you and see what happens!"

Once people admit the possibility, then they're giving Jesus a chance. There's a tiny seed of faith, and God will honor that faith by letting them see and feel and know the proof. Jesus will come into their hearts, and He'll prove Himself by changing their lives and answering their prayers.

—Adapted from D.B.B.

There's no set or "official" salvation prayer. All people need to do is sincerely ask for forgiveness and open their hearts to Jesus. They can either pray out loud, or silently. They can pray in their own words, or they can pray as they read a written prayer from a tract, or they can repeat phrase by phrase a prayer that you lead them in. There's not a "right" method or even a "best" method. Jesus said, "He that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."¹ All they need to do is "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and [they] will be saved."²

You may find one salvation prayer that you particularly like and use that with most of the people you witness to, or you may want to have a few different prayers on hand to use in different situations and with different types of people.

A sample salvation prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for me so that all my mistakes and wrongs can be forgiven. I now open the door to my heart and ask You to please come into my life, forgive me, and give me Your free gift of eternal life. Amen.

¹ John 6:37 KJV

² Acts 16:31

The personal touch

As a young preacher with a real love for the lost and a sincere desire to try to win the poor lost sheep the churches had failed to reach, I tried everything I could think of and dreamed up every method I could imagine to try to carry the Gospel to them. I preached on the streets and in the parks. I sang at the top of my voice. I showed slides and movies anywhere I possibly could, to reach the people outside of the churches with the message of God's love. But it was still the meeting method and the mass evangelism approach, which only had moderate success.

Then one day I discovered the exciting truth that I could win more people to the Lord by witnessing to them wherever I could find them, without a church or a pulpit or a meeting of any kind, anywhere, any time, and all the time, everywhere, to everybody!

—D.B.B.



“Joy in the presence of the angels of God” (Luke 15:10).

Each time a new soul is born into the kingdom of God, it's like the birth of a child. And the same joy, only greater, is experienced at the birth of a new spirit into the kingdom of God. All Heaven rejoices over that one lost soul that was found and rescued, more than over ninety-nine who are already safely home (Luke 15:7).

—D.B.B.

Keep It Simple

Receiving Jesus and His love and salvation is a simple, straightforward process. A lot of people have the idea that it's a lot more complicated than it really is and, sadly, a lot of well-meaning witnesses perpetuate that wrong idea by bringing a lot of points into their witness that aren't really necessary or helpful. Sadder yet, a lot of people fail to receive Jesus because they are scared away by unwise witnesses who either are too forceful in their presentation, or who try to convince them of things that weren't necessary for salvation.

Jesus simply went about everywhere doing good, showing love and calling, "Come to Me."¹ Point people to Jesus. Talk about His love. Talk about His acceptance and forgiveness. Talk about His power to change, to heal, to comfort, to mend broken hearts and lives. Once people have accepted Jesus, He can lead them along step by step. The Holy Spirit and His Word will reveal the difference

¹ Matthew 11:28

between true and false doctrine and answer their questions over time.¹

Your primary job as a witness is not to teach details of theology, Bible history, or deep spiritual mysteries. In fact, you don't really need to know much about any of those things to be a good witness. You just need to know Jesus and what He has done in your life, and believe that He wants to do the same for others. Stick to the simple love of Jesus and how much He cares for them and wants to help them.

¹ John 16:13; 8:31–32

The Gospel in twenty-five words

All you need in order to share God's love with others is a simple faith in a simple salvation and a simple Gospel for people to simply believe and receive and be saved—the Good News summed up so simply in one beautiful verse: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

That's the best single verse in the Bible to explain the concept of salvation to people from almost any background. If you can help them to understand each part of that verse, that's all you really need. “For God so loved the world.”—Who is God?—He's the Spirit of love! Are they part of the world? “For God so loved you”—put their name in there—“that He gave His only begotten Son.”—Who's that?—Jesus! “That whoever believes in Him”—Do they believe in Jesus? Then they “will not perish”—won't go to Hell—“but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16 is all the education you need to go and win the lost. That's all the preparation you need to be a missionary. Simply go out where the lost are to be found and give them His love and His Good News of salvation in Jesus!

—D.B.B.

The Spiritual Warfare

Each of us who has answered Jesus' call to help bring His truth and salvation to others is engaged in a war of the worlds. It's a spiritual battle of good against evil. "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."¹ God, His heavenly forces, and His children on earth are fighting the Devil, his demons, and earthlings who are wittingly or unwittingly his followers and agents on earth. And what is the objective of the fight? What is each side trying to do?—Win the hearts and minds and souls of us mortals. The Devil tries to win people to his cause and ways, or to at least keep them captive by keeping them from hearing or receiving the truth.² When we witness, we try to set the captives free.³

¹ Ephesians 6:12

² 2 Corinthians 4:3–4

³ John 8:31–32,36; 2 Timothy 2:24–26

The Devil will fight both you and the person you're witnessing to. He'll try to defeat you before you even get started by giving you lots of "good" reasons for not witnessing. He'll remind you of other things you could be doing instead. He'll try to cause you to feel shy or embarrassed about your faith, or worried about how people will react. He'll try to get you thinking about yourself and your own problems. It's similar to what most soldiers experience before going into battle—what they call the before-battle blues. But if you're going to accomplish what God wants you to do, you can't let the Devil scare you out before you begin.

Once you get started and begin to see the Lord working on your behalf, engineering situations and putting His words in your mouth and working in people's hearts, it gets easier. The Devil will probably continue to try to cause you trouble and get you sidetracked by sending time wasters your way, but you're bound to win if you don't give in! The Enemy always fights when you're accomplishing something for the Lord, or about to. His opposition is proof that you're hitting him where it hurts. That's not the time to retreat; that's the time to witness all the more boldly.

