

### HOW YOU CAN BE A FRUITFUL WITNESS

#### **You Can Change Your World**

One of my responsibilities in giving leadership to Campus Crusade for Christ is to meet each year with the ministry directors of each continent.

Frequently in my travels to Asia and Europe I visit with our staff and meet with thousands of pastors and laymen. On one occasion while meeting with a group of Christian leaders, I shared some of the highlights of the great worldwide spiritual harvest that is taking place today. One of the leaders interrupted me.

"I'm thrilled with your report," he said, "but I want to be very frank with you. I have not seen that kind of ministry myself. Why am I not having a more fruitful ministry?"

Perhaps you are asking yourself the same question. In the following pages, I want to share a biblical plan that will enable you to be fruitful in your witness for our Lord wherever you are, wherever you go, and under all circumstances.

But before I share this plan with you, let me call to your attention the fifth chapter of Luke which records an incident in the life of a seasoned fisherman - Simon Peter. He and his fellow workers had spent the entire night casting and gathering their nets but had not caught a single fish.

Jesus observed these men as they were washing their nets and asked Peter to push out a little into the water so He could sit in the boat and speak to the crowds that were pressing around Him.

When He had finished speaking, Jesus made a promise to this fisherman - a promise that I believe Peter, weary from his futile night of fishing, initially thought foolish. Jesus told Peter to go out a little further and let down his nets. If he did so, he would catch fish. Luke records Peter's response and what happened as a result:

"Sir," Simon (Peter) replied, "We worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, we'll try again."

And this time their nets were so full that they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

Jesus told these fishermen who were so awestruck with this demonstration of His power, "From now on you'll be fishing for the souls of men!" They were so overwhelmed with the presence and power of Jesus that they left their occupation to follow Him.

There is no experience in life more exciting and spiritually rewarding than the adventure of fishing for people. As you follow the Lord's instructions, your net too can be filled - even if you have never introduced anyone to Christ - even if you may

be skeptical like Peter. But if you are also obedient like Peter, the Lord Jesus will honor you with the response of many people to your witness.

All over the world, I have asked two questions of millions of Christians - young and old, rich and poor, new Christians and people who have been believers for more than half a century. I have asked these questions of some of the most wealthy and famous Christians in the world. The answers are always the same no matter whom I ask.

1. What is the most important experience of your life?

"Knowing Christ as my Savior is absolutely the most important experience in my life," is the inevitable answer.

2. What is the most important thing that you can do to help another person?

Again, the answer is always the same: "Help him to know Christ."

I am sure that, if you are a Christian, you would give the same answers to these questions. Yet, how sad it is that so few Christians are sharing Christ with others. Obviously something is wrong. If you are typical of the majority of Christians today, you have never introduced anyone to Christ. You would like to do so, however, and you know in your heart that this is what God called you to do. Jesus calls to every believer, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

When you begin to fill your nets with people whom you introduce to Jesus Christ, you will begin the most exciting, joyful and rewarding adventure life has to offer. Perhaps, like the disciples, you will leave the nets of your present student, business or professional involvements to follow Him in this great adventure of witnessing for our Lord in your Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the far countries of the world.

The biblical plan I want to share with you can be divided into two categories - personal preparation and taking the initiative.

### **Steps for Personal Preparation**

Personal preparation is the key to becoming a fruitful Christian. If you follow these steps carefully and prayerfully, they will transform your life and witness for our dear Lord.

#### **1. Be Sure That You Are a Christian**

Millions of good, moral, religious people are active in the church but are not sure of their present and eternal relationship with God. They are not sure they will go to heaven when they die. In hundreds of our training conferences, which are attended by the most sincere and dedicated church members in each community, from ten to twenty-five percent usually indicate they either received Christ or they gained the assurance of their salvation as a result of the training.

Let me give you an example. A remarkable young woman came to join our staff. My wife and I were much impressed with her and were confident she would have a great ministry for our Lord. She came from a wonderful Christian family, and had attended a Christian kindergarten, a Christian grade school, a Christian high school and a Christian college. She had been an active leader in church activities and was

president of the Christian Women's Association in her area. She had even served as a counselor in several Billy Graham crusades. This attractive, dynamic, young woman demonstrated all of those qualities you would expect to find in a radiant, fruitful Christian.

