

BEING A SOUL WINNER FOR JESUS

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INTRODUCTION: (SCRIPTURE – 2 TIM 2:24-46)

- A. Anyone who has been a Christian for a decent amount of time has tried to reach someone who was lost**
1. Have you ever tried to teach the lost or restore one who fell away? Think about it... How'd it go?
 2. Sometimes doing this can be an extremely rewarding experience, can't it? But then again, it can also be a very disappointing and frustrating experience if their response is a negative one
 3. We've got to remember in all of this what our responsibility is... To teach the gospel!
 - a. We can't force anyone to obey the gospel of Christ or to give up some religious error, and while we wish at times we could, that wouldn't result in true conversions anyway
 - b. Our job is simply to teach people the truth, to plant the seed of the gospel in their hearts, and if we have done that then we've had success → The rest is up to them & God!
 - c. If we get confused on this matter we will be left feeling unsuccessful and discouraged with ourselves and also frustrated with others... When this happens, others often see it!
- B. We'd like to see more people turn to the Lord after our efforts to teach them. This isn't about pride in our selves... We genuinely want to see souls saved and the Lord's church to grow! (2 Tim 2:24-26)**

KEYS TO BEING AN EFFECTIVE SOUL WINNER FOR JESUS:

- A. Being effective at winning lost souls starts with a real understanding of their terrible condition!**
1. Paul, in a very picturesque way, describes them as being captives of the devil! (2 Tim 2:25-26)
 2. Why did Jesus spend so much time teaching and trying to bring people to salvation? He loved everyone & He saw their lost state & knew that Hell is real! (Isaiah 42:7; Matthew 23:15)
 3. One of the greatest reasons why we don't try more diligently to reach the lost is that we don't see them as being souls that are lost! (2 Thess 1:7-9)
 - a. We see people as being good moral people & great friends & we try to not think about the fact that they are lost... This makes us upset and is uncomfortable, but it's the truth!
 - b. Think about some people you know and love, but people you know are lost... Unless they change, God tells us they are heading for eternal destruction & torment in Hell!
 - c. What if Jesus started to return and you are standing there talking to them... How do you feel about them now? This is a perspective we need to try to keep all the time!
- B. Don't be quarrelsome, but be patient with everyone:**
1. Paul had spoken of a certain type of controversy that Timothy was to totally avoid (2 Tim 2:23)
 - a. There's "foolish" controversies → The Greek here is "moros" and is where we get moron from... You could say these are stupid controversies! These are questions which, even if you are able to find a good answer to them, would be completely pointless!
 - b. Then there's "ignorant" → The emphasis is on the question's nature... It is uneducated!
 - c. This is more than just a question... It's persistent questions that turn into debates that cause strife & division! When you finish with them, you see they don't even matter!
 - d. In the 14th Century, religious scholars spent a great deal of time debating just how many angels could fit on the head of a needle! That's stupid, unlearned, & doesn't matter!
 2. We also must guard against being quarrelsome in the way we teach others: (2 Tim 2:24)
 - a. Charles Spurgeon, in speaking to some students in London, said, "Beware of being like

- some, who go about with theological revolvers in their ecclesiastical trousers.”
- b. Some Christians who know what the truth is, but it seems they’re just out to pick a fight!
 - c. If we want to be effective at winning souls to Christ, we’ve got to avoid arguing back and forth with people → When people are arguing what are they not doing? LISTENING!
3. Instead of being quarrelsome, we should be kind to all people **(2 Tim 2:24)**
 - a. Who does Paul include? EVERYONE! This includes people of all races, genders, religious backgrounds, economic standings, political affiliations, & even their level of morality!
 - b. This means that we make sure we are patient with them – Try to put yourself in their shoes, give them the benefit of the doubt, realize how difficult it must be for them
 - c. Kindness is a quality we need all the time! In today’s world, when people are kind it almost seems shocking doesn’t it? It’s another way to let Christ shine! **(Col 3:11-12)**
 4. This doesn’t mean we shouldn’t defend the truth or that we should avoid all religious controversy!
 - a. The political correctness of our culture has had a great impact on religious people! Many love the concept of “agreeing to disagree” and see any controversy as unChristlike!
 - b. People who think this have not read the gospel accounts of His life! Jesus did not shy away from showing the error of the religious leaders & even created controversy to make His point... But He always treated those seeking salvation kindly! **(Mark 12:18-27)**
 - c. When fighting against false teachers we must contend earnestly for the faith **(Jude 3)** – But with others, we must strive to be more patient and kind in how we handle them

