

There's Only Two Kinds Of People—Givers And Takers

It's been said that the greatest test of a male Christian's character is determined by what he does with the money in his possession, but I believe that's one of the greatest tests for any Christian. As Christians, we are called to be good stewards of all we possess to the glory of God. Now in the Old Testament that 10% was required from believers. In the New Testament God requires 100%. Yes, all our *stuff*—everything we have—belongs to the Lord and He wants us to use it to help other people come closer to Him primarily, and closer to His Church secondarily. Under His direction, the Holy Spirit wants us to wisely utilize money along with our talents and giftings to win sinners to Jesus Christ! Some ministries and Churches (both religious and real) have given an under emphasis of teaching to this area. And even more have given an over emphasis to this area, and both extremes bring an inferior witness to the world. Some are struggling with lack and deprivation and others are struggling with excess and greed. Maybe you know of some ministry in the past that God has brought down because of greed? Like music, money, in and of itself isn't evil, they can be used for good or evil. Devotion to it is, ***“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”*** (1 Timothy 6:10). It really grieves God, when Christians misrepresent Him with money and it hampers His work.

Maybe you've felt cynical or distrust for all preachers due to the failings of some. Well, rest assured that God has a great deal of ministers with pure motives out there, which aren't avaricious. We all need to diligently pray for our pastors too. They have bigger guns aimed at them, so to speak. Those with great abilities and talents for the Lord seem to be the special target of Satan.

The Gospel is absolutely free of charge to all, but it does cost the Church to pipe it to those who haven't yet heard. Airlines don't give us free tickets because we praise Jesus.

You might be asking, “So, what can I give?” Christians can give from a motive of L-O-V-E: **tithes** (which should go to the ongoing practical support of their local church which has a saved, spiritual, and Bible teaching pastor), **offerings** (which can be given to other soul-winning ministries and needs), and **alms gifts** (which go to bless and witness to the poor) as the Spirit leads.

All the little details in the Old Testament about tithing (like tithing in the 3rd year) do not apply to the Church today, but the basic principle of tithing is good for us as we live by faith focused on the Lord to meet our needs. Yes, all Christians should prayerfully consider how the Lord would have them use *His* funds, and give as the Lord directs. But giving ought to be *“as unto the Lord”* with an attitude of love and thanksgiving. One should never give out of compulsion, but with cheerfulness (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

- ◆ One should always use discernment when giving—our Lord and His disciples warned us many times about false prophets and false teachers (Matthew 5:19; 7:15; 15:2-20; Luke 11:38-52; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:14). According to 2 Peter 2:3, what is the number one sign of a false teacher? It's putting an over emphasis on money and giving. *“Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make*

merchandise of you.” So, the question that I have for many so called Christian preachers is: what minister in his right mind wants the marks of a false teacher on his ministry? We should make sure the ministry we give to is a good steward of God’s money, and doctrinally sound. We would encourage Christians to be more than prayerful in assessing their church’s stewardship. They many wish to talk with the church’s financial handler about the church’s use of tithes and offerings. If financial responsibility is neglected, the Christian has every right to channel his finances elsewhere.

- ◆ The New Testament does not demand a tithe from Christians. Of course, Christians can choose to tithe if they so desire, for the principle of tithing certainly can be supported. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, and Jesus Christ, who is our High Priest, is *“after the order of Melchizedek”* (Hebrews 6:20-7:21). Since we are the spiritual children of Abraham (Galatians 3:6,29), then it is *appropriate* for us to do *“the things Abraham did”* (John 8:39), and tithe to Jesus—our “Melchizedek.” Nevertheless, there is no place in the New Testament that explicitly states how we should pay our tithes, or that we must pay tithes. The cross certainly didn’t cancel the promise of Malachi. Some ministries dun by mail, the people who have pledged money. That’s not right! Giving by constrain isn’t what God wants. The Bible teaches us that whatsoever a Christian purposes in his heart, so let him give. You can see tithing in the Gospels where the context is primarily Jewish, but you don’t see it in the Epistles. God is a Giver and we should also be givers, but God isn’t dependant on or lusting after your money. He is much more into adding to your life (and multiplying) than in taking away from you.
- ◆ Some ask if it’s ok to tithe from your business or church income? Sure, you can’t out-give God. Tithe on the profit of your business if you like—*“from what he has,”* not going into debt to give. *“Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion”* (2 Cor. 9:7).
- ◆ Thus the principle of tithing is supported in the New Testament, but the details are left up to each individual’s Spirit-filled conscience to decide for themselves. Concerning where to give the tithe. I believe Christians should give first and foremost to the local church *where they are fed*. What for? For the practical support of ongoing ministry and quality evangelistic outreach. If an individual wants to give an offering to a fruitful para-church ministry or some other type of constructive organization and they are capable of doing so beyond what they give to their church, that is also wonderful!

