

# He That Winneth Souls

by John R. Rice

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*John R. Rice emphasizes the critical importance of soul winning as a command from Jesus and outlines the sins associated with neglecting this duty.*

**Duration:** 22:05

**Scripture:** Proverbs 11:30, Ezekiel 3:17-18, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 1:17, John 14:15, John 15:4-5, Romans 1:14-15

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Discipleship"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of winning souls, highlighting the seven sins of those who do not engage in soul-winning. It discusses the disobedience to the Great Commission, the lack of love for Jesus, the failure to follow Him, not abiding in Christ, dishonesty in neglecting the sacred trust of sharing the gospel, the folly of short-sightedness in not focusing on eternal rewards, and the grave consequence of spiritual manslaughter by failing to warn the wicked. The message urges Christians to repent of this sin and prioritize soul-winning.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to you about the very serious subject, the sevenfold sin of those who do not win souls. Yes, you understood me the first time. Sin, the sevenfold sin of those who do not win souls.

If you are saved, if you're born again, if you're not a soul winner, you're living in sin every day. Every Christian is commanded to win souls. It's the first duty of every Christian.

Every Christian who does not win souls is guilty of seven terrible sins, and I'll prove that by the Word of God. May God open our hearts to the importance of the main business he left for us to do. First of all, I want you to see that the Great Commission, as given in Matthew chapter 28 and verses 19 and 20, plainly says that every Christian should win souls.

In this scripture Jesus said, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you. And lo, I'm with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Now remember that Jesus said that the twelve apostles were to go to all the world and preach the gospel, but there were only twelve. They couldn't go to more than twelve places, and long since these centuries

they've been dead, Jesus must have meant for somebody else to do the work too. And he told them, when you get somebody converted, you baptize them and then teach the new converts to observe everything I told you to do.

So everybody that was saved when Peter preached, everybody that was won by Andrew, by Philip, and by others of the apostles, was commanded, take on yourself the Great Commission. You do what Jesus commanded these other apostles to do. Every Christian ought to win souls.

That's the plain command of God. In fact, that's the main command Jesus Christ left for us. We call it the Great Commission.

No commission, no plan, no work he ever commanded us to do could be more important than this. And these are marching orders for Christians. We're to win souls.

Jesus repeated that command when he met John on the Isle of Patmos later. And over in Revelation 22, 17, Jesus said when he met John on the Isle of Patmos, the Spirit and the bride say come and let him that heareth say come. Everybody who hears it is commanded to say come.

Did somebody tell you? You're commanded to tell of this. You can't get out of this plain obligation. It's the main thing the Lord Jesus left for his disciples to do.

I remember so well when my mother lay dying. I was less than six years old, yet how well I remember the very words she said. I remember how she looked that day.

I remember the gladness in her face. And she told us what we should do. We must meet her in heaven.

And so I remember the last words that Jesus gave to us all before he went to heaven were in this Great Commission to go to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And if we do that, we'll be soul winners. If you don't take the gospel like Jesus said, and get people converted, and teach them to be baptized, and then teach them to do everything Jesus commanded the apostles to do in the way of preaching the gospel and getting souls saved.

If you don't do that, you're in rebellion. You're in disobedience. Let me say then, sin number one of a Christian who does not win souls is a sin of disobedience to the main command that Jesus ever gave.

You're guilty. You're a wicked, backsliding, disobedient Christian if you are not a soul winner. Now then, sin number two.

If you do not win souls, it's because of the sin of lack of love. I approve that too. In John chapter 14, remember the Savior said in verse 15, if you love me, keep my commandments.

And again in verse 23, if a man love me, he will keep my words. If you love Jesus Christ, then keep his commandments. It's quite clear then that in proportion as we love Jesus Christ, we'll do what he tells us to do.

As you love the Lord Jesus who died for you, you'll obey him. If you love me, keep my commandments. If a man love me, he will keep my words.

Sometimes we say, well, I'd win souls, but I don't have a gift of soul winning. No, no. You say, I'd be a soul winner, but I don't have a gift of gab.

Well, there's nothing there that a gift of the Holy Spirit can't cure. But that's not what's wrong with you. What's wrong is your heart has grown cold.

