

Evangelism Series - Part 1

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon emphasizes the importance of wisdom and intimacy with God in effective personal evangelism.

Duration: 59:38

Scripture: Proverbs 11:30, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:21, John 14:26, Acts 4:12, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:57

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins a three-week teaching session on the keys to personal evangelism. While he acknowledges the abundance of how-to books on witnessing, he emphasizes that personal evangelism is not just about the technicalities. The speaker focuses on the wisdom of winning souls and effectively communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He warns against machine-gun evangelism and urges believers to speak in a way that people can understand, just as Jesus did through parables. The importance of living where the people live and responding with wisdom is highlighted, as the Scripture says that he who wins souls is wise.

Transcript

Father, I thank you tonight for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. God, I thank you for your strength. I thank you for your power.

Lord, I don't stand here in any strength of my own. The only strength that I do have is the strength that you give me. God, thank you.

We thank you tonight for every good gift that you give to your children. God, bless us tonight, oh God, with the knowledge of Christ. Bless us with the strength and the power of Christ.

Holy Spirit, come and quicken us now. Quicken my mind, quicken my physical body. Quicken the hearers in this house, for it is our desire.

Lord, it's our heart's desire to be a bride that is intimately acquainted with you, to know your heart, to walk in unison with you. Lord, the things that you do, we would be found doing. The things that are the desires of your heart would be clearly conveyed to us and clearly manifested through each one of our lives.

God, grant us this tonight, oh God. Speak to our hearts, Father. Lord, make us into soul winners.

Holy Spirit, we implore you in Christ's name. You were sent to lead and guide us into all truth. You were sent to empower us to be witnesses of the fact that Jesus Christ is alive from the dead, has atoned for our sins, and sits now at the right hand of all power and all authority.

Holy Spirit, work in our hearts in a very special way. And in this last hour of time, make us witnesses to the fact that Jesus Christ is alive from the dead. That there is remission of sins in no other name.

That in Christ is found all the power that we need to live a life of honor and glory to his name. To have victory and triumph over the powers of darkness and the power of sin. God, we thank you for this.

We praise you for it. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Proverbs chapter 11, if you'll turn there with me. Proverbs chapter 11, one verse of Scripture. I'd like to start with tonight.

I'm going to be doing a three-week, really a teaching session, I guess if you want to call it that, on the keys to personal evangelism. Now, although I will be dealing somewhat with technicalities of witnessing, this is really not a how-to session. There's no shortage of how-to books on witnessing, and if that's really where our hearts are at, we can go to many Christian bookstores and there's innumerable books on the how-tos of witnessing.

And that's really not what it's all about. It's not about how-to, although we will get into that. I'm going to be talking specifically tonight about the wisdom of winning souls.

And then next Friday night, I'm going to be speaking about effectively communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ. And my message on the third Friday is simply called, Everyone Loves a Good Story. Hallelujah.

I was approached by somebody on the street just a few days ago. I was walking in downtown New York and somebody approached me, a Christian, to witness to me about Jesus Christ. And I thought that was rather interesting, so I just played along just for a moment.

And the methodology, although the heart of this young person probably was well-intentioned, the methodology certainly could have used some refining. Evangelism, witnessing to somebody is not just getting out as much Scripture as you can in 35 seconds as he's passing down the street like a machine gun, just bleh, bleh, bleh, Scripture as people go by. That's not what witnessing is all about.

Jesus said, The Holy Spirit, it will come upon you. And he will give you the power to be witnesses. So witnessing is not just spouting off Scripture.

Witnessing is the power of God in our lives, enabling us to be a living example of what we are about to share with other people. And there's so much involved in witnessing. It's really my hope that you can come out for the full three weeks because I couldn't even hope to cover it, really, even in three weeks.

But I'm going to talk tonight. I'm going to begin with one statement from Proverbs chapter 11 and verse 30. The Bible says, The fruit of righteousness is a tree of life.

And he that winneth souls is wise. Now the fruit of righteousness, in other words, if we are in Christ, if Christ is in us, if we know him as our Lord and Savior, if we have an intimate walk with God through Jesus Christ, the fruit of that righteousness is a tree of life. In other words, where we go, the things we become will be life, not just to us but to others around us.

Life begets life. I've never ever heard tell of dead people having children. I don't know about you, but if you're dead, you're really, the odds of having a child are not very good if you're dead.

The fruit of righteousness is life. It's a tree of life. There is a life that radiates and emanates from one who knows God, from one who knows him in intimacy.

I remember when I first came to Christ, and I know that there are many of you here today too as well. When you first came to Christ, you loved him so much. And I hope you can get back to that day and remember that day.

You loved him so much that there was nothing virtually on this earth that could stop you from speaking his name. Unfortunately, that love for Christ was not matched up with an equal amount of wisdom at times. And I know that when I first got saved, it took me quite a while in some cases to undo some of the damage that I did.

I had some close friends one time, and I used to walk in their house and open my Bible, and I'd virtually yell at them, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and wonder why they ran. And when they'd run from the kitchen into the living room away from me, my heart had accused them of being backslidden and not loving the Word of God. And so I'd go in the living room, and I remember one of my friends told me one time that they got to the point of dreading my arrival.

They'd say, oh no, here he comes. And I'd walk in, and I'd open the book, and I'd start. You see, I had a zeal for God.

I loved the Lord, but not tempered with very much wisdom. He that wins souls is wise. Now this passage of Scripture is not a declaration that the man who sets about to win the lost of Christ is given wisdom because of his attempt to bring others to Christ.

Now a lot of people think that. Some interpreters have taken that passage of Scripture and say, well, if you go out to win souls for Christ, you'll be made wise. Really, that's not what the Bible is saying here.