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. ‘And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ says the LORD of hosts; and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the LORD of hosts”(Malachi 3:8-12).

To Whom Do We Give Contributions?

When the Christian gives, he or she may give to individuals or to the church, but in the final analysis they are giving to God if their heart is right [see Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 6:2-4; 22:17-21; Acts 5:4; Romans 14:4-8; 2 Corinthians 8:5; Colossians 3:22-25].

Warning: False teachers fleece the flock, true shepherds feed the flock! Christ challenged Peter, “Feed My lambs”, “Tend My sheep”, “Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep’” (John 21:15,16,17). According to second Peter, what is a sure sign of a false teacher? It’s an over emphasis on your money and giving—yes, gospel-greed, that old give-to-get motive. What’s most on the lips, will be most on the heart. What do they love to talk about? The Bible says, “*many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words [fake, deceptive words] make merchandise of you*” (2 Peter 2:2,3 kjv emphasis mine). Beware of such sincere spiritual leaders who over-elaborate on how you are to plant seed in their offering baskets to get the blessings flowing. And I would go so far as to say that this covetousness Peter addresses with these groups is two sided. Their devotees have also come to believe that they will surely get rich on earth for supporting them. Moreover, the most blatant among them not only make merchandise of you, they make merchandisers of you for themselves, both outside the Church (i.e., selling the watchtower, cultic books), and inside many churches, (i.e., applying undo pressure tactics from the pastor). Chuck Smith warns that, “Most of what many false teachers teach is true according to the Bible” and I agree. Ninety percent of what is used to poison rats is good grain, it’s the ten percent that gets em. Are all ministers that squeeze their people false teachers who poison? Hey, I’m accusing no one, but I do have a question. What minister wants the marks of a false teacher on his ministry?

Who Should Give?

Only those who have been united with Christ and His church by personal faith in Jesus Christ should give to the people of God and the work of God. In the Bible, every admonition to give is addressed to believers and not to sinners. Raising funds from unbelievers is prohibited (3 John 5; see also 2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

Why Should God's People Give?

1. Giving is Scriptural

I believe that when you put God first (even with tithes), you’ll be satisfied and have enough. But when you put yourself first, you won’t be satisfied nor will you have enough, [see Haggai 1:1-11]. In the Old Testament we see it [Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Malachi 3:7-12] and in the New (Romans 12:13; Galatians 2:10; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:17), the people of God are instructed to give for certain needs. When one is able to, failing to give for such causes when the Spirit prompts you do to so, is basically an act of disobedience. Not all giving is required, however [see Leviticus 7:16; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15].

2. Giving is a great privilege

The churches of Macedonia were models of generosity in giving, even though they weren't financially well off. They gladly gave out of gratitude toward God and love for their brethren (2 Corinthians 8 and 9; see especially 8:4, 9). Paul reminds us of Jesus' teaching that *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).

3. Giving is one dimension of our stewardship

Very often Jesus spoke of the stewardship of His people in terms of money (see Luke 16:1-13). Our faithfulness as stewards in this "little thing" of money has a bearing on what other (and greater) responsibilities we will be given (see Luke 16:9-12).

4. Giving is a selfless act of worship

The Old Testament righteous could only approach God in worship with a sacrifice, and this sacrifice was a contribution, whether whole or in part. In the New Testament, contributions were also described as sacrifices offered up in worship (see Hebrews 9:1-10; 10:1-25; 13:10-16).

