

## The Beginnings of Discipleship: Leading Other People to the Lord

**Text** - "And he brought him to Jesus." (John 1:35)

### b) Introduction

The Greek word for 'salvation' is 'soteria'. This word could also be translated 'safety and soundness'. When we are born again and become children of God, we are made whole or sound and safe. Therefore, when we speak to others about the salvation available in Jesus, we need to realise that we are revealing to people how they too can become whole and safe.

There are three aspects to this:

1. **Reconciliation:** to God, which is made possible through the death of Jesus.

*"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!" (Romans 5:11)*

2. **Renewal:** because Jesus rose again and He gives us new life and He is responsible to God for us.

*"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus 3:5b-6)*

3. **Re-orientation:** through submitting to Jesus, because He is now our Lord and therefore He is on the throne of our life.

*"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you." (James 4:7-8)*

We do not need to wait until we are perfect in every spiritual area before we can make disciples for Jesus.

We need to get on with the job of fulfilling the Great Commission, and allow all the adjustments that are necessary in our lives to occur as we are working for God.

We must not let laziness, complacency, unbelief or lack of love stop us from doing what Jesus has asked all His disciples to do.

There are three powerful and motivating forces at work in us that enable us to make disciples for Jesus:

1. **The love of Jesus Christ:** (2 Corinthians 5:14). This should burn in our hearts so that we want everyone to know this same love.
2. **The power of God:** by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
3. **The fear of God:** (2 Corinthians 5:11; Psalm 103:13). This is a deep respect for a loving Father and a desire to live and act as He wants us to.

Remember, we are not called to work for God, but to be workers together with God (2 Corinthians 6:1).

### **c) Personal Preparation for Witnessing**

1. Make sure that you are adequately prepared (i.e. knowledge of Scripture & know your testimony [preferably recent]).

2. Spend an unhurried time of prayer with the Lord and go through the following checklist:

**Be cleansed:**

- a) yield and submit yourself to God.
- b) Confess any known sin in your life and ask God to cleanse you by the blood of Jesus.
- c) Forgive anyone who has wronged you. You will then be clean before God and Satan will not have any hold on you.
- d) You also need to resist Satan and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

**Humble yourself to receive authority:** humble yourself under God's mighty hand (1 Peter 5:6) and tell God that it is not your will but His that you want to do, whatever the cost. When you decrease and He increases, you will be coming into line with God's authority. God's power and authority can then run through you to enable you to master any situation.

**Be filled with the Holy Spirit:** ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and anoint you to lift up Jesus Christ, and empower you for His service.

**Yield to the Holy Spirit:** yield to the control of the Holy Spirit. Tell Him you are giving Him your body, mind, will and emotions so that He might use you as His obedient channel. This will mean that you still make the decisions, but you will also be guided and influenced as to what to do and say. This is the essence of the Spirit-filled life.

**Be a channel:** ask the Holy Spirit to flow out from you to touch other people's lives and to minister through you to other people (John 7:37-39).

**Speak His Word:** ask the Holy Spirit to put His words in your mouth, that is, to bring to mind anything from Scripture, or any word or vision necessary to open up the situation for God. Ask Him to anoint your lips to speak in the way that He desires with words of power, authority, challenge, conviction, life, liberty, love and compassion.

**Be thankful:** thank the Lord for answering these prayers.

You can then go forth in the authority of the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit to be Christ's ambassador in every situation of life.

3. Pray that God will lead you to the very person whose heart He has already prepared (Ephesians 2:10; John 16:7-11).

4. Win the confidence and trust of that person by building up a relationship with them where possible (friendship evangelism).

5. Rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom.

#### **d) Vital tips for being an effective soul winner**

##### **1. Get to know Jesus better (Philippians 3:10)**

The more we know Him, the more we will be able to commit ourselves to Him, and the more we will be able to share confidently with others. The best ways of getting to know Jesus better are: daily through God's Word, in prayer, and in fellowship with other Christians.