C. Work on being able to teach:

1. Another key we find Paul giving Timothy is that he needs to be able to teach others **(2 Tim 2:24)**
 - a. The only other time this word “able” appears is in the qualifications of elders **(1 Tim 3:2)**
 - b. It involves the idea of having the ability to teach others and being inclined to teach others
 - c. Being able and apt to teach involves a couple of things – First a person must have a decent knowledge of God’s word and secondly a person has to have a desire to teach others
2. Some Christians have feelings of inadequacy when it comes to being able to teach others when they are fully capable to teach: **(1 Cor 2:1-5)**
 - a. Sometimes we feel inadequate out of fear → What will they say? What if they refuse to listen to me? What if I don’t know the exact thing to say? What if they get mad?
 - b. These are certainly concerns we all have... But they aren’t concerns that should stand in our way! These concerns are beyond our control for the most part – Pray & go on!
 - c. Sometimes our concerns stem from forgetting what our job is – Stop thinking that you must get everyone you talk to repent... Just focus on getting the message out there!
 - d. If you are a Christian you obviously know what it takes to become one, so you can tell someone that, right? If its someone who has quit serving God, you know why they should return to the Lord, right? Often, our problem isn’t with a lack of knowledge!
3. You may rightfully feel unable to teach others... This is something you can change! **(2 Pet 3:15)**
 - a. We fear people may want to discuss some pretty deep things that we aren’t sure how to answer... But we all know where the answers are and we know how to find them!
 - b. There’s nothing wrong with saying, “I don’t know, let me study on that!” In fact, if you are willing to say this & actually do it, your humble attitude may be what wins them over
 - c. When we choose not to try to teach someone the gospel because we feel like we don’t know enough, and we’ve been Christians a while, what we really are saying is that we don’t care enough to take the time to study God’s word so we can teach them!

- d. Wouldn't it be sad if on the day of judgment someone we know is condemned while we had the opportunity to teach them, but we didn't because we were too lazy to study!

D. Patiently endure the evil that comes your way

1. Next Paul points out that we must endure the evil we face with patience **(2 Tim 2:24)**
 - a. "Patiently Enduring" translates from one word meaning, "bear with or put up with evil"
 - It's about an attitude of willingness to put up with the evil we may be subjected to
 - b. Man's tendency is to lash out when we are mistreated! We have the right of the pursuit of happiness and if anyone stands in the way of that, they will pay! If someone says or does something against us, our first thought is often, "How can I get them back?"
 - c. Consider Jesus! On the cross He wasn't just trying to reach the lost, He was providing the sacrifice for all mankind... Even then He was patiently enduring evil! **(1 Pet 2:20-23)**
2. Paul may be referring to times when we suffer for our testimony and for doing what is right – When we patiently endure this, it strengthens our ability to reach the lost! **(1 Pet 3:13-16)**
 - a. Peter had just described the mindset and life of one who wants a good life... He won't speak evil or deceit, turns away from doing evil & does good, seeks & pursues peace
 - b. Ironically, in doing this, when are going to receive evil treatment from time to time! What do we do? Keep doing what's right! Let others see us honoring Christ in everything!
 - c. As we do this, we'll have to give a defense for the hope in us! This isn't about answering error, but teaching others as we live a good life in spite of being treated wrongly!
3. But really, how we respond to difficult times regardless of the cause, is a demonstration of our faith and the power of God in our lives **(Romans 5:1-5)**

E. Correct your opponents with gentleness

1. When others oppose us, we must make sure we correct them with gentleness **(2 Tim 2:25)**
 - a. It seems Paul is saying that sometimes our efforts to reach others will turn personal! They aren't just disagreeing with something we believe but they are opposing us... It hurts!
 - b. When this happens it's easy to respond to others with frustration and even to get agitated in the way we speak and deal with them... That's not gentleness but harshness!
 - c. It's also easy to get frustrated when others can't see the truth, or they make excuses for obeying the gospel, or they refuse to repent and start doing what's right again
2. Our words must be chosen carefully! We must strive to be gracious with others **(Col 4:5-6)**
 - a. What this tells us is that there is a totally wrong way to present something totally right!
 - b. Remember, our goal is not to win some heated debated with another person, showing them we're better Bible students than they are... Our goal is to teach them the truth!
 - c. Salt makes food taste better doesn't it? It even makes food that is more difficult to eat because of its flavor (squash) more tolerable to our taste buds! This is how the way we present the truth, and the words we choose, impacts people's acceptance of it
 - d. This doesn't mean we water down the truth or that we hide the cost of discipleship from those we are teaching, but we don't make it harder to accept by what we say!
 - e. **Illustration:** 10th grade study hall with Mrs. Firestone – "Do you think I'm a Christian?"
3. As we seek to teach others the gospel or restore the fallen, the way we correct them may mean just as much to them as the message we bring! Be gracious! **(Prov 25:11; Prov 15:23)**