

Personal Soul Winning

by John R. Rice

Personal soul winning is the main way to win souls, as commanded by Jesus in the Great Commission.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:6, Mark 16:15, Luke 14:23, Luke 18:10, John 1:40, John 3:16, John 5:24, Romans 10:9

Topics: "Evangelism", "Discipleship"

Description

John R. Rice preaches about the value and importance of personal work in winning souls for Christ. He emphasizes the New Testament model of Christianity, where personal conversations and individual efforts were the main ways of spreading the Gospel. Rice highlights the essential role of personal soul-winning in conjunction with mass evangelism, stressing the need for plain Bible preaching to create a climate for personal soul-winning. He shares practical steps and Bible verses to guide believers in effectively sharing the Gospel and leading others to Christ, emphasizing the significance of personal contact, invitation, and prayer in the salvation process.

Transcript

Value and Importance of Personal Work

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me... . Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth... ." - John 1:40-43, 45.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." - Mark 16:15.

THE WINNING of individuals by individuals in personal conversation is the main way to win souls.

The New Testament type of Christianity has been so perverted and misshapen that now people generally consider Christian work to be primarily done in a church house, in formal services, conducted by preachers. The simple truth is that in New Testament times there were no church houses (not a single one mentioned in the New Testament). The public meetings were informal and more or less incidental to the main work of carrying the Gospel all over town, yes, all over the world, speaking to individuals.

Seminary professors and others without much practical experience sometimes discuss the relative merits of personal soul winning and mass evangelism. The truth is that they are essential parts of the same thing. The right kind of gospel preaching sends Christians out to win souls, and bombards the hearts of sinners, dynamites the hard ground, and arouses the conscience, and makes a climate for personal soul winning. And the personal soul winning is best done, always, where there is plain Bible preaching, evangelistic preaching. No man who is against mass evangelism is ever a very good personal soul winner, and the greatest soul winners have been the best advocates of mass evangelism. Who ever did better personal soul-winning work than D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey? And who ever developed personal soul winners like these great evangelists and other evangelists?

In an evangelistic ministry of nearly forty years, and having seen tens of thousands of people come to Christ, I can say that personal contact, personal invitation, had a part in winning nine out of ten of all those I have seen come to Christ.

The best gospel preaching and the best personal soul winning effort go together.

It is good to preach to great crowds the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But the simple truth is that many a lost sinner will never come to hear a sermon unless some Christian brings him, will not respond to the invitation unless some Christian encourages him to go forward and claim Christ, and would not know how to trust Christ and have the assurance of salvation if some personal worker did not show him from the Scriptures.

D. L. Moody said that if he had to win one thousand souls in order to make sure of Heaven himself, he would certainly choose to risk it by personal soul winning without public preaching rather than to attempt it by public preaching without personal soul winning.

Dr. Charles G. Trumbull, long-time editor of The Sunday School Times, after many years as editor of a magazine with an average circulation of a hundred thousand copies, after preaching for many years to good crowds, said that he felt sure he had won more souls to Christ in personal conversation than all those saved through his influence in other ways.

I am saying that personal soul-winning effort with individuals is the main way to win souls.

I. The Winning of Individuals by Individuals Is the Way Most Clearly Commanded in the Bible

Let us examine the marching orders which Jesus Christ left for Christians, His "Great Commission" left to churches and individuals.

Consider Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." We generally think of "preaching the Gospel" as preaching a sermon to a crowd. But a little examination of this Scripture will show that that is not the principal meaning of the Great Commission. We read that Great Commission as if it read, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel in every church auditorium and to every congregation." But the Great Commission does not mention any auditorium and it does not mention congregations. No, the Lord Jesus here is talking about individuals. We are to preach the Gospel "to every creature," that is, to every individual. Christ did not die for congregations; He died for individuals. The Great Commission is not to preach the Gospel to congregations, but to individuals.

I freely grant that it is a blessed thing to preach the Gospel to as many as we can, whether a Sunday School teacher talks to ten, or a preacher preaches to fifty in a rescue mission, or to a thousand in a great congregation, or to a million in a radio broadcast. But the only way that a group or congregation fulfills the Great Commission requirement is that in the Sunday School class, or in the rescue mission, or in the church congregation, or in the radio audience are poor lost individuals who need to hear the Gospel. And every preacher ought to remember that he is not preaching to a crowd. but to individuals.