In teaching, preaching and evangelizing, we must be very careful how we take up an offering or spend that offering. God doesn't want His children giving under constraint or because of religious manipulation. Years ago in Germany, Martin Luther vehemently **protested** the Church's unbiblical selling of indulgences so that sinners could allegedly go out of suffering in purgatory to heaven, and so that the religious leaders could build their lavish cathedrals. That's why he and his followers were called Protestants. We too should protest this kind of give as well. Today, we see many high profile ministers use their alleged gift of "Word of Knowledge" to command people to give them money in the Name of the Lord. They connect the viewer getting their healing, supernatural blessing or their loved one getting saved to say a thousand-dollar offering or pecuniary vow they will give to their ministry. Jesus never healed or used His spiritual gifts selfishly under the guise of "revelation knowledge" for a financial price. We can't purchase God's blessings or agape love—they are simply given. Unbelievers should never feel pressure or obligation to give, or think that their giving or works are meritorious for them getting saved—like they would contribute to their righteous standing before God. We are saved *unto* good works, not *by* good works. Unbelievers do not need to give money to God, they need to receive the gift of salvation, which He offers to them freely in Jesus Christ. In church, I believe the offering should be received during the worship time rather than during the time of proclamation, to encourage the saints to give as an act of their worship.

5. Giving is a wise investment

Jesus encouraged believers to prioritize and give in order to *"lay up treasure in heaven"* (Matthew 6:19-21). Investing earthly money in the advancement of the eternal Kingdom of God is one way in which we can lay up spiritual treasure in heaven (see Luke 16:1-13). God rewards obedience in giving, but (unlike many teach) we can't sovereignly determine when or how the return on our investment will come back to us (whether it will come back to us in heaven or here on earth).

6. Giving is an act of self-sacrifice

All Christian service should be a joy, a sacrifice and directed by God (Romans 12:1-2). In giving, we should not seek man's acknowledgment, praise or glory, but God's (Matthew 6:2-4). We are literally to give for the applause of One, not many! We should not give with the hope of getting financially rich in this life, but with the faith that God will reward us in heaven (or here in some cases). ***“When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just”*** (Luke 14:12-14). We should give voluntarily, not under pressure, but willingly and cheerfully, with gratitude for God's grace to us, and according to our ability (2 Corinthians 8 and 9). God has always been the Initiator and we are the responders to His agape love.

7. Giving is an excellent expression of brotherly love

Giving is an expression of brotherly love and of Christian unity. This principle is set down in texts such as Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 3:11; Romans 12:13; James 2:15-17 and 1 John 3:15-18. The practice of this principle is seen in Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 11:27-30; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Philippians 4:14-19.

For What Did God's People Give In The Past?

In the Old Testament, the Israelites gave for the construction of the temple and for the on-going maintenance of its worship and ministry (Exodus 25:1-9; 35:4-9; 2 Kings 12:4-16; 1 Chronicles 29:1-17; Matthew 17:24-27). They also gave to the poor and needy (Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Mark 10:21; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 11:27-30; Romans 12:13; 2 Corinthians 8 and 9; Galatians 2:10). Old and New Testament saints also gave in remuneration for ministry which they received (see Numbers 18; Luke 10:1-9; Galatians 6:6; 1 Corinthians 9:1-14). They supported those who ministered to others (Luke 8:1-3; Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:14-19; 2 John 7-11; 3 John 5-8). There was also ministry to those who were suffering and in need (even imprisoned) for the sake of the gospel (Matthew 25:35-40; Philippians 2:25-30; Hebrews 13:3).

How Much Should God's People Give?

In one sense, God's people are to give everything to God (Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:15; 12:33; 14:33). One's loyalty and devotion cannot be shared between God and material possessions (Matthew 6:24). In another sense, we recognize that we really own nothing, that all things belongs to God and we are stewards of them. We may have possessions, but possessions shouldn't have us—we are not to be possessive (1 Corinthians 7:30). From Acts (2:44-45; 4:32-35; 12:12) we conclude that the early Christians did not claim anything as their own. Many of them would on occasion unselfishly sell what they did not need to meet the needs of others, as different needs arose. Paul makes it clear that people should give only what they have to give (2 Corinthians 8:12), and this according to one's ability and according to what he or she has purposed to give (2 Corinthians 8:3, 10-14). Creating credit card debt to bless the Lord should never be encouraged.

What Can God's People Give?

We tend to think primarily of money when we speak of gifts or contributions. Certainly money is one form of contribution to God's people and His work. But in addition to money, other possessions may be given. For example, the materials necessary for the construction of the Tabernacle were donated (see Exodus 25:1-8). Food and clothing may be shared with those in need (Luke 3:11). Another form of contribution is that of labor (see Exodus 35:30-36:5; Philippians 2:25-30; Hebrews 13:16 ["doing good"]).

In The Bible How Was Support Obtained?

