

LOCAL EVANGELISM

A Manual For Growing

A

Community Of Faith

by

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2024

OVERVIEW

The church that does not reach out will die out. It is not rocket science. If the farmer does not scatter seed, he will not gather a harvest. Few congregations will experience growth by simply opening their doors. If we are to rescue the lost, we must go out and find them.

But it is not merely a matter of going out. There are people to meet. There is a message to deliver. There are objections to overcome.

We must be prepared to take the Good News. And the assembly of the saints must be ready to receive new members. One without the other will lead to disappointment.

This short book emphasizes going out and bringing in. Therefore, it is a handbook for growing a community of faith—a gathering of people who believe in Jesus and walk in His footsteps. It is not the first or the last word on the subject. It is a humble presentation of what the author has experienced in finding and folding the lost lambs of God.

There is a lot to do. There is much to learn. The Lord will be with us every step of the way. Let us launch out into the deep so that we can become successful *“fishers of men.”*

Ed Mathews
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PART ONE

BEGINNING

THE

ADVENTURE

LESSON ONE

DEFINITION OF LOCAL EVANGELISM

Local evangelism has been called many things: personal work, a home Bible study, and a cottage meeting—to name a few. I have chosen to call it “local evangelism” (because it differentiates it from foreign mission).

What follows applies to seeking the lost in our neighborhood, that is, among people like us. To say it differently, this is not a book of instructions for proclaiming the Good News in another country or another culture. What, then, is local evangelism?

I. It Is Evangelism

Gospel proclamation is more than a social visit. It involves telling the old, old story. It is an attempt to make folks followers of Christ. It is a believer persuading others to become believers. It is discussing the terms of salvation. In short, a local evangelist is a private teacher instead of a public speaker, a tutor rather than a preacher.

II. It Is Work

A sermon is delivered in thirty minutes to a large audience. It may take years to present the Gospel to the same number of people in small group Bible studies. Moreover, local evangelism usually occurs on week days between 6:00 and 8:00 o'clock in the evening. It can require multiple meetings to cover the essential material. It involves effort. It takes a substantial commitment—though it is the most rewarding work a person can ever do.

III. It Is Personal

The vast majority of present day believers have never thought of themselves as responsible for teaching others to be a child of God. After

all, is that not what the church staff is paid to do? Well, actually, everyone is required to share the Good News, Acts 5:42; 8:1b,4; Philippians 1:14; 2:14-16; II Timothy 2:2; Jude 3. We cannot meet this challenge by proxy. It is a personal responsibility. The sinner needs help in understanding the Scriptures, Acts 8:30,31. Each Christian should be trying to convert someone. There must be a compelling urgency in our message that "*makes*" those who are spiritually hungry come to the banquet of God, Luke 14:23. The Lord never intended for the few to carry the load of the many.

ACTIVITY: Read, discuss, pray about, and sign the CLASS COVENANT.

CLASS COVENANT

This class will be a discussion group regarding different aspects of local evangelism. The intention will be to learn how to proclaim the Good News. Several styles of evangelism will be examined. Each participant promises to regularly attend class and faithfully do the assignments, to actively join in the discussion and to apply the material as it is being learned. Furthermore, each member will uphold the class covenant for the sake of self, others, and God.

COVENANT OF KINDNESS: I promise not to offend any member of this group in word or deed.

COVENANT OF PRAYER: I promise to pray each day for everyone in this group (including myself).

COVENANT OF OPENNESS: I promise to disclose my feelings, my struggles, and my misgivings about the class to the best of my ability.

COVENANT OF HONESTY: I will speak what I think or feel in a caring and controlled manner.

COVENANT OF LISTENING: I want to hear others and to be heard by others in this group.

COVENANT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: I promise to keep private whatever is shared in this class so that a genuine trust can prevail.

COVENANT OF ACCOUNTABILITY: I desire to grow in grace and knowledge so that I may become more like what God wants me to be.

COVENANT OF ACCOMPLISHMENT: I fully intend to the best of my ability to lead others to Christ.

Signature Of Class Member

LESSON TWO

CHALLENGE OF LOCAL EVANGELISM

Those “*who win souls are wise*,” Proverbs 11:30. They “*will shine like the brightness of the heavens*,” Daniel 12:3. It is good to be a soul-winner. But, in order to teach the world, we must venture beyond our comfort zone. And, if we do, the Lord promises to “*always*” be with us, Matthew 28:20b.

I. Reality

The world is not a happy place. To many, God seems distant. Christianity is not often welcome. Yet that is where we are asked to go. It is where the lost live. It is where sinners (who need the light) are waiting.

II. Responsibility

The saints must not remain silent. The world needs to trust in Christ. But “*how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard?*” Romans 10:14. Well, they will not, unless someone goes.

There are at least three attitudes that keep us from doing evangelism.

1. Lack of sufficient concern for the lost.
2. Neglect in answering the call of God.
3. Failure to rise to the occasion.

The Father sent His Son. We are “*obligated*” to go, Romans 1:14. Why?

A. It Is Christ-Like. Jesus was an evangelist. And, if we are to follow in His footsteps, we should seek the lost like He did, 1 Peter 2:21. “*We should declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light*,” 1 Peter 2:9.

B. It Is Biblical. We claim to follow the pattern of the first century

church. However, to make good on that claim, we must do what they did. Indeed, we must share the word, Acts 8:4; 11:19.

C. It Is Self-Preserving. It is difficult to maintain a vigorous spiritual life when our faith is dormant. Sharing our beliefs strengthens our commitment. The shortest path to apostasy is fruitlessness. In the parable of the talents, the one talent man was not condemned for immorality but for doing “*nothing*,” Matthew 25:24,25. Seeking the lost is a major part of fruit bearing, John 15:1,2,8.

D. It Is A Source Of Joy. Those who are recently converted want their relatives and friends to be saved. Their eagerness can spark new life in a dying congregation. For those we bring to Christ are our “*joy and crown and life*,” Philippians 4:1. There is nothing quite like finding a lost soul, like leading a wandering sinner to the Savior.

E. It Is The Desire Of God. The Lord does not want anyone to perish, II Peter 3:9. We are His ambassadors. He is making Himself known through our efforts in local evangelism, II Corinthians 5:17-20. It is not beyond our ability to do His will, Ephesians 3:20. For, He works in us “*to will and to act according to His good purpose*,” Philippians 2:13.

ACTIVITY: Write a prayer (150 words) that mentions both the reality and the responsibility of doing local evangelism.

LESSON THREE

EXCUSES FOR NEGLECTING LOCAL EVANGELISM

It is human to make excuses when we are afraid to do something. Hence, when God asked Moses to return to Egypt and lead Israel out of slavery, he refused.

"Who am I that I should go," Moses countered, Exodus 3:11.

But the Lord would not allow Moses to dodge His assignment. *"I will be with you."* And *"I will make the people favorably disposed toward you,"* the Lord reassured him, Exodus 4:10-12.

Still, after all of that, Moses remained reluctant. *"Send someone else!"* he said, Exodus 4:13.

Does that sound familiar? Have we not thought similar things about doing local evangelism?

The Lord became *"angry"* with Moses, Exodus 4:14. And, I am quite sure, He is not thrilled with our hesitancy!

What will it be like on the Judgment Day if we continue to refuse to do local evangelism? God has been patient. He has waited long enough. Is it not time for us to do His will? Our future depends on how we act in the present. Let us repent and spread His word!

In order to overcome our objections, we must identify them and abandon them.

Here are the most common excuses for neglecting to do local evangelism.

EXCUSES	BIBLE RESPONSES
<i>I have sinned.</i>	Peter denied Christ. Paul persecuted the church. John Mark turned back. But, later, they all did the will of God.
<i>People will not listen.</i>	Likely some will not! Did everyone listen to Christ? <u>John 1:11</u> . Did they listen to the prophets? <u>Isaiah 6:8,9</u> ; <u>Jeremiah 1:17-19</u> ; <u>Ezekiel 2:3-7</u> .
<i>I need to learn more.</i>	When does an apprentice start applying his new skills? Jesus sent His disciples on the "limited commission" to get experience, <u>Luke 10:1-3</u> .
<i>I do not have time.</i>	Is it not a matter of arranging our priorities? <u>Matthew 6:33</u> ; cf. <u>Colossians 4:5</u> . We find time to do what we want to do!
<i>It is not my job.</i>	Everyone is responsible to do evangelism, <u>Philippians 2:15,16</u> . This class is qualifying you to teach others, <u>II Timothy 2:2</u> .
<i>I might offend someone.</i>	Yes. Jesus did, too, <u>Matthew 10:34</u> ; cf. <u>Acts 2:37</u> . The word of God does that, <u>Hebrews 4:12</u> .

God never asks us to do the impossible (though evangelism may be difficult).
We are to obey "*according to our ability*," Matthew 25:14,15; cf. II Corinthians 8:12; Philippians 4:13.

Would we not try to save a person in a burning building? Of course, we would. Is not saving them from eternal “fire and brimstone” more important? Absolutely!

The Christian attitude is one of being sacrificed for the sake of saving others, II Corinthians 12:15; Philippians 2:17; Colossians 1:24; I Thessalonians 2:8; II Timothy 2:10.

We will be glad to do personal evangelism once we rely on the Lord, Psalms 51:10-13. There are always more people who want to hear the Good News than there are people willing to tell them about their salvation.

ACTIVITY: In two parallel columns, make a list of your fears about doing local evangelism (in the left column) and how you intend to overcome those fears (in the right column).

LESSON FOUR

PREPARING TO DO LOCAL EVANGELISM

The first century church “*turned the world upside down.*” She did so not because it was easy but because she was convinced it could be done (with the help of God).