I think we preachers often have a wrong conception of the ministry to which we are called. We say, "God has called me to preach," by which we generally mean He has called us to prepare a sermon with a good outline and Bible truth and an exposition of Scriptures, and to preach this in a public address or sermon to a congregation. Now the call to preach may include preaching to a congregation, but that is not the primary meaning of the word as Jesus used it in the Great Commission. Actually we preachers are called to keep people out of Hell. We are called to get the Gospel to individuals. A preacher is doing exactly what Jesus commanded in the Great Commission when he talks to one poor sinner in his home, or on the street, or in the shop. And I say it with deep concern, I doubt if most of us preachers who preach formal sermons to congregations are really "preaching the Gospel to every creature" in the sense in which Jesus meant it. We are not called to preach sermons primarily. We are called to keep sinners out of Hell. In some cases sermons will help to do that. In other cases the individual contact is the only way we can get people saved.

How to Do It: Practical Help

"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." - Luke 14:23.

MANY PEOPLE would like to win souls, but they have no practical knowledge of how to go about it. In a city-wide revival campaign one pastor who co-operated in the meeting, who believed the Bible and seemed in real sympathy with the preaching and objectives, wanted to win souls. But when I suggested that he go into the inquiry room to take the Bible and make clear to people how they could be sure they were saved, he shrank from it and plainly said he would not know how to go about it. So that he could have some part in the salvation of sinners, I had him stand by me, and when converts came forward, he led them to the inquiry room and came back for more. But it was pitiful to see a preacher who had no practical understanding of how to deal with people in soul winning.

On another occasion I was in a revival service in a large Canadian church. A good many people came forward to take Christ as Saviour and I dealt with each one briefly as they came to take my hand at the pulpit. But then these new converts and the wayward Christians who were rededicating their lives went into an inquiry room for further instruction, and the assistant pastor was sent by the pastor into the inquiry room to make certain that these converts had really trusted Christ and knew their sins were forgiven. A little later when I went into the inquiry room to help and to check up, I found the assistant pastor, a college graduate and seminary graduate, going into great detail in a theological discussion on the fall of man, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, while the bewildered converts sat patiently listening to his harangue. He was a good man. He was fundamental in doctrine. But he knew nothing about how to deal with souls.

Here I want to make some practical suggestions about the soul winner's person, personality, and plans for showing lost sinners that they need to be saved, showing them how to be saved, and getting them to claim the Saviour.

I. The Preliminaries of Soul Winning

We make here some brief suggestions that have proved helpful as people plan to win souls.

1. Pray earnestly before you go.

Pray for God to guide you where to go and what to say. Pray particularly for the power of the Holy Spirit upon you. Remember, soul winning is a supernatural business and no one can do it without supernatural help.

2. When going among strangers, and from house to house particularly, it is often wise to go two by two.

It was so when the Lord Jesus sent the apostles and the seventy. One paralytic man was "borne of four" to the Saviour. Usually, in dealing with one particular person, one person should do the talking while the other tries to see that there is no interruption. Sometimes he will play with the children or answer the doorbell or telephone. The fact that he is there will give courage and moral support to the worker who is speaking and will add weight to his testimony. Perhaps in the next visit the silent partner should take over. But to interrupt and both try to speak at the same time generally leads to a discussion and sometimes to argument that is not helpful. One person should do the talking, as a general rule.

3. Dr. Jack Hyles, in the little book, HOW TO BOOST YOUR CHURCH ATTENDANCE, says: "Be clean and neat."

If a person is going to be a soul winner he must not be offensive to the people with whom he talks. It is a definite asset for a soul winner to be careful to bathe often, to avoid body odor. Teeth should be brushed, and breath should be tested. Carry mints in your pockets or some good flavored chewing gum which will help keep the breath from being offensive. One of the most damaging things in soul winning is the effect of halitosis. By all means, a soul winner should watch this carefully. The soul winner should also be neatly dressed. A lady should be dressed conservatively, and I think it is best for a man to at least wear a shirt with a tie."

A good salesman tries to avoid baggy pants, dandruff, or an unshaven face. The soul winner ought to look like a respectable, trustworthy lady or gentleman.

4. The soul winner should always have his New Testament with him.

Of course, the personal soul winner would expect to use the Bible, but a large and cumbersome Bible may frighten the people at whose door you stand. A New Testament in your pocket is unobtrusive, readily available, and usually all you will need in winning a soul. Generally it will be best to hold the Bible so that the one with whom you deal can read it easily. Point your finger to the verse as you read it to him, or sometimes you may ask him to read it. But Christians should avoid trying to make a big show of being religious. You do not come to appear like a preacher but as a Christian friend to do the man a favor. Sometimes the Scriptures you want to use may be available in a tract, but it will be more impressive if you

show the one with whom you deal the verses in the New Testament.

