

**Enthusiasm  
For  
Evangelism**

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## What The Law Could Not Do

The snapshot has been taken. The image of the glorified Christ has been etched in the faith Center of the new creation's brain through the gospel of glory. Formed in the image of Christ for good works, this new creature is to carry out the task of distributing the evangel to the nations. With joy the word has been received, and the plant is now sprung up.

But what kind of soil is it rooted in? Will this new creature indeed be able to carry out Christ's commission in conjunction with his fellow Christians, or will he fall away when persecution or affliction arises because of the word? Will this son of God follow Christ and become a fisher of men, or will he be choked with worries and riches and the pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity? The key to the continuing growth of the plant is the development of the picture of Christ past the snapshot stage, to bring the latent image of the shining Jesus into the forefront of the son of light's thinking, so that a vivid Son of God beckons the faithful pilgrim onward.

Faced with the reality of a harsh and hostile environment called "this world," the spiritual offspring of Abraham wonders if he in fact is equal to the task before him. He struggles, perhaps, with doubts of his ability to exceed Moses and David in performance. He wonders if he indeed can overcome sin, and keep a good conscience before God. But, praise God, assurance comes from the word of God, emphasizing what Christ can do in him. "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3,4)

- **Yesterday is gone** - When one of God's children "steps to the line" to meet some challenge before him, Satan whispers: "You failed yesterday. This proves you cannot succeed today." Whether the challenge involves overcoming some sin, maintaining a good attitude, or fighting through adversity, the past record of each is that he has not performed perfectly. The adversary tries to remind the new creature of those failures, and engages in all sorts of mental name calling and intimidation. But Jesus came "as an offering for sin." The past is nailed to the cross with Christ, and the child of God can "step to the line" with no record of failure behind him! What a confidence builder our God has provided
- **It can be done** - "You can't do it," is the message from Satan's headquarters. "You cannot become a partaker of the divine nature. You cannot be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." "You're just a human being, and while you should strive for perfection, you will never get there." But Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and overcame the temptations associated with living in a body. He lived perfectly, and has given us the same Spirit who won the battle with every encounter with sin. Thus, for those who are looking for the excuse, "It can't be done," there is none. But for those who are looking for hope, the scripture calls us upward, promising that "the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us."

The Law could not build men who could keep it. The gospel of Christ, however, forms and strengthens creatures in the image of God who can fulfill the requirement of the Law by walking according to the Spirit, and who can successfully carry the message of the gospel of God to a darkened world.

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## A "Can Do" Attitude

There are talkers, and there are doers. James says, "But prove yourselves **doers** of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22). This thought from James' inspired pen has an interesting corollary: Anyone who will not do what the word says is engaged in self delusion. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven," said the Lord Jesus, "but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Can each Christian carry the message of salvation to the lost? Anyone who says he can't is engaged in self delusion. Can each child of God become a partaker of the divine nature, and become conformed to the image of Christ? Anyone who says he can't is engaged in self delusion.

"I can't," is the wail of the deluded one, swept away by the flood of negative thinking fostered by the losers of this world. But in stark contrast to the darkened and dreary thinking of mere earthlings, the scripture speaks, in the words of the apostle Paul: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

- **"I can"** - The person who thinks he can't is whipped before he starts. Even Gentiles, with perhaps some distant familiarity with the word of God, have produced the story of "The Little Engine That Could" to illustrate the principle that if you think you can, you can! The one who says, "I can't," is a wicked and lazy slave, who is hiding his talent in the ground under the guise that he simply doesn't want to lose it.
- **"Do all things"** - The apostle Peter reminds us that "the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (I Peter 5:10). If God does all this, in accordance with His word, who are we to say that He cannot. The child of God has a "can do" attitude, stepping with faith to meet any challenge in the confidence of Christ.
- **"Through Him who strengthens me"** - But the strength and power clearly come from God. As Daniel of old was strengthened so that he could stand on his feet in the face of the awesome visions he had seen, so each spiritual descendant of Abraham is strengthened through the Holy Spirit so that he might carry on and carry out the work of God.

What a blessing to greet each day in the certain knowledge that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us! How exciting it is to know that He who specializes in the impossible stands with us, and is willing to enable us to develop the image of Christ within, and execute the performance of Christ without.

But the mind of the child of God has a tendency to drift backwards. Because of this downward pull, the Christian needs to impose an iron discipline upon his mind, to destroy strongholds in his own imagination, to take every one of his thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. He must work every day to renew the spirit of his mind, so that it is predisposed to practice righteousness instead of falling into iniquity when sin presents an opportunity, so that it is preset to respond favorably during the crisis moment.

Strengthen your resolve. Set your mind. Make this statement so much your own that a surge of confidence rockets through your entire being every time you repeat these words: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

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## Development and the Set Mind

The sunshine soldier and summertime patriot are legion. When the weather is fair, and prospects of victory confidently beckon, the band wagon never wants for merry musicians. But bring on blustery gales and uncertain skies, and the once heaving wagon is but a barren rail, manned by a few heroic souls who have the iron will to press on. Thus, in the wisdom of the Majestic One the "fiery ordeal" of testing is allowed to go on, to separate the chaff from the wheat, to select from the group who come because of the crowds and those who are "fools for Christ," who have the driving determination to please Him who called them out of darkness.

The difference, then, between life and death, is "the set mind." The difference between developing and dying is "the set mind." "For those who are according to the flesh," said the apostle in his letter to the Roman brethren, "set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:5,6). The ragged survivors of earth's storms and persecutions are those who set their minds on spiritual things, and, like Abraham of old, do not waver in their faith. They come to understand basic principles, which must be unflinchingly adhered to for spiritual survival and progress.

- **A mind set, which recognizes the importance of spiritual priorities** - There are important things in life, and there are really important things in life. And the really important things are not houses, cars, bank accounts, or good names as civic leaders in the community. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The man with a spiritual mindset devotes time to study, memorization, and somber reflection on the words of God. The spiritual man devotes himself to petition, supplication, praise, thanksgiving, and entreaty, interceding according to the will of God. The spiritual man blocks out time for evangelistic effort, and keeps a solid spiritual focus in his family. The spiritual mind set simply shunts aside many temporal concerns in order to focus on the eternal.
- **A mind set which recognizes the importance of spiritual discipline** - The body - the flesh - is by nature rebellious, wild, and unruly. The mind set on the Spirit is going to shoulder past the "good intention, but no action" stage, and begin to bring the body under spiritual discipline. The apostle Paul recognized this, and using himself as an example, pointed a warning finger at each of us: "I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27). Godliness, he wrote in another place, as contrasted with mere bodily discipline, is the result of a discipline that is eternally profitable.
- **A mind set which powers through persecution** - "Through many tribulations," explained Paul and Bamabas to the suffering brethren of Pisidia, "we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). This basic principle will not change so long as this entire physical creation groans as if in travail. This mindset holds to the faith regardless of any external pressure, and overcomes every obstacle, faithful until death.

Any brother or Sister who fails to develop this spiritual mindset will be blown away like chaff from the summer threshing floor. Develop it, and grow.

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## First Blood

When the spear's iron tip plunged into the Savior's limp and lifeless corpse, "first blood" caked the dust of Golgotha's somber top. Though the hand of the Father - by which He hid His face from the sin - bearing Son, and obscured the other Sun - had been withdrawn and light from the major marker of time flooded the summit "outside the camp," a heavy pall still hung in Calvary's atmosphere. Words of weight from the Roman centurion - perhaps a grizzled veteran of many of years of Imperial combat, inured by experience to death-still echoed significantly in the minds of all who were witnesses of Jesus' last moments in human encasement. "Truly," he had exclaimed. in the midst of the earthquake which shook violently in the darkness, "this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). More magnificent portents accompanied the death of the King of the universe than ever signaled the impending passing of a Caesar. The pagan centurion rightly noted heaven's wrath, and uttered in his fear the confession, which the rest of the world would do well to similarly proclaim. "First blood" had indeed been spilt.

But in an awesome display of the forbearance of God, the "first blood" which should have been the occasion for an all out declaration of war against earth was, instead, the profound proffer of peace. "But now," emphasized Paul to those who were once alienated from the courts of heaven, "in Christ Jesus you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace" (Ephesians 2:13,14).

- **"First blood" resulted in "First born"** - Jesus, although he was a son of David by virtue of his fleshly birth, was declared "the Son of God" by virtue of His resurrection (Romans 1:3). Thus, He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead" (Colossians 1:18), and therefore "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Colossians 1:15).
- **"First blood" is the first transition from the physical to the spiritual** - The physical temple, the physical "house," was to be replaced by those who are being built up as a "spiritual house," the physical priests replaced by spiritual priests, and physical sacrifices by "spiritual sacrifices" (I Peter 2:5). But the blood was the first transition. Physical blood certainly caked the dust of Golgotha's summit, but it was "spiritual blood" which was offered by the spiritual High Priest in heaven's Holy of Holies. "Not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).
- **"First blood" first cleansed heaven** - "According to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood" (Hebrews 9:22). So while the blood of goats and calves, the "blood" of the red hyssop plant, with scarlet, wool and water, cleansed the vessels of the Old Covenant, the heavenly things themselves were cleansed by "better sacrifices than these" (Hebrews 9:23). The "better sacrifices" are, of course, the death of Christ and His spiritual "first blood."
- **"First blood" establishes Christ as having "first place" in our lives** - The apostle Paul wrote that we have "been justified by His blood" (Romans 5:9), and now made part of the church. "He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything" (Colossians 1:18).

Those who appreciate the significance of the "first blood" offered in the true holy place for them will joyfully set their minds where He who has "first place in everything" directs them. And He said, "Seek first" the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Make the church, the kingdom of God, and the righteous life your highest priority. Now!

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## Jesus' Priorities

"It's my life and I'll do what I want with it," is not a new "now generation" slogan. It is old, as old as the human race. Thus it was in Noah's day, and thus it was in the degenerative era of the Judges of Israel, presaging the need –unfortunately - for an earthly king. The writer of Judges laments in his closing, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25). Everyone did what he good and well pleased, and destruction was at hand.

But that was Israel according to the flesh. Israel according to the Spirit is a different kind, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (I Peter 2:9). This holy and separate people recognizes their indebtedness to their Savior, remembering that He shed His blood for them on Calvary's mount, cognizant of sprinkled spiritual blood as the constant offering in the true holy place by their eternally intercessory High Priest. This holy and separate people is not going to rebelliously walk in their own way, setting their own priorities. This holy and separate people is pleased to acknowledge that they "have been bought with a price," that they are not their own (I Corinthians 6:19,20). Therefore this holy and separate people does not regard it as burdensome to set their minds to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

- **His kingdom** - The kingdom of God is the church of the living God. When the Lord tells us to seek first His kingdom, He set the priority for His holy and separate people. The church comes first. The church comes ahead of the family (although there is really no competition between the two; the family is strengthened and blessed when the church comes first). The church comes ahead of jobs, business, or general "making a living." The church comes ahead of political coalitions, or social respectability. The church comes first, and it takes a set mind to consistently keep the activities and goals of the church at the forefront of a Christian's priorities.
- **His righteousness** - The purpose of "imputed righteousness" is to produce actual righteousness. "If you know that He is righteous," wrote the aged John, "you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" (I John 2:29). And to emphasize the point, he added, "Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God"(I John 3:10). The Purchaser of each brother's freedom has set the priority - "seek first...His righteousness." It takes a set mind to seek that righteousness. Half-hearted resolutions and indolent good intentions will not move the child of God to lay aside the corrupted and slothful old self. Only the steel will and dogged determination of a set mind will carry the individual through the agony required in producing real change.

In ancient Israel everyone did what he wanted because there was no king. But in spiritual Israel today there is a King, and His faithful and loyal subjects will joyfully make His priorities theirs, and will set their minds to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness."

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## Personal Evangelism

"Good news" was announced by the angel to Bethlehem's shepherds on that exciting night 20 centuries ago. "Behold," said he, "I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all people, for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10,11). The "good news" was that the Savior, the Rescuer of a lost race, "for all the people," had now come to earth. This good news was followed by more: wise men from the East arrived successively in Jerusalem and in Bethlehem, and because they were from the Gentiles, their pronouncement was profound: "We saw His star in the East," (the sign to them that the King of the Jews, the Christ, was born), "and we have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). For Jew and Gentile alike, the birth of the Savior of all mankind had been announced.

As the Child grew to a Man, He functioned in accordance with a previously laid out and agreed upon plan. Christ in the flesh would come "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Thus His years in the flesh following His immersion featured His release of sundry captives, but nearly exclusively all sons and daughters of Abraham according to the flesh. The plan was to establish His credentials as the Son of God and Redeemer of Israel, before Operation Rescue was expanded to set free willing prisoners throughout the world. Thus it was, that in successive stages the good news of the consolation of Israel, the redemption of Jerusalem, and Savior of the world was announced to "all the people."

- **Who announces?** - But who shall continue to announce the good news of great joy? Who shall take the message of a Savior crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again? Jesus Himself has vacated the scene, in a sense, operating in oversight capacity, while the angels' mouths are stopped. By the will of God, the good news is carried from man to man, furthered by a special and holy people, whose sole purpose is to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called" them out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Each of these holy people bears a special burden, a groaning for those lost in the confusion of a Satan-controlled world. With a deep driving love for his fellows, a consciousness of the glory of heaven, and a healthy terror of the Lord, each Christian personally persuades men.
- **How is the announcer motivated?** - Based upon his foundation of honest concern for each lost sheep, the proclaimer of God's excellencies must "set his mind" to kick himself out his own door way and into the homes of others. Without the set mind to seek and save the lost, golden opportunities tarnish, and wheat whitened on the stalk falls lifeless to the ground. The "worker" who goes into the harvest is just that; harvesting of souls is an intensive and back-breaking labor requiring a set mind to keep at it and keep a good attitude in the blazing heat and skin-ripping cold.

Personal evangelism, Personal announcing the good news of great joy. No committees. No parachurch organization to hide the guilty conscience or lazy labor habits. Just good old-fashioned love for the lost and a set mind to keep at it until Jesus comes.

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## Working out the Contract

There have been a few rare occasions in the history of man where, in selected locations a man's word was his bond. No written contract was needed, nor veiled threats of law suit if the contract went unheeded. A simple hand shake sufficed, and a man kept his word.

The same has been true of marriage vows. There have been times when the public vow of "for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part" meant something to the prospective bride and groom. The "I do's" were more than empty words to be mumbled at the appropriate spot in a vain ceremony; they were commitments given before a holy God who was the One who truly joined man and wife as one flesh.

