

Getting Around To Personal Evangelism

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Assembly

Introduction:

Do you care about people? Do you care about the people in your family? Do you care about the people with whom you work? Do you care about your neighbors? Are any of the people about whom you care lost? What are you planning to do to help them in the next week? ... the next month? ... the next year? Are you doing anything? I know we all want to do personal work. But many times we do not get around to it. I would like to discuss six keys that will help you be a successful personal worker.

Discussion:

- I. Care about people.
 - A. We often read **Matthew 9:37-38**. Jesus explained that the harvest is plentiful and workers are needed. But why did He claim that? Because in **Matthew 9:36** He saw a lot of people who were "weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." "He was moved with compassion."
 - B. This term is used in **Luke 15:20** to describe the feelings the father had for the prodigal son as he returned. It is being so moved by others' needs that you are compelled to help them.
 - C. We must have this compassion and care. We must see the spiritual needs people have. When we look at people we should not see their clothes, their cars, their homes or their families. We should see their souls. We need to see the lost as sheep in need of a Shepherd.
- II. Fear God and the judgment.
 - A. If you are like me, one thing that hinders doing personal work is fear. I fear people's reactions. I fear rejection. I fear failure. I fear being misunderstood. I fear the unknown. I fear a lot of things. All of these fears hinder me.
 - B. But there is one fear that will help us do the work of the Lord. That is the fear of God. In **II Corinthians 5:9-11**, Paul claimed that one of his motivations was thinking about the day in which he would stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Because he knew the terror of the Lord, he persuaded men. He was afraid for himself, but I think he was also afraid for others. He would not gloss over his relationship with others because not only did he not want to face hell, he did not want those people about whom he cared to face it either.
 - C. When we fear God and the judgment adequately, our other fears pale in comparison. Then, and only then, will we overcome the fears which paralyze us.
- III. Know what your job is.
 - A. We often get discouraged by the lack of response from others. Perhaps you invited 50 people to worship and only 2 actually attended, but neither of them were baptized. When that happens you feel like a failure and become convinced that this personal evangelism stuff just isn't for you. We become discouraged because we are confused about what our job really is.
 - B. Do you realize that your job in personal work is not to convert people? In **I Corinthians 3:6-8**, Paul described his and Apollos' job and by extension our job. Our job is to plant and water. Our success at this job is totally dependent on ourselves.
 - C. Did you invite someone to worship? Do not wait until the service to see if they show up to determine whether or not you were successful. You were successful because you planted the seed! Did you bring up a spiritual discussion at work? Do not wait to see if the person becomes convinced of the truth to decide if you were successful. You were successful because you planted the seed! Have you had a Bible study? Do not wait to see if they get baptized to decide whether or not you were successful. You were successful because you watered the seed. Do you realize what this means? You do not have to fear failure. The only failures are those who do nothing. Those who do something are 100% successful, because they planted and watered.
- IV. Have a plan.
 - A. I think every Christian in this room wants to work for the Lord. I think we all want to be involved in evangelism. However, if I were to ask everyone who thinks they are doing what they ought to do regarding personal evangelism to raise their hands, I imagine at the most, we would have only a handful. Why? One of the top reasons is because we have no plan.

- B. If you are going to evangelize, you have to have a plan. You have to know how you are going to proceed. You have to plan what kinds of things you will say. You have to know when is a good time to invite people to worship services. You have to determine when you will invite people to study and then what you will study. You have to plan how you will respond to certain questions.
 - C. Evangelism rarely happens by accident. It happens on purpose and with a plan. Though I cannot take you to a passage that says, "Have a plan." I can go to several passages that demonstrate the concept of planning.
 - D. In **I Corinthians 9:19-23**, Paul had a plan for evangelism. He knew he had to deal with different people in different ways and had consciously thought through how he would deal with them. Throughout the book of Acts, we find Paul consistently moving into a town and going to the synagogue first (*e.g. Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; et al*). He had a plan. **Ephesians 5:15-16** says we must be wise and redeem the time. This applies to our work as personal evangelists. We must plan our time for evangelism. If you read through Paul's sermon on Mars Hill in **Acts 17:22-31**, you see a logical plan of teaching. He began with a hook. Then he expounded on the "unknown God". Finally, he talked about the plan for salvation. And remember, Paul was successful on Mars Hill not because some joined him later, but because he planted the seed.
 - E. You must have a plan. Figure out what you are going to do and when you are going to do it. Then find somebody to hold you accountable to the plan.
- V. Seek and seize opportunities.
- A. I know you care about people and fear God. You now know what your job is. Maybe you already have a plan or maybe you have to formulate one. If you only get this far, you will not work as an evangelist. Now you must seek and seize opportunities.
 - B. In **John 4:6**, we learn that Jesus was tired. He must have been hungry, because His disciples had gone to buy food (**vs. 8**). Along comes a Samaritan woman. But Jesus did not see a Samaritan woman. He saw an opportunity to help someone. He asked for a drink. This intro led Jesus to be able to teach her about worship and the Messiah. She then went into the city and brought out many of the Samaritans who eventually believed (**John 4:39-42**).
 - C. Have you ever thought about this? The disciples went into the city. They were surrounded by people who would believe if they were taught. But the disciples were going into the city to buy food. They were not seeking any opportunities and so they did not seize any. They went in and came out of the city and nothing of value had been done. But Jesus' food was to do the will of His Father (**John 4:34**). One woman came out of the city to get water and Jesus saw the opportunity. We need to be like Jesus; we need to seek opportunities and seize them.
 - D. What opportunities are there? Did somebody ask you what you did over the weekend? There is an opportunity. Tell them, "I went to church. Let me tell you what I learned and how it has helped me." Did somebody tell you that they just had a baby? That is an opportunity. Tell them about the excellent classes we have for their children and for them. Did somebody tell you that they are having some struggles at home? There is an opportunity. Tell them you have had struggles too, but God's word has helped. Ask if they would like to see what the Bible says.
- VI. Do something.
- A. If you are going to be a personal evangelist. You have to do something. You may not do much right now, but do something. You will grow.
 - B. Leave an invitation card with your tip after a meal at a restaurant. When you go to the bank drive-through, put a card in the canister with your deposit slip. Invite a friend. Talk to a guest after worship services. Answer a Bible question. Offer to study with someone. Study with someone. Give away a tract. Provide a word of encouragement to someone that will take them to the Bible. Do something. Do not wait for someone else—you do something.

Conclusion:

Allow me to ask my first question again. Do you care about people? I know that you do. What plans do you have to help the lost people you care about this week? Care about them, fear God, know what your job is, make a plan, look for opportunities and then do something. When we plant and water, God will give the increase.