5. Be pleasant, considerate, courteous.

Don't be bossy. This is simply another way of saying that there ought to be a genuine, warm love in your heart for sinners, a compassion, a sympathetic understanding of people, and a liking for people. I have known people to try to win souls who did not even shake hands, who did not say even a pleasant "good morning." Sometimes people try to win a soul when they do not even know the man's full name, whether he is married, whether he has any children, where he works. I think that I was able to win a Catholic woman in Norfolk, Virginia, largely because I was attracted to her little three-year-old girl and made friends with the little one and took her in my arms. In Texas I won a hardened sinner because I came to see his new baby and was interested in the baby. One must love sinners and show it, be interested in what they are interested in. An Orthodox Jewish man kept me for two hours when he found that I talked with real interest to him about the Passover, about the dietary laws of Leviticus, about the offerings and priesthood of the New Testament and the meaning of circumcision.

Sometimes because of company or a date or pressing duty, the one on whom you call cannot spend much time with you. Be kind. You might ask, "Could I come back to see you this afternoon?" or "If you like, I will call another time."

6. Stay on the main track.

You come to talk to people about sin and the Saviour. I know one man who went out on visitation hoping to win souls, and he argued with a man for nearly an hour about the tobacco habit. Someone intended to call on some Catholics in an effort to win them to Christ, and asked me for literature proving that the mass was wrong, that the popes were not all good men, and literature to show that the papal infallibility was a false doctrine! When I talk to a Catholic, I never start out to show that Protestants are right and Catholics are wrong. Instead, when I speak to a man about his soul and he says, "Well, I am a Roman Catholic," I frequently say, "Yes, and it happens that I am a Baptist. But I know that many, many Baptists are not good Christians and I am sure you know some Catholics who are not good Christians." I suppose every Catholic will assent to that.

Then I sometimes say, "Well, it is clear, then, that to be a member of a church, whether my church or your church or any other church, is not enough unless one is right with God in his heart." And every sensible person surely would agree to that. I have never had it challenged. Then I say, "Well, the important thing is whether or not you know your sins are forgiven, whether you have come to Christ and trusted Him personally and have assurance that He is your own personal Saviour."

The simple truth is that one may be a Catholic and be saved (I fear that most Roman Catholics are not, but that is not the point). The important thing is not to deal with the differences between Catholics and Protestants, and not to show anybody that their convictions and rearing and traditions are wrong. the important thing is to bring every sinner to face the fact that he is a sinner who needs forgiveness, and to show him that Christ is ready to save him.

I never say, "You are a sinner." Instead I say, "Of course, you know that we are all poor sinners, and Christ died to save sinners like you and me." In the first place, it is true that I needed the same Saviour as others do. It is also the courteous and considerate way to state the matter.

Somebody says, "How shall I deal with a Jew?" Deal with him like a sinner; you and he both need the same Saviour, and so with loving and considerate heart you can tell him that you know the way one can have his sins forgiven and have peace in heart, and you would like, if he will allow you, to show him from the Scriptures how he can know. Stay on the main line. Don't argue about eternal security, about holiness, about the Second Coming, or worldly amusements, or habits. Don't argue over denominational differences. Keep the conversation on the simple plane that all of us, therefore including the friend to whom you are speaking, are sinners and need the Saviour, and show him that by the Scriptures. Stay on the main track.

7. The soul winner should largely control the conversation.

Dr. Jack Hyles suggests that if the person with whom you are dealing brings in some other subject, asks questions as to where Cain got his wife or why God allows war or why there are so many denominations or about hypocrites in the church, you say something like this: "That is a good question. Remind me after a little bit and I will try to answer it, but first, let me tell you this" An unsaved woman who talked to D. L. Moody insisted that she saw no harm in the theater and the dance. D. L. Moody wisely said, "I promise to answer that to your satisfaction if you will first trust Christ as your Saviour." After she trusted Christ, she found the problem already solved in her heart.

You are dealing with the most important subject in the world. You should have planned ahead of time some simple steps. I beg you, try to control the conversation and lead through the matter of the guilt of sin, the free salvation paid for by Jesus Christ, and the fact that this salvation may be had at once by personal faith in Christ. Then press for a decision.

II Simple Steps in Winning a Soul Using John, Chapter Three

It is easy to show the plan of salvation. One simple, easy way to win a soul to Christ is by using certain verses in John, chapter 3. The book of John is specially written to show people how to be saved. John 20:30, 31 says: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." So there are more verses on the plan of salvation in the book of John than in any other book in the Bible. But one need not use many Scriptures nor go all through the Bible in winning a soul. In most cases a few verses near each other are sufficient. Do not make a hard job of showing that people are sinners, that they need to be saved, that Christ died for them, that one who trusts Christ will have everlasting life. Sometimes, indeed, the one you seek to win knows the essentials and simply needs to be urged to the decision to trust Christ here and now.

In John, chapter 3, Jesus showed Nicodemus, a religious, moral man, that he was lost and needed to be saved, and showed him how to be saved. I suggest that you now look at John, chapter 3, and learn to use these simple steps in winning a soul.