But with the continued trashing of Western Civilization, and the trivializing of anything of real significance, a man's word is not his bond, and a marriage vow is a stepping stone to the next convenient relationship. And this trashing and trivializing tends to carry over into the church, where the contract called "salvation" tends to be viewed as an instrument where only the God of heaven is bound to make any long-term commitments, and where the solemn profession of faith and immersion into Christ (if "into Christ" is even considered) is presented by "marketing the church" charlatans as some sort of favor to God to be broken at any time by this whimsical "new king." But the words of the Lord, delivered through the apostle Paul, still reverberate unchangingly across the centuries: "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, workout your salvation in fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

- **"In fear and trembling"** - The Almighty is big, and we are small, very small. The Bible is full of illustrations to communicate the greatness of Him who fills heaven and earth, and what it means to appear before Him. Each child of God must constantly impress upon his mind the awesomeness of God's favor toward him personally, and carefully, prayerfully act as a God-pleaser in thought and deed. All things indeed are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
- **"Work out your salvation"** - Salvation is a contract, a covenant. Both parties of this contract will have solemn obligations, God having by far the greater part by His own gracious choice. Because, however, the Most High carries the burden of the contract does not alleviate the Christian from carrying out his responsibilities. "I betrothed you to one husband," pointed out Paul, "that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin" (II Corinthians 11:2). Salvation is like a marriage vow (or the engagement vow of the first century). And as a bride is to be submissive to her husband, so each Christian is to be submissive to Christ, to show forth the fidelity of a grateful recipient of the blessings of Christ's sacrifice. No matter what it takes, "work it out!"

When the repentant captive stepped to the line and confessed with his mouth that Jesus is Lord, he was making a solemn commitment to a contract called "salvation." When he was granted his release in the waters of immersion, he was promising a faithful Savior that his fidelity and loyalty would be to Christ, and that nothing on earth would shake that union. "Work out your salvation in fear and trembling."

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## The Upward Gaze

When a man goes down, he tends to take his whole family down with him. The man who lets alcohol or drugs take over his life often sees his family disintegrate before his eyes, and disillusioned kids charge off in all directions but the narrow way which leads to life. The irresponsible man who spends his Lord's Days hunting, fishing, or engaged in some other wilderness escape often finds his family without spiritual conviction, easy victims of ravenous denominational wolves or other cult groups. The impure man, defiled by pornography or pornographic thoughts, who chases skirts and flaunts the sacred marriage vow, finds his family shaken to the core, and often unable to learn to trust God and His word. The embittered man, disaffected by life's challenges, complaining about church leadership and people in the church, often sees his kids disheartened and numbed by the whole proceeding, never willing to take a stand for the truth of Christ and His church. This is not to say that the children, when they are of age and capable of making adult decisions, are not responsible for their own salvation - they are. But the general nature of this thing the word of God calls "a sheep" is that the family follows dad, upward to glory or downward to oblivion.

Thus the whole human race tends to follow the downward stampede begun by Adam. Of flesh, and sold into bondage to sin, the long line of Adam's descendants walk with their heads down. Buying and selling, planting and harvesting, tearing down and building, marrying and giving in marriage essentially constitute the sum of their existence. No wonder the plodders are described as without hope and without God.

But a different message challenges the sons of God, those breaking loose from the flawed visage of Adam and becoming conformed to the image of Christ. "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:1,2).

- **Not on things of earth** – While the needs of earthly existence have to be provided for, there is to be no provision for the lusts of the flesh. Like mosquitoes or flies, the needs have to be dealt with, but they cannot be the focus of the faithful son of God's attention.
- **The things above** - The things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand, are reality. To the earth-bound plodder, black dirt, a good harvest, a fine-looking animal, and a solid building are reality. The Christian recognizes that the form of this earth is passing away, fixing his attention instead on the things, which are not seen. Righteousness dwells in the glorious new heavens and new earth, not in this creation.
- **Set your mind** - Again the admonition to "set your mind" shows up. The Holy Spirit knows that those who will not set their minds on spiritual things are not going to make it.

Hope, encouragement, and a secure future lie in the things above. A certain foreboding, an emptiness, an atmosphere of futility and discouragement lie in the things of earth. Child of God, turn your gaze upward, and walk in a certain hope of a glorious future. Lay aside earthly concerns, and set your mind firmly where Christ is, seated in power at the right hand of God.

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## Keep Focused

There is, on our piano in the living room, a set of pictures of my daughter Lori on her first birthday. As of this writing, nearly a quarter of a century has passed since those pictures were taken, and she is now a beautiful, vivacious, loving Christian young woman. And because I see her nearly every day, I have a clear picture in my mind what she looks like now. But, to tell the truth, if it weren't for those three pictures of her now on the piano top, I would have totally forgotten what she looked like on her first birthday. And because I see those pictures nearly every day, I have a clear picture in my mind of what she looked like then. Repetition is the key; seeing those pictures over and over again imprints them in my mind.

Thus it is with the picture of the glorified Lord. The new creature is formed in the image of Christ in glory during immersion. "Put on the new self," said Paul, "which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4:24). The likeness of God, of course, is Christ in glory (Hebrews 1:3). At the new creature's new birth the snapshot of Christ our light is taken, and through the writings of the New Testament this picture is imprinted in our minds.

This "photographic" image, however, must be developed before the picture is clearly visible. By believing the scripture that we really can be like Christ, we begin the development process. By understanding the thrust of Romans 8:3,4, we comprehend that past sins and barriers to our becoming imitators of our Lord were nailed to the cross with Christ, and that by walking according to the Spirit, we fulfill the requirement of the Law, can do all things through the Spirit of Christ who strengthens us, and thus further develop the image of Christ. By setting our minds to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, by setting them to seek and save the lost, to work out our contract of salvation, and to seek the things above, the light of the risen Lord brightens and clarifies before our spiritual eyes.

But just as the illustration of the photographs of my daughter, we must keep focusing on the new developed picture of Jesus in glory. Repetition is the key; seeing the picture over and over again imprints it in the faith center of our minds.

Listen briefly to some of the scriptures, which emphasize the repetition necessary for spiritual survival and growth:

- **Colossians 3:1** - If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- **Romans 12:2** - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **Colossians 3:9-10** - Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.
- **Ephesians 4:22-24** - In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in *the* spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Repetition - renewing the mind - is the key. Focusing on the image of the glorified Lord over and over again keeps His spiritual visage clear in our minds, and spiritually transforms. As the Nike [Greek word for victory] slogan says, "Just do it!"

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Dealing With Distractions

The devil is skilled at developing distractions. From the organ grinder who encourages the audience to watch the monkey while his assistant picks their pockets to the complicated diversions of the international bankers, Satan and his minions successfully divert the attentions of the masses and "steal them blind." Not only are the peoples generally enslaved physically and politically, their attentions of the things of eternal and false teachers serve to disorient those who are to some degree seeking spiritual life, and help to blind the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

Satan tends to be successful on another front as well. There are those who have been forgiven by the blood of the eternal covenant, who have arisen and had their sins washed away in immersion, thereby calling on the name of the Lord. There are those who have punctured the veneer of falsehood, and have found their way to the truth of the gospel, who have been "saved to serve." But the Deceiver is ready for them with a whole host of distractions, to swerve them from their purpose, to get them to make poor use of their allotted time, and to minor in majors, and major in minors.

The word of God arises to aid the spiritual sons of Abraham, to help them refocus their attentions and affections, and to assist them in their driving desire to evangelize the world. "And this I say for your own benefit," wrote the apostle Paul, "not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:35). What does the apostle say for our benefit?

- **Consciousness of shortness of time** - Urgency is the byword of the scripture. A person cannot read the word of God honestly without coming to sense of the criticalness of each moment, that men are perishing for all eternity each second, and that the child of God should act immediately to by all means save some. "The time has been shortened," exhorted the apostle (I Corinthians 7:29).
- **Marriage distractions** - There are men who are cry-babies, and there are women who are cry-babies. There are men who want an inordinate amount of attention, and women who want an inordinate amount of attention. And in a marriage, such a man or woman can be a major distraction to getting the work of the church done, The advice from the scripture is hard but straightforward under those conditions: "From now on those who have wives should be as though they had none" (I Corinthians 7:29).
- **Circumstances of life distractions** - "Those who weep" should be as those who do not weep, and "those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice" (I Corinthians 7:30). Keep focused; neither life nor death, birth or loss of a loved one should keep us from our appointed rounds.
- **General problems of living distractions** - "Those who buy," should be "as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it" (I Corinthians 7:30,31). Distractions make a person lose his focus, and the word of God is exhorting us to keep our focus!

The child of God is obligated to spend time each day re-establishing his focus. The world keeps pressing in on him, clamoring for his attention, demanding his immediate action, creating emergencies to draw him in. The deep, resounding counsel of the word of God reminds him: "The form of this world is passing away" (I Corinthians 7:31). Focus, keep focusing, and do not allow distractions to divert your attention from seeking and saving the lost.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Imitators of Christ

"Follow Me," said our Lord Jesus, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). "Follow Me," were words that Jesus, the Savior of all mankind, used frequently in His discourses to those willing to listen. And why not? He knew the way of salvation; He is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). No one, indeed, comes to the Father apart from Jesus Christ. "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true," He answered some of His Jewish critics, "for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from, or where I am going" (John 8:14). There is only one Guide across the untracked wilderness between earth and heaven. "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man" (John 3:13). We would do well to follow Him!

- **Be imitators of Christ** - Imitation is the sincerest form of admiration. The church can raise its voice in the choruses of "Oh How I Love Jesus," but unless the individuals begin to imitate Immanuel, "God with us," then the words are empty, hollow tunes from hollow tombs. And, no, it is not impossible to be an imitator of Christ. The exhortation from the inspired apostle comes: "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Indeed, the reason for the new birth is that the old man of sin may be done away, and a new creature resurrected from the waters of immersion, arising to walk in the strength and majesty of the God who just created him in Christ Jesus for good works.
- **Following in Christ's steps** - The word of God never indicates that the path of the new born child of God is an easy one. Followers of Christ can learn from Him, how to make the yoke easy and the load light, but the learning process comes through suffering. "For you have been called for this purpose," wrote the apostle Peter, "since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (I Peter 2:21). It is exciting to note, however, that by God's grace we can follow in the footsteps of the Great One!
- **Becoming conformed to Christ's image** - God has an eternal purpose which He carries out through Jesus Christ our Lord. The apostle Paul works on this concept a bit in his epistle to the Roman brethren: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He fore-knew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30). God's foreordained purpose is that each called, justified, and glorified son of God also become conformed to the image of Christ. And the thrust of the passage is that each son is called now, justified now, glorified now, and becoming conformed now!

Imitation is the highest form of adoration. The Almighty has sent His Son into the world, not only to redeem us, but to transform us. He has provided His Holy Spirit, in conjunction with His word, to strengthen us, and to enable us to walk in the footsteps of Him who has trodden the path of suffering and righteousness before us. In accordance with His eternal purpose, He has made it possible for us to become conformed to the image of the only begotten Son of God. Let us follow Him then, in paths of righteousness, and let us become excellent fishers of men.

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## A New Self Image

Even the world recognizes the importance of what it calls "self image." Coaches and sales managers know that their team members cannot successfully perform until they have the image or picture of themselves as being able to accomplish their goals. Those who are truly interested in helping others to succeed in life (rather than just using the down-trodden as source of government income or some other scam) know that as long as the individual views himself as a failure, he will continue to fail. Teachers truly loving their charges know that they must do their best to build in each child a sense that he is capable, and that he can succeed if he will but try. The words of Solomon still ring true: "For as he thinks within himself, so he is" (Proverbs 23:7). The secret of helping others is to help them change their inner picture of themselves. It therefore follows that God is at work, helping you change the inner picture of yourself.

- **Out of the treasure** - Our Lord Jesus directed our attention to the importance of what the scripture calls the "inner man" (II Corinthians 4:16). "The mouth," said the Christ, "speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil" (Matthew 12:34,35). The key to change in behavior or change in performance is to change the heart, or the treasure, of the inner man.
- **Recognize that the earthly image was formed in error** - The sin of Adam was sin by an innocent man in a yet perfect environment. "Through one man," then, "sin entered the world" (Romans 5:12). The rest of us who are old enough to know better have sinned, but not "in the likeness of the offense of Adam" (Romans 5:14). We have come into a world corrupted, twisted, and bent by the ravages of sin, and the nature we inherited from Adam is weak, and easily subjected to corruption by such savagery. "We have borne the image of the earthy," wrote the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:49). The futile way of life inherited from our forefathers formed us wrongly, and we sin and have "fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
- **Be born again!** - The only real solution is to be changed from the inside out. The human is incapable of so radically redirecting his life and thoughts; his own heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. The supernatural act of God's power is to give man an entirely new heart in his repentance and immersion, as David in his longing, prophetic prayer looked to the new covenant: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). The directive from the Holy Spirit, expressed by Paul, is, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold new things have come!" (II Corinthians 5:17). By his immersion into Christ, the individual is born again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The new creature has a new image. Gone is the failure, the guy who never could quite make it good. Gone is the sinner, who never could quite break through into the righteousness his inner man desired. Instead there is the new picture of a man who is a success, who can do all things through the Christ who strengthens him. Instead there is the new image of a man who is a saint, who is saved by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and who lives in righteousness, peace, and joy in the kingdom of God. All praise to Him who accomplishes the impossible!

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## Restoring the ancient purpose

Purpose and power must be understood to be intricately connected. A stream of water gushing down a steep hillside is a tremendous source of power in driving a turbine for the generation of alternating current electricity, but it can also be awesomely destructive if it breaks free from its channel and begins to tear down houses, bridges, and everything else in its path. And, looking in the other direction, a person without purpose in his life is essentially powerless, a drifter without moorings, tossed by the tides and turbulence of life.

Hence, as we consider the effort to return to primitive Christianity, the powerful surge of the first century, which rocked Rome and took the gospel to the world, we reflect, then, on the restoration movement of modern times.

- **Restoration of the ancient name** - In 1793 men from North Carolina and Virginia, carrying the Methodist denominational stamp, noted that the name Christian was the name denoted by God for His children to bear, after the name of the Christ who died and rose on their behalf.
- **Restoration of the ancient book** - In 1809, Thomas Campbell, a preacher originally of the Presbyterian stamp, concluded that man made creeds were the source of division among those who claimed the name of Christ, and exhorted others to speak where the Bible spoke, but to be silent where the Bible was silent.
- **Restoration of the ancient order** - In 1823, Alexander Campbell, who broke from Presbyterianism independently of his father, Thomas Campbell, began publishing a periodical called The Christian Baptist, in which he called for a "restoration of the ancient order of things," the relinquishing of all human elements in religion, and going back to the Bible way of doing things.
- **Restoration of the ancient gospel** - In 1827 Walter Scott, a former Presbyterian, fired with excitement over returning to the freedom offered in scripture, preached what he called the gospel restored, calling on men to repent and be immersed for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, in the same spirit and teaching with which the gospel was first offered in Acts 2, and from then on by true gospel preaching.