Think of the obstacles! Christianity was a new religion. Christians did not have a Bible. They were told to stop trying to convert others. They were persecuted. The church was made up of mostly the lower classes, that is, the poor and uneducated. She did not have church buildings, Sunday schools, or located preachers. Yet, in spite of all these strikes against her, she grew into a worldwide phenomenon. Why? What was the secret of her amazing growth?

We get some clues from the early history of the Christian movement, Acts 4:20; 5:42; 8:4; Philippians 1:14. We admire their example, but often fail to follow it. We cannot be like them unless we think like them. Therefore, in order to prepare for local evangelism, we must do (at least) two things.

I. Love The Lost

We will never “*win friends and influence people*” until we are concerned for them, until our concern for them knows no bounds. So, in everything, “*do to others what you would have them do to you,*” Matthew 7:12. This is not merely a sentimental feeling. It is not simply a wish. It must be a contagious desire to share with them the Good News, II Timothy 2:24-26.

Ezekiel developed this contagion when he “*sat among the exiles,*” Ezekiel 3:15. However, such urgency (by itself) is not enough. The prophet had to warn them. Otherwise, he would be held accountable, Ezekiel 3:18,19. Indeed, local evangelism is more than a take-it or leave-it proposition. It is a critical ingredient of our own salvation.

II. Have Faith In Yourself

The church is full of people who feel they cannot share their faith. They have a “no-can-do” attitude. This is unfortunate. It is unnecessary. WE CAN DO PERSONAL WORK. We must develop a wholesome confidence in our ability to be ambassadors for Christ. The key is faith, Matthew 17:20. *“In all things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us,”* Romans 8:37. Yes! We *“can do all things through Christ who gives us strength,”* Philippians 4:13.

Very few of those who claim to be Christians have ever led someone to the Lord. We are not alone in our self-doubt. But we need NOT remain frozen in fear. *“Everything is possible for him who believes,”* Mark 9:23.

When we tackle a challenging enterprise, our faith is one thing that ensures a successful outcome. It is not the lack of ability that dooms our effort but our lack of belief. Indeed, faith is the victory. Faith works wonders. If we do not doubt but believe, good things will happen.

ACTIVITY: State as many reasons why you can succeed in doing evangelism.

MY REASONS FOR BELIEVING I CAN DO LOCAL EVANGELISM

- . God will help me.
- . The first century Church did it.
- . People throughout history have done it.
- . Believers are doing it now.
- . The Lord told me to do it.
- . The Bible records His command to be a local evangelist.

PART TWO

SECURING COTTAGE MEETINGS

LESSON FIVE

ARRANGING BIBLE STUDIES (1)

Gold is where you find it. Therefore, like a prospector, believers must always be panning for people. In other words, wherever people are, there is a potential candidate for a home Bible study. This includes:

- . Engaged couples (when one or both are not baptized)
- . Friends
- . Neighbors
- . Fellow employees
- . etc.

Everyone without Christ needs to understand the will of God. All of them are potential cottage meeting participants. Each child of God needs to be a perpetual prospector.

I. Informal Conversations

The above list allows for a casual approach. During ordinary chit chat, the idea of a Bible study can be introduced. As a friendly offer, it will usually be viewed as a kind gesture.

However, when people hesitate, the idea must be explained in more detail. Describe the content of the class. Then ask, “*Is that okay?*” If so, sign then up. If not, explain where the class meets. Again, ask, “*Is that okay?*” If not, clarify what the class will actually study. If they are still reluctant, state how often

the class meets. Then, promise to gather at the appointed time. Should they still hesitate, tell them how long each class will meet. Often a quick review of what a Bible study is like will lower their apprehension.

II. Formal Survey

Prospecting can also be done "*from house to house*," Acts 5:42; 20:20.

Local evangelism must not be confined to the Sunday morning worship service. Cottage meeting participants can be found in a religious survey. It employs a simple technique that anyone can follow.

A. The Approach. A formal survey is a cold turkey, door-to-door method. The survey worker should remain at ease. He or she must be friendly, maintain eye contact, be unhurried, and convey a spirit of sincerity. The interview should begin by stating your business in order to make your mission clear. The following form will be filled out during the interview.

RELIGIOUS SURVEY

This survey is interested in finding out the percent of

_____ churched (have a connection with a church)

_____ unchurched (have no connection to any religious organization)

people in our town. If churched, are you:

PROTESTANT CATHOLIC JEW Other _____

This survey is also designed to know the religious interests in our city.

1. Do you have a Bible in your home: YES NO

2. With what church are you best acquainted? _____
Are you a member? YES NO

3. Do you attend? REGULARLY OFTEN SELDOM NEVER

4. Do you believe the Bible has instructions for us to follow?

YES NO UNDECIDED

5. Do you find the Bible difficult to understand?

YES NO UNDECIDED

Would you like to learn how to understand the Bible?

Did someone answer the door? YES NO

If "no," what is the address? _____

Was the interview denied? YES NO

The interview should go something like this:

"Hi! My name is _____. I am conducting a religious survey. The survey is interested in discovering the percent of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in our community. Which are you?"

This survey is also designed to discover the religious interests in our town. I have five quick questions. Such as

B. The Objections. It is not uncommon for people to hesitate. We must help them move past their objections.

OBJECTIONS	REPLIES
This is a trick!	Hand the person a survey form and ask the first question.
Is there an obligation?	This is a survey to determine religious interests. It is designed to encourage Bible study.
Do I have to answer the questions?	You are not required to but the cooperation of people like you can make the survey accurate.
I do not have time.	I assure you it will take a minute or less. I have a lot of people to interview. I will not waste your time.

Almost all people will initially resist the interview. Their objections must be seen as a means of asking for more information. A respectful attitude must be maintained. It is important to stay cordial at all times. The name of the person is obtained ONLY after a Bible study is accepted.

BIBLE STUDY APPOINTMENT

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Date of Bible Study _____

Time _____ AM PM

1. Occupation: Husband _____ Wife _____

2. Name and Ages of Children

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. Other Information:

The most important item in the Bible Study Information form is the “date” and “time” of the first class meeting. The other answers are helpful (but can be ascertained during the first cottage meeting). It is good to record the objections overcome in the process of getting the appointment. This can be done in the “other information” section.

C. The Results. The prospector must not get discouraged. If he or she goes to 100 houses, approximately 40 will answer the door. Of those 40, they will conduct 20 interviews. And, on average, 7 Bible studies will be arranged. It can be expected that 4 of the studies will be completed. And 2 of the studies will result in conversions. No wonder local evangelism is called “work!”

A successful religious survey is a matter of persistence. As Paul said, *“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain,”* 1 Corinthians 15:58.

Indeed, *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up,”* Galatians 6:9.

ACTIVITY: Be ready to administer the RELIGIOUS SURVEY in class during our next meeting. This includes being prepared to overcome objections. We will evaluate each other’s performance in order to improve our skills.

LESSON SIX

ARRANGING BIBLE STUDIES (2)

There are an endless number of opportunities that come our way for arranging Bible studies. Beside the formal approach in survey efforts, there are casual encounters in chance meetings.

We must not allow these precious moments to slip away unused "*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders,*" Paul wrote, "*make the most of every opportunity,*" Colossians 4:5.

When we unexpectedly see a friend, meet a neighbor, or make conversation with a stranger, it could be an appointment arranged by God. We will never know unless we become His messenger. We should "*be prepared in season and out of season*" to speak for the Lord, II Timothy 4:2.

I. Be Confident

The first point of importance is to reaffirm in our mind that the "*the Lord will find a way for me.*" Confidence is crucial. Act like a spokesman for heaven. OTHERS WILL BE INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU SAY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WHO THEY ARE. Keep eye contact. Smile. And, somewhere in the conversation, ask the question.

II. Make Your Request

There is more than one way of asking for a Bible study.

A. Direct Method. After gaining a measure of rapport, the direct approach simply moves to setting an appointment. For instance, "*Johnny, I have known you for a long time and have wanted to ask you a question. 'Would you be interested in studying the Bible next Thursday evening at 7 o'clock?'*" OR "*I think it is important that we have a close relationship with God. Would you like to discuss that in a Bible study beginning next Tuesday evening at 7 PM?'*" Not everyone is comfortable

using the direct method (though it can be an effective way of getting Bible studies).

B. Indirect Method. This approach begins by turning a casual conversation toward spiritual matters. It is an attempt to peak the interest of people, to lead them to desire more information.

It is easy to introduce a spiritual topic. For example, *"What do you think about the church?"* OR *"What does Jesus mean to you?"* OR *"What can we do to have religious unity?"* OR *"How can we discover lasting happiness in this world?"* OR *"What is the fate of those who do not obey God?"* OR *"How does a person become a Christian?"*

The indirect method is often found in Scripture, John 4:1-26; 4:39-42. There are over 400 questions in the Bible that a person can use to get an appointment to study the word of God.

III. Overcome Objections

An appointment to study is an obligation. People are reluctant to encumber themselves. Therefore, they will likely voice some objections (regardless of which method you use).

A. Help The Reluctant. Always reassure the listener that you have no intention of forcing anything on him or her. After all, most people plan to obey God someday. Therefore, you should affirm that intention. However, you should point out the need to know what should be done when you feel ready to obey the Lord.

The prospect will usually rise to the occasion. That is especially true if we ask four or five "yes" questions while arranging a Bible study. *"Would it not be reassuring to know what the Lord wants you to do in order to be prepared when the time comes?"* OR *"Would it not be helpful to find out now what the Bible says about obedience?"* OR *"Is it not best to have that information now?"* While you are asking these questions, nod your head

in agreement whenever a positive response is received. Then proceed to answer the objections.

B. Meet Their Objections. The aim in answering the objections is not to win an argument. It is solely a matter of making an appointment to study the word of salvation. Maintain a kind demeanor. Be patient. Talk to the "prospect" gently. Your tone of voice is as important as the words you say. Remember: the soul of the "prospect" is at stake.

