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Practical Tips and Suggestions For Effective Soul Winning

By Randy Simmons

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20)

This is what we know as the Great Commission. It is highlighted by several verbs in the form of imperatives. The first one is "Go". We are to go out and "look up" or "track down" unsaved people.

The second is "Teach". Actually, it means tell them how to be saved through the power of the gospel of Christ.

The next verb is "Baptize". We all know that is essential to salvation and is a commandment of obedience from God.

The fourth verb is "Teach them again". What do you teach them? To *"observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."* It does not say "whatsoever I have written you" but "whatsoever I have commanded you."

Now what did He command us to do? Go, teach, baptize, then teach them what He commanded us to do. If I understand the Great Commission properly, the first thing you teach someone won to Christ is how to win someone to Christ. What else could this mean?

Since soul-winning or personal work or evangelism is the primary work of the Church and of individual Christians, it stands to reason that we should train ourselves to be more effective soul-winners. These following tips or suggestions will help you to improve your soul-winning, or if you have never been involved in personal work, will point you toward getting

started.

HAVE A DEFINITE TIME TO GO. This is one of the most important things in soul-winning. If you are to be a soul-winner, you have to do it on purpose. You must plan to do it and try to do it. Set a schedule, a time to go soul-winning every week, and do not let anything interfere with it. Many elders set aside Tuesday nights for soul-winning, that is a good time. If you cannot go on a certain night, go another time, but the point is, set aside a definite time every week and say, "This is my time to win souls." If you do not, or you allow things to interfere, you will probably fail as a soul-winner.

BE SOUL CONSCIOUS. Realize that everyone has a soul and is either heaven-bound or hell-bound. Constantly be on the look-out for prospects. Think all week about who you can visit. Do not always expect someone to give you an assignment. Be conscious enough to get your own prospects whenever possible.

BE CLEAN AND NEAT. Dress nicely and neatly. Do not overdress, but do not look like a "slob" either: be careful about your breath. Nothing will cause a prospect to lose his train of thought like bad breath (garlic, onion, etc.) Mints can rectify this problem. When you go soul-winning, you are representing Jesus and His church. So dress the part, and be clean and neat.

CARRY A BIBLE WITH YOU. You can never win a soul to Christ effectively without God's Word. Why even go without it? Sometimes it is best not to carry it out in the open. Do not be ashamed of the Bible. When some folks see you walk up the sidewalk with a Bible under your arm, they will go and hide or not answer the door. Carry a pocket or purse Testament.

GO TWO BY TWO. There are many reasons to go two by two:

1. It is scriptural. Jesus sent the apostles out two by two;
2. One can encourage the other;
3. One of the two might have more influence. The prospect may not take to one, but might to the other.
4. One can lead; the other keep the road clear (keep children, handle interruptions, etc.); and
5. There is strength in unity: Two are almost always better than one.

GO WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE. The best way to train a soul-winner is for him to go and watch someone else win a soul. Also, you may pick up good pointers from other personal workers. Finally, soul-winning experiences draw people closer together than ever before.

PRAY WHEN YOU GO. We cannot emphasize this enough. Many go soul-winning without getting in a spiritual attitude. A simple, brief, sincere prayer of faith asking God to help you and give power will suffice. It is so important to make sure God is going with you.

GO BELIEVING. Expect to be successful. That is faith. Be positive. God has promised, *"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."* (Psalm 126:6). Do not be surprised at success, but do not be too discouraged at what appears to be failure. Anytime the "seed" is sown, some good is done.

BE NICE. Be nice, courteous, kind and gentle. When you have gone into a home uninvited, you are infringing upon their privacy, so be courteous. Be personable and pleasant. If they do not like you, they will not listen to you!

BE COMPLIMENTARY. Find something to compliment. Compliment their home, children, clothes, furniture, etc. Make it a habit to be complimentary. This starts the visit on a positive note. It is hard for

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PRACTICAL TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SOUL WINNING

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the prospect to be hostile toward you when you are complimenting him.

BE CAREFUL ABOUT GOING IN. If it is not the opportune time, do not push the situation and stay. You may do more harm than good. One can generally tell if he has arrived at a bad time. Be especially careful about two men going in where a woman is alone, or two women going in where a man is alone. Sometimes, if a person in genuinely busy, it is best to make an appointment to come back at his convenience.

BE A GOOD LISTENER. There is a lot of room in the world for good listeners. Talk to him about his interests, and let him talk to you. Listen to them. If you listen to them for a while, they will be much more receptive to listen to you as you present the gospel, if for no other reason than to return the courtesy. Everyone likes a good listener, but nobody likes a know-it-all who must dominate the conversation.

ONLY ONE DO THE TALKING. The one who has the inroad or the most experience should do the talking; the second partner should be quiet, prayerful, and helpful, and then if his partner is failing, he may try. Never should the soul-winners get into an argument or disagreement showing a lack of unity in belief. It is best for one person to take the lead and do most all the talking.

