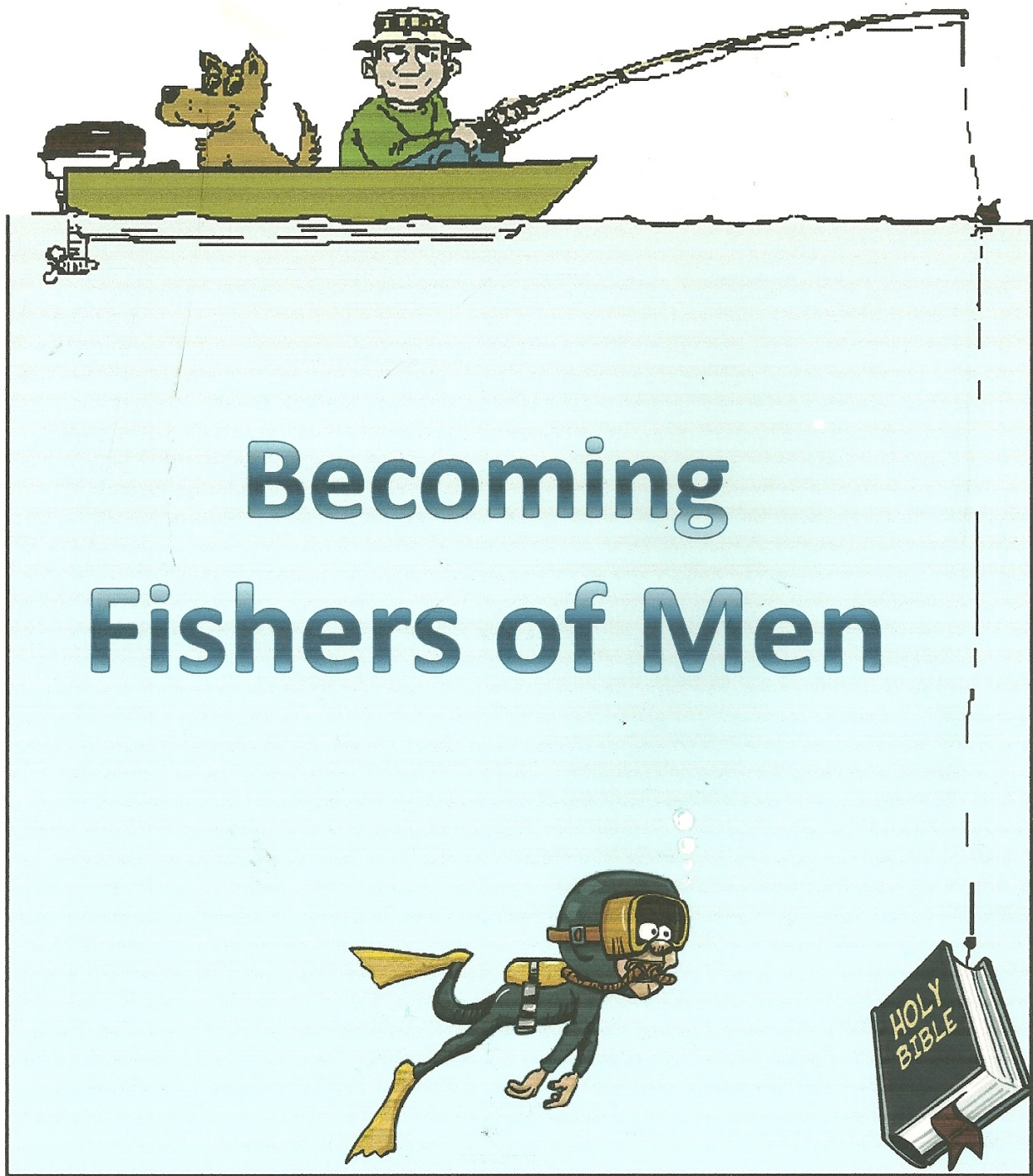


# Evangelism Workshop



Forum Terrace Church of Christ Grand Prairie, Texas - June 8 – 10, 2018



# Table of Contents

“Let’s Go Fishing” .....	5
<i>Friday, 7:30 pm, June 8, 2018</i>	
Becoming Fishers of Men .....	11
<i>Saturday, 9:30 am, June 9, 2018</i>	
Parable of the Fishless Fishermen .....	16
Fishing for Men With Two Fishermen .....	17
<i>Saturday, 10:30 am, June 9, 2018</i>	
Overcoming Obstacles When Fishing for Men .....	23
<i>Sunday, 9:30 am, June 10, 2018</i>	
Great Acts of Fishers of Men .....	31
<i>Sunday, 10:30 am, June 10, 2018</i>	
Caring for the Catch .....	37
<i>Sunday, 5:00 pm, June 10, 2018</i>	
Personal Contact Forms .....	43



# **“Let’s Go Fishing”**

## **Why Should You Become a Fisher of Men?**

To becoming a fisher of men is to be a soul winner for Jesus. A favorite hymn, we have often sung, says: “I want to be a soul winner for Jesus every day.” But why? The song goes on to give several good reasons: First, “I want to aid the lost sinner to leave his erring way, and be from bondage free.” Second, “And bring the lost to Christ, that they His grace may know.” Another reason would be, “I want to hear Him say, servant, ‘You’ve gathered many sheaves, receive a starry crown.’” In the refrain the final reason is: “He’s done so much for me.” Yet there are some other good reasons to be soul winner.

### ► **Jesus Has Commanded Us to Share the Gospel**

The Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark. 16:15 is clearly given to the apostles. The apostles are all dead and gone, but this does not mean all responsibility to save the lost is out of the hands of man. Preaching the Gospel is the responsibility of every Christian. Part of the apostles’ commission was to teach the disciples. The apostles were to teach all disciples to observe all things which Christ had commanded them (Matthew 28:19). Paul illustrates this, when he told Timothy to commit the gospel to faithful men who were “*able to teach others also*” (2 Tim. 2:2).

The duty to teach others went from the apostle Paul to Timothy to faithful men, and finally to others who are able to teach. This has continued being passed along right down to today. If a church has 100 members it should have 100 soul winners. “Every Christian this side of heaven ought to be concerned with every sinner this side of hell.”

### ► **Jesus Left Us His Example to Follow**

Christ was a soul winner. At the age of twelve Christ was teaching in the Temple, saying: “*know ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?*” (Lk. 2:49). What is the Father’s business or work? (Jn. 4:34). The Father’s business Christ was to do involved saving the world (Jn. 12:4); calling sinners to repentance (Mt. 9:13); seeking the lost (Lk. 19:10); and making fishers of men (Mk. 1:17). Jesus was always willing and ready to teach multitudes as well as individuals. We are to be as our mater (Mt. 10:25).

One passage in particular helps us identify Jesus’ attitude toward the lost. “*When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things*” (Mk. 6:34). Sheep need a shepherd, else they wander unprotected and will die of hunger and thirst. People are the same (1 Pet. 2:25). Jesus had feelings for those lost: “*He had compassion on them.*” Compassion is “a sympathetic consciousness of the condition of others with a desire to alleviate it.” What did Christ do about it? “He began to teach them.”

### ► **The Example of the Early Christians**

Notice how natural it was for the early disciples to share the Good News with others. Philip spent a night with the Master and went out and found Nathaniel to bring him to Jesus. Andrew found his brother, Simon Peter. After Peter and the other apostles preached on the day of Pentecost, the Lord

### **6 Solemn Facts:**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| #1 | Not all will be saved (Matthew 7:21).  |
| #2 | The majority will be lost (Matthew 7:13-14).   |
| #3 | Many will perish who expect to be saved (Matthew 7:22-23).                                 |
| #4 | There is no means of salvation for those who die lost (Matthew 7:21-23).                   |
| #5 | Christ, the only savior (Acts 4:12) saved only those who do His will (Matthew 7:21,24-27). |
| #6 | Today may be someone’s last opportunity - even yours (2 Cor. 6:2).                         |

continued adding to the church those being saved daily (Acts 2:47). Later, 5,000 obeyed as a result of the apostles preaching daily in the temple (4:4). Even after suffering persecution for preaching the Gospel, they continued to preach in the Temple and in every house, daily (5:42). Many priest were among the disciples that were made in Jerusalem (6:7). Stephen died preaching to the Jews (Acts 7). After Stephen's death *"there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ...Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word"* (8:1,4). Notice the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem as others went out to be soul winners for Jesus. Philip preached in Samaria with great success (8:5,12). He later taught the Ethiopian (8:26-39). Soon all of Palestine was taught (9:31). By 63 AD all the (Roman) world was evangelized (Col. 1:23).

► **Our Salvation Depends On Our Efforts To Help Save the Souls of Others**

God gave a warning to those of the Old Testament, He had commissioned them to speak words of warning to the wicked. *"If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul"* (Ezek. 3:18,19). Personal evangelism is personal preservation. Paul warned that a good soldier of the cross does not entangle himself in this world (2 Tim. 2:3f). We were saved to save. We cannot sit down and expect the world to become Christians spontaneously. Like Paul we need to feel a great urgency to share the Gospel. *"For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"* (1Cor. 9:16).

► **Being a Soul Winner Brings Great Joy**

Those who received the Gospel in the New Testament went on to rejoice (Acts 8:39; 16:33,34). Great joy is found in knowing you are saved. Great joy is also experienced by those who share the Gospel with others. Personal joy comes in working with God and being helpful to the lost. Paul often expressed his joy over the souls he helped lead to Christ. He told the Philippian saints that he counted them as his *"joy and crown"* (Phil 4:1). The Thessalonians were his hope, joy, and crown (1 Th. 2:19,20). "Crown" is used in the sense of a wreath or chaplet worn by athletes in the Grecian games for their king. Today, athletes win trophies or gold metals for our nation.

Sharing the Gospel is in fact sharing the joy. We share things joyfully everyday of our lives. A housewife shares a real bargain with her neighbor. A business man shows others new tax-saving laws. A farmer shares a new fertilizer that increased his crop yield. Fishermen share favorite fishing spots and lures. The shepherd who lost one sheep out of 99 and then found it called his friends and said, *"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost"* (Luke 15:6). The woman who lost one coin out of ten called her friends and said, *"Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost"* (Luke 15:9). Jesus made the application for us, *"just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* (Luke 15:10).

► **It is Wise**

*"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise"* (Prov. 11:30). Therefore, those who are not soul winners cannot be wise. He is like a man who can save many from a burning house, but will not.

It takes great wisdom in saving souls (Mt. 10:16). Wisdom includes great foresight as well as application of hindsight. The Soul Winner must see the lost and their needs. He sees the "fields white unto harvest." He esteems that which is most valuable in life - that is the soul. Soul winning is wise, for in saving others we are saved. It is wise, for we hide a multitude of sins (Js. 5:19,20). It is wise because it will bring eternal glory for them and for us. Those saints who lack such wisdom should pray for it (James 1:5).

► **One Soul is of Great Value**

Jesus said, *"for what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matt. 16:26). The soul's value can also be seen in its immortality (Lk. 20:37,38). Where your soul spends eternity depends on how you spend your life here on earth. Where the lost spend eternity depends on whether you take the Gospel to them and they obey

it (2 Th. 1:7-9). The Day of Judgment for the immortal soul is coming (Mt. 24:35-44). No man is certain as to when it will happen. All men should be certain that it will happen and be prepared for when it does happen.

The value of the soul can be seen in what God has done to save it. The cost of redemption is the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:17-19). God gave His only Son to die for us (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

Perhaps it could be argued that the greatest achievements or successes or work a man could do in this life is related to winning lost souls. First, one must see to it that his own soul is saved. Second, one must be sharing the Gospel to save others. In this time of wickedness soul winning is one of the greatest challenges. It does, however, bring the greatest rewards. To save a lost soul will bring the saved lost soul joy, the one sharing the Gospel personal joy, and rejoicing in Heaven. Remember: your own salvation is tied to the responsibility to save others.