It's not talking about God giving special wisdom because you and I attempt to bring others to Christ. Nor is it a declaration that he possesses a natural wisdom above others or above his peers, the result of which enables him to win the lost beyond others. We oftentimes think of certain people who seem to have an ability to lead others to Jesus Christ.

And we say, well, God must have given him or her very, very special wisdom to do this. And that may, I suppose, be the fruit of loving God, but that's really not what the Scripture is about. You don't get special wisdom just because you're winning others to Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in Proverbs 11, chapter 11, verse 30, he that wins souls is wise. What it really means, it's simply a statement that the man who has made soul winning his life's desire is already wise. That's really what it says.

If soul winning is your desire, if you are a Christian and now your heart's desire is to see others brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, you are already declared by the Word of God to be wise. Why would that be? It's simply because your life pursuit is toward that which is eternal and your work now has begun to be declared that it is of God. Why are you wise? It's because those that come to Christ and continue on in the secular pursuits of the world, continue on with a divided heart, there's no wisdom in that.

But God says those who make the saving of the lost, the winning of the lost, their life's desire are already wise because by the very intent of their heart, they have entered into the work of God. That's what wisdom is all about. We're not living for ourselves now.

We are now living for the work of God. We're living for the plan of God. God has a plan that has been unfolding since before the foundation of the world.

And that plan is unfolding through Jesus Christ. It's unfolding in our generation and it's going to culminate in a day when Christ comes and gathers His church from the face of this earth. First, those that have died of the Lord and secondly, those of us who are alive and remain at His coming will be gathered together with Him in the clouds and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This is the work of God. The work of God is not to preserve the earth, as precious as that might be. The work of God is not to... whoever gets the most money wins in the end.

The work of God is not just to be a nice guy or a nice girl. The work of God is to bring the saving message of Almighty God to this fallen generation. That is the work of God.

That's why God the Father sent His Son. There is no other reason. He didn't die before mankind just to prove a point.

He died because it's in His heart to see not one perish but that all come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is the work of God. And He who enters into that work is already wise.

He has already attained a measure of wisdom that this world can't offer. He has left off other pursuits. He has left off gravitating to other loves and the other things that can so easily encroach in any one of our lives.

And he or she has come to the place of saying, Father, I want to do Your work. And God says, that is an indication that you have already laid hold of wisdom because it's in your heart to want to do what is in fact the only work of God. The only eternal work of God is the winning of the lost.

John 4, 34 and 35, Jesus said to them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work. Do you not say that there are yet four months and then comes harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Christ said, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white, all ready to harvest. Jesus is saying clearly, This is what I have been called to do.

My meat, my strength, my life, the substance, the essence of who I am is not to do my own will, but it's to do the will of the one that sent me. That's His Father. And it's to finish His work.

He that wins souls is wise. He said, lift up your eyes now. He said, do you not say there are yet four months and then comes harvest? In other words, He's saying it's in the human heart to say, well, we'll look after it tomorrow.

There are good days ahead. There's a time coming when I'll be able to get at this work of harvesting. I'll be able to get at it.

I've got so many things to do now and harvesting will come in its due time and in its day. But He says, no, lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are already white to harvest. In other words, He was saying the harvest is here, the harvest is now and elsewhere in the scriptures He said, pray now the Lord of the

harvest that He would send forth laborers into His harvest.

Don't put away the work of God. The direction of the soul seeker indicates that he's in fact a seeker of God. For I don't believe that one can genuinely be a pursuer of his fellow man until he has first been a pursuer of God.

You can't be. The lawyer came to Jesus and said, what is the most important commandment? He said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength. And He said, the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

A man who is a soul winner, a woman who is a soul winner, it's a clear declaration that you have a love for Jesus Christ and you're a pursuer of God. What happens when we begin to pursue God? The very first thing that happens we become aware of His heart, isn't it? Isn't that a fact? If you have no burden for souls tonight then you are not a genuine pursuer of God because if you are a pursuer of God tonight the moment you get into His presence He's going to begin to speak to you about something that's on His heart. And there's nothing more important on His heart than men and women, than children, than young people.

First those that know Him, His beloved, His bride and secondarily those whose hearts are open to receive the kingdom of eternal life through Jesus Christ. This is what He's going to speak to you about because this is His work. He's not going to speak to you about Cadillacs and better jobs and bigger cars and all of these things that people would like to think God is speaking to them about.

He's going to speak about His work. Nothing has changed. Jesus said, this is the work.

My work is to seek out those that are lost. My work is to bring sinners to repentance. My work is to see the kingdom of God come with all of its power, its might and its glory.

My work is to reach out to all of those who can hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is my work. When we begin to seek God He begins to reveal to us His work.

I tell you, there are many, many people today. There are all over America today. There are churches.

There are organizations. There are evangelistic associations that proclaim that they are experiencing revival and a genuine blessing of God. But I want to tell you folks, it's not true because you don't mark a genuine work of God by what comes in the door.

You mark a genuine work of God by what goes out the other side. By how many missionaries go to the mission field. Mark a genuine work of God by the missions budget.

If there is no missions budget there is no heart of God in the center of that work. You cannot. You cannot.

It's impossible for a church to say we're seeking God and have no heart for the lost. It's impossible. It's ludicrous.

We cannot be seeking God. It's like my own sons coming and saying we know the heart of our Father. We know the mind of our Father and yet head out and do something completely contrary to my will or something that is not even an issue in my heart.

Walking away saying we represent our Father when that would be a lie in itself is not the truth. If we are genuinely seeking God something comes into the heart to say Lord God, I want to see men and women come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Brethren, this has been a passion of my life.

It continues by God's grace to be a passion of my life. When I first got saved I wanted everybody to know that Jesus Christ was alive. I wanted everybody to know He was the Son of God.

