**Biblical Evangelism**

**Learning from Paul’s Teaching**

*The Spiritual Harvest Process*

While dealing with problem issues in the church at Corinth, Paul gives an especially revealing truth about the nature of evangelism.

First Corinthians 3:4-8 is most often utilized when teaching concerning the problem of division in a local church. This is because in Corinth, believers were either aligning themselves as those “of Paul” or those “of Apollos.” It is very natural, of course, to have a special affection and respect for a person God used to help lead us into a relationship with Christ. Paul does not say this is evil, just very *human*. He writes,

*“For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe–as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.”[[1]](#endnote-1)*

Paul was not rebuking the believers for having special affection and respect for him and Apollos, because both are a sort of spiritual father to them. What Paul is trying to communicate is if that is all people see, they do not understand the nature of how God gathers the spiritual harvest. The Corinthians were only believers because the *Lord* gave opportunity, and Paul and Apollos were merely servants through whom they believed.

Three facts are especially evident in this passage.

**A. The *potential* is in the *soil***

We can almost never tell from the appearance of people whether or not they will be truly productive soil for the gospel. Some of those who appear responsive will not last, and some who appear unresponsive are only initially so. In the end they not only exhibit life but are also a means of multiplying the message.

Too often people analyze the demographics of a certain area and try to predict where an especially fruitful field will be in which to sow the gospel. But God is working in ways that are not visible or obvious to us. We must be obedient to His call to proclaim the message everywhere, even in places that do not appear to be responsive. God does not waste the efforts of His laborers. He does not send them to fields where no harvest will be gathered. Certainly some fields are harder than others. But wherever we are sent by the Lord of the harvest, there is good ground in whose lives the message will grow and multiply.

**B. The *privilege* is the *sower’s***

In the spiritual harvest of God’s kingdom, *God* causes the growth. We enter into the work of the Holy Spirit. Evangelism is not merely a human effort to persuade nonbelievers to come to Christ. Evangelism involves God’s servants planting and watering the message in every way possible, knowing that God is the harvester. He gives us the privilege of entering into His work.

Whenever I have had the privilege of witnessing to someone and leading them in a prayer to receive Christ, almost invariably I learn that God had used other people in the preparation process. John Wesley referred to this activity of the Holy Spirit as “prevenient grace.”

After teaching His parable concerning the sower and soil, Jesus explained that the seed in the spiritual harvest is “the word of God”[[2]](#endnote-2) —the message. The Holy Spirit prepares the soil (people’s hearts) to receive the message. The sower’s role in evangelism is to enter into the Holy Spirit’s work in people’s lives. As Jesus said to His disciples, “The saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.”[[3]](#endnote-3)

Paul states, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”[[4]](#endnote-4) God’s servants plant and water the seed. God causes the growth.

In this statement, God’s work in the spiritual harvest is clearly distinguished from that of His human servants. The time factors Paul describes in this process are different. When Paul and Apollos planted and watered the seed (the message), the Greek verb tenses indicate specific points in time, called *punctiliar* tense in Greek. For a period of time, Paul planted the seed. For another period of time, Apollos watered it. But when Paul describes God’s activity in this process, Paul used a *linear* tense in Greek, in which the verb clearly reveals that God did not merely work after the seed was planted and watered, but *all along* God was causing the growth.

In a responsive conversation with a nonbeliever, we cannot always share what we might consider to be a complete presentation of the gospel. But we need to remember that few people make a decision for Christ because of a single encounter, and we can still guide a responsive conversation, even if we do not control it. Remember, we are “planting” and “watering” the message. God is causing the growth. The Holy Spirit brings people to decision.

Before we sow the seed of God’s message into the lives of people, the Holy Spirit has gone before us to prepare the soil of their hearts to receive the seed.

In the case of Paul and Apollos in Corinth, the Holy Spirit preceded Paul’s work. He worked while Paul ministered in Corinth and while Apollos ministered. He continued to work even beyond that.

God is the one who begins the work of salvation in each life, and He is the one who completes it. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith,[[5]](#endnote-5) and, as Paul put it so clearly, “He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.”[[6]](#endnote-6)

**C. The *power* is in the *seed***

When Paul speaks of his work of planting and Apollos’ work of watering, he obviously is talking about the seed, which Jesus explained is the message of God.

Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because *it is the power* of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”[[7]](#endnote-7) Anyone involved in evangelism needs to understand that the primary power in evangelism is not in the messenger.

The primary power is in the *message*. “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”[[8]](#endnote-8)

The New Testament reveals four kinds of “power” that God’s Word has.

1) The power of *regeneration.* The Greek word translated “regeneration” is the word *palingennesia*. *Palin* means “again.” *Gennesia*, from which we get the word “genesis,” means “beginning.” *Regeneration* simply means “beginning again.” That is the nature of the new birth. It is starting a whole new life by God’s supernatural work.

Peter wrote, “For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”[[9]](#endnote-9)

Paul taught that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”[[10]](#endnote-10)

2) The power of *sanctification.* Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the *washing* of water with the *word*, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.”[[11]](#endnote-11)

God uses His Word to confront us with the truth about ourselves and expose things in our life that need to be purged or cleansed. God’s Word cleanses our lives and penetrates our heart’s motives.[[12]](#endnote-12)

3) The power of *transformation*. God uses His Word not only to cleanse us, but also to change us. The kind of change described is radical, not merely a psychological adjustment. Paul told the Romans that we are transformed by the renewing of our mind.[[13]](#endnote-13) In 2 Corinthians, he says that this transformation process is step, by step making us more like Jesus from “glory to glory.”[[14]](#endnote-14)

4)The power of *multiplication.* In the Parable of the Sower Jesus said that when the seed of God’s message lands upon good ground, it produces 30, 60 and 100 times as much grain. Not only does the power of God’s Word change individual lives, but it also multiplies through those lives to change others. As Jesus revealed in the Parable of the Mustard Seed, what begins as a seemingly small work can grow to enormous proportions. The power of God’s message multiplies through the lives of countless others once it is received by a person whose heart is productive soil.

*Comprehensive Witness*

The apostle Paul wrote to the believers at Thessalonica: “Our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”[[15]](#endnote-15)

Paul’s witness was not merely *what* he said (“*not* … *in word only*”), but also *how* he said it (“*in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction*”) and *who* he was (“you know what *kind* *of men we proved to* *be* among you for your sake”).

It is very significant that the apostle Peter presents the same three components of effective witness in his first epistle:

*“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”[[16]](#endnote-16)*

Notice that Peter indicates *what* we should say: “the reason for the hope that you have.” He also emphasizes *how* we should say it: “with gentleness and respect.” And he stresses the importance of *who* we are—our character, speaking of a “clear conscience” and “good behavior in Christ.”

More than 300 years before Paul and Peter wrote their epistles, Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, in his book *Rhetoric*, presented three components of public speech and communication:

*Logos*, translated “the Word” in the beginning of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the *word,*”[[17]](#endnote-17) refers to the content of our message.

*Pathos*, from which we get the English words “passion” and “pathetic,” has to do with feeling and emotion. Aristotle believed that the emotion with which content is communicated is an integral part of the message.

*Ethos,* from which we get the word “ethnic,” means what *kind* of person the speaker is. The speaker’s reputation and character are also vital to the message.

Essentially, Aristotle said almost exactly the same thing as Peter and Paul. Our message is *what* we say, *how* we say it and *who* we are.

Teaching these three principles of communication will help believers develop a comprehensive approach to personal witness.

**A. W*hat* we say**

Our Lord’s commands are clear. Evangelism involves speech. A term that has come into prominence is “*lifestyle* evangelism.” An excellent book by that title was written by Joseph Aldrich. It rightly emphasized a critical need for forming friendships with nonbelievers and living credible Christian lives in personal evangelism.

Unfortunately, some have interpreted lifestyle evangelism as an excuse not to share their faith vocally.

The gospel is a message that must be conveyed in words. The study of evangelism in the New Testament repeatedly reveals that the focus of our message should always be *Jesus*.

When the Early Church was born, the message of believers always focused on the person Jesus Christ. As they boldly and clearly proclaimed Jesus, great numbers believed.