In speaking to the new staff during a training session, I stressed the importance of being sensitive to the needs of professing Christians who are not sure of their salvation. "Never assume that those who are unsure of their salvation are Christians, even if they have gone through the act of receiving Christ many times," I said. "You should not try to convince those who have doubt about their salvation that they are Christians. Rather, you should assume they are not yet Christians, and you should prayerfully counsel them and lead them to the assurance of their salvation."

At the conclusion of my talk, this young woman said to me, "I don't think that I am a Christian, and I have always had doubts about my salvation."

Throughout the years, she had gone to various Christian leaders for spiritual counsel, telling them she was not sure she was a Christian. Since she believed all the basic doctrines for the faith, they assumed that she was a Christian and prayed and encouraged her. Although they prayed with her, she was never sure God heard her prayer. "There has been no evidence that Christ has come in," she said. "I am afraid I will die without Christ."

That day I had the privilege of sharing the good news of Ephesians 2:8,9 with this dear young woman who had been exposed to Christianity throughout her entire life. This time the Holy Spirit enabled her to trust God and His Word. By faith she received the Lord Jesus, the gracious gift of God's love, and her heart was filled with joy and praise and the assurance of her salvation. She was so excited that she called her mother and father, my wife and others, to tell them the good news that she now knew for sure that she would go to heaven when she died.

One of my dearest friends during seminary days was the son of a famous evangelist. He came from a godly home. We met often for prayer. He memorized thousands of verses of Scripture and lived such a disciplined life for God that he was a constant challenge and inspiration to me. I was privileged to be the best man in his wedding.

He existed on a special diet of inexpensive food for days at a time, enabling him to live on twelve to fifteen cents a day, so that he could give more money to missions. He had finished his theological studies for his bachelor's degree and was studying for his doctorate in theology when he telephoned me one day to say, "Bill, I have just become a Christian."

I was amazed. "You're one of the best Christians I have ever known," I insisted. "I'm sure you have had an emotional experience of some kind."

"No," he said, "I have just become a Christian."

He then explained that all through the years, though he had never shared this, he had experienced conflict and uncertainty. Though he had invited Christ into his life numerous times, he had never before been sure that He had actually come to be his Savior. Never before did he have the assurance of his salvation.

Perhaps you have never known the wonder, the joy, the assurance that Christ lives in you, that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God. You may have believed in Christ intellectually for years. You may be active in the church; you may be very moral, religious and godly in the eyes of your neighbors, and yet you have never experienced this new birth.

Becoming a Christian involves commitment of the total person, which can best be illustrated by the marriage relationship. Many years ago, for example, I became aware of a beautiful young woman whom I thought was the most wonderful girl in the world. As we became better acquainted, we fell in love and were married. But we were not married just because we were intellectually involved and admired each other or because we were emotionally involved and loved each other. It was by an act of our wills by faith that we committed ourselves to each other as we stood one day before a minister and became husband and wife. In that moment, because of two words, "I do," we became legally married.

As a result, she left her home, and I left my home, and we started a third home. Now, there was no emotion when I said, "I do." The walls didn't shake, nor did lightning flash. As a matter of fact, I felt a little numb. But, we were no less married because I didn't at that moment feel like shouting for joy. Those two words which expressed the desire of our hearts consummated our long engagement of three years. My love for Vonette has grown through the years, and I have told her thousands of times since that memorable marriage ceremony that I love her. But I have not proposed to her one single time since we said, "I do."

So it is in your relationship with Christ. Commitment to Christ involves your entire person - your intellect, your emotions, your will. It is not enough to believe intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; not enough to know that He died on the cross for your sins and was raised from the dead; not enough to be baptized, to be active in the church, and to read your Bible and pray daily. You do not become a Christian until by faith, as an act of your will, you receive the gift of God's grace - His love and forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ. When you receive Him by faith, you receive a new nature - you are born into God's family, and you begin to experience the reality of eternal life.

