

Why Are So Many Christians Not Sharing Their Faith?

BRENT HUNTER

We looked in our last installment at three barriers that must be overcome if we are to be successful in our soul-winning efforts. In this article, we address three additional barriers (#4-6).

#4. We are not “prospect conscious.” We get busy and allow ourselves to become distracted. Too often we get involved in many worthwhile activities that may even be strengthening to us spiritually, but they can fill up our time and use up our energies so that there are no resources available for outreach. Maintenance is important, but so is mission! An individual’s discipleship must go beyond just showing up at assemblies and doing Bible lessons. While these are vital, they are not a substitute for winning souls. Every Christian needs to see himself as “an epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (2 Cor. 3:2), and constantly *looking for those who are looking!* The marriage and family literature states that 98% of men eventually get married. Why? As singles, they usually are busy with school and/or work, but they prioritize looking for a partner. In the back of their minds they have their radar up, constantly looking and asking, cultivating relationships along the way, until eventually they get a “yes” to their proposal. Should we not in a similar way, care enough about the souls of the lost, and the privilege of sharing our faith, so that we, too, are constantly looking for those who may be “wed” to Jesus? Beloved, let’s make it a top priority, to pray for God to send us seekers, and be looking and asking, cultivating relationships along the way, always eager to share the gospel with anyone who is willing! Are we focusing on the right things, or are we distracted from what *really*

matters? We must become *prospect conscious* if we are to be successful.

#5. A lack of joy and assurance of one’s salvation. Sadly, many Christians don’t possess assurance. John tells us, “These things I have written to you, that you might *know* you have eternal life” (1 Jn. 5:13). God’s intent was for His children to have peace and joy in their hearts. We possess joy when we come to trust in Him and God’s grace as

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we “walk in the light and He is in the light” (1 Jn. 1:7). Obviously, if Christians don’t possess the assurance of their salvation, they can’t have joy in their hearts. Beloved, it is this joy that should naturally flow out of us! Our words should not be cold and mechanical, but warm and heartfelt. Berating people for not doing “personal evangelism” and trying to get them to be motivated primarily from guilt is not a long-term solution for changing the culture in a congregation. We must be insightful enough to deal with the real underlying issues, and not just deal with symptoms. A better course is to encourage and strengthen personal commitment, and the Christian’s faith in the promises of God, and the “joy of your salvation” (Ps. 51:12). It is noteworthy, that after God promises

us that His word will not return void, He says, “For you shall go out with **joy**, and be led out with **peace**” (Is. 55:12).

#6. A lack of modeling. May I be perfectly blunt? Perhaps the reason why many congregations do not offer classes on “How to do Personal Work” – is that it is rarely being done, so consequently, there is no one to teach the class. It is true that soul winning is the privilege of all mature Christians (Heb. 5:12), not just the preacher, but if the local evangelist is not willing to set an example and spend a good share of his time teaching the lost, how can he expect the members to do so? Who is going to teach good training classes if the leadership is not engaged, and it is not a part of the lifestyle of those who are to be an example to the flock (1 Tim. 4:12, 1 Pet. 5:3)? One has to look hard at the congregational culture of which we are a part. If winning souls is not an expectation of what mature Christians should be doing, and there is little or no modeling of this by church leaders, is it any wonder that in this type of environment, personal evangelism becomes rare or non-existent? As Jesus admonished, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master” (Mt. 10:24 NKJV).

We are saved to serve, won to win, taught to teach!!

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So You Want to Be a Soul Winner (#2)

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The reasons why so many Christians report that they feel uncomfortable sharing their faith are multifaceted. We must be aware of what these barriers are, because any successful soul winning effort must start by laying a foundation of preaching and teaching that deals with these six key barriers and how they can be overcome. It is essential to attain a true revival.

Let's deal with the first three in this article and barriers # 4-6 in the next installment.

Three Key Barriers Which Must be Overcome

#1. People just aren't interested anymore! I hear this all the time. Jesus said, "Life up your eyes, and look unto the fields, they are *white unto the harvest*" (John 4:35; emphasis - bh). On another occasion Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest is *great!*" (Mt. 13:38; emphasis - bh).

First and foremost, we have to believe what Jesus said. We must stop making excuses! We need to lay up in our hearts the powerful promise that if we faithfully spread the word, "it shall not return unto Me void, but it *shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper*" (Is. 55:11; emphasis - bh). If we believe that there is no one in our community who will respond to the gospel if taught, why bother? That is one of the reasons why it is important to be informed of the faithful congregations that are having evangelistic success. It can help to provide us with hope and assurance that people not only need the gospel, but if approached in the right way,

many will respond. If others can be successful, so can we! We must believe that the harvest is white, and that there are opportunities everywhere.

#2. Fear of Rejection. "I just don't feel comfortable." We are surrounded by a culture that is "politically correct" and people today are very easily offended. Unfortunately, many Christians have allowed the culture to change them, instead of the reverse. Indeed, this often *paralyzing fear* of rejection, is the most commonly stated reason why Christians tell me they don't talk to their friends and neighbors about the gospel. We need to be reminded that the opposite of fear is faith, and that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

John admonishes us, "Perfect love cast out fear!" (1 John 4:18)! Say that little spiritual gem to yourself when feeling afraid, repeat it over and over again, and you will find it will not be long until a *courage fit, replaces a fit of fear!* This is not surprising because Jesus has told us that when we go out and share the gospel, "I will be with you, even to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). Picture Jesus by your side, and it will help you to build courage and brush aside your fears!

#3. A lack of training and practical instruction. It has always amazed me that most congregations see the need and value of "men's training classes," to teach men to be more effective and edifying in our assemblies, and more and more brethren understand the value of "singing schools," all of which I commend wholeheartedly. However, what about training classes on "How to Teach Others the Gospel," or "How to Effectively Share One's Faith"? Too often we forget that the Lord's plan of

evangelism is to "Teach these things unto faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). *Evangelism is not complete, until the evangelized becomes the evangelist!* How can we obey this command and "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12), if we don't regularly provide instruction and training in *how* to do so? Should there not be instruction provided on what we should be doing *outside* of the assembly, as well as *inside*?

I have found that one of the reasons why so many Christians are so afraid is that they are not shown or taught *how to win souls*. Think about it. All of us are filled with fear, in any area of our lives, when we are told to do something, but have no idea of what we are doing. *Uncertainty will always lead to inaction*. No wonder, so many good hearted, well-meaning Christians do not share their faith!

Jesus said that the problem is not the harvest; the problem is the lack of reapers going into the field (Mt. 13:38). "Pray therefore the Lord of harvest that He would send forth workers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2). I pray that prayer frequently. Whenever possible, we all need to put feet to our prayers and answer this plea of Jesus personally.

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