**B. *How* we say it**

*How* we say things communicates as much as *what* we say. Passion is contagious. It is not necessarily conveyed by volume, but rather through evident sincerity and conviction. To be *convincing*, we must first be *convinced*. If we’re not moved by our message, it’s unlikely we will move anyone else.

Our emotions, attitudes, and actions are as much a part of our message as our words. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul said, “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech *always be with grace*, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”[[18]](#endnote-18)

The apostle Peter wrote, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But *do this with gentleness and respect*, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against *your good behavior* in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”[[19]](#endnote-19)

Notice that both Paul and Peter emphasize a witness that includes more than mere words. Paul says our speech should “always be with grace.” Peter says we should speak “with gentleness and respect.”

**C. *Who* we are**

The validity of our witness is related to the credibility of our lives. Effective witness depends on character. This has always been true. But in a culture that is increasingly skeptical of Christianity, it is even more critical. The content of our message will be greatly hindered if our manner and actions are inconsistent with our words. With many people, especially those we know personally, our personal testimony of the difference Christ has made in our lives and its consistent proof through our actions will compel them.

In many countries, Christianity is not a prominent religion. The Christian population is small, and Christian media do not exist. This can offer a great advantage in evangelism because the first witness unbelievers in those countries receive is from someone they know personally whose life has greatly changed after receiving Christ. They do not have to overcome negative perceptions that come from knowing people who communicate a Christian message but whose lives do not affirm it.

In a society in which people are rapidly losing faith in the integrity of leaders in government and the business world, the personal credibility of Christians is not merely an added blessing in witness, but an essential requirement.

***Power for All Three Components of Witness***

In Paul’s testimony to the Thessalonians concerning his witness, he states that it was “in power and in the Holy Spirit.” As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit’s power enables us in all three of the components of our message: what we say, how we say it and who we are**.** People often think of the Holy Spirit’s empowerment in terms of signs, wonders and spiritual gifts. But the word translated “power” in Acts 1:8 (*dunamis*) is wonderfully comprehensive. It simply means “ability” and applies to all practical ways to everyday life. The power Jesus promised His followers is for every aspect of Christian living, enabling us with whatever it takes to do and be what He purposes in our lives.

A) The Holy Spirit empowers our witness in *what we say*. As He did for the New Testament Christians after the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit gives us the internal motivation to speak about Jesus, confident in the Spirit’s convincing work. The early Christians prayed for that kind of help: “Grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

B) The Holy Spirit also helps us in *how* we speak — to communicate Christ as Paul did “in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.”[[21]](#endnote-21) The Spirit moves us in our witness with a sincere, compelling passion.

C) And the Holy Spirit enables our character to *become* what God has called us to be as the fruit of the Spirit — the nature of Jesus Christ — becomes evident in our lives.

The power Jesus promised His followers is for every aspect of Christian living. It enables us to do and be whatever our Lord has purposed in our lives. The Holy Spirit baptism opens the way to a life of effective witness for Christ in *what* we say, *how* we say it, and *who* we are.

**God’s Part and Ours**

A mindset that holds many Christians back from being effective witnesses is the misconception that we are responsible to persuade nonbelievers to become Christians. Only God can open a heart and move someone to decision. We do what we can—share a clear message, communicate it with sincerity and conviction, and live exemplary lives that give credibility to our words.

Teaching believers to be effective witnesses demands that they understand the difference between their part in evangelism and God’s.

Whether we came to Christ through a sermon or one-on-one witnessing, most of us can remember that even before we heard the message, God brought about circumstances in our lives to prepare our hearts to receive the truth.

Just as God prepared us, He is preparing people around us to receive our message.

Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”[[22]](#endnote-22) The next verse explains that God saved us by grace for a purpose: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which *God* *prepared* *beforehand* so that we would walk in them.”[[23]](#endnote-23)

God is preparing us for good works. He is also preparing good works for us. Before we were born, He had a specific purpose for each of us. Part of that plan is that God has divine appointments for us, both with strangers and those we know well—friends, family members, neighbors and coworkers with whom we relate regularly. Those encounters will happen—whether we’re ready or not.

Understanding God’s work in evangelism is essential to having the faith to do our work. We will fail in our part if we’re trying to do His part. He is God. We’re not. He assigned our part to us, and He doesn’t command anything that we can’t do with His help.

Although God has chosen to involve us in the evangelism process, our part is possible only because the Holy Spirit is working in people—even before we share the message.

We have no excuses. God will do what we can’t—if we will do what we can.

**Response Evangelism**

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, his final instructions conveyed how Christians should relate to nonbelievers, whom he appropriately calls “outsiders.” This simple yet profound teaching is the primary foundation for what I like to call Response Evangelism:

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”[[24]](#endnote-24)*

In these verses, Paul asks the Colossians to pray for his personal effectiveness in proclaiming the message of Christ and also instructs them how to be effective in communicating Christ to outsiders. His teaching in these five verses reveals two major principles and six practices. The two principles are *dependence* and *discipline*. As in all of Christian living, the combination of dependence and discipline is essential to effective witnessing. While dependence and discipline are distinct from one another, they cannot be totally separated from each other. Not only are each essential, but they also should interact.

Following are six practices based on Paul’s teaching in Colossians 4:2-6. The principle of dependence applies most in the first two practices and discipline is the major emphasis in the remaining four practices. But each of the six practices involves dependence and discipline. Both always apply.

**1) Disciplined Dependence**

The first two practices of “praying for open doors” and “sharing Christ clearly” are in the form of a prayer request from Paul. Dependence on God’s help is the major emphasis of both. While prayer is dependent, it also takes discipline to pray. Both practices presented involve discipline.

**2) Dependent Discipline**

Although the last four practices are instruction and essentially *commands* by Paul to the Colossians, each convey our dependence on God’s help to be effective. We need His wisdom from above and the Holy Spirit’s guidance to seize and build opportunities. We depend on the Spirit’s help to speak with grace and sensitivity and know how to respond individually to people.

The response evangelism approach involves not just speaking but *listening* and being ready to answer people’s questions and relate to their personal spiritual needs. It demands more than merely learning a witnessing routine, because we don’t totally control the conversation.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would convince the world concerning “sin and righteousness and judgment.”[[25]](#endnote-25) We are responsible to share the message clearly, but the Holy Spirit convinces and persuades the heart of the listener.

Response evangelism is possible because God takes the initiative in people’s lives and continues to work in the evangelism process. When we understand His work in evangelism, it enables us to be bold—depending on His persuasive work. We can also be patient—trusting His timing rather than trying to push people to a premature decision. This frees us from anxiety and allows us to be neither hesitant nor hasty as we relate to people.

Response evangelism acknowledges God’s sovereignty and depends on His activity. This allows us to fulfill our role in the evangelism process—responding to people while depending on the Holy Spirit’s help.

***Paul’s Evangelism Practices***

In March of 1973, 19-year-old Maria Lourdes committed her life to Christ on the first night of missionary Bernhard Johnson’s evangelistic crusade in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The next night she was filled with the Holy Spirit. On her first Sunday morning in church, the pastor’s sermon challenged the people to personal witnessing. Maria realized that she had not yet told anyone about her new faith in Christ. So, she prayed, “Lord, before I go to bed tonight I will tell someone what You have done for me.”

Maria was determined to witness to someone on the 40-minute bus ride home from church. But no one sat beside her. As she ran home from the bus stop, she felt she had failed God.

When she opened the door to her apartment, the Holy Spirit impressed her to go to the telephone. She opened the telephone book, closed her eyes and put her finger down on the page. Her finger landed on the name Johnny Sousa. She dialed the number. After the sixth ring, a gruff voice answered.

“Who is this?”

Maria didn’t know what to say. All that came to her mind was the song the choir sang in the stadium crusade. So Maria started to sing into the telephone, “Just as I am, without one plea…”

Something changed in Johnny Sousa’s voice. “Please don’t hang up,” he replied. “I’ll be right back.” A minute later, he came back on the line. “My wife Clara’s standing next to me, and we’re holding the telephone so we can both hear. Would you please sing that song again?”