If you have never yet said to Christ, "I do receive You as my Savior from sin and the Lord of my life," I encourage you to do so right now. Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in..."

Ask Him to come into your life. Then, on the authority of His promise, thank Him that He has come in as He promised to do. He will not lie to you.

After you have received Him, never insult Him by asking Him into your life again. The rest of your life, begin each day by thanking Him that He is in your life. He has promised to be with you always, and He said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

I made this emphasis on faith at one of our citywide Lay Institutes for Evangelism. At the conclusion of my message, a woman who had reached her twilight years came to me in tears. She said that she had been a Sunday school teacher for forty years.

"Seldom a day has passed during the last forty years that I haven't asked Christ into my life," she said. "But I was never sure that he was there. After tonight and for the rest of my life, I am going to say "Thank You, Lord that You are in my heart. I am never going to insult You again by asking You to come into my life, for now I am sure that You are already there."

Will you do the same? If you have never done so, do it now. Pause for a moment and if the following prayer expresses the desire of your heart, make it your prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord.

Thank You for forgiving my sins. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Thank You for coming into my life. The rest of my life I will thank You that You are in my life and will never leave me. Thank You that I now have eternal life as You promised.

## **2. Be Sure There Is No Unconfessed Sin in Your Life**

If some sinful attitude or action is hindering your fellowship with God, He cannot live and love through you, and you will not be a joyful Christian or a fruitful witness for Christ.

According to Hebrews 10, Christ came as God's sacrifice for your sins. The Old Testament records that the Israelites took their animal sacrifice to the priest where it was slain and the blood was sprinkled on the altar as a covering for their sins. Then in the fullness of God's time and purpose, foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, came to die for you. He came as God's sacrifice to shed His blood on the cross for your sins. As a result there is no further need of a sacrifice to be made for your sins.

You can add nothing to the assurance of salvation and eternal life which Christ accomplished for you on the cross. Tears and self-imposed discipline do not add anything to His complete and perfect substitutionary sacrifice which He made for you on the cross. The only thing you can do to make Christ's death on the cross meaningful in your life is to confess your sins and accept His sacrifice as the full and final payment for all of your sins - past, present and future. The Bible, God's holy, inspired Word, says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

In the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word "confess" (homologeō) means to "agree with" or to "Say along with." What do you do when you agree with God?

First, you acknowledge that the sin which you have committed is wrong. God is holy. No sin can enter His presence. And yet, God, who hates sin, loves the sinner. He loves you no matter what you do, but He hates your sin. When the Spirit of God says to you in that still, small voice, "I am grieved with your conduct - your attitude," you know what you have done is wrong, and you acknowledge - agree with God - it is wrong.

Second, you acknowledge that all of your sins were paid for by Jesus when He shed His blood on the cross for you according to Hebrews chapter ten. Now, thank Christ for dying for your sins.

Third, you repent. The original meaning of the word "repent" is literally "to have a change of mind." You change your attitude toward your sin, which of course - through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit - will result in a change of your actions. You willingly turn from doing what displeases God and begin doing what pleases Him.

You cannot live a holy life and grieve God's Holy Spirit at the same time! Failure to acknowledge sin and judge yourself will result in divine discipline. Because God loves His children, he chastens, corrects and disciplines those who are disobedient. David records, "I cried to him (the Lord) for help...He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins."

The minute the Spirit of God puts His finger on your sin, confess it. Breathe spiritually. That is, exhale by confessing your sin. Whenever the Holy Spirit makes you aware of sin which you have committed or are committing, be quick to confess it. Confession of sin is essential for a holy life and contagious, fruitful witness for our Lord.

### **3. Be Filled With the Spirit**

One of my dear friends, who is a great Christian scholar, confessed to a group of fellow believers in one of our Lay Institutes for Evangelism that he was not a happy, joyful Christian and he seldom witnessed for Christ. Later I shared with him some of the truths about how to witness in the power of the Spirit. God touched his life. He came back that evening from an afternoon of sharing Christ bubbling over with joy. He could hardly wait to tell us what God had done in his life. He shared how he had talked to two young college students about Christ, and in the process Christ had become more real to him than he had ever experienced.

