

Soul Winning

by Samuel Logan Brengle

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the necessity of a personal, joyful experience with God for effective soul-winning.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10

Topics: "Soul Winning", "Personal Transformation"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the necessity of a personal and transformative experience with God for effective soul-winning. He argues that a soul-winner must have a clean heart, a joyful spirit, and a constant relationship with the Holy Spirit to lead others to Christ. Brengle illustrates this through biblical examples, highlighting that true conversion is a revolutionary experience rather than an evolutionary one. He stresses that joy in the Lord is essential for sustaining the passion needed to win souls, as it reflects the power of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. Ultimately, Brengle calls for a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus to empower believers in their mission to save others.

Transcript

Samuel Logan Brengle (1860-1936) was an American Methodist born in Indiana who joined the Salvation Army in the 1890's. He was mightily used of the Lord even more so by his many books. They were chiefly written during a convalescence following being badly injured while street preaching. This is the first chapter from his book *The Soul Winner's Secret*, and deals with the soul-winner's personal experience with God.

Every soul-winner is in the secret of the Lord, and has had a definite personal experience of salvation and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which brings him into close fellowship and tender friendship and sympathy with the Saviour.

The Psalmist prayed, "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then," said he, "will I teach transgressors Thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." (Psalm 51) He saw that before he could be a soul-winner, before he could teach transgressors the way of the Lord and before he could convert sinners, he must have his own sins blotted out; he must have a clean heart and a right spirit; he must be a partaker of the Holy Ghost and of God's joy. In short, he must himself have a definite, constant, joyful experience of God's salvation in order to save others.

It was no "hope-I-am-saved" experience that he wanted; nor was it a conclusion carefully reasoned out and arrived at by logical processes; nor an experience based upon a strict performance of a set round of duties and attendance upon sacraments, but a mighty transformation and cleansing of his whole spiritual nature and a glorious new creation wrought within him by the Holy Ghost.

I. This must be a definite experience, that tallies with the Word of God. Such only can give that power and assurance which will enable you to lead and win others. You must possess knowledge before you can impart knowledge. You must have fire in order to kindle fire. You must have life to reproduce life. You must know Jesus and be on friendly terms with Him to be able to introduce Him to others. You must be one with Jesus, and be "bound up in the bundle of life" with Him if you would bring others into that life.

Peter had repented under the preaching of John the Baptist, had forsaken all to follow Jesus, had waited with prayer and unquenchable desire until he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, and had been anointed with power from on high, before he became the fearless, mighty preacher who won three thousand converts in a day.

Paul was mightily converted on the road to Damascus, and heard the voice of Jesus telling him what he was to do, and was baptized with the Holy Ghost under the teaching of Ananias before he became the apostle of quenchless zeal who turned the world upside down.

Luther was definitely converted and justified by faith on the stairway of St. Peter's at Rome before he became the invincible reformer who could stand before popes and emperors and set captive nations free.

George Fox, Wesley, Finney, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, James Caughey, and William Booth who became the Founder of our great Salvation Army, each and all had a definite personal experience that made them apostles of fire, prophets of God and saviours of men. They did not guess that they were saved, nor hope that they were saved, but they knew whom they had believed, and knew that they had 'passed from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.'

This experience was not evolution, but a revolution. No evolutionist ever has been or ever will be a great soul-winner. It is not by growth that men become such, but by revelation. Men do not become soul-winners until God bursts through the veil of their hearts, reveals Himself by the exercise of faith in His dear Son, gives a consciousness of personal acceptance with Him, and sheds abroad His love within, destroying unbelief, burning away sin, consuming selfishness, and filling the soul with the passion of Jesus.

The experience that makes a man a soul-winner is two-fold:

1. He must know that his sins are forgiven; he must have recognized himself to be a sinner out of friendly relation with God, careless of God's claim, heedless of God's feelings, selfishly seeking his own way in spite of divine love and compassion, and heedless of the awful consequences of separating himself from God; and this must have led to repentance toward God--by which I mean an entire turning away from sin, and a confiding trust in Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He must have so believed as to bring a restful consciousness that he has been adopted into God's family and made one of His dear children. This consciousness results from what Paul calls 'the witness of the Spirit,' and enables the soul to cry out in deep filial confidence and affection, 'Abba Father.'

2. He must be sanctified; he must know that his heart is cleansed, that pride and self-will and carnal ambition and strife and sensitiveness and suspicion and unbelief and all unholy tempers are destroyed by

the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He must experience personal Pentecost and the incoming of a great love for, and loyalty to, Jesus Christ.

II. It must be a constant experience. People who frequently meet defeat and fail of victory in their own souls will not be largely successful in winning others to Jesus. The very consciousness of defeat makes them uncertain in their exhortation, doubtful and wavering in their testimony, and weak in their faith, and this will be unlikely to produce conviction and beget faith in their hearers.

Finney, Wesley, Fletcher, Bramwell, Mrs. Catherine Booth and scores of others walked with God, as Enoch did, and so walked 'in the power of the Spirit' and constantly, as to be soul-winners all their lives.

III. It must be a joyful experience. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength,' said Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8:10). 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,' prayed David (Psalm 51:12). 'I feel it my duty to be as happy as the Lord wants me to be,' wrote McCheyne, the gifted and deeply spiritual young Scotch preacher, who was wonderfully successful in winning souls.

'Oh, my soul is very happy! Bless God, I feel He is with me,' cried Caughey, while preaching his sermon on 'The Striving of the Spirit.' No wonder he won souls.

Whitefield and Bramwell, two of the greatest soul winners the world ever saw, were at times in almost an ecstasy of joy, especially when preaching, and this was as it should be.

John Bunyan tells us how he wrote 'The Pilgrim's Progress' in his filthy prison cell. He says, 'So I was led home to prison, and I sat me down and wrote and wrote because joy did make me write.'

God wants His people to be full of joy. 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full,' said Jesus (John 15:11). And again He said, 'Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full' (John 16:24). 'And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full,' wrote John (1 John 1:4). 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,' wrote Paul to the Galatians (Galatians 5:22), and again he writes, 'The Kingdom of God is... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Romans 15:17). 'Joy in the Holy Ghost' is an oceanic current that flows unbroken through the holy, believing soul, though surrounded by seas of trouble and compassed about by infirmities and afflictions and sorrows.

We have so often thought of Jesus as 'the Man of Sorrows' as to overlook His fullness of exultant joy.

Joy can, and should be, cultivated, just as faith or any other fruit of the Spirit is cultivated:

1. By appropriating by faith the words that were spoken and written for the express purpose that we might have fullness of joy. 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,' wrote Paul to the Romans (Romans 15:13). It is by believing.
2. By meditating on these words and holding them in our minds and hearts as we would hold honey in our mouths until we have got all the sweetness out of them.
3. By exercise, even as faith or love or patience is exercised. This we do by rejoicing in the Lord and praising God for His goodness and mercy, and by shouting when the joy wells up in our souls under the pressure of the Holy Spirit. Many people quench the Spirit of joy and praise, and so gradually lose it. But let them repent, confess, pray and believe and then begin to praise God again. He will see to it that they

have something to praise Him for, and their joy will convict sinners and prove a mighty means of winning them to Jesus.

Who can estimate the power there must have been in the joy that filled the heart of Peter and surged through the souls, beamed on the faces, and flashed from the eyes of the one hundred and twenty fire-baptized disciples, while he preached that Pentecostal sermon which won three thousand bigoted enemies to the cross of a crucified Christ.

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