## **Make Disciples, Not Excuses**

A college professor told his little boy to stay in the yard. While the boy's father was gone, the youngster stole away. Busying himself with his forbidden liberty he completely lost track of time. When he ran into the house, his father bellowed, "Why did you get out of the yard, David Sinclair Burleson!!?" David replied in a frightened voice, "But, Papa, the wind blew me out!"

Vain excuses are as old as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Many of them are just as inane as Aaron's explanation to Moses about the origin of the golden calf. He informed Moses that after he cast the gold from the people into the fire *"this calf came out"* (Ex. 32:24). As a wise man once quipped, *"Nobody grows fat on excuses, but everybody gets fed up with them"*. No doubt God does not acquiesce to all the lame excuses given by Christians for not fulfilling their duty to reach the lost.

Many of the excuses used for shirking the work of evangelism appear on the surface to be logical reasons. However, a cursory analysis will reveal their hollowness.

### ♦ **"I'm Too Busy"**

Every Christian has 24 hours per day 168 hours per week. The difference between those who work and those who shirk is often merely a matter of priorities (Mt. 6:21,24). Many Christians are too in love with money, therefore too busy for the Lord's work. Consider, how much time could you make for the work if you were given \$10,000 for every convert? If you are too busy to share the Gospel than you must be too busy in the wrong things. It is more important why we are busy, not just that we are busy. Remember, the busy bee is praised while the busy mosquito is swatted.

### ♦ **"I Do Not Know Enough"**

It is quite true that too many older Christians are still babes in the Word (Heb. 5:12f). Saying "I cannot do personal evangelism because I'm ignorant" is like saying "I cannot pay my bills because I am too lazy to get out and work". We are still liable for our responsibilities no matter how many excuses we may come up with. Begin now to meet God's approval by diligently pursuing the Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Remember, it is not so much what you know, but who you know that makes for sharing the Gospel. Some of the hardest working and most successful workers I have known have been novices. Both Andrew and Philip were busy bringing people to Jesus before they were even called to be fishers of men.

### ♦ **"It's The Preachers Job"**

Some Christians think that if they give to support a local evangelist than he does the work for them. This promotes religion by proxy. If we can have someone teach for us than can we hire someone to do our singing, praying, partaking, and even giving for us? It was New Testament Christians who *"went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). Furthermore, *"every man must bear his own burden"* (Gal. 6:5). True, an evangelist should be an example and in many cases take the lead in the work, however, no preacher can do your work.

### ♦ **"Nobody Is Being Converted"**

First of all, that is not true. The problem isn't that the Gospel has lost its power to touch the souls of the lost, it is the failure of us to reach the lost with the Gospel.

If times are hard, than we need to work harder, not less. When the harvest is small, farmers plant

more, not less. In 1970 the corn belt was hit by a blight, and the crop was inferior to a typical harvest. An even worse blight was predicted for the 1971 crop. So, expecting a poor yield the farmers planted more! Because the blight did not strike as hard as expected in 1971, the national harvest was a record breaker. The fundamental law of nature and of the spiritual realm is that we reap as we sow. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly (Gal. 6:7,8; 2 Cor. 9:6). Less seed planted, less working in the field, will equate to less reaping at harvest time. Farmers who fret over future failure find further forfeiting of fortune. Likewise, Christians should plant more, water more, hope more, and pray more. Even pray to the Lord of harvest to send forth more workers into the harvest (Mt. 9:36,37).

When Christ commissioned the disciples to go into all the world preaching the Gospel, He commanded them to make disciples. No where did he command us to go out and make excuses.

♦ **"It is such discouraging work"**

Just as some fisherman might fish all night and be disheartened by a measly catch, so the fisher of men can find it discouraging work. It can be like beating one's head against the wall or taking three steps back to every two steps forward.

The Bible is filled with those who faced the discouragement of not being able to reach the lost. Noah preached for a hundred and twenty years and only saved eight souls (1 Peter 3:20). Jesus, Himself, was disheartened at the negative responses to His message of hope and salvation. The rich young ruler rejected Jesus' call to commitment (Mark 10:21f). After the feeding of the five thousand *"from that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?'"* (John 6:66,67). Even at the end of his three and a half year ministry Judas betrays Him, Peter denied him, and at the cross only John stay with Him. Despite all his success during his missionary journeys Paul too suffered the pain of discouragement in trying to save the lost. The Jews would raise up and expel Paul and Barnabas from the region where they were preaching (Acts 13:50-51). At another time he shook his garments and said to those to opposed him, *"your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles"* (Acts 19:6). In his letter to the churches of Galatia he lamented, *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel"* (Gal. 1:6).

When discouraged over one's difficult efforts to fishing for men, it is good to remember seven things. 1) There is great power in prayer. So pray to the Lord of the harvest (Matthew 9:37,38). 2) Remember God is patient *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). 3) *"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart"* (Gal. 6:9). 4) Consider there are several different types of soils or hearts of men upon which the seed is sown (Matt. 13). Keep sowing the seed till it falls on good ground. 5) Jesus warned that few would be saved (Matt. 7:13,14). 6) It is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). 7) Even if no one responds to your effort at least you have saved your would (Ezek. 3:16f).

**How Good Will Your Excuses Be?**

How good will your excuses be, the day our Lord returns?

Will He find you watching there or filled with vain concerns?

How good will your excuses be to friends lost in sin?

Could it be that you would teach them, if you could live again?

"I'm sorry friend," the Lord might say, "I'll have to pass you by,

It's for the faithful saints I've come to live with me on high."

How good will your excuses be? Only time will tell.

A poor excuse is all it takes, to guide a soul to Hell.

-- Phyllis Drew

A game warden once approached an old fella to investigate his fishing habits that had been rumored to be illegal. Early one morning they both went out in the man's boat and the warden observed that the old man pulled out some dynamite lit it and threw it out into the water. KA BOOM!!! Floating up to the surface came dozens of dead fish. The warden yelled, "Now, Jake you cannot fish that way! It's illegal!" Jake did even look at him. He just lit a short fuse of another stick of dynamite and tossed it into the warden's lap saying, "Warden, are you going to talk or are you gonna fish?"

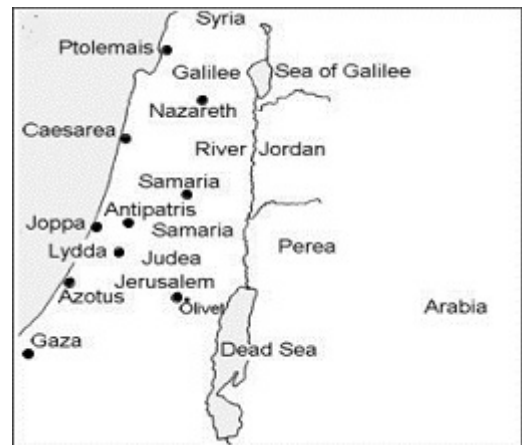


Fishermen will make all kinds of excuses for not catching any fish. "My arm was in a cast." "I forgot the lighter for my dynamite." "My fishing buddy ate all the worms." It is time for us to stop just talking about fishing for men and pick up God's Dynamite, the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and start fishing.

### Questions:

1. Of the "Six Solemn Facts" found on page 5, which one concerns you the most pertaining the lost?
2. True False Since the Great Commission was given to the apostles of Christ it does not apply in any way to Christians today.
3. Using 2 Timothy 2:2 the teaching of the Gospel went from Paul to \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and then to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. How did Christ feel about the lost? What did He do about this feeling?

5. Using the map and starting at Jerusalem draw an outline of the spread of the Gospel by the early Christians in the New Testament.



6. Explain: "Personal Evangelism is personal preservation."
7. List some things that have been lost and the joy of finding them. Compare that to the joy of sharing the Gospel with the lost.
8. List several reasons why it is wise to save souls.

9. List several things of value to you, you would be willing to give up just to save one valuable soul from sin.
10. Budget your time. How much time could you practically give to sharing the Gospel with the lost?
11. What is the minimum knowledge one needs to have before he can start bringing people to Jesus?
12. Which of the following statements is the most Biblically accurate?
- a) Both Christians and the local preacher are equally responsible in sharing the Gospel with the lost.
  - b) The preacher is paid by the congregation to share the Gospel with the lost. Members can help if they want to.
  - c) Although a preacher may have a greater responsibility to share the Gospel with the Lost because of his greater knowledge, experience, time, opportunity, ability, etc. all Christians are to also teach the lost.
  - d) We should just give the lost a Bible and let them figure it out.
13. If it is true that less people are obeying the Gospel today what should Christians do?
14. Who was discouraged in the Bible at their efforts to reach the lost and what did they do about it?

# Becoming Fishers of Men

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When Jesus came to recruit disciples from among a group of lowly fishermen He said, "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men*" (Matthew 4:18-22). He chose this figure because both He and His hearers were well acquainted with the fishing industry of Galilee, where most of His ministry took place.

Disciples are the fishermen, human souls are fish, the world is the sea, the Gospel is the net, and eternal life is the shore where the catch is destined. This call came from the greatest fisher of men. He could show them how to catch men with the Gospel.

## The Call of Fishers of Men

### ◆ **Special Call**

Jesus was not a stranger to these men. Up to this point they had not received a formal call to leave all and follow Jesus permanently. They probably had returned from time to time to their occupation. Yet they, along with others, had probably witnessed Christ's first miracle of turning water to wine at Cana in Galilee. As disciples of John the Baptist they had heard his witness of Jesus (Jn. 1:35-42). This call came after their trip with Jesus to Jerusalem. Back home in Galilee they were fishing again, perhaps while Jesus visited His old home in Nazareth.

### ◆ **A Call to Common Men**

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew and others to be with Him, they were not men with special gifts and accomplishments. They were not famous people or noted scholars. James and John before they became tempered by Jesus' influence were nicknamed the "*sons of thunder*." Just ordinary men, but Jesus believed in using common men to accomplish the amazing. Ordinary fishermen plus Christ equals extra-ordinary fishermen.

Christ, Himself had worked in Nazareth as a carpenter. The Greek word here for carpenter is "tekton" meaning one who worked with wood and stone. A craftsman or builder who could do any job that needed to be done. The Son of God as a man called mere men to do God's work.

### ◆ **A Call to Busy Men**

God or Jesus never called a man while who was idle. Moses and David were called from keeping sheep. Gideon was called while threshing wheat. Elisha was commissioned when at the plow. God has honored humble, yet honest labor, from the beginning. Thus, Christ called men who were busy. When Jesus appeared while Saul was on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians. Matthew was busy at the tax table. Peter, Andrew, James and John were busy fishing. God calls the busy to His business. He did not call men by saying, "Hey, you don't have anything better to do, you are not busy, why not come along and kill some time with Me."

### ◆ **A Call to Leave All**

They left all: business, property, homes and families. Their nets were the means of their living. By leaving all, they gave every evidence of sincerity. James and John's father, Zebedee, is not mentioned among the disciples of Jesus. There is the mention of hired servants (Mk. 1:20) and of two boats employed (Lk. 5:7), and the subsequent allusion of John's acquaintance with the high priest (Jn. 18:15) which seem to indicate that Zebedee was a wealthy and well-connected man. His sons, however, left all for a bigger prize. They began to seek men for Christ. If only men today could perceive the greater value of the spiritual, many more would leave their material pursuits and serve Christ becoming fishers of men.