In our study of first century Christianity as revealed in scripture, and our examination of the restoration movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, we came to the conclusion that something was missing. The tendency of preaching and teaching was simply to view the immersed individual as forgiven but not really the entirely new creation, which the New Testament depicts. In an effort to identify the true work of the Holy Spirit in the inner man, strengthening the individual in conjunction with the written word, we have called for the fifth point, the **restoration of the ancient power**. It is as the apostle Paul prayed in Ephesians, that we may "be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).

Jeff Hostetter, missionary to Ghana, W. Africa, conscious of the deadness of American churches, and the crying need for Christians to recognize the necessity of evangelism, has proposed the sixth point of the restoration, the restoration of the ancient purpose.

Purpose and power work together. May we understand the dynamics of this divine synergism, and work to bring forth the scriptures empowering the individual to carry out the seemingly impossible, taking the gospel to every lost soul in a dying, lonely world. And may the Lord Jesus receive all the praise and glory and honor!

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## The New Creation and The New Purpose

The divine analysis of each man apart from Christ is not complimentary. "In the futility of their mind darkened in their understanding and "the ignorance that is in them" come particularly from Paul's Ephesian commentary. "For we also were once foolish ourselves," he reminded Titus, "disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another" (Titus 3:3) But the gospel truly is good news! It makes sinful man a new creature, giving him a fresh start and an opportunity to make good; and it also gives him a new purpose, allowing him to lay aside the futility of his past existence.

God loves man. Conscious of the frailty of his creation, God has offered to mankind what He has never offered to angels - redemption! Knowing the weakness of man's flesh, and his tendency to get bogged down in earthly things, the Almighty has made provision for a new beginning for each willing soul, and has also provided clear and specific purpose for each, that his direction might be upward and fulfilling. These words of power and purpose still ring convincingly from Paul's pen: "Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13,14).

- **The new creature** - When the alien and stranger to the covenants of promise turns to the Lord in immersion, he is created anew. The old man of sin is crucified with Christ, and an entirely new man arises to walk in newness of life. This new man is more than just the old man forgiven; he is an entirely new creature with entirely new capabilities. No longer born of blood, or the will of the flesh, or of man, he is in fact born of God. The waters wherein the old man's sins were washed away became not only the tomb, but also became the womb of the new creature, born of water and Spirit, created now in the image of the glorified Christ. Whereas the old man was weak and easily overcome by flesh, the new man is empowered and emboldened by the Spirit of God, before whom idol temples must fall.
- **The new purpose** - Taking his cue from his new Master, the new creature is imbued with a powerful and joyful purpose in living. Willingly, he denies himself, and takes up his cross, following the Lord in seeking and saving the lost. He, like a grain of wheat, falls into the earth and dies to himself, that he might bring forth one hundred fold, sixty fold, or thirty fold. He remembers the words of the Savior, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8). He is diligent to present himself "approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). He is "ready to make a defense to everyone who asks" him to give an account for the hope that now lies within him (I Peter 3:15). He makes the most of every opportunity with outsiders. He has the same purpose for which Jesus came, and he is excited that he should be one so privileged to be a part of such a divine partnership.

The new creation and the new purpose are twin barrels of God's gospel shotgun, from which the Christian is fired with enthusiasm into a world, which so desperately needs to hear his message. Jesus the Christ has placed before him an open door, which no man can shut. May each with courage and strength from God, and love for the lost, walk through that door with the message of hope and salvation for a confused and sinful world!

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## Methods, Men, and Motivation

Men spend a lot of time worrying over methods of evangelism. The word of God, by contrast, spends little time on methods. The all-knowing heavenly Father understands that when Christians really love the lost, and when they are confident in themselves of the strength of the Spirit of God, they will joyfully teach and preach the word of God at every opportunity. When a child of God is sufficiently concerned to overcome his own internal barriers, he will figure out how to get the job done. So of the three - methods, men, and motivation - the word of God spends very little time on methods, and concentrates on building the confidence of men, and upgrading their motivation.

The natural man is not capable of carrying out the mission of God. For such a high and holy calling, a special new creature has to be produced who is fitted to hand-carry the pleadings of God to a darkened and savage race. Thus the scripture has as a major focus the development of this new creature as the most important ingredient in personal evangelism.

- **A new potential** - The natural man has come into a world whose spiritual waters have been sordidly fouled by the pollution of sin. Adam opened the gate on the polluted pipe, and none but the Son of God Himself could break loose from the eternal death caused by sin. Thus every one born of human parents is born with a limited potential. But the Lord Himself, while setting forth the greatness of John the Immerser, focused past John's limitations to the new potential of the new creature in Christ, the citizen of the kingdom of God: "I say to you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John, yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). The natural man is limited; in bearing the image of Adam, he is unable to overcome the debilitating effects of sin and execute the will of God. But even the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Immerser. He has been born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh," but born "of God" (John 1:13). There are no words, which can really express the awesomeness of what this means - each Christian has a tremendous new potential, the potential of taking on the character of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus had pointed to this very concept, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).
- **The new picture** - The Lord knows that the key to an individual's performance is whether he can picture himself as already getting the job done. So the Lord designed a powerful dual picture - even to the extent of putting Jesus through crucifixion, burial and resurrection - in which the old man is buried with Christ, and new one is resurrected with Jesus. "Therefore we have been buried with Him through immersion into death, in order that as Christ Jesus was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4)

The scripture does not spend a lot of time on method. The scripture motivates the Christian to carry out God's mission in seeking and saving the lost, but it really works to build the men, "the new men," who can hand-carry the message of God to a darkened and savage world.

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## The Perfect Picture

It takes light shining on film to produce a picture. In particular it takes controlled exposure to light from the source to produce the perfect picture. The Lord has shone as the light source, and through the gospel, has set the exposure on the film of the human heart. But the Lord can't shoot just one picture; because of the human condition and the entrenched position of sin in the members of each man's body, a preliminary picture must be snapped, showing the elimination of the old man of sin. But the real story, of course, is glory. The goal of God is that each child of light might lay aside the deeds of darkness, and participate in and proclaim the glory of Him who radiates the brightness of the eternal Father.

- **The first picture** - According to the writer of Hebrews, sin easily entangles us, even as Christians. Of course, before we were citizens of the heavenly kingdom, we were strangers and aliens, darkened in our understanding, engaging in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. Hence the first picture for us features Christ dying on the cross, paying a brutal price for our sins. So for the individual earnestly seeking to follow Christ, and for the honest Christian seeking to overcome sin, the Holy Spirit points to words He inspired the apostle Paul to write: "How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been immersed into Christ Jesus have been immersed into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him in immersion into death . . . knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with ..." (Romans 6:2-6). The first picture is the death of our old man, which in immersion experiences the same brutal death as did our Lord on Calvary's cross. That picture is snapped for us at the first of our hearing the gospel, and forever impressed upon us in the Lord's Supper, lest we forget our purification from our former sins. Dead men tell no tales, and commit no sins.
- **The second picture** - The second picture is more powerful, featuring the resurrection of Christ and His accession to the throne of glory, and therein the source of our faith. God "raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (I Peter 1:21). Christ, then, "was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so [that] we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). It is significant that it took the shining glory of God to raise Christ from the dead and to give Him life. "For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:10,11). Similarly God has brought us out of death into life through the gospel of the glory of God, seen by us in the face of Christ. We are to picture ourselves as much alive to God as Christ is; we are to see ourselves as possessing His glory.

These two great snapshots are etched in the film of our minds by the brightness of the glorious gospel. In laying aside the old self, and putting on the new self, we are now being prepared to carry on the mission of Christ. We indeed have been called "by His own glory and excellence," that we "might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (II Peter 1:3,4).

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## Power in the Picture

What is to be destroyed is much less important than what is to be built. For the new creature in Christ is a dynamic and refreshing truth that "the old things passed away" (II Corinthians 5:17). Gone are the mistakes and sins of the past. Gone is the stumbling failure. Gone is the proud, arrogant, rebellious-against-God power-seeking man of the nest. Gone is the adulterer and fornicator.

Gone is the pleasure-ridden, sin-crazed old man. But as it important as it is that the "dirty old man" of sin is gone, of much more significance is the new man reconstructed in the image of the glorified Christ. "Behold," exclaims the apostle, "new things have come" (II Corinthians 5:17). The thrust of the New Testament writings is to etch the new image in the inner man, to burn the vision of the glorified Christ indelibly as an imprint in our hearts. There is a reason why the wisdom of God concentrates on forming the image of the risen Christ on the film of our minds: there is power in the picture. Power for evangelism. Power for overcoming personal problems. Power for conquering the world for Christ.

- **Description of Christ in glory** - "Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again," said Paul. "Death no longer is master over Him" (Romans 6:9). The resurrection of Christ overpowered death, so in moving past death, the apostle describes our Lord in the resurrected state: "For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God" (Romans 6:10). Note the phraseology: Jesus in His glorified state is described as "dead to sin, and alive to God."
- **The picture for us** - The Holy Spirit is desirous that we rapidly move past the death of the old man, and to begin to perform in the power of the new creation. Paul, in referring back to our immersion into Christ, broaches the subject: "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall live with Him" (Romans 6:8). The thrust of the statement is not that at some future time - Jesus' second coming - we shall live with Him, but that we shall live with Him immediately following our immersion into Him. We are not only immersed into His death, but we arise to "walk in newness of life." "For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:10,11). Jesus in His glorified state is described as "dead to sin and alive to God." The child of God is fervently exhorted to view himself as currently in the same glorified state as the risen Christ: "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God" with the appendage, of course, of "in Christ Jesus."

This, then, is the burning picture, branded in the front of our minds. The picture is so powerful that, through the renewing of the mind, it transforms the individual into the image of Christ in glory. We, beholding "the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image" (II Corinthians 3:18). The power is in the picture. Power to pick up our crosses and follow Him. Power over Satan. Power to change the world for Christ. Let's begin now!

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## Developing the Picture

If the snapshot is taken, but the picture is never developed it was a waste of time and film to have pointed and clicked in the first place. In the same way if we have been turned from facing into the law, and have turned to the risen Lord in immersion but have not gone on ahead to develop the image of the Lord which first flashed in our hearts through the gospel of glory, we have wasted our time. As the venerable James, elder in the church of Jerusalem and bond-servant of the Lord, notes, "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was" (James 1:23,24).

The solution for development is also given by James: "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does" (James 1:25). The key is in what James calls "the intent look" at the law of liberty. The glory of the Lord is intimately associated with the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (II Corinthians 3:17). Looking intently into the law of liberty develops the image of the glory of the Lord in us, through the Spirit.

- **Developing faith in scripture** - Faith is not some sort of blind leap into the unknown. Faith is carefully developed by the all-wise Father, who gave His children the ability to think clearly, if they choose to do so. "Come now, and let us reason together," said the Lord through His servant Isaiah, "though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). God appeals to man's reason, and through a reasoned process, develops faith in the mind of man. Again, through Isaiah, the One and only, the Almighty issues the challenge: "And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it. Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming, and the events that are going to take place" (Isaiah 44:7). Through the accurately recorded history, and through prophecies of future events, including the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God, the King of Israel and Redeemer of mankind proved to the satisfaction of any objective individual the accuracy and authority of His word.
- **Developing faith in ourselves** - The scripture records the accomplishments of the great men and women of God, culminating with the extra-ordinary and awesome resurrection of Jesus Himself to the right hand of the Majesty on high. While we admire the leadership of Moses, the faith of David, and the devotion of Daniel, the question arises as to how much we are going to be able to accomplish. And it becomes clear: the reason the scripture records the exploits of the great men of old is to let us know that through Christ we can greatly exceed those who were merely born of woman!

Ultimately, God wants us to believe that, through the scriptures and indwelling Spirit, we can be imitators of Christ, that it is indeed no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. The faith of the old prophets, priests, and kings are recorded to help us have the ultimate faith, that we can be like Christ. Like Abraham, we are to be "fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is also able to perform." Begin developing the picture, and begin to accomplish.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Honest Love as a Foundation

The smartest wolves look the most like sheep. But, sooner or later, the wolf must bare his fangs and show his wolfishness. However, a lot of sheep get devoured before the member of *canis lupus* is generally exposed.

How can the sheep of God's pasture detect wolves? "Beware," said our Lord, "of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous as wolves. You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15,16). The false teachers and false prophets are doing what they are doing for personal gain of some kind; true teachers love the souls of men and are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others' eternities.

Some of the wolves are interested in money, fleecing the sheep. But not all the false prophets are motivated by the purse; sometimes the driving force is prestige, power, or personal proselytes. "They love the place of honor at banquets," said the Christ of prestige seekers, "and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, 'Rabbi'" (Matthew 23:6,7). "The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses," explained Jesus to His disciples concerning first century power mongers. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," cried the Son of God to those who wanted converts for a personal following, "because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). You will know them by their fruits.

But the one who is going to earnestly strive to follow his Lord is going to "walk in love, just as Christ also loved [us], and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (Ephesians 5:2).

- **Love sacrifices** - To be an effective winner of seekers of truth, the motive of the messenger must be pure. While the gullible can be "conned" by the pretenses of the false prophets, those who are the called and chosen can sort their way through the facades; they are watchful and observant, and are good gaugers of the intent of the one carrying the message. The effective soul winner must radiate a sense of self-sacrifice and concern for others.
- **Love does not just want to hear itself talk** - The Christian who really wants to work with lost sheep on a personal basis must be "quick to hear, slow to speak." He must listen carefully to the questions of the other person, both those asked directly and those, which lie beneath the surface, and he must answer those questions. Otherwise, as Paul put it, "If I speak with tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or clanging cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).
- **Love does not just want to show off knowledge** - "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith, so as to remove mountains," explained the apostle, "but do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2). Those who are "pedantic" are show-offs, and turn off truth seekers.

The "good tree bears good fruit." The wolf has personal gain in mind; the one who loves will sacrifice himself and work hard at communicating the truths of the gospel, answering the questions honestly and succinctly. Honest love, teaching the Biblical doctrine of salvation, trying to save other souls from the fire, is the foundation for effective evangelism.

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## Willingness to Extend Yourself

Jesus left heaven to come to earth. You would think, then, that a Christian could leave his home, extend himself just a little, and go to the home of others in order to try to save their souls. The problem is what has come to be called "the comfort zone." It is more comfortable for those who claim the name of Christ just to have a nice happy Christian family and generally hit the regular assemblies of the saints, rather than to involve themselves in the hassles of trying to set up Bible studies and working with those people problems. It is more comfortable for those who claim the function *elder* to sit in meetings and make high sounding pronouncements concerning finances and mutterings about church policy than it is for them to have "paid their dues" in having sought and saved numbers of the lost, and thus really know how to equip the saints for the work of service. It is more comfortable for those who claim the function *preacher* to sit in a building and answer phone calls or go to the hospital and visit sick members of the flock than it is for them to suffer the slings and arrows of carrying the fires of a spiritual revolution to a lost, dying, and hostile world.