You do not love the dear Lord Jesus as you ought. You're living in the sin of a cold heart, of lack of love, or you do what Jesus said. This is back of all the lack of our soul winning effort.

This is the reason for our disobedience, the main command. Sin number two is lack of love for Jesus Christ. He so had said so himself.

Number three, sin number three, if you're not a soul winner, it's because you do not follow Jesus. You know, we sing so many songs about following Jesus, trying to walk in the steps of the Savior, and we sing, where he leads me, I'll follow, and you never win a soul. Why sing a lie? You know that the scripture says in Matthew 4 19, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men.

And Jesus said it in Mark 1 17, come ye after me and I'll make you to become fishers of men. If you're not a soul winner, it's because you don't follow Jesus closely. You know, he commanded us to follow him.

He said that if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. You remember the scripture says, let this mind be in you which is also in Christ. And Jesus said in John chapter 20, that even as my father sent me, even so send I you.

We should follow Jesus, but if you don't win souls, you're not following Jesus. Someone says, I don't know how to win souls. I wish I could grow to be a soul winner.

You can. It's easy. Just follow Jesus.

He'll make you into a soul winner. And everybody who isn't a soul winner, it's because you don't follow Jesus. It's an open and shut case.

Those who follow Jesus, he makes them into soul winners. If you don't follow him, then you're not a soul winner and it's your fault. You're living in rebellion and disobedience.

You're not following Jesus. You're a far off. I don't say you're not saved.

I don't say you haven't been converted, but I say that you're living in sin. The sin of not following Jesus. If you don't win souls, so says the very clear word of Jesus himself.

Here's sin number four, and I ask you to think carefully about it. Remember that in John chapter 15, we're told that you're to abide in Christ. John 15, four and five, abide in me and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except you abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.

For without me, ye can do nothing. You can't do it without Jesus. Somebody says, I tried to win souls.

I intended to, but I can't. I can't get anybody saved. I invited people to church and they won't come.

I talked to my children. They won't listen to me. I can't get anybody saved.

Somebody says, I know. I know why. Jesus just said, you can't do it except you abide in me.

And he said, I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, not just a few. You can win lots of people if you really abide in him.

That's what he said. So let's face what Jesus said. Now, your sin, if you do not win souls, is the sin of not abiding in Christ, not being wrapped up in him, not being filled with his word, not walking in his steps, not being wholly surrendered to him, not being absorbed with him, you're not abiding in Christ or you'd be a soul winner.

Jesus Christ said it. I didn't say it. And here's a plain command that you have disobeyed.

You have missed the way. You're out of the will of God. You're not winning souls because you don't abide in Christ.

So says the Word of God. If you are a soul winner and bringing forth much fruit, it's because you abide in Christ. But if you're not a soul winner, it's because you are in this sin of not abiding in him and his fullness and his word and his power, not abiding in you.

You know, when a branch of a vine bears fruit, it's because the sap from the vine flows right on through into the branch. And there's the power, there's the food, there's the blossom, and then the fruit, because the branch has all the power of the vine. And a Christian can have all the power of Christ, our vine, if you abide in him.

And if you don't, it's because of this sin. It's a sin of not winning souls. That's sin number four.

I come now to sin number five. Everybody who doesn't win souls is guilty of dishonesty in a sacred trust. That's very, that's very sharp word, isn't it? That's a serious charge, isn't it? That's a terrible sin, isn't it? But there it is.

I'll prove it to you again. In Romans, the first chapter, Paul writes to the people of Rome, and he says in verse 14 and verse 15, I'm debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Paul said, you know why? I'm trying to come to Rome. I don't care if I get in jail. I don't care if I'm there with a chain on my hand in two years.

I don't care if I get my head chopped off. I'm bound to come to Rome. What's the matter, Paul? Paul says, I have a debt to pay, and I'm an honest man.

I've got to do it. I must pay my debt. What is your debt, Paul? You remember, don't you, one time Paul said, woe is me if I preach not the gospel.

Paul said, if I preach it willingly, then I receive a reward. If I don't preach it willingly, I must preach it. A dispensation of the gospel is committed to me.

I have a debt to pay. You know, it took the blood of Jesus Christ to keep me out of hell. I'm not my own man.

You're not your own. It took as much of the blood of Christ to keep you out of hell as it did me, or as it did any preacher, as it did the Apostle Paul. And you have a debt to pay.