STAY ON THE SUBJECT. This is of vital importance! Keep it simple and follow your plan, not letting anything get you off the main line. Do not spend all your time answering his questions or he will be

governing the conversation. You govern the conversation. You "carry the ball". Suppose a question which is not related to the main subject is asked - what should you do? Say, "That's a good question. I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll make a note of it and we will discuss it when we get through. Now back to ..." If you answer all their questions too early, you may not be able to close effectively. Make sure you remember the purpose of the visit and stay on the subject.

CONVINCE THE PROSPECT THAT HE IS LOST. You cannot get a person to change his life and be saved unless you first convince him that he is lost. None will make a change in anything unless he sees the need. Use Isaiah 59:1-2 or Romans 3:10 or Romans 3:23 or some other scripture, but make sure you get him to see that he is lost, or you will not convince him of the need to be found!

"IF YOU DIED NOW, DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU WOULD GO TO HEAVEN?" I think that is the best question ever used in soul-winning. It opens up so many possibilities.

PROPER POSITIONING. It seems like a small thing, but position yourself so that you can look the prospect squarely in the eye. Also, it is best to sit across the room in dealing with the opposite sex. Eye contact is so important.

BE ON TIME FOR APPOINTMENTS. When you have scheduled a film or study, be prompt. Do not make the prospect wait for you.

PLAN EACH STUDY. Nothing is worse than a haphazard cottage meeting. Every prospect is different and must be planned and handled differently. Write out a list of questions to ask the prospect (especially after film studies). Leave a list of questions and scriptures for the prospect to search through and consider until the next appointment. Do not get too set in your ways and conduct each cottage meeting with the same method. Always be open to new ideas and methods of reaching prospect for Christ. Something as important as a cottage meeting with a lost soul should involve careful planning, preparation and prayer.

TRY TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN. If you are unsuccessful at conversion, do your best to not antagonize or alienate the prospect. It is good to send him a nice letter, thanking him for his hospitality and

asking him kindly to think again about his decision. Try to leave the door open, when possible, for a future conversion.

These are just some practical tips and suggestions on soul-winning. Soul-winners are trained, nor born. We constantly need to remind ourselves of these effective suggestions for soul-winning.

Consider these questions:

1. Are you a soul-winner; Are your practicing the Great Commission?
2. Do you have a definite time to go soul-winning each week; If not, why not?
3. Are you soul-conscious; Do you search for prospects?
4. Do you try to be clean and neat when you go to represent Christ and His Church;
5. Are you in the practice of carrying a Bible with you?
6. Do you pray when you go soul-winning, taking God with you?
7. Do you go believing? Are you positive?
8. Are you nice, courteous and kind when you enter a prospect's home?
9. Do you find something to compliment?
10. Are you careful about going in at a convenient time?
11. Do you try to be a good listener?
12. Do you stay on the subject, remembering the purpose of the visit?
13. Do you try to make the prospect face the reality of being lost?
14. Are you on time? Do you plan and prepare for each individual study or do you just go haphazardly?
15. If unsuccessful for conversion, do you make every effort to leave the door open?

Remember, "*The fruit of the righteous is the tree of life: and He that winneth souls is wise.*" (Proverbs 11:30)

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Congregational Responsibility Toward Elders

By
Oran
Rhodes

Much emphasis is placed, and properly so, on the qualifications and the work of elders. It would seem obvious that the failure to stress the importance of both of these will result in inadequate leadership. The church must have qualified men who are willing to faithfully do the work of elders (I Tim. 3:1). These things are of vital importance to the future of the church, as well as for faithfulness and growth today.

Of similar importance, though not stressed enough, is the responsibility a congregation has toward the elders. If the work is to go well and if we are truly interested in pleasing God, then BOTH the elders and the congregation must properly respond to their respective responsibilities. The failure of a congregation to follow is just as unscriptural and damaging as the failure to lead on the part of the elders. Thus, the responsibility of the congregation needs to be examined scripturally.

The writer of Hebrews says, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you*" (Hebrews 13:17). When they are willing to lead us along the pathway that we should follow, we should gladly submit. Elders do not have the authority to make laws, but they do have the authority which God through His word has given them.

We live in a day when submission to authority is an extremely unpopular idea -- even among members of the church -- but if the leading is scriptural, then the disciples are to obey. Many times elders feel that a certain teacher or a certain program should be changed for the good of the class or the benefit of the congregational work. They should be able to make the change without feeling that someone is going to be "peevied" about it; for if it is needed, it must be done anyway. The elders have the responsibility to lead scripturally; the members of the congregation have the obligation to follow scripturally.