Jesus left heaven to come to earth. You would think that a Christian would joyfully leave his comfort zone, and extend himself with burning zeal to rescue eternal souls from the fires of hell. "We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us" (I John 4:16). "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16). "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11).

- **Meet in their home, at their convenience** - "If you love those who love you," said our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, "what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, *what do you do more than others?* Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matthew 5:46,47). To save the lost, you have to go out and find them. You have to go "the extra mile." Generally speaking, to be able to have regular, effective Bible studies, you have to go to the homes of prospects, where they feel comfortable, and meet with them at their convenience. This is not only an essential step in evangelism, but it is also a powerful demonstration to them that you care.
- **Be consistent** - Because the confusion factors are so great, home Bible studies are going to have to take place on a weekly basis for probably a year or so consistently; essentially, if there is a cancellation, it must be on the part of the prospect. Wisdom from above produces fruit: "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18). But note this about wisdom: "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, *unwavering*, without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). That faithful consistency is a characteristic of our God. "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (II Timothy 2:13).

To reach the lost, the imitator of Christ must demonstrate His consistency and willingness to work with searchers of the truth at their convenience. This unwavering extension of the Christian on behalf of those separated from Christ is an absolutely essential ingredient in house-to-house evangelism, and powerful year-by-year demonstration of sincere, sacrificing, Christ-like love for the lost souls of men.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Caring: Overcoming Honest Objections

The god of confusion is hard at work. Not only has he created thousands of divisions within the framework of what is called Christendom, he has wrought a plethora of general false religion in the form of Hinduism, New Age, Buddhism, Shintoism, Sunni Moslem, Shi'ite Moslem, etc. In addition, the master of deception has brought a befuddling array of philosophy and "scientific" thought such as humanism and evolution, and coupled that with the ideas that there are no absolutes and that words have no meaning ("deconstruction"). The truth-seeker therefore is going to have some serious questions for which he wants straight answers, and he may express those questions in the form of objections. One of the most important ways in which the follower of Christ demonstrates his sincere care for the lost is by his willingness to answer the questions scripturally and straight-forwardly, dealing with each honest objection one at a time.

- **Willingness to listen** - "But let everyone be quick to hear," says James, "slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19). The natural tendency of an upbeat brother is to run his mouth about all the exciting "scripture stuff" he has been into lately. Instead, he should spend his time listening more carefully to the questions and objections the prospect has, and dealing with those as he works his way along the path-to-run-on.
- **Ability to keep on track** - Satan is shoveling away, trying to keep his victims in his trap, in "the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will" (II Timothy 2:26). Satan will incite his prey, as the victim is being taught the scriptures which will set him free, to attack the one who is sharing the word of God, to get the teacher to defend himself or to engage in a quarrel over some irrelevant issue. "And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged" (II Timothy 2:24). Not quarrelsome, and able to teach-a great combination. By diffusing the personal attacks, and refusing ignorant and foolish speculations, the discipler keeps the discussion on point, and the focus is on the applicable verses from the word of God.
- **Overcoming objections** - The servant of the Lord must carefully and patiently work through the objections to and misunderstandings of sound doctrine. In the words of scripture, he must correct with gentleness "those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil" (II Timothy 2:25,26). This ability, which is primarily the product of experience coupled with a real desire to communicate clearly, is an essential ingredient in being able to effectively transmit the gospel to the truth seekers.

The word of God tells every Christian that he must be a good listener, sensitive to the obvious and hidden questions of the inquirer. And the word also emphasizes, "And the Lord's bond-servant must ...," followed by the list of qualities which make for effective soul-winning. Otherwise the would-be discipler is going over the ground without reaping any of the harvest, and the Lord is going to have to send somebody else in to do the job.

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## Telling the Truth under Duress

The Pharisees and scribes, smarting under the lash of Jesus' verbal whip, pressured Him to back off from His position, or tried to trap Him in what He said. Of the Pharisees, our Lord declaimed, "Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it" (Luke 11:44). One of the scribes then tried to force Jesus to backtrack. "Teacher," he said, "when you say this, you insult us too" (Luke 11:45). The Christ's response is classic: "Woe to you lawyers as well" (Luke 11:46). "And [the scribes and chief priests] watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so as to deliver Him up to the rule and authority of the governor" (Luke 20:20). But Jesus continued to speak in parables, and snap the horns of their dilemmas. He told the truth in the face of their pressure; He maintained His veracity under duress.

The apostles followed in the steps of the Lord, speaking the truth out of love, reaching for the souls of men. Peter and Paul both spoke out boldly when on trial before the Sanhedrin, and brought individuals face to face with the exactitude of God's word. From the tip of Paul's inspired pen flow the following principles:

- **Pleasing the right One** - "I solemnly charge you," intoned the great apostle, "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word!" (II Timothy 4:1,2). God wants His message delivered faithfully, and the messenger is to have the sense of delivering the message under the watchful eye of God the Father, and the sacrificed Son.
- **Position of preparedness** - "Be ready," said Paul, "in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2). There is no earthly occasion or ceremony that is as important as the emergency rescue of a sinner's soul. The preachers and teachers of God's word expressly need to be prepared at any instant to step in and direct the salvage operation, to tell the truth even in a stressful situation.
- **Providing corrective redress** - Sometimes it is necessary to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (II Timothy 4:2). Gentleness and wisdom are required, but there is a time in working with disciples when the reproof and correction are necessary, and the discipler must not shrink back from telling the truth.
- **Promoting sound doctrine** - The natural tendency of people is to want to hear the things, which make them happy in the flesh, and the false teachers are ready and anxious to serve up whatever the customer wants. The messenger carrying the word of the Lord often finds himself in the position of having to expose false doctrine, and point disciples to the "hard sayings" of Jesus and the apostles. "For the time will come," explained the apostle Paul to Timothy, "when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:3-5).

One of the most difficult challenges in going and making disciples for Jesus is knowing how to communicate the eternal truth of the gospel to people who have been deceived, misled, and given false hope by false prophets and false teachers. But the servant of the Lord must be willing to tell the truth no matter how much pressure is applied to try to have him keep his mouth shut.

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## Willingness to Deal with all the Issues

There are those who have a quick and easy presentation of "a plan," be it true or false, to get people "into the church." Having gotten the prospects "into the church," the idea is that church programs, activities, and relationships will hold them "in the church." This quick and easy approach essentially makes the church a social club and an activities organization rather than the institution of highest learning the Lord intended it to be.

What is in the word of God, and what is the word of God capable of producing? The grace of the Almighty and the peace of God are multiplied to us "in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord," said Peter, "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (II Peter 1:2,3) *Everything pertaining to life and godliness* - that is an awesome claim, yet it is matter-of-factly stated by Peter. Paul likewise testified that we are all to "attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). Again, what an awesome claim to be able to produce those, whose spiritual stature is the same as Christ in all His fullness! But how is the word going to be able to do its job? Through individuals and the local congregation!

- **Teachers and preachers** - Having built the church on the foundation of the apostles and New Testament prophets, the Lord Jesus continues to expand His edifice through evangelists and shepherd-teachers (Ephesians 4:11,12). These men, in conjunction with others through whom they are training in the setting of the local church, are the ones who are bringing the brethren to the stature of the fullness of Christ in glory. The whole picture of Christ was being taught in the first century institution of highest learning.
- **Anything profitable** - Paul reminded the elders, the shepherd-teachers of the congregation at Ephesus, "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). "Therefore I testify to you this day," he added, "that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:26,27). The whole purpose and plan of God was being taught in the first century institution of highest learning.
- **The whole message** - It is not often, even as recorded in the pages of the holy writ, that an angel tells men what to do, much less the entire collection of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Having been placed in jail for preaching Jesus in violation of a local zoning ordinance, the apostles were released from prison by an angel of the Lord who instructed them, "Go your way, stand and speak to the people of the temple the whole message of this Life" (Acts 5:20). The whole message of the Christian life was being proclaimed by the first century institution of highest learning, the church.

The church of the living God is first and foremost an educational institution. Founded and directed with the vision that it is to teach the whole word of God, to educate its members in the whole purpose of God, and to teach them the whole message of the Christian life, the church is not to serve pabulum to a bunch of sycophants who have been recruited into a social organization. Those who teach God's word must be prepared to deal with, and must teach everything pertaining to life and godliness.

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## Charisma: Positive Projection

While Jesus was offensive to the Jewish hierarchy, He certainly drew the multitudes to Him. Near the end, for example, "the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth, and kill Him. But they were saying, 'Not during the festival, lest a riot occur among the people.'" (Matthew 26:3-5). Jesus' personal charisma - His exciting and powerful personality - attracted truth-seekers from all segments of Jewish society, to the extent that His disciples, secret and open, numbered in the thousands.

For a Christian to walk today in His footsteps, to follow Him and be made a fisher of men, His charisma must also be developed by the imitator of Christ. The concept that the living word can be effectively communicated by dead heads is utter nonsense. Personal magnetism is a hallmark of the child of the King.

- **Enjoy what you are doing** - It is not humble for a Christian to be apologetic about his presentation, whether to a non-Christian, or a Bible class, or preaching to the brethren; it is convoluted pride; it is reliance upon an inadequate self rather than reliance upon the adequacy provided by God (II Corinthians 3:5). The carrier of the message of hope needs to step to the performance line with a sense of joy and excitement, passing on to others the atmosphere of freedom, which comes from being citizens of heaven. "These things I have spoken to you," exhorted God in the flesh, "that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11).
- **Be interested in the material** - The individual following the upward call of God in Christ Jesus enjoys being reminded of great truths and great true stories from the word of God. Far be it from any disciple of Jesus that he should fail to glory in the cross, that he should sniff and declare how tiresome are the accounts of the accession of the King. "Therefore," proclaimed Peter, "I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you" (II Peter 1:12). How can any Christian expect others to be interested in the presentation of the gospel or related teaching if he does not want to be reminded of these great things of God, if he is bored with the material just because he has seen it or been through it before?
- **Make the presentation your own** - "And the things which you heard from me in the presence of many witnesses," Paul instructed Timothy, "these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). The purveyor of good news is a faithful man, a recipient of what others have developed, and is passing the teaching and the methodology on to others. But he needs to take the tracks that others have developed, and with maturity and experience, make them his own. If he just plods through the material, he demonstrates lack of preparation and lack of interest in others.

In the Christian's personal life and presentation of the word, he needs to develop the charisma of Jesus. His personal magnetism and excitement about the things of heaven will attract truth-seekers in the area of his influence.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Willingness To Be Persistent

Jesus told a parable about persistent prayer. The parable was about a woman who kept pestering an unrighteous judge until she finally wore him down and he granted her protection. But the way Dr. Luke introduces the parable is significant: "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). The Lord's point was that God does not always immediately answer prayer, but requires that a Christian in his personal growth get past his petulance if he does not get his own way right away, and past his discouraged attitude when God does not seem to be paying attention to his petitions. Too many quit too soon, and the All Wise Father in His relationship to His children of faith (that is what prayer is, the relationship with the Father), works to increase their overall persistence.

It is this same persistence that is required in making disciples of Christ. Persistence is required in reaching one individual; phone calls have to be made in reminder of Bible studies, sometimes prospects have to be drug out of saloons, or intervention in family feuds is necessary. Persistence is also required in working for new contacts; the discipler has to wade through a lot of "no's" to get to a "yes," and has to wade through a lot of yes's to get to a serious, long-term "yes." The only motive strong enough to carry the follower of Christ through in this persistence process is true, Biblical, Christ-like love.

- **Love bears all things** - The carrier of the gospel puts up with all sorts of physical abuse and thoughtlessness. Sinners in need of repentance often flare back at the one bringing them the message of God, and prospective Christians often are not present at the time of the appointment, or allow minor or secondary concerns to divert attention away from the word of God. The messenger of Christ bears with these things and presses on.
- **Love believes all things** - The disciple maker believes that the fields are white for harvest; he believes that the harvest is plentiful; he believes that the next truth-seeker is just around the corner. So he presses on.
- **Love hopes all things** - "The plowman," said Paul, "ought to plow in hope, and the thresher in hope of sharing the crops" (I Corinthians 9:10). The gospel carrier sees the potential in each individual, and he sees the potential in the collection of people with whom he works, and in hope of developing that potential he presses on.
- **Love endures all things** - It is the great enduring quality of love that is most closely related to persistence. When the insults have been great, when the spiritual crops have failed, when the interested, he endures because he loves. He presses on.

Speaking of those who carry the message of salvation, Paul wrote (including himself) that such messengers should commend "ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:4-10). And that is a description of the persistence disciple makers need to press on.

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## Willingness to "Dust Off Your Feet"

Jesus told the apostles to shake the dust off their feet if they were not received by a house or city. Why would the loving Savior of mankind say such a thing to His disciples? What purports to be modern Christianity would never engage in such a socially offensive act, cutting off relationships, burning bridges. But our Lord carried with Him a sense of urgency and a knowledge of men, and gave His inspired and ageless advice on those bases.

- **Sense of urgency** - After Jesus was immersed by John in the Jordan, His life was marked by a driving urgency that was socially offensive and obnoxious to those who did not share His vision. To those who felt they should wait until the death of their parents before they joined His revolution, the Lord bluntly stated, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22). Jesus knew that their "concern" for parents was just a socially acceptable excuse, and demolished it. So single-minded was Jesus that He refused to arbitrate disputes between brothers or to chastise Mary for not helping in the kitchen. Not only was our Lord filled with a sense of urgency, knowing that He had but three and one-half years to carry out His mission on earth, but He also imparted that same drive to His disciples. "But whatever city you enter," He told the seventy, "and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'" (Luke 10:10,11). The message to the disciple was: *Keep moving!*
- **Knowledge of men** - The idea is floating around out there that if a Christian has the perfect attitude, the prospect or spouse (or whatever) will become a Christian. While perfect attitude and behavior eliminate stumbling blocks, and make the disciple more useful to the Lord, they do not negate the free will of other people. The insight of our Lord concerning the human race is valuable: "He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man" (John 2:25). The Lord knew the chief priests and elders in Jerusalem would mock Him and kill Him. And He knew that the majority of the people in the world would reject the authority of the scriptures. "Remember the word I said to you," He remarked to the apostles. "'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:20). If Christians preach and teach the words of Jesus today, they will get the same type of response Jesus and the apostles got: some believed, some were indifferent, and some persecuted.