1. Read verses 1 to 3.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say

unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now I would call attention to the fact that this man was a good moral man, one of the religious leaders and rulers of the Jews, evidently a member of the Sanhedrin. He is called a Pharisee, and Pharisees were the strictest religious sect among the Jews. And to this man, moral and religious and upright, Jesus plainly said, "Ye must be born again."

2. Now it is well to call attention to the insistent warning Jesus gives, that being born again, born from above, is an absolute necessity.

Verse 3 says, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This refers not just to Nicodemus; no person can see the kingdom of God without being born again.

In verse 5 Jesus said, "... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The water here evidently pictures the Word of God. "Born of the Spirit" means that the change must be worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit after one hears the Word.

In verse 7 Jesus said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Jesus did not say that one merely ought to be born again, or that it would be wise for him to be born again. He said, "Ye must be born again."

3. Then call attention to verse 6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

You might say to the sinner, "Perhaps you had a wonderfully good mother, as I did, and a good father by human standards. But our parents were human and frail and imperfect, and so we were born the same way. The reason we need to be born again is because we were born with a fallen nature in the first place, and so any fleshly birth then still means we must be born again to ever see God in peace."

It is well here for you to stress that we are all sinners. Get the sinner to admit that he is not perfect, that he has fallen short in God's sight, that often when he means to do well, he does not do right, that when he makes resolutions, he sometimes breaks them. Do not leave the impression, "I am good and you are bad." No, make sure that you take the sympathetic, honest position that we are all sinners alike and need forgiveness alike, and that unless we come to get a new heart, there is no hope of Heaven.

4. Now, if the thing is not clear, it might be well to call attention to verse 8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

How will one feel when he is born again? The Bible does not say. It is God who works the miracle of the new birth, and we do not need to understand it, but should simply turn the matter over to God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

5. And now you are ready for verses 14 and 15.

Jesus reminded Nicodemus that when the Israelites complained at God, fiery serpents came among the people and bit the people and much people died. But God told Moses to put a brazen snake on a pole and whoever looked to that brass snake would be healed. So Jesus told Nicodemus: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. That whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have eternal life."

That snake on a pole pictured Jesus bearing our sins on the cross. Those people looked at the brass snake and believed that God would heal them by looking, and so they were healed.

6. Now follow with John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now the soul winner can say, "Here God tells you expressly how to be born again. Do you admit that you are a sinner, that you need a new heart, that you want forgiveness? And you can see that God loves you. He gave His Son to die for you and for me and the whole world. Now 'whosoever,' anyone in the world - you, me, anybody that believes in Christ or depends upon Christ or relies upon Christ for forgiveness and salvation will not perish, will not go to Hell, will not be lost forever, but he shall have 'everlasting life.' "

You might illustrate faith by showing how a sick person relies upon the doctor and turns the case over to the doctor. Believing good things about the doctor does not do one any good unless he turns his case over to the doctor and risks him.

One who has a lot of money and feels insecure about it takes it to the bank and deposits it. He trusts his money with the bank for safekeeping. He relies upon the bank because the bank has promised to keep it safely for him and is able to do it. Just so one needs to turn himself over to Jesus Christ, relying on Him, depending upon Him for salvation. One who trusts in Christ or relies upon Christ for salvation has everlasting life, according to the plain promise here.

7. Now I would go over that again with the sinner. "Do you understand that you are a sinner?"

Doubtless he will say yes.

"Do you believe that Christ died for your sins and mine on the cross, and wants to save you?"

Doubtless he will say yes, that he understands that.

Next, "Do you see, then, that if you rely upon Jesus Christ and turn your case over to Him, depending on Him to forgive you and give you everlasting life as He promised, that is all you are to do to obtain salvation?"

Then you might say, "Then let us bow our heads and I will whisper a prayer and ask the Lord Jesus to forgive you and save you now." And then you may pray, and ask him if he will.

After you pray a very simple, short prayer, then you might suggest words of suitable prayer for him. You might say, "Can you honestly repeat the words of this prayer as I give them to you? 'Lord, I confess that I am a poor sinner who needs saving.' " Let him repeat that.

"I believe, Lord Jesus, that You died on the cross to pay for our sins and that You are willing to save me." And have him repeat that.

"Lord Jesus, I ask You now to forgive my sins and save me." And have him repeat that.

"Lord, the best I know I trust You now to forgive my sins; I give You my heart forever." Then ask him if he can repeat that.

I do not believe one must pray aloud in order to be saved. Sometimes a timid person will pray silently. One is saved when he turns to the Lord and trusts the Lord. But sometimes the matter is much clearer in the mind of a sinner and the transaction is remembered as a definite transaction if he can express his faith in the words of a prayer. Besides, if he asks the Lord to forgive, then he always has extra promises like Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," as an evidence that he has really been saved.