Maria sang “Just as I Am” three times, then shared her testimony and explained why Jesus gave His life for us. She asked Johnny and Clara Sousa if they wanted to receive God’s forgiveness, too. Over the telephone she led them both in a prayer to receive Christ.

Then Johnny Souza told her their story. He and Clara had been married seven years, could have no children, and were too poor by government standards to adopt a child. Six months earlier, Johnny had lost his job, and they were down to their last few cents. They expected to be evicted the next day.

“My wife and I got so desperate this morning that we took the last money we had and bought poison. We agreed to drink the poison and die together. I mixed it and gave one glass to my wife. I picked up the other. We began raising the glasses. When the poison was just about to touch our lips, the telephone rang.”

Johnny Sousa’s story didn’t end the night he and Clara received Christ. God called them into the ministry, and he became an Assemblies of God pastor. His congregation in Santa Rosa, Brazil, eventually grew to more than 20,000 members.

The Holy Spirit searches people’s hearts and knows when someone is ready for the gospel. He guides circumstances and will use believers as channels of God’s message of forgiveness, hope and everlasting life. We need to be ready for God to use us as He works in people’s lives.

1. Pray for Open Doors

Prayer is essential in evangelism. Unless God works in hearts and lives, our work will not produce lasting results. Our responsibility is to share the message and pray for God to do what only He can do in the evangelism process.

**Our Model Is Jesus**

Our greatest example concerning prayer is our Lord himself. Jesus both taught and modeled a life of prayer. His commitment to prayer made a powerful impact on His disciples. When they asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray,”[[26]](#endnote-26) it was not a casual inquiry from mere curiosity. Something was different about Jesus’ prayer life, and it instilled in them the desire to pray like Him. They had witnessed prayer in the temple and practiced it themselves. But Jesus prayed to Jehovah as His Father and taught them that He was their Heavenly Father too. He demonstrated that prayer is not a ceremony, but a relationship with an all-powerful and caring God who hears and answers.

Jesus exemplified what Paul instructed the Colossians to do. He was devoted to prayer. He made His disciples aware that God is always present; He sees the sparrow fall and knows how many hairs are on our head.[[27]](#endnote-27) Both through instruction and by example, Jesus taught His disciples that in normal daily living and in crisis, we need to get alone with God: “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”[[28]](#endnote-28)

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul explains that Jesus, “although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”[[29]](#endnote-29) In His earthly life, Jesus obeyed the Father and depended upon the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who guided and empowered the Son of God, will also open doors of opportunity and enable us to effectively share the message of Christ.

**Not Merely Human Persuasion**

Evangelism is, in some respects, a process of persuasion. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, “Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men….”[[30]](#endnote-30) But evangelism is very different from normal human persuasion. Paul also wrote, “My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”[[31]](#endnote-31) Though Paul certainly had persuasive ability, he understood that earthly wisdom and human persuasion were inadequate to reach the Corinthians with the gospel of Christ.

The reason human persuasion alone will not lead someone to a decision for Christ is found in the nature of persuasion itself. For persuasion to be effective, it must appeal to desires that already exist in a person. People essentially do what they *want* to do. To move people to a decision, they must see that the decision will result in gratifying a desire they already have. This is the fundamental objective of all advertising.

People living in sin do not naturally have the desire to deny themselves, follow Christ, and do God’s will. It requires a special work of the Holy Spirit in our minds and hearts to bring us to understanding and move us to a willingness to obey the truth.

People are not naturally inclined to believe the gospel, because sin blinds them to the truth. Paul says, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”[[32]](#endnote-32) He also says, “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”[[33]](#endnote-33) Without God’s help, a person can’t understand or respond to the truth. That is why no one can come to Christ through human persuasion alone.

We must pray because we are dependent on God to open doors of opportunity, to bring understanding to hearers’ minds and to move their hearts to decision.

**How We Should Pray**

Believers should pray regularly in two ways.

1) We should pray specifically and regularly for nonbelievers we know. As I was growing up, my parents led us in daily prayer for family members and friends who were nonbelievers. Over the years we have had the joy of seeing many for whom we prayed come to Christ. Their conversions happened in ways that clearly showed they were responding as a result of believing prayer. It may take many months and even years of consistent prayer, but God continually works in the lives of those for whom we regularly pray. It is helpful to keep a prayer list in your Bible to remind you of people for whom you are committed to pray regularly.

2) We should pray for divine appointments. God wants to use us—both to plant and water the seed of Christ’s message in the lives of casual acquaintances and even strangers. This includes praying for each other, that God will open doors of opportunity, just as Paul requested the Colossians to pray for him.[[34]](#endnote-34)

**A Lifestyle of Prayer**

The importance of prayer in evangelism cannot be overstated. People who commit themselves to be witnesses must also be committed to a lifestyle of prayer.

A revealing example of the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s work in evangelism is found in Acts 16. When Paul and his companions went to a riverbank outside Philippi to pray on the Sabbath Day, they sat down and began speaking to a group of women:

“A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”[[35]](#endnote-35)

Paul spoke the message, but the Lord opened Lydia’s heart! The truth is, none of us can open a heart— not even the apostle Paul.

As I walked through the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois, I read quotations by Billy Graham displayed on the walls. In one of those he said, “If God should take His hand off me, I would have no more spiritual power. The whole secret of the success of our meetings is spiritual—it is God answering prayer. I cannot take credit for any of it.”

Anyone who has been involved in evangelism for any period of time knows that it is a spiritual activity, and human persuasion alone cannot accomplish the task. We can do our part. But unless God works in people’s hearts, we will not see lives changed. Billy Graham knows that and so should every person who obeys our Lord’s command to be His witnesses.

We have the privilege and responsibility of sharing the message. But only God can open a heart.

2. Share Christ Clearly

Just as we are dependent on God to open the heart of a person with whom we share Christ’s message, we must also depend on Him to help us communicate that message clearly.

Paul’s prayer requests teach that we are dependent on God at *both* *ends* of the communication process. We need the Holy Spirit’s help to open a door for the message to be effectively received. But we also need His help to deliver the message. Our work can only be accomplished because God works in and through *us*—as well as in the hearts of those with whom we share the message.

Paul wrote the Colossians:

“*Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well…so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.*”[[36]](#endnote-36)

**We Need the Spirit’s Help**

At the close of Ephesians, Paul gives an exhortation and prayer request that is similar to the passage in Colossians:

*“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”[[37]](#endnote-37)*

Paul asked the Colossians to pray for him for clarity of speech. He asked the Ephesians to pray for him for boldness. In Ephesians, his desire was to speak the message “boldly, as I *ought* to speak.”[[38]](#endnote-38) In Colossians he asked believers to pray that he would make the message “clear in the way I *ought* to speak.”[[39]](#endnote-39) For Paul, boldness and clarity were not options, but *necessities*.

**Clear, Not Clever**

The issue is to be clear, not clever.

I really question the value of some Christian bumper stickers and billboards. Limited space requires that their messages must be brief. Since it is necessary to communicate something that will capture people’s attention while driving by, the messages tend to focus on the clever and confrontational. Often this comes at the expense of clarity. In the case of bumper stickers, it is an appropriate irony that the message is usually moving away from people.

Paul said his message was the “mystery of Christ.”[[40]](#endnote-40) The central issue in evangelism is that people must be brought to a decision concerning what our Lord’s sacrifice on the cross means for them personally.

It is a great help when an unbeliever with whom you are conversing believes the Bible is the Word of God, but the Bible itself does not require that someone believes in verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture to be saved. God’s Word does require true faith in the heart and confession with the mouth.[[41]](#endnote-41)

Some salvation presentations begin by focusing on the inspiration of Scripture so a person has a biblical foundation from which to start. But for many people, the process works in reverse. First, they must be confronted with the person and work of Christ. The Word itself must be proclaimed. The Holy Spirit will convince a person of its truth.

The simple two-point presentation in chapter seven of *who* Jesus was and *why* He gave His life from the analysis of Peter’s preaching can be effectively shared by any believer.