Spiritual believers didn't look to man for their needs to be met, they looked to God and they worked hard and smart to serve others. One ought never to use the term "solicitation" when referring to the scriptural teaching and practice of obtaining contributions in the church. Giving then, like today, is often spontaneous, though some obligations are set down as commands (see Galatians 6:6). Jesus never solicited funds for His personal support or ministry. In fact, when He urged people to give up their money which literally represented the very hours of their life, He instructed them to give to the poor, not to give to Him personally or to His ministry. There were a faithful few who sustained our Lord and His followers (Luke 8:1-3). The same seems to be true of Paul, who often labored with his own hands in order to minister physically and financially to others (see Acts 20:33-35; 1 Corinthians 9:3-14; 1 Thessalonians 2:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). If possible, the Christian shouldn't willingly become a burden to the church in any way (Galatians 6:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-15), and the family should be the first to minister to their own in times of need (1 Timothy 5:3-8). In the New Testament church, the needs of others were made known, and people were encouraged to meet these needs (see Acts 11:27-30; Romans 12:13). The normal pattern is that we should work to meet our own needs, as well as the needs of others (Acts 20:33-35; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Ephesians 4:28). Several fat-cat religious leaders were abusing sincere worshipers in the temple in Christ's day for the purpose of their greedy, illicit profit-making and Jesus Christ sharply proactively rebuked them publicly (Matthew 21:12-17). They were negatively influencing many. We need to wisely rebuke the merchandising of the anointing of our day. Funds to carry on the work of God were not solicited from unbelievers (3 John 7-8). We should therefore avoid any fund-raising from those whose spiritual condition is unclear or from those we know to be unsaved.

How Were Contributions Handled and Disbursed?

Not all ministry employing the use of money or goods was carried on through the early church. In the Old Testament, corners of the field were not harvested, and other gleanings were left for the poor (Leviticus 19:9-10). In the New Testament we also see that some giving was done privately, such as through the family (see 1 Timothy 5:4).

Paul was painstakingly meticulous concerning the way in which monies were collected and distributed so that no allegation of impropriety would arise. He was a zealous witness for Jesus! There was great effort made to assure donors that the monies given were used for the purposes for which it was contributed. Paul sought to maintain a good testimony, not only before the church but also

before all men [see 2 Corinthians 8:20-21]. Peter's Spirit-led example in dealing with the deception of Ananias and Sapphira indicates that church leadership must require, as much as possible, that the donors be absolutely honest and forthright in their contributions [see Acts 5:1-6].

What About Poverty – Is It A Curse?

Poverty is a curse only in the sense that it is part of the fallen creation (a result from the Fall of Adam). Nevertheless, it is not a sin to be poor. Poverty can occur because of many reasons (i.e., mental, emotional, or physical disabilities, oppressive governments, catastrophes, foolish squandering due to covetousness, etc.). Additionally, poverty is not a curse in the sense that if one does not pay tithes, their money is cursed. Malachi 3:8-10 is often used to support this faulty notion. This passage is an old covenant promise that was given to the children of Israel who were rebuilding Jerusalem at that time. Cheerfully and willingly we are to give, not from a motivation of fear that God will curse our lives if we do not give [2 Corinthians 9:7-9].

Nothing Is More Thrilling Than Witnessing For Jesus!

As a result of praying, reading your Bible, and having fellowship, (which are all disciplines of healthy consumption), God will lead you to give out, sharing your faith with people who don't know the Lord! And this is what we call *witnessing*.

**Jesus' last command should be our first concern!
He said, "GO!" How can we say NO?**

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" [Acts 1:8]. All Christians know that witnessing is something they should do. God puts a spiritual desire in them to help people in this way. Yet, for various reasons, this is a discipline many Christians tend to shrink from. Some don't know how to receive the power, boldness or compassion to approach someone. To intrude in someone else's business seems not only threatening but also blatantly presumptuous. Even with the acquaintances God brings by, we sometimes fear offending them, we fear being rejected, we fear doing an inadequate job of representing our "perfect Lord," and most of all we fear being branded a "weird cultic fanatic." So we remain silent, and pray that God will use someone else to communicate the Message.

Listen, it's a new day in the Kingdom and as the Holy Spirit is restoring the Church around the world, many are discovering a new confidence, a fresh approach and excitement in sharing Christ. Thousands of juicy sinners are flocking into the Kingdom, because of a Jesus-style of witnessing that's winsome. It's because of an anointed boldness that's sensitive and it's because of a neo-heaven-sent revival that's irresistible! Those who were naturally shy, are finding themselves supernaturally and graciously initiating.