##### **2. Follow Jesus more closely (Matthew 4:19)**

The only way to follow Jesus is to follow His example and do what God asks us to do day by day through His Word. Jesus called His

first disciples to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men. He wants to do the same for us.

Five keys for being effective fishermen:

- their purpose is clear (they know what they are doing and they are not distracted).
- their preparation is careful (they are adequately equipped for the job).
- their place is chosen (they go where the fish are and where they are biting: seldom do fish jump into the boat!).
- their person is concealed (they do not project their own image but rather the image of Jesus Christ, because He is the answer and not them. They make disciples by being disciples themselves. Other people should be able to look at them and see Jesus.).
- their patience is constant (they don't give up the first time if the fish do not bite).

### **3. Lift up Jesus with your life, action and word (John 12:32)**

It is not your fine words or persuasiveness that draws people to Jesus, but the uplifting of the Lord Jesus clearly before others.

Your life is your most powerful tool in influencing friends, relatives and other people in general, and in leading them to Jesus. Your life may be the only Bible some people ever read. How can people tell we have Christ in us and we are filled with the Holy Spirit? Think of yourself as an unmarked tube. To find out what is in the tube you squeeze it and see what comes out. When you are squeezed by the pressures of life, what comes out? Is it impatience, tensions, stress, anger, frustration etc., or is it love,

joy, peace, patience etc.? Others will look to see what comes out, because they will want to know if what you say actually works.

Remember to be real as you witness to others for Jesus, especially in the realm of your testimony. God's cause is not furthered by exaggeration and dishonesty. Our witness must be mixed with a measure of discipline, discernment, love and care. We also need to stay tuned in to God and He will guide, direct and empower us.

### **e) How to lead someone to Christ**

Every situation will be different, therefore, you must stay open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Remember, we do not save people: Jesus does, through the Holy Spirit. We are just channels God is using to bring His provision in Jesus to another person. The following steps are some guidelines that may help:

1. When the Holy Spirit leads you to a person, engage them in casual conversation and so establish social contact, praying that the Holy Spirit will steer the conversation to spiritual matters. Watch for opportunities to begin speaking about Jesus and use your own testimony as an introduction where possible. Once you have their attention, find out where the person is at with Jesus, e.g. ask whether they have accepted Jesus into their own life or if they have a relationship or friendship with Jesus. Make sure that the person does not lead you away from the point with 'red herring' arguments and excuses. Also make sure that you do not use religious words that they cannot understand, because this may confuse them or put them off.

2. Share the good news with them (i.e. the gospel):

- God loves all people in the world (John 3:16).
- but all men have sinned (i.e. displeased God, Romans 3:23).
- sin separates men from God (Isaiah 59:2).
- if sin isn't taken away, men's lives will be fruitless (Ephesians 2:1-10).
- the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).
- God sent Jesus and He died on the cross and paid the penalty for the sins of all people (1 Corinthians 15:3).
- God raised Jesus from the dead and Jesus is able to save (1 Corinthians 15:20-22; 2 Corinthians 4:14, Hebrews 7:25).
- only the blood of Jesus shed when He died can cleanse and remove sin, allowing eternal life with God for mankind (Hebrews 9:12,22).
- to be forgiven by God, a sinner must take two steps:
  - (i) **Repent**: turn from all their selfish, sinful ways (Acts 3:19).
  - (ii) **Accept**: they must make Jesus their Lord and Saviour (Romans 10:9-10).

3. Let them count the cost. Jesus said,  
 "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

- Emphasise that receiving Jesus means to totally make Him Lord of their life (Acts 2:36).

- Explain that they must be willing to confess Jesus as their Lord publicly (Romans 10:9-10).

- Show them that they must be willing to give up their idols such as T.V., car, money etc. They can still have these things, but they must no longer hold them as the most important things in their lives.

- They must be willing to make a commitment to Jesus and not turn back from it (Luke 9:57-62; Luke 14:25-33).