Our message to nonbelievers must be clear and simple. The primary focus must be Jesus. The life of Jesus Christ is the turning point of all history. The world’s calendar is hinged on His birth. He is thought of by many as a teacher, a philosopher or even a prophet, but every person must be confronted with the reality of who Jesus truly is. All people must be given an adequate witness and the opportunity to make a choice of accepting or rejecting His offer of forgiveness of sin and everlasting life and then personally submitting to His lordship.

When Jesus dealt with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman at the well, He brought them to a revelation of who *He* is. In our encounters with people, we must do the same. We must not merely communicate truth concerning *what* we believe. We must clearly communicate Jesus Christ—the *person*, who is our Savior and Lord.

**The Spirit’s Message**

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would glorify Him.[[42]](#endnote-42) It is the Christ-centered message the Holy Spirit will honor and use.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the first Christians boldly and clearly witnessed about Jesus as He promised they would.[[43]](#endnote-43)

In Acts 2, the multitude was amazed because they heard those who had been filled with the Holy Spirit speaking in the languages of the nonbelievers who were gathered. When they asked, “What does this mean?”[[44]](#endnote-44) Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, stood and explained that what had happened was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy in the Old Testament concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.[[45]](#endnote-45) Then he clearly and boldly preached about Jesus Christ, and about 3,000 people were added to the Church that day.

In Acts 3, as Peter and John were going to the temple, they prayed for a man at the temple gate who was lame from birth, and he was healed. Peter again used the opportunity to proclaim Jesus, and about 5,000 believed the message.

In Acts 4, the priests, captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees were so disturbed that they put Peter and John in jail. The next day the rulers, elders, scribes, and high priests challenged them: “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”[[46]](#endnote-46) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke boldly about Jesus: “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”[[47]](#endnote-47)

Notice that when the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost and in the days following, the message of the early Christians focused on the Person of Jesus Christ. As they boldly and clearly proclaimed Jesus, great numbers believed. Today this same message—Jesus—must be clearly communicated to the spiritually lost of this world.

**Not Just Words**

Communicating the message of Christ effectively is not just an issue of the words we speak. Sharing Christ in a compelling way will be directly connected to our personal relationship with Him.

Clarity of message also relates to the consistency and credibility of our personal Christian lives. If there is a difference between what we say and how we live, it sends mixed signals and can hinder the effectiveness of our witness.

When Peter instructed us to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us,[[48]](#endnote-48) he did not necessarily mean we would have all the right intellectual and philosophical arguments at our disposal. What really matters is that we be able to effectively communicate that hope. The issue is not necessarily that our hope is articulate, but that it is evident.

Effective personal evangelism is not merely about *what* we know but about *whom* we know. Our personal relationship with Jesus is an integral part of our witness. “Making the message clear” involves *what* we say, *how* we say it, and *who* we are.

Sometimes we may be at a loss as to what to say, but if our manner and character reflect the love of Christ, we will be more effective than if we say the right words but our manner is not consistent with the message of Christ.

The text for this lesson was a prayer request of the apostle Paul. He needed the Spirit’s help to share Christ clearly, and so do we.

3. Be Wise with Outsiders

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.* ***Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders****, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”[[49]](#endnote-49)*

I once had a unique opportunity to witness to an Indian guru. My seat was assigned next to him on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu. I recognized his face and confirmed who he was in conversation, noting that he had advised wealthy celebrities and rock musicians.

The swami was surprisingly cordial. When I turned the conversation first to spiritual things and then to Jesus Christ, I was pleasantly surprised at the respect with which he spoke of Jesus. As I probed what he believed, I was puzzled to discover that he believed in Christ’s bodily resurrection, but he said he could not believe in His virgin birth. At first, I was bewildered by this contradiction, because the Virgin Birth is just as critical to the Christian faith as the Resurrection.

Many Christians might feel awkward about witnessing to an Indian guru. And while gurus are not our typical audience, many in the secular cultures around us are just as far, and in some cases further, than others in their understanding of who Jesus is and His saving work on the cross. At least the swami believed in Jesus’ death and bodily resurrection, which is more than many believe. Today, more than ever, we must understand the increasing variety of contexts, cultures and philosophies with which we have to contend in evangelism.

**Communicating with “Outsiders”**

*“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders.”[[50]](#endnote-50)*

After telling the Colossians to devote themselves to prayer and requesting prayer for his own work in evangelism, Paul gives some instructions. His first instruction is to act wisely toward outsiders. The word “outsiders” is significant. We have all been in settings where we have been outside a particular group. The insiders have jokes and expressions we don’t understand. We are left out because the meanings are private.

Paul’s term “outsider” is an appropriate and practical way of describing a nonbeliever’s relationship to the church. For a variety of reasons, most nonbelievers with whom we will share Christ today are further outside the Christian context than ever. Christians now must communicate the message of Christ more interculturally, much like missionaries to foreign countries who learn to communicate the gospel across barriers of language and culture.

Most Christians are familiar with terms for non-Christians such as “nonbeliever” and “sinner,” but the term “outsider” has not been utilized much. Interestingly, Jesus uses the term in Mark 4:11, and Paul uses it in three of his epistles. “Outsider” is an especially helpful expression in understanding the communication challenge we face in evangelism.

When we converse with nonbelievers, we are communicating from a church culture to a secular culture. If we have spent much of our lives in the church, we have acquired perceptions, values and even vocabulary that those outside the church do not understand.

Witnessing programs and approaches that depend on a predetermined routine often assume a basic understanding of Judeo-Christian concepts and values. We can’t assume that our audience has that kind of understanding.

When I served as a missionary in the Samoan Islands, I had to learn a new language. Part of being a missionary—one who is “sent”—is crossing language barriers. Chasms of understanding must be bridged. We might think we witnessed to someone, but if the message was not communicated in terms that were understood, we failed. I could travel halfway around the world to communicate the gospel and fall one foot short of my goal if I can’t clearly and effectively communicate the message in a language that a person understands. We can’t assume people know and understand our Christian terminology. Having to take time to give Christian explanations to our theological vocabulary can be a distraction from presenting a simple, clear witness of Jesus Christ.

Two simple but critical factors in communication with outsiders need our attention. They are clarity and interest.

**1) Clarity**

Several common Christian words illustrate this challenge. The first is the word “salvation,” along with the related word “saved.” Asking, “Are you saved?” to someone from a non-Christian background can be confusing because the concepts of “saved” and “salvation” are foreign or at least vague to them. Instead, I always like to first communicate the fact that God has a purpose and plan for every individual’s life. He loves us and His plan for our lives is for our good. In Ephesians 1, Paul writes,

*“He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him.”[[51]](#endnote-51)*

Notice that the intention of God’s will is kind. But His plan and purpose for our lives cannot happen unless we first deal with the issue of sin and forgiveness.

“Sin” is certainly a much better known and understood term than the word “saved.” While people may have some misconceptions about sin, they at least have an understanding of right and wrong, and usually understand the concept of forgiveness because of human relationships.

Another example is the word “repent.” If a person is from a Roman Catholic background, the word “repent” could bring to mind the concept of “penance.” Telling a person, “You need to repent,” can be confusing and even misleading. Repentance means to “change direction,” which involves turning away from sin and turning to God. It is a spiritual change of mind and heart. A much simpler and clearer explanation is to say, “You need to have your heart and life changed.”

Even the words “Christian” and “born again” cause difficulties. The word “Christian” has acquired connotations that can be a distraction in witnessing. There are even political connotations to the word in many countries, and increasingly even in the United States. I prefer to use the term “believer” or “follower of Christ.”

In recent decades in America, “born again” has become a commonplace term. Unless you explain what Jesus taught about being born again, the description can be confusing or even misleading. Even when Jesus first used the expression “born again” with Nicodemus, it provoked a question from the Jewish religious leader:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?”[[52]](#endnote-52)

Jesus went on to explain what He meant by being born of the Spirit. A clearer description is to talk of a “spiritual birth” or having our “heart changed” rather than being “born again.” Even an expression such as “starting a new life” is effective to introduce the truth that only God can change our hearts.

These are just a few examples. A thoughtful examination of our vocabulary is essential to becoming more effective witnesses.

**2) Interest**

Communicating with anyone requires getting and keeping the person’s attention. The simple but obvious fact is that to be effective in interpersonal communication, we must be *interesting*.