The thrill in Christianity is back for saints who will commit to rescuing those that the devil has spiritually highjacked! Sharing Jesus is the most exhilarating yet natural thing to do for those who have been born into God's family.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matthew 5:14

Would that God would make hell so real to us that we cannot rest; heaven so real that we must have men there; Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the Man of Sorrows the Man of Joy by the conversion to Him of many...

Hudson Taylor

I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

1 Corinthians 9:22,23

I know that the gospel is the power of God – the great means which He employs for the regeneration of our ruined world.

David Livingstone

Many Christians hesitate, listening to that small voice, telling them, "Don't be rude. You'll only start an argument. Who do you think you are to lay that spiritual heavy on them?" And we've all seen those angry looking people with Bible in hand, yelling at strangers downtown at the bus stop, condemning them to hell in the name of witnessing. Fortunately we think, "I'll never do that." But let's not throw the baby out with the bath water or drench that baby with dirty water either, because God's plan for reaching other people is still through loving Christians *biblically* witnessing of their faith.

Let's be normal Christians, attracting people to Christ using the "Good News" of Christ's love, joy and hope, rather than permanently turning them off to the things of God. If you've ever felt turned off by Christians, I want to encourage you. God doesn't want to make you weird or into something you're not. He wants to use your personality to bless people!

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Romans 1:16

We are all missionaries (soul-winners). Wherever we go, we either bring people nearer to Christ, or we repel them from Christ.

Eric Liddell

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.

2 Corinthians 2:15,16

The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of evangelism, and the nearer we get to Him the more intensely EVANGELISTIC we must become.

Henry Martyn

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.
Psalm 126:5,6

Seedtime and harvest are tied together in a sure knot.
Charles Spurgeon

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.
Proverbs 11:30

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

There is no argument for soul-winning. The total action of God in history, the whole revelation of God in Christ – this is the argument. But for some seasoned saints, it seems the longer they're saved, the fewer non-Christians they come in contact with. Listen, if you know all there is to know about what's happening on Christian television, you know too much! We all must grab ourselves by the lapels and periodically make the conscience effort to exit the company of the righteous and our familiar Christian activities in a Spirit-led, resolute fashion. We must go out of our safe holy huddles often and make friends with a lost person to tell them about Jesus' saving grace!

And you don't have to be perfect to be a witness either. God can use people who sometimes make mistakes with the facts. **"Philip found Nathaniel and said to him, 'We have found Him... Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph'"** (Jn. 1:45). That part simply wasn't true. Joseph hadn't fathered Him. Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit. But did Philip quit witnessing? No way! Philip was doing the best he could and God used him to win Nathaniel to Christ.

You have one business on earth -- to save souls; therefore, spend and be spent in this work. John Wesley

A true witness delivers souls, but a deceitful witness speaks lies.
Proverbs 14:25

My personal rule of strategy among the lost is this: **the more familiar the sinner, the less I will be in verbalizing my faith to them.** Love respectfully confronts with truth, so there will be a time to be direct and tell them verbally for sure. But personally, I want to **preach the Gospel wordless** too, (very loudly through my life and deeds). Even more so in fact, when I am in constant contact with them—you know, like in a work environment or at home. For many, you're the living Bible—your life may be the only Bible they will ever read. Maybe you've noticed how your co-workers or fellow students barrage you with questions at times. They try to draw your beliefs out of you when they know you well enough (and if they don't, we should then take the verbal initiative). The closest place I've found for a silent witness (which is really a contradiction of terms) is at home with lost family members. No one needs to see your selfless behavior more!

***You are writing a gospel, a chapter every day
By the deeds that you do and the words that you say.
Men read what you write whether faithful or true
Just what is the gospel according to you?***

Christ is your first-love and the Spirit wants you verbalizing truth in love. But when communicating, just brag on Jesus the most! What's most on the heart, will be most on the lips. The Bible says, "**For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**" (Matthew 12:34). It's so important to speak **primarily** about how wonderful Christ is! Tell them about all the things that Jesus has done for you in convicting, saving, delivering, providing, sanctifying and healing you. You can pray with them as they make that decision to follow Jesus. **Secondarily**, invite them to church, telling them how sound your church or pastor is. If you spend a lot of time fellowshiping alone with Jesus in prayer, you will feel so excited about Him and people will know it. Winning people to faith in Him will come so natural. Go ahead and invite your friends to your church services as often as you can, but if they are lost, above all invite them to Jesus! Clearly explain about Jesus' wonderful greatness! He said, "**If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto myself**" (John 12:32). And of course this is talking about Christ's passion on the cross, but I believe it also sets forth an evangelistic principle.

