

Where To Start - When To Stop



Sometimes soul-winning is like looking for that one lost sheep; sometimes like casting a net while fishing for men ('catch what you can') Whatever you do, do so because of the Lord's love and because of the Lord's leading. Don't force the situation. Trying to "plant seed" in ground not "properly prepared" is poor farming! Timing is important!! And never forget that sharing one's faith should be a natural experience, including how we present ourselves and how we present our message. So be yourself (not your favorite preacher!!)



Know Before You Sow (test the "soil")

The Parable of the Sower (Mat 13:3-23) tells us what happens when good seed falls on bad ground. For our application, let's just say we're talking about someone you want to share Jesus with but that they have "already heard all this before." Maybe they did [maybe they did not] - but that just means you have to start where they are! Consider the three conditions Jesus describes in this parable:

- Seed by the wayside [*did not understand*] - Never assume a clear message was "delivered"
- Seed upon a rock [*did not have time to grow*] - Never assume they were "discipled"
- Seed among the thorns [*did not escape the world*] - Never assume they weren't "deceived"

Remember the rule: **start where they are.** Jesus got one of His out of a tree, went home with him, met his friends, had dinner with him, and gently led him into a brand new life!! Some He met at work along the shore, some collecting taxes, others just along the way - but never did Jesus miss an opportunity when it presented itself. Always have Christ on your mind and his message in your mouth! [see 1Pe 3:15]



Don't Get 'Hooked' In The Book

Now this may seem contradictory to **Romans 10:17** which says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" but you will need more than just a few of your favorite memory verses to have a meaningful conversation with someone about your faith. Your words (your own story) accompanied with a sincere tone of voice, a patient manner, even a touch or hug at the right moment, can make all the difference [we are social beings in need of human contact] Don't just read scriptures, read their faces [do they understand, do they agree, are you hitting home?] Let them ask questions, let them challenge you - if you don't have an answer tell them so! Write down the "tough" ones and say you'll "get back to them" (you'll learn something new and they'll better respect you.) Remember, you're not the 'investigating officer', just a witness at the scene. By all means: **avoid the temptation to show off what you know!!** You may win the arguments but lose the souls. In Proverbs it says that a lot of words can mean a lot of trouble [10:19 , 18:13 , and 29:11]



People have heard enough preaching. This time give them something they will believe ... your story!

K. I. S. S. ("Keep It Salvation, Saints"!!)

Remember the example that Jesus gave us in his conversation with Nicodemus. Stay on the central message: God sent his Son so that we may live with Him forever! Apostle Paul said, "*I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" (1Cor 2:2) Why? Because the "*gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation*" (**Rom 1:16**) And don't try to do the Holy Spirit's job for him. It is his responsibility to convict the world of sin - not yours!! (John 16:8-11)

So...when do you 'stop'? (When they hear the 'knock'!!)



Jesus said in **Revelations 3:20** that he will be at the door of their heart knocking. Show them the verse - ask them to open the door and invite him in. You will know when they've heard the 'knock' because you've been studying them, you've been praying for them. Tell them to "believe with their heart" and "confess with their mouth" (**Rom 10:9,10**), that all God is asking them to do is to turn ("repent" - Ac 3:19) from their old life and accept His new one (**2 Cor 5:17**) Just feeling bad about their sins is not enough, they must forsake them (2 Cor 7:10) Tell them to just be sincere and that the Lord promised that, if they "seek" Him with "all their heart", He will be "found" (Jer 29:12,13)

Pray, pray, or pray! Pray with them if they are ready. A great '*sinners prayer*' is **Psa 51:1-4, 10-12** (I've read it to hundreds over the years.) If they say they're not "ready yet" ask them if you can still pray for them [and make it a *good* one!!] If they just walk away - pray anyway (loud but lovingly!) Encourage new believers with **1John 1: 7 & 3:1-3** ; **James 1:12** ; **Psalms 23** ...and keep in touch!