I wanted everybody to know He had forgiven me my sin. I wanted every man, every woman, every young person to know that there is a God in heaven that loves Him. I had looked for Him for 24 years and finally He had found me.

Hallelujah. I wanted them to know about Him and in the first five years I've shared with you before of knowing Christ there were many, many that God gave me the opportunity to lead individually to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Did it come really because I knew everything in the Scriptures? No.

I couldn't tell you where the book of Habakkuk was. I didn't even know some of these books existed in the Old Testament. I didn't even know what they were.

And I've read them and I couldn't make sense out of them. But I knew one thing. Jesus Christ had come.

He was God in the flesh. He had died for my sins. The third day He rose again from the grave.

He had filled me with the Holy Ghost. He had transformed my life. And I had a story to tell.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Just like the Apostle Paul with all of his revelation knowledge God sends him to the Gentiles.

If He would have sent him to the Jews he would have always been digging back in the storehouse of all his revelation out of the Old Testament. But when you find yourself around an altar where people are worshiping and saying to the unknown God all of a sudden all of his former resources fail him. And what did Paul say? I've got a story to tell you.

I was traveling an enraged man full of religious zeal but it was unrighteousness. I was heading out to persecute a people I didn't understand and all of a sudden I saw a light from heaven. That light knocked me right off my horse onto the ground.

And He began to speak to my heart and told me that it was Him that I was persecuting. I was taken to a house for three days I couldn't see. I didn't eat.

I didn't drink water. I was terrified in the presence of this Holy God that a man called Ananias came into the house and laid hands on me and said, Brother Saul receive thy sight. I received my sight.

I received strength. I began to see life in a new way. My eyes were opened.

I was born again. By the Spirit of Almighty God. Hallelujah.

And from that simple testimony, from that story, churches were started all over Asia. Churches that we read about today in Thessalonica. All these churches that you read about in Revelation were all started by Paul traveling and telling his story.

Was it because he just had a point to prove? No. He had a passion for God. He loved God with all of his heart.

And because he loved God it became a reasonable thing for him to do to lay down his life as a living sacrifice that others too may come to this saving knowledge of Christ. People who become soul winners it's not because they have a technique. They have a passion for God.

There is a big difference. There's a passion for God. Often times, I've seen it over the years, people come to the knowledge of Christ.

They love Him with all their heart. They come into the church. They win more people to Christ in the first two years or two months of their conversion than for the next 20 years.

All of a sudden knowledge comes in. They had a relationship and knowledge begins to crowd in and push the relationship away. And now it becomes the Bible verses as good as they are that they have memorized.

Now it becomes all of these programs and all of the things that have come in and taken the place and pushed out that relationship. The next thing you know they're standing on the street and shouting Scripture verses at people that pass by. That's all they've got to say because they've lost their intimacy with God.

It's not about shouting Scripture verses at people. It's about intimacy with God. It's about a sensitivity to the Holy Ghost.

It's about knowing the mind of Christ. Folks, I don't feel compelled to witness to everybody I meet on the street. You know that.

I don't. God has been teaching me more and more again to get back to that place of my first love. That first love relationship.

I knew instinctively who to speak to and who not to speak to. I never had been in a program other than one on a Billy Graham thing. I think it's four steps to sharing your faith.

Other than that I don't know if I'd ever been in a program but I had an intimacy with God. Every day I was in the Word of God. Every day I was seeking Him.

I loved Him with all of my heart. I was thankful for what He had done. I would just walk through my day and He would begin to speak to me.

Talk to this one. Do something for this one. He would begin to speak.

I would begin to speak to people. They'd begin to weep. The next thing you know their heads are bowed.

We're walking together. I'm leading them in a prayer to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. The fruit of righteousness is a tree of life.

The fruit of relationship is a tree of life. The fruit of a Christian who knows God in intimacy is a tree of life everywhere we go. The Holy Spirit leads.

The Holy Spirit speaks. Hallelujah. To pursue God means to find His heart.

When you pursue God you and I will find His heart. We'll be renewed in Him. That's why there was such a cry in His heart to the church of Ephesus.

This was a church I am absolutely convinced that loved Him. That's because He was so grieved by this church. This church started out with a love and then they progressed or regressed rather into a system of works.

They were laboring. They were bearing. They were bearing the heat of the day.

They were even doing it in the right name. He said, You've labored. You've borne in My name.

He said, Nevertheless, something is happening to you and if you don't get a hold of this He said, you're going to lose everything that you've ever had in Me. He said, You have left your first love. You're not seeking Me the way you used to seek Me.

You're talking about Me and you're doing things in My name but it's not coming from the source that is life. And that source of life is an intimate relationship with Me. And there was a cry in His heart.

I don't ever want to lose my first love for Jesus Christ. I thank God for knowledge. I thank God that by His grace He opens up the Scriptures.

But I acknowledge tonight that everything that has ever come into my life, everything that God has ever done in me and through me has been because of relationship. Everything He's shown me has been pure, pure grace because of His love. I don't ever want to lose that.

I don't want a program to come in and ever replace it. I don't want professionalism to overpower it. I don't want any of these things to come in and take away the simplicity of knowing Him and loving Him and being a soul winner for Jesus Christ.

To pursue Him means to find His heart. To find His heart means to become a partaker of a new value system. If anyone is in Christ he becomes a new creature.

The old things pass away. Behold all things become new. A new value system comes into our life when we begin to pursue Christ.

I have an opportunity from time to time to speak in business meetings in various places and I see sometimes the tearing, the pulling in the hearts of people who have one hand in the work of God and the other hand in the work of man. Now I'm not standing as anybody's judge. Please don't misunderstand me but I see the torment.

I see the frustration. I see the unfulfillment when a heart begins to halt between two opinions. That's why the Old Testament the leader of God's people cried out and said how long will your heart halt between two opinions.