OBJECTIONS	RESPONSES
I do not discuss politics and religion.	<i>"Do you vote?" (Wait for an answer) "Do you find out what the candidate believes?" (Pause) "How can you know what Jesus stands for unless you study the Bible? Let's start a discussion next Friday evening at 7:30 PM!"</i>
I cannot live the Christian life.	<i>"Do you think God wants you to become a Christian? (Pause) "Will God help you? (Wait) "I certainly think so," <u>Hebrews 4:16</u>. "Can we start a Bible study next Tuesday evening?"</i>
I will have to ask my spouse.	<i>"I will wait." (If he or she is not there) "I will come back tomorrow. What would be a good time?"</i>
I am sincere. Is that not enough?	<i>"It is good to be sincere. But could you be sincerely mistaken? <u>Acts 23:1; 24:16; Galatians 1:13,14</u>. "Let's study what everyone must do to be saved."</i>

C. Lead The Discussion. Some “teachers” may object to the idea of leading the discussion. But there is no choice. The “prospect” needs information he does not have. We are the messengers of God. We must take the lead. And, in reality, from time to time, are we not leading others anyway? Arranging a Bible study is no different. Hence, the attitude we display is the attitude the “prospect” will accept.

Let us, then, set the stage for a profitable study. Manage the conversation. Engage the “prospect.” Show the lost their Lord and Savior.

Enthusiasm is more contagious than the measles. A confident outlook breeds confidence in others.

ACTIVITY: Prepare to practice securing a Bible study in our next class session. THIS IS CRUNCH TIME. God is calling you to be His servant. Let us be ready to demonstrate we want to serve Him.

PART THREE

DELIVERING

THE

MESSAGE

LESSON SEVEN

EVALUATING THE PROSPECT

People automatically evaluate each other. We pigeon-hole one another based on what we see and hear. Hence, our first impression is important. But how do we convince others that we are kind, intelligent, and harmless? WE LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY!

The Lord gave us two ears and one mouth. Does this not suggest we should do twice as much listening as we do talking? People will talk about themselves. We will learn more about them if we listen. So “break the ice” by asking them about their background. Here are six characteristics of a good listener.

- . Look at the person who is talking.
- . Act interested in what he or she is saying.
- . Lean toward the one talking.
- . Ask about their past.
- . Do not interrupt.
- . Share your own background (briefly)

The Bible study gets off to a great start if the participants get acquainted. The next class session can build on this initial information by asking additional personal questions.

I. Classify The Listeners

All “prospects” fall into one of two categories: the “churched” or the “unchurched.” The former are affiliated with a church, synagogue, or mosque while the latter is unaffiliated with any religious organization.

A. Churched. Those who are religious are usually sincere (though they can be sincerely mistaken), like Apollos, Acts 18:24-28, and Paul, Philippians 3:1-11. They obeyed when they received further

instruction. The churched can also be dishonest—like the Pharisees, Matthew 23:1-36, and the hypocrites, II Timothy 4:3,4. Whoever they are, the churched can be challenging to convert because they already think they are believers.

B. Unchurched. These people are not part of any religious organization. They may be good but they have never heard the Good News, like the eunuch, Acts 8:26-30. Or they may be consumed in worldliness, like Felix and Drusilla, Acts 24:24-26. The unchurched do not demonstrate much inclination toward being reached. But it is not our place to judge them John 12:47,48. We defeat our purpose when we doubt the possibility of their becoming a Christian, Luke 5:32; 15:7.

II. Adjust To The Prospect

We must start where the “prospect” is and move him or her to where God wants them to be. Hence, we must adjust to their manner in the moment. We must proceed creatively regardless of how they present themselves to us.

A. Silent. Some Bible study participants neither agree nor disagree. We might wonder if they are even listening! The remedy is to ask them a direct question. Given they respond, we can turn the reply into a reason for further study.

B. Cautious. Most people do not want to be pushed into a decision. They want to know every detail of each point as the class proceeds. Answering questions slows down the study. However, we are not trying to win a race, but win a soul. The “prospect” is more likely to be converted if his or her questions are answered.

C. Talkative. The student can also be talkative. Indeed, he or she may be so verbal that the personal worker finds it difficult to get a word in edgewise. So patiently mention a comment that the person has made, tie it to the purpose of class, and gently move on.

D. Opinionated. Occasionally someone may think he knows as much as you do about the Scriptures. Listen. Appreciate their comments. Then, as tactfully as possible, go on. There are a lot of reasons for his or her attitude. They may have previously met a rude Bible banger (who they think you are). They may assume the meeting is a game of outflanking the “teacher.” Whatever the reason, it is imperative to retain or regain the control of the class by restating the purpose of your visit, namely, a discussion of what God wants us to do to be saved.

E. Suspicious. There are “prospects” who distrust the world in general and personal workers in particular. They may have dealt with an aggressive, high-pressure, religious person in the past (who had good intentions but bad methods). Or the “prospect” has studied the Bible and is uncomfortable doing so again. So, the “prospect” says, *“I know what I believe. I do not need to study the Bible. This class is a waste of my time.”* Obviously, they simply want to be left alone. Yet, delicately, ask the “prospect” what conclusions he or she has reached from their Bible study. Most suspicious people have little or no idea what the word of God says. It is imperative for the “prospect” to realize that Christianity is vital. It is far deeper, for more important than ignoring the issue.

F. Rebellious. There is a lot of confusion about what religion really is. The rebellious liken it to politics. In other words, religion to them is a private matter, a personal decision. But is not religion a matter of confronting God? This is His world. We are His creatures. He has revealed His will. He expects us to obey Him. There are consequences if we refuse. Christianity is not a take-it or leave-it proposition. It is an urgent, life altering decision. The job of the personal worker is to dig below the rebellious veneer and touch the heart of the “prospect.” Unless the deeper issues are awakened, the “prospect” will raise unnecessary objections that lead to a dead end.

ACTIVITY: Conduct a simulated exercise in dealing with silent, cautious, talkative, opinionated, suspicious, and rebellious students.

EVALUATING THE PROSPECT

5 to 7 participants

20 to 25 minutes

Distribute to each class member ONE of the following role assignments. TELL THEM TO KEEP THEIR ROLE A SECRET. Everyone is to participate in the simulated exercise as assigned. In a small class, some of the roles will not be distributed.

<p>TEACHER</p> <p>Pretend that you are leading a Bible study. You start and maintain the conversation. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET.</p>	<p>SILENT</p> <p>Remain quiet. Do not give an opinion. Act like you are merely a listener. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET</p>
<p>CAUTIOUS</p> <p>Be careful. Proceed with caution as if there is a danger in taking part. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET.</p>	<p>TALKATIVE</p> <p>Try to dominate the conversation so that the class cannot arrive at a conclusion. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET.</p>
<p>OPINIONATED</p> <p>You are to hold stubbornly to you opinion about the futility of studying to Bible. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET.</p>	<p>SUSPICIOUS</p> <p>Show distrust in the value of the class and the honesty of the teacher. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET.</p>
<p>REBELLIOUS</p> <p>Interrupt the class conversation. Try to steer the class in another direction. KEEP YOUR ROLE A SECRET.</p>	

Debrief The Simulation: Can you identify any of the other roles? What was difficult about this simulation? Why? Was anything easy? Why? What did you learn from the simulation?

LESSON EIGHT

SETTING THE STAGE

The personal worker and the “prospect” meet at the appointed place, at the agreed upon time. The initial steps in teaching the Gospel are like walking through a minefield. A misstep can blow up all that has been accomplished up to that point. So, tread carefully!

I. What To Do

The do’s and don’ts of conducting a home Bible study are obvious. But they still need to be emphasized.

A. Be Positive. The “teacher” should wear a smile. Maintain eye contact. And be upbeat. He or she must express a genuine interest in studying the Bible. A lot of effort has gone into getting this far. Now the rubber meets the road. Our enthusiasm can inspire the “prospect” to look forward to the class. *“Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go,” Joshua 1:9.*

B. Be Honest. The class is a confrontation with God. It is a meeting with the Almighty. The stakes are high. A soul rests in the balance. No one who loves the truth will compromise the truth. We are on an errand for the Lord. We are His messenger. We represent heaven. We carry a huge responsibility. *“See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take from it,” Deuteronomy 12:32; cf. Revelation 22:18,19.*

C. Be Calm. A personal worker must keep his emotions under control. Do not get angry. Do not raise your voice. The truth will speak for itself. Anger is never a good substitute for reason. *“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone,” Colossians 4:5,6.* We should begin the class by giving thanks for the opportunity to teach His truth.

II. What To Avoid

It is important to act the right way. It is equally important to avoid the wrong attitudes.

A. Do Not Be Apologetic. The “teacher” must not demean his teaching skills. He or she must not in any way intimate that the Gospel is too demanding to obey, too complicated to understand, or too difficult to accept. As Jesus said, *“If anyone is ashamed of the Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father’s glory with the holy angels,”* Mark 8:38; cf. Romans 11:16.

B. Do Not Be Arrogant. The “teacher” must not act like he or she knows everything. We are all fellow learners. Members of the Church of Christ have often been criticized for thinking they are the only ones who are saved. God will decide that matter. The Bible study should not condemn others. It should love them to God. *“All of us who are mature should take a similar view. And, if you disagree, God will make it clear to you in due time,”* Philippians 3:15. Or, as Peter wrote, *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you about your hope; but do this with gentleness and respect,”* 1 Peter 3:15.

C. Do Not Be Dogmatic. A prospect has a right to question anything the “teacher” says. It is the responsibility of the “teacher” to demonstrate that he or she is presenting the truth. Find your response in the Scriptures. Discuss the matter until the “prospect” is satisfied, until there are no more questions. The truth is important. If the “teacher” cannot find the answer in the Bible, promise to bring the answer to the next study session. Though God has the right to be dogmatic, even He chooses to “reason” with humans, Isaiah 1:18.