When Paul and Barnabas were persecuted for preaching the word in Antioch of Pisidia, "they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium" (Acts 13:51). The Christian needs to recognize when he has to go shake off the dust of his feet and move on also. Most of mankind is going to reject the gospel; the job of the follower of Christ is to find those who are truly interested, make them disciples of Christ, and help them to go and do likewise.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Charisma: Intense Personal Magnetism

Personal magnetism is not a substitute for truth. Many a false political or religious movement has been built upon the attraction of a charismatic figure. But the movement of the gospel is going to be carried out by brethren of Jesus who have imitated His character, and who likewise draw truth-seekers to them. "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity," Paul reminded Timothy, "but of power and love and discipline" (II Timothy 1:7). Each Christian is a living *dynamo*, fueled by the *love*, which comes from God, and directed by the *disciplined* control of God's Spirit through His word. These dynamic, charismatic followers of Christ will have a profound effect on the lives of all with whom they contact, and influence many to examine the claims of Jesus Christ on their souls.

- **Be interested in each contact as a very special person** - Presenters of the gospel need to remember that the church is not a high pressure sales organization. The word of God reminds heralds of the good news that each individual is specially formed by God, and has intrinsic value because he is made in the image of God. The goal is not to "grow a church" by marketing to the masses; the goal is to save souls on an individual basis. It cannot be over-emphasized: Jesus, the good shepherd, would leave the ninety-nine safe sheep for the one sheep that was lost. Each member of the human race must have the gospel presented to him with the necessary data and the opportunity for asking questions so that he can make a rational, informed decision about his eternity. The relationship between the church and the prospect, if he becomes a Christian, is long-term, and there is no need for generating an atmosphere resembling a high pressure hustle. "For we are not like many," said Paul the apostle, "peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God" (II Corinthians 2:17).
- **Personal fellowship with Christ as a first priority** - It is difficult to pass on to others what you really do not possess yourself. To express the gospel as Christ would have it promulgated, the Christian must be in fellowship with Christ Himself. Therein can he speak the truth in love, therein can he exhibit the charisma of Christ as he radiates to the world what he sees in the face of Christ. In living and breathing the word, brethren today can do what the apostles did, as expressed by John the aged: "What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).
- **Enthusiasm makes the difference** - The children of God are the ones who should be the most enthusiastic, who most enjoy the years of the earthly pilgrimage. After all, who is it who live with hope, who live with courage, and who live with the strength the Spirit provides. "But in all these things," wrote Paul refreshingly, "we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). "Be filled," then comes the exhortation, "with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The enthusiasm (God within) should just flow from the sons of God like rivers of living water, and begin to make alive the denizens of earth's spiritual deserts.

1) Christ; 2) Contacts; 3) Caring; and 4) Charisma. These four spiritual topics, understood and developed by each child of God, will make him powerful and effective in carrying out the great commission, and enable him to inspire multitudes of others generations deep. To the glory of God and Christ Jesus, to the church and for all generations. Amen.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Be Transformed

Change is painful, and self-improvement comes only at the price of a significant up-front investment. The non-Christian can improve himself and upgrade his performance if he uses certain principles of success in combination with consistent effort and hard work. The Christian, although he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, can also improve himself only by using those same principles of success as found in the word of God; he who thinks the Spirit removes personal responsibility is deluded or playing games with God. Thus the writings of the New Testament pressure the individual child of God to be transformed, to be "metamorphosed" into an entirely new creature who is desirous and capable of carrying out the will of the Father.

Many do not like this emphasis on change. Their preference is to live an unregenerated life, but get to go to heaven at the end. The apostle John reminds such *gnostics*, ancient or modern, that "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1 John 1:6). So each son of God must change for the better, and the only way this can be accomplished is through the painful process of repetition, of *renewing the mind*.

- **Proving the will of God** - The apostle Paul went to the core of the matter with the brethren in Rome. Urging them to offer their bodies as living and holy sacrifices (the only ones acceptable to God), he wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2). Change in performance is only going to result from a change in thinking. The mind's thought patterns are altered by a repetitious training regimen, a daily discipline of directing the mind in paths of righteousness, and focusing on the glory of the risen Lord.
- **According to a true knowledge** - "You have laid aside the old self with its evil practices," wrote the apostle to the Colossian brethren, "and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Colossians 3:9,10). The mind must continually be redirected to the image of the glory of Christ, which is the creative and transforming power of God. This process once again is called "renewing" of the mind, the repetitive effort of going over again and again the picture and performance God expects of those who wear His family name.
- **In the spirit of your mind** - "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind," Paul exhorted the Ephesians, "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4:23,24). Once again the exordium for renewing the mind surfaces; once again the life or death issue - whether the mind is going to be reprogrammed to think the thoughts of Jesus or whether it is going to continue to have the values and volition's of the world - comes to the forefront.

Brethren, if a person is immersed into Christ, but fails to renew his mind, he will die eternally. Without daily prayers, without daily devotion, without daily reading, without daily meditation and praise and thanksgiving, without daily stoking the fires of zeal for the lost, the disciple withers on the vine, is eventually cut off, stacked, and burned. But if he puts on the armor of light and makes no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts, he will, in successive stages, be transformed into the image of Christ, and will have the corresponding impact on his disciples and the world.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Working out the Contract

"There is power, power, power in the name of Jesus." So says the song. And that of course is one of the basic thrusts of the scripture. But if you do not know how to tap into that power source, knowing that the force is there is not of great value. So we must pay attention, very close attention, to the instructions of the scripture in regard to this power.

Power in wrong hands is destructive. Hence it is that the Lord has perfectly designed His system so that only those who will use the power for His purposes can have it. Those who would be selfish or destructive, by the wisdom of God, are "foiled again."

The power of God is operative through the indwelling Spirit, as the apostle Paul put it in his prayer for the Ephesian brethren: "Be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). There are some introductory steps to take in understanding how to participate in this spiritual power.

- **Imitation of Christ** - Imitation is the highest form of adoration. Thus the true lover of Christ will try to imitate Him; His attitudes, His actions, His priorities, and His mission will be emulated by his disciples. Before the individual can begin down the road of sharing in Christ's power, He must recognize that there is to be no selfishness, that His purpose, as was Christ's, is to do the will of the Father. "Be imitators of me," said Paul, "as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- **Man is shut up** - To understand the spiritual nature of power connected with the indwelling Spirit, the weakness and futility of the fleshly nature of man is first exposed. "But the Scripture," intones Paul, "has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Galatians 3:22). Only those who truly believe and who are obedient to the gospel are set free from their cage and fit recipients for the promised Holy Spirit. The spiritual man rightly has no intention of returning to the filth of that fleshly prison, and therefore will not use the promised power for self glorification or sensual purposes.
- **Receiving the promise** - The gift of the indwelling Spirit is offered to those who believe the gospel. "Repent," said the apostle Peter, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself" (Acts 2:38,39). This promised Holy Spirit was prophesied in the Old Testament for both Jew and Gentile, and remission of sins is the first step in recognizing the value of the Spirit Himself. The thrust of preaching was the promised Spirit, however. Paul's question for men immersed into John's immersion was, significantly, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2).

The Lord in His wisdom has perfectly designed His word to separate out those who are spiritually-minded, and who will appreciate and use His power for His purposes. Only those who will begin to be strengthened in the inner man for carrying the treasure of the gospel message in earthen vessels have access to the fountain of God's dynamism. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Romans 11:33).

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## It Is To Your Advantage

"How much more," asked Jesus, "shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13). Jesus, in His teaching, pointed His disciples to the coming of the Holy Spirit as the One who would indwell Jesus' followers. "It is to your advantage that I go away," He said, in another place, "for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).

But the coming Paracletos' purpose was not so that disciples of Jesus could walk on water, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead. The purpose of the coming Spirit was to strengthen believers so that they could walk people to the water, heal the spiritually sick, give sight to the spiritually blind, and raise the spiritually dead from the water to walk in newness of life. This Spirit was promised to the seed of Abraham 2000 years before Christ, and repeatedly mentioned as coming to the Gentiles throughout the pages of the Old Testament. But the spiritual nature of that promise is designed specifically to eliminate those who are not truly interested in the spiritual purpose of His coming.

- **The promise to Abraham** - As the Lord was calling Abraham out of Ur of Chaldees, He promised, "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). This promise, specifically including the nations of the world, was proffered in slightly different words when Abraham offered up Isaac his son at Calvary's precursor: "And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). Thus it was that Christ in the Spirit was to come to the Gentiles (for Christ in the flesh, by His own words, was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel).
- **The blessing of Abraham** - "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law," explained Paul "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13,14). Forgiveness of sins, or redemption, is to prepare the body of the now-forming child of God so that he is a fit dwelling place for the Spirit of God. The purchase price of the blood of Christ is applied in immersion, so that the new body is now a temple of the Holy Spirit of God, the promised blessing of Abraham.
- **The promised Spirit** - Central to Peter's response on Pentecost was the indwelling Spirit. The emphasis of his words lies on the expression "for the promise," which was to be for the Gentile as well as the Jew. As Paul explained in his letter to the Ephesians, "You were sealed in Him with the *Holy Spirit of promise*, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13,14).
- **The men of old did not receive the promise** - While the Holy Spirit came on the Old Testament prophets, and spoke within them, He did not indwell them, nor cause them to be born again to a living hope. Thus these great men of faith "did not receive the promise, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39,40). They did the great things of the Old Testament records, but they were not strengthened with power through God's Spirit in the inner man.

The purpose of redemption is to focus the spiritually-minded on the indwelling Spirit, promised beforehand in the gospel to Abraham. In other words, the message of the New Testament is not on forgiveness of sins, but on the working of the Spirit of Christ. "This is the only thing I want to find out from you," Paul challenged the Galatians. "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?" (Galatians 3:2). The spiritual ones, then, will pay attention to the teaching concerning this Spirit, desiring to know how He strengthens with power in the inner man.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## The Promise

The emphasis of Peter's words on Pentecost was not on forgiveness, or remission, of sins. Now it is certainly true that immersion by the authority of Jesus Christ occurs in the medium of water, and that it offers remission to the truly penitent believer. And it is just as certainly true that there is no other means by which the convicted sinner might find grace in the cross of Christ; unless a person is immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, he has no forgiveness, and is destined for an eternity of punishment in a Christ-less hell. Now, as important as remission of sins is, that was still not the main thrust of his answer to the serious questioners of Acts 2.

Read Acts 2:38 and Acts 2:39 carefully together. Peter's response to their query of "What shall we do?" was: "Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. *For the promise* is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself." The emphasis was on the promise. And what is the promise? The promise is the indwelling Spirit of God, through whom one is born of God and an heir of eternal life. Note these considerations:

- **The indwelling Spirit is the distinguishing mark of a Christian** - "However," wrote Paul, "you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Romans 8:9). John the Immerser did immerse with what was called *the immersion of repentance* (Acts 19:4) which was for the *remission of sins* (Luke 3:3). What John's immersion specifically did not offer was the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul makes a similar point in his letter to Titus: "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the *washing of regeneration* and *renewing by the Holy Spirit*" (Titus 3:5). The renewing action of the Holy Spirit is critical in the regeneration process.
- **The Old Testament promised the Spirit to God's people** - Typical of many Old Testament prophecies is this clear statement from Ezekiel: "And I will put my Spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:27). The spiritually-minded student of the Old Testament writings would earnestly desire the indwelling Spirit which God had for ages promised to His people. Thus, among the "devout men from every nation under heaven" gathered to hear Peter's preaching on Pentecost were those who looked for this promised Spirit, and responded with gladness to the divine offer mentioned through Peter and the other apostles.

Forgiveness of sin is a vehicle to receiving the promised Holy Spirit. Fleshly man is at first not particularly interested in a spiritual Promise, even of this magnitude. God reaches man through a message, which convicts the guilt-ridden earth dweller of his sin, and through this begins to make him increasingly aware of the value of the indwelling Spirit. If we were to concentrate the entire message of the New Testament to a single drop of power elixir, it would have the title *The Promise*. This is the message of the New Testament; this is even the purpose for which Christ shed His blood on the cross of Calvary, that He might purchase a now cleansed body as a dwelling place for the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 6:19,20).

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## The Mystery

The message of the New Testament writings is The Promise. From the beginning of the church on Pentecost 30 AD, the gospel of Christ has promised the blessing of the indwelling Spirit to those who are obedient to this gospel. Jesus Himself prepared the disciples for the reception of this Spirit by His teaching during the years of His earthly sojourn. John recounts one incident: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast [of Tabernacles], Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"" John then adds, "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39). This promise of the Spirit was central to New Testament preaching and teaching, and its importance was expressed in the terms with which Paul approached some disciples in Ephesus: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2).

But the above quote from John's account illustrates, the indwelling Spirit was also the central topic of the Old Testament. As the New Testament inspired writers look back on those works, they call the promised indwelling Spirit The Mystery.

- **Christ in you** - Another name for the indwelling Holy Spirit is "Christ in you." In writing to the Roman church, Paul sheds light on this point: "However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Romans 8:9,10). The apostle equates the indwelling Spirit with Christ in you.
- **The Mystery in Colossians** - Writing to the congregation of Colossae, the apostle explains that his purpose is to "fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery, which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:25-27). This mystery, which is Christ in you, the indwelling Spirit, had been hidden in the pages of the Old Testament, but through the teaching of the New Testament, beginning on Pentecost, 30 AD, has now been made plain to the saints of God.
- **The Mystery in Ephesians** - "By revelation," explained Paul, there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:3-6). This mystery, which is the same as the promise, had been hidden from the previous generations, but the purpose of the apostles and New Testament prophets was to make this mystery known to the sons of men from Pentecost, 30 AD, onward.

Just as The Promise is the message of the New Testament, so The Mystery is the message of the Old Testament. And the message of both Testaments is the same: the indwelling Spirit! Every Christian should immediately snap to attention, and take careful note of the significance the Almighty is putting on this issue.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## I Can Do... Through Him

In effect God has said, "If you can draw near to Me, I will let you in on a secret." The writer of Hebrews has said, "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22). In being immersed into Christ, our bodies are washed with the purifying water, and our hearts are sprinkled clean from evil consciences with the spiritual blood of Christ.

Having thus been cleansed, the now sanctified individual is the recipient of God's Holy Spirit, And the reception of that Spirit is the secret, or mysteries, that the loving Father wants us to know, and for really no one else to understand. This secret is the hidden message of the Old Testament, written in a code which, if a person knows the code, he can look back into the pages, and unravel the interesting and exciting clues which are intertwined with the historical and prophetic discourses. Thus the blessing of Abraham is a prophecy of the coming indwelling Spirit, as well as the showers of blessing, and the rivers of living water. Because of these prophecies, and the earnest thrust of the Old Testament, the indwelling Spirit in the New Testament is called the promise. Thus it was said that the Old Testament men of faith "did not receive the promise" (Hebrews 11:39). The promised Spirit was reserved for those who were to come under the sprinkled spiritual blood of the ascended Christ.