The apostle Paul places the need to

know the elders upon the members of the congregation. "*And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you*" (I Thess. 5:12). Members should not be satisfied to merely know the names and faces of the elders. The dislike many brethren have for their elders often stems from second-hand information and from watching their performance from a distance. It is amazing how many fears are dispelled and misunderstandings are cleared away when one truly knows the person. Elders desire to be friends to each of the entire membership over which they serve. To know them helps us to better understand their thinking and their actions.

In I Thessalonians 5:13, Paul continues his discourse by urging that elders be "*esteemed highly in love for their works sake.*" Hours upon hours of an elder's time is spent in the Lord's business. Family recreation, even livelihood on occasion, are put on the back shelf until some work or problem is resolved. Honor, submission and gratefulness should be every member's feeling toward elders who have this self-denial. This esteem is closely related to our respect for those in authority as is taught in God's Word. Members then should respect the elders, give them encouragement, and should earnestly pray for them.

A warning is given by Paul concerning the congregation's attitude toward elders in I Timothy 5:19 which says, "*Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.*" Since elders who walk in sinful ways are to be rebuked before the congregation (I Tim. 5:20), it is of tremendous importance that any charge must be upon the oral testimony of two or three witnesses. If such support is lacking, the accusation must not even be taken up or entertained. The reputation of the elder must not be unnecessarily damaged, thus causing his work to suffer.

Christians need to realize that it is necessary for them to perform their duties toward the elders just as it is necessary for the elders to perform theirs toward the congregation. Every elder has his faults, but collectively they will not make many errors, and our criticism increases the burden of their yoke. Elders have the same emotional capacities for disappointment, discouragement and grief as they have for satisfaction, optimism,

and joy. We need love, sympathy and human compassion in addition to grateful appreciation for those serving as overseers of the flock of God. A church led by godly men and composed of brethren with a loving attitude toward those men cannot be shaken by outside pressure or opposition.

The Sin of Hypocrisy

By J. Wayne Kilpatrick

We Americans may not agree on many things, but we probably come as close to uniting in our attitude against hypocrisy as against anything else. I don't know of anybody who doesn't despise hypocrisy.

The wife who has been deserted by a husband, who left with another woman, surely despises the hypocrisy that he manifested during the "cover-up" period. One wife said, following her husband's affair, "I can forgive his immoral conduct but I'm having serious trouble forgetting the lies he has told and the sneaking around he has done." Wives also despise the hypocritical words of love that the unfaithful husband says to her that merely keep her blindfolded as to the true state of things.

People also despise the hypocrisy of the supposedly religious family that has so much trouble at home, and that is hard to get along with in the neighborhood. So do they that person who has pulled many crooked business deals, but is the "big cheese" at church. Oh, how they do despise such a person! And you can't blame them too much.

Jesus was gentle with those who were overpowered with sin, but he had no patience with those who were sinners in reality, but who posed as righteous persons. With what group was Jesus dealing in those scathing words recorded in Matthew 23? With hypocrites! Over and over he said in that chapter, when about to bring up something against the Pharisees, "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*" The fact that Jesus was never more stern, more severe with his words than he was in this chapter, indicates that the Lord, himself, bitterly opposed hypocrisy. From all indications, there will be no mercy shown to the hypocrite.

THE SIN OF HYPOCRISY

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As we look at the other side, we see that everybody praises sincerity. Who is the most respected person in the community? That person who has the utmost sincerity. A co-worker of mine a few years ago was most successful as a soul winner, not because of his knowledge of the Bible, for many persons with whom he studied knew the Bible much better than he. Not because he was so eloquent, for many were superior in this area. He was most effective because of his sincerity. He came across as being genuine. Even when he did not make a convert, he was spoken of highly by the ones with whom he had studied. Why? Because of his sincerity. Have you ever heard someone say, "I can't agree with him, but I will defend his right to believe as he does." They never speak this way about a hypocrite. People feel toward a hypocrite about the same way the Jews felt about Paul: *"Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And ... they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,"* (Acts 23:22, 23), to show the violence of their feelings.

Hypocrisy has been a chief stumbling block to many people. When people have no faith in the sincerity of someone in the church, they often allow it to keep them out of the family of God. What a tragedy! It is a terrible thing to be a stumbling block. In Matthew 18:6, Jesus said, *"But whoso shall offend (cause to stumble) one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*

It is so very discouraging to go out and try to win sinners to Jesus over the bad examples of some who profess to be Christians. Those who are trying to win sinners surely deplore hypocrisy to the limit. They know the damage it is doing to those whom they are striving to win.

Let me now say a word to those who may be using the inconsistency of others as an excuse to keep from doing God's will. If you hate hypocrisy so much, why don't you become a genuine Christian, be an honorable part of the church, and help drive hypocrisy out of the ranks of God's people? This is what the rest of us have done and are doing.

How To Become A Christian

The most important question ever asked is: *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17). *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."* (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt. 3:8,

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

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