For nonbelievers to be interested in what we have to say, our conversation should address *their* interests and concerns. People’s interests differ, but one subject in which almost all people are interested is themselves. We must *listen* to them and *learn* about them.

Jesus said to His disciples, “…as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”[[53]](#endnote-53) The word missionary does not occur in the Bible. It comes from the Latin term “missio,” which means “sent.” Paul expressed the task before us clearly and succinctly:

“Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?”[[54]](#endnote-54)

When most people read this text, they probably think of missionaries going to foreign countries. But God wants to send all of us *outside* the church—to penetrate the spiritual darkness of our communities with the light of Christ’s message.

4. Make the Most of Opportunities

A few weeks ago, I had a 1 ½-hour wait in an airport for my connecting flight. I decided to get my shoes shined. I’m sure I have connected in that airport more than 200 times over the years and have had my shoes shined there often. The shoeshine stand is a busy one. But this day, only one man was shining shoes. Normally at least two or as many as four people work there, and a line is always waiting. But that day only one other man came at the same time for a shoeshine. I arrived first at the stand, but because the other man’s flight connection was earlier, I offered to let him go first. Had I gone first, it’s unlikely what followed would have happened.

After the other gentleman left, I was alone with the man who was shining my shoes. As we conversed, I asked about his family, and he told me that he was divorced from his wife who had been repeatedly unfaithful to him.

We continued talking even after he finished the shoeshine. I asked about his spiritual life and told him about God’s plan for his life and that it couldn’t happen unless he was in right relationship with God through Christ. After a conversation of about 15 minutes, I asked if he was prepared to invite Jesus Christ into his life and offered to pray with him. He accepted, and I put my hand on his shoulder and led him in a prayer to receive Christ into his heart.

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders****, making the most of the opportunity.*** *Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”[[55]](#endnote-55)*

**Divine Appointments**

God is watching over all of us and is working in people’s lives. He has ordained divine appointments for each of us who will let Him work through us. In God’s planning, we will experience opportunities to witness to strangers and casual acquaintances.

When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at the well, He could have listed many reasons not to spend time with her. He was tired. It was in the noonday heat. Being seen conversing with the woman would not be good for His reputation. In their conversation she was slow to understand and raised objections. But the overwhelming, compelling reason for Him to spend time with her was her spiritual need. After His conversation with the woman, He said to His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.”[[56]](#endnote-56)

Opportunities are framed in time. The common saying, “Opportunity doesn’t knock twice,” is true. A particular opportunity may never come a second time. Each opportunity is unique, because people and circumstances are different.

Opportunities should be approached in two basic ways. We should seize them and build them.

**1) Seize Opportunities**

First, we need to be spiritually alert to *seize* opportunities. In Colossians 4, Paul tells believers to devote themselves to prayer, “keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”[[57]](#endnote-57) If we are not alert in prayerful dependence on God to work through our lives, we can miss these divine appointments. We need to be continually aware that God is working in our everyday circumstances.

Many believers feel inadequate in witnessing because they think they can’t retain all the information they believe is necessary. They can’t remember all the Scriptures they think they should. Even if they did, they aren’t confident they can recall them when needed. But two simple and powerful practices can be effective in every believer’s life: sharing a personal testimony and praying with people.

Every believer has a personal testimony. Sharing our personal experience and relationship with Jesus Christ with sincerity and conviction can be the most compelling witness with some people.

Another way we can seize opportunities for witness is praying for someone in their presence. I have had this opportunity many times on airplanes and in airports as I travel. When people express problems, ask them for the privilege of praying with them. If we truly believe God answers prayer, we should practice our belief by praying with and for people, trusting God to answer. But it is important to be sensitive to the surroundings and not embarrass people by praying with them in public in a way that attracts attention.

Hearing a believer pray can have a significant effect on nonbelievers. When we pray for their needs, people can usually tell we are sincere and have a relationship with God. And when God answers prayer, it can be the means of opening hearts to the message of Christ.

**2) Build Opportunities**

The second way of making the most of opportunities is to *build* them. Those who called Jesus “a friend of sinners” meant it as an insult. God the Father sent His Son Jesus to seek and save the lost. Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”[[58]](#endnote-58) If we are to reach people as Jesus did, we will become friends of sinners too.

Opportunities for witness, and particularly for prayer or decision, will not usually come the first time we converse with someone. But by taking time to become friends with people, the opportunity to “plant and water the seed”[[59]](#endnote-59) will happen.

When my wife, Ruth, and I moved to a different part of our city, we found a nice little café where we went occasionally for a hamburger and ice cream. Lori, the owner, was very outgoing, and we developed a casual friendship.

One day while she was taking our order, she expressed her frustration about a circumstance in her life. What was unusual about this evening is that Ruth and I were the only ones there. Normally the little café was busy. I have learned to be sort of “spiritually suspicious” when I’m in circumstances where other people normally would be around, yet I find myself alone with someone. Sometimes that is a clear signal that God has brought about that circumstance for His purposes.

We finished our order, and Lori went back to the kitchen. I told Ruth, “I should have prayed with her right then. When she comes back, I’m going to ask her if she’ll let us pray with her.”

But before she returned with the food, another man entered the café. I was frustrated. “Lord, let him leave so we have the chance to pray with Lori,” I prayed. The man picked up an order of ice cream and left. I thanked the Lord.

When Lori returned with the food, I said, “Lori, God cares about you and your life. Would it be all right if we prayed with you right here and now?” She nodded her head, and I prayed with her for God to take control of her circumstances and lead her life into His will.

We won’t have the opportunity in every circumstance to lead someone in a sinner’s prayer, but we can respond to them in times of need—building and seizing opportunities for witness.

**Not Always Convenient**

Sometimes opportunities will not be convenient. But as the apostle Paul taught, we must be prayerfully alert and sensitive to God’s guidance in situations that might appear natural, but really are divine appointments He has brought about to work through us.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 says: “He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.” This verse about physical harvest illustrates a principle that applies in spiritual harvest. There are very few convenient times or perfect opportunities in which to sow the seed.

Personal evangelism will seldom happen on our schedule. While many have been reached through door-to-door evangelism, our personal schedule is not always going to be convenient for the people we are trying to reach.

Often divine appointments will be occasions when God calls upon us to sacrifice time. In contemporary society, people are busy. If we want to accomplish the good works God has prepared for us,[[60]](#endnote-60) it sometimes will mean interruptions in our schedule that require us to slow down and let God use us in a way that could count for eternity. Sometimes this may mean going out of our way to meet a person at a time that is convenient for them.

When we pray for open doors, we shouldn’t be surprised when opportunity knocks. We should be *alert* in prayer and ready to *respond*.

5. Speak with Grace

Many Christians seem to believe the most critical issue in personal witnessing is knowing what to say. But only knowing *what* to say is not enough.

Communicating Christ clearly involves both clarity and sincerity. Our message is not only what we say, but also *how* we say it and who we *are*.

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.* ***Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt****, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”[[61]](#endnote-61)*

**More Than Words**

Our emotions, attitudes and actions are just as much a part of our message as our words. How we say things and who we are will not be determined merely by taking a study course. These elements of our message come from our character. Effective personal evangelism must be rooted in spiritual life. This has always been true. But in a culture that is increasingly skeptical of Christianity, it is even more critical. Our personal credibility as Christ’s messengers will significantly determine our effectiveness. The content of our message will be greatly hindered if our manner and lives are not consistent with our words.

Similarly to Paul, the apostle Peter said it well. We should always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that we have, but “*with gentleness and respect*.”[[62]](#endnote-62)

In a culture in which people are rapidly losing faith in the integrity of government leaders and the business world, the personal credibility of Christians is not merely an added blessing in witnessing, but an essential requirement.

Clearly communicating the gospel of Christ cannot be overemphasized. But with many people, what will be especially compelling is our personal testimony of the difference Christ has made in our lives and, in the case of people we know personally, that our lives are consistent with our message. Sometimes when even the best intellectual arguments concerning Christianity are inadequate, our personal testimony can be effective.

One of the greatest tests of Christian character is how we treat someone who has no power over us and can do nothing for us. All people have a deep, personal need for genuine love.

