

Where to Do Personal Work

by R.A. Torrey

Personal work is essential for spreading the Gospel and should be done everywhere, in various settings and situations.

Scripture: Mark 2:14, Luke 8:39, Luke 24:32, Acts 8:4-17, Hebrews 13:2, James 1:5

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Opportunities for Witnessing"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the importance of personal work in evangelism, particularly after Gospel meetings, in homes, on the streets, and in various public places. He encourages Christians to actively seek opportunities to engage individuals about their faith, using examples from the Bible, such as the Apostle Paul and Jesus. Torrey highlights that personal work can be done in diverse settings, including parks, workplaces, and even during travel, urging believers to be vigilant and prayerful in their approach. He stresses that every Christian should be prepared to share the Gospel wherever they go, as personal interactions can lead to significant spiritual transformations.

Transcript

I. PERSONAL WORK AFTER A GOSPEL MEETING.

Perhaps the easiest and most natural place to do personal work is after a Gospel meeting. Whenever you attend a meeting, watch for some one to deal with after the meeting is over. Do not trust to chance in the matter, but as the minister preaches the sermon keep your eyes on the audience and watch who it is that is hit and what hits them, then you can follow up the work that the minister has already done by his sermon. You will soon

acquire good judgment in deciding with whom it is wisest to speak. Of course one must be on his guard against being obtrusive in watching others. Before you go to the meeting pray definitely to God to give you some one at the meeting, and then watch for an answer to your prayer. When you have found your man, go for him, and do not let him slip away under any consideration. It is often well to go as quickly as possible to one of the doors of the meeting-house, and without making oneself too prominent, watch people as they come out, and then gently and courteously approach some one, and deal with him about his soul.

There is a great difference in Christian workers. Some seem never to get any one at the close of a meeting unless some one else takes them to them. They wait around with their Bible under their arm for some one to come to them and take them to an inquirer; others keep their eyes open for themselves, and almost always manage to get hold of some one.

In many of the more active churches, the church is divided into sections with an overseer over each division of the church, and individual workers under the overseer. This is an excellent {23} plan. When it is well carried out it prevents any hopeful cases from getting out without being dealt

with personally.

II. IN HOMES.

The Apostle Paul tells us that he preached the Gospel not only publicly, but "from house to house" (Acts 20:20). There is far too little Christian work done in the home. The best home to begin with is your own. Jesus bade the demoniac of Gadara when he was healed to return to his own house and show how great things God had done unto him (Luke 8:39). Every man who is converted should begin to tell the saving power of Christ first in his own home, to his own relatives and friends.

Many a mother with her family of children regrets that she has not a wider field of labor for Christ, but she will find one of the grandest of all fields in her own home.

But we should not limit our personal work to our own homes; we should do it in the homes where we visit. In this way those who make us partakers of their hospitality will entertain angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2). A godly man who once visited in the home of Spurgeon's parents, by a few words to the little boy, made an impression upon that boy that went far toward making him the mighty minister of the Gospel that he became in after years.

Then we should do personal work in the houses that

we enter in our house-to-house visitation. That man or woman is a poor church visitor who simply makes a pleasant call or talks upon religious generalities. The true visitor will find frequent opportunities for doing effective personal work with some of the inhabitants of the home, or with strangers they may find calling upon them.

III. ON THE STREETS.

Here again we have the Apostle Paul for an example. Not only did he reason "in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons," but also "in the market place every day with them that met with him." (Acts 17:17 RV) As you walk the streets, be listening for the voice of God to say "Go and speak to that man." Very often as one walks the street of a crowded city or the lonely roads of the country, if he is walking with God, the leading will come to speak to some one that he meets by the way, and countless are the souls that have been led out of darkness into light in {24} this way. As you look upon the surging crowd, ask God if there is some one in this crowd with whom He desires you to speak. Sometimes it is well to stand to one side and watch the people as they pass. Soon there will come a face that interests you, a face it may be that tells a story of sin, or sorrow and need. You can quietly follow this

person and watch for an opportunity to engage him in conversation, and then point him to the one who says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

IV. IN THE PARKS AND OTHER RESORTS.

The parks are often full of people who have plenty of leisure and are willing to talk upon almost any subject. Go through the park and find your man, engage him in a conversation, and as quickly as you can, lead him up to the great subject that is burning in your own heart. Oftentimes it is well to begin to talk about matters of passing interest, the burning questions of the day, then lead by the shortest possible route to the great question. Sometimes show the one with whom you are talking a tract, and ask his opinion of it, and this will lead easily to the matter uppermost in your mind. Not infrequently if you sit down in a park some one will come and sit down beside you and begin to talk to you, then of course it is very easy to lead him into a conversation about his own soul's need.