**The Spirit is the guarantee of the saints' resurrection** - "You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise," explained the apostle Paul to the Ephesians, "who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13,14). The indwelling Spirit, the promise, is the earnest of God's commitment, His pledge that He shall in fact raise Christians to a resurrection of life. If the significance of the difference between the resurrection to life and the resurrection of the unrighteous to condemnation impinges upon the mind of the child of God, he is deeply and immortally grateful for the pledge of the Holy Spirit guaranteeing His proper resurrection.

**The indwelling Spirit is the source of spiritual power** - To move, to reach, to stretch, to accomplish... these all require power and strength. The earnest prayer of the apostle Paul is that "He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). The power of God is operative through the indwelling Spirit; the contemplative child of God will recognize that if he wants that power to be operative within Him, he must understand how the power comes to be there in the first place, and what instructions he must follow after the power is implanted. "I can," expounded the apostle, encouraging the rest of us to follow his example, "do all things through Him [the indwelling Spirit] who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

God has let us in on a big secret. And He has chosen the use of the words promise and mystery to communicate the importance of the indwelling Spirit, knowing that these words arouse our spiritual curiosity and emphasize the importance of His presence within. Let us draw near, listen, and learn, and then "do" through the strength this Spirit provides.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Working From Within

Carrying the fiery torch emblazoned *REPENT* to this world can be an experience fraught with fear. Even the brave heart Paul, when he was finally able to catch his breath in Corinth on his first time through, was told by the Lord in a night vision Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city (Acts 18:9,10) And the forces at work against the proclamation of righteousness are no small matter; as the apostle Paul put it, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). In simple terms, it's power vs. power.

It is easy to mouth the platitude that the power of God is greater than the power of Satan. Unless the individual knows how to make the power of God operative in his life, however, the platitude does him no good, and Satan holds sway over his life. So where does the power of God begin to function?

- **In the inner man** - The apostle Paul knew that the power of God operates from the inside Out. He thus prayed for the Ephesian brethren, that the Lord of hosts would grant them, "according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). Because of the spiritual nature of the warfare, inner strength and ability to pray and be heeded at the throne of grace are much more major players than they might at first seem to someone who only looks at things as they are outwardly. And these powers are operative only through the indwelling Spirit.
- **God works through power within** - The apostle's letter to the Ephesians contains the following glorification of God: "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20,21). God, of course, is able to do far beyond all we ask or think, but it is interesting that the manner He has chosen to do all this is through the power of the Holy Spirit working within Christians. Each Christian must learn to ask, and he must learn how to think, and he must then recognize that he is but a vessel through which the then operative power of God flows. How important the life and prayers of each truly spiritual son of God are!

Because in this spiritual struggle it is power vs. power, and that the power of God is operative only through the Holy Spirit indwelling the inner man, it is imperative that the emphasis on the indwelling Spirit be the same central focus as it was in the preaching of the first century apostles. Only those who understand the importance of the Spirit in the inner man, and who can do their part to unleash His power in their lives, can effectively carry the message of repentance and turning to God to an increasingly hostile world. Enthusiasm in evangelism begins with the work of God within!

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Fearing God is the Beginning

The biggest hindrance to evangelism is fear. Fear of people strikes many tongue-tied. Fear of failure causes multitudes to refuse to take the first stumbling step. Fear of persecution drives thousands to a state of naked paralysis. And fear of death leaves minions quivering skeletons long before their bodies are lowered into the yawning grave, silent specters who stilled the tongue rather than shouting the message from the housetops.

Our Lord knew that fear would be a definite factor in the lives of His disciples. Dealing with the apostles when He first sent them out two by two, He gave them a series of helpful instructions to which we would do well to pay attention in overcoming our own fears:

- **Warning about the nature of man** - "Behold, I send you out as sheep among wolves," said our Lord. "Therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Men are obviously extremely dangerous, as is clear in the sheep-among-wolves illustration from Him who is able to accurately assess the nature of man. Having a clear conscience is a major protection from the ravages of the wolfish clans, for righteousness is indeed a breastplate. Innocence is to be more than a child-faced mask the Christian dons in the face of trial or accusation; he is to be innocent! One of the major purposes of the shed blood of the Christ is to grant the believer in God a clean conscience so that he can powerfully serve in innocence. And to be shrewd, the son of faith can ask and receive wisdom from Him who loves to give it generously and without reproach.
- **Warning about being brought to court** - "But beware of men," adds the Savior, "for they will deliver you up to the courts, and scourge you in their synagogues" (Matthew 10:17). Should the child of the King meekly tremble in fear when shouldered into the court by burly bailiffs? Rather, he should go on the offensive, following the example of the apostles and prophets of the first century, who were "brought before governors and kings for [His] sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Matthew 10:18). Fear can be banished when attention is focused away from self, when a woe-is-me perspective is replaced by a recognition that this is a great opportunity for the dissemination of the gospel. A word of caution: do your preparation before you enter court. You and I today, having the completed New Testament to study at our leisure, are to be responsible for the assimilation of its teaching and principles, and therefore able to defend ourselves with its quotations before the assizes rather than relying upon the Spirit to tell us directly what to say when the courts assemble.
- **Knowing whom to fear** - Satan and his servants are not to be feared; he is simply Beelzebul, the lord of the dung heap, and his servants are less than he. "And do not fear those who kill the body," declared our Master, "but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Healthy fear of the merciful, just, compassionate Majesty on High drives fear of all others into the darkness of the nothingness. Fear of the Lord is truly the beginning of wisdom, and those who do not begin with this fear are beaten and shaken all their lives, slaving servants of the dark realm, unable to truly serve the Almighty because they love the approval of men more than the praise of God. As the apostle Paul put it, "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11). Speak therefore, and let not the servant of the Lord be silent!

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Overcoming Fear of Death

Satan is the perpetrator of unhealthy fear. The prince of the power of the air works assiduously to foment real or imagined fears in the minds of those who would be harbingers of the good news, carrying the message of care and salvation each man to his neighbor. From superstition to persecution, from fear of dearth to fear of death, the dark angel has so arrayed his psychological defenses that the purveyor of gospel truth tends to be immobilized before such an impressive display. And this shutting of the mouth, this slavery to inaction, is precisely what the liberating truth of the gospel is designed to destroy. As the writer of Hebrews expressed it: "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Hebrews 2:14,15).

- **Fear of death is the ultimate fear** - All other fears is essentially rooted in fear of death. The ultimate extension of fear of failure is fear of starving to death. The ultimate extension of fear of people is that they will kill. The ultimate extension of fear, whether it be persecution or stigmatization by a peer group, is fear of death.
- **Satan uses the fear of death to paralyze** - Because other fears are rooted in fear of death, the simplest way to express Satan's power is in terms of fear of death. Thus, even in the political realm, millions are enslaved to tyranny because they are afraid to speak out, for speaking out is tantamount to dying. And in the spiritual realm, millions more for the same reason are slaves to sin, and are unwilling to speak the confession of Christ.
- **By destroying fear of death, all fear is destroyed** - The Lord paints with a broad brush, and the scope of His picture is huge. When therefore Jesus participated in death and came forth in the power of the resurrection, He not only destroyed death but all fear rooted in death. The scripture thus truthfully says that Christ rendered Satan powerless, him who used the fear of death to enslave earth's minions.
- **Our participation in Jesus' resurrection sets us free** - "Through death," says the scripture, is how our Lord "might deliver" us from Satan's grip. "Through death" is the expression of the Hebrews writer, because the death of Christ was necessary in order for the resurrection to occur. Our deliverance, our freedom, initially occurs through our participation in Jesus' resurrection by being immersed into Christ. "We have been buried with Him through immersion into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). And as Peter commented: "Immersion now saves you ...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21).

The child of God, through his immersion, is set free from Satan's power and he recognizes that fear is longer a governing or contributing factor in his life. Fear for the believer is banished; he is no longer concerned about the preservation of his life or property, is at liberty to fully proclaim the will of God.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## The Right Spirit

Our God knows how powerful fear is as Satan's weapon against His children. To help the Father's spiritual offspring, Jesus "had to be made like His brethren in all things" (Hebrews 2:17). In passing through death and participating in the resurrection, the Lord showed that there is a way to overcome death, and that the saint need not fear, but simply follow Him who knows the way. Christians, since they partake of flesh and blood, need this help in overcoming fear of death, whereas angels, never being flesh and blood but only spirit, never die. "For assuredly He does not give help to the angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16).

But this is not the only help the Almighty provides to those who must face the sting of death. In addition to the great picture of Jesus and the empty tomb, the Father has provided the Helper as the great enabler in overcoming fear. The indwelling Spirit, doing His work in conjunction with the written word, provides powerful internal confidence and assistance in the great spiritual mind game against the Adversary.

- **Christians do not receive a spirit of being afraid** - When the apostle Paul wrote to his son in the faith Timothy, he encouraged him to make use of the spiritual gift which was in him through the laying on of Paul's hands. Timothy was apparently somewhat hesitant, so the grand apostle penned these words: "God has not given us a spirit of timidity" (II Timothy 1:7). The point is clear: rather than being timid and hesitant, men of faith have received the Spirit, which makes them bold and brave.
- **The Spirit of power** - When you need to be bold and brave, there is great strength in knowing that a power source stands behind you. A single individual can be confident in his negotiations with a gang of 100 toughs when he knows he has 10,000 men hidden nearby. The saint can likewise exude assurance in his bearing, knowing that the tremendous power of God is exerted through him. Christians have received, not spirit of timidity, but "of power."
- **The Spirit of love** - Love indeed believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Stories abound of mothers whose children, for example, were taken from them, but who never gave up hope, and against unbelievable odds and incredible opposition - found their lost loved ones. How much more, then, the Spirit "of love" for the eternal souls of the lost empowers and emboldens Christians in their search for the missing children of God.
- **The Spirit of discipline** - The secret to offensive effectiveness is discipline. Whether we speak in terms of athletics or armies, the great victories are won by disciplined offensive units, by men who hold their position courageously but who move with precision and finesse at the appropriate times. The same type of fiber, but in the spiritual realm, is provided in superabundance by the Spirit "of discipline" to the soldier of the cross, so that alone or in concert with others he boldly attacks Satan's dominion in his mission to rescue the perishing.

The child of God need not fear nor be intimidated. God has provided mega-help for each Christian through the Spirit, so that with the Spirit of power, love, and discipline, he moves and speaks with confidence and boldness.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## No Fear, for Sons of God

The indwelling Spirit greatly assists the Christian in overcoming fear. The apostle Paul strongly emphasized that "God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline" (II Timothy 1:7). And again, conscious that fear of death keeps people enslaved to the power of darkness, the apostle noted: "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' " (Romans 8:15). It is comforting and exciting to know that the Spirit of God received in immersion is the Spirit of freedom as well as power, love, and discipline, and that Spirit is working with us specifically so that we no longer are governed by fear.

Christians have received, then, the Spirit of adoption as sons of God, by which they may address the Father in heaven in the most intimate and personal terms. In now being sons of God through their participation in the resurrection of Jesus in immersion, children of faith have some very special privileges and favors, which fill them with confidence as they charge forth on earth's surface.

- **The witness of the Spirit** - "The Spirit Himself," asserted Paul, "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16).
- **Suffering pales in comparison to glory** - "For I consider," added the apostle, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18).
- **The Spirit assists our prayers** - "The Spirit also helps our weakness," we are informed, "for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).
- **God works all things for good for His children** - "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28), and that all events are working to conform saints to the image of the glorified Christ.
- **The Father will give His sons what they need** - "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).
- **The condemnation from the world is inconsequential** - "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" queries the bond-servant Paul. "God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?" (Romans 8:33,34).
- **Nothing external can separate the saints from Christ's love** - "Shall tribulation" separate the Christian from the love of Christ? is Paul's question. "Or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" he added. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38,39).

Being a son of God through the Spirit eliminates fear. The Spirit works within to inspire confidence, while the word of God brings forth powerful instruction, calling saints to take courage. "If God is for us," is the question, "who is against us?" (Romans 8:31). First, make sure God is for you by functioning according to His word. Then, in full assurance of faith, carry the gospel message to the next person.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Kings Without Fear

Imagine being a king! As the ruler in your realm, there would be no one greater. Governors would bow at your feet, judges themselves would beg for your mercy, and dangerous dowagers would politely curtsy and hope you would kiss their hand. There would be no one individual of which you would be afraid, for all would be lesser and in fear of the powers at your command.

But let your imagination carry you a step further. Suppose that your throne was in another world, that you were secure as a king in a far off distant realm, inaccessible to those with whom you were currently consorting. As an earthly king, your realm is subject to revolution; there are always Absaloms to plot your destruction, and to usurp the throne at an opportune time. But if your throne is in another realm, then no earthling can touch what is yours; though your disguise be as a poor peasant, you would have nothing to fear even from those who arrogantly robe themselves in royal purple.

But you need not imagine. By the grace of God through our Lord Jesus, "even when we were dead in our transgressions, [He] made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up with Him, and seated us in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5,6). We are kings! Our throne is in another realm! No one on earth can touch what is ours; though we be draped in poorest peasant apparel, and though we fall among thieves and are murdered, nothing can take away our kingship or our kingdom.

What, then, is an earthly emperor to such a heavenly king? Of what account is a mere President, a third rate dictator, or pompous judge? There is no contest, no threat, and nothing to fear for such kings!

- **Greetings from the King** - The book of Revelation, written really to encourage the brethren not to succumb to fear from those who would even dare to claim to be gods, as did the Caesars, opens with these words designed to help servants of Jesus overcome their fears: "Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead and the ruler of the kings of earth" (Revelation 1:4,5). Jesus, the first-born from the dead, had already as the King conquered death, and is emphasized as the one ruling over the kings of the earth. So this greeting, from the distant untouchable realm, from such an exalted Personage, comes as great encouragement to those following in His steps.
- **Blessings to His kings** - Praise for the exalted One follows: "To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5,6). The One from the distant realm loves us, and nothing can separate us from that love. He released us from our sins by His blood, and no earthly potentate can pronounce us guilty. And He made us exalted, a kingdom of priests, far above the mere titles earthlings might arrogate for themselves.

Christians live and reign with Christ now! Knowing that we are kings drives any sort of earthly fear from our lives, and endues us with the confidence that though we be in chains before this world's Agrippas, we can easily recognize the superiority of our position. Children of the king can be beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and not lose their faith. They will not worship the beast or his image, or receive his mark on their foreheads or hands. They have come to life, and live and reign with Christ. Now!

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Love Casts Out Fear

The Lord, the Almighty, the blessed One, handles fear for His children. First, all fear that Christians might have of men is transferred to fear of God. As Jesus explained: "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Then the loving Father institutes a program in which fear step-by-step is replaced by confidence.