The Devil will also fight those to whom you are witnessing—usually by putting all sorts of doubts or opposing or distracting thoughts in their minds, or trying to interfere in other ways. He'll belittle you to them, and find fault with you and your message and your presentation. Or he'll try to cause them to feel embarrassed, or to think in terms of what this change you're offering them is going to cost them—things they've been indulging in and enjoy-

ing, which they imagine would be taboo if they were to “become religious.” The Devil has been at this game for a long time, and he’s gotten quite good at painting a black picture! This is why it’s important to give people the benefit of the doubt when they ask a lot of questions or seem skeptical. This is also why it’s so important to silently pray for the person you’re witnessing to throughout your witness. Or if you’re witnessing with a partner, one of you can pray silently while the other talks.

It’s a spiritual battle, but you’re on the winning side. You can’t win every skirmish, but if you’ll stay close to your Commander in Chief and follow His instructions, you’ll have many more victories than losses.

Whose hour?

I was in Singapore with an hour to kill before catching a bus to the airport. Around the corner, sitting on the pavement, was a young Westerner who looked quite distressed.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" I asked.

"Yes," came the reply. "You can listen to me. My mind is going crazy! I don't know how to find peace!"

So I sat there and listened. He was an American and had come from Indonesia, where he had met a girl, he explained. Now he was afraid that he had gotten AIDS from her. He didn't know where to go next—back to the States, or on to Thailand to try to find a place to meditate.

When he was all talked out, I told him what had happened to me—how I had also been desperately looking for peace, love, truth, and happiness, and how I had found everything I needed in Jesus. He prayed with me to receive Jesus, and then we prayed together for his complete healing of body and mind.

Was I ever glad I hadn't wasted that hour that the Lord wanted me to use to reach this young man with His love!

—*Emmanuel Peterson*

The Results

Sometimes you get instant results. Some people you witness to will be at a point in their lives when they're open, ripe, and ready to receive Jesus, and they will do so right away. Perhaps the Lord has had others witness to them already, or perhaps He has worked in their lives in other ways to bring them to that point. Then the Lord sends you along to help them take that final and all-important step of receiving Jesus.

Witnessing can also be a difficult and thankless job. Not everyone is interested in knowing about Jesus or getting closer to God, so don't be surprised if some people reject your witness. Don't be discouraged, either. It can be a bit disheartening when you reach out to people and offer them the most wonderful gift anyone could ever receive, only to have them brush you off, quickly change the subject, look at you critically, or even belittle or berate you. When that happens (as it does to everyone at some point), don't give up. That person may not be ready to listen or get saved, but the

next person might. If you persevere, sooner or later you'll get positive results.

Some people's first reaction is negative simply because they were caught off guard. They weren't expecting or prepared to get into a discussion on such a deep topic as faith in God. Others may have had bad experiences with other Christians or heard arguments against Christianity that left them disillusioned. Some need to be won over by personal example before they will listen to the "sermon." Some feel that if they were to receive Jesus as their Savior they would be betraying the faith in which their parents raised them. Some fear that getting saved would mean they would need to give up certain things they're not ready to give up. Some are simply too self-satisfied or too content with the things of this world. There are all sorts of reasons why people don't open their hearts to Jesus the first time they have the opportunity. In non-Christian cultures, especially, it often takes time and a lot of patience to win people to Jesus. Some people have to be convinced of your sample—the way you live and how loving and concerned you are for others—before they're ready to accept what you have to say.

If some people don't want to listen to what you have to say about the Lord, don't try to force it on them—but don't give up on them either. It may be that it's just not their time. Try to end your witness on a positive note and continue to pray for them whenever you think of them. Ask the Lord to keep working in their hearts, to water the seeds that you planted there, and to show you what more you can do to try to win them. Perhaps they will eventually

The parable of the sower

A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold. ...

Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the Devil comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the Word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

—Jesus

(Luke 8:5–8; 11–15.

The parable of the sower is also found in Matthew chapter 13 and Mark chapter 4.)

be won through your personal example of living the happy, love-filled life that Jesus has for all those who receive Him. Maybe the Lord will tell you to tell them you're there for them, and that you'd be happy to talk with them more about the Lord whenever they like. Maybe He wants you to keep in touch and encourage their faith by mail or e-mail, or by giving them Christian literature from time to time. Or maybe the Lord has some other plan. Maybe He will send someone else along to finish the job that you started. Maybe later, under different circumstances, they will be more receptive.

If you've ever done any gardening or farming, you know that the one who plants the seed doesn't have the final say in whether it grows or not. All the gardener or farmer can do is till the ground, plant the seed, and water and fertilize it. He can't make the seed grow. Only God can do that. No matter how effective a witness you are, the results are in the Lord's hands, according to the response of the individual. You can't force results! One may sow and another water, but God gives the increase.¹

¹ 1 Corinthians 3:6

Life is in the seed, not the sower.

Winning people to Jesus is like farming: We plant little seeds of truth of God in the earth of people's hearts. The great warm sunshine of His love and the water of His Word will cause some of those seeds to burst forth in the miracle of new life.

Of course, we hope to win others to faith in Christ, but that's really God's job and the work of the Holy Spirit. We can only give people the truth and show them the Lord's love; we can't force results or make the decision for them. Whether or not they choose to believe and receive and follow that truth is between each individual and God.

One person sows the seed, another may water it, but it is God that gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). We can only try to prepare the ground, soften it with our prayers, and sow the seed. It's up to the individual to receive it, and only God can make it take root and grow and produce fruit.

Our job is simply to go forth bearing precious seed and to plant it in fertile, fruitful, receptive hearts. We may not always see the harvest ourselves, but as long as we have faithfully done our part, we can leave the rest up to the Lord.

—D.B.B.

Witnessing never fails.

No witnessing is ever wasted! God will see to it that if you cast your bread on the waters it will accomplish the purpose whereunto He has sent it. His Word will not return to Him void (Ecclesiastes 11:1; Isaiah 55:11). Witnessing always pays and it always gets results. Whether you win people to the Lord or not, you're obeying God, doing His will, and fulfilling your obligation to preach the Gospel.