Paul said, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”[[63]](#endnote-63) God’s love is not in response to anything we have done. It is the fruit of His character. Our mission is to effectively communicate this unconditional love to spiritually lost people.

Paul said our speech should always be with grace. We show that grace in three ways.

**A Message of Grace**

We need to communicate a *message* of grace. The message of God’s grace is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. At its core is God’s love and forgiveness.

In the early part of his letter to the Colossians, Paul said, “And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.”[[64]](#endnote-64) The message we proclaim is Jesus. But that message includes a *warning*, which is the word used in the New King James Version and is a simpler meaning of “admonishing.” Paul also said, “He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”[[65]](#endnote-65)

Paul’s statement is reminiscent of Jesus’ words to him on the Damascus Road:

*“… for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness…to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”[[66]](#endnote-66)*

In evangelism, we’re not inviting people to join a group of nice people with higher-than-average moral standards. We are challenging them to change kingdoms—from Satan’s kingdom of darkness to our Lord’s kingdom of marvelous light.[[67]](#endnote-67)

As sensitive as Jesus was in His dealings with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, He still proclaimed clearly the truth that sin needs to be dealt with and our hearts changed.

While we must deal with the issue of sin, it should be in the context of the good news of Christ’s offer of forgiveness and eternal life. It is not our responsibility to convince people they are sinners. That is the Holy Spirit’s work. Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit came, He would “convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”[[68]](#endnote-68) In my experience in witnessing to strangers, I’ve found that it is usually not a major obstacle for people to understand they have sinned. Although many do not understand how they have sinned against God, they do understand that they have sinned against other people. God has put within each person a conscience—the capacity to understand right and wrong. We all know what we do not want others to do to us. And when we do to others what we don’t want them to do to us, our conscience tells us that we have sinned.

We have been given the privilege of sharing the good news of Christ’s forgiveness. We are called by our Lord to be witnesses—not prosecuting attorneys.

**A Gracious Manner**

We need to demonstrate a *manner* that is gracious. This may seem too obvious to mention, but some Christians apparently miss it. An important part of effective witnessing is just being *nice*!

As salt seasons food, a spirit of grace should season our conversation with nonbelievers. Communicating the grace of Christ is done not only through words but also through how we treat people. We must not compromise the truth, but we can communicate the truth with kindness.

Our attitude toward sinners should be gracious, as God has been gracious to us. We have no right to be self-righteous, thinking ourselves to be better than others. We are all sinners being saved by grace. We need the Holy Spirit’s help to enable us to be gracious rather than judgmental.

Paul says, “For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges.”[[69]](#endnote-69)

Few things will distract nonbelievers from the truth more than if they perceive the messenger as insincere. This fact has always been true, but sincerity is increasingly critical in a culture in which people have seen hypocrisy in people who claim to be Christians.

Much of our interpersonal communication is nonverbal. If a contradiction exists between what someone says and the way it is said, we will believe the way it’s said every time. An apology can be perceived as either sincere or sarcastic, depending on the way the words are spoken. Voice inflection and facial expressions can send mixed messages that contradict the words we say. Many of those we are trying to reach have a negative history with the church and are defensive or even hostile to Christian witness. Others are emotionally scarred and have become insensitive to spiritual issues. The Christian with personal grace will help counteract the mixed signals people have received from those whose lives are inconsistent with their message.

In a culture that is resistant and even hostile to Christianity, our message must be accompanied by godly, blameless Christian living. The validity of our message is connected to the credibility of our lives. If our lives aren’t credible, the likelihood of a decision among those we are trying to reach will suffer, and in many cases fail.

**Gracious Acts**

We need to demonstrate *acts of grace*. We are called by our Lord to affect the world around us. Jesus said:

*“You are the salt of the earth…You are the light of the world…Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”[[70]](#endnote-70)*

Communicating the grace of Jesus Christ is much more than sharing His message in words. Our Lord himself commanded us to let our good works be evident to the world around us so that God will be glorified.

More than 45 years ago in the small town of Shawano, Wisconsin, a young man, Albert Kallies, beat a man to death in a bar fight. After he was arrested and jailed, a newspaper article recorded that he had a wife and six children. A pastor in the town visited the woman’s home, a small two-bedroom house next to the coal chute and water tower by the railroad tracks. The pastor did not preach to the woman or even invite her to church. He simply brought two boxes of groceries to her home. People from the church continued to bring groceries to the family. The woman and her children came to church and eventually received Christ.

Albert Kallies was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to eight years in the state penitentiary. His oldest son, Bruce, visited his father in prison over the years, and eventually Albert also received Christ as his Savior.

After five years, Albert was released from prison on probation. Years later, he died in a tragic hotel fire while rescuing another man.

Bruce Kallies later became the associate pastor of First Assembly of God in Rochester, Minnesota. The young pastor who reached out to the Kallies family was Paul Hoff, who served 35 years as an Assemblies of God missionary in Argentina and Chile before retiring.

What would happen in our communities if multitudes of Christians did whatever they could to penetrate their surroundings with words, manners and actions of grace?

6. Respond Individually

Paul concluded his exhortation to the Colossians with this reminder: “*Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”[[71]](#endnote-71)*

**The Power of Response**

A careful study of the four Gospels reveals an almost startling fact about the nature of Jesus’ public ministry. Many of His most significant teachings and miracles were in *response* to people and circumstances. It would seem that the Son of God—on a mission to save the world and knowing how short His time was—would have a focused, strategic plan for proclaiming His message to as many people as possible. Yet Jesus spent 90 percent of His life in preparation for public ministry and never traveled far from His hometown. He devoted most of His time to 12 men. He did not record His teachings on parchment or stone. The One who had the most and best to say simply said it. He spoke the word and left it to the hearers to record. He didn’t write it on a temporary medium, but on the only truly permanent one available—the hearts of His followers.

Even more surprisingly, the One who came with the greatest mission on earth responded to people whom most would have considered insignificant. Much of His ministry was determined by interruptions. His miracles witnessed to who He was, but His intention in working these miracles seems to have been as simple as meeting a need in an individual’s life. Many of His profound parables were a response to someone’s question. Jesus, the Son of God, lived an earthly life that was responsive to common people—not prophets, priests and kings, but fishermen, shepherds, women and children.

Jesus shaped His words to fit the occasion and in response to people who asked questions—some penetrating and some simple. But even to simple questions from common people, He responded with profound truth, unfolding the mysteries of the universe. He revealed the nature of an infinite God in words and images even the illiterate people of His day could understand.

His life challenges us to learn from Him and to encounter people in our world who are seeking peace, forgiveness and hope, *responding* to them as He did.

**More Than Souls**

Often, the vocabulary many Christians use concerning evangelism focuses on “souls” rather than “people.” While each person is a living, eternal soul, the emphasis of Colossians 4:6 is clearly focused on people as individuals. The end goal of evangelism is not merely to produce a soul count. It is being a channel of communicating God’s grace to a person God knows intimately and loves deeply.

Souls are not just statistics. Paul said, “…from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.”[[72]](#endnote-72) Every person should be viewed in the light of eternity. But to be effective in reaching them we must understand that every soul is a person, and each person is unique. Relevance is an individual issue.

Learning the thinking processes, values, concerns, interests, and desires of people in various cultures and generations is helpful. But generalizations can be misleading. Baby boomers or busters, Gen X-ers, members of a post-Christian or postmodern culture, millennials, or mosaics—these profiles and stereotypes are useful tools, but they are not personal realities. No single mold exactly fits every person within a particular generation or ethnic group.

When Paul said we are to respond to each person, he implied that we will respond differently, because each person is an individual. Paul was committed to identifying personally with anyone who was spiritually lost. He wrote to the Corinthians:

“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.… To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”[[73]](#endnote-73)

This great missionary apostle could not be content just to preach the gospel to crowds. His heart reached out to individuals to such an extent that he considered himself their slave. Whether a person responded, Paul gave his best to each—to win as many as possible.

**All Kinds of Individuals**

Early in his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul stated the objective of evangelism to be, “that we may present every man complete in Christ.”[[74]](#endnote-74) The Greek word translated “every” has two implications.