Perhaps you spend hours in prayer and studying the Bible every day, but you are not joyful. You are not living that abundant life which Jesus promised.

In order to be fruitful in your witness for Christ, you must appropriate by faith the fullness of God's Spirit. Jesus promised, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Being filled with the Spirit involves inviting the Holy Spirit to control and empower you - to enable you to live a holy, godly life and to make you a fruitful witness for Him by faith. Two words and two verses are vital here:

First, remember the word command. Ephesians 5:18 says:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

This means you are to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit as a way of life. It is a command for every believer - not for the evangelist or pastor only, not just for the Sunday school teacher and other Christian leaders, but for everybody who believes in Christ.

Now relate God's command to His promise, found in 1 John 5:14,15:

We are sure of this, that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will.

And if we really know he is listening when we talk to him and make our requests, then we can be sure that he will answer us.

On the basis of God's command and His promises, if you are willing to surrender the direction and control of your life to our Lord Jesus Christ, you can know that He will fill you when you by faith, as an act of your will, appropriate the fullness of His Holy Spirit.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that you must experience some great emotion. In fact, emotions can be very dangerous. Pour a gallon of gasoline on the ground, strike a match, and it goes up in flame and smoke - then it's all gone. Dramatic, but wasted.

Many people are so involved in emotions and in seeking experiences that they actually insult God. The Bible says, "The righteous will live by faith," and "Everything that does not come from faith is sin." The very act of seeking an emotional experience repudiates the concept of faith.

Many times when I stand in the pulpit or talk to individuals personally, I do not feel any great surge of spiritual power or emotion. Sometimes, because of much travel, speaking and inadequate rest, my body is weary and my mind is dulled by fatigue; yet (if there is no unconfessed sin in my life, and by faith I claim God's fullness) I know that I'm filled with the Spirit even if I do not feel like it. I don't depend upon feelings. I depend upon God's Word - His command and His promise.

By faith you can know that you are filled with the Spirit constantly and continually the rest of your life as you continue to "breathe spiritually" - exhaling as you confess your sins, and inhaling as you appropriate God's power by faith.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit equips you for services as a witness for Christ. We say to our staff who are now serving Christ in 133 major countries of the world, representing 97 percent of the world's population, "Don't go to your assignments unless you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are filled with the Holy Spirit." Only service performed for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is pleasing to God. Service performed for Him in the energy of the flesh is time wasted and dishonors His name, producing spiritual wood, hay and stubble which, on Christ's judgment day, will be burned up.

If at this moment you know that you are not filled with the Holy Spirit and you truly desire to be a man or woman of God, you can pray this prayer right now:

Lord Jesus, I truly desire to be a godly person. I turn from my sinful ways. I surrender the control of my life to You. I hold nothing back. I want You to be my Master and my Lord.

Now, on the authority of Your command to be filled and Your promise that if we ask anything according to your will You will hear and answer us, by faith I receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

If you prayed this prayer in faith, you can know on the basis of His command and on the authority of His promise that you are filled with the Holy Spirit right now! You can know this by faith - with or without emotions - simple trusting God and His Word.

However, according to the promise of Jesus, "The one who obeys me is the one who loves me; and because he loves me, my Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal myself to him." Since Jesus promised to manifest Himself to all who obey, valid emotions result when you live by faith and when you share your faith in Christ with others in the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **4. Be Prepared to Communicate Your Faith in Christ**

Keeping Christ on the throne of your life as the Lord of your heart is the best preparation for communicating your faith. 1 Peter 3:15,16 says:

In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared 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.

Like any other skill, the ability to give the reason for the hope you have in Christ - or "witnessing" - can be done better after instruction and practice.

Let me illustrate. A pastor told me he had been in Christian work for more than twenty-five years, but had never introduced anyone to Christ until after he had participated in one of our training conferences. He said, "Your message on how to witness in the Spirit and understanding of how to present the gospel through the use of the Four Spiritual Laws changed my life. Never have I been so happy. Now, I know something of the abundant life which Jesus promised."