The Word will do the work. Once you've delivered God's message, once you've given people the Word, your job is done. What those people do about it is then between them and God. Even if you never win a soul, you're still winning as long as you're faithfully witnessing!

—D.B.B.



Don't ever give up just because you have a few defeats! The Lord didn't say anything about being successful, He said, "Well done, good and *faithful* servant!" (Matthew 25:21).

—D.B.B.

Common Obstacles and Pitfalls

Don't be dismayed or discouraged if you run into any of the following roadblocks to your witness; the Lord can help you find a way around them and any other problem you may encounter.

Judging by outward appearance or first impression

If Jesus had judged people by their outward appearance, do you suppose He would have chosen uneducated fishermen and a hated tax collector for His disciples? And what would have become of Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman He met at the well, or a host of others that Jesus loved and helped and won? “The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”¹ Ask

¹ 1 Samuel 16:7

God to help you see each person He sends your way as He sees them.

Arguing

Some argumentative types argue because they are skeptical and unbelieving and just want to try to cause you trouble and waste your time. But not everyone who seems argumentative at first falls into that category. Some sincere seekers will argue with you because they really want the answers; they want to be convinced. How do you tell the difference? First of all, shoot up a silent prayer, asking the Lord to help you discern the person's motives. Then shoot up another prayer for patience if the Lord shows you to give the person the benefit of the doubt.

You've usually got to win people to yourself before they are going to listen to and believe what you've got to say about Jesus and the Bible and get saved, so try to find and stick to points you can agree on. If after spending a few minutes trying to relate to them and answer their questions they clearly don't want to listen to God's answers from the Bible, just tell them politely that you have no other answers to give them, and leave it at that.

Look at how Jesus answered the questions He was asked: Some came from people who sincerely wanted to know the truth, like Nicodemus¹ and the Samaritan woman who He met at the well.² These He answered sweetly and patiently. Other questions came from His enemies, who were trying to trap Him in His words. When Jesus perceived that

¹ John 3:1–21

² John 4:5–29

Let's not argue over doctrine; let's get people saved!

God's mercy doesn't hang on legalistic theological technicalities. How much can a small child understand? Yet Jesus said, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Children don't waste most of their time arguing over doctrine or theological fine points.

The American orator and statesman Daniel Webster (1782–1852) once said, "The Bible is to be believed and understood in the plain and obvious meaning of its passages, for I cannot persuade myself that a Book intended for the instruction and conversion of the whole world should cover its true meaning in any such mystery and doubt, so that none but critics and philosophers can discover it."

It's the Devil who tries to make salvation seem so complicated or so difficult that people can't understand it. Don't let him lead you or others away from the simplicity of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Not everyone can understand strong doctrine, but everyone understands love. Stay on the main line and preach the most important doctrines of all—Jesus and His love and salvation!

—D.B.B.

those questioning Him only wanted to cause trouble for Him, He answered very carefully.¹ Sometimes He saw that there was no use in even talking to certain people, so He said nothing at all.²

Feeling intimidated

Some people will challenge you by either belittling you and what you are saying, or by coming on strong about what they believe. Often it's not because they are really so sure of what they profess to believe, but because they want to find out how convinced you are about what you are telling them. Others act that way with nearly everyone: They try to dominate others by putting them down. In any case, what you need to remember is that you have something that those people desperately need—Jesus. You shouldn't feel intimidated because, in actuality, they're not opposing you—the Devil is opposing them. Keep your composure and continue to speak with conviction. “God's people must not be quarrelsome; they must be gentle, patient teachers of those who are wrong. Be humble when you are trying to teach those who are mixed up concerning the truth. For if you talk meekly and courteously to them, they are more likely, with God's help, to turn away from their wrong ideas and believe what is true. Then they will come to their senses and escape from Satan's trap.”³

¹ Matthew 22:15–22; John 8:6–8

² Matthew 26:62–63

³ 2 Timothy 2:24–26 TLB

The spoiler

Sometimes if you try to witness to two or more people together, one person will be unreceptive and try to spoil your witness for the others by making derogatory comments, asking insincere or belittling questions, or doing other things to interfere. That's why it's usually best to witness one-on-one.

One-on-one, it's easier to find a person's key—the thing that will spark faith or compel him or her to receive the Lord—and that key will likely be different for each person in the group. Also, many people feel awkward about talking about God and faith and spiritual matters in front of others, especially their friends, and especially if they haven't given those things much serious thought before.

This is one reason why it's good to witness in pairs or small groups when possible. That way, each person witnessing may be able to strike up a personal conversation with one person from the group they're witnessing to. One-on-one, even those who may have seemed unreceptive while in the group, due to peer pressure or trying to maintain their image in front of their friends, often turn out to be very receptive.

Avoiding the devoid

Some people don't just want to argue or harass; they are so devoid of the truth and light and Spirit of God that they will try to put a stop to your spreading the Gospel by causing you bodily harm or serious problems—just as they did Jesus.¹ This

¹ John 15:18–20

is the type of people Jesus was referring to when He warned His disciples, “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”¹

In other words, don't cause yourself unnecessary trouble by witnessing to people who you know will resent and reject and oppose your message and persecute you for it. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,” Jesus told His followers. “Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”²

Lecturing

There's a story about a boy who was swimming in a river when he suddenly became tired and was in danger of drowning. The boy called to a man on the riverbank for help, but the man started to lecture him about how he should have been more careful and stayed closer to the bank. “Rescue me now!” cried the boy. “You can lecture me later, when I am safe.”

We laugh, but you'd be surprised how many would-be witnesses for the Lord do the same thing, often without even realizing it. It's much more important to get people saved and help them establish a personal relationship with Jesus than it is to warn them about the evils of smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling, foul language, or sexual promiscuity or perversions. Actually, there are sins of the spirit that can be even more damaging, such as anger, hatred, prejudice, extreme jealousy, or

¹ Matthew 7:6

² Matthew 10:16

Be a wise witness.

