

A General Principle - d.l. Moody

by J. Wilbur Chapman

The personal touch is essential in evangelism, as it provides a foundation for trust, understanding, and spiritual growth, and is a key factor in leading others to Christ.

Scripture: Proverbs 27:17, Matthew 5:16, Galatians 6:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Christian Witness"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman emphasizes the power of personal influence in leading people to Christ, highlighting how many notable figures like John Wesley, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and D.L. Moody were impacted by individuals who personally shared the message of salvation with them. Chapman stresses that the personal touch, tears, compassion, and genuine concern shown by believers can have a profound effect on others, ultimately bringing them into the Kingdom of God or into special service. He underscores the importance of not just preaching the Gospel, but also embodying Christ's love and truth in our interactions with others, as demonstrated by the life-changing encounters of Wesley, Spurgeon, and Moody.

Transcript

I have been amazed in my study of the biographies of men and women who have been specially used of God, to see how almost universal is the rule that they have come to Christ, or to an experience of power, through the personal influence of a friend or acquaintance. Preaching is not enough, it is sometimes too general; the impressions of a song may soon be effaced, but the personal touch, the tear in the eye, the pathos in the voice, the concern which is manifested in the very expression of one's countenance; these are used with great effect, and thousands of people are to-day in the Kingdom of God, or in special service, because of such influences being brought to bear upon their lives.

John Wesley is a notable illustration of the influence of the personal touch. Peter Bohler of the Moravian Church, came into his life when he was in sore need of just such assistance as he seemed able to give. Dr W. H. Fitchett of Australia, writes:--

"The Moravians of Savannah taught him exactly what Peter Bohler taught him afterwards in London, but the teaching at the moment left his life unaffected. Wesley's own explanation is, 'I understood it not; I was too learned and too wise, so that it seemed foolishness unto me; and I continued preaching, and following after, and trusting in that righteousness whereby no flesh can be justified.'

"The truth is that Peter Bohler himself, had he met Wesley in Savannah, would have taught him in vain. The stubborn Sacramentarian and High Churchman had to be scourged, by the sharp discipline of failure, out of that subtlest and deadliest form of pride, the pride that imagines that the secret of salvation lies, or can lie, within the circle of purely human effort. Wesley later describes Peter Bohler as 'One whom God prepared for me.' But God in the toilsome and humiliating experiences of Georgia, was preparing Wesley for Peter Bohler."

Bohler described Wesley as "a man of good principles, who did not properly believe on the Saviour, and was willing to be taught." Later on, in the city of London, where Wesley had been intimately associated with Peter Bohler and had come directly under his influence, he one night attended a religious service in Aldersgate Street, where the one conducting the service was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. The effect of that service upon Wesley is best told in his own words.

"About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more special manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth, them according to the counsels of His own will."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in speaking of his own early experiences, writes thus: "When I was a young child staying with my grandfather, there came to preach in the village Mr Knill, who had been a missionary at St Petersburg, and a mighty preacher of the gospel. He came to preach for the London Missionary Society, and arrived on the Saturday at the manse. He was a great soul winner, and he soon spied out the boy. He said to me, 'where do you sleep? for I want to call you up in the morning.' I showed him my little room. At six o'clock he called me up, and we went into the arbour. There, in the sweetest way, he told me of the love of Jesus and of the blessedness of trusting in Him and loving Him in our childhood. With many a story he preached Christ to me, and told me how good God had been to him, and then he prayed that I might know the Lord and serve Him.

"He knelt down in the arbour and prayed for me with his arms about my neck. He did not seem content unless I kept with him in the interval between the services, and he heard my childish talk with patient love. On Monday morning he did as on the Sabbath, and again on Tuesday. Three times he taught me and prayed with me, and before he had to leave, my grandfather had come back from the place where he had gone to preach, and all the family were gathered to morning prayer. Then, in the presence of them all, Mr Knill took me on his knee and said, 'This child will one day preach the gospel, and he will preach it to great multitudes. I am persuaded that he will preach in the chapel of Rowland Hill, where (I think he said) I am now the minister.' He spoke very solemnly, and called upon all present to witness what he said."

D.L. Moody was thus won to Christ. His Sunday School teacher in Boston was Mr E.D. Kimball. He was not one of the ordinary type of Sunday School teachers. Mere literal instruction on Sunday did not satisfy his ideal of the teacher's duty. He knew his boys, and if he knew them, it was because he studied them, because he became acquainted with their occupations and aims, visiting them during the week. It was his custom, moreover, to find opportunity to give to his boys an opportunity to use his experience in seeking

the better things of the Spirit. The day came when he resolved to speak to young Moody about Christ, and about his soul.

"I started down to Holton's shoe store," says Mr Kimball. "When I was nearly there, I began to wonder whether I ought to go just then, during business hours. And I thought maybe my mission might embarrass the boy, that when I went away the other clerks might ask who I was, and when they learned might taunt Moody and ask if I was trying to make a good boy out of him. While I was pondering over it all, I passed the store without noticing it. Then when I found I had gone by the door, I determined to make a dash for it and have it over at once. I found Moody in the back part of the store wrapping up shoes in paper and putting them on shelves. I went up to him and put my hand on his shoulder, and as I leaned over I placed my foot upon a shoe box. Then I made my plea, and I feel that it was really a very weak one. I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was of it. I think Mr Moody said afterwards that there were tears in my eyes. It seemed that the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, for there at once in the back of that shoe store in Boston the future great evangelist gave himself and his life to Christ."

Many years afterward Mr Moody himself told the story of that day. "When I was in Boston," he said, "I used to attend a Sunday School class, and one day, I recollect, my teacher came around behind the counter of the shop I was at work in, and put his hand upon my shoulder, and talked to me about Christ and my soul. I had not felt that I had a soul till then. I said to myself. This is a very strange thing. Here is a man who never saw me till lately, and he is weeping over my sins, and I never shed a tear about them. But, I understand it now, and know what it is to have a passion for men's souls and weep over their sins. I don't remember what he said, but I can feel the power of that man's hand on my shoulder to-night. It was not long after that I was brought into the Kingdom of God."

The personal touch is necessary. It is not so much what we say, as the way we say it, and indeed, it is not so much what we say and the way we say it, as what we are, that counts in personal work. We cannot delegate this work to others. God has called the evangelist to a certain mission in soul winning. He has given ministers the privilege of winning many to Christ. Mission workers, generally, are charged with the responsibility for this special work. But this fact cannot relieve the parents, the children, the husband, the wife, the friends, the business man, the toiler in the shop, from personal responsibility in the matter of attempting to win others to the Saviour.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-wilbur-chapman/a-general-principle-dl-moody/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net