V. ON A WALK OR RIDE.

In this we have our Savior's own example. He made the hearts of the two disciples burn within them while He spoke to them in the way, and opened to them the Scriptures (Luke 24:32). We also have the

example of Philip the evangelist. The Spirit bade him go and join himself to the chariot of Queen Candace's treasurer. The treasurer invited him up into the chariot to ride with him, and the memorable conversation and personal dealing that followed led to the conversion and baptism of the treasurer, and the carrying of the Gospel into Ethiopia (Acts 8:29-38). There are few more favorable places to do personal work than on a walk or ride with a friend or even with a stranger. {25}

VI. AT THE PLACE OF BUSINESS.

Here again we have the Savior's example. "As he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him." (Mark 2:14) Of course we ought not to interrupt men and hinder their proper performance of their business duties. Many a workman has rare opportunities to speak with his fellow workmen, sometimes during work hours, sometimes during the noon rest. One of the most earnest Christian ministers I ever know had been a godless employee in a factory, but the man who worked next to him was a Christian, took an interest in his fellow employee's soul, and was instrumental under God in leading him to Christ. I have met a good many from one of the largest

business institutions in our city who have been led to Christ by one consecrated young man in the establishment. This young man has since gone as a foreign missionary, but he was used of God to lead many of his fellow employees to Christ before he went. It is well, wherever possible, to go into stores and factories and other places of business for the deliberate purpose of leading those who work there to Christ. Of course, as already said, it will not do to interrupt a man at his business, neither will it do generally to deal with him when others are around and listening, nor should he be taken at an hour when he is in a bad temper; but one who has that discretion that God is so ready to give (James 1:5) will find many opportunities for doing the Master's work. It is quite possible oftentimes to drop a word, or even to have a little talk, when there is not a great pressure of business, with the clerk who sells us goods, or with the barker who shaves us, or with the boy who blacks our shoes. There are five marks of a good opportunity; when one is alone, unoccupied, in good humor, communicative and in a serious mood.

VII. ON CARS AND BOATS.

Traveling on a train affords a very rare opportunity for personal work. Travelers usually have much time that hangs heavily upon their

hands, and are glad to get into conversation with any one, but if one is a real Christian, there is one subject always uppermost in his mind, one subject that he would rather talk about than any other, and that is Jesus Christ. When you get {26} into a train, get as good a seat for yourself as you can, put your coat and grip out of the way, move away over to the farther side of the seat, and make the vacant space beside you look as inviting as possible. If the car is at all crowded, you will soon have a fellow passenger, and the desired opportunity for personal work. Sometimes it is well to keep your coat and grip in the seat beside you until you see the man or woman that you want coming, and then remove them and move along in a way of silent invitation. It is well to talk with the trainmen and porters. They are usually willing to talk, and many of them have been led to Christ by Spirit-filled workers who were traveling with them. Many Christian workers go through trains and give tracts to every one on the train. I am not sure that this is the wisest thing to do, but I know that great blessing has come from it in many cases. Certainly it is well to carry a good supply of religious literature with you when you travel. Some of the books of the Bible Institute

Colportage Association are excellent for this purpose, such, e.g., as "Probably Sons." People are willing to read almost anything on a train, and these books without any comment oftentimes will lead the reader to Christ, and when they do not do this, they pave the way for a conversation.

Street cars are not as favorable a place for personal work as trains. One does not have the time or opportunity that he has on a train, and yet good work can be done on a street car, both with the passengers and with the motorman and conductor. A minister once said to me, "I was greatly ashamed last night going down on the street car. I was sitting inside the car talking on unimportant matters with friends, and as I looked to the front end of the car, I saw one member of my church talking with the driver about his soul, and when I looked to the other end of the car I saw another member of my church talking to the conductor, and there I, the pastor of the church, was doing nothing but wasting my time."

VIII. PRISONS, HOSPITALS, AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

A fine place to do personal work is in public institutions, such as prisons and hospitals, where many people are gathered together and are at leisure from morning till night. Every Sunday, all

over this land, devoted men and women are going into prisons, jails and {27} hospitals, carrying the glad tidings of salvation, and thousands are being converted to God through their faithful personal work. Many of the best Christians that I know today were brought to Christ in prison, not so much through the public preaching, as through the personal work of some devoted child of God who went from cell to cell and talked to the men about Christ. But while so much is being done already in this direction, there are many prisons and jails and hospitals where little or nothing is done.

Nurses in hospitals have a rare opportunity of doing personal work in the institutions where they are employed. Fortunately a very large proportion of trained nurses are devoted Christian women, and yet many of them do not realize the opportunities that God has put within their reach. A very unusual opportunity is also open to the Christian physician. Indeed a true Christian physician will oftentimes find opportunities for doing personal work that even the minister of the Gospel cannot find. Sometimes it will be with the patient whom he is treating, sometimes with the relatives and friends of the patient who are in deep anxiety as to the outcome of the sickness.

What has been said does not of course cover all

the places where personal work can be done, but it will suggest rich fields of opportunity. To put it in a word, personal work should be done everywhere. We read of the early disciples that "they that were scattered abroad went EVERYWHERE preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4), that is talking to individuals about Jesus, showing them the word of truth as it is found in the Bible, and leading them to accept it. Every child of God should be at all times on the lookout for opportunities to speak personally to some man or woman about Christ.

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