The Lord expects us to exercise wisdom in how and when and to whom we witness. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves," Jesus told His disciples. "Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We owe the message of God's love to everyone, but especially to those who will believe and receive it. The Lord doesn't mean for us to cause ourselves unnecessary trouble by giving the message to people who we know won't receive it and possibly even persecute us for it. The whole purpose of witnessing is to win others with the Lord's love, not antagonize or offend.

In some non-Christian countries, unwise witnessing can lead to serious persecution. In such situations, you must be very selective in who you witness to, and even then you must be very prayerful in how you go about it. Don't end your witnessing opportunities prematurely, when just a little patience and wisdom could help you avoid trouble.

—D.B.B.

physical or verbal abuse of others. Once people are saved, it will be easier for them to change because they will have the Lord's power behind them.

However, in the case of those who already recognize that they have a problem with a certain addiction like alcohol or drugs and are seeking a way out, you can explain that asking Jesus into their hearts is the first step in getting His help to overcome their problems. Then, after they have Jesus, you can suggest or discuss ways to go about making the changes that they and you know they need.

The long, solemn sermon

Don't make the common mistake of preaching a sermon instead of witnessing. David Brandt Berg once told of a time he went witnessing door to door with a certain preacher:

"We knocked on the door of a family that neither of us knew, and a woman answered. Immediately, the man with me began to preach a sermon. 'Dearly beloved, we are gathered here together...' Well, it wasn't quite as bad as that, but you would have thought he was preaching to a congregation! The only way he knew how to witness was to preach a sermon. He may have been a good preacher, but that's not the way to witness! All the dear little housewife at the door could do was blink her eyes and wonder. I could almost read her mind: *What in the world is this preacher doing on my doorstep? The baby's falling out of his highchair, dinner's burning on the stove, the laundry's waiting to be hung out to dry—and I'd like to hang this preacher!*"

Hellfire and brimstone

In the past two thousand years a few people may have been scared into Heaven with warnings that hellfire and brimstone awaited them if they didn't repent and turn from their wicked ways, but a heaven of a lot more people have been won through love. Too many people picture God as some sort of angry monster who carries a big stick and is just waiting for them to get out of line so He can clobber them, and sadly, this type of presentation by Christians has turned a lot of people away from the Lord. Don't perpetuate that wrong image. God is love.¹ He knows each person's fears and problems, heartaches and secret dreams, and He wants to take their hand and lead them to the happy, meaningful lives they desire.

Unwise choice of words

A big part of relating to people is in using vocabulary that is not likely to offend or rub them the wrong way. For example, people need to hear that they need a Savior, but instead of telling them that they are "rotten sinners," you'll get further by talking in terms of things that they've done that they know were wrong or unloving, things that they now regret having done because they realize that they hurt others. The point is that people need God's forgiveness, but it's not your place to judge them for their sins. Help them see the light without feeling the lightning bolt.

¹ 1 John 4:8

First things first

You should sympathize with people about their problems, and sometimes you need to show them God's love in a tangible way by helping meet their immediate needs before they're ready to hear the Gospel or get saved. As someone aptly put it, you can't preach the Gospel to a man with an empty stomach. In other words, you need to relieve his preoccupation with hunger in order to both get his attention and to show him that God cares about him.

But don't get so involved in trying to help people sort out all their problems that you fail to point them to the Answer Man. Get them saved as early on as possible, so that He can then help them with their problems. Once they're saved, the Lord may want to use you to also give them His advice or help them in practical ways, but He is the One who has the answers and the power to change them and their situation.

Talking too much about yourself

Someone once defined a bore as "someone who talks about himself when I want to talk about myself." There are times in your witness when it's appropriate and even important to talk about yourself, particularly when you're establishing points in common and explaining your own salvation experience, but don't you become the focal point of the conversation. A safe rule of thumb to follow would be for every word you say about yourself, let others say twenty about themselves.

Different strokes for different folks

You can't use the same approach with everyone. What turns some peoples' keys may turn others off. One man's meat is another man's poison. For example, the elderly and the terminally ill are probably thinking about what awaits them at death, so the promise of eternal life in Heaven will probably inspire them more than anything else to receive Jesus. Most teenagers, on the other hand, feel they have their whole lives ahead of them and are far more concerned about coping with the present, so the promise of a Friend who truly understands and will love them unconditionally may be just the thing to win them.

People are different, so try to tailor your witness to the needs, backgrounds, and mindsets of those you witness to. Communicate with them on their level and in a way that is most likely to appeal to them. This was one of the secrets of the apostle Paul's success: He found common ground and, in effect, became a servant to those he was trying to win to Jesus by adapting his message and personal example accordingly.

"Though I am free from all men," Paul wrote, "I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews ... to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

—Shannon Shayler

He who would win some must be winsome.

In order for people to communicate well, they must have some things in common. So in your witnessing, approach others in a positive way with a positive attitude. Establish points of contact. Develop a rapport.

Be friendly, loving, understanding, compassionate, and sympathetic. Find as much common ground as you can. The apostle Paul said that he became all things to all men in order to win some (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Fighting false systems and false doctrines can be a temptation when you know you're so right and others are so wrong, but that's a negative type of witnessing—the kind that doesn't show love or win people. The best way to handle points of disagreement is not by refuting what the other person says, but by hearing them out and then presenting the truth in a loving and positive way. "Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord, and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, and do it in a gentle and respectful way" (1 Peter 3:15 TLB).

Dwell on the positive, not the negative. Instead of preaching against things, preach Jesus and uphold Christ, and He will draw all men unto Himself (John 12:32).

—D.B.B.

Show people Jesus!

