

# What It Takes To Convert The Lost

**Introduction.** The mind can come up with many ideas to eliminate personal involvement. There are many churches with tools to promote personal evangelism. It has become vogue to bring in "experts" to enthuse us about personal work. And yet the church gains very little ground.

The problem is that we have done everything we can to keep from having to go out and tell a sinner that they are a sinner and only Jesus can save him. We cannot import an enthusiasm merchant to temporarily arouse our spiritual adrenalin while we neglect spiritual commitment and ever expect it to work. There is a lot of difference between enthusiasm and commitment.

Virtually every church I know of has some kind of mass-market approach to evangelism. The ground might be prepared by mass media but ninety-nine percent of all conversions come from someone being there -- some Aquila or Priscilla who taught someone the gospel (Acts 18:26). Let's look at four specific attitudes that we must possess to convert the lost.

## I. ***A Love Of The Savior***

- A. The apostle Peter emphasized this attribute as a prerequisite of those who would prepare themselves to teach others (1 Peter 3:15).
  - 1. We are sometime ineffective in rallying others to be workers for the Lord because we seek to get others to tell about a Lord that they do not know themselves.
  - 2. If we love the Lord, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). His commandment is to teach the lost (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 4:35). When we love the Lord, His word becomes a fire within us (Jeremiah 20:7-9).
- B. Those who love the Lord completely will have no problem teaching others no matter how awkwardly the message is presented.
  - 1. When a young man proposes to the woman he wants to spend the rest of his life with, she understands the message even if it is poorly presented.
  - 2. His love for her is apparent and she is graciously complimented.

## II. ***Faith In The Message***

- A. This message is eternal. While God, man, sin and the devil have not changed, society does change. Our methods of presenting the message will change over time. But among these changes, our mission to seek and save the lost cannot change.
- B. The message is to be taught whether it is accepted or not. One great encouragement is knowing that not everyone will accept the message.
  - 1. Jesus, near the close of His personal ministry, found it necessary to

- explain the apparently small response to His teaching (John 12:37-42).
2. Jesus was a complete success in everything He did (Mark 7:37).  
The increase of converts is the Lord's part (1 Corinthians 3:6-8).
- C. Ezekiel was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. He was not sent to those of a strange language or culture.
1. He was told that they would not hear him, yet he was to go anyway.  
If he failed to teach the wicked he would perish with the wicked.
  2. If he taught the righteous he would save himself as well as his hearers. But whether they chose to hear or they chose to forbear they would know that there had been a prophet among them (Ezekiel 2:5; 3:4-7, 17-21).
- D. In Acts 17:32-34, some in the New Testament reacted with angry hostility to the preaching of the gospel. Others were interested but did not immediately obey. Many believed and obeyed the gospel. It is clear that if we teach the gospel, whatever the apparent results, we will please the Lord. If we do not teach it, we can only expect condemnation.

### III. **Concern For A Soul**

- A. We should be horrified at the thought that someone we know is going to hell. Jonah did not go to Nineveh because of his animosity (Jonah 4:10-11). Jonah was afraid that the Ninevites might repent and God would spare them.
- B. What does our lack of personal evangelism indicate?
  1. It indicates that we do not really believe people are lost or that we will be lost if we do not take the gospel to them.
  2. Do we have the same joy as the angels when a sinner repents (Luke 15:7, 10)? If not, why not? The Lord came to preach to sinners (Matthew 9:10-13).
- C. Paul lived to bring others to Christ (Philippians 1:23-24). In a spiritual manner, our goal should be to see if we can pull one more sinner from the world (Jude 22-23).

### IV. **The Mind Of The Spirit**

- A. A true disciple of Christ must be spiritual or spiritually minded. True disciples walk "after the spirit" and have the "mind of the spirit" (Romans 8:4, 6).
- B. Paul said that the lost are actually best approached by the spiritual (Galatians 6:1). He would say that you who are spiritual are going to be those that are His disciples.
- C. Simply put, spiritual people are those in which spiritual interests prevail in their lives.

1. Spiritual people spend a large portion of their lives hearing gospel preaching, reading the Bible and related materials, caring for the needy, visiting those that are in the hospitals and nursing homes, fellowshiping and socializing with those of like precious faith, talking about spiritual issues and seeking the lost.
  2. That is not to say that they do not enjoy secular activities. It is just that their whole lives are not dominated by ball games, movies, parties, novels and picnics.
- D. If the thrust of our life is focused on carnal affairs, even if those things are not wicked within themselves, we are not spiritual and we will be unsuccessful converting the lost (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Let us offer up spiritual sacrifices by doing our best to show others the salvation we enjoy (1 Peter 2:5).

**Conclusion.** Do we have the commitment it takes to be a growing (not swelling) congregation (Galatians 2:20)? We do not need enthusiasm in the pulpit like we need commitment in the pew. The church in general is shrinking because the members of the church are shirking their responsibility! The world today is probably more ready to listen than we are to preach. We who are saved are loath to go, while they who are lost are anxious for us to come. Our goal, at the end, should be to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).