## **Preparation of Fishers of Men**

Jesus hand picked men to train to become fishers of men. The word "*become*" implies that the men Jesus chose needed further growth and training (Mark 1:16,17). Jesus chose them not so much for what they were, but what they could become under His influence (Mk. 3:14). They were to be with Him, so they could grow spiritually. So He could send them out to preach. The order of these two events is significant. He must first spend time with Jesus praying and meditating on His Word. Then they went out to preach.

What if a man studied about fishing all the time but never went fishing? Too often people think that the ability to speak smoothly and fluently is necessary to being good at teaching the lost. One should not think that he cannot reach out for others until he has become an expert on the Bible. True, a Christian must be a serious student of the written Word, but he must avoid always preparing and never going. Remember, most fishermen learn by experience.

There was a tribe in Africa whose very name struck fear into the hearts of neighboring tribes. They had a reputation for being murderers. They killed in order to rob, they killed for hire, and they killed for revenge. Missionaries came and converted a few. Later a man who was reputed to have murdered at least a dozen people was approached by a Christian from another tribe. "I am glad you have changed your occupation". "Oh, but I haven't changed my occupation" came the surprising answer. And then he quickly added, "I've just changed my tools, I used to catch men with knives and guns. Now I catch them with the Bible and the love of Christ."

Are you a fisher of men? Or are you just standing on the banks of the river talking about fishing while merely chopping bait?

## **Seven Traits of Highly Effective Fishermen**

During one of his sermons to the populous, Christ chose Simon Peter's boat to be His pulpit (Luke 5:1-7). The water then provided a barrier between Jesus and the throng of the crowd. After speaking He told Simon to go out and cast the nets into the deep. They had engaged in exhausting toiling all night and caught nothing. Fishing was their profession, and empty nets meant that their livelihood was endangered. They were tired. They were experienced fishermen, Jesus was not. Night was the time for fishing, and the proper place to cast the net was near the shore. Nonetheless, Peter sacrificed his own practical knowledge as a fisherman to the authoritative word of Jesus. Peter had a spirit of obedience. The result of his faith was a huge catch. Peter had to call a second boat for help. They probably ran a second net under the one which enclosed the fish and by thus doubling the strength of the net were able to draw the fish up between the boats.

### **❖ Faith**

Today, fishermen must fish out of faith. When he casts the hook, he does so not by sight but by faith. The fisherman normally cannot see the fish in the water, at least the ones he is desiring to catch. He doesn't know if he will be successful, but he believes he will.

In like manner, soul-winning is an unpredictable venture. One never knows for sure if the lost soul will be receptive to the message, but with Jesus's help we can reach the unreachable. This miracle had the propose to produce the faith in them to fish for the great catch starting on Pentecost. The Lord challenges us to launch out into the deep, but our experience causes us to reject such counsel.

Later, the fish became a symbol of early Christian art, almost a code word. Because the Greek work for fish is "ichthus," it was used as a acronym which spelled out the initials of a simple creed "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior." Even today it is used as a symbol of the Christians' faith.

### **❖ Patience**

Fish seldom bite the moment the bait hits the water. Many a fisherman spent a long day waiting for his catch -- which never came. He knows by experience that his efforts will finally pay.

Likewise, fishers of men must be very patient. They cannot force the issue or try to push the other person along too fast. Teachers must listen and never get into a hurry. Take time to explain the meanings of the words unknown to people familiar with the Bible: husbandman, dispensation,

mercy-seat, and propitiation, remission, redemption, etc. Many a saint has never caught a sinner for the Lord because they give it a quick little try and gave up.

❖ **Selective**

The successful fisherman knows what kind of fish bite, when they bite, and the bait they like. Some fish will bite on worms; others prefer minnows, bugs, or flies. He goes where they are. He will cast in one spot and then another and another. He will not be plunging the bait down their throat, so he must learn to be selective. He might make it look easy to those sitting on the bank, but it's mentally intensive work.

The Christian must be selective in what he teaches, to whom, and how and when he teaches. There are many doctrines which a prospect needs to learn, but not all at once. Jesus had to be selective in teaching His own disciples. *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now"* (Jn. 16:12).

❖ **Persistent**

Real fishermen get up early and stay out late. They don't quit when the weather changes. The good fisherman does not want to quit until he makes his catch. They will let the sun blister their faces and mosquitoes eat them alive. He will lose some, but win others. He seems perfectly content if he takes one fish every fifty casts.

"Catch" means to take alive. Fish are not caught because they choose to be. When the synagogue was shut Jesus took the open road. Rejections will come, doors will be slammed in your face. Once in Niceville, Florida I was out door knocking with a fellow "fisherman" and before we could reach the front door of one home a man stepped out and declared, "you're wasting your time boys I'm an atheist." My reply was, "Oh, no sir, you are just the man we came to see." Well, I would like to say that he invited us in, but a few houses later we procured a Bible study that lasted over six months.

❖ **Courageous**

The fisherman of fish must have courage. The water is not always shallow and tranquil. Sometimes the torrent is raging. However, the best fish have been caught in deep water or among crashing waves. The Sea of Galilee is stormy, owing probably to the high hills by which it is surrounded. A fisherman may find himself far out from land. As an old Greek prayed long ago, "my boat is so small and the sea is so large." Just remember *"...he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"* (1 John. 4:4).

❖ **Alert**

A good fisherman knows the best time to fish. He knows that there is a time to cast and a time to look for better fishing spots. He watches for opportunities to teach and he is prepared to teach when it comes. The greatest fisherman of men, Jesus, had a keen eye and saw where the fish were. Successful men must be alert to the opportunities around them. Many people saw steam raise the lid of a kettle; only James Watt went on to think of a steam engine. Many people saw lightening. Only Ben Franklin saw the power of electricity. Many people saw an apple fall; only Isaac Newton went on to think out the law of gravity. If we wait for a perfect set of circumstances, we will never begin at all. It depends on making personal contacts and establishing personal relationships. One of the best ways this can be done is by inviting friends to dinner. Hospitality disarms shyness and even prejudice. It is possible to use lunch times, break times, and after work hours to speak to others.

❖ **Takes Care of His Catch**

A good fisherman does not quit when he has landed his catch. He carefully preserves his fish. If you don't care for the catch when it is brought in, then remember Satan like roaring is there seeking someone to devour. Each person we teach is worth more than the whole world (Mt. 16:26). People are won by love. Loving care for them will keep them in the ark of safety. Neglect will cast their souls back out into the sea of darkness.

Have you been developing these traits of highly effective fishers of men? In far too many congregations they have ceased to be fishers of men and are now content just being keepers of the aquarium - taking fish out of one bowl and placing them into another.

## Questions:

### True/False

1.     \_\_\_ Peter, Andrew, James and John were all fishermen.
2.     \_\_\_ When Christ called men to become fishers of men, He had did not know them at all.
3.     \_\_\_ God rarely bothers busy men, but uses those who are idle.
4.     \_\_\_ There was no real lesson to be learned from the miracle of the great catch of fish.
5.     \_\_\_ Christ did not have to train His disciples to be fishers of men.
6.     \_\_\_ Fishermen only try to catch those fish they can see.
7.     \_\_\_ The "ichthus" or fish symbol became an acronym for faith among early Christians.
8.     \_\_\_ If one cannot catch men with the Gospel in his first couple of tries he should give up.
9.     \_\_\_ We should catch men for Christ in the same way, same place, same age etc. every time to go fishing for men.
10.    \_\_\_ Persistence in teaching the Gospel will always pay off.

### Multiple Choice:

11.    Our courage to face opposition from the lost comes from   a) God   b) our ability c) their ignorance.
12.    After one catches someone with the Gospel he should a) immediately turn his attention to catching more   b) care for the new born in Christ c) just wait an see if their baptism is going to take.
13.    If one is too busy to teach the lost, he should   a) examine why he is so busy   b) get his priorities straight   d) all of these.
14.    Fishing for men is a duty for a) only the preacher   b) only those well studied in the Bible   c) all saints.

### Discussion:

15.    Being alert to opportunities is essential to fishing for men. What opportunities are their around us to teach the lost?
16.    Where can one find time to reach the lost?

17. How should we react if we are not being very successful in saving souls?
  
18. Those who are constantly making excuses for not fishing for men have deeper problems hindering them. What are the real reasons behind their neglect?
  
19. What is the best way to learn how to fish for men?

# Parable of the Fishless Fishermen

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by John M. Drescher

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year these who called themselves fishermen met in meetings, talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. Further they said, "the fishing industry exists by fishing as fire exists by burning." They loved slogans such as "fishing is the task of every fisherman." "every fisherman is a fisher," and so on. They sponsored special meetings called "Fisherman's campaigns" and "The Month for fishermen to fish."

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do; they didn't fish.

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a committee to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. They promoted the idea of fishing in faraway streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Large, elaborate, and expensive training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years courses were offered on the needs of fish, the nature of fish, where to find fish, the psychological reactions of fish, and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology. But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, after tedious training, many were graduated and were given fishing licenses. they were sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters which were filled with fish.

Some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing and to see faraway places where the founding fathers did great fishing in the centuries past. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quits his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. he was also placed on the Fishermen's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of there fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?"

Imagine how hurt some were then one day a person suggested that those who didn't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fishermen if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing?

— John M. Drescher via <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1979/04/a-fish-story>



# Fishing for Men With Two Fishermen

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One the best ways to learn how to fish is to watch others fish with great success. In the Gospel one learns of two fishermen who can teach us a lot about how to share the Gospel. Andrew and Jesus are but too great fishermen who can help us. Their stories give us insight into just how the great fishers of men were able to make big catches in the first century.

## The Andrew Approach to Fishing for Men

Many passages could be employed to demonstrate the various means and methods utilized by the early Christians. However, we can learn a great deal about leading people to Christ by taking a look at John 1:35-42. This context will manifest the approach used by a simple ordinary fishermen. Andrew may be considered a lesser known apostle and a minor Biblical figure, but his encouraging example in evangelism is as equally important as others, such as, Peter and Paul.

### ***Just what does the Andrew Approach involve?***

#### ✓ **Be Converted**

John the Baptist was with two of his disciples when he pointed out Jesus, *"Behold the Lamb of God!"* (John 1:36). Prior to this he proclaimed that Jesus *"takes always the sins of the world"* (1:29). John also spoke of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove and testified that this Lamb of God was the Son of God. He sparked the interest of Andrew and the other disciples. They followed Jesus and ended up staying with Him all night. Their faith was not founded just upon John's preaching, but they questioned Jesus throughout the night to learn that He was the Messiah (1:41).

One of the first and most important steps in beginning to bring others to Christ is to genuinely believe in Christ. Before one can convert others, he must first be converted himself. The blind cannot lead the blind to Jesus. Andrew had heard John preach a baptism of repentance. Surely, Andrew as John's disciple had repented and been baptized by John. He was completely convinced that Jesus as the Messiah. It was only then that Andrew became evangelistic. Remember, before Jesus can mean anything to your friends, he must mean everything to you.

A young man came to me one day very upset. He was new to our congregation. His wife was not a Christian and was pregnant. Furthermore, she was not interested in studying or worshiping. He was very concerned about the spiritual well-being of his family. What could he do? His first mistake was his haphazard attendance. So, I told him, "you need to show her how much Christ means to you and then He will start meaning something to her. To do this you need to be faithful in attendance. Come whether she will or not. Arrange a ride for her when you cannot come." This is what he did. A few months later she obeyed the Gospel.

#### ✓ **Set Your Priorities**

Andrew *"first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (Which is translated, the Christ)"* (1:41). The word "first" suggests Andrew's priority. The first thing on his "to do list" was not to spend ten more years investigating and learning more about Christ before feeling qualified to introduce Him to others. Although he had not yet been called by Jesus to become a fisher of men, Andrew had already went fishing for his brother.