If God be God serve Him. Love Him. Walk with Him.

If God be God if you know it in your heart if you have truly found Him if truly He's God then serve Him and consider it reasonable to live for Him. A brand new value system comes in. Old things pass away.

The old concerns, the old pursuits. We now, according to the book of Proverbs begin to pursue wisdom and understanding like we used to pursue silver and gold and riches and things like that. A brand new value system comes in.

In turn it means that the Christian begins to live and move in Christ from the position of first love and not of works. He has found the heart of God and thus it can be said that he that wins souls is wise. Hallelujah.

I can't take my house to heaven. I can't take my suit to heaven. I can't take this speaker to heaven, this pulpit.

I can't take these seats to heaven but I can take you to heaven. If through my life you can find Christ as your Lord and Savior and hold to Him in faith trusting Him the rest of your days then I can take you to heaven. God has given me that responsibility and He's given me that privilege that there will be people before the throne of God that will stand there and rejoice with me as we sang earlier tonight triumphant in the work of His hands not because of me but because of Christ within me because I've allowed His power to lift me out of human mediocrity and lift me into the realm where I can share of His heart where He can speak through my voice where He can touch through my hands where my chiefest delight is to be a soul winner where God can impart to me the wisdom of heaven because He who wins souls is wise.

Hallelujah. The man who pursues the lost is in the purest sense I guess you could say a seeker of God. I don't really see where you can be a seeker of God and not be a pursuer of the lost.

Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 and 2 says, If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things of the earth. If ye be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Now tonight Christ sits in a place of triumph and rest and we too are exhorted to live in that place of rest and triumph in Him. Hebrews chapter 4 verses 9 and 10 says, There remains therefore a rest to the people of God for he that is entered into his rest he also is ceased from his own works as God did from his. Now this is a place of rest that the Bible talks about in Christ where soul winning is not a program.

I'm not against programs for soul winning. Please don't misunderstand me. But soul winning in itself is not a program.

It's neither something that we only set aside time to do. Soul winning is not something that we can say well I did that Friday night from 7 to 9. Folks that might be good in itself but that's not soul winning. Soul winning is my life.

Soul winning is 24 hours a day 7 days a week 52 weeks a year for the rest of my life. That's what soul winning is all about. It's not something I do.

It's not something I set aside time to do. It's something I become because Christ is in me. I become a soul winner.

If I possessed the heart of Christ He had no other pursuits on this earth than to see you and I come to the knowledge that our sins could be forgiven through the shedding of His blood through faith and trust in Him that our sins could be forgiven. That was the work of Christ and we are now His body. If I am in Him if He has gotten a hold of my heart I now have the wisdom of God because I'm now walking in the pursuit that

God has for my life.

He who wins souls is wise. It's not a time that we set aside just to tell people about various scriptures that we've learned but rather it's simply an extension of our life. And we have the privilege of being led by the Holy Spirit of Almighty God.

I thank God for that with all of my heart that I can be led by the Spirit and not driven by the overwhelming needs that are around me. That I don't have to be a partaker of what I call machine gun evangelism. I hope you remember that term because more often it's a work born of the human compulsion and of the flesh.

It's not born of the compassion of God. Folks, you cannot win somebody by walking down the street shouting scripture at them. That is not the way to win people to God.

And if you're going to witness just a little side thing make sure your witnessing tools make sense. We understand some things in the body of Christ. Other people don't.

I've seen people walk down the street with a t-shirt that says the blood chases the devil. Well, that's fine and dandy. I mean, I know what that's all about but if I was unsaved I wouldn't know if that's a rock band.

I wouldn't have any idea. The blood. You get the picture of this big red monster going down the street chasing the devil.

I'm not trying to be facetious. Make sure that what you're using makes sense. That it's not terminology that we've just become familiar with in the church and has no relevancy whatsoever out there.

I've read some tracts and I just thank God I was saved because I wouldn't be able to understand them otherwise looking at them. Make sure that whatever you're using speaks to the people where they live. It speaks to them in common language that people can understand.

That's why so many people gathered around Jesus. The Pharisees had all this religious vernacular. Now, vernacular is another word for speech.

They had all this religious talk and they spoke in a way that nobody could understand them. Many of you came from nominal churches, right? Before you came to the knowledge of Christ. And you went to church seeking God.

You really wanted Him. And then the pastor, the priest, whatever he was would stand up on Sunday and you couldn't make out a word he was saying. You had no idea what he was talking about.

First of all, he wasn't born again. He probably had no idea himself what he was talking about. Neither did you.

But it sounded so holy that you sat there and thought, well, it must be holy. It sounds holy. And you end up with the impression that, well, God is unreachable by the masses.

Like ignorant little old me can never reach God. God is just somebody who can be reached by people who have this incredible biblical, historical knowledge of God. And you end up going out of the house thinking, how could I ever touch God? How could I ever reach God? But, you know, Jesus was different.

Around Him were gathered harlots, tax gatherers, the lepers, the maimed, the blind, the poor, the lame, the nobody, the nothings of society. And He talked to them and He taught them in a way that they could understand. He told stories time and again.

The kingdom of heaven is like a man. The kingdom of heaven is like this. Once a man had two sons and he talked about one going away and spending all of his substance on riotous living.

The other son getting angry. The son coming home because he remembered the goodness of his father. He told them his stories.

He spoke to them in a way that they could understand. He lived where the people lived. They accused them of being an unrighteous man.

They said, you're a glutton and a winebibber. But how did He respond? Wisdom, He said, is justified of her children. He who wins souls, the scripture says, is wise.

Beware of this machine gun evangelism. Beware of speaking just out of the compulsion of the flesh. Matthew chapter 7. Go there with me in the New Testament.