If you don't pay it, you're crooked. If you don't pay your honest debt and carry the gospel to those to whom you owe it, you're guilty, you're disobedient, you're crooked, you're dishonest in a sacred trust. I'm thinking of a man who died and left his estate to be administered by his partner in business.

It was understood that the widow should be cared for, and the children would have money laid by so they could go to college. But when the time came the children should go to college, the money was all wasted and gone. It was administered falsely, and the administrator had used the funds of the man who died entrusting him with it.

The man had used it for his own purposes, and the money was squandered and gone. How wicked. It was dishonesty in a sacred trust.

And Jesus died, and he gave you a plain command. He gave you a command, and you're to pass it on the gospel to others. Did you think, did you think that Jesus died for you alone? Sometimes we use John 3 16 like this, for God so loved John Rice, or Bill Brown, or Jane Smith.

God so loved you that he gave his only begotten Son, that you, or me, or that John Rice, believing in him, should not perish but have everlasting life. Listen, John 3 16 is more than that. Not one, not me, not you alone, but the billions, over two billion living now, he died for them.

And for the billion to live before, he died for them. And for the billions that may be born yet, Jesus died for them. God so loved the whole world.

How wicked it is to take all the blessing for myself, and say I'm so glad I'm saved. I knew a woman one time, rise up in revival service and say, I think we ought to close this meeting. My boy was saved.

Everybody else's boy had the same chance to be saved as mine. And now if they're not saved, it's their fault. I think we ought to close this campaign.

What a wicked, selfish, thoughtless way for a Christian to feel. You see, if you don't win souls, you're guilty of the terrible sin, the sin of dishonesty in a sacred trust. Do you remember that Jesus told the parable of the talents, and the parable of the pounds, and he ended them with these words about that wicked, soulful servant.

Thou wicked and soulful servant, if why did you take my own then, and give it to the bank, and I'd have interest on my money when I returned. Wicked and soulful, that's the way the Lord Jesus feels about anybody who takes this sacred trust and uses it for your own joy, your own comfort, your own peace, and doesn't pass on the gospel to others. Oh God, give us grace to be obedient in soul winning, and not be crooked and dishonest.

The gospel isn't just meant for us to enjoy. I'm glad I'm saved, but oh, I'd hate to be saved alone, and not take anybody with me to heaven. How the Savior would look at me with reproach, how I'd feel guilty, and for a million years in heaven, how ashamed I'd be that I was dishonest, that I took only for myself that which the Lord Jesus gave to all who would have it.

Let's take the gospel to others. You have a debt to pay. You're dishonest and crooked if you don't pay it, if you don't carry the gospel to others.

That's sin number five. And now let's have sin number six. The sin number six of a Christian who does not win souls is the folly of a short-sighted fool.

Now listen to the Bible language before you condemn me, before you're displeased, before you stop to quibble now. In Proverbs 11 30, the scripture says the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise. Every Christian ought to be the kind of a tree that brings forth fruit, and brings forth fruit, and brings forth fruit, and he that winneth souls is wise.

And in Daniel 12 3, the scripture says, and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn minute to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. You know who's a wise man? The man that uses his money, and his time, and his talents, and all he has to bring our glorious reward later on. How silly it is to live for today.

How silly it is that my money, my time, my influence, and my talents should all be used for a present frivolous moment, and be wasted and gone forever. That's not sensible. That's not wise.

But here the scripture says, in Daniel 12 3, that they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn minute to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. What a, what a silly thing it is. How foolish, how thoughtless to waste your time in a way that brings no reward.

In 1 Corinthians the third chapter, the scripture says so plainly that one day the fire shall cry of what sort it is, and if any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss, not lose his soul. Not lose his soul, he shall suffer loss. But if his works abide, he shall receive a reward.

Not that your soul is lost when you get to heaven and you find that you have money in your souls, but that your reward is lost. And I want to lay on your heart now that this is a terrible sin to live as if there were no heaven, to live as if God didn't reward soul winning, to live as if your house and your car and a tile bath and the other luxuries or comforts of life as if those things mattered by the side of the weight of any mortal soul. One of these days you'll be mighty glad if you won soul.