This Christian leader was beaming with new-found joy as he shared how he had, for the first time in his life, introduced not one person, but two people to our Savior.

During that same week of training, hundreds of students and the few lay people in attendance had been used of God to pray personally with more than nine hundred people who received Christ through their witness. Training made the difference.

I thank God for the way He is using theological seminaries, Bible schools and similar instructional Christian institutions, but you don't need to take long years of training before God can use you. Not everyone has the gift of evangelism, but every believer is called to "do the work of an evangelist." You have the privilege and responsibility of being witnesses for your wonderful Lord Jesus. Christ's Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 is for you.

By learning how to use a simple tool like the Four Spiritual Laws in the power of the Holy Spirit, you too can experience effectiveness in your witness.

Some Christians will be more fruitful than others. Don't be distressed if you find that some of your friends are introducing more people to Christ than you are. Just rest in the knowledge that those who come to Christ through the witness of a Christian are coming as a result of the ministry of the Spirit of God who alone enables you to bear fruit. Remember, success in witnessing is simply taking the

initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.

I am personally convinced that if you give ten Four Spiritual Laws to non-Christians each day, at least one to five will receive Christ, depending on the country or culture.

### **Taking the Initiative**

Personal preparation - being sure you are a Christian, confessing your sins, being filled with the Holy Spirit and being prepared to communicate your faith in Christ - is the first part of how you can be a fruitful witness. The second is taking the initiative.

Four steps are involved in taking the initiative. Let's look at each briefly:

#### **1. Pray**

According to God's holy Word, if you ask anything in harmony with His will, He hears and answers you. Do you want your loved ones, your friends and neighbors to come to Christ? Begin to claim them for God.

Follow the example of our Lord, whose high priestly prayer is recorded in John 17: "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me..." Paul and the other writers of the New Testament were frequently requesting prayer for others as well as for themselves.

I have prayed for loved ones with whom I used to weep as I pleaded with them to come to Christ. Then the day came when I realized that God was not willing for them to perish - He loved them more than I did - and so I began to thank God in faith that they would become Christians. Most of them have already received Christ. But more names continue to be added to that list.

Just as Jesus prayed that the Holy Spirit would do a work in the lives of His disciples, so you can pray that the Holy Spirit would convict non-believers and give them a strong desire for the ways of God. The Scripture promises:

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Sometimes, however, in His mysterious, sovereign timing, He chooses to wait for the prayers of a concerned believer to unleash the Holy Spirit in that person's heart. As someone has said, "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance - but laying hold of God's willingness."

Although God is not willing for "anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance," His schedule is not always the same as yours. Continue to trust and thank Him for the salvation and spiritual growth of those for whom He has impressed you to pray. From my personal experience and study of God's Word, I can assure you that the starting point in bringing a loved one to Christ is prayer.

Make a prayer list or keep a prayer dairy and pray for specific non-Christians and Christians by name and for specific events. As God answers prayer, record the date and describe how God answered your prayers. In a short time you will have a

record of God's faithfulness that will encourage and strengthen your faith and the faith of others.

## **2. Go**

One of the greatest barriers in witnessing is the problem of getting going. You hear all kinds of excuses: "I'm too busy," or "I'm waiting for the Holy Spirit to lead me to someone." Don't wait for the Holy Spirit to "lead you." Our Lord Jesus Christ has already commanded you to go tell the good news to all who will listen. Don't wait for them to come to you. As you follow Jesus, He will lead you to people whom He has prepared.

Remember, the greatest thing that has ever happened to you is knowing Christ, and the greatest thing that you can do for another is help him to know Christ. If this is true, you should begin to rethink your priorities. How are you spending your time? Are you taking time every day to share Christ with someone?

You may be encouraged to know that many on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, like myself, are by nature shy. We do not always find it easy to talk to others about Christ. But since Jesus came to seek and to save the lost and since He lives within us, we simply ask Him to give us the courage to speak powerfully for Him.

Whenever I am alone with a person for a few minutes, I assume that I am there by divine appointment to share the good news of God's love and forgiveness.

