

## **Eight Tough Questions**

If you are willing to hear from the mouths and hearts of lost people, and if you really believe that lost people matter to God, you need to take a few minutes and read this article. Let us be reminded that evangelism, included personal evangelism, begins with God. It is not some human endeavor that depends on magical words, the latest methodologies, or cutting-edge research. It must always begin with God and with His people who are willing to carry the gospel to the lost (Acts 8:4).

Reaching those who have no religious affiliation is spiritual warfare. Satan will oppose us at every effort we make to reach lost people: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). We cannot proceed on our own power (cp. Romans 1:16). The following eight questions are meant to address some of those areas in which our opportunities to be a testimony for the Savior can be stymied.

1. How well do you pray? Most of us, if we are honest with God and ourselves, would admit that we are too busy for our own good. Life’s demands sometimes cause us to replace the good for the best. Time in prayer is often the loser when we look at our checklist of to-do items. Prayer is our source of power to fight the schemes of Satan as we try to reach the unchurched world around us (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
2. Whom did you tell about Jesus today? When we fail to talk to people about Jesus, we fail in our responsibilities. Jesus told us in His last words before He went back to Heaven, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15; cp. Matthew 28:19-20). Whom did you tell about Jesus today? If the answer is “No one,” then our reasons for not growing are becoming more apparent.
3. How is your family? The last three decades have provided clear evidence that one of Satan’s most effective strategies against Christians has been to attack the family. The apostle Paul told elders that they could not lead the church if they did not manage their households well (1 Timothy 3:5). When a Christian’s family is in turmoil, his or her ability to teach the lost is damaged.
4. Do you need to reconcile with someone? Sometimes the greatest barrier to growth is the squabble between two people. Jesus placed a high value on relationships between people (Matthew 5:23-24; 6:15). Is it possible that your enmity toward someone is rendering your teaching and influence ineffective? Perhaps you need to go to someone!
5. Are you handling your finances and possession well? Such a question may seem unusual and out of place in an article about inviting others to obey Christ. The primary purpose of this article is to motivate you and others to teach the gospel of Christ. And Jesus said very clearly that a preoccupation with the material world

precludes our having a focus on the important matters of God (Luke 12:15; Colossians 3:5). Does your lifestyle honor Christ? If necessary, could you make some adjustments to downscale your lifestyle? Do you give abundantly and cheerfully? Do you put the priorities of God before the material amenities of the world?

6. Are you devoted to your congregation? A vast number of church members have developed a consumer mentality. Many churches have become so inwardly focused that they fail to see the needs of others. But too many Christians have an attitude that asks what the church has done for them lately. The attitude of sacrificial service is all but gone for many church members. Do you truly desire to reach people with the gospel of Christ? You must love your church, despite its flaws and imperfections. Do you ask what you can do for the Lord in the church rather than what the church can do for you? Are you an encourager to others in the church (Acts 11:22-24)?
7. Do you love others unconditionally? It is very easy to write off people who are not like us. It is very convenient to avoid those people who irritate us. It is a lot easier to spend time with people like us — who think like us and act like us. But if we truly love people unconditionally, we will seek those who are different. We will, with God's power, learn to love the unlovable (Matthew 9:10-13; 22:39). We will begin to see more people through the eyes of Christ.
8. Do you have a grateful attitude? In all of life's peaks and valleys, every one of us have discovered the consistency and constancy of God's love and mercy. And we know that if we are faithful, we will see Him face to face (1 John 3:2). Is it any wonder that we always have reason to rejoice (Philippians 4:4)? Our rejoicing does not depend on the changing circumstances of life, but on the unchanging Christ who gives us life. Do you show a joyous attitude at home, at work and in your neighborhood (Romans 15:11; Hebrews 13:15; James 5:13)? Such joy can be contagious and give you opportunities to tell others the source of your joy.

These are questions with pretty important answers! In fact, the way you answer these questions will show if you will be effective spreading the gospel. Jeremiah said, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9). Let the word be burning in you and take it to the lost!

Adapted from Thom Ranier