ACTIVITY: It is imperative to get the Bible study started in the best possible way. In order to do so, respond to the questions by giving answers and justifications.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS	JUSTIFICATIONS
1. Where should the Bible study class meet?		
2. What should the “teacher” bring to the class?		
3. Where should the “teacher” and the “prospect” sit?		

Write an opening statement (150 words) that will be useful in beginning a home Bible study class.

LESSON NINE

BIBLE STUDY METHODS (1)

There are opportunities to engage people in spiritual discussions almost anywhere: at the store, in a restaurant, at the airport, or in the park. Because the setting is more temporary, a short presentation is best.

I. Roman Road

A popular method of local evangelism is called “The Four Spiritual Laws” or the “Roman Road.” It goes like this (from the bottom up.)

*“The gift of God is
eternal life, ”Romans 6:23b.*

*“Christ died for
us,” Romans 5:8.*

*“The wages of sin
is death,” Romans 6:23a.*

*“All have sinned,”
Romans 3:23.*

This is a simple idea that has profound implications. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the “Roman Road” method?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Easy to learn.	Oversimplifies the Gospel.
It is simple to present.	It leaves a lot out.
Useful in chance meetings.	It assumes the prospect believes in Jesus.
Opens a window for more study.	It presumes a desire for eternal life.

II. Salvation In Acts

Sometimes a “teacher” will lead a “prospect” in a discussion of salvation in the Book of Acts. The “teacher” draws a grid and asks the “prospect” to read various passages out loud and put an “X” in the appropriate box.

Passages In Acts	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BAPTIZE	Results
2:37-39		X		X	Forgiveness
8:5-13	X			X	
8:35-39	X		?	X	Rejoicing
10:34-38	X			X	Forgiveness
16:13-15	X			X	
16:32-34	X			X	Joy
22:3-16				X	Wash Sins

This is an eye-opening exercise. But, like all quick evangelistic methods, it has its shortcomings, too.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
It is easy to learn.	It leaves a lot out.
It involves the prospect.	It assumes the prospect understands.
It emphasizes baptism.	It overlooks other aspects of conversion.
It can lead to more study.	It is premature in the conversion process.

In my opinion, the “Roman Road” and “Salvation In Acts” are door openers for further study. They might get people into the baptistry. But they leave out so much essential information that—in our society—they are quite inadequate (if used by themselves).

More needs to be said. More Bible needs to be studied. More ground work needs to be laid. A better foundation should be constructed.

Quick baptisms lead to weak saints. Those who “get wet” are similar to

“socially promoted” students in elementary school. They are not ready to read the Scriptures on their own. They are not mature enough for the solid fool of the faith. They are not equipped to distinguish between what God says and what men think, Hebrews 5:11-14.

ACTIVITY: All members in this class should be prepared to present the “Roman Road” and “Salvation in Acts” methods of personal work when called upon to do so in our next meeting. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THESE SKILLS ARE LEARNED NOW! There is no reason to introduce additional methods when the ones that have already been studied are not mastered. We claim to be the workmen of God. IT IS TIME TO PROVE IT.

LESSON TEN

BIBLE STUDY METHODS (2)

I. Gospel Presentation

Another method of local evangelism is called the “Gospel Presentation.” It is employed with much success. And, because it is written out as a conversation, it is easy to use. However, to be the most effective, the questions (in bold print) should be memorized and employed by the “teacher” as part of a spontaneous conversation.

An obvious down side to the “Gospel Presentation” involves the response (in italics) that the “prospect” will supposedly make. But, like all local evangelism, the “prospect” does not always react the way the “teacher” expects. Therefore, the “teacher” must go off-script in order to get the presentation back on track. That requires a measure of agility and skill in the spur of the moment on the part of the “teacher.”

Thus, this method is not as easy as it first appears. It demands that the “teacher” be “*nimble on his feet.*” On a scale from easy-to-difficult, this method falls mid-point between the two. It demands a preparation beyond simply reading a printed dialogue. Yet with adequate forethought, it is a helpful approach. Many people use it with good results.

THE GOSPEL PRESENTATION

If you were to die today, would you go to heaven?

I hope so.

Do you want to be sure you are going to heaven?

Yes!

The Bible was written to tell us how to get there. It says, *"These things were written that we may know we have eternal life,"* 1 John 5:13. Let me share with you how to get to heaven.

Okay! I would really like that.

All right. First, I will ask a question: Today, if God asked you why you should be allowed into heaven, how would you answer?

Well, I have been a good person.

That is commendable. The world sure needs more good folks. But, is being good, good enough?

I do not know. I sure hope so.

Let us look further. Are you ready for some Good News?

Absolutely!

Many people think exactly like you. They believe they will get to heaven if they are good. They will earn it. However, the Bible says eternal life is a gift. *"The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,"* Romans 6:23. In order to be sure you understand, let me ask: "What is the free gift of God?"

It is eternal life.

Perhaps, you are thinking, "How can that be?" Let me show you. The Bible says all of us have done wrong. Indeed, it says none of us are good enough to get to heaven, Romans 3:23. Everyone has failed. Hence, none of us can earn a ticket to eternal life. We cannot save ourselves. The Bible says, "We have been saved through faith, not by works lest any should boast," Ephesians 2:8. The situation is serious. We are all sinners, Romans 3:10-20. Yet we must still give an account of ourselves to God, Romans 14:12. Do you grasp what is being said in these passages?

I think so. I am a sinner headed to the judgment seat of God?

The punishment for sin is death. But God offers a solution. He sent Jesus to die for us, Romans 5:8; cf. Isaiah 53:5,6. Though innocent, He suffered our penalty. Now He is preparing a place for us in heaven, John 14:14. Do you know how to get to heaven?

No! Please tell me.

Do you love Jesus?

Yes!

"If you love Me, you will keep My commands," He said, John 14:15. Will you obey Him?

Yes!

He asks you to be baptized into Him, Romans 6:3,4. Does that make sense to you?

I think I understand His dying for me, but why baptism?

Our sins are forgiven through baptism, Acts 2:37-39; 10:34-48; 22:3-16. Baptism saves us, 1 Peter 3:21. Are you ready to be baptized?

Yes! That is really Good News.

What do you think of "The Gospel Presentation?" What are its strengths and weaknesses?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
It is written down.	Questions should be memorized.
It involves the "prospect."	Prospects do not follow the script.
It can be used anywhere.	It assumes belief in Jesus/heaven.
It includes several Scriptures.	It leaves out a lot.

II. Your Conversion Story.

There is another handy evangelistic method. It is referred to as "Your Conversion Story." This approach is powerful. It is personal. It is convicting. "Your Conversion Story" is believable. And, because it is your experience, you already know it.

So take a few minutes to write down your conversion story. BE SURE TO MENTION THE WHO, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, AND WHY OF YOUR SPIRITUAL BIRTHDAY.

"Your Conversion Story"

Why is it good to write down “Your Conversion Story?” An event, when told and retold, can, over time, gain or lose important information. It can get distorted or changed in the frequent retelling.

Like the other short methods of local evangelism (the “Roman Road,” “Salvation in Acts,” and “The Gospel Presentation”), “Your Conversion Story” can stand alone or be inserted into a larger conversation. All of them are good to know and worthwhile in an evangelistic setting.

III. Questions And Answers Concerning Eternal Life

There is another short evangelistic method. It is called “Questions And Answers Concerning Eternal Life.” If the “teacher” provides the “prospect” with a copy of the “Questions And Answers,” the “prospect” can read the Bible verses as the study goes along. This makes the presentation far more effective. In order to help the “prospect” find the passages, bring a marked Bible to the study for him or her to use.

The “strengths” and “weaknesses” of the “Question And Answer” method are very similar to those of “The Gospel Presentation” (listed on page 37). The big difference is that in the “Q and A” approach the questions do not need to be memorized. And the “prospect” is not as likely to deviate from the script.

Therefore, many personal workers prefer this method over all the others mentioned thus far.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE

How can we gain eternal life?	Matthew 19:17	There is something we must do.
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Securing Eternal Life

Can we be saved by other religions?	John 10:7-10	No! They are like thieves and robbers.
Can we save our self?	John 14:6; Acts 4:12	No!
Will those who claim to know Jesus go to heaven? Can we get there by doing miraculous things?	Matthew 7:21-23	Our claims will not earn us eternal life. We must follow the instructions of God.
Will everyone receive eternal life?	Matthew 7:13,14	We get there only if we do His will.
How much of His will must we obey?	Matthew 28:18-20	We must obey all He asks us to do.
What causes us to keep His commands?	John 14:15; 15:14	Those who love Him will gladly obey Him.

Believing

Does the Lord want us to believe Him?	John 3:16	Yes! We must trust Him completely.
Can we please God without faith?	Hebrews 11:6	No! We must believe He is and obey Him.

Repenting

Does the Lord want us to repent?	Luke 13:3,5	Yes! Jesus wants us to turn from sin.
Is anyone exempt?	Acts 17:30	No!
Will we regret giving up our sinful ways?	II Corinthians 7:10	No! It is what all of us must do.

Confessing

Does the Lord want us to confess His name?	Matthew 32,33	Yes! A believer should never be ashamed to acknowledge His Lord.
Is confession necessary for salvation?	Matthew 16:15,16; Romans 10:9,10	Absolutely! We are required to admit what we believe.