4. Show them that they need Christ Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life and He is the only one who can give us a relationship with God (John 3:18,36; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

5. Make sure that the Holy Spirit has brought about a genuine conviction of sin (John 16:8).

6. Challenge them to repent and give up their old way of life that dishonoured God. Encourage them to ask God to forgive them for their sins. This will make them clean in God's sight. Then they must accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour (Romans 10:9-10). They will immediately receive the Holy Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing their new inheritance in God (Ephesians 1:13-14) and they will become a child of God (John 1:12).

7. Ask them to pray aloud a sinner's prayer. They can repeat it after you, read a copy or make up their own once they know the truth of the gospel of Jesus. A sample prayer follows:

"Lord Jesus, I realise that I am a sinner and I am sorry for my sins. Thank you that you died for me on the cross. Please forgive my sins. I turn from and forsake all my sinful ways. I ask you into my life as Lord and Saviour. Thank you for the new life you are

giving me now. Amen." (See also Why Jesus leaflet by Nicki Gumbel)

8. Explain to them that they can be assured and confident in their salvation. The Holy Spirit will witness within them that they are saved (1 John 3:24; Romans 8:14-16) and God's Word has promised that when they have done all the above, then they are saved (John 6:37; John 1:12; John 5:24; John 6:47; 1 John 5:11-13; Hebrews 13:5).

God's Word says that they are cleansed from sin and they have the gift of eternal life. They may not be touched emotionally, but they will know that they are different somehow. This may take some time to become obvious.

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### TEACH ONE TO REACH ONE

The method is simple: Each believer reproducing other believers, teaching faithful men who are able to teach others. Just as in the natural example of the fruit of the harvest, the cycle is unending. But the results of this plan make it easy to understand how the early church "turned the world upside down" with the Gospel message.

Look at the chart on the following page. This chart uses the period of a year as the average time necessary to reach a person with the Gospel and train him to be a reproductive Christian.

In reality, the process could take more or less time depending on the people involved.

But using one year as an average time, if a believer would reach just one person and disciple them each year and have them pledge to disciple one person each year thereafter, the world could

easily be reached with the Gospel message. The chart shows that during the first year the Christian is discipling one person. At the end of that year, there are now two faithful people (the believer and the person he has discipled).

During the next year, each of them reaches one person. At the end of the second year, there is a total of four people, each of whom will reach one person the following year.

Look at the top of the chart and observe the results of this process if it is followed over a period of years. If you are a member of a local church, take the total membership of your church (118) and multiply it by 131,072.

Your answer is the number of people your church could harvest in the next 17 years = 15, 466, 496 if each member was reproducing.

### **DISCIPLER(S) DISCIPLE(S) TOTAL**

YEAR 17	$65,536 \times 65,536 = 131,072$
YEAR 16	$32,768 \times 32,768 = 65,536$
YEAR 15	$16,384 \times 16,384 = 32,768$
YEAR 14	$8,192 \times 8,192 = 16,384$
YEAR 13	$4,096 \times 4,096 = 8,192$
YEAR 12	$2,048 \times 2,048 = 4,096$
YEAR 11	$1,024 \times 1,024 = 2,048$
YEAR 10	$512 \times 512 = 1,024$
YEAR 9	$256 \times 256 = 512$
YEAR 8	$128 \times 128 = 256$
YEAR 7	$64 \times 64 = 128$
YEAR 6	$32 \times 32 = 64$
YEAR 5	$16 \times 16 = 32$
YEAR 4	$8 \times 8 = 16$
YEAR 3	$4 \times 4 = 8$

YEAR 2     $2 \times 2 = 4$

YEAR 1     $1 \times 1 = 2$

God has always used men and women to fulfill His will. God's method for harvesting requires people. People search for better methods, but God seeks for better people.

The world takes able men who are talented and tries to give them character.

God says to take men of character, faithful men, and He will develop them into able men.

As a steward of the mysteries of God, all that is required is that you are faithful:

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

(I Corinthians 4:1-2)

It is not required that you are educated or talented. It is only required that you are faithful.

Faithful men and women committing the Gospel to other faithful men and women who are able to teach others...this is God's revelation for reaping the harvest.