1) We should warn and teach each person individually, so that each person will be presented complete in Christ.

2) “Every man” also means “some of every kind” of person. This speaks of the wide variety of individuals to whom we must relate. We are called to reach outsiders—people who are different from us. Christian witness should not only be to “our kind of people.” The Holy Spirit will enable us to effectively communicate with many kinds of people.

While the basic physical, social, and spiritual needs of people are the same, the paths by which we arrive at those needs wind through a variety of personal interests and concerns. This raises a critical point: How can we really know people’s individual interests? The answer is simple: Building relationships and even friendships with outsiders is the primary method by which we can respond individually. When Paul says that our gracious conversation will enable us to know how to respond to individuals, it implies that we will learn how to respond.

A first examination of Paul’s words here makes this exhortation seem an overwhelming task. How can we possibly know enough to be able to respond individually to each person we encounter?

We will not effectively reach outsiders unless we come to know them where they are. The most important “research” is done by listening to people. That will happen only if we spend time with them—getting to know and understand them. Only then can we effectively share the message of Christ with them. God’s timeless truth must be communicated in a timely manner—with the right words for the right occasion. In many situations, a preplanned message would be uninteresting and irrelevant, presuming that others will respond to us. In reality, we should respond to them.

Most people who come to Christ through personal evangelism are not reached by strangers, but by someone they know. Most of our witness will be among people with whom we have ongoing relationships. In these relationships, memorizing an evangelistic routine will not be adequate. We can’t just keep repeating the same things to people we know. We must be ready to respond to them in a variety of ways.

**In Jesus’ Steps**

If we are to follow in Jesus’ steps, we should care about people as individuals, knowing that each is known and loved by our Heavenly Father. We must connect with them, not only in their cultural context but also in their personal lives.

Jesus gave no less than His best to both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman at the well. How He dealt with these two people emphatically affirms the worth of each individual. Jesus dealt with each differently, tailoring the conversation to individual understanding and interests. But for both, He was the answer to the deepest spiritual needs of their hearts.

Jesus related to people individually and addressed their personal needs, confusion, and pain. He always had time for people. He had time to go with Zaccheus to his house, and time in the heat of the day to converse with the Samaritan woman. And He had time for children. He had time to rescue the woman caught in adultery. Even in His hour of suffering, when it would have been natural to be occupied with His own self-interest, He had time for Peter. As the rooster crowed, He gave Peter a look—not an “I-told-you-so” look, but one that conveyed love and forgiveness.

On the cross, Jesus bore pain none of us will ever know. But He still had time to forgive a dying thief, and He ensure that His mother would be cared for.

Jesus always had time for people. To reach people in the way He commanded us, we must value them as Jesus did and be committed to spending time with them. No one Jesus met was beneath His attention.

The most quoted verse in the Bible, John 3:16, was not part of Jesus’ sermons. It was spoken softly in the night during a conversation with Nicodemus, as Jesus responded to the Pharisee’s searching questions.

Everyone—our friends and family members, our neighbors and coworkers, and every person we meet—will spend eternity in heaven or hell. And every person should be given an adequate witness of the gospel and the opportunity to make a decision concerning Christ’s offer of salvation.

People who are headed toward eternal judgment deserve more from us than canned answers to serious, heart-searching questions. People are not just statistics, not merely souls to be won for the Kingdom. They are individuals with distinct personalities—unique creations for whom God has a personal purpose and plan.

Jesus taught that a sparrow does not fall to the ground without our Heavenly Father’s notice, and the hairs of our head are numbered. He values each person on earth for whom His Son gave His life.[[75]](#endnote-75)

People who are spiritually lost deserve what those who came in contact with Jesus received—a personal response.

**Motivation for Evangelism**

An Assemblies of God pastor in a communist country served four separate prison terms for preaching the gospel, leading many of his fellow prisoners to Christ. In his fourth imprisonment alone, he led 42 of his cellmates to Jesus, as well as two prison guards. One of the 42 was a young drug dealer. He was filled with the Spirit and called to the ministry while in prison.

The young man was released from the prison four months after the pastor. He journeyed to the pastor’s town to attend the underground Pentecostal Bible school. Only two weeks remained in the semester, so he could not receive credit, but he could sit in on the classes.

Then they had a one-month break. One of the requirements for entrance into the Bible school was to lead five nonbelievers to Christ. So, the young man journeyed to his hometown, a communist stronghold where not one religious house of worship was standing. All had been torn down by the communists. Three weeks later, he called the pastor and asked if the pastor would come and baptize those he had led to Christ.

“Do you have five?” the pastor asked.

“No,” the young man replied.

“Then I will not come,” said the pastor. “It is a long train journey to your town, and until you have five I will not come.”

The young man interrupted him, “Oh, no, Pastor, I have more than five.”

The pastor did not ask how many people the young man had led to Christ. Two days later, he journeyed by train to the young man’s city and baptized not five, but 753!

The young man had not yet taken a personal evangelism course. He simply shared the story of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit convinced nonbelievers of the message.

**The Confidence Factor**

Why don’t more Christians tell others about Jesus Christ? Many think the most common reason is apathy—that Christians just don’t care. But for most people, the real problem is a lack of confidence.

Most followers of Christ want to be effective witnesses. But many feel inadequate, intimidated, or even fearful about sharing their faith in Christ, especially with someone who doesn’t have a Christian background. The problem is, most people look for confidence within themselves, which is not the believer’s source.

The Early Church believers are an inspiring and instructive example of confidence. After the Holy Spirit was outpoured on the Day of Pentecost, a man who had been lame all his life was healed. Those who knew him were “filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”[[76]](#endnote-76)

Because of this miracle and the resulting commotion, Peter and John were arrested and put in jail. The religious leaders and rulers questioned them, asking, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”[[77]](#endnote-77) Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, powerfully declared the testimony of Christ, concluding with his well-known statement: “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”[[78]](#endnote-78)

Scripture then records, “Now as they observed the *confidence* of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”[[79]](#endnote-79)

The confidence of Peter and John was both clearly evident and troubling to the religious leaders who said, “But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name.”[[80]](#endnote-80) Peter and John’s response was, “We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”[[81]](#endnote-81)

When Peter and John returned to the other believers and reported what had happened, they didn’t look for a way to escape the persecution. Instead, first they acknowledged God’s greatness, saying, “O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.”[[82]](#endnote-82)

Afterward, they recognized the true nature of the problem. They didn’t take the persecution personally, but instead prayed, “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”[[83]](#endnote-83)

They did not see their problem as merely human persecution, but as part of God’s larger plan. They concluded their prayer this way: “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”[[84]](#endnote-84)

After they prayed, “the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”[[85]](#endnote-85)

The confidence with which the first Christians shared the message of Christ was not based on their own human persuasive ability. It came from knowing who Jesus is, their understanding of what God was doing, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Being an effective witness is clearly not an issue of how much someone knows. Why is it that more new believers tend to be active in sharing Christ with nonbelievers? They are still highly motivated to share the difference Christ has made in their lives.

Part of the problem is a matter of education. But I believe the greater issue is motivation. People need to see more believers engaged in evangelism. I believe they need a little training and a lot of encouragement.

Maintaining Motivation

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul deals with “levels of motivation” concerning evangelism. In chapter 12, he speaks of maintaining motivation.

Perhaps you have heard someone described as “a zealous new Christian.” Why is the word zeal so often associated with new Christians? Probably because it seems that most Christians’ spiritual fervency diminishes in time. What about “a zealous *old* Christian”?

My Grandfather VanDover was a “zealous *old* Christian.” The grace of Jesus and the fire of the Holy Spirit ignited a fervency in his heart that never diminished. Grandpa was a bartender and a drunkard who dealt cards and raked the poker table in a gambling house. Grandmother had received Christ in meetings preached by P.T. Emmett, an Assemblies of God pastor. Not long after, Pastor Emmett drove to Grandpa’s bar and asked him to step outside, where he challenged him to commit his life to Christ and become a Christian husband and father. Grandpa was saved that week and took off his poker apron for the last time.