Being Baptized

Is baptism part of the will of God?	Acts 2:36-38	Yes! It has been required from the beginning.
Does baptism have anything to do with being saved?	Mark 16:15	Clearly baptism is imperative.
When should a person be baptized?	Acts 16:32,33	They should obey the Lord without delay.
What is baptism: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?	Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12	The word <i>baptize</i> means to "immerse."
How many baptisms are there?	Ephesians 4:4-6	One. There is only one baptism prescribed by God.
What is baptism like?	Galatians 3:26,27	Baptism is like putting on clothes. When we are immersed in water for the forgiveness sins, we put on Christ like a jacket.
Is it necessary to be baptized in order to be saved?	John 3:5; Acts 22:16; James 1:22-25; I Peter 1:22-26	Yes! By baptism, we are born again. Our sins are washed away.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of “Questions And Answers Concerning Eternal Life?”

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Prospect is involved.	Assumes belief in eternal life.
Scriptures are read.	Prospect may have difficulty finding the passages.
Clarifies baptism.	Overlooks other essential subjects.
There is nothing to memorize.	Expects a quick decision.
Calls for a decision.	Requires follow-up.

The “Questions and Answers Concerning Eternal Life” is a good tool to have in our evangelistic kit. But, given the vast diversity in our potential audience, it is only one method out of many approaches available to the personal worker.

ACTIVITY: Spend time polishing your skills in using the “Gospel Presentation,” “Your Conversion Story,” and “Questions and Answers Concerning Eternal Life.” There is much to do before our class meets next week. **BE READY TO SKILLFULLY USE ONE OR ALL THESE METHODS IF CALLED UPON TO DO SO.** God loves a faithful servant!

LESSON ELEVEN

BIBLE STUDY METHODS (3)

The sixth local evangelism approach is the most comprehensive. It takes several sessions to complete (though, occasionally, some parts might be omitted).

The method under discussion is called "Bible Charts." It consists of eleven carefully designed pages of material. The charts illustrate the information being taught. Sometimes more than one chart is used in a single class session. Most cottage meetings will proceed through the charts in the following sequence.

- . **Class One:** The Purpose Of Life
- . **Class Two:** God
- . **Class Three:** The Bible, Library Of God, and Why We Misunderstand
- . **Class Four:** Things Written For Our Learning
- . **Class Five:** Jesus Christ and The Deliverer
- . **Class Six:** Learn Not To Go Beyond The Things That Are Written
- . **Class Seven:** How Sinners Are Rescued and Baptism

The above agenda is a suggestion. Another schedule can be tailored by the "teacher" (if the spiritual maturity of the "prospect" dictates) though this seldom is done. What, then, are the strengths and weaknesses of the "Bible Charts."

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
They look professional.	Demands more of the "teacher."
Covers much more of the Bible.	Takes several sessions.
Charts can be left with "prospect."	More time and expense required.
"Prospect" learns a lot more.	Creates scheduling problems.
Higher rate of conversion.	"Teacher" faces more objections.
Weeds out the curious.	Demands more commitment.
It is a proven method.	Not useful in chance meetings.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

WE WANT TO KNOW

THE REASON FOR

OUR EXISTENCE

Ecclesiastes 1:3.

GOD

ALONE HAS

THE WORDS OF LIFE

John 6:68

?

IS IT:

EDUCATION ? Ecclesiastes 1:13-18

PLEASURE ? Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

POWER ? Ecclesiastes 2:12-17

WEALTH ? Ecclesiastes 2:18-21

LIFE WILL NEVER

BE SATISFYING

UNTIL WE TRUST

AND OBEY GOD,

Ecclesiastes 12:13

**No! They simply result in anxiety, frustration, boredom,
and despair.**

GOD

Psalm 19:1 Romans 1:20

Who is He? What is He like?

Love

I John 4:6

Self-Existent

Exodus 3:14

Spirit

John 4:24

Fair

II Corinthians 5:10

All-Powerful

Matthew 19:26

Holy

Isaiah 6:3

All-Knowing

Hebrews 4:13

Eternal

Jude 25

Unchanging

Malachi 3:6

**He can be found if we seek Him with all our heart,
Jeremiah 29:13**

THE BIBLE
Psalm 19:7-11

40 Writers

66 Books

1500 Years

**Supernatural Character
Of The Bible**

Profound Teachings
Agreement Among Authors
Purity Of Ethics
Relevant To Human Needs

**Genuineness Of The
Scriptures**

Many Manuscripts
Several Versions
Numerous Quotations

Inspiration

"And the Lord said..."
Unconcern of Jesus
Divine Guidance Admitted

Archaeology

Flood
Walls of Jericho
Mouth Breeder Fish

Credibility Of The Writers

Sincere
Honest
Successful

Influence Of Christ

Phenomenal Growth
Overwhelming Odds
Inferior Means
Beneficial Results

**There is no reason to challenge the inspiration of
the of the Bible. Rather, we should be challenged
because the Bible is inspired.**

II Timothy 3:16,17

THE LIBRARY OF GOD

OLD TESTAMENT

Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
Samuel/Kings/Chronicles
Ezra/Nehemiah
Esther

Wisdom Literature

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs

Prophets

Major Prophets
Minor Prophets

NEW TESTAMENT

Gospels

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

History

Acts

Letters

Romans
Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Colossians
Thessalonians
Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James/Peter
Jude

Prophecy

Revelation

**“By calling this covenant ‘new,’ He
made the first one obsolete,” Hebrews 8:13.**

WHY WE MISUNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Reading Without Intending to Learn
Studying in a Haphazard Manner
Approaching the Scriptures with Dishonest Motives

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ?

Believe the Bible can be Understood
Observe the Historical Setting and Grammatical Construction
Examine The Accuracy of Your Conclusions

"You diligently study the Scriptures because by them you possess eternal life," John 5:39.

"(They) were more noble (because) they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see (that what was said) was true," Acts 17:11.

"(Let us be) a workman...who is not ashamed but handles the word of truth correctly," II Timothy 2:15.

THINGS WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING

Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11

Probation

Creation of the World, Genesis 1:1-24, and Man, Genesis 1:27-31
Disobedience of Man, Genesis 3:1-1
A **Deliverer** is Promised, Genesis 3:15, and Rejected, Genesis 6:5-7

Preparation

Scattering of the People, Genesis 11:1-9
A **Deliverer** is Promised Again, Genesis 12:3
Egyptian Slavery, Exodus 1:8-14

Conquest

Exodus from Bondage, Exodus 3:1-8; 12:40,41; 14:21,22
Formation of a New Nation, Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 28:2-68
Leadership of Judges, Judges 17:6

Power

Reign of the Kings, I Samuel 8:4-22

Decline

Division and Disaster Caused by Sin, II Chronicles 36:14-23

Servitude

Assyrian and Babylonian Captivity
Need for a **Deliverer** Recognized, Psalms 51:1-4

“Consider the Kindness and Sternness of God,”
Romans 11:23.

JESUS CHRIST

Philippians 2:6-11

DEITY
or
Imposter

John 1:1-3,14; 8:24,58;
Colossians 2:9

AUTHORITY
or
Pretender

Matthew 28:18;
Ephesians 1:20-23

BORN OF A VIRGIN
or
Fraud

Luke 1:34,35

RESURRECTION
or
Deceiver

John 1:25,26;
1 Corinthians 15:12-19

SINLESS
or
Hypocrite

John 8:45;
Hebrews 4:15

MESSIAH
or
Fanatic

Matthew 20:28;
John 10:17,18

DIVINE TEACHER
or
Hoax

John 7:46;
12:49,50

THE DELIVERER

WHAT MAN DID:

WHAT CHRIST DID:

F GRACE I T H

**The Gentiles Failed To
Save Themselves,**
Romans 1:18-32; Proverbs 14:12.

**Satisfied The Claims Of
Justice Against Sinners,**
Romans 5:8.

**The Jews Failed To
Save Themselves,**
Romans 2:1-5, 17-23.

**Changed The Attitude
Of Sinners,**
I John 4:9,10.

**All Have Sinned and
Fallen Short Of The
Approval of God,**
Romans 3:23; 6:23.

**Moved Sinners To
Accept The Offer Of
Pardon,**
John 3:16-18, 36; I John 5:3.

The Promise Of A Deliverer Is Fulfilled
Galatians 3:16

LEARN NOT TO GO BEYOND THE THINGS THAT ARE WRITTEN

I Corinthians 4:6

Deuteronomy 4:2

Galatians 1:8,9

Joshua 1:7

II John 9-11

Proverbs 30:5,6

Revelation 22:18,19

A Warning To Us

Therefore, let us

- . speak as the oracles of God, I Peter 4:11
- . declare all the counsel of God, Acts 20:27

Because

- . we will be judged by what God has spoken,
John 12:4

BAPTISM

WHO?

Persons That Are:

Taught, Matthew 28:19
 Believe, Mark 16:15
 Repent, Acts 2:38
 and are Mature, Acts 8:12

WHY?

In Order To:

Be Saved, Mark 16:16
 and
 Receive Eternal Life,
1 Timothy 1:16

HOW?

Baptism Requires:	Pouring	Sprinkling	Immersion
Plenty of Water, John 3:23; cf. Acts 8:36-39	No	No	Yes
Going into the Water, Acts 8:38	No	No	Yes
A Burial In Water, Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12	No	No	Yes
Coming up out of the Water. Acts 8:39	No	No	Yes

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

Preaching	Faith	Repentance	Confession	Baptism	Results
Acts 2:14-41		X		X	Sin Forgiven
Acts 8:5-13	X			X	
Acts 8:35-39	X		?	X	Rejoicing
Acts 16:13-15	X			X	
Acts 16:32-34	X			X	Filled With Joy
Acts 22:3-16				X	Washed Sins

HOW ARE SINNERS RESCUED?

GRACE

Romans 3:24

We Need Salvation But
Do Not Deserve It,
Romans 5:8.

We Cannot Deliver Ourselves
From Sin. Only Christ Can Rescue Us,
Acts 4:12. Therefore, Relying on Him
Is Absolutely Necessary

Ephesians 2:8,9

FAITH

Romans 3:25

James 2:14-26

The Commands We Obey Demonstrate
Our Faith In God For Our Deliverance,
Genesis 22:1-19; Romans 4:1-5,16.