When witnessing to people from non-Christian backgrounds, don't dwell on the differences between your religions. Neither do you need to get into discussing big theological questions about who God is. That's why Jesus came—to show everybody what God is like. Just talk about Jesus, the Man who went everywhere helping people and doing good. Jesus has a pretty good reputation, even where Christianity does not. He's your biggest asset. Just say frankly, "I love Jesus, and He loves you!"

In talking about Jesus with people who know little or nothing about Him, you don't even need to go into how He died for their sins and they need to ask His forgiveness. These things you can explain later. They may not understand that their problems are the result of sin (or even what sin is, for that matter), but they know that they have problems.

So just tell them, "If you want to straighten out your life and be truly happy, you need to ask Jesus to help you. He is the spirit of goodness and light and love, and He'll solve all your problems. Do you like love? Jesus *is* love! He's the light that chases away the darkness. He's the love that chases away the hate. He's the good that chases away the evil. He's love and mercy and forgiveness and everything good. Jesus is God's love, and He wants to love you! Just ask Jesus to come into your heart."

—D.B.B.

The Rewards

Witnessing is a wonderfully rewarding experience! It's thrilling to see the Lord's love transform people's spirits and lives, and it's wonderful to know that a loved one, friend, or someone you may have just met will be going to Heaven as a result of your witness. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents,"¹ and you, God's instrument on earth, also get to partake of that joy.

That alone would be reward enough, but there's much, much more! Jesus has promised bountiful rewards and honor in Heaven to those who follow and please Him, and the best way you can please Him is by bringing others to Him. That makes Him proud of you. "I tell you, whoever acknowledges Me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God."²

Once you're saved, you belong to Jesus forever. You can rest assured that He will never stop loving

¹ Luke 15:10

² Luke 12:8 NIV

you, and that you have eternal life no matter what you do or don't do. That can't change. What can change according to how much you let the Lord use your life is the amount of commendation and heavenly reward you'll receive. Your works don't determine your salvation, but they will determine whether you enter Heaven "with honors." The Bible says that "those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."¹ Salvation alone doesn't guarantee that special shine in Heaven; doing your best to fulfill the Great Commission does.

That's now your job as a born-again Christian, and it's not meant to be something you do out of duty alone. It's a vocation you should be proud to fulfill. It's not always an easy task, and there will probably be times when you will be discouraged or frustrated because you feel you're not bearing much fruit. In times like those, it helps to remember what's waiting up ahead. The satisfaction of knowing you have pleased the Lord and the rewards He promises as a result will make it worth it all!

¹ Daniel 12:3

Will Jesus say to you, “Well done”?

We can't earn or work for salvation. That's a gift (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5). But we can earn special praise and commendation from the Lord, and we can work for rewards. The heavenly crown the Lord talks about in Revelation 2:10 is not our salvation. We have eternal life through His Son (John 3:36). The crown is our reward, given only to winners—only those who run and win the race (1 Corinthians 9:25–27). “He will reward each according to his works” (Matthew 16:27). The people who love the Lord the most and serve Him most faithfully and sacrificially are going to get the greatest rewards, the greatest blessings.

In the story Jesus told about the man with one talent (ancient unit of weight) of gold, the man with two, and the man with five, the thing that was important was not that one was given more than the other, but how they each invested the assets they had been given (Matthew 25:14–30). What you do with your talents or gifts is up to you. It's not what you've got that determines the outcome, it's what you do with what you've got!

When you get to Heaven and the time comes for you to receive your recognition and reward, will He say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord”? (Matthew 25:21). That's the commendation that we all want to hear one of these days—and we will if we will be faithful to do our best for Him here and now.

—D.B.B.

We're building a home of hearts that's going to last for eternity.

The happiest part about Heaven will be all the people we'll see there that we had a share in winning to the Lord. Our greatest joy is going to be His love and the love of others and the gratitude of others, the thankfulness of those we helped to get there.

If you really love people, you will love them all the way—all the way to Heaven and all the way through eternity! You'll tell them about Jesus and help them receive Him. Then no matter what happens here, you'll meet them over there. Tell them about Jesus now so you'll be together in heavenly places for eternity.

—D.B.B.



We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.

Never underestimate the power of personal witnessing to not only win people to Jesus, but also to inspire and encourage your own heart and keep you alive spiritually. "The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself" (Proverbs 11:25). Witnessing in itself is a form of reward. It inspires our own hearts as we watch the Lord work. It will not only be worth it all when we see Jesus, but it's worth it all right now to see the wonderful, thrilling, and satisfying results of our labors.

—D.B.B.

A Promise of Power

The book of Acts gives a few more details about Jesus' final moments with His disciples before His ascension. "Wait for the Promise of the Father, which you have heard from Me," He tells them. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me ... to the end of the earth."¹

The disciples then returned to Jerusalem, where they prayed and waited with over one hundred more of Jesus' closest followers. Their prayers were answered with a miraculous manifestation of God's power: "Suddenly there was a sound like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on their heads. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in languages they didn't know, for the Holy Spirit gave them this ability."²

¹ Acts 1:4,8

² Acts 2:2-4 TLB

This was what they'd been waiting for—supernatural power to continue Jesus' work now that He had departed. Suddenly, the fear, worry, and inability to act on their convictions were all gone. One of the most spectacular evangelistic experiences of all time was about to take place.

A major religious festival, the Jewish Feast of the Harvest, was being celebrated in the streets of Jerusalem, and Jewish pilgrims from many nations had come for the annual event. As Peter and the other disciples began telling pilgrims the wonderful news of God's love and salvation through Jesus, they each found themselves speaking fluently in the languages of the various pilgrims—languages the disciples had never spoken before. As news of the miracle spread through the city, multitudes quickly gathered.