**f) Help them get started in their new walk as a Christian**

1. Do as much follow up as possible at the time you lead a person to Christ, because you may not see them again. Leave them with adequate literature, e.g. a good tract or follow-up booklet explaining what the person has done and showing the basic steps needed to follow Christ; and also make sure that they have a readable translation of the Bible (or part of it). Make sure you explain to the person the need they have to be baptised or filled with the Holy Spirit (see Section A: Chapters 11 and 12). If they give their permission, take their name, address, age and 'phone number, so that you or someone else can contact them either by 'phone or a personal visit.

2. When contacting the person for the first time (make sure you don't leave it too long) be cheerful and encourage them to continue with Christ. Tell them you are praying for them, and make sure you do so, daily. Ask them how they are getting on with the literature you gave them and answer any questions they may have. Encourage them towards personal growth in Christ through:

- daily prayer (talking with God) (Luke 18:1).
- daily reading of God's Word (the Bible) (Acts 17:1).
- trusting in Jesus (John 6:28-29).
- obedience to God and His Word (Acts 5:32).
- fellowshiping regularly with other born again believers (Acts 2:42).
- witnessing by telling others what they have found in Jesus (Luke 8:39).

- working for God (John 9:4).
- being baptised and then continually filled with the Holy Spirit to enable them to serve God in His strength and power (Acts 1:5,8; Romans 8:11; Ephesians 5:18).

Ask them if they are having any problems and advise them as best you know how. Be a friend to them in Christ. Ask them if they are attending a church, or at least if they have made enquiries. If they want to attend the same church as you do, offer to pick them up or go with them so that they will not feel alone. If they decide to go to a church you do not know, then encourage them to find a dynamic, biblically based church. Some characteristics of such a church include:

- a total commitment to the Lordship of Christ.
- love and unity among the members.
- a strong emphasis on prayer.
- praise and worship conducted in the Spirit and in truth.
- members moving in the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit.
- the church encourages holy living.
- they call sinners to repentance.
- they preach the gospel of salvation by faith.
- they help the poor and needy.
- they give sacrificially.

- they are involved in worldwide mission.

It must also be remembered that the church may not yet have reached these ideals, but it should at least be aiming at them.

If at all possible, ask them if they would like to be discipled regularly by you or another person and arrange for this. Finally, pray for them, concentrating especially on their problems and on their ongoing relationship with Jesus.

### **g) Live as a True Child of God**

Be genuine and sincere: do not be a callous, thoughtless fanatic. Be natural about your Christianity. The joy and love of Christ is the greatest advertisement you have to reach those you desire to know the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves. Be salt wherever you are. Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt purifies, heals, preserves, disinfects and fertilizes. Therefore, without realising it, you have a tremendous effect wherever you are because of Christ in you. Another vital thing that salt does is to make people thirsty. Your life should make people thirsty for the life of Christ because He is radiating from you. As you live your life genuinely as a disciple of Jesus before other people, you will attract them to Christ.

Remember a witness is not called to be judge, defence or prosecutor. A witness is simply called to give the facts as he knows they are. Let God do the defence, convicting and judging, you just share what you know to be true in your life.

### **h) Practical Suggestion**

Write out your own testimony in less than 250 words, avoiding all religious jargon, so that you will be ready to share it.

**i) Summary and Application**

1. Salvation in Jesus is wholeness for those who find it.
  2. Before witnessing we must make sure that we are right before God and man.
  3. We need to know what we will share with others in order to bring them to Jesus for salvation.
  4. We must be open to the leading, guiding and empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to be an effective witness for Jesus.
  5. Our life is the best testimony and advertisement we have to show Jesus to other people, and to show what He can do in people's lives. Therefore, we need to get to know Jesus better, follow Him more closely and uplift Him with our life, action and word.
  6. When we lead another person to the Lord we have a responsibility to make sure that they are followed up and that they are going on with Christ. This can be done by us personally, or by another person to whom we can entrust this important responsibility.
  7. Remember, we are not called to make converts who may change their mind. We are called to make disciples who have changed their life.
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