OBEDIENCE

1 Peter 1:22

Repentance, Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30—Expresses Our Belief In A
Need For A Change In Moral Behavior

Confession, Matthew 10:32,33; Romans 10:9—Shows Reliance On
The Deliverer

Baptism, 1 Peter 3:20,21—Is An Outward Display Of Our Inward
Trust

The “Bible Charts” are designed to acquaint the “prospect” with the will of God. This method emphasizes two important aspects: (1) an open Bible and (2) an open discussion.

I. An Open Bible.

It is a great gift to quote Scripture. But quoting a passage is not as powerful as the “prospect” reading the passage. For he or she sees the words rather than merely hears the message of God. Were not the Bereans “*more noble*” for examining the Scriptures themselves instead of letting others do it for them, Acts 17:11?

Reading the Bible reinforces the authority of the text. We are commanded to search the word. Did not Phillip “*begin with the Scriptures when he taught the eunuch,*” Acts 8:35? “Sales are made when samples are provided.” Therefore, in using the “Bible Charts,” let the “prospect” read the passages. An open Bible creates an open mind! It is slower but ends in a better place.

II. An Open Discussion

A skillful personal worker will connect everything to the “prospect.” After all, the Bible study is about HIS or HER salvation, HIS or HER soul, and about HIS or HER spiritual needs. It is not about the “teacher.” Hence, get the agreement of the “prospect” after each chart before moving on to the next one: “*Do you agree?*” OR “*Do you understand?*” OR “*Do you have any questions?*”

If he has a question, handle it in one of three ways: (1) If it refers to what was just presented, take time to clarify the misunderstanding. (2) If the question is answered in a future lesson, gently postpone it (with a promise of a future response). And (3) if you do not know the answer, promise to find the answer and bring it to the next class meeting. Dealing with questions in this manner: Keeps the “prospect” interested, stimulates additional questions, and provides an excellent beginning for the next session.

It is always incumbent on the “teacher” to consider why a question is asked.

- . Was it asked to stir up controversy?
- . Was it mentioned to ascertain truth?
- . Was it intended to get the “teacher” off the subject?
- . Is the “prospect” avoiding a decision?

All questions should be handled with care. A soul is at stake!

ACTIVITY: The “Bible Charts” require a lot of learning in order to be used effectively. But they are the most successful in converting the lost. In our next class session, you will be asked to present one or more of the charts. BE PREPARED. This is the last method you will be required to learn in this class. We are rounding the final turn and heading home. The finish line is in sight!

PART FOUR

LEADING

THE

LOST

LESSON TWELVE

STRONG FINISH

One of the most important factors in teaching a home Bible study is believing there will be a good result. We should expect the “prospect” to receive Christ and be surprised when he or she does not do so. The matter of expectation is critical, because—to some degree—favorable outcomes are influenced by a confident “teacher.”

When a young minister mentioned that he had not converted a single soul in a year, an older preacher asked him how many he had expected to convert!

A person must never be pushed into accepting the Lord. But neither should he be allowed to walk away from Christ without hearing a solid case for conversion, cf. Luke 14:23; Acts 2:40; 18:4; 19:8; II Corinthians 5:11.

Personal workers are often reluctant to use persuasion. Yet, everything up to this point (in the local evangelism course) has been intended to persuade the “teacher” to be persuasive.

The “prospect” often needs help in taking that final, important step. There are two ways of assisting the “prospect:” overcoming hesitation and answering objections.

I. Overcoming Hesitation

There are several ways to move the “prospect” toward a positive conclusion. I call them “closings.” Each one should be employed until a “prospect” makes a decision—for or against the Lord.

There are six closings. Each personal worker needs to be very familiar with them so that his closing sounds sincere.

ASSUMPTION CLOSING	The "teacher" should assume the "prospect" will accept Jesus. Expect the "prospect" to do so. <i>"Surely you want to go to heaven? It is time to be baptized." The Bible study is finished. The hour of decision has come.</i> This closing is safe to use. It is the best way to complete a "Bible Charts" study. However, if the "prospect" hesitates, the "teacher" should move to the next closing.
STEP BY STEP CLOSING	The effort to convert a "prospect" is NOT over if he or she hesitates. Try again. Make positive statements. <i>"You respect God and desire to keep His commands."</i> (Pause) <i>"You believe the Bible is inspired."</i> (Pause) <i>"You want your sins forgiven."</i> (Pause) <i>"You are ready to be baptized."</i> (Pause) Such statements help the "prospect" make up his mind. Positive reminders lead to positive responses.
SUMMARY CLOSING	The next closing summarizes the benefits of obeying the Almighty. <i>"God has given us the Bible. He has alerted us to our need for salvation. He sent Jesus. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Are you ready to receive these blessings? They are free."</i> This is a powerful closing (when made with enthusiasm and confidence).
NARRATIVE CLOSING	Should the "prospect" continue to hesitate, the personal worker tells the story of someone who refused to become a Christian. Or the "teacher" can refer to the story of someone who took the opportunity to become a Christian. Stories cause the "prospect" to think. Narratives (both happy and sad) touch the emotions and motivate a person to act.
CONTRAST CLOSING	Remind the "prospect" that the home Bible study has introduced several important concepts: forgiveness, hope, heaven, and eternal life. Ask him <i>"which one of them are you willing to abandon: forgiveness? (Pause) hope? (Pause) heaven? (Pause) or eternal life? (Pause) However, if you reject baptism, you turn your back on ALL of them. Are you ready to be baptized?"</i> This closing offers the "prospect" everything and, then, takes everything away.
WHY-NOT CLOSING	The final closing simply asks the "prospect" the reason for his reluctance. It is effectively used when the "teacher" asks several probing questions. <i>"What is your reason for hesitating?" (Pause) "What hinders you from being baptized?" (Pause)</i> This usually results in more objections.

Our learning to do personal work is something like playing a sport: football, basketball, soccer, hockey, etc. The coach can diagram a “perfect play” on the chalkboard. The play should work. But the opposing team has other ideas. In a similar manner, the “teacher” of a Bible study must overcome hesitation. When the six closings (above) are used without moving the “prospect” across the finish line, do NOT quit. The “prospect” has too much to lose. He or she may continue to raise objections. It is common to do so. DO NOT BECOME DISCOURAGED. Pause. Take a deep breath. And smile. For, as the “teacher,” your work is not done!

II. Answer Objections

After repeatedly nudging the “prospect” without success, it is time to confront his or her objections head on. As before, the attitude of the “teacher” toward the objections is crucial to the outcome. The “teacher” should gladly embrace them. And, again, treat them as if the “prospect” is asking for more information.

- . Appear as though you expected more push back
- . Be confident
- . Let the “prospect” state his case
- . Pause before answering
- . Let the “prospect” save face

REMEMBER: It is common for people to hesitate—even at this “stage of the game,” Acts 24:24,25. Felix likely knew better but simply did not do better. It is a big commitment to accept Christ. Be patient. Persevere. Answer the objections with love for the truth and for the “prospect.”

<i>"I do not think that I know enough."</i>	It is admirable to want to know more. Yet no one can understand spiritual things until he accepts Christ, <u>I Cor 2:14</u> . Your obedience will give you insight, <u>Jn 7:17</u> ; cf. <u>II Cor 3:14-16</u> . How much must you know in order to be baptized?
<i>"I am afraid what others will say."</i>	No true friend will ridicule your convictions. If someone does, we should not be ashamed of Jesus, <u>Mt 5:11,12</u> ; <u>Mk 8:38</u> ; <u>II Tim 3:12</u> ; <u>I Pet 4:14,16</u> . Rather, we should be happy, <u>Lk 6:22,23</u> .
<i>"I am undecided about what I want to do."</i>	What are you undecided about? We are against Jesus if we do not decide for Him, <u>Mt 12:30</u> . The Bible urges decisive action, <u>I Kgs 18:21</u> ; <u>Acts 22:16</u> . God will help you, <u>Jn 8:12</u> .
<i>"The Christian life is too hard."</i>	God will aid you along the way, <u>Jere 29:11-13</u> ; <u>II Tim 1:12</u> . Indeed, we cannot be faithful by ourselves. But, the Lord will help us, <u>Ps 37:5</u> ; <u>Phil 1:6</u> ; <u>4:13</u> ; <u>II Pet 1:10</u> .
<i>"I have tried but I have failed."</i>	Everyone struggles against failing. God has promised to protect us, <u>Isaiah 40:28-31</u> ; <u>41:10</u> ; <u>Mt 28:20</u> ; <u>I Cor 10:13</u> ; <u>II Cor 12:9,10</u> ; <u>Heb 13:5</u> ; <u>II Pet 2:9</u> ; <u>Jude 24,25</u> . We can trust He will.
<i>"What will happen to my relatives?"</i>	Your relatives surely would have followed Jesus if they knew what you know. They are in the hands of a just God, <u>II Cor 5:10</u> . You will not condemn them if you obey the Gospel.
<i>"I believe everybody is going to be saved."</i>	The Bible plainly declares that that is not so. There are some who will <u>not</u> be saved, <u>II Cor 6:9</u> ; <u>Rev 21:8</u> . The Savior Himself will send some to eternal torment, <u>Mt 25:31-46</u> .
<i>"This is merely the way you interpret the Bible."</i>	I realize that others disagree with both of us. What should we use as the final authority in religious matters? <u>Ps 19:7-11</u> ; <u>I Thess 2:13</u> ; <u>II Tim 2:15</u> .
<i>"I am perfectly satisfied with my religion."</i>	It is good to be satisfied. But, are you satisfied on account of what humans think or what God revealed? <u>II Cor 10:12,18</u> . Our goal should be to satisfy the Almighty, <u>Luke 16:15</u> .