Matthew chapter 7. Incredible verse of scripture here. Sometimes people have a hard time understanding. It seems to not be in line with the context of the previous verses nor the ones that follow it.

It's right stuck in the middle but it's really a profound verse of scripture. Matthew chapter 7 verse 6. He says, Give not that which is holy unto the dogs. Neither cast ye your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.

Now what Jesus is saying here, don't take the precious truths that I have given you and just randomly cast them out to the self-consumed. What is a swine? Really if you want to go to the, a swine is somebody that eats, an animal that eats garbage in a trough and they'll stick their head in it and their god is their belly, really. And really what Jesus is saying, don't take the precious truths that I give you the things you learn and just randomly cast them out to those who are not yet ready to hear.

To those who are living in self-consumption because the best that will happen to you they'll turn and when they're not good to their digestion they'll trample them under their feet and turn again and simply just attack you or argue with you. This is the end of... This medical team, I shared this a couple of weeks ago, went into the, this one house in Kosovo, not Kosovo, Macedonia a couple of weeks ago and there was a lady there bedridden for, a Muslim lady bedridden for over two years suffering uncontrolled seizures. Repeated, it kept her in a continual state of weakness.

She would get up, she would just simply fall down. She'd become completely blind in one eye. They told me that you could stick your finger literally in her eye.

Her eye was dead. There was no sight in it, there was no life in her eye and she was totally paralyzed. Her husband told me later, he said it's been a living darkness for two years.

He said, we've not known what to do. Medical team went in, they took a look at her and they said, we're sorry. There's not much we can do for her medically speaking.

We really just don't have the equipment to deal with this. They said, but we can pray for her. And then the husband rose up, a devout Muslim, I assume, and he began to mock Christ and say, you Christians with

your Christian God, your God is just as powerless as all other gods are.

There's no difference. He said, we've taken her down to the mosque and we've had her prayed for and we've taken her to doctors and there's absolutely nothing that can be done for her. Now here was a situation where if somebody's not led of the spirit, you can begin to argue doctrine.

Muslims don't believe that God had a son. So the next stage if you're an arguer would say, God had a son. No he didn't.

Yes he did. No he didn't. Yes he did.

And it would get you nowhere, absolutely nowhere. But a young girl on the team with a boldness upon her. As a matter of fact, I believe that she's in Kosovo right now.

She said, you may, she just stopped the whole process and said, you may not believe our words. She said, but you will believe when you see what our God can do. Now isn't that incredible? That's witnessing.

You'll believe when you see what our God can do. I'll stop the story there just for a moment. Can you say that to somebody on the street? Say, you may not believe my words, but you will believe if you will let me tell you what God has done in my life.

You will believe. Let me tell you where God brought me from. You see, that's what a testimony is all about.

That's what soul winning is all about. That's what wisdom is about. It's a living testimony for Christ.

The medical team went into the room. They laid hands on this lady. They prayed for her.

She was instantly healed. Sight was given back to her eye. She saw again.

She was raised up. She was completely sound and in perfect health. When I arrived in the village about four hours later, there was a, as the Bible says, there was a stir.

There were people all around, the medical team, out in this open area. The first thing that happened is people got scared of our medical team from here from Times Square Church. They said, what kind of people are this that this kind of power operates through their lives? Then I was invited to the house.

We went to the house. The man was there. He brought together all of his family.

Now a Muslim family is very large. It's aunts and uncles and grandmas and sisters and I don't know, all of the folks. Of course, there were some refugees as well.

Brought them into the house. When you're dealing with a Muslim family, you can only speak to the head of the house. You're not allowed really to speak to anybody else.

As the head of the house goes, there goes the whole house. I began to speak to him. He could not deny the power of God.

As the scripture says, a notable miracle. Here is his wife. She is sitting on that couch.

She is radiating. She had received Christ. They led her to Christ after they prayed for her.

She is radiating the joy of the Lord. I mean, it was incredible. Her countenance was changed.

A smile literally from ear to ear. Her eyes, she can see. Her husband is dumbfounded.

He doesn't know what to do. And so, I began to speak to him and then found out that he spoke French. So, I didn't need to use a translator anymore because I speak French.

I used to at least. It was a step of faith on my part to start speaking to him in French. But I trusted the Holy Ghost and I shared with him.

I said, you've seen a miracle. A miracle has come into your house today. He could not deny the power of God.

I said, but I want to share with you a much greater miracle than this. And I began to share the miracle of Calvary and God's Son. The shedding of blood.

The fact that he could know his sins could be forgiven. That God could give him a new life. And then he asked me a question.

He said, how do you account for the poverty that is upon my people and upon this area of the world? And I talked to him about the hatred. I talked to him about the violence, the blood that is in the soil. I talked to him about people who have refused to forgive over the centuries.

And because of it there's a confusion. The Bible says clearly where there's strife and evil there's confusion in every kind of an evil work. And finally, sharing with him about Christ, he just bowed his head and began to weep and tears came to his eyes.

And I knew at that point the victory was won. All these years of Islam had fallen to the ground and Christ had come. Hallelujah.

He who wins souls is wise. The people of that particular area of the world it's a very, very gloomy society because of the wars and there's such a deeply embedded ethnic hatred in the people. One thing that we did notice is that the children have such life.

They dance and jump in the streets like normal children do until they become about 13 years of age. And then this gloominess seems to set in and virtually overpower them. That hits the whole society because of sin.

Because of not unbelieving but it's the sin of refusing Christ and harboring hatred in the heart. But we saw one of the things that the people were enamored with was the joy of the Lord that was evidently upon our teams to walk through and just to be smiling to be shaking hands to be talking to people to be sharing. And that was one thing that they couldn't really cope with.