Peter climbed the steps of a nearby building, raised his hands, and shouted to the enormous crowd. He spoke to them with such conviction and authority that 3,000 people accepted Jesus as their Savior.¹

Less than two months earlier, Peter had been so cowardly after Jesus was arrested that he had denied even knowing Him. Now he stood before thousands in the very city where Jesus had been arrested, tried, and executed, boldly proclaiming God's message to all! Peter had changed, just as the Lord had prayed he would.² What caused this sudden transformation?—The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Acts 2:41

² Luke 22:32

If you feel shy or awkward when it comes to sharing your faith with others, you'll be happy to know that the same power is available to you. The Holy Spirit can override shyness, inhibitions, worries about what others might think, or any other natural tendencies that get in the way of your freely reaching out to others with the message of God's love and salvation in Jesus. You may never preach to or win thousands at a time like Peter did, but in the end you may win just as many or more, one at a time.

(For more about the Holy Spirit and its gifts and fruits, see *God's Gifts*, another title in the *Get Activated!* series.)

If you haven't yet been baptized, or filled, with the Holy Spirit, you can be right now by simply praying the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, please fill me to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit so that I can love You more, follow You more closely, and have greater power to tell others about Your love and salvation. Amen.

Rivers of living water

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in Me.’ (He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in Him)” (John 7:37–39 TLB).



The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a baptism of love. God is the very Spirit of love, so when He baptizes you with His Holy Spirit, He pours on His love till it fills you from top to bottom, and He keeps pouring it on until you can't contain it; your heart bursts with His love and overflows on others. You just have to share the love and happiness God's given you, so others can know Him and experience His love also.

—*Rafael Holding*



If there's anything that catches people's attention and causes them to take notice of what you're saying or doing, it's enthusiasm! The word enthusiasm is derived from two Greek words: *en*, which means “in,” and *theos*, which means “God.” So enthusiasm literally means “in God,” or “God in us.” Thus the truly enthusiastic person is one who acts and speaks as if he or she were possessed by God.

—*D.B.B.*

Getting inspired to witness

It's been my experience that most people don't go witnessing because they don't feel inspired to. They say they are waiting for God to work in some supernatural way first. But God's not going to give power to those who are not going to use it. We need to obey in order for Him to have a chance to work.

When you get out there and see the multitude as Jesus saw them, "as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36), you'll get the desire. When you get out there face to face with the need, the Lord will give you the inspiration and compassion you need.

—D.B.B.



We want to be humble, but we don't like to be humbled—and talking with others about God and faith can be very humbling, especially at first. It helps to remember, though, that in God's eyes, humility is an important virtue. It also goes hand in hand with unselfishness, another of His favorites and another key to overcoming shyness. The Holy Spirit helps us overcome our natural tendencies to think mainly about ourselves or how we come across or how people see us, and instead concentrate on the needs of others and how we can help them; it gives us power to get past the awkwardness.

—Shannon Shayler

Giving God the Glory

When God said you would receive supernatural power to witness, He meant it! That power is real, and it may very well manifest itself in ways that surprise you at first. God may give you special insight into people and their problems—the ability to discern things about them that they haven’t told you and that you would have no other way of knowing. Or you may be amazed at how clearly and persuasively you get His message across, even if you often find it hard to communicate or express yourself in other situations. Or you may hear yourself relating experiences you hadn’t thought of in years, or saying things you hadn’t planned to say, only to realize that was exactly what the person you’re talking to needed to hear. Or maybe something in the Bible that you read only once will suddenly pop into your mind and be the perfect answer to the person’s question. This phenomenon is what Jesus was referring to when He said, “It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”¹

¹ Matthew 10:20

When this first happens to you, you'll know that's supernatural! You'll know it was all the Lord's doing and nothing of yourself, and you'll be so excited that you will naturally and wholeheartedly give all the credit to Him.

But God is not limited to such outright and obvious manifestations of His Spirit working through you. He will use whatever means He can to bring people to Him, including whatever natural gifts and abilities you may have. If you're outgoing and make friends easily, He'll use that. If you're a natural leader or the type that others look up to, He'll use that. If you're the sort of person others find it easy to open up to and confide in, He'll use that. If you speak well, He'll use that. If you're a musician or singer, He'll use that. He'll use any talent you have, if you'll let Him.

But He also wants you to remember that any success you have is only because of Him working in you, not because you're anything great. Even your natural abilities are gifts from Him. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father."¹

If you start taking the credit to yourself for being a good witness, a powerful speaker, or a persuasive salesman of the Gospel instead of lifting up Jesus so He can draw people to Himself,² you'll be drawing them to yourself. If you do that, you won't be an effective witness for long! It's human nature to want to take credit for your accomplishments, but when it comes to witnessing, the Lord needs you to remain humble. Constantly remind yourself that

¹ James 1:17

² John 12:32

it's only through His power that you are able to lead others to Him. He says, "Not by [your] might nor by [your] power, but by My Spirit."¹ That's the secret!

In fact, the Lord often chooses to use as some of His best witnesses those who are not so naturally gifted, because then it's clear to all that what they have to offer is not due to their own abilities or supposed greatness; it's because they have connected with a source outside themselves that has brought love and light and happiness and other good things into their lives.

"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."² It is also written of some of Jesus' first disciples: "When [people] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."³

If your desire is to serve and please the Lord, then you will be looking to Him for help and guidance and will therefore want to give Him all the thanks and credit when He helps you to succeed—like the apostle Peter did when a crowd gathered

¹ Zechariah 4:6

² 1 Corinthians 1:26–29

³ Acts 4:13

around him and John after the lame man was healed at the Temple one day. “All the people ran together ... greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? [God] has glorified His Servant Jesus. ... The faith which comes through Him has given [this man] this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.’”¹

You should never be ashamed or afraid or too proud to let people know that you are the Lord’s and that He is the One who helps you to accomplish anything good. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”² If you will constantly remind yourself and others that you are just a tool in the Lord’s hands, then He will get all the glory for anything good that He does through you, and you will find that He will bless and use you wonderfully. Give Him all the glory!