- **Confidence in the day of judgment** - "By this," the apostle John wrote, "love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world" (I John 4:17). Some day each of Christ's brethren will stand before the judgment seat and give an account of himself. That could be a fearful occasion, or, if the brother has been careful to engage in love and good deeds, it can be an occasion of great confidence. "And now, little children," exhorts the apostle of love, "abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (I John 2:28).
- **No fear in love** - "There is no fear in love," added the apostle, "but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love" (I John 4:18). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). But fear is not a very good long-term motivator. As the child of God grows in knowledge and grace, his confidence increases; His relationship moves progressively along a scale from fear to friend as He loves the Father more and better understands the Father's love for him.
- **Learning to love God through learning to love man** - The type of love God has for mankind is not a natural love; it is a love that must be learned; it is a love that responds in imitation of God. "We love," says the word, therefore, "because He first loved us" (I John 4:19). But because God is spirit, and intangible, it is easy for someone to say he loves God. So the intangibility of the learning process is removed by requiring that love of God is demonstrated by love of man. "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also" (I John 4:20,21). And love for your fellow man is love of his soul, love of his eternity. Love for souls leads the individual to serve, to toil, to study, to pray, and to suffer persecution so that the message of salvation reaches the lost brother.

As each faithful disciple learns to love man in general and each person in particular, he also increases in his love for God. And the one so perfected in love has finally passed through the fear barrier. Fear of man is totally replaced by fear of God. Fear of God is cast out by love of God. And this love abides forever.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Provisions For Performance

Our Father, who is in heaven, knew that there would be significant barriers in front of those desiring to seek and save the lost. Furthermore, the All Wise knew that the Adversary's main goal would be to defeat Christians mentally: through intimidation, persecution, and other tactics Satan would try to keep the mouths of the children of God shut. So God knew that the most important ingredient in personal evangelism was the mental and spiritual preparation of each Christian.

To carry the supernatural message against a superhuman enemy, God through the writings of the New Testament has prepared a supernatural people. This people, this holy nation, has been brought out of spiritual darkness into God's marvelous light. This people has, on an individual as well as on a collective basis, been given the power to overcome every spiritual obstacle in their path, to smash every intimidating specter or speculation raised, and to overwhelmingly conquer even through severe persecution. All the provision for performance has been made.

- **Imitators of Christ** - A new potential has been granted to each one born again in the waters of immersion. He now has, because of the indwelling Spirit, in conjunction with what is written, the capacity to follow his Lord. "Be imitators of me," wrote Paul, "just as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1).
- **A new self image** - The old man was a failure. Coming into a world ravaged by sin, each member of the human race is soon bent, twisted, and spiritually deformed. But the great I AM has arranged for the burial of this failure, and implanted in the faith center of his mind an entirely new self image. "You laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Colossians 3:9,10).
- **The new creation** - God performs a supernatural, powerful act in bringing the new creation into existence. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17).
- **Developing the new creation** - This new creature in Christ must be developed. The principles from scripture must be gone over time after time after time, so that the new creature is developed, and the Christians performance finally matches his picture.
- **Christ in you, the hope of glory** - Accomplishing His divinely powerful work is the indwelling Spirit, Christ in you. This new creature, this child of God is born of the Spirit (John 3:5), sustained by the Spirit (Titus 3:5), and transformed by the same Spirit (II Corinthians 3:18).
- **Banishing fear** - This powerful new creature, reprogrammed and reformed by the word of God, boldly steps forth in the face of his adversaries, overcomes all fear, and takes the message of Christ through the most forbidding barriers.

Through faith in God in accordance with what is written, this collection of new creations, this mighty army, conquers. "Fear knocked at the door; faith answered, and no one was there."

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## A Track To Run On

The individual Christian needs help. Because he needs help, God has graciously provided the Helper. But beyond the influence of the indwelling Spirit and the direct teachings of the word of God, the Father has provided the church fellowship and church leadership to supply this help.

The Christian needs help in many areas. He needs assistance in raising his family and strengthening his marriage. He needs counsel and discipline in regard to his finances. He needs strengthened and encouraged in his attitude and work ethic. But most of all, he needs help in carrying out the great commission. He needs a "track to run on." For this reason it is written: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

- **Present day gifts to the church** - Jesus, having ascended on high, has given certain men leadership positions as gifts to the church. Initially, before the writings called the New Testament were completed, as the Lord laid the foundation for the spiritual temple, He gave some as apostles and prophets. Once the foundation was laid, there was no more need for apostles and prophets, and the church continues to be equipped by evangelists and pastor-teachers.
- **Purpose of leaders** - The evangelists and elders have the stated purpose of equipping the saints to do the work, so that the body of Christ is built up. Since the body of Christ consists of individual disciples, it is obvious that the body of Christ is built up when new disciples are added one by one to the body, and when present disciples are strengthened and edified on an individual basis.
- **Equipping the saints for the work of service** - The saints at first are not equipped to do the work required of them. The elders and evangelists in particular are to equip the saints to carry out the building up of the body of Christ; it is patently obvious that elders and evangelists first need to have been equipped themselves in bringing in the lost and strengthening the saved, and secondly to know how to pass that on to the new or unequipped Christian. It is also clear that the brethren working beneath the leadership of these evangelists and pastors need to be willing to be instructed and directed, to cease to be "know-it-all's" and willing to learn and submit with servant's hearts.
- **To the unity of the faith, to a mature man** - The "track to run on" implemented by elders and preachers must be complete in scope; it must be able to bring each child of God "to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ."

Only as each congregation knowledgeably implements the "track to run on" is the church going to be back "on track" and conquering the world with the gospel again.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## "Know How"

There are those who bluster and blow, and there are those who know how to get the job done. Self appointed experts and bar stool brainstormers are legion; those who know how to labor in the harvest are few.

The apostle Paul was one who knew. Having served his apprenticeship, and having gone through his journeyman's training, he wrote, "As a wise master builder I laid a foundation" (I Corinthians 3:10). This wise master builder knew how to come into an area, preach the word, and implement the training of the saints to carry out the great commission, so that when he and those who co-labored with him were gone, the local congregation continued to function and the gospel continued to bear fruit. Such a man is worth listening to, and worth emulating.

Such a man worth listening to spoke thusly: "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned as it were, with salt, so that you may know how to respond to each person" (Colossians 4:5,6).

- **Conduct yourselves with wisdom** - There is a difference between being bold in ignorance and bold with wisdom. And some brethren, because of who they are and what their track record is, can be more bold than others. But the exhortation is to "conduct yourselves with wisdom." Pray diligently for this wisdom; God who gives such things generously and without chewing you out for asking, would especially delight in granting you wisdom in regard to the person-to-person spread of the gospel.
- **Toward outsiders** - The mission of Christ was "toward outsiders." The exhortation of one who knew was for the brethren to focus "toward outsiders" also.
- **Gracious speech, seasoned with salt** - Words of grace fall from the lips of these impassioned followers of Christ who fish for men. The dashes of salt in the conversation are those zingers thrown in, tweaking the listener's conscience, probing for an opening for teaching the word of Christ.
- **Making the most of the opportunity** - Time is short. Each opportunity will pass, and there may never be another with that person. The will of God, expressed by the Holy Spirit, is that we make the most of each opportunity.
- **So that you may know how to respond** - Experience, desire, and prayed-for wisdom combine to give the Christian the "know how" to make the most of the opportunity.

It is the function of church leadership to help the individual disciple to make the most of each opportunity. Evangelists and elders need to have moved far past their own apprenticeships, and pass their "know how" on to those allotted to their charge. It is the function of church leadership to train the saints in "knowledge" and "know how" whether the saints understand the leadership or whether they do not. The blusterers and blowers need to keep silent, and learn from those who have a proven track record of "know how."

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Scriptural Firepower

Satan himself took on the Lord Jesus after His forty day fast in the wilderness. Three times the wily one tempted the Lord; three times the Lord defeated Satan with memorized scripture. Think of the significance of that great spiritual matchup - Satan, the god of this world, prince of the power of the air, the one who holds captive all those trapped in the snare of sin, versus the great Son of God. In reality it was no contest; Satan staggered in the first few seconds, rocked by the very first punch, and was down and out by the time the third blow was delivered. And the weapon: the MEMORIZED WORD OF GOD.

But this weapon, the memorized word of God, is not a sword to be wielded only by Jesus the Son of God. It is a vital part of each Christian soldier's armor, and its double-bitted edge can be effectively used by any saint against the forces of the dark one. Through the strength, which this weapon supplies, each child of God can resist the devil and he is forced to flee. Praise God for such a weapon!

But who will set aside the time to memorize God's word? Because our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the conspiratorial world forces of this darkness, each Christian needs to be shown how, and encouraged, to memorize the word of God on the track to run on.

- **Importance of personal example** - I personally owe a debt of gratitude to Ed Bousman of Lynchburg, Ohio. Since I first heard him quote memorized scripture in 1973 at the Kiamichi Clinic in Honobia, Oklahoma, and saw the power of memorized scripture, I have been motivated to "go and do likewise." And from that example, many others have been excited and inspired to memorize chunks of the New Testament. Recognizing the power of personal example, it behooves each serious disciple-maker to be a memorizer of the word of God, that those who follow in his wake also imitate that good example.
- **Importance of scriptural role models** - In a message stressing the importance of memorizing scripture, Ed Bousman jolted us with this graphic thrust: "Jesus quoted memorized scripture. Peter quoted memorized scripture. Paul quoted memorized scripture. And if the example of Jesus, Peter, and Paul does not motivate you, you simply cannot be motivated."
- **Retraining the mind** - Because of the thousands of times that each verse of scripture must be gone over to have it permanently locked in mind, the memorized words of God begin to take over the thought processes. And, where the mind goes, the body eventually goes.
- **Increased effectiveness** - People respect others who know what they are talking about, and are more likely to give them a hearing. When scripture is memorized by a Christian, he tends to be conscious of the details in the books of the Bible he has memorized, and really becomes an expert on those passages of scripture. Thus, the likelihood of other's paying attention to his Bible studies is greatly increased.

"The weapons of our warfare," wrote Paul, "are not of flesh, but divinely powerful..." (II Corinthians 10:4). And the major weapon of our warfare is called the MEMORIZED WORD OF GOD. Get with the program, stay with the program, and help others to "go and do likewise."

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Devoted To Prayer

"Devote yourselves to prayer," insisted the Spirit of God through Paul, "keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). Devotion to prayer is not the same as praying occasionally. A man who devotes his life to hunting rallies to the chase at every opportunity. He plans extended hunting trips, using up vacation time and spending lots of saved up money. He reads hunting magazines, he knows what equipment and clothing are available, and he has enough expertise to show someone else how to do what he does. If the word of God said, "Devote yourself to hunting," the message would be very clear. Shall we claim ignorance, then, because the scripture says *prayer* instead of *hunting*.

Through prayers the individual saint can move all of glorious heaven on behalf of pitiful earth. How much more, then, the combined prayers of the brethren. "Now I urge you, brethren," pleaded Paul, "by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me..." (Romans 15:30). "And He will yet deliver us," affirmed the apostle to the Corinthians, "you also helping us through your prayers..." (II Corinthians 1:10,11). It is obvious that a serious disciple of the Lord sets aside a significant portion of his time for prayer, and as a result of developing that habit is consciously praying often throughout the day.

- **Prayer is powerful** – "The weapons of our warfare... are divinely powerful..." averred Paul (II Corinthians 10:4). In Paul's appeal to the Roman brethren to strive together with him in prayer, three things would be accomplished through their joint petitioning: a) Paul would be delivered from the "disobedient in Judea;" b) His service for Jerusalem (a large offering collected from the Gentile congregations) would prove acceptable to the saints; and c) That he could joyfully come to them in Rome and find rest in their pleasant company. Those were big prayers, and were answered (but not easily; Paul suffered greatly and was imprisoned for years before making his way under Roman guard to the capital city). What would have happened had not faithful brethren prayed?
- **Prayer for the lost is critical** - The political fate of nations resides in the prayers of the saints. Again the Spirit of God exhorts: "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:1-4). "Finally, brethren," Paul appeals to the Thessalonian brethren, "pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified" (II Thessalonians 3:1).
- **Prayer in conjunction with the word is unstoppable** - The scripture is replete with prayers of men and women who used the written word as a basis for their petitionings. Daniel, for example, read of Jeremiah's word that Judah would be enslaved to Babylon for 70 years, and used that to plead for Judah's deliverance before the Almighty. Saints, then, who will use the word of God as a basis for praise and thanksgiving are certain to be heard in the courts of heaven. But beyond that, when the child of God memorizes scripture, and allows that scripture to dwell and to work within him, and to guide him, he can not only be heard in heaven, but his requests will absolutely be acted upon: "If you abide in Me," said Jesus, "and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).

On the track to run on, disciples need to be taught to pray, and how to pray. And the teacher of the disciple must especially teach by example.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## “Publish Abroad” the Glad Tidings

The intensity of Jesus' desire for the spread of the good news is evident in His commission at the close of Mark's gospel account "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation," (Mark 16:15). Not once did Jesus or the apostles ever issue the directive, "Go and start churches." Such a directive would be flawed from the first because the goal would be to "plant a church," which practically speaking, translates into "compromise the word in order to get results." The orders from on high focus on a different point: "Go and preach the gospel." And that focus will constitute the thrust of true disciples of Christ and whole strings of congregations will automatically spring up as Christ's disciples disseminate the word.

How is the word "published abroad?" Individually, and in teams, at this point in history, a great variety of ways are available, and effective disciple-makers will make use of all of them.

- **Word of mouth** - The best "advertising" has always been family members telling family members, friends telling friends, neighbors telling neighbors. The broadcast of the word always keeps the individual contact as the primary thrust, as in the early days of the church: "Therefore those who had been scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).
- **Printing** - Printing is just the spoken word put in more permanent form. Disciples of Christ will work together to write, print, and distribute books, commentaries, messages, articles, magazines, and tracts which point people to the truth of God's word.
- **Audio and video cassettes and presentations** - In recent years the development of both audio and video cassettes have opened up major avenues in the distribution of teaching of the word of God. Audio cassettes are comparatively easy to produce and duplicate; good messages by interesting teachers can be duplicated in this way; and spiritually minded individuals will find time to listen to them. Effective videos are much more difficult to produce, but are powerful means of communicating scriptural truths. Teams of Christians can work together, pooling their creative talents to deliver potent, gripping, state-of-the-art presentations to assist the disciple-making process.
- **Television, radio, computers, internet, etc.** - As the communications world goes "digital," great opportunities for creatively distributing the good news concerning Jesus, His terms of pardon, and His kingdom will continually open up. Everything from desk-top publishing to computer produced slides and videos, to web pages on the internet can and should be used to make contact with individuals who are interested in truth.