8. Once the person has asked Christ to forgive him and save him, I suggest that there be some open demonstration of his decision.

I would say, "Now you have asked Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and save you. If you are ready to turn your case over to Him, ready to rely on Him to forgive your sins and save you as He promised to do, will you now take my hand and let this handshake be a sign between you and me and God that you now trust Christ as your own personal Saviour and give Him your heart forever? Will you do that?"

If the sinner has been honest thus far, in most cases he will be ready to make that open profession of his faith in Christ.

If a loved one is present who is already a Christian or if another worker is present, it is good for him to shake hands also with them. Sometimes if it is a child who has been saved and the mother or father is present, I might say, "Isn't that wonderful! Now you have trusted Christ as your Saviour. If you are glad and you want your mother to be glad with you, come and put your arms around Mother's neck as a sign that you have taken Christ as your Saviour."

Sometimes it is well to say, "The pastor is nearby; suppose we go and tell him that you have trusted Christ as your Saviour." Or it may be the mother or father or a wife or husband. At any rate, it is good for the one who has trusted Christ to commit himself as openly as possible. There is a special blessing for those who confess Christ openly, and assurance and joy often wait upon that public confession of Christ.

9. Now before you leave the person, there is one more thing that is important. The new convert ought to be assured by the Word of God that he now has everlasting life.

So, often I turn to verse 18 in the same chapter of John and have the one who has now trusted Christ look on and read with me: "He that believeth on him is not condemned"

Now you can say to the one who has trusted Christ, "Here we see that one who has trusted in Christ and relied on Him is not condemned, is not lost, is not going to Hell. Have you trusted Christ?"

Usually he will say yes.

"Then, since you have believed on Him and relied upon Him, are you condemned?"

And he can say, on the authority of the Scriptures, "No, I am not condemned anymore!"

Then show him John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." And again you may ask him, "Have you now trusted Christ or believed on Christ as your Saviour the best you know how, relying on Him to forgive you?"

And he, of course, can answer yes.

"Then what does the Bible say that you now have?"

Have him look on the verse with you. Have him see for himself and then he can say, "The Bible says I have everlasting life!"

And then you can say, "Now the way to know that you are saved is not because you feel a certain way, but because the Bible says that when you trust Christ you have everlasting life.

You may put step nine before having the new convert go to tell others that he has trusted Christ, if that seems wise.

This plan is simple; all the Scriptures are found in one chapter in the Bible, and God has helped me to win hundreds of souls from this chapter.

And sometimes people are so ready that just on John 3:16 alone the matter of salvation can be made so clear that they can trust Christ at once.

III. How to Win a Soul to Christ With a Few Verses in the Book of Romans

Dr. Jack Hyles has used this plan and taught it to hundreds of others so that thousands have been won to Christ through using the Scriptures here suggested. I believe that it may make Christ's substitutionary death for our sins clearer than using some other steps. I found this method particularly useful in India among heathen people who know almost nothing about the Christian religion. And here, in a few moments, you can use a few Scriptures that make clear the whole matter of man's sin, man's condemnation, Christ's substitutionary death, and being justified by faith.

First, Dr. Hyles says, "Make a map in your New Testament." Start with Romans 3:10 and on the margin by it in pencil, write 3:23, so that you have before you the next verse to turn to. By Romans 3:23, write 5:12 in the margin. Then by Romans 5:12, write 6:23. Then by Romans 6:23, write 5:8. Then in the margin by Romans 5:8, write 10:9-13.

In starting to talk to the lost person about salvation, you might say, "The book of Romans has much to say about sin and salvation, and just a few verses here will make the whole matter clear as to why you need to be saved and how to be saved."

Now you are ready to go through the Scriptures in order as you have them, stepping from one to another, following the map you have marked in your New Testament or Bible.

1. Have the One with whom you are dealing look at Romans 3:10.

It is better to have him read it aloud if he will. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.' " It is fair to ask him then, "Is there anyone really righteous in God's sight?" Then you might say, "Then I must admit that I am not righteous, because 'there is none righteous, no, not one.' " Then you might explain, "Of course, men are relatively good men or bad men in the sight of other men and by human standards, but in the sight of God who sees the heart, we are all sinners alike; there is none righteous. Now may I ask you then, according to the Scripture, are you righteous in God's sight?"

The person will see that he cannot honestly claim to be righteous in view of that verse.

2. Now the next step in your Testament is Romans 3:23.

Have him read it with you or read it aloud: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And then you can say, "Of course, I must admit that I, too, have sinned. So has everybody else sinned. Now, looking at this verse, don't you think that you, too, would have to say that you have sinned the same as everybody else has, and that you have come short of the glory of God?" An honest inquirer, of course, will have to say, "Yes, I have sinned, too."