#### ✓ **Be Personal**

So, much of what we refer to as "personal" evangelism is so impersonal. We use radio, TV, flyers, cards, letters, email, websites, etc. However, Andrew personally knew his contact and gave him a very personal invitation. Others in the New Testament did the same: Philip found a friend, the Samaritan woman found her neighbors, Cornelius invited his relatives and friends, etc.

✓ **Bring them to Jesus**

Another problem with our modern methods is seeking to win people by merely bringing them to a church building or win them with a man's sparkling personality or a carnal form of recreation or promoting peer groups. The real objective is to bring them to Christ. This is the most effective means of conversion in all the world. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus not John the Baptist, not a building, not a group meeting, not a "fellowship" meal, but to Christ, Himself. Ever me we see Andrew's name pop up on the printed pages of the New Testament, he is bringing someone to Jesus. He brought Peter, his brother. He brought the boy with the basket of food and Greeks seeking Jesus.

✓ **See the Opportunities**

Andrew seems to have had the unusual ability to see great opportunities in the smallest and simplest things. At the feeding of the 5,000 Andrew saw the boy with the five loaves and two small fish. The result of this perception of such a small thing provided for the feeding of many and great glory to Christ (John 6:4-9). Could you imagine the other disciples' response to Andrew. "That's right Andrew what is the boy's sack lunch among so many. Why did you even point out the boy's lunch?" Peter may have thought, "Oh, brother, you are embarrassing me!" However, with the small lunch from a small boy with Andrew's simple observation, Jesus performed a great miracle. How many millions of souls starving for the truth have been fed because of men with faith and vision like Andrew.

To many of the Jews of Andrew's day, the Messiah was to be the Savior of the Jews, not the Gentiles. Yet, one day Greeks came to Philip saying, "*sir, we wish to see Jesus*" (John 1:20-22). Philip did not know what to do about this odd request, so he brought it to Andrew's attention. Andrew saw this as an opportunity, so he and Philip brought them to Jesus. The Pharisees would never have thought to bring them to Jesus. Goodpasture said, "not only was Andrew the first home evangelist and the first foreign evangelist."

Today, we are blessed with far more opportunities and abilities than those of Andrew's day. We have television, telephones, cell phones, radio, the printed page, e-mail, internet, cars, planes, trains, buses and subways. Sadly, we seem to do less with more.

Once a congregation I had just started working with asked me what evangelistic programs would I implement to save souls in the community. They also asked how much money, manpower, and special tools would be required to start it. To their surprise I told them that I had no special program, no money would be required, no help needed for me to get things started and we already had the tools necessary. Next, they inquired as to how successful could I hope to be with this approach. I informed them that over the past six years an average of six souls from the community were saved per year. They insisted, "You're not going to have such lunch in his area. We have tried everything: radio, newspapers, door to door, etc. After all, where are you going to find your contacts." Well, they were right that next year we did not see six souls come to Christ, we witnessed seven being born again. Where did these contacts to teach come from? The first three were sitting in the pews of the congregation. They had been attending for months. No one had made the effort to bring them to Jesus. Sometimes the best opportunities are sitting in the pew next to you.

✓ **Do a Lot With a Little**

As Americans we have always been taught to believe that BIGGER is better. Is this really true in relation to evangelism in the twenty-first century. In his book *Why Churches Grow*, Flavil Yeakley presents a statistical survey that shows that those churches with the "bigger is better" mind set have on an average, reached a "zero growth" condition (losing more members by death and apostasy than they are gaining by conversion). The Mormons learned that they had a 0.1% rate of "conversion" by knocking on 1,000 doors but that the percentage went up to 50% when members invited neighbors into their homes for a study. Perhaps, nothing is more effective than one person sitting down with another person and just a Bible between them.

Andrew knew how to do a lot with a little. With just one evening spent with Christ, He brought Peter. With his knowledge of a boy in the crowd with a lunch He fed 5,000. With the knowledge of Greeks seeking Jesus he introduced them to Christ.

Remember, Andrew brought his brother Peter to Christ, Peter became a leader among the apostles. He preached the first Gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). He was given the keys

of the kingdom by Christ (Matt. 16:16f). The first Gentile converts were taught by Peter (Acts 10). Additionally, Peter wrote two epistles found in our Bibles. Without Andrew the name of Simon Peter might not have been written across the pages of history of the Lord's Church.

Does a congregation have to have a large membership, a million dollar budget, a massive amount of man power, highly educated workers, thousands of programs, to save souls? NO! You could take the Andrew approach and do a lot with a little.

One man like Andrew could do a lot to bring souls to Christ. Our job is to plant the seed. God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Sometimes the seed we sow produces thirty-fold, sometimes sixty-fold or perhaps even a hundred-fold. Never underestimate the power of the seed, the Word of God. Never underestimate the power of a single common man sowing the seed. In 1903 there were seventeen communist countries in the world. By 1980 one third of the world was communist. We have all puzzled over the mathematical problem about giving a someone a penny and doubling the amount each day for a month. Checked it out. You will be amazed how fast a little penny can grow. Just how fast would the Lord's Kingdom grow if someone like Andrew would lead one soul to Christ each year? And each new converts would in turn lead someone to Christ. How long would it take to teach every soul in the world?

It has been observed that the average church member has heard 4,000 sermons, 8,000 congregational prayers, 20,000 public songs, and saved 0 sinners! This does not have to be the case with you. You can be like Andrew and get started today bringing souls to Jesus. Don't wait for fancy methods or programs. There is a story to the effect that a certain society in South Africa once wrote to David Livingston. "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to know how to send other men to join you. Livingston replied: "if you have men who will come ONLY if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is NO road at all." The church of today needs good men who will bring others to Christ even if there is no money, large building or fancy personal work program.

Other than these three short stories in the Gospel of John, we know very little about Andrew. The last thing told of Andrew is by tradition. He died in Edessa at the hands of Egeas the governor. This account says that he died on a cross put in the ground like an "X" for preaching against idolatry in the city. The "X" shaped cross is now called "Andrew's Cross." We all have the cross to bear, it is much like his. It requires us to seize the opportunities and bring people to Jesus.

## **Jesus: The Master Fisher of Men**

Jesus was a carpenter by trade. He did have a lot of time and experience on the Sea of Galilee with several fishermen. On two different occasions Jesus help his fishing disciples catch a large quantity of fish. First, in Luke 5:1-11 the disciples had been fishing all night and caught nothing. Jesus had Peter cast out into the deep. The result of this was such a large catch Peter had to call for another boat to assist. After His resurrection Peter and several other disciples went back to fishing. Again they spent the night in the boat and caught nothing. Jesus called and told them to "*cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.*" So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish" (John 21:6). On another occasion Jesus told Peter to go fishing. When he caught a fish, he was to open its mouth and he would find coins to pay both His and Peter's temple tax. Now that is some fish story. No wonder the disciples began to listen to Jesus when He talked to them about fishing, especially fishing for men.

### **◆ Compassion for the Lost**

A fisherman does not have to like fish or even eat fish to be good at his job. He certainly does not have to have compassion on the fish. However, he may throw the small ones back, so they can grow up to be caught another day. One of the most amazing aspects of Jesus ability to influence others is His love and compassion for people. You can talk to just about anything to anyone, if they know you really care about them. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus asking what he needed to do to obtain eternal life. "*Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me'*" (Mark 10:21). Throughout His ministry Jesus had a love for the lost with strong feelings of compassion.

- *"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with **compassion** for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36).*
- *"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with **compassion** for them, and healed their sick" (Matt. 14:14).*
- *"Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, 'I have **compassion** on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way'" (Matt. 15:32).*
- *"So Jesus had **compassion** and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him" (Matt. 20:34).*
- *"And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had **compassion** on her and said to her, 'Do not weep'" (Luke 7:12,13).*

Not only did He have compassion, He did something. Do not just see the needs of the lost and love them. Do something! Share with them the Good News.

#### ◆ **Seize the Moment**

Jesus was very busy healing and addressing the crowds. However, He was never so busy that he could not stop and bait a hook for fishing opportunities. In John 4:1-42 Jesus and His apostles were passing through Samaria. While the apostles went into town to find something to eat. Jews normally did not have anything to do with Samaritans, but Jesus had compassion on all men and even women. When seeking the lost no such barriers can keep one from hooking onto the opportunity to fish for men. When a Samaritan woman came out to fetch water from Jacob's Well, Jesus seized upon this opportunity to arouse her spiritual interest. First, he found some common ground: the need for water. He asked her for a drink. He had no means to get water for Himself but she did. Quickly He turned the conversation from the physical need for water to the promise of "living" water He could give to her.

Jesus was the expert when it came to choosing the right bait for the right moment to lure others into a conversation about their soul's deepest needs. Not only did He use a little boy's lunch of five loaves and two fish to feed five thousand, but He turned it into an opportunity the next day to teach the masses He was the bread of life come down from heaven (John 6). Whether it be a question, a lily in the field, a sower in the field, a barren fig tree, Jesus could turn the conversation to the spiritual topics people needed to hear.

When the disciples came back to see Jesus talking to the woman they questioned Him. She went off to the city to tell them about Jesus. He asked the disciples, *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"* (John 4:35). The people were coming out to meet Him. They only needed to open their eyes to the opportunities that were right in front of them and not wait four months. A short time later, Philip would come to Samaria and baptize many of them (Acts 8:12).

#### ◆ **One on One Personal Contact**

Much of what we call personal evangelism is not very personal. Most would rather just pass out flyers or preach on a radio without facing the lost person to person. Once I had asked an older Christian man to teach a new converts class in his home. He said he would only if I could guarantee three to four students. Otherwise it was not worthy his time.

Jesus took time for the single soul in need of His guidance to truth. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night to ask him how to enter the kingdom, He took the time to teach him (John 3:1f). When the rich young ruler came asking Him the same question, He told him what to do (Matt. 19:16-22). He spoke one on one with the Samaritan woman at the well and she went to the city to tell the people who she found. That one woman brought out to Jesus the whole city of Sychar. Jesus knew that souls are not just saved in large audiences gathering to hear the Gospel. Most are saved one soul at a time.

Many, many other lessons can be learned by observing the Master Fisher of Men. Study the

Gospel accounts showing how Jesus interacted with people. You will be amazed by His examples on how to share the Good News with others.

**Questions:**

1. Why is it so important for a fisher of men to be truly converted, before he begins to convert others?
2. How much time did Andrew need to spend with Jesus in order to know He was the Messiah? How much time did he need with the Messiah, before he could start bringing people to Him?
3. How can we make our evangelistic efforts more personal?
4. Is it possible to bring someone to church without bring them to Christ? Explain.
5. How important is seeing the opportunities in order to seek the lost?
6. How necessary is it to have a large congregation, big building, lots of money, etc. to saving the lost?
7. How long would it take to teach every soul in the world (8 billion) using the following model where each soul each year just reached one soul  

Year 1:	1 = 2
Year 2:	2 = 4
Year 3:	4 = 8
Year 4:	

8. Would it be fair to say that Jesus himself was quite a successful fisherman?
9. Can one be a successful fisher of men without compassion for the lost? Explain.
10. What often keeps us from seizing the opportunities to share the Gospel?
11. What is the value of one on one personal time with lost souls?
12. What other fishing for men tactics can we learn from Jesus: the Master?

# **Overcoming Obstacles in Fishing for Men**

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Fishermen have all kinds of obstacles to overcome when fishing. Sometimes the fish get scared off by too much commotion. The weather can ruin a fishing trip. He may not be able to find any fish. The branches and trees in the lake keep snagging his line.

When trying to catch men, fishers of men must overcome the myriad of excuses offered up by those they are trying to save. Jesus Christ taught us to analyze all excuses in Luke 14:15-24. In His parable many were invited to a great supper, but *“they all began to make excuse.”* One said, *“I have bought a piece of ground,”* but men don’t buy fields unseen (14:18). Another excused himself with: *“I have bought five yoke of oxen,”* but one does not buy oxen unproved (14:19). The third excuse was *“I have married a wife,”* but most men go places with or without their wives (14:20). Christ said these excuse makers will not partake of the supper (14:24).