<i>"I think I have already made the right choice."</i>	That is good—as long as your choice is the same as the will of God, <u>Matt 6:10; 26:39</u> .
<i>"I think all churches are right."</i>	How can all churches be right when they teach different things? Christ established only one church, <u>Matt 16:18; Eph 4:1-6</u> . Unity is a divine command, <u>I Cor 1:10</u> .
<i>"I must give up too many things."</i>	Is that not a problem of loving the things of this world more than loving Jesus, <u>Luke 14:33</u> ? We lose our affection for the stuff of this life when we find Christ, <u>Phil 3:7,8</u> .
<i>"I am too busy."</i>	He who is "too busy" to be a Christian is <i>busier</i> than God wants him to be! We should put "first things" first, <u>Matt 6:33</u> .
<i>"Religion has too many restrictions."</i>	Everything in life has restrictions. The Christian is freed from the slavery of rules to serve the Lord, <u>James 1:25</u> . Does not a concern for rules imply resentment of God, <u>I John 5:3</u> ?
<i>"There are too many things in religion I cannot accept."</i>	There are many things in life that we blindly accept and use without question (like electricity), <u>Deut 29:29; John 13:7; I Cor 13:12; II Cor 5:7</u> . The Lord has revealed enough for us to gain a saving faith, <u>John 20:30,31</u> .
<i>"My spouse would object to my baptism."</i>	This is a very difficult position to be in yet the Lord wants you to put Him first, <u>Matt 10:37; 19:29</u> . Why would your spouse object? Let us study the Bible with your spouse.
<i>"I want to improve first then I will be baptized."</i>	We can only partially improve ourselves while Jesus can change us completely, <u>Matt 9:3</u> . The Lord died on the cross because we cannot reform ourselves, <u>Romans 7:15-25a</u> .
<i>"God will not punish me if I fail to obey the Gospel."</i>	God condemns those who (because of their hesitancy) condemn themselves, <u>Luke 6:46; II Thess 1:8,9</u> .

<i>"I have a grudge against someone."</i>	What is eternity worth? What is more valuable than your soul? Is a grudge worth more than eternal life? <u>Matthew 6:15</u> ; <u>Colossians 3:12,13</u> .
<i>"I have plenty of time to obey later."</i>	Surely this is contrary to your own best judgment because we have no guarantee of tomorrow. The Bible discourages procrastination, <u>Isa 55:6</u> ; <u>Matt 24:44</u> ; <u>II Cor 6:1,2</u> .
<i>"I am not good enough."</i>	God is concerned for you. Jesus died for you. No one is too wicked if they accept the Savior, <u>Isa 1:18</u> ; <u>Rom 10:13</u> ; <u>Heb 7:25</u> ; <u>I Jn 1:9</u> .
<i>"I think what you have said is too narrow."</i>	We must be as narrow as the Bible, <u>Matt 7:13,14</u> . The word of God is quite narrow on certain things and at certain points, <u>Acts 2:38</u> ; <u>Ephesians 4:4-6</u> ; <u>I Peter 4:11</u> .
<i>"There are hypocrites in the church."</i>	Yes, there are! But he who sees the sins of others <u>before</u> he sees his own sins is the real hypocrite, <u>Matt 7:1-5</u> . There are hypocrites everywhere (except heaven), <u>Matt 24:51</u> .
<i>"I am not all that sinful."</i>	But that is an admission that you are sinful. All of us need Christ, <u>Jere 17:9,10</u> ; <u>Rom 3:10-12,23</u> ; <u>6:16</u> . We must not justify ourselves, <u>Lk 18:9-14</u> .
<i>"I do not see any harm in some innocent fun."</i>	What is "innocent fun?" Does it not choke the Gospel and hinder obedience, <u>Prov 21:17a</u> ; cf. <u>Lk 9:14</u> . It alienates us from God, <u>James 4:4</u> . He commanded us to be "holy," <u>Heb 11:24-26</u> .
<i>"What does it matter what I believe as long as I do right?"</i>	The Lord cares! Indeed, it makes a big difference what you believe. How can a person do right if he does not believe the right things? Your destiny depends on your beliefs, <u>Rom 10:10</u> .

A person can feel saved but still be lost, Acts 23:1; 26:9; Galatians 1:13; I Timothy 1:12-16. Sincerity is not a sign of acceptability, Proverbs 12:15; 14:12. A person can be deceived by his feelings, Genesis 37:28-36; 45:25-28.

The three pages of “objections” and “responses” (above) need not be memorized. Nevertheless, it is good to know where the objections are located on the various pages so they can be found without delay.

Finally, when the “prospect” agrees to be baptized, he or she should be informed of the next steps in doing so.

1. Emphasize being baptized as soon as possible.
2. Explain how the process works.
3. Inform other members of the congregation.
4. Conduct a dignified service.
5. Mention the cost of discipleship, Luke 14:25-35.

ACTIVITY: Write a story about someone you know who refused to be baptized (150 words) OR write a story about someone you know who accepted Jesus in baptism (150 words).

LESSON THIRTEEN

FOLLOW-UP

The cruelest thing to do to a new convert is to drop him or her as soon as they are baptized. We understand how to be a Christian. But the recently born-again saint is often clueless. It is the responsibility of the “teacher” to see that the new believer is nurtured, Matthew 28:18-20. We neglect a vital part of local evangelism when follow-up is left undone.

Unfed lambs become weak. Our effort has been wasted if the convert “*backslides*” into sin, cf. Jeremiah 3:22a. There are far too many underdeveloped saints in the pews. A new convert must not remain a babe in Christ, Hebrews 5:12-14. The recently baptized must be trained, must get involved. The new fruit must become fruit bearers, John 15:1-4.

I. Strengthening The Convert

There are many things to do after conversion. Here are a few of them.

A. Make A Phone Call. Within a couple of days after the baptism, the “teacher” should call the new believer to “*touch base*,” to field any questions, and to remind the convert of the times the saints meet for worship. Assure the new brother or sister in Christ that you will be at the building to introduce them to some of the members.

B. Send A Letter. Within a week, the “teacher” should send a letter of welcome and encouragement to the new convert.

C. Continue The Bible Study. There are five more “Bible Charts” that take three more sessions to cover.

- . **Session One:** Worship and The Christian Life
- . **Session Two:** Church Unity and The New Testament Church
- . **Session Three:** What Does The Future Hold?

WORSHIP

Ecclesiastes 5:1-5

Worship is:	True Worship Is:	False Worship Is:
A sincere acknowledgement of God expressed in a reverent manner by word and deed to the praise and honor of His name.	Should be done everywhere in submission to and respect for the Lord, <u>I Peter 4:11</u> .	Is without honor for God, <u>Matthew 15:8,9</u> , devoid of understanding, <u>Acts 17:23</u> , and dictated by human rules, <u>Colossians 2:20-23</u>
PRAYER <u>Philippians 4:6,7</u> .	Spoken in faith, <u>Mark 11:24</u> , in Jesus' name, <u>John 14:13,14</u> , and according to His will, <u>I John 5:14</u>	Mechanical repetition as a show of piety, <u>Matthew 6:5-7</u> , with selfish motives, <u>James 4:3</u> , while cherishing sin, <u>Psalms 66:18</u> .
COMMUNION <u>I Corinthians 11:23-29</u> .	In memory of Christ's death on the cross.	Failure to concentrate on Calvary
GIVING <u>I Corinthians 16:1,2</u> ; <u>II Corinthians 8:12; 9:6-11</u>	Should be done regularly, proportionally, liberally, and cheerfully.	Forgetting that God owns everything, <u>Ps 24:1</u> , and a failure to lay up treasures in heaven, <u>Matt 6:19-24</u> .
SINGING <u>Ephesians 5:19</u> ; <u>Colossians 3:16</u> .	With joy, gratitude, enthusiasm, and understanding in our heart.	Done for entertainment instead of for the Lord.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

II Peter 1:3-9

*"Add to your faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance,
godliness, brotherly kindness, and love."*

Walk With God
To Be Like Him,
II Peter 3:18

In Christ Our
Fullness Dwells,
Colossians 2:9,10

Christian Living Is The
Outward Glow Of An
Indwelling God,
Philippians 2:12,13.

Hence, A Christ Not In Us
Is A Christ
Not Ours,
Galatians 2:20.

So We Must Allow
Him To Come Into
Every Part Of Our
Existence,
II Corinthians 5:17.

A Christian Life Is
The By-Product Of
Yielding Completely To God.

If We Do These Things
We Will Never Fall,
II Peter 3:9,10.

Reflect His
Glory

Take Him With
Us

"We can do more than we imagine by His power that works in us,"
Ephesians 3:20.

CHURCH UNITY

Ephesians 4:3-6

The Church is the Believers.
CAN THEY BE UNITED?

IS IT POSSIBLE?

John 17:20,21

IS IT COMMANDED?

I Corinthians 1:10

IS IT NECESSARY?

YES

CAN IT BE DONE?

DOES IT MATTER?

Galatians 1:8,9

SHOULD WE DO IT?

Matthew 7:24-27

HOW?

BUILD ACCORDING TO GOD'S PATTERN, <u>Hebrews 8:5</u>
Founder and Head is Christ, <u>Matthew 16:18</u>; <u>Colossians 1:18</u>
Government: Elders, <u>Acts 20:28</u>, and Deacons, <u>Acts 6:1-6</u>
Guide to Faith and Practice: The Bible, <u>II Timothy 3:16,17</u>
Terms of Membership: Added by God, <u>Acts 2:47</u>
Mission and Work: Sharing the Wisdom of God, <u>Ephesians 3:10</u>

NOT EVERY RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IS RIGHT, Matthew 7:13

nor is

MERELY MENTIONING HIS NAME SUFFICIENT, Matthew 7:21-23

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

33 AD -----NOW

A Departure Was Predicted, Acts 20:28-30; Romans 16:17,18

What Caused It?