Remember that the importance of "publicly" spreading the word is to make contact with individuals so that "house to house" discipleship can be implemented. "Publishing abroad the glad tidings" prepares the fields for individual reaping, and generates new sets of people where family member to family member, friend to friend, and neighbor to neighbor "mouth to mouth advertising" of the gospel goes on. And may it go on and on and on, to the glory of God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Sense of Mission

When Jesus said that He came in order that His offspring might have life abundantly, He was not kidding. But does this abundant life that only Christians possess consist of fancier houses, faster cars, and fussier ornaments? Obviously not, for these are the things the Gentiles eagerly seek. How about power, prestige, and predominance? Again, obviously not, for even though the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over their "lesser men," it is not to be so in the church of God. The abundant life for the child of God is participation in the mission of getting the gospel to every nook and cranny of this earth, delivering the message to every person, giving each soul the opportunity to make a clear and informed choice about his eternity.

And what a mission our Lord has provided! Consider the potential and characteristics of this abundant life mission offers the individual who takes up the challenge Jesus lays before him:

- **Untapped market** - The earth's population is approaching six billion, and currently doubling every 27 years. With the average age of this planet's denizens about 15 years of age, the growth potential for the gospel of the glory of Christ is virtually unlimited.
- **Every person a prospect** - All (who are old enough to understand) have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Thus every individual old enough to be responsible for his own actions is in desperate need of the gospel, and is a prospect for the presentation.
- **Rewards are great** - There are certain rewards even on earth for being involved in this great mission. The relationships developed in the spread of the gospel are based on the true love so necessary in each who carries the precious treasure in earthen vessels. "The grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (II Corinthians 13:14) causes Christians to "abound in love for one another, and for all men" (I Thessalonians 3:12). But beyond that are the great rewards of heaven, accolades from the Lord Jesus Himself, and the blessings of spiritual fellowship for all eternity.
- **Challenges requiring maximum personal growth** - The grandest of crusades, the greatest of all adventures demands the maximum from each of the participants. Each sojourner on the team must deal with his own attitude as he faces adversity from without, and occasional disparagement from within. He must steel himself to face persecution without flinching, trial without trembling. He must shoulder the load of his own cross, and shout encouragingly to fellow cross-bearers. He must maintain and deepen his own spiritual commitment, while the exigencies of the day do their best to destroy carefully established spiritual habits. He must willingly lay aside his own life for the sake of the lost, and set as his highest priority the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

What challenges! What lessons! What persecutions! What triumphs! "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place" (II Corinthians 2:14). "And who is adequate for these things?" (II Corinthians 2:16). Join with us in this great mission. Throw your life into accomplishing that which lasts for eternity. And when the harvest comes in, you also will come in with great joy!

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Six Important Steps: The Approach

Our Lord, the Maker of man, was a master at approaching man. He was able to use common human experience to interact with people, and then to draw each person one step upward spiritually. Not all were happy with His interaction, as evidenced by the fact that they killed Him. But He was able to approach people, and broach the great subject concerning each's eternity.

It is worth studying the Master, trying to see how He fished for men, gaining more insight on how to follow His example.

- **Personal interaction** - Jesus often involved others around Him, enlisting their help or engaging them in conversation, in order to extend the discussion that one step deeper spiritually. For instance, at Sychar in Samaria, at Jacob's Well, Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink. Her surprise at his asking her for a drink, since He was Jewish and she was a "loathsome" Samaritan, resulted in a conversation about living water and true worship of God. The simple asking for a drink from another engaged the process of personal interaction.
- **Personal intensity** - The personal interaction without the personal intensity to push the discussion to the appropriate spiritual point is essentially a waste of God's time. Our Lord's intensity often angered others, but for those interested in truth, the burning zeal of the Christ drew them onward. When Jesus' intensity about His being the bread of life caused many to withdraw and not walk with Him any more, Peter's response was, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68).
- **Personal interest** - Jesus clearly loved each individual, whether it was the rich young ruler who rejected Him, or Lazarus whom He raised from the dead. Jesus took a personal interest in Zaccheus, and was able to invite Himself to lunch with the rich tax gatherer. This personal interest in the publican led to the Lord's standing with Zaccheus against the murmuring of the crowd, and bringing him to repentance and salvation under the terms of the remnant of the old covenant.
- **Personal investment** - Many of the contacts Jesus generated came from a previously established reputation, and from the "third party" references because of that reputation. John the Immerser's high regard for Christ pointed his followers Jesus' way, including the initial contacts, which resulted in at least five of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The Lord's teaching and preaching, teaching and preaching, teaching and preaching in the synagogues throughout the villages and cities of Galilee created a ground swell of interest in the Teacher. His healings verified that He was a teacher come from God, and attracted the interest of men like Nicodemus. The investment of Christ in this traveling and preaching built His reputation, and thousand's interest in His message was awakened.

If each Christian would follow the example of the Lord, each would become a fisher of men. Personally interacting with people everywhere generates discussion and interest. When this is coupled with the personal intensity connected with the seriousness of the gospel, many more contacts are developed. When a Christian is truly interested in each person, this registers strongly and greatly enhances interaction and intensity. And when the Christian makes the personal investment of traveling, extending himself, speaking, teaching, improving in knowledge, and increasing third party influence, the number of contacts rises exponentially, and the gospel movement is well under way.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Six Important Steps: The Plan

Good fishermen know what to do when they have a fish on the line. They have a plan for pulling the fish in, and they have a plan for handling the fish they have landed. The fisherman without a plan is a fisherman with no fish as part of his permanent catch.

So the serious fisherman, once he has mastered *the approach*, needs to understand and implement *the plan* to carry out the commission of our Lord Jesus of actually making disciples of Jesus, immersing those disciples, and continuing to teach those disciples so they can go and do likewise. This is why we have developed *The Track To Run On*, a system of disciple-making tailored to handle the controversies of this century, and capable of using the technology of our time for the dissemination of information. Let us note, partly in review, some of the big points connected with this plan:

- **It is systematic** - *The Track To Run On* is designed to begin at the beginning, to prove that the Bible is the word of God and to thus establish the existence of absolute truths and the authority of the scripture. *The Track* systematically moves through the way of salvation, including immersion into Christ, proving key definitions of Biblical terminology connected with the Holy Spirit, delineation of each person's potential in Christ, description of the church as provided in the New Testament writings, and a discussion of the Lord's second coming. Thus the elementary teachings of Christ are systematically brought forward in such a way that each definition and key concept is proven. The result is that the disciple of Christ has objective confidence in his understanding of the word of God, and can immediately begin reading and comprehending the New Testament himself.
- **It is duplicable** - Because *The Track To Run On* is objective, logical Biblical, and systematic, the follower of Christ can now take the elementary teachings and impart them to the next interested earthly sojourner. And because the information is comprehensive enough and carries the seeker deep enough into the Bible, generation after spiritual generation of Christians can be produced.
- **It helps change lifestyles** - The gospel succeeds where the Old Covenant failed. One of the reasons the gospel succeeds is that the New Covenant focuses the believer's attention outward rather than inward. Whereas God had to keep the Israelites separate in order to preserve them as a people, the power of the gospel is so strong that God sends His New Covenant people into the world to change the world. In simple terms, in order to be effective in carrying the word of God to the lost, the disciple-maker has to develop a reasonable degree of holiness and consistency of lifestyle, to keep his behavior "excellent among the Gentiles" (1 Peter 2:12).
- **It is important that each disciple begin to implement "the plan"** - The key ingredient to the success of God's system of disciple-making is that each Christian participate. But Joe and Joleen Christian do not really have the time to develop an educational system that will handle the controversies ranging from evolution vs. creation to the details of prophecy and the Lord's second coming. *The Track To Run On* was designed to help new and "average" Christians have materials and a plan for immediately being able to not only spread the gospel themselves, but so that the other new Christians coming into the body through their efforts can also be made immediately effective.

The teacher of the word of God must remember that it is not only important that he communicate effectively for the glory of God and the edification of the disciples, but also that his teaching be able to be duplicated by the disciples. The plan must contain basic, orderly, information that all disciples need, and not a lot of fancy footwork that only a few skilled defenders of the faith can execute. Learn *the approach*, then implement the *plan*.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Six Important Steps: Attitude

Attitude is everything! When the apostle Paul summarized the great life of Jesus our Lord, he wrote, "Although He existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). But the words which precede this great summary are the focus of our attention at this point, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). The story of Christ, from His taking the form of a bond-servant to His ignominious death on the cross is placed before each of us underneath this headline: HAVE THIS ATTITUDE! Attitude really is everything.

And when the Christian picks up his cross and begins to follow His Lord down the trail of evangelism, he must work very hard on his attitude. When he tries to set up Bible studies, when he makes the approach, he often faces rejection and ridicule, and he needs to work on his attitude. When he takes others through the steps of the plan, some drop out, some refuse to do anything, some do "their own thing" and are ineffective, and some, like Judas, betray him and become hostile, and he needs to work on his attitude. He needs to learn, as did the Lord, to focus his attention past suffering and rejection to the blessings of the harvest. Attitude, the third important step on the track.

- **Learning to focus** - When discouragement strikes, when it seems no one wants to listen, when all the doors appear closed, it is important to remember the focus and words of Jesus, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). Key words-lift up your eyes! Get those eyes looking up instead of being downcast. And the fields are white for harvest; every "no" gets the cross-bearer that much closer to a "yes!"
- **Work on attitude all the time** - Don't expect to hit the crisis or the moment of opportunity and somehow miraculously maintain a Christ-like attitude. Referring to the true, the honorable, the right, the pure, the lovely, that of good repute, the excellent, and the things worthy of praise, the inspired apostle noted, "Let your mind dwell on these things" (Philippians 4:8). The mind cannot occasionally land on the branch of the praiseworthy, for example, rest a couple of minutes, and then suddenly flit somewhere else, and expect to be able to consistently make uplifting comments. The mind has to dwell in the house of praise to be comfortable and consistent in exhibiting good and edifying attitudes.
- **Using "surround sound"** - Listen to great messages over and over. Read scripture. Fill your life with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Pray, giving praise and thanksgiving to God. Spend your "personal building" time with brethren who do constructive things in the body of Christ, rather than with the whiners and complainers.

HAVE THIS ATTITUDE! The attitude of Christ will carry you consistently to white fields. The attitude of Christ, developed through consistent training of the mind, through positive input and proper associations, will carry you through your own cross to a sense of great victory, and will draw thousands to you for the glory of Christ Jesus.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Six Important Steps: Working with Others

Some of us are just plain "anti-social." Some of us don't like crowds. Some of us are so focused on ourselves on our family that others have a hard time being around us. Some of us act, for some strange reason, weird. And some of us handle ourselves pretty well, but could still do better.

But the fact remains, the church of the living God is comprised of people, the temple of the Lord is build of living stones. For us to work in the church, the great God has so arranged it that we must interact with people, and this interaction is a necessary part of our personal growth. Furthermore, to carry out the steps necessary to seek and to save the lost, the child of God not only needs to interact with people, but to be able to motivate and inspire them. It is interesting, isn't it, that the fruit of the Spirit-love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - should be primarily others-directed.

To carry out this commission of our Lord, then, each of us must take the scriptural steps necessary to learn to work effectively with others. We need to be able to work with individuals, and to be able to work with a group, to be able to expand the group, and to be able to develop leadership who can take these same steps with others also.

- **Genuine concern for others** - It is no accident that *love* should be listed first in the fruit of the Spirit, and that love should be the foundation for all motivation in Christ. People who are involved "for me and mine" are "into themselves" rather than really "into Jesus," and are not going to be very effective long-term either in the church or in reaching the lost. Each of us must learn *agape* love.
- **Developing teamwork skills** - The church is described repeatedly in the holy writ as a *body*. The church is to function as a team rather than as a scattered set of solo artists. In order for the Christian to be a team player, some of his individual peculiarities and preferences must be sacrificed, but the blessings greatly exceed the sacrifices. Well-developed harmony is much more fulfilling than trembling solo.
- **Developing sensitivity and reach out capabilities** - Jesus Himself said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32). On a broad, broad scale the Lord demonstrated His sensitivity to the suffering and plight of each man and woman, and took major steps to reach out and rescue each one. On a smaller scale, each Christian man and woman has the opportunity, particularly in working in settings to reach the lost, to be imitators of Jesus, to be sensitive to the needs of the lost, and to reach out to them first on an individual basis, and then to draw them upward to Jesus.
- **Developing motivational and leadership skills** - Our Lord was, and is, the great motivator. While others may use earthly wisdom and motivational schemes, the Christian motivator and leader will use the example of the Lord, and the spiritual, Biblical means to exhort, guide, and direct.

God is calling each of us out of our "anti-social," selfish and self-centered behavior. He wants us all to learn how to reach out, work with, and motivate others, that the church might function in harmony, and countless thousands of lost sheep be rescued.

# Enthusiasm For Evangelism

## Six Important Steps: Developing Loyalty

One of the greatest challenges of any leadership is to inspire loyalty. Once great quarterbacks find themselves “booed” by distraught spectators and great teams find their fans (shortened from *fanatics*) getting up to leave when the game appears lost. Even our Lord had to make some pretty blunt statements to secure our loyalty: “Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven,” He said. “But whoever shall deny Me before men I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32,33). Those who recognize the authority of King Jesus immediately snap to attention, and solemnly assure the Lord that He has their undying loyalty. But this type of loyalty is really an inspired loyalty rather than commanded, and church leadership, following the example of Christ, has the challenge of producing loyalty among the members of their flock to Christ's church as a whole, and to the local congregation in particular.

- **Inspiring loyalty** - Loyalty is a specific commitment to a person or cause or organization. Our Lord sacrificed Himself for each believer; the one who truly believes in Christ will willingly lay down his life for the same cause. “We know love by this,” wrote the aged John, “that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). The ultimate loyalty to Christ is to lay down one's life for the brethren, and our Lord's example inspires like-minded commitment from those who will walk in His steps.
- **Loyalty to the church of Christ as a whole** - The scripture establishes the point that without loyalty to the church, there really is no loyalty to Christ. The Lord essentially says, “Love Me, love My wife.” Local leadership is challenged to use the scriptures to establish, in each member belonging to the church, loyalty to the confession of faith, the inspired doctrines, and the mission of the church. As the writer of Hebrews exhorts, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).
- **Loyalty to the local congregation** - Ultimately, there is no loyalty to Christ or the church as a whole without loyalty to the local congregation. Christ and His church are mere theoretical concepts until the principles of the scripture are applied to real people and real situations. To produce disciples who are loyal to the local congregation, the disciple-maker himself has to be super-loyal. The principle here is stated by Paul in another context, “For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8). If the disciple is not pointed clearly and distinctly to involvement in a faithful local congregation, then there is no clear direction for the disciple to proceed, and he is essentially in a state of limbo. As the writer of Hebrews expands on the earlier thought, “... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:25).

Inspiring loyalty to Christ, to the church as a whole, and to the local congregation is an absolutely critical step in the building of a disciple, and in the continuing production of generation after generation of followers of Christ.