The job of the fishers of men is to overcome these excuses by presenting the truth. But just how does one answer these 21 objections to hearing and obeying the Gospel?

## **Objection 1: “I am a good, religious person just as good as those who go to church.”**

Just being religious does not mean you do not need the saving grace of Christ. The Pharisees were very religious. Paul noted the religious nature of the Athenians yet told them *“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious”* (Acts 17:22). Cornelius was a good and devout man who still needed Peter to tell him and his household words by which he would be saved (Acts 11:4). No man was more religious than Saul of Tarsus (Gal. 1:17; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13,15). Still he needed to be saved and later joined himself to the church at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29). Later he confessed his previous condition in a letter to Timothy: *“although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus”* (1 Tim. 1:13-14). Jesus warned of many at Judgment Day who thought that being content with their good works and religious involvement would be good enough. *“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”* (Matthew 7:22-23).

Concerning being just as good as others note that such comparisons are not wise (2 Cor. 10:12). Just because one might be better or as good as someone else does not mean he is as good as he ought to be before God. Christ is the standard not Christians.

## **Objection 2: “The church is not important.”**

The church must be important to Christ. He built, purchased with His blood, died for, saves, is the founder and foundations as well as its head. To say the church is not important to claim the Christ’s work and sacrifice is not important to one’s salvation. Consider the fact that Jesus *“is the savior of the body”* which is the church (Eph. 5:23).

## **Objection 3: “One church is as good as another.”**

You don’t use this logic when choosing a doctor, wife, house, car, catch a plane, etc. Christ is the judge of whether or not a church is as good as it needs to be. After all He gave His life for the church (Eph. 5:26-27). So how could a man-made church or denomination be as good as the church Jesus bled

and died to build? Christ is satisfied with only one church, His church (Eph. 4:3-6; 1:22,23; Mt. 15:13).

Consider Christ's view of the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2 and 3. He did not think five of the seven were just as good as the other two. Ephesus left her first love (2:4). Pergamos had those two held to "*the doctrine of the Nicolaitans*" (2:15). Thyatira permitted sin (2:19,20). Sardis was "dead" (3:1). Laodicea was "lukewarm" (3:16,17). Only Smyrna and Philadelphia were good (2:8-11; 3:7-13).

#### **Objection 4: "There are too many hypocrites in the church."**

Do we use this logic in every day life? When needing a job, getting marriage, buying groceries, doing business, etc. do we refuse these activities just because there are too many hypocrites involved? Would you refuse a \$20 bill because some are counterfeit? If drowning, would you refuse to get into a boat because there are hypocrites in it? This will be a very weak excuse on judgment day. "Lord, I didn't serve you because of the hypocrites and therefore I deserve heaven?" Hypocrites will go to hell (Mt. 24:15; 23:15; Rev. 21:8; Acts 2:47). It is better to put up with a few hypocrites in the church, for a little while than to be with all hypocrites for eternity. There is only one place where no hypocrite can go, heaven. There is only one place that will be full of hypocrites, hell. It is hypocritical to claim one cannot stand hypocrites and yet not make an effort to avoid the only place that will be full of them. The Biggest Hypocrites are those who pretend to be better than hypocrites.

#### **Objection 5: "I cannot believe that a loving God could send anyone to hell for eternity."**

Many struggle with this idea of God sending someone to hell. God is love (1 John 4:8). God is also just (Lk. 16:25). God condemns only those who condemn themselves by not following His Will (Luke 7:30; 13:3; Mk. 16:16). God and Christ have warned about the dangers and possibility of going to hell (Ps. 1:5,6; Jn. 12:48). God is not a liar even if all men are (Romans 2:5). Yet out of love for the sinner God wants all men to come to repentant and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9; Ezek. 18:23).

#### **Objection 6: "How can such a loving and all-powerful God allow so much evil and suffering in this world."**

Freedom of choice is the Creator's great gift to the human race (Dt. 30:19). Remember, sin originated with man, not God. The world God originally made before sin destroyed things was "*very good*" (Gen. 1:31). God provided a costly remedy - His son (John 3:16). God has provided an alternative to a world filled with evil and suffering (Rom. 6:23). It involves eternal life without and pain and suffering or even evil (Is. 65:20, Rev. 21:4-8).

#### **Objection 7: "I do not know enough."**

Know one would have every become a Christian if they were required to know. Christians begin to grow in Christ after they are baptized into Christ (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:3f). Those on the day of Pentecost had to grow as the continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). The Eunuch, Cornelius, the Jailer and Lydia had only heard one sermon. They knew enough at that point to make a decision to obey the Gospel.

#### **Objection 8: "I do not think I could live the Christian life."**

No one knows unless he tries. The one talent man feared failure so he did nothing but bury the talent (Mt. 25:25). Doing nothing is no better in the sight of God than doing the wrong thing (James 4:17). Peter had enough faith to get out of the boat to walk on water. His fear paralyzed his faith to the point he began to sink. Peter's fear of sinking brought on his sinking (Matthew 14:30). Don't be like the man who wishes to travel from here to go to Houston from Dallas: "I'm not going to go till I know I will arrive safely."



### **Objection 9: “I am too big of a sinner.”**

Paul referred to himself a “*chief of sinners*” and a blasphemer (1 Tim. 1:13,15). Have you persecuted Christians to the point of death (Acts. 22:4; 1 Cor. 15:9, Acts. 8:1; 22:20)? Paul did, yet God showed grace and mercy to him (Acts. 22:16; Gal. 1:15,16). Are you lost? Jesus came to this world to find you (Lk. 19:10) Are your sins like scarlet? God can make you white as snow (Is. 1:18). Are you a thief? Jesus told one of the thieves on the cross: “*Today, you shall be with me in Paradise*” (Lk. 23:43). Are you an adulterer? Jesus told the woman caught in the very act to “*go and sin no more*” (Jn. 4:18). Are you like the Corinthians? “*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). If you are a great sinner then you someone whom Christ died for (Rom. 5:8).

### **Objection 10: “I need to first get my life right.”**

This is a presumption that one can get his life together. No man can direct his own life. Jeremiah learned, “*O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps*” (Jer. 10:23). You can’t improve your relationship with God with sin in the way (Is. 59:1,2). Only Christ can help us with sin and its negative affects. If you can get better without Christ than no one needs him and he died in vain. Jesus claimed, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6).

### **Objection 11: “I have tried and failed.”**

One failure does not mean final defeat. You need to answer for yourself several questions. Did you obey the Gospel? Did you pray (Mt. 26:41)? Did you study God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15)? Did you trust in God’s help? Did you go to work for Christ (Lk. 11:24-26)? Did you attend (Heb. 10:25)? If not, this would explain why your efforts or lack of effort lead to failure. It is not that you tried before and failed, it is that you failed before you tried.

### **Objection 12: “I do not need anything for God or the church?”**

The truth is: “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). All men are in need of salvation from sin by God’s Son, Jesus Christ. “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ...If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us*” (1 John 1:8,10). Still some will argue that they have not murdered or commit adultery or hurt anyone. However, it is also a sin to fail to do what you are commanded to do. “*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin*” (James 4:17). Furthermore, all the spiritual blessings including redemption, sanctification, justification, salvation, election, etc. which are found in Christ are found in His church (Eph. 1:13f).

### **Objection 13: “I have too much to give up to be a Christian.”**

Is it too much to give up rags for riches? Dirt for diamonds? A model car for a Rolls Royce? Sin for heaven? A man’s soul is more valuable than the whole world. “*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Matt. 16:26). Whatever you may lose in this life is nothing to compare to what you gain in this life through God’s grace and even greater blessings eternally. Jesus promised His disciples, “*Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come everlasting life*” (Luke 18:29,30). Just think what God and Christ gave up for you. “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

#### **Objection 14: “My friends are too important to me to give up?”**

The fact that this objection has been made is proof you know that friends can have a negative impact on your life and decisions. Paul warned, *“do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’* (1 Cor. 15:33). Are you friends worldly? Would be friends with them make you an enemy of God? *“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”* (James. 4:4). In fact, losing worldly friends and gaining Christ as your friend could be a win for you and your friends (Jn. 15:15; Mt. 19:29). Remember, your friends may not care for your soul but your example of being a Christian could help lead your friends to Christ (John 1:45).

#### **Objection 15: “Not now, this is not a good time for me.”**

This excuses sounds like the response governor Felix gave to Paul *“as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you’”* (Acts 24:25). The convenient time was right then or that very day. Salvation is too important to be put off. *“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”* (Heb. 2:3). *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (2 Cor. 6:2). Furthermore, no one knows the hour of his death or when Christ will return (Matt. 24:35).

#### **Objection 16: “I am too old to change now.”**

Abraham, John, Paul, Noah, Daniel could all serve God in old age. Colonel Harland David Sanders was past retirement age when he founded the fast food chicken restaurant chain Kentucky Fried Chicken. The Psalmist promised that the righteous *“shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing”* (Psalm 92:14).

#### **Objection 17: “I am too young and have so many things I still would like to do.”**

Solomon in his wise gives this advice: *“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’”* (Eccl. 12:1). David was a young man when he slew Goliath. King Josiah was only sixteen when he began his great reforms against idolatry in Judah.

#### **Objection 18: “I do not wish to change from my parents religion. I do not want to condemn them.”**

Our relatives are not the standard or authority for what you should do with your soul. Jesus warned, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”* (Mt. 10:34-37). Paul had a family background of being a son of Abraham and devout Pharisee, but he gave is all up to serve Christ. *“If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ”* (Phil. 3:4b-7). If your parents knew what you knew, don’t you think they would have done the Lord’s Will and encourage you to do the same. To argue: “If family is lost, I don’t want to be saved,” is like rejecting a cure for cancer because their parents died of cancer.

#### **Objection 19: “How Can I Know There Is a God?”**

In order to have faith, people need to have evidence (Heb. 11:1). The existence of God is both knowable and provable by observing the Creator’s creation (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-20; Ps. 8:3; 33:6; 17:28). *“Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from*

*heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17).*

There are several logical arguments which can assist one in finding enough evidence for their faith in God. First, there is the Cosmological Argument or Law of cause and effect. The universe exist therefore there must be a reasonably adequate cause. *“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4).* Second, the Teleological Argument points out that every design demands a designer. The universe shows functional and detailed design, therefore their must be an intelligent Designer. The Psalmist wrote, *“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well” (Psalm 139:14).* The intelligent and detailed design found in a single human being is evidence their must be a Designer. Third, the Moral Argument focuses upon mankind’s universal sense of right and wrong. This sense of morality must have a moral source. Paul wrote, *“for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Romans 2:14-16).*

### **Objection 20: “How can I trust the Bible to be reliable?”**

Is the Bible just a book by human authors just like every other book in the world? If so, why should any one be required to follow its teaches versus any other “scripture?” The Bible claims to be the very words of God and able to complete man. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).*

Evidence both internally and externally abounds showing the Bible is not just another man made book. This includes unity of the Bible. It is the perfect example of unity in diversity. The Bible contains 66 different books written in two languages by some 40 different writers who live over a period of 2000 years on three continents and from various backgrounds.

The Bible’s historical accuracy is well attested to by archaeological evidence. “No archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements of scripture” (Dr. Nelson Glueck, N.Y. Times, Oct. 28, 1956). Among the ancient ruins of Corinth archeologist have found Gallio’s judgment seat or bema mentioned by Luke in Acts 18:12. Furthermore, in Acts 19:35 Luke refers to the *“town clerk”* (translated from the Greek term *grammateus*) as the chief public officer of Ephesus. Excavations have show that this was indeed the same Greek term used for the executive officer at Ephesus during the time of Paul.