Things Of Faith Became Matters Of Opinion, Matthew 15:18,19
Binding Human Ideas Like They Were Divine Mandates,
II Thessalonians 2:4,5

Infant Baptism Advocated	150 AD
Salvation by Faith Only	400 AD
Roman Catholic Church	600 AD
Greek Orthodox Church	1250 AD
Lutheran Church and Church of England	1530 AD
Presbyterian Church	1536 AD
Congregational, Episcopalian, and Baptist	1610 AD
Methodist Church	1739 AD

In The Early 1800,s The Restoration Movement Began To
Restore The First Century Ways Of Doing Things

**“ASK FOR THE ANCIENT PATHS WHERE IS THE GOOD
WAY AND WALK IN IT”**

Jeremiah 6:16

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS?

REMAIN FAITHFUL

- . Believers must remain faithful till the end, John 15:5-8.
- . A saved person can be lost, Galatians 5:4;
I Timothy 1:18-20; 4:1; 6:9; II Timothy 2:18;
Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26,27; II Peter 2:20,21; I John 3:7-10;
Jude 21.

SECOND COMING

- . Christ will come again, when we least expect Him,
I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Time will come to an end.

JUDGMENT

- . We will all be judged, II Corinthians 5:10.
- . Christ will be the judge, John 5:22,27.
- . He will weight our attitudes, thoughts, words, and deeds. Nothing will be hidden from Him,
Hebrews 4:13.

ETERNAL DESTINY

- . All evil persons will go into eternal punishment. All righteous people will enjoy eternal life, Matthew 25:46.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him," I Corinthians 2:9.

WHO HOLDS THE FUTURE?

The “teacher” should always ask the new convert if he or she has any unchurched relatives or friends nearby who would host a Bible study.

D. Keep The Connection. Of course, the “teacher” will see the “convert” at church. But, as the “teacher” moves on to the next Bible study, he or she should stay in touch with their former student(s). The following four visits—spaced out over the next year—are recommended.

- 1 month after baptism inquire about their Bible reading and prayer.
- 3 months after baptism ask about their spiritual growth.
- 6 months after baptism encourage responsibility in the church.
- 12 months after baptism suggest they arrange a home Bible study.

ACTIVITY: Write a welcome letter to a new convert (150 words).

- . Rejoice in their conversion.
- . Welcome them to the community of faith.
- . Mention their name being added to the congregational directory.
- . Promise to “stay in touch.”
- . Remind them of the remaining Bible study classes.
- . Offer to answer any of their questions.

II. Rescuing The Fallen

A warm and enthusiastic follow-up can prevent many from falling away. But satan is not asleep. He prowls around seeking to reclaim any straying sheep. We must not let down our guard. And, should a convert "fall through the cracks," we must snatch them out of the hands of the adversary.

ACTIVITY: Make a list of fallen saints that need to be brought back to the Lord.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

It is difficult to restore the fallen. But, in spite of the challenge, we should encourage them patiently, 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR A FALLEN SAINT

How are believers to behave after baptism?	<u>I Corinthians 16:13,14;</u> <u>Colossians 3:12-14</u>	Believers should obey God and forgive others.
Can we do for ourselves what Jesus did for us?	<u>John 10:10; 14:3</u>	No! Only He can give us an abundant life.
Is being a Christian difficult?	<u>Matthew 7:13,14;</u> <u>7:21-23.</u>	Yes! Yet it is not impossible. God will help.
How are we to live in order to get to heaven?	<u>Titus 2:11-14</u>	We must live godly lives and say "no" to sin.
Does being a Christian require us to sacrifice?	<u>Romans 12:1,2</u>	Absolutely! We do for Christ what He did for us.
How do you feel about your present condition before God?	<u>I John 1:8,9;</u> <u>Revelation 2:5</u>	You must turn back to God and confession your sins.
Does it do any good to know these things but refuse to do them?	<u>James 4:17</u>	Refusing to do what is right leaves our future in jeopardy.
What, then, should you do?	<u>James 5:19,20;</u> <u>II Peter 2:20,21</u>	Are you ready to ask the Lord for forgiveness?

**IS THERE ANY REASON GOOD ENOUGH TO DELAY DOING
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE? TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE.
ETERNITY DOES NOT GIVE SECOND CHANCES.**

CONCLUSION

TURNING YOUNG LAMBS INTO MATURE SHEEP

I would be remiss if I did not mention the after-care of new converts. In the “overview” (of this book), I wrote, “*the assembly of the saints must be ready to receive new members.*” Thus, I conclude this short manual on local evangelism with comments on turning the lambs into sheep.

Once the lost have been found—namely, the prospect has been baptized—the new believer must become an active church member. This does not happen accidentally. It must be carefully planned.

We live in a time of low church commitment. Most Christians are spectators rather than players. They hop from one congregation to another (without identity, accountability, or loyalty). They do not realize that church membership includes believing and serving.

I. Welcome New Members

Recent converts are like visitors when they start attending church. They are, for the most part, strangers in the assembly. That is a critical moment in their spiritual life.

A. Greet Them. New Members must be greeted as soon as they arrive. For, they will be asking themselves various questions.

- . Do I belong here?
- . Does anyone care that I have come?
- . Am I needed?
- . Is there a benefit in being here?
- . What is required to be a member?

It is up to the congregation to answer those questions without delay.

B. Love Them. Do not leave new members guessing. The first impression can become their enduring impression.

Every congregation thinks it is a loving church—which usually means they love those they already know. But do they go out of their way to care for newcomers? An easy way of finding out is to give every visitor a “First Impression Card.”

MY FIRST IMPRESSION

We want our guests to feel welcome. Would you share your honest opinions about attending this church?

1. What did you notice first?
2. What did you like most?
3. What did you like least?

THANK YOU. AND, PLEASE, COME BACK!

C. Feed Them. People attend church for secular, social, and spiritual reasons. Initially, no reason is more legitimate than another.

SECULAR	SOCIAL	SPIRITUAL
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John 6:23,24

Matthew 26:6,7

Mark 10:17

Fix my problems

Please parents

Find peace with God

Make connections

Make spouse happy

Get forgiveness

Find friends

Keep traditions

Go to heaven

Considering all visitors (including new converts), what percent are in each category?

45%

35%

20%

Everyone who goes to church has a need. Yet only 20% of visitors have a spiritual need! A church will not grow unless it supplies all three concerns.

II. Develop New Members

Turning a lamb into a sheep requires considerable food. The food must be both tasty and nutritious—a balanced diet—wanted and needed.

A. Value In Membership. Belonging is more than being added to the church role. It is a commitment. But people do not commit to serve unless they understand the value of church membership.

- . It is an identification with the saved, Acts 2:47.
- . It provides a supportive family, Ephesians 2:19.
- . It includes the guidance of qualified leaders, Hebrews 13:17.
- . It gives an opportunity for accountability, Romans 14:12.
- . It is a place to serve, Romans 12:1-4.

The church offers benefits that cannot be found anywhere else. Everyone has a longing for belonging. The church is a haven in a hurtful world, a safe retreat in a dangerous environment.

B. Class For Membership. The way a person joins an organization influences how he or she functions in that organization. If little is required, little will be done. Therefore, a class about membership is essential in turning guests into family, members into servants.

The membership class does not have to be long in order to be strong. Four hours in one day—with a short break every sixty minutes—is plenty. The purpose is to answer the questions of the newcomer.

- . What is a church?
- . What is the purpose of the church?
- . How is the church organized?
- . What are the benefits of church membership?
- . What are the responsibilities of membership?
- . How does one get involved?

Completion of such a class should be considered a requirement for membership. It is a demonstration of commitment. If a person is unwilling or uninterested in attending, he or she will (most likely) never be an active part of the Body of Christ.

C. Care Of Membership. New members must make friends. Friendships are the glue that hold the church together. It is the key to retaining newcomers. Most people who drop out of a congregation say, *"I didn't feel anyone cared that I was present!"* Intra-church relationships are encouraged by game nights, potlucks, picnics, home groups, and weekend retreats. The latter is probably the most effective because they require the most time and facilitate the most interaction.

D. Nurture Of Membership. New members must not remain infants,

Ephesians 4:14. But how is maturity gained?

Lambs do not become sheep automatically. Even if converts faithfully attend church they do not necessarily grow. They must want to grow. They must decide to grow. Indeed, as Paul said, they must “*continue to work out their salvation*,” Philippians 2:12.

Carefully planned strategies are required to turn a baptized believer into a functioning saint. Lay ministry is built on four biblical truths.

TRUTH	BIBLICAL TEACHING
Every believer is a minister.	All Christians are created to work, <u>Ephesians 2:10</u> . It is a gift from God, <u>1 Peter 4:10</u> , which He expects us to role up our sleeves and do.
All ministries are important.	Though some ministries are invisible, they are not insignificant, <u>1 Corinthians 12:14-16</u> .
Every minister is needed.	Like pieces in a puzzle, it is easy to notice when one is missing, <u>1 Corinthians 12:17-20</u> .
Gifts of ministry must be discovered.	What God made us to <u>be</u> determines what He intends for us to <u>do</u> . We must not argue with the Almighty, <u>Romans 9:20,21</u> .

Every convert must recognize his abilities, celebrate his talents, and contribute accordingly.

In short, the leadership of the church must ask for commitment and guide members to engage in kingdom business.

In this way, every member fulfills the purpose God gave him. *“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom other people come to believe—as the Lord assigns them their tasks,”* 1 Corinthians 3:5.

Hence, *“do not become weary in doing right; for, at the proper time, you will gather a harvest if you do not give up,”* Galatians 6:19. Indeed, we should *“serve God’s purpose in our generation,”* Acts 13:36.