Folks, that's why the Bible says clearly the joy of the Lord is our strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength. When I was a young Christian I tell you for sure I was so in love with Christ I was so thankful to be saved I didn't have to seek out people to tell about God.

I'd go into work and I'd just do my work during the day and oft times I loved to sing. Sometimes I'd sing just sometimes I wouldn't even be aware that I was singing. I'd just worship the Lord just love Him and virtually not on a continual basis but quite often other men that I'd work with would come up to me and say what is it? What is it that's in your life? What is it that you have? You're so different than the rest of us.

We're all complaining about our wages and we're talking about people and we're doing this and you just sit there on your typewriter and you just seem to be having such a good time. You seem to enjoy your work. Well I don't I really didn't enjoy my work all that much but I enjoyed the presence of the Lord.

I enjoyed Christ He was upon me and it was in relationship. I would spend my mornings in the Word of God. I'd spend my nights in the Word of God.

I drove 37 miles home and 37 miles to work every day and all the way home my hand would be in the air. Sometimes I'd rather not say this as a policeman but sometimes I'd even close my eyes just momentarily I'd forget where I was. I don't ever recommend you do that.

If you get the tape please don't do that. But I would love Him I would weep I would pray for people I'd come in to work that day I'd pray for guys that I worked with and I would weep and cry and my hand would be in the air and sometimes I'd forget and I'd ease up my foot on the gas pedal and the next thing I know people are passing me and shaking their fists at me and I'm going about 40 miles an hour on the highway and I'd finally I'd finally get there and the tone of the day had been set because I was walking in my first love. When you're walking in your first love when you're seeking the heart of God soul winning is not a program.

It's not four steps to this and six steps to that. The scriptures help us to explain Christ but soul winning is not just the memorization of scripture. As good as that is soul winning is not a program.

Soul winning is the wisdom to enter into the work of God and the only way we enter in is through our first love relationship that we simply refuse to let go. I'm not letting this relationship with God go. I'm not letting the day encroach upon it.

I'm not letting other values come in and steal it away from me. I'm not letting the gloominess of this society because of its self-seeking come into my soul and rob me of the treasure that I have in Christ. I refuse to sing the psalms of this generation.

I have a new song in my heart and a new song on my lips and that's the song I'm going to sing. Hallelujah. Do you know how gloomy toll takers are? Any toll takers here tonight? Do you know how gloomy and grouchy toll takers usually are? I'm at the point of trying to be nice to them now.

You don't get a response very often but one morning, one morning, I was coming into New York City and there was a precious lady in the toll-taking machine at the Lincoln Tunnel and she was shouting and singing and I gave her my four dollars and she gave me my receipt and said, Bless God. Bless God. Have a good day.

That's the testimony. You know all the people that come through to New York every day and the very first thing before you hit the border is a grouchy toll taker. Won't even look at you.

Won't even talk to you. Half the time doesn't even give you the right change. Hallelujah.

He who wins souls is wise. It's all about relationship, my brothers and my sisters. It started out with a relationship.

It's all about relationship. It will never be anything but relationship. I've shared with you before this older gentleman that used to be part of the church that I pastored in Canada.

He was 83 years old. His name was Howard Young. I remember one day after church service I took him out to lunch.

We went to a restaurant together and in my hand I had a tract in my pocket and whenever I'd go to a restaurant I'd want to leave a tract with a tip and this kind of thing. We go in the restaurant and you're looking for your chance. I don't know if you're like that or not.

If you're in a restaurant, the waiter comes and you're just looking for a word and you can jump in and say do you know Jesus? Are you saved? Mind if I give you this? It's like a skipping game. You're waiting for the rope to come around so you can get in. I was a minister then.

I won more people before I became a minister than after. That's another story altogether. I'll tell you about it sometimes.

But here I am. I'm now preaching the gospel. I am winning less people to Christ than I used to.

But I am preaching the gospel. The church has been established and all these things are happening. But something is wrong because I'm now relying on tracts.

I'm now looking for opportunities to share what used to just flow out of my life. And this man, Howard Young, I took him for dinner one day. We're sitting in the restaurant.

He's a wonderful man of God. He had a powerful testimony. He had been a cantankerous construction worker, a boss.

Nobody could virtually work for him. They said he was one of the orneriest men you ever met. Was saved in his forties.

I knew him when he was 83. Hard to believe that he could have been the type of man that some people had described. This was not the man I knew.

He used to go to senior citizens' homes to witness. He told me, he said, I love witnessing to those old folks in the senior citizens' homes. He said, they need the gospel.

He was 83 years of age himself. We went into the restaurant. We were sitting at the table.

I've got my tract in my pocket and I'm waiting my chance. I want to be a good Christian witness. After all, Howard is with me.

I want to be a good Christian witness. I'm looking for my chance to get my tract out. Right in the middle of all my deliberations and waiting for the rope to come around one more time, Howard reaches out and grabs his hand and starts to cry.

The tears started rolling down his cheeks. He said, honey, do you know the Savior? He said, do you know Jesus, the Son of God that loves you? And she began to cry. The only one who wasn't crying was me.

Sitting there with my tract in my hand as Howard was leading this girl to Christ. You see, because there was nothing left for him. There was no agenda.

He had laid hold of God like precious few really do in our generation. I believe that many are here at Times Square Church, but there are precious few that lay hold of God like that. He had so laid hold of God that

there was such a purity in this man that he could reach out and grab somebody's hand.

He could ask a question with a broken heart because he loved God so much that he knew the heart of God for that girl. Irrespective of how unclean she may have looked and how dirty her background might be, he could still reach out and touch her and because the heart of Christ was manifested in him, he was a soul winner. That's what soul winning is all about.

Mark chapter 1, to be led by the spirit. That's my heart's desire. To be led by the spirit.