For instance, while in Atlanta I stopped at a shopping mall to purchase a tie. The store manager offered his services, and while choosing a tie to match the suit I was wearing, I told him I was in town to meet with a number of Christian leaders to talk about ways to bring our nation back to God. Then I asked, "Are you a Christian?"

He said he was not, but that he had considered becoming one. I showed him the Four Spiritual Laws booklet. As I read through the booklet, I came to Law Four, which explains how to receive Christ and ends with this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

I asked, "Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?"

He assured me that it did, so I suggested that he pray it aloud, which he did. And as soon as he finished, I prayed for him.

Then I asked him if he knew where Christ was in relation to him. He assured me that Christ was now in his life. I went on to explain how, according to God's Word, he could not only have assurance of eternal life, but grow as a Christian.

As is my practice, I obtained his address to send important follow up material.

On planes, in restaurants, even on elevators, I meet people who are eager to receive Christ.

Wherever I go, across America and in other countries, on planes, in restaurants, on elevators, in lecture halls, on the college campus, or among laymen, I meet people who are eager to receive Christ.

Sharing Christ with others should be a way of life for every Christian. When you awaken each morning, thank the Lord Jesus for living within you and ask Him to use your lips to speak of His love and forgiveness at every opportunity throughout the day.

### **3. Talk about Jesus**

Paul said, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen." Don't just talk about peripheral matters, such as the weather, sports, government and business. Pray and expect God to enable you to introduce His Son into the conversation.

A quiet, loving widow in her early thirties has led dozens of her relatives, friends and neighbors to the Lord Jesus. Nearly every Sunday she brings someone new to church with her. Many of these she has introduced to Christ during the previous week.

Once she was asked, "How do you manage to share your faith with so many people?" She answered, "I ask myself, 'If I don't tell them about the Lord Jesus, who will?' And I don't have a good answer for that."

Today, an ever-increasing number of Christians are constantly being used of God to introduce others to our Savior because they have been trained to talk about Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. They do not get sidetracked to discuss nonessential matters. That's the reason the Four Spiritual Laws booklet is so effective - it keeps the conversation centered on the person of Christ, away from distracting issues which direct attention away from our Lord. And it makes your presentation of the gospel simple and understandable.

Many people express antagonism toward God and the church - they want nothing to do with religion. But when you tell them about Jesus, they respond.

I recall a taxi driver in Australia who said to me, "I gave up all religion in World War II. I want nothing to do with a God who allows people to kill each other."

"Wait a minute," I said. "You are accusing God of something for which man is responsible. It is the evil in man, his sin, that causes him to hate and steal and kill."

I explained the difference between religion, which is man's search for God, and Christianity, which is God's revelation of Himself in Christ to man. As I talked to him about the person of Christ, this man's entire attitude changed. Soon he said that he would like to pray with me and receive Christ.

Many people today are also antagonistic toward the organized church in general, and if you are going to reach them for the Savior, you must talk first about the Savior, not about the church. After they receive Christ, most of them will want to become active in the church.

Others are antagonistic toward the Bible as the Word of God. You do not have to prove the Bible - just use it. Use it even with people who say they do not believe it. God has promised to honor His Word.

If you expect God to use you, talk about the Savior - and always encourage those with whom you share to invite Him into their lives. You really haven't "evangelized" until you have given people a chance to respond to the gospel by inviting Christ to be their Savior and Lord.

As you talk to people about the Savior, you will discover that many are ready to receive Him the very first time you talk to them. Some may need to "ripen" a bit.

As a young boy I used to visit my uncle's peach orchard. We would always pick the ripe peaches, but leave the green ones. Two days later, we would return to the same tree and pick more ripe peaches. Every two days we would pick yet more ripe ones. So it is in our witness for Christ. Be prayerfully sensitive to people and their readiness for the gospel. Ripe for harvest, some will readily receive Christ; others, like green fruit, will not be ready.

Do not argue with those who are not ready. Do not browbeat them; do not insult them; do not try to high pressure them into "making a decision for Christ." Give them something appropriate to read (like the Four Spiritual Laws or the Uniqueness of Jesus), leave them with a prayer, talk to them later - as the Lord gives opportunity - but continue to look for the ripe ones. They are all around you. Thousands, yes millions, of people whose hearts have already been prepared by the Holy Spirit are waiting to receive Christ.