In addition to historical accuracy there are many examples of the Bible’s scientific accuracy. Job said over 4,000 years ago that God *“... hangs the earth on nothing” (Job 26:7b).* Ancient man did not know this. Egyptians said it was supported by large pillars. Greeks said it was supported by Atlas’ shoulders. They didn’t tell us on what Atlas was standing. Our astronauts have taken beautiful photographs showing that it literally rest *“upon nothing”*. Job did not reproduce the science of his day. Perhaps, the greatest proof of the Bible’s Divine origin would be the multitude fulfilled prophecies recorded within its pages. Man cannot know the future, only God can foretell history or events. The Bible foretold the destiny of nations and the coming of Christ. Therefore, the Bible is the Word of God not of man. In 710 B.C., Isaiah prophesied concerning Cyrus (by name) who would permit the rebuilding of the temple before it was even destroyed, 586 B.C. Cyrus did in 538 B. C. (Ezra 1:1; See Is. 44:29; 45:1).

### **Objection 21: “Was Jesus real and was he the Son of God?”**

Belief in Jesus as an historical figure is not only verified by the four gospel accounts about his life (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), but also by the many non-Christian historians, such as, Pliny, Seutonius, Tacitus, Josephus, etc.

Evidence as to the divine nature of Jesus as the promised Messiah and Son of God is found in the many miracles He performed. *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,*

*the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (John 20:30,31). Additional proof is the three hundred prophecies he fulfilled. Jesus said, *"these are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me"* (Luke 24:44). Those who knew Jesus by watching and listening to Him believed Him to be the Son of God. Nathanael said to Jesus, *"Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* (John 1:49). Martha said, *"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world"* (John 11:27). Thomas, who doubted Jesus' resurrection claimed Him to be God after seeing and touching the evidence. *"Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (John 20:26-29). Peter confessed: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus answered and said to him, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 16:16,17). Jesus claimed He would resurrect. Jesus told his disciples He would *"be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again"* (Mk. 8:31). Later Paul claimed that Jesus *"was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep"* (1 Cor. 15:6). All of these and more offer up enough evidence for one to have faith in who Jesus was and His ability to keep His promises.

Mark Twain when asked by a neighbor to borrow his ax, said, "I can't loan it to you I need to eat my soup with it." Mark Twain responded that he did not wish to loan the ax and one excuse was just as good as another. The lazy man who does not want to get out and work can manufacture all kinds of excuses but this one takes the cake. *"The lazy man says, 'There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!'"* (Pr. 26:13). Do not let the lion or Satan (1 Peter 5:8) stand between you and working out your salvation (Phil. 2:12).

<b>The Lost's Objection:</b>	<b>The Christian's Reply:</b>
Objection 1: "I am a good, religious person just as good as those who go to church."	
Objection 2: "The church is not important."	
Objection 3: "One church is as good as another."	
Objection 4: "There are too many hypocrites in the church."	

Objection 5: "I cannot believe that a loving God could send anyone to hell for eternity."	
Objection 6: "How can such a loving and all-powerful God allow so much evil and suffering in this world."	
Objection 7: "I do not know enough."	
Objection 8: "I do not think I could live the Christian life."	
Objection 9: "I am too big of a sinner."	
Objection 10: "I need to first get my life right."	
Objection 11: "I have tried and failed."	
Objection 12: "I do not need anything for God or the church?"	
Objection 13: "I have too much to give up to be a Christian."	

Objection 14: "My friends are too important to me to give up?"	
Objection 15: "Not now, this is not a good time for me."	
Objection 16: "I am too old to change now."	
Objection 17: "I am too young and have so many things I still would like to do."	
Objection 18: "I do not wish to change from my parents religion. I do not want to condemn them."	
Objection 19: "How can I know there is a God?"	
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Objection 21: "Was Jesus real and was he the Son of God?"	

## Great Acts of Fishers of Men

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When questioned about the evangelistic programs used at their congregation brethren are often asked, "What approach do you use?" All too often the only things emphasized are the methods, concepts, procedures, programs, and techniques. Brethren want to spend millions of dollars on a thousand different programs to save a dozen souls. Perhaps a better question may be asked of the New Testament. What approach did they use in the early days of the church?

The Book of Acts is filled with examples of conversion and cases of non-conversion as well as how to evangelize the lost. Acts is not just a narrative about the activities of the Apostles. In the Apostles' commission Jesus introduces the duty of the apostles to be witnesses of the Gospel as it expands forth from Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Note Peter's initial success among the Jews in Jerusalem and later in Judea. Followed by Philip's progress among the Samaritans and then missionary journeys of Paul to the Gentiles all represent the fulfillment of the Great Commission as they went out preaching "*concerning the kingdom*" (8:12; 20:25; 28:31). From start to finish Acts is an account of the progress of the Gospel beginning at Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria even to the remotest parts of the world (1:8). History of the growth of Christianity as indicated by the progress reports Luke has scattered throughout Acts (2:47; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31). Early converts represent three continents: the Ethiopian from Africa, Saul of Tarsus from Asia, and Lydia of Europe. There is a great deal to learn from the first thirty years of evangelism recorded in Acts.

### **Boldness in the Face of Hindrances and Opposition**

The book of Acts ends with... "*And he remained a whole two years in [his] own hired apartment, and welcomed all the [ones] coming in to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness unhindered*" (Marshall 601). An adverb like "unhindered" seems like a strange way to end a book. Sir William Ramsay wrote, "no one can accept the ending of Acts as the conclusion of a rationally conceived history" (Stagg 3). The purpose was to show that in the face of all the obstacles and opposition to the Word God's work will go on unhindered if it is proclaimed in boldness. With all the hindrances the early Christians faced in spreading the Gospel it is amazing that Luke ends Acts on a positive note.

Luke shows that Christianity has been opposed by the Jews. Even before the first Gospel sermon Peter had to defend the apostles against the mocking of the Jews (Acts 2:13). Peter and John were arrested by the Sadducees for preaching the resurrection (4:2) later they were threatened and released (4:21). Next, the Sanhedrin had all twelve apostles arrested (5:18) and this time beat them before releasing them (5:40). The Sanhedrin procured false witnesses against Stephen (6:13) and later stoned him (7:58). Saul persecuted the church as far as Damascus arresting both men and women (8:3). After his conversion, beginning in Damascus Jews sought to kill Paul (9:23). When he started preaching in Jerusalem the Hellenistic Jews sought to put him to death (9:29). Agrippa I in order to please the Jews killed James and imprisoned Peter (12:2f). Everywhere Paul went preaching the Gospel the Jews instigated a persecution (13:45,46,50). At Iconium the Jews even stirred up the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas (14:2). At Lystra the Jews attempted to stone Paul (14:5). Later, Jews from Antioch and Iconium dragged Paul out of the city, stoning him and leaving him for dead (14:19). The Jews continued to oppose him in Thessalonica (17:5), Berea (17:13), and in Corinth (18:2). They plotted to kill Paul in Macedonia (20:3). Forty conspirators swore to murder him (23:12), as did another group (25:3). They testified with false accusations against Paul before Felix (24:1) and before Festus (25:7). "Luke took pains to show that whenever Jews brought accusations of disloyalty against the Nazarenes before Roman officials, they got nowhere (18:14,15; 25:25; 26:31)" (Harrison 21).

Another motive for Luke's defense is that Christianity has been scandalized by false accusations. At Philippi they were accused of *"advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice"* (Acts 16:20-21). Paul and Silas are accused of *"causing trouble all over the world"* (17:6). Christianity is referred to as a sect *"everywhere spoken against"* (28:22). At Thessalonica the Christians are accused of *"defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus"* (Acts 17:7). In Corinth they are accused of *"persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law"* (Acts 18:13).

Christians today are troubled by misrepresentations, used to hinder the truth. Opponents today will bring false accusations against the Gospel:

- "You don't believe in the O.T."
- "You don't have music in our church".
- "You believe in water salvation".
- "You don't have any priests".

Trying to share the Gospel with the lost world has always required boldness and confidence. Perhaps, this is why the apostle Peter prayed with the disciples at the early church in Jerusalem, *"now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word"* (Acts 4:29). Peter and John healed a cripple, preached Jesus to the masses, saw five thousand souls saved, and went straight to jail.

Acts chapter four is filled with the word: "boldness." After healing the cripple the members of the Sanhedrin questioned Peter and John's authority, *"By what power or by what name have you done this?"* (Acts 4:7b). *"Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit"* began to answer them (Acts 4:8a). The fact is, the Holy Spirit is where Peter and John derived their authority and ability to perform this act of mercy and preach Jesus. Peter went on to boldly witness to his accusers of their own sin, *"let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole"* (Acts 4:10). The one being tried put his would-be judges on trial. All Peter was doing was healing and preaching in the name of Jesus. They were the ones who crucified Him. He was able to witness with all boldness *"by the name of Jesus Christ."* After quoting a prophecy about their rejection of Jesus in the Old Testament, Peter emphatically declares with boldness that this Jesus is their only Savior. *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Previously, during Jesus' trial Peter had adamantly denied he even knew Him. Now while on trial Peter boldly declares that the members of the Sanhedrin are lost without Him. It was at this point they all marveled at Peter's demonstration of boldness before the court. *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13).

After the Sanhedrin consulted among themselves, they decided to command these two lowly fishermen to stop preaching Jesus. Peter declared they must boldly preach the Truth. *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:19,20).

The apostle Paul knew the importance of boldness when preaching the Truth. The Greek term often translated "boldness" is *parresia*. It is a noun meaning frankness, forthrightness and outspokenness. Wherever Paul went preaching and teaching the Gospel, he proclaimed the Word with all boldness. From the very beginning of his work for the Lord *"...he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus"* (Acts 9:27). At Antioch of Pisidia *"the Jews...were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles'"* (Acts 13:45f). At Iconium, Paul was *"speaking boldly in the Lord"* (Acts 14:3). When he arrived at Ephesus *"he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God"* (Acts 19:8). Even before the Roman Governor Felix (Acts 25:24f) and King Agrippa II (Acts 26:26,27) Paul preached with great courage and confidence about the Lord.



How does one obtain such boldness to preach the truth in the twenty-first century? Preaching with all boldness can be learned from those who were so successful at it in the first century. Notice after Peter proclaimed Jesus boldly before the Sanhedrin, he prayed for God to bless him and others with the ability to preach the Word with all boldness. After the prayer *“they spoke the word of God with boldness”* (Acts 4:31b). Paul asked God for boldness and asked others to pray with him (Eph. 6:19,20). We should ask God for boldness while evangelizing.

So, the next time you go out fishing for men speak up - don't clam up.