I shared with you earlier, I'm no longer under compulsion to witness to everybody I see. But I am under an obligation in my heart to spend quality time with God so that he can reveal to me his heart. There's a hundred thousand voices wanting to speak to me on every billboard, every sign, everybody is selling something in this city.

There are even voices in the airwaves that I'm not even aware of. I'm surrounded continuously outside of these doors by different voices begging for my attention and begging to lead and lead. All the works that are going on in Times Square right now, there's only one work that is eternal and that is the work of God.

There's only one channel that I want to be tuned into and that's the voice of the Holy Ghost. That as I'm walking down that street, he can begin to speak to my heart and say, speak to this man. He can even tell me what to say.

When we were in Kosovo recently, in Macedonia rather, I'm sorry, we would get up, Elder Bill Martin was with me, we would get up in the morning somewhere around 5:20, we'd begin to pray until about 9 o'clock, get in the Word and just spend time in prayer. We would ask God for directions for the day and at the end of the day, folks, we were able to rejoice. There was a rest in that, a relationship with God was intact, we were hearing the voice of God, we were trusting in Him, there was no agitation and throughout the day people would just simply come across our path.

You see, if somebody is listening to the voice of God, God knows where they are. If somebody else is hungry, God knows where to send them. He can bring people across your path in the workplace, in your neighborhood, on the street that are really God ordained appointments and if we're listening to His voice.

We got caught one day in a rainstorm, a horrid rainstorm was coming and I said to Bettina, we better get to one of the army tents shortly because really it was a very very bad storm that came on us. And as we were rushing to the army tent, this young man, we ran into this young man. Now you're talking 30,000 people in this tent city.

We ran into this young man that Bettina had met one time in the city of Skopje and he spoke English, very few that speak English in Macedonia. And we ran into him and he invited us then to his tent. See this is a divine appointment, this is the leading of God.

We followed him, we went to his tent. In that tent were four other young men, all university students, all very very hungry for God for two hours solid. God gave us an open door to share Jesus Christ, to share our testimonies.

They couldn't get over the fact that we were able to share with them the changes that had come into our lives since Jesus Christ had become our Lord and Savior. They began to ask questions of us like where do we get the power to forgive? How can I quit smoking? It was another one of the questions. Where can I

get the power to do these things? They were so touched by what we were able to share with them, Muslim men, that on Thursday night I was speaking to one of the churches, one of them with three, two family members arrived three hours early for the service, wanting to hear the Word of God.

And he's coming to New York, he's going to be here shortly I believe coming to Times Square Church. God touched this young man because it was a call of God. Had we not been listening to the voice of God, had we not been walking under the unction of the Holy Ghost, we might have missed that divine appointment and just said hi and kept on walking.

I wonder in the course of the day how many opportunities we miss, how many divine appointments we pass by because we've not spent sufficient time seeking God. This is really the basis of soul winning. It's intimate time with Jesus Christ.

Mark chapter one verse twenty-nine. And forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.

And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. And at even, or the evening, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city, verse thirty-three, in other words the whole city, the whole town, were gathered together at the door.

Now this was an incredible revival happening here. And he healed many that were sick of diverse diseases, and cast out many devils, and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him. And in the morning, verse thirty-five, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. I'm sure this was a tremendous report.

Just stop there just for a moment. He's been in the house, he's been in the house, in Simon's house. The whole town is gathered.

Peter's mother is healed. People that are demon possessed are being set free. Diseases are being cast out.

Wholeness is coming. And in the morning, Simon runs after him and says, Everyone now is seeking for you. Not only the town, but everybody.

There's not a soul around that's not come now to hear your words and to let your power be released in their lives. And then he, an incredible response now comes from Jesus in verse thirty-eight. And he says, I said unto them, Let us go to the next towns, that I may preach there also.

For therefore came I forth. You see, Jesus was not led by need around him. He was led by the voice of the spirit of almighty God.

A great while before day he went out. A great while, verse thirty-five, in the morning. A great while before day he went out and departed to a place alone and there prayed.

And it was in that place that God spoke to him and said, Go, go, go. To another town. Not motivated by the needs.

You see, the reason for so much failure in so many today almost always goes back to the failure of even sometimes the most zealous people of God to have the mind of the spirit. Driven by the need but not led by the voice of God. And the reason is that they have failed in knowing him in personal intimacy and relationship.

I can't tell you I guess in a way this is a how-to when you talk about soul winning. You will not be a soul winner if you don't know Jesus Christ in personal intimacy. That is the basis of all we do.

If you don't have a burden to share Christ with somebody if the voice of the spirit is not speaking to you then something is wrong in that early morning relationship. And might I suggest that if you want to become a soul winner, that it might become a good practice to get up a great deal of the morning and go into a solitary place and there seek God. Open the Bible and begin to pray and pray for your co-workers.

Pray for the mind of the spirit. Pray for the Holy Ghost to lead the course of your day. Pray for sovereign divine strength to be a witness in every situation that you're going to encounter.

Pray for the ears of God to be able to hear what begins to speak and says this is I want you to speak to this person. Pray for an obedient heart that when God begins to speak that God will bear fruit. Pray for the mind of Christ that you can know what to say.

Folks you don't have to say the same thing every time. God will give you the words to say. God will give you the story to tell.

I was in one house in Macedonia and I just simply was waiting for the Holy Spirit to speak to me and then all of a sudden He began to speak and reminded me that I lost my house several years ago. I lost everything I owned and I shared with the translator with this man. I said I'd like to share a story about something God did for me a few years ago.

Would you like me to share that story? And the translator asked and the man said yes I'd like you to share. Never take away a person's dignity. Don't force the gospel.