¹ Acts 3:11–13,16

² Philippians 2:13

Taking Care of the “Baby”

When people receive Jesus and are “born again” spiritually,¹ they enter a new world for which they seem poorly equipped. Like weak and helpless natural babies, if your new spiritual babies are going to survive, they are going to need a lot of help—and who could God better use to help them get off to a good start in their new lives than you, their “parent in the Lord”?² If you don’t, who will?

As anyone who’s had a natural baby will tell you, babies are a lot of work, but they are also tremendously rewarding. The same is true of spiritual babies. You may feel that you’re not up to the task or that you’re not much more than a spiritual babe yourself, but if God has given you “children,” you can rest assured that He will also help you care for them.³ A person passes from childhood to adulthood when he or she learns to sacrifice to care for and help others, and that is also true in the spirit.

¹ John 3:5–7

² 1 Corinthians 4:15

³ 1 Thessalonians 5:24

Nothing will help you grow and mature spiritually like helping younger Christians progress in their spiritual lives.

You don't necessarily have to take on the full responsibility of your new "babe's" spiritual care and training, especially if you know other Christians who are grounded in the faith and are able to help, but you should try to provide all the spiritual and moral support you can.

To grow into happy, healthy, well-adjusted, and productive "adult" Christians, newly born-again Christians need five major things:

1. Prayer. Most new Christians aren't in the habit of praying or don't understand the importance or power of prayer, so they don't pray—or they don't pray for the right things. That's why they need others to pray for them, to intercede for them. And one of the most important prayers that we can pray for people after they get saved is that they will "desire the pure milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby."¹ God knows exactly what they need, beginning with a sincere desire for more truth and the things of the spirit. The more earnestly we intercede for them, the sooner and better He is able to meet those needs.

2. Love. Spiritual babies thrive on love, just like natural babies. They need to feel God's love, and they'll most likely feel it first and foremost through you, their spiritual parent. They may also need continual reassurance of God's love

¹ 1 Peter 2:2

Where are the shepherds?

One of God's greatest needs is good shepherds who are concerned for their flocks—patient pastors and teachers who have the faith, vision, and burden to trudge along day after day, feeding the sheep as they gradually grow to be productive and fruitful. A lot of Christians seem to like to scatter seed, but not many people seem to want to take care of the results. Anybody can go out and scatter seed: It takes a true farmer to patiently weed and water and fertilize and prune the little plant to fruitful maturity. Anybody can go out and witness and invite folks to receive Jesus, but very few want to patiently, painstakingly care for and train the spiritual babes they bear till they are able to bear and care for children of their own.

—D.B.B.



Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

—*The apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:2–3).*



Although God can do anything, He has committed Himself to work through our prayers. He wants us to show concern and pray. We have to visualize the people we're praying for and ask the Lord specifically for what we want Him to do, then the Holy Spirit goes to work right away on their behalf.

—D.B.B.

and your love in order to become the “new creations”¹ God wants them to be. You are God’s hands, His feet, His eyes, His mouth, and His face to help them feel and find security in His love.

3. The Word. The Word is our spiritual nourishment. How much and how quickly new Christians grow spiritually depends on how much spiritual nourishment they take in, and that depends largely on their spiritual hunger, how much they desire to be fed and grow.² Faith comes; it grows by taking in the Word of God.³ But the Bible is a big book—not to mention all the Bible commentaries and other Christian literature available. How is the new Christian supposed to know where to start or how to make sense of it all? Spiritual babies need spiritual milk,⁴ and when they’re very small they need someone to feed them. Start your “babes” on the Gospels—beginning with the gospel of John—and titles in this *Get Activated!* series that explain the fundamentals of their newfound faith. Stimulate their hunger for God’s Word by telling them how reading and applying it to your life has helped you.

4. Jesus. People have Jesus if they are saved, of course, but they need to build a personal relationship with Him. They need to find security

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

² Luke 1:53

³ Romans 10:17

⁴ 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:13–14

in the fact that Jesus loves them unconditionally, and they need to learn to return His love. They also need to learn to let Jesus guide them in their day-to-day activities, and to depend on Him to solve their problems, rather than depending on themselves as they have done all their lives.¹ None of these things happen automatically. They will come through spending time with Jesus each day, communicating heart to heart as they talk to and listen to Him in prayer, and as they read His Word.

5. Fellowship. New believers need the support of other Christians—especially those who are older and stronger in the faith. New believers also need to see examples of Christian love in action. They need to see others excited about reading and living the Word. They need to see God answering others’ prayers and working in others’ lives, and as they do, they’ll better understand and appreciate how He is also working in theirs. “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”²

¹ Proverbs 3:5–6; Philippians 2:5

² Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

What makes parents wonderful?—That self-sacrificial spirit that is willing to sacrifice their own time and strength and other pursuits to care for their children. The same goes for those who give of themselves to “parent” new Christians. Caring for spiritual children is a big job, but with a big job comes a big reward. In fact, bearing and caring for other new Christians is just about the greatest experience a Christian can have this side of Heaven!

“Feed My sheep” (John 21:16 KJV).

The Lord wants us to have real love for the lost, to tell others about His love, and to feed them spiritually with His Word. Jesus alone can save you, but He can't save you alone. If you're saved and you really love the Lord and others, you're going to share His love; you're going to witness and tell others about Him.

What can you do for Jesus? You can reach the lost. You can feed His sheep. You can love His little ones. This is the greatest work in the world, so keep on loving Jesus and continue to search out His dear little sheep and love them into His fold, till the Great Shepherd returns for His own (Isaiah 40:10–11; 1 Peter 5:2–4).

—D.B.B.