### **Begin Where The Prospect Is and Take Them to Where They Need to be**

Throughout the Book of Acts are found nearly thirty speech in its twenty-eight chapters. Each message proclaims the same Gospel, yet it is tailor made to fit the audience. On the day of Pentecost Peter and the rest of the apostles focused on those who were responsible for having the Son of God crucified. First, they use the Old Testament to point to the coming of the Kingdom being ruled over by the resurrected King (2:14-40). Stephen's lengthy lesson focuses upon the sinful history of the Jew's rejection of the prophets and finally Christ. It even ends with their rejection of Stephen by stoning him to death (Acts 7). Perhaps the best example of being where the prospect is and leading them to salvation is when Philip preaches to the Ethiopian. Being sent by the Holy Spirit and an angel to preach to the Ethiopian, Philip first heard him reading from the book of Isaiah. *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him”* (Acts 8:35). Most of the sermons, except Paul address to the Athenians, will use quotes from each of the major Old Testament divisions: Law, Prophets and Psalms. These quotes are mostly in reference to the fulfillment of prophecy (1:20; 2:17-21; 25,28; 3:22,23; 7:49; 15:16; 28:26). Paul began to speak to the Athenians about their ignorance of the “unknown God.” He reasoned with them from their perspective finding common ground and even quoting one of their own poets. (Acts 17). His speech concluded with the mention of the resurrection. Perhaps the most common similarities are the mention of the resurrection in almost all of these speeches (1:22; 2:24,31; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:30; 7:56; 10:40; 13:30; 17:31; 22:8; 23:6; 24:15,21; 26:8,23). The greatest proof of the deity of Christ is His resurrection from the dead. The resurrection also gives man great hope over his enemy death. Somewhere during the speeches by Christians a call to repentance is given (2:38; 3:17; 5:31; 9:22; 10:48; 11:18; 13:38,39; 15:9; 17:30; 20:21; 26:18,20; 22:28). Man's greatest problem is sin and his response to the Gospel requires him to turn from sin and toward God.

### **Continuous Sharing of the Gospel**

Much of today's evangelistic efforts are hit and miss, now and then, only accomplished and attempted during Gospel Meetings or other special events or efforts. This was not so in New Testament times. The early Christians made personal evangelism a part of their daily routine. After Pentecost the first Christians *“praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved”* (Acts 2:47). They were *“daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”* (Acts 5:42). After widespread persecution began following the martyrdom of Stephen *“those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word”* (Acts 8:4). As *“the churches were strengthened in the faith”* they *“increased in number daily”* (Acts 16:5). Not only did they daily share the Word, the scriptures were daily searched by their prospects. *“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so”* (Acts 17:11). At Athens Paul *“reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there”* (Acts 17:17). When the Jews and others would not believe Paul *“departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus”* (Acts 19:9). Later Paul reminded the elders of Ephesus that *“for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears”* (Acts 20:31). During his imprisonment at Rome *“Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him”* (Acts 28:30,31).

## Teamwork

Knowing the value of teamwork Jesus sent out the seventy “by two” or in pairs. “*After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go*” (Luke 10:1; cf. Mark 6:7 ). On the day of Pentecost the Apostles, with Peter taking the lead, preached the first Gospel sermon (Acts 2). Peter and John teamed up to preach in the Temple (Acts 3,4). They would be sent to lay their hands on believers in Samaria to impart gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:25). Barnabas and Saul went on the first missionary journey from Antioch (Acts 13f). Later Paul took Silas and Barnabas took Mark to continue their teamwork in preaching the Word. At times Paul took Luke, Timothy, Titus, and others with him to preach (16:5). There are times when couples worked as a team sharing the Good News as in the case of Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18; Rom 16:3).

Although at times Stephen, Philip, Paul and others would work alone, often they went about in pairs. What is the purpose and value of teaming up in pairs to do evangelism? It is good to have the power or synergy of two pulling the load together. By planning and deciding things as partners two can often have a united will in presenting the Truth to others. Mutual support can be provided to one another. They can hold each other accountable. “*Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.....Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken*” (Ecclesiastes 4:9,11,12).

## Supplications For Soul Winning

A congregation in Orlando spent a whole summer knocking on doors. 13,000 people were talked to about the church, Bible Study, etc. No one was saved. When the workers met in the fall to discuss their efforts and find out why they were so unsuccessful, someone pointed out that they never began a session with prayer. Prayerless pews are powerless. Prayerless pulpits are powerless.

It is not surprising that in the Book of Acts to find that “...14 of the first 15 chapters of Acts (ch. 5 excepted) and many of the later chapters mention prayer...” (FA 30). It was the habit of the apostles to give “*themselves to prayer*” (Acts. 6:4). To represent God to the World men of prayer are needed. The early church often had prayer meetings (6:6; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23; 20:36; 21:5). Obedience to the Gospel and growth of the church often followed.

Various patterns are seen in the framework of Luke’s writing. A pattern of progress dominates the first half of Acts is...

**Prayer**  
**Power**  
**Preaching**  
**Persecution**  
**Progress**

Although this exact order is not a hard fast occurrence.

This pattern can be seen as early as the Day of Pentecost. The apostles are *praying* in the upper room before Pentecost (1:14) and when selecting Judas’ replacement (1:24). On the day of Pentecost the twelve receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes upon them (2:1-4). Some mock (*persecute*) the apostles saying “*They are full of new wine.*” Peter *preaches* the first Gospel Sermon (2:14-36). Three thousand obey (*progress*) the Gospel (2:41).

The pattern is seen again in Peter and John’s preaching and teaching in the Temple. Peter and John go to the temple at the hour of *prayer* (3:1). They heal a man lame through the *power* of Christ (3:2-13). Peter *preaches* on Solomon’s Porch (3:11-26). *Persecution* comes as they are arrested (4:1-3). Progress: about 5000 men believe (4:4).

How important is prayer when it comes to personal evangelism? What needs to be a part of these prayers?

- **Intercession for the Lost**

Since God wants *"all men"* to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and does not want anyone to perish but come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9) Christians need to pray for their souls.

- **Opportunities To Teach**

*"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains"* (Col. 4:2). While Peter was praying on a roof top in Joppa opportunity came for him to go preaching to the first Gentile converts (Acts 10).

- **Success for Preachers of the Word**

*"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you"* (2 Th. 3:1). Pray for the spiritual strength of your fellow workers (Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9; 2 Th. 1:11; 1 Th. 5:23; Col. 4:12).

- **Boldness to Proclaim the Word**

The Jewish authorities had strictly charged the Apostles not to preach any longer in the name of Christ. Their request was granted in a spectacular exhibition of divine power, *"and when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness"* (Acts 4:31).

- **For Rulers**

Praying for rulers *"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence"* (1 Tim. 1:1,2).

- **For Supplies**

It takes special supplies to spread the Word, such as, money, transportation, etc. (Matthew 18:19,20). Prayer is the personal workers requisition form to the stores in the warehouses of Heaven.

- **For Fellow-workers or laborers**

Jesus said, *"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest"* (Matthew 9:37,38).

- **For Wisdom**

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him"* (Js 1:5). Praying for wisdom includes the ability to see lost and their needs; the value of the soul (Mt. 16:25,26); to see the *"fields while unto harvest"* and understand this great and privilege.

### Questions:

1. In order to best learn about the evangelistic efforts of the early Christians one should...
  - Study the Gospels
  - Study the Book of Acts
  - Study the Epistles
  - Read a book of early church history
2. Opposition to the early Christians preaching the Gospel came from...
  - Sanhedrin
  - Kings
  - Gentiles
  - All the above
3. Today, Christians have been falsely accused of
  - "You don't believe in the Old Testament."
  - "You don't have music in our church".
  - "You believe in water salvation".
  - "You don't have any priests".
  - All the above

4. Acts chapter four is filled with the word
  - steadfast
  - boldness
  - Gospel
  - baptism
5. What things can be done to help a Christian develop boldness in sharing the Gospel?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon on Pentecost                      a. began to preach Jesus from the passage the Ethiopian was reading
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen's Sermon                      b. call to turn from sin found in many speeches in Acts
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Philip                      c. proof of fulfilled prophecy
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul at Athens                      d. important proof of Christ's deity in most sermon
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Resurrection                      e. Spoke to them about the unknown God
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Repentance                      f. accused Jews of killing God's Son
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Quotes from Old Testament                      g. accused Jews of not listening to the prophets
13. What difference did it make that the early Christians share the Word daily?
14. List various ways the a Christian can share his faith daily with others.
15. What are the advantages of going out two by two and teaching the Word?
16. What is the pattern often found in the book of Acts?
17. What does praying for rulers have to do with teaching the lost?
18. Why is wisdom needed to personal evangelism?

## Caring for the Catch

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One day a fisherman was having a great deal of luck. As soon as the hook and bait hit the water, he pulled in a fish. He had quite a string of fish attached to a line beside his boat. He was so excited about it, he had to call up a fishing buddy to brag about his great catch. When he finally hung up, he noticed that a large turtle had come and helped himself to the fish.

Once a fisher of men lands a new convert, he needs to take care of their catch for Christ. Far too often a babe in Christ is left on the steps of the baptistry dripping wet with no one to follow up on their spiritual growth. This requires the efforts of their spiritual family: the church.

### **It Takes a Congregation to Raise a New Convert**

Oh, the joy of having a new born baby in the house. However, babies can be a lot of responsibility. Before marriage, the man and woman both think themselves to be the "boss". After marriage, the "boss" problem is pushed around. When their first baby arrives, there is no question who is boss.

As in the physical realm, babes in Christ are both a joy and a big responsibility. Whether aged, middle-aged, or a teenager, the new convert is a *"babe in Christ."* They are *"born again"* (Jn. 3:1-8) or *"new creatures"* (Rom. 6:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:17). God is their Father (Rom. 5:12-16). Fellow Christians are their brothers and sisters and rejoice with the angels in heaven over their repentance (Lk. 15:7; 10:17).

Today, we struggle with a very high "infant" mortality rate in the Church. Observing this problem, Falvil R. Yeakley, Jr., in his book RESEARCH ON EVANGELISM wrote, *"In the two decades following World War II, the church of Christ was reputed to be the fastest growing religious group in the United States. Since the mid -1960s our growth rate has declined dramatically"* and *"One of the principal findings of this study is that our major problem in evangelism is our very high dropout rate"*. As in the Parable of the sower (Lk. 8), some seed would never germinate. Some would spring forth to life, but quickly die for lack of moisture. Some seed would sprout and begin to grow, only to be choked out with thorns and weeds - "the cares of this world, and deceitfulness of riches" (Mt. 13:22). Some seed would germinate and bear fruit. Observe that only one in four brought forth any fruit.

Perhaps, the biggest reason for losing our new converts is due to them being neglected by maturer Christians. Many babes are left standing there "dripping wet on the baptistry steps" as members wait to see if the baptism is going to take or not. If we treated our babies like that, the infant mortality rate would be appalling. We abhor crimes against babies abandoned and neglected. How do you feel about neglected novices? Christ gave strong warning against harming "these little ones" (Mt. 18:5,6).

Hillary Clinton wrote a book entitled IT TAKES A VILLAGE which promoted the need for a community instead of parents to take the lead in raising the next generation of children. Although I disapprove of the main gist of this book, it does take a congregation to edify a new convert (Eph. 4:11-16). Most seem content to leave this responsibility to a few "specialists", however, the church is a family (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6). Is it the work of preachers? elders? teachers? parents? experienced disciples? Yes! Furthermore, the growth of the body of Christ is a product of "what every joint supplies" (Eph. 4:16).

Today, we hear about quite a few multiple births. Having twins, triplets, quadruplets, or even quintuplets can be more than a dream come true, but a nightmare. Just think of have seven newborns like the couple in Iowa. Multiple births can also presents problems for congregations. When a small congregation without elders and deacons is blessed with several new converts the follow-up obviously is not going to keep pace with the personal work. At the small congregation in Texas where I preach

we've seen fourteen souls obey the gospel in the last three years. Although this is wonderful its also a huge duty to tend to their needs when there are only 45 members in all.

An avid sportsman was away from home on a fishing trip even though his wife was due to deliver any day. He caught a big fish, the biggest he had ever landed in his long and busy life. He was elated. He was crazed with the joy and telegraphed his wife, "I've got one. Weighs seven pounds and its a beauty". She answered with: "So what. I've got two! Each weighs over 6 pounds! Not a real beauty. They take after you. Need help. Come home now."

No one should really have to be asked to help with new babes. They should easily be able to see the need and also, want to help out.