You can't grab them by the nose and yank open their jaw and just cram the gospel down their throat. It doesn't work. If you're wise, if there's wisdom in your heart, you will allow, you will draw the person out.

So I'd like to tell you a story. Would you like to hear it? I had a man one time I was at a hockey practice for one of my sons and he sat next to me and he said what is it that you believe? That's an incredible question isn't it? You talk about an open door. What is it that you believe? I looked at him and I said it's going to take me 20 minutes.

I don't normally do this but this is what the Holy Spirit spoke to me. It's going to take me 20 minutes to tell you and I said but if you're interested I'll tell you and he looked at me, he looked at his watch and said well I got time, tell me. In this particular house the man opened the door to his heart to his home and I was able to share with him how I lost everything.

I was out doing good things and I came home and I had lost everything. I said but I had a promise from the Bible that if I seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness that he would add everything to me that I

need and I told him about the faithfulness of God and how he gave back everything that I had lost and I said I believe that if you will trust in God he will do that for you too as well and there was a nodding of heads and an agreement in that room and they allowed us then to pray for them. Isn't it incredible? You're talking about Muslim homes, Muslim families and we were praying for them in Jesus' name that they would come to the knowledge of God but just following the leading of the Holy Ghost we went in other homes there was no witness whatsoever to speak to the people.

No witness. We'd go in and there was just no witness in the heart. We were not walking under a compulsion to speak to everybody we came across.

There were certain places. Paul wanted to go to Asia. The Holy Ghost said no you're going in the other direction and so Paul went in the other direction.

There was one couple that had been engaged. They had been kicked out of Kosovo. They were living in separate tents with their families and I offered to marry them.

I said I'm a minister of the gospel. I'll marry you here. We can have a wedding.

I thought what an opportunity to get all these people together and have a wedding and he chickened out. I think I really caused the problem there to be honest with you because she was all for it and he got cold feet and I was kind of thankful I was leaving I think around that point. Hallelujah.

I had a good heart anyway. Listen to what the psalmist says. Let me just read it to you.

He said oh God thou art my God. Early will I seek thee. David said I'll seek you early.

My soul thirsts for thee. My flesh longs for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

This is often my prayer. God I long to see you work on the street like I have seen you work in the sanctuary. I long to see lives illuminated with the joy of coming to the saving knowledge of Christ as I have seen those lives touched and illuminated in the house of God.

Lord I will seek you early. David said I will seek you early. I long for this.

Go with me to psalm five. We'll read there together. Psalm five.

Next week, next week I'm going to get into a little more of the how to's of evangelism. But it would be futile to even attempt to do that if you are not a seeker of God. If you and I have not set aside the time to seek him, to know him, to give our lives for his purpose.

Because soul winning is not a program. Soul winning is the program. It is the program.

It's not another program. It is the program of the church. There is no other program.

Christ was a missionary. He left heaven. He came here for us and he said follow me.

He poured out his life. He was compassionate. He had compassion on the people who were ignorant and had no teachers.

He had compassion on the hungry. He had compassion on the leper. He had compassion on the blind.

He had compassion because his heart was the heart of his father. He had come to do the will of his father. And walking in that heart, walking in the intimacy of that relationship, his life became a virtual extension of his father in heaven.

And we as his beloved bride and as his body, he calls us now to be an extension of his heart in our generation. There is no other way we can do that without intimacy with God. Give ear to my words, Psalm 5, O Lord.

Consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my king and my God. For unto thee, O Lord, unto thee will I pray.

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning. O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer and unto thee will look up. Moses said in Psalm 90, he cried out, he said, let thy work appear.

And he said, O God, establish the work of our hands. Let your work appear to us, O God. Your work.

Let it appear in me. Let it appear in my life. And God, establish the work of my hands.

Let me be a servant to Let me be a soul winner. Let me be a soul winner. Let it be as easy as breathing.

In the name of Jesus Christ. God, make me sensitive to the leading of your spirit. Help me to enter into your work, Lord.

This is your work. I am your servant. God, give me great grace that I may enter into your work.

Walking in the spirit. D.L. Moody, a great, great evangelist, walked on a train one day and just was sitting and reading a book in the corner. And he was reading and all of a sudden the man walked up to him weeping and said, sir, tell me, who are you? He said, you convict me of sin.

He said, what is it in your life? You see, he had an intimate relationship with God. He was just sitting in the corner worshipping God, loving the Lord, thanking Him for His goodness, His power. Just, he was worshipping.

That's all he was doing. In his heart, he didn't even have his hands raised. He was just worshipping God.

This man, he opens his eyes, a man standing there weeping. He says, who are you? Your presence convicts me of sin. He said, who are you? What is it that you have? And as he began to share with this man in the train, other people began weeping all over the train cars.

They heard him share. And other people began to come to the knowledge of Christ because he had an intimate relationship with God. Father, I ask tonight in Jesus' name, Lord, that you stretch out your hand over this beloved bride, this beloved body that is yours here in Times Square Church in New York City.

God, this is one of the most vile cities in all of the world. But, Lord, I ask tonight, O God, there are people here as well perhaps as in other places throughout the city tonight that are seeking you, that want to know you, O God. Lord, make us sensitive to them.

Make us sensitive, O God, to everyone that we encounter, Lord, whose heart is open, who are yearning. Lord, there are people walking down the street tonight that if they don't get an answer they're going to commit suicide. God, there are fathers walking the streets that don't know how to give to their children.

Lord, there are mothers who have come to their wit's end. They're in despair. They don't know who to turn to.

There's a cry in their heart for Almighty God. Oh, Lord, make us sensitive, O God. Give us your heart.

Give us your ears. Give us your mind, Father. God, thank you, Lord, that you're going to make Times Square Church a soul-winning church in this city.

Thank you, Lord, that there will be life in this house.

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