Until Grandpa VanDover went home to be with the Lord at age 82, he never lost the joy and wonder of his salvation. I took him out for lunch frequently during the final years of his life. If a waitress gave him 30 seconds, he was 30 seconds into his testimony of how God saved a drunken bartender more than 40 years earlier.

Paul encouraged the Roman believers, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”[[86]](#endnote-86) The Greek word translated “zeal” is *spoude*, which speaks of earnestness of diligence. The Greek word translated “fervor*”* here (*zeo*) has a connotation of temperature. It means “boiling” when referring to liquids and “glowing” when referring to solids. The Revised Standard Version accurately translates the expression for “spiritual fervor” as “aglow with the Spirit.”

Paul lived his admonition to the Roman Christians. From his encounter with the Lord on the Damascus Road, he was never the same. The fire in his soul never seemed to diminish. While this is not the norm of most Christians’ experience, it is certainly God’s desire. The New Testament is clear that the spiritual life of the church was designed by God to be a constant flow of God’s Spirit within and through His people.

A familiar hymn from my Pentecostal youth was, “Revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love; may each soul be rekindled with fire from above.”[[87]](#endnote-87) We don’t really have a problem *obtaining* the fire; our problem is *retaining* the fire. Paul reminded Timothy to “kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you.”[[88]](#endnote-88)

Second Corinthians contains a passage that reveals Paul’s inner motives and the motivation of his heart. In 2 Corinthians 5:1-15, these two major factors are at the heart of Paul’s zealous, fervent life:

1) his focus on the eternal rather than the temporal

2) his personal devotion to Jesus Christ.

In the first few verses of the chapter he rejoiced in the reality of our eternal “dwelling from heaven.” For Paul, the earthly body does not even merit being called a building. Rather, it is a tent—a temporary dwelling.

Because of his devotion to Christ and his eye on eternity, whether he lived or died was not the point.[[89]](#endnote-89) His beautiful expression at the end of verse 4 explains what death means for the Christian: “That mortality may be swallowed up by life.”[[90]](#endnote-90) Paul’s preference for being absent from the body was not pessimistic escapism but a positive faith that was focused on his Lord. He preferred death to life because death means to be at home with the Lord. For this reason, he could say, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”[[91]](#endnote-91)

Verse 9 reveals Paul’s single ambition to be pleasing to Jesus. Why? “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”[[92]](#endnote-92) The judgment seat of Christ is an awesome thing to face. Paul said, “Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.”[[93]](#endnote-93) His objective in wanting to please the Lord was related to his knowledge of Jesus’ future judgment of all who followed Him.

In the same passage Paul related his motive to the “fear of the Lord,” but his motivation was the “love of Christ.”

The Greek word used here (*sunecho*) is translated in different versions as “constraineth” (KJV), “compels” (NIV), and “controls” (NASB). This word refers to something that literally takes over. In the Gospels it describes those who were controlled by different diseases, such as Peter’s mother-in-law who was controlled by a fever. Paul was saying that the love of Christ had taken control of his life the same way a disease or fever takes control of a body. His zeal was a result of Christ’s love, not his own will or emotions.

The compelling love of Christ was not merely a sentimental or emotional feeling for Paul. He had concluded that Jesus died for all so that we who live should no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf.[[94]](#endnote-94) The Greek word translated *concluded* here means to make an intellectual and ethical judgment. Paul’s fervency was not the product of emotionalism.

The foundation of Paul’s fervency was his wholehearted devotion to Jesus. To him the issue was simple: Life is to be a response to the sacrifice of our Lord. He said it clearly in his well-known statement, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”[[95]](#endnote-95)

When Paul admonished Timothy to “kindle afresh” the gift of God within him, he was telling Timothy that the fire of his spirit was burning low and that he could and must do something about it.

How can we kindle our zeal? As with Paul, we must focus on Jesus and eternity. The personal realization of our Lord’s sacrifice for us and His grace in our lives sparks the flame of spiritual passion in our hearts. The great old hymn “My Faith Looks Up To thee” says, “May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire; as thou has died for me, O may my love to thee pure, warm, and changeless be a living fire!”[[96]](#endnote-96)

Remember, our problem is not as much *obtaining* the fire but *retaining* the fire. How do we retain spiritual fire? By *maintaining* the fire.

As a Boy Scout I learned that to maintain a fire, I needed these three things:

1) a constant, fresh supply of wood

2) a free flow of air

3) a continual clearing of ashes

The same is true spiritually. To maintain the zeal of devotion to the Lord, we need three similar spiritual things.

(1) a constant, fresh supply of the Word

(2) a free flow of the Spirit in our prayer life

(3) a continuous cleansing from sin and self-will

Paul feared that the passion for Christ would diminish in the Corinthian believers. He said, “I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”[[97]](#endnote-97)

People who long for revival in our churches must first seek God in their personal lives. We need to sing again with understanding and conviction: “O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee; send a revival, start the work in me!” Charles E. Hackett, former executive director of Assemblies of God United States Missions, once said: “Revival will happen when each of us takes personal responsibility for his own spiritual condition.”

My Grandfather Hurst lived a rich, full life as a Pentecostal preacher. He retired from the pastorate early to care for my grandmother, who was slowly dying from cancer. Even in retirement he was always zealous—daily searching the Word and in prayer. He never stopped growing spiritually. When he went home to be with the Lord at age 89, his final utterances were a prayer in tongues and a song: “Oh, how I love Jesus, because He first loved me!” The controlling focus of His life was still Jesus.

As with Paul, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and eternity. The simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ will enable us to obey Paul’s exhortation, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”[[98]](#endnote-98)

1. 1 Corinthians 3:4-8 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Matthew 13:18-19 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. John 4:38 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. 1 Corinthians 3:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Hebrews 12:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Philippians 1:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Romans 1:16 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Hebrews 4:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. 1 Peter 1:23 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. 2 Corinthians 5:17 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Ephesians 5:25-27 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Hebrews 4:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Romans 12:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. 2 Corinthians 3:18 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. 1 Thessalonians 1:5 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. 1 Peter 3: 15,16 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. John 1:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Colossians 4:5,6 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. 1 Peter 3:15-16 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Acts 4:29 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. 1 Thessalonians 1:5 [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Ephesians 2:8,9 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Ephesians 2:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Colossians 4:2-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. John 16:8 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Luke 11:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Matthew 6:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Philippians 2:6,7 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. 2 Corinthians 5:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. 1 Corinthians 2:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. 2 Corinthians 4:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. 1 Corinthians 2:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Colossians 4:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Acts 6:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Colossians 4:2-4 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Ephesians 6:18-20 [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Ephesians 6:20 [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Colossians 4:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Ephesians 3:4; Colossians 4:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Romans 10:9,10 [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. John 16:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Acts 1:8 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Acts 2:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Acts 2:14-36 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Acts 4:7 [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Acts 4:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. 1 Peter 3:15 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Colossians 4:2-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Colossians 4:5 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Ephesians 1:5-9 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. John 3:6-9 [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. John 20:21 [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Romans 10:13-15 [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Colossians 4:2-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. John 4:34,35 [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Colossians 4:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. John 20:21 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. 1 Corinthians 3:6,7 [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Ephesians 2:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Colossians 4:2-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. 1 Peter 3:15 [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Romans 5:8 [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Colossians 1:28 [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Colossians 1:13,14 [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Acts 26:16-18 [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. 1 Peter 2:9 [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. John 16:8, RSV [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. 1 Corinthians 5:12,13 [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Matthew 5:13,14,16 [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Colossians 4:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. 2 Corinthians 5:16 [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. 1 Corinthians 9:19,20,22 [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Colossians 1:28 [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Matthew 10:29,30 [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Acts 3:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Acts 4:7 [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Acts 4:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Acts 4:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Acts 4:17 [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Acts 4:20 [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Acts 4:24 [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Acts 4:27,28 [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Acts 4:29,30 [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. Acts 4:31 [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. Romans 12:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. 2 Timothy 1:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. 2 Corinthians 5:8,9 [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. 2 Corinthians 5:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. Philippians 1:21 [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. 2 Corinthians 5:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. 2 Corinthians 5:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. 2 Corinthians 5:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. Romans 12:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. 2 Corinthians 11:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. Romans 12:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-98)