## **We Are Commanded to Keep the Saved Saved**

Helping with the new born in Christ is not an option. Various commands demand all to be involved.. The last part of the great commission commands us to teach "them to observe all" what Jesus has commanded (Mt. 28:20). This is not to be done just collectively and publicly, but personally and privately (Ac. 20:20). We are commanded to care for the weak (1 Th. 5:14) and rescue those in sin {Js. 5:19,20).

Remember, the Devil wants them back. When the kingdom of God increases, the kingdom of darkness decreases by that one. If New Testament Christians do not assist the new convert who will?

The preacher alone cannot tend to all the needs of several novices. It does indeed take a congregation, the whole congregation, to raise of new convert.

## **Start Before Baptism**

Today, far too many babes in Christ are left standing on the steps of the baptistry dripping wet with no one willing to take the time to follow-up. It has been my practice for many years to work hard to teach people how to become a Christian. But just as they are practically demanding to be baptized into Christ I stop and have them count the cost. Preparing and caring for the future babe in Christ must begin before they are every baptized into Christ. Jesus often has masses following Him. Many were not true spiritual followers or disciples of Jesus. He knew this. Jesus required all would-be disciples to stop and count the cost of becoming a disciple (Luke 14:25-33).

Jesus weeds out the followers from true disciples. No less than three times He told them they could not be His disciples (Luke 14:26,27,33). They first had to consider the cost of following Him. Jesus promised a crown for faithful disciples to wear in eternity, but He first warned them of the cost of bearing their cross.

Jesus gives a couple of conditions for being a disciple. First, they must be will to sacrifice their personal relationships. He said, *"if anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14:26). "Hate" in the lit. sense would violate Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20. However, Matthew 10:37 shows that "hate" is to be taken in a comparative sense. This passage adds loving others *"...more than"* Jesus. It may appear that we *"hate"* those whom we seemingly turn away from, out of a greater loyalty to the Lord God. All natural loves and the love of self, and of life, must be subordinate to our love to Him who must be first in our life. Christ had every right to ask us to leave our father - He left His own Father, and the Father's house, Heaven. Even Mary, His mother, did not have a greater place in His heart than the will of the Father. Second, a would-be disciple of Jesus had to complete be willing to sacrifice his personal goals and desires. *"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple"* (14:27). Our day is characterized by a longing for comfort. Jesus demands of His disciples to take up a cross and follow Him. Paul did just this. *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20). This is like telling someone that they can only be a Christian if they first hop into an electric chair and pull the switch or strap themselves down and inject themselves with a lethal dose. Death to one's life must precede a life of following Jesus in the Christian life. Third, to would-be disciples must first count the cost of giving up all they have to be a Christian. *"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple"* (14:33). So many cling so firmly to their

physical possessions they can not lay up treasures in Heaven. They are like the monkey's captured in Africa. The hunter finds a hollow log and makes a hole just big enough for the monkey to slip its hand into it to grab the bait: a nut. With its fist wrapped around the nut the monkey cannot pull out his hand. He will not let go even to save his life when the hunt comes up to club him. Jesus asked the rich young ruler to give all he had to the poor, so he could have eternal life. He went away, because he would not let go of his riches.

In the midst of these three conditions of discipleship, Jesus gives two twin parables about the wisdom of stopping and counting the cost. First, he tells the story of the builder of the tower. *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it-- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 'saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'"* (14:28-30). Before baptism everyone should have a chance to pause for a moment and calculate the cost. Perhaps, they realize the price is higher than what they are will to commit themselves to at the present time. The second parable is about a king going to war with another who has twice as many soldiers. *"Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace"* (14:31,32). This parable serve as a warning to anyone who endeavors to take on a commitment with too much haste and like of consideration of the cost and consequences.

### **How to Care For a Babe in Christ**

At home, when the baby starts to cry the parent immediately takes note as to what the child needs whether it is a bottle, a cover, a nap, new diaper or just to be held. In caring for the novice Christians need to care for them by noticing their needs and finding a scriptural means of provide for those needs.

#### **Babes in Christ Need...**

##### ■ **A New Family and Friends**

Often after one obeys the Gospel they experience opposition from family and friends. They are bombarded with "wasn't the ?? church good enough for you?" or "Do you believe that only those who are members of the Church of Christ are going to be saved?" or "Are you going to teach your children that their grandparents are going to hell?"

Often they are torn between loyalty to Christ and hunger for group approval. Unless they already had friends within the church their feelings of isolation may be excruciating. Babes in Christ need to know they are loved and "belong" to the family.

So just what can you do? Start by showing hospitality by having them in your home for a meal or a cookout (Rom. 12:10,13). Find a place in the Family and give them something to do. They should be used as soon as possible. Encourage them to bring others. Call or write one of them in the congregation each week. Have someone in your home each month. Mail them the bulletin when they miss. Visiting the new convert will help him to feel a closer kinship. In short, find way to integrate new members into the local family.

##### ■ **Love and Encouragement**

According to a British doctor, unloved babies do not grow normally. At an international conference of family doctors held in Toronto. Dr. G.C. Jenkins said nurses caring for unloved babies were taught to look at them and talk to them until the babies fixed their eyes on the nurses' faces. When the babies become aware of the nurses' faces, they will start to gain weight and grow. One reason unloved babies do not grow normally could be the effect their unhappiness has on the digestive system. Dr. Jenkins said that a happy baby's stomach is producing the hydrochloric acid necessary for digestion, whereas the acid production is shut off if the baby is upset.

Because of the strong backward pull of his old life the novice wonders: "Will I be able to hold out?" Unfortunately some will lament: "I failed as a Christian. I knew I could not do it, and I was right. There is no sense in me continue to come to church. I'd just be a hypocrite." They need to know they

are not going to be able to live a sinless life (1 Jn. 1:8,9). Like Simon the Sorcerer they may quickly fall back into their former life and have need of repentance. They also must be made aware of the fact that God promises to provide a way of escape out of every temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). A radical change in their life calls for constant assurance. Lydia seemed to feel this need (Ac. 16:15).

#### ■ **Special Consideration**

A little girl asked her grandfather, "What makes our new baby at home cry so much?" He answered, "If your teeth were all out, your hair off, your legs so weak that you couldn't stand up alone walk. You couldn't talk and you were wearing a wet diaper with a fresh load in it. If all these happened to you, you'd cry too!"

Become dead to the world, sin, and our former life style can be a traumatic experience. Sometimes pain is associated with growing and the novice is soon aware of his growing pains. The new converts experience a form of culture shock. The religious terminology he has been accustomed to is often frowned upon. Like the American preacher in Australia who explained that his wife was not at services because she "was under the weather". The congregation roared with laughter. You see "under the weather" in Australia means that a person is "drunk". The new convert will need to be informed as to the differences between: Mass and the Lord's Supper; Reverend, Pastor, and Preacher; or a Bishop and an Elder.

A new convert not only needs help breaking their former habits, but assistance in replacing them with new habits such as attendance and Bible Study. Remember, babes don't come to the table by themselves. You can't just ring the dinner bell and expect them to come running. A baby doesn't know where to get help from others. He just cries out.

#### ■ **Plenty of Proper Nourishment**

One doesn't bring a new baby home from the hospital and immediately begin to feed him steak or pot roast. When Peter wrote that Christians as "newborn babes" should desire the milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2). He wasn't necessarily addressing new Christians, but was encouraging all believers to maintain a naturally strong desire for the pure, "incorruptible" truth (23). However, this appetite is acute for the new Christian. His spiritual appetite is a great blessing (Mt. 5:6). As the early Christians continued steadfastly in Apostles teachings, fellowship, breaking of bread, Lord's supper, Prayer (Ac. 2:42).

They will need to be taught: how to study the Bible; how to establish Bible authority; the meaning of the Lord's Supper; the necessity of attendance (Heb. 10:25); how to pray (Lk. 1:11); the need and joy of giving; how to lead a moral life and stay clear of gambling, immodest clothing, improper recreation, fornication; and most importantly maintaining a personal relationship with God.

Here are just a few things that might help. Start a new converts' class. In business, in government, in the Armed forces, new members are given special indoctrination courses. Why not have a special class to put the doctrine in the new convert? Take them to a Gospel Meeting. It is a great way for them to meet other Christians. Correspondence courses, tracts, reference books, a good Bible, etc. are also valuable tools that should be employed.

#### ■ **New Priorities**

Discipleship costs. The new Christian must deny himself ungodliness and worldly lust (Tit. 2:11,12). Jesus was constantly encouraging his disciples to count the cost and rearrange their priorities in order to be a true disciple (Lk. 9:59-62; 10:38-42; 14:25-33). He demanded that His disciples should "seek first the kingdom of God," (Mt. 6:33). This restructured life will manifest itself in the place he gives to his job, money (Mt. 6:19), material possessions (Lk. 12:14), associations (1 Cor. 15:33), recreation, family, etc. It will not be easy for him to love God with all of his heart, mind, and soul. Instead of making God another part of his life, he must make God the master of his life and put all these areas "under new management".

#### ■ **Time to Grow**

Why is it that some people can grow anything and other people can kill Johnson grass? Well, some are willing to put in the time and effort necessary. They learn how through trial and error like playing a piano. If you love someone's soul enough you'll learn how and find the means to help them.

Time is a very precious commodity these days. Time has come to be more precious than money to most. We had rather pay for something to be done. Yet, we can't always "pay" others to do our



teaching for us, it is a personal responsibility.

Caring for babes is very time consuming. Parents have to be available 24 hours a day. One doesn't expect a baby to mature into an adult overnight. Remember, our Lord selected 12 men and worked with them for 3 1/2 years. It also required the time and patience of others while you were growing in Christ.

Unfortunately, not every new convert will survive. Some new converts will die even when the elders and members do everything possible to help them thrive spiritually. Nonetheless, let us do our part to provide for their needs knowing our labor is not in vain (I Cor. 15:58).

## **Questions:**

### **Multiple Choice**

1. The number one problem with growth in the Church according to some research is a) a lack of effort b) loss of new converts c) atheism.
2. Christ explained the problem with a very high drop out rate in His parable of a) the sower b) the lost coin c) the mustard seed.
3. The duty to care for new babes is Christ belongs to a) elders b) preacher c) the whole congregation.
4. The Great Commission commands us to a) teach the lost b) baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit c) teach disciples all things commanded d) all of these.
5. Which new Christian fell away shortly after being baptized? a) Simon the Sorcerer b) Elymas the Sorcerer c) Philippian Jailor d) Lydia
6. Christ worked with the twelve for a) 3 and a half years b) 52 weeks c) seven years.

### **True/False**

1. \_\_\_\_ In every temptation God provides a way of escape.
2. \_\_\_\_ Our spiritual appetite for God's Word must be like a baby's desire for meat.
3. \_\_\_\_ New Christians need special help understanding New Testament terms and how they are used.
4. \_\_\_\_ New converts automatically should understand the necessity of faithful attendance.
5. \_\_\_\_ They need to be reminded of the high cost of discipleship.
6. \_\_\_\_ They need to know the minimum requirements of being a Christian.
7. \_\_\_\_ It is not unreasonable to expect all new converts to remain faithful.

### **Discussion**

1. What are the problems associated with a small congregation having a large number of new converts?

2. What are some things we can do to help new converts feel like that are a part of the spiritual family?
3. How can we show them love and encouragement?
4. List things new converts need to be taught soon after they become Christians.
5. What means can be utilized to teach them these things?
6. List the priorities that a new convert must have and explain if there must be a proper order to these priorities.
7. How much time should a new covert put in each week to study and worship?
8. What kind of sermons do new converts need to hear?

**Homework:** Find a new convert in the congregation and find a way to assist them in their growth in Christ.

# Personal Contacts Form

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## Family Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Friend

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Co-Worker

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Neighborhood

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Community Activities

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hobbies, Sports, Recreation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Enemies

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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