You've got to help your new converts learn to put their faith in the Word, not their feelings. Without faith in His unchanging Word, what will happen when they don't feel so good? The Devil will get them to doubt God and their connection with Him, and they'll get discouraged. They must have the Word in their hearts; that's the foundation of faith. The strongest Christians and the strongest witnesses for the Lord are those who are strongest in the Word. You can fail, others can fail, the whole world can fail, but God's Word will never fail! "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). It doesn't matter if everyone else in the whole world turns their back on the Lord, they'll still keep going for God if their faith is in the Word!

—D.B.B.

Teaching Others to Teach Others

In a personal letter to Timothy, an up-and-coming young leader of the Early Church, the apostle Paul gave one of the keys to the new movement's success and rapid growth: "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."¹

This was, in fact, the principle that Jesus had applied in training His own disciples: Jesus didn't promote the establishment of impersonal and unwieldy organizations or large congregations all dependent on one person for their spiritual feeding and leadership. He practiced and taught personal witnessing and personal care and training—and for good reason: If enough of those who hear the Gospel and receive salvation would gain a basic knowledge of His Word and take up the challenge to tell others, and if those they win would also take

¹ 2 Timothy 2:2

up the challenge, it wouldn't take long for everyone in the world to have the opportunity to find God's love and salvation in Jesus.

The first step is to pray specifically for the Lord to lead you to people—perhaps even just one to begin with—who will not only get saved, but also catch and keep the vision of spreading the Gospel and winning others to Jesus. “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few,” Jesus told His disciples. “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”¹

Then, once you have won more laborers and they have prayed to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, you need to teach them to witness and help them mature spiritually so eventually they can also care for and train those they win to the Lord. If you win people but fail to help them grow up spiritually, you'll end up with a nursery full of spiritual babes to care for and still no more laborers to help bring in the harvest.

You don't have to wait until you think you know everything. Start now with what you do know and the Lord will teach you more as you go. This book and other titles in this *Get Activated!* series—particularly *God's Gifts*, *Understanding God's Word*, *Prayer Power*, and *Hearing from Heaven*—will help you and those you win and teach to build a strong foundation for your faith and service. *Discovering Truth—Bible Basics*,² is another great learning and teaching tool. You can also learn from each other by sharing the things that you discover in your per-

¹ Matthew 9:37–38

² Published by Aurora Production AG

sonal times of study and hearing from the Lord in prayer.

As with winning people to Jesus, helping others to grow spiritually isn't something *you* can do; it's something the *Lord* does *through* you. It's His Word and His Spirit that do the work of changing lives. Your part is to pray for them, to constantly point them to the Lord and the Word, and to strive to be the kind of Christian they will look up to and want to be like.

Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. ... You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain."¹ "And then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this—that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."²

¹ John 15:8,16

² Matthew 28:20 TLB

We must teach others to teach others to teach others.

As active Christians and witnesses for the Lord, our object is to preach the Gospel to everyone, everywhere. But if we're going to accomplish that task, we can't try to do it all ourselves. We must teach others to teach others. That's the way to multiply our efforts and results.

The apostle Paul wrote, "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). To be productive and self-propagating, we must not only witness and win souls, but we must make disciples of those souls, who can teach others to teach others to teach others in an endless chain reaction of preaching the Gospel. That's how Jesus meant for it to spread.

Jesus didn't reach millions Himself. He spent most of His time teaching and training His disciples to carry on. He preached most of His sermons to them and a few others, until by the time He was ready to leave them behind, they were well able to carry on with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—and they did a terrific job!

So each one teach one—the name of the game being multiplication of citizens for the kingdom of God to glorify and love the Lord. That's the reason for it all—love!

—D.B.B.

Only one life, 'twill soon be past.

Only what's done for Christ will last!

Every Christian was intended to bury his life in the soil of God's service, to lay down his life and take up his cross and follow Jesus in order to bear fruit, many more Christians like himself (Luke 9:23–24; John 15:8). Jesus said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain" (John 12:24). If we will go out and "die daily" for the Lord in His service by giving our lives to help others (1 Corinthians 15:31), we will bring forth much fruit, more Christians like ourselves to preach the Gospel to more of the lost and win them to the Lord that He may have much fruit.

What a small price to pay for all He has promised in return—blessings, happiness, and eternal rewards in Heaven! If you give your all, God will reward you a hundred times over (Matthew 19:29). You can't beat that kind of investment. There's no other investment in this world that guarantees that kind of returns.

What are you doing, and for whom? Will it last forever for Jesus and others? Don't waste another day! Spend its precious time for Him and His, for eternity!

—D.B.B.

Appendix

Verses to Use in Witnessing

You may want to mark these key verses in your Bible so you can find them quickly when explaining these points while witnessing.

God—who He is and what He is like:

John 4:24: God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Ephesians 4:6: [There is] one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 John 4:8: God is love.

Jesus—who He is, why He came, and what He does for us:

John 8:12: I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

John 11:25–26: I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

John 14:6: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

1 Timothy 1:15: Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

1 Timothy 2:5: There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Why we are separated from God's love:

Isaiah 59:2: Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Romans 3:23: All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Salvation is a gift that cannot be earned through good works:

Romans 6:23: The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8–9: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration [spiritual rebirth] and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Eternal salvation—what it is and how to receive it:

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 1:12: As many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

Revelation 3:20: Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

How to know you have eternal life once you have received Jesus as your Savior:

John 3:36: He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John 5:24: He who hears My Word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 10:28: I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Acts 16:31: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

Why we need the Holy Spirit:

Matthew 3:11: I [John the Baptist] indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He [Jesus] who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John 14:16: I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.

John 14:26: The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 16:13: However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Acts 1:8: You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me ... to the end of the earth.

Luke 4:18: The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me ... He has anointed Me to preach the gospel.

Galatians 5:22–23: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit, simply ask:

Luke 11:9–13: So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

The *Get Activated!* series

If you'd like to learn more about how you can develop your personal relationship with God and receive His blessings, love, and happiness in your life, don't miss the rest of the *Get Activated!* series. These include:

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