

Personal Work

by W.H. Griffith Thomas

Personal work is a crucial aspect of the Christian life, requiring spirituality, faithfulness, tactfulness, and definiteness.

Scripture: John 1:40, Acts 8:26, Colossians 4:5, 2 Timothy 4:5, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Christian Witnessing"

Description

W.H. Griffith Thomas emphasizes the importance of individual and personal work in the Christian life, highlighting how evangelism in the New Testament was primarily through personal interactions and testimonies. The duty of personal witnessing is crucial for Christian workers, especially ministers, as it reflects loyalty to Christ and a desire to bring others to the Kingdom of God. The reality of one's relationship with God is essential for effective personal work, as seen in the story of Philip and the Eunuch, showcasing qualities like spirituality, faithfulness, tactfulness, and definiteness in leading souls to Christ.

Transcript

"Individual work for individuals" is the title of a valuable and important book. It suggests what should never be forgotten in the Christian life, that work for Christ is preeminently individual and personal. Evangelism in the New Testament is essentially of this character. The first two who became disciples of Christ were led to Him by the personal testimony of John the Baptist. The intercourse of our Lord and His disciples was primarily individual and personal. And although on the Day of Pentecost St. Peter preached to a large crowd, yet very soon in the record of the Acts we find instance after instance of personal efforts at soul winning. Even St. Paul with his greatness as a preacher and an administrator was first of all a personal worker, and his services at Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus illustrate this particular aspect of Christian work.

If this is true of Christian workers in general, it is especially true of the Christian minister, for whatever else he may do, he must never lose sight of the duty of personal witnessing. No parochial organization can make up for this, and no sermons or classes, however important, can take its place. It is one of the sure marks of the true spiritual servant of God, that he will hold himself in readiness to use opportunities of witnessing for his Master and winning men to the Kingdom of God. This will not mean spiritual bondage and a compulsion under all circumstances to do this kind of work; on the contrary, it will be but the natural expression of his own loyalty to Christ and his desire to make known what is so precious and powerful in his own life.

Section 2. Some Counsels. The first essential for personal work is the reality of our own life with God. As personal dealing means the winning of individual souls for Christ, or the helping of individuals who are in Christ, it naturally follows that almost everything will depend upon the spiritual qualifications of the worker. The typical instance of personal work for Christ is found in the story of Philip and the Eunuch, and it illustrates some of the essential requirements of the personal worker. 1.

Spirituality. How quick Philip was to see the duty laid upon him by the Holy Spirit, and how responsive he was to the call of God to go towards the Eunuch. 2. Faithfulness. Without any hesitation he went forward, influenced by loyalty to the call of God to do personal work. This is the true Christian aggressiveness which is so striking a feature of all New Testament evangelism. 3. Tactfulness. There is a beautiful point in the original Greek of the first words addressed by Philip to the Eunuch.

As they appear in the English version they almost suggest abruptness: "Do you understand what you are reading?" But as Philip actually spoke the words, they are prefaced with an exquisite bit of spiritual wisdom, as though he took up the Eunuch at a point in the reading which he heard as he drew near: "Quite so, but do you understand it?" Aggressiveness which is not blended with tact will often do more harm than good. The spirit in which we do Christian work counts for a very great deal.

Manner as well as matter must always be considered. 4. Definiteness. Philip was content with nothing short of personal contact between the Eunuch and Christ. Taking the Word read, Philip led the eunuch to the Incarnate and Exalted Word. This is personal work, bringing the soul face to face with Jesus Christ and leading as thoroughly as possible to personal decision. Arising out of our life with God will come a gradual experience of the needs of the human heart and of the best ways of dealing with spiritual difficulties.

The deeper and fuller our experience, the greater will be the help that we can render. It is this emphasis on ministerial experience that we find indicated in the well-known words of the address in the Communion Office, "discreet and learned minister of God's Word". The true minister will provide and welcome every opportunity for doing personal work, and in so doing his own spiritual experience of the needs of men will become deepened and strengthened. Pastoral visiting will often be a great opportunity for this personal insight, and for the constant increase of spiritual insight and experience.

As a great help, the personal worker will be only too glad to compare notes with others who have had far greater experience than himself. An old book, but one well worthy of constant attention by all clergymen, is *A Pastor's Sketches*, by Spencer, an American clergyman of a former generation. The knowledge of the human heart and the ways of dealing with individuals revealed in this book will be a constant help and guide to soul winners. A new book on the same general lines is *Methods of Soul-Winning*, by another experienced American pastor, Dr.

H. C. Mabie; while the book already referred to, *Individual Work for Individuals*, by Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, used in connection with the companion book by his son, *Taking Men Alive*, by C. G. Trumbull, will be of immense help in the study of ways of working. Of course it must never be forgotten that the personal equation rules everything, and no laws and methods can be laid down. Each man must find out his own work and do it in his own way; and if only he places himself at God's disposal day by day, seeking for opportunities, and then for grace to use them, he will quickly realize that personal work is one of the most blessed opportunities of making full proof of his ministry.

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