3. The next step is Romans 5:12. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Now is the time to make clear that sin came into the world when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, and since that time everybody else is sinful, "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." You can show the inquirer that that is why people die. And you can show him also that because of our sins, eternal death in the lake of fire is the proper judgment for all of us poor sinners. Sentence is already passed, the sentence of death on all men. I think there you might ask him, "Do you see then why all of us by nature are lost and need to be saved?" If he understands the Scripture, he will see that.

4. The next step is Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now you can show that "the wages of sin is death"; that is, the normal result of our sins is eternal death. That is wages we have earned. That is strict justice. It is what we ought to get.

But you can show him that "the gift of God is eternal life." Everyone who goes to Heaven must get salvation as a free gift. We do not deserve it. You can show him that all who go to Hell are simply getting what they deserve; they are getting the wages of sin. All who go to Heaven have to go as a gift of God through Jesus Christ.

5. The next step is Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Here is a wonderful truth. As the sinner reads this Scripture, call his attention to the fact that because of His love for us, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Somebody had to die for sin. Either I must die for my own sins or someone else who is worthy and sinless must die for me. So because of His great love, Jesus Christ died in my place and died in the sinner's place.

So you might say to the sinner, "Do you see that here is a debt you deserve to pay, but Jesus has paid it for you?" You may show him that on the cross the Father turned His face away and Jesus suffered all the agonies of a lost soul. God counted Jesus a sinner and let Him suffer like a criminal, so that He could forgive my sins and count me righteous for Jesus' sake. Thus you can show the sinner that Christ's love made it so his sins were all paid for and now he can accept that free salvation if he will. It is already bought and paid for.

6. The next step is Romans 10:9. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Now that Christ has died in the sinner's place and paid the sinner's debt, then all that is left is for the sinner to claim what Christ offers him. Jesus says, "I have redeemed you. I have paid the debt of sin. Will you

take the forgiveness and salvation I have purchased for you by My suffering?" And the poor sinner can either say yes or no. He can accept it or reject it. If one believes in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, that means he believes that Jesus is the Son of God, the perfect, sinless sacrifice, and since He is raised from the dead, that proves He is able to save us. Now if one claims with his mouth this Saviour, believing that He is God's own Son, the atoning Saviour, he "shalt be saved."

Then show verse 10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It is in the heart where faith is, and the outward confession is simply an expression of what happened when the heart decided to trust in Jesus.

Then you may dwell for a moment on verse 11: "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." One who trusts in Christ will never be left embarrassed and disappointed. When one trusts in Christ, He saves him.

Now verse 13 will be clear. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Why not then have this convert bow his head and tell the Lord, "Lord, I ask You now to forgive me. I now believe that You do for- give me. I trust You to be my Saviour. I want to live for You beginning today."

Then you may show from verse 13 that he who has honestly called on the Lord is saved, and he can know it because the Bible says so.

IV. Shorter Methods to Win Souls With Single Well-Known Passages of Scripture

The above two plans of using the third chapter of John and of using the Scripture verses in Romans to win a soul are thorough, and often that much attention and Scripture is needed. On the other hand, many people are ready to be saved in a shorter time. The main thing is that the worker have a heart that is warm and led by the Spirit of God so that he does not do shallow, superficial work. The sinner should know that he is a sinner who needs forgiveness. He should know that Christ alone can save, and he should definitely trust Christ as Saviour, and then he should be taught to claim the Saviour openly and to know that his sins are forgiven. But the Bible is full of the plan of salvation.

1. When I was a university student, one summer I won sixty-six people using Isaiah 55:6 and 7.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." You will note that these verses indicate an urgency to settle the matter at once since tomorrow He may not be near. Then verse 7 stresses the fact of sin, the need for an honest repentance, a heart turning away from sin and turning to Christ. The unrighteous man is to give up his own thoughts or plans about how to be saved and take what God says. And then there is the sweet promise that if he returns to the Lord, He will have mercy on him and will abundantly pardon. There is very sweetly and simply the plan of salvation.

2. Isaiah 53:6 also states the Gospel very simply.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It says that all of us have sinned and are lost. It says that the heart of sin is our self-will, our wanting our own way. It says that Jesus Christ has borne all of our sins.

An English preacher had preached in one of the outlying towns and then rushed to the railway station to catch the train back to London. One man deeply convicted of his sins followed the preacher to the station and there said, "I want to get saved. Please tell me how." The last train for London for the night was about to leave. Heavy duties made it imperative for the preacher to go. So he said to the earnest inquirer, "Do you have a Bible?"

"Yes," said the lost man, "but I do not know where to read."

"Turn to Isaiah 53:6. Have you got it?"