I preached a funeral sermon for a boy in Fort Worth and the father came to me the next day and said, I've been so much comforted by your sermon. Our 12 year old boy has gone to heaven. Said, I was out in the garage this morning and I found his roller skates and his ball and bat and glove.

And he said, I, I decided that, uh, oh, my heart clutched and I thought if Scotty only had his toys, he would enjoy them. Then I laughed to myself to think why in heaven Scotty has the angels and everything God himself could provide. And so I shouldn't think about that.

And I looked down the long street toward my big tent and awning company, said this businessman. And I said to myself, old fella, you better get your mind off your, off your toys. You'll go off and leave them one of these days.

You'd better get your mind on something that'll last forever. And I want to lay on your heart, uh, this sin of ignoring eternal verities and filling your mind and thought with the things of the world. They to be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

I know that we soul winners are called fanatics and fools. I know that many times evangelism is mocked at, but when they come in from the north and the east and the south and the west to sit down with

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the kingdom of God, I think I'll be mighty glad that I was away from my home and I left other business and I put my soul into the matter of keeping people out of hell. Oh, the glad reward for those that went soul.

And what a silly fool any of us is who neglects souls and lives for today and the pleasures and comforts and the fame of this life. That's sin number six. Now, the seventh of the seven sins of those who do not win souls is spiritual manslaughter or soul murder.

I call your attention to a solemn scripture over in Ezekiel chapter three and verses 17 and 18. God says, son of man, I have made thee a watchman under the house of Israel. Therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked, thou shall surely die and thou givest him not warning nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life. The same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. God's going to hold you to account.

You don't have to get everybody saved, but you have to warn them or meet God who'll say you have blood on your hands. Oh, the foolish alibis we give. How will they sound when you meet the savior and you find you've let people go You didn't mean it.

You didn't do much about it. You just let them go. I had a postcard when I lived in Dallas, Texas and broadcast on a radio station and an old man about 81 years old wrote to say, I've been hearing you on the radio.

I'm not saved. Won't you come and see me and pray for me? I have a cancer. The doctor says I won't last long.

I hope you'll come and tell me how to be saved. I was so busy. I was in a big revival campaign.

I plan to go tomorrow. I put that card up on my desk and said, I'll go tomorrow. But tomorrow is busy and two services a day leading my own singing and writing the advertising.

Oh, I never could get there. It seemed the radio mail held me up and day after day, it was postponed until in two weeks time, I finally set a man to see this old man. He found the people had gone to his funeral.

Oh, I meant to win him. I had all I could do, but I wish now I'd missed a meal or missed a night's sleep and made sure that poor old man knew how to meet God. What will I say to Jesus Christ if he asked me why I didn't go when that man begged me to come to tell him how to be saved before he died.

I say what a sin it is that we'll have blood on our hands or souls unwarned. So then Jesus here the scripture says that his blood will I require at thy hand. Ezekiel was a literal watchman to Israel about physical life and death, but we are watchman to poor, immortal souls and God have pity on us.

We'll be ashamed if we have to face him. And if we have not warned them, my message is about done. These seven sins of those who do not win souls are these first disobedience to the great commission, the main command of Jesus Christ.

Second, it's lack of love. If you love me, keep my commandments. The third sin of those who do not win souls is not following Jesus.

Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. Jesus said the fourth sin is not abiding in him for he said, if you abide in me, you can bear much fruit. You can get people saved.

And again, number five, it's a sin of dishonesty and a sacred trust. You remember Paul said, I'm a debtor to the Greeks and barbers and the wise and free. And so as much as in me is I'm ready to preach the gospel to them at Rome also.

And sin number six, it's a folly of a short sighted fool not to win souls and to be occupied with anything else. And then sin number seven, it's spiritual manslaughter, blood on your hands, poor unsaved souls. You might have warned and God will require their blood at your hand in Christ's dear name.

Christian turn from this sin of not winning souls and confess it as a sin. Nevermind about all your talk of a deeper life unless it makes you a soul winner. Nevermind your claim to holiness or sanctification or to everything else.

If it does not make you a soul winner, Oh God give us the fullness of the spirit and the deeper life and sanctify us and make us holy and separated. But all of that will mean nothing except as it really makes us do what Jesus said do. Won't you do that today and turn from this sin of not winning souls.

Thank you.

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