On one plane trip, for example, I talked to two people who were "spiritually ripe." One was an eighty-year-old woman who received Christ as her Savior. The other, the president of a large corporation, had always believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and had died for his sins, but had been too busy with other things to make a commitment to Christ personally.

On the same trip, at Cornell University where I addressed students and faculty, the president of a sizable business approached me. He was visiting his son who was a new Christian of six months.

"I want to thank you for helping my son spiritually," he said.

Then I asked if he had ever received Christ. He replied that he had not, but that he wanted to. We bowed in prayer and, to his son's great joy, he committed his life to our Savior.

Take the initiative by praying, by going to others, by talking about Jesus, and finally, by expecting God to use you.

#### **4. Expect God to Use You**

When you talk about Jesus, expect men and women to respond - not on the basis of positive thinking, but because of God's faithfulness, His love, His sovereignty, His power and His promise that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The Lord Jesus promised His supernatural resources to all who join with Him in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. He told His disciples:

"I have been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of these - that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

You are assured of that same resurrection power and presence today. Our Lord is committed to honor the faithful witness of all who place their trust in Him.

It is interesting to note that while the disciples met with strong and often bitter opposition, the Christian movement experienced phenomenal growth, as was expressed in Paul's letters to the churches in Thessalonica and Colosse:

When we brought you the Good News, it was not just meaningless chatter to you; no, you listened with great interest. what we told you produced a powerful effect upon you, for the Holy Spirit gave you great and full assurance that what we said was true. And you know how our very lives were further proof to you of the truth of our message. So you became our followers and the Lord's; for you received our message with joy from the Holy Spirit...

The same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world and changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very first day you heard it and understood about God's great kindness to sinners.

One of the greatest lies of the centuries is the attitude among Christians that people do not want to know God personally. Because of this, many Christians approach others with a negative attitude as if to say, "You don't want to become a Christian, do you?" By their negative attitude, they inhibit others from expressing their need of Christ. Let me encourage you to expect that God has already prepared the hearts of those who are eager to receive Christ, and you will find He really has.

After more than forty-five years of sharing Christ with millions of students and laymen, individually and in small and large groups, I can tell you that the Holy Spirit has created a hunger for God in the hearts of multitudes around the world. Millions are waiting for someone to tell them about our wonderful Savior, ready to receive Him as their very own.

For example, at one of our pastors' conferences in Haiti, more than one thousand people received Christ as 550 pastors and lay preachers prayed with them, one and two at a time, during a total of approximately four hours of witnessing.

At Daytona Beach, during an Easter vacation, approximately fifteen hundred Campus Crusade staff members and university students introduced more than thirty-five hundred university students to Christ in one day of witnessing at the beach.

Most of our staff, lay and student volunteers report that from ten to seventy-five percent of the people to whom they make a clear presentation of the gospel receive Christ. The percentage of responses often depends on the country and culture. Yet, we find that the Spirit of God has prepared the hearts of multitudes of men and women to respond to Christ. As Jesus said, "The fields are white for harvest." Not every one with whom you share Christ will receive Him, but God will use you to both sow and harvest in His kingdom as you trust Him.

## **Success in Witnessing**

Expect results when you witness for Christ. But remember, however God chooses to use your faithfulness in witnessing, your responsibility is to present Christ. It is His responsibility to draw people to Himself. As I have said earlier, success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.

In these pages I have presented a biblical plan that will enable you to be successful in reaching others for Christ. First you must begin by preparing yourself:

- Be sure you are a Christian.
- Be sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life.
- Be filled with the Spirit.
- Be prepared to communicate your faith in Christ.

Then, you must take the initiative by:

- Praying.
- Going to others.
- Talking about the Lord Jesus.
- Expecting God to use you.

Following this plan consistently will enable you to be fruitful for God as a way of life. No other experience in this world can compare to that of witnessing for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Will you join me in this adventure?

Remember, How You Can Be A Fruitful Witness is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

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<http://www.transferableconcepts.org/index.html>