"Yes, Isaiah 53:6."

"Then," said the preacher, "come in at the first 'all' and come out at the last 'all' and you will be saved." And he stepped on to the departing train.

What a strange way to be saved, the lost man thought. But he went home, opened his Bible, and discovered that the first word in the verse is "all" - "All we like sheep have gone astray." "Well, I can come in there, for I have gone astray. I am a sinner," the sinner said to himself.

But then his instructions were to "come out at the last 'all.'" And the last word of the verse is "all" - "The Lord hath laid on him [on Jesus] the iniquity of us all." Then the sinner thought, "And I am one of those whose iniquities were laid on Jesus. My sins are paid for! Well, I will come out there, and so I will be saved!"

3. Many a sinner has been saved by the simple Gospel in Numbers 21:5-9.

There is the clear illustration that all are sinners, and the death that comes by sin is illustrated by the fiery serpents. There is the clear picture of Jesus on the cross being counted the serpent, a sinner. And there is the illustration of faith so that every poisoned person who looked at the brazen snake on a pole was healed. So a sinner may be taught to look and live.

4. Thousands have been won to Christ by John 5:24.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." "He that heareth my word... ." You can say to the sinner, "You have heard it many times and you are hearing it now, are you not, as we read this?" Of course the sinner will agree to that.

"And believeth on him that sent me" "So you can say to the sinner, "Do you believe that God loved the world and gave His Son to save sinners? Then are you willing to risk that God and that Saviour today, and turn your case over to Them and rely upon Them?" Then you can show the plain statement that one who thus believes and trusts "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." And that is a wonderful promise for assurance and certainty.

5. Many have been saved by the story of the publican and the Pharisee who went up into the temple to pray (Luke 18:10-14).

The Pharisee, self-righteous, self-satisfied, was never saved. The poor publican who confessed his sinfulness and asked for mercy was saved and went down to his house justified. And so you might well ask the sinner to bow his head and make this prayer his prayer. You can teach him to pray, "God, be

merciful to me a sinner. and save me for Jesus' sake." And then when he has prayed that prayer, you can ask him if he will here and now trust the Lord Jesus to do what He said He would do, and to manifest it either by taking your hand solemnly, or by going with you to tell the pastor or a friend, or by going forward in a public meeting.

Whatever Scriptures you use, there are two or three things that must be involved. The sinner must know that he is a sinner, and wants to turn from sin and be forgiven. Then the sinner must know that God has promised to save those who trust in Christ. and he must be brought to personally trust Christ as his own Saviour.

V. Certain Devices Are Helpful in Soul Winning

In the case of the woman at Samaria in John, chapter 4, the Lord Jesus suggested, "Go, call thy husband." Thus He was led of the Spirit of God to bring out the fact that she had been married five times and was living in sin with a man to whom she was not married.

In the case of the paralytic man borne of four given in Mark 2 and in the other Gospels, Jesus first said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," and then as an evidence and assurance of forgiveness of sins He healed the man's body.

He evidently used the shame or public disgrace to win the woman taken in adultery to whom He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). The spiritually-minded soul winner will find different devices to help illustrate the Gospel and to cause people to see that they are sinners and need salvation, and to give assurance of salvation when they trust the Saviour.

1. It is often wise to get the sinner to pray.

We know, of course, that when the heart turns to Christ and trusts Him, one is saved, whether he consciously prays or not. But both public confession and prayer are used as the outward form or demonstration of faith. So "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," we read in Romans 10:10. The confession does not save, but it is a demonstration of saving faith. Likewise we are told in the same passage, verse 13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But the following verse plainly says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? ..." So when one calls on the Lord for mercy and forgiveness, he will be saved, because in his heart he has already believed that there is such a Saviour, that Jesus does save people who call upon Him. An honest heart calling upon Christ for mercy and forgiveness and salvation is a believing heart.

Thus it is a little simpler and easier for many people to take a definite step of faith when they call upon the Lord for forgiveness. The dying thief prayed and was saved (Luke 23:39-43). The publican in the temple prayed and was saved (Luke 18:13,14). Three times in the Bible, in Joel 2:32, in Acts 2:21, and in Romans 10:13, we are told that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Thus the one who calls in connection with his faith is likely to have more assurance. He has something clear-cut that he can remember. He can honestly say to himself, "The best I knew, I called on Jesus to save me and trusted Him to do it."

Even when one is in a crowd, or when the sinner is timid and may not like to pray aloud, you can say, "God knows what is in your heart now, does He not? If you in your heart ask Him to forgive you and want Him to save you now, He will know it, will He not?" Of course, every sensible sinner will know that that is true. "Then," you may say, "I will whisper a prayer softly as we stand here together and I will ask Jesus to come into your heart, forgive your sin, and save you this moment. Now as I pray, will you down in your heart say, 'Yes, Lord Jesus, I admit I am a sinner, I want You to forgive me. Please save me now.' " It is wise to try to see that there is a definite transaction in a choice of the will, a holy decision to trust Christ and claim Him, when the sinner turns to Christ.

2. For a similar reason it is important that there should be some way for the sinner to make his decision known.

Years ago in a great tabernacle service in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I preached on "The Banquet Invitation," the great supper to which many were bidden and many made excuses. I said, "Who here tonight will say, 'Brother Rice, I want to be at that great supper. Please tell the Lord Jesus that I accept His invitation and thank Him. If He will have me, I will be His and will be at that great supper'?" I asked the question more or less as a rhetorical question to bring decision in the mind. But a young man who had just gotten home from the Navy and was heartsick over sin jumped to his feet and said, "I will, Brother Rice! I will!"

I most often use the simple device of saying to the sinner, "If you are ready to take Christ as your own Saviour, relying on Him to forgive you and give you everlasting life, then let me suggest the way you can show it. As a sign between you and your friend here and God and me, would you be willing to shake hands with me, meaning, 'Lord Jesus, here and now I take You to be my own personal Saviour'? If you will, grip my hand." And as I indicated before, it is wise to get the convert to tell someone else.

3. Sometimes it is wise to use an object lesson to make clear that our sins are all laid on Jesus.

Sometimes you may select a weight, a stone, a book, and say, " Let this represent your sins. Now you hold this weight in your hands. Now all your sins are on you. Now suppose we put this weight over in the hands of this other man. Let him represent Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that Christ has borne our sins. Jesus suffered in our place. He was the substitute for us. Now your sins are all laid on Jesus. Then they are not charged to you but charged to Jesus. Jesus died for them, and you are not to be judged for these sins anymore !"

Or you can illustrate the matter this way. A man has been sick, out of work, and cannot pay his grocery bills, and they have mounted up until he is in disgrace. But a friend who loves him goes to the store and pays the bill. All the grocery bills are marked paid and turned over to him. Thus the poor man does not owe that debt anymore.

4. It is important to give assurance of salvation.

When I was saved, no one showed me the Scriptures so I would know that I had everlasting life. I asked my father if I could join the church and he implied that I was not old enough, that I had not been saved, and he took the matter no further. Years later I asked another preacher to pray for me and he said, "All right, I will, John, and you pray for yourself." But the matter could have been settled in five minutes with the Word of God. After three miserable years I was reading through the Gospel of John and came to John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" I said to myself, "Well, that is the only thing I know for sure that I did when I went forward to take Jesus." I saw that when I trusted Jesus, I got the

whole thing settled. And I am not conscious that I have ever had a moment's doubt since that time that my sins are forgiven, that I am saved.

VI. It Is Important to Follow Up the New Convert, Leading to Public Profession of Faith, Baptism, and Church Membership

A few weeks ago my daughter was delivered at the hospital of a lovely baby boy, and the eight-pound, two-ounce boy was named for his proud grandfather, John Robert Rice, II. (His father is also a Rice.) But his parents did not leave the baby at the hospital! They brought him home and began elaborate care of the little fellow-feeding, bathing, changing diapers. So when you have a soul born, do not leave the lamb for the wolves; do not leave the new convert without assurance of salvation and without leading him in the road for success and happiness in the Christian life. In the Great Commission the Lord Jesus said that when souls are saved, then we are to baptize them, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

1. First, arrange if possible for a public profession of faith.

I would explain simply that one who is on the Lord's side ought to say so. He has been all this time before without Christ and on Satan's side, and now he should make known publicly his grand decision and the transaction by which he is made now a child of God. I would teach the new convert Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." There is special joy in claiming Christ openly. And I would explain that that simply means that his decision ought to be made known in some simple way. The most logical way is for you to arrange to pick him up in your car or to meet him at some church service where he will be given an opportunity to come forward and let it be known that he is taking Christ as Saviour. You make the plans to take him to some such good Bible-preaching church. Sit by him in the services. Walk forward with him and tell the preacher, "My friend here has trusted Christ and wants you to know it and wants you to tell the people that he has been saved."

2. The new convert should be taught to be baptized.

Jesus made much of this. It is in the Great Commission as expressed in Matthew 28:19 and 20, and in Mark 16:16. It was the universal practice of New Testament Christians that as soon as one was saved, he was taught to be baptized, often "the same hour of the night," as with the Philippian jailer and his family.

And of course the young convert should be taught to attend some Bible-believing church where he will learn the Word of God and will find usefulness and fellowship. And he should be taught to start out to read his Bible through, reading daily, and to have a secret time of prayer every day and to get into soul-winning activities.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-r-rice/personal-soul-winning/>

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