Candidly use your testimony; use your daily behavior; use the truth that others have spoken to you; use the Word of God and prayer! And remember to **ask for a decision**, "Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2 nlt). The devil says tomorrow, God says today! As you go, you can learn all of the logical apologetics for confronting different cult members. Be encouraged, be inspired and be vocal for Jesus!

David Shibley once said, "If people are lost outside of Christ, and if faith in Jesus Christ is the only avenue of redemption, what could possibly be a higher priority than spreading the gospel? Anything the Church does that is not directly tied to evangelism is not unlike rearranging the furniture while the house is on fire!"

With sensitivity, urgency, and fearless confidence we are called to ***"Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter."***

Proverbs 24:11

LET US GO TO WIN FOR THE LAMB THE REWARD OF HIS SACRIFICE.

Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf

Surely there can be no deeper joy than that of saving souls.

Lottie Moon

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Daniel 12:3

I am not here merely to enjoy the good life. I am here as a child and a servant of God to invest my time, my talent, and my treasure to seek and to save the lost. This is what our Lord came to do nearly 2,000 years ago, and what He commanded His followers to do generation after generation until His blessed return.

Bill Bright

What kind of example are you? Christian, you are a representative for Jesus Christ. You represent God Almighty to them. You are either a good representative or a bad representative for Jesus, but all Christians represent Him.

Greg Laurie

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.

Paul, Romans 1:14

The gospel is good news only if it arrives in time.

Carl F. H. Henry

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:19

*Give me the love that leads others to the Way,
The faith that no devil in hell can dismay
The hope that no rejection of sinners can tire
The passionate zeal that burns like a raging fire,
Let me not sink in sin to be a clod:
Make me Thy fuel, Thy witness, O Flame of God.
Kurt v. S.*

Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.

Psalms 104:4

I live for souls and for eternity. I want to win some soul to Christ. If you want this and work for it, eternity alone can tell the result.

D.L. Moody

Christian, have you tried witnessing before and been rejected? Who are they really rejecting? Don't take it personal! Don't let those you cannot win interfere with those you can. Don't let the things you don't know about the Lord interfere with the things you do know. There are only two kinds of sinners out there—*no-people* and *yes-people*. So get past those people who live in a "No" posture towards Jesus to find the spiritually hungry, in a "Yes" posture towards spiritual things. There are more people than you think who are open spiritually. I'm not the whole Church, but I am one witness. I can't

do everything, but I can and will do something with Him, lest I end up doing nothing. Christ gave me the soul-winning mandate and He continues to give me the soul-winning miracles! Will you take ownership of the call with me?

When 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, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Ezekiel 3:18,19

Being a witness is so much more “**What you are,**” moment by moment, even more than what you say! But some never go out, they never compel anyone to come in, they never open their mouth to tell someone the Good News. Then they try to soothe their conscience by giving money to reach the heathen far away, thinking this releases them from any further obligation. But God can’t be proverbially *paid off like* this. He has a plan to bless us! And Jesus desires our lives back more than our green backs! Today you are either becoming spiritually more of a witness or more witness-needed. Today you are more effectively ministering to others or in need of someone more effectively ministering to you.

Jesus said, “Go...tell” (Mark 5:19).

He said, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21).

The ultimate of the Spirit-filled life is sharing Jesus with others.

Ron Dunn

The Gospel is a fact; so tell it simply. The Gospel is a joyful fact; so tell it cheerfully. The Gospel is an entrusted fact; so tell it faithfully. The Gospel is a fact for the present moment; so tell it earnestly. The Gospel is a fact of infinite love; so tell it warmly. The Gospel is a fact of deep revelation; so tell it with illustration. The Gospel is a fact about a living person; so tell about Jesus with life! –Author Unknown

***BUT, BEFORE WE TALK TO MEN ABOUT GOD,
WE NEED TO TALK TO GOD ABOUT MEN!***

If You Won't Pray, You Won't Stay

If you do pray, you will stay in the move of God—in the Word of God, in the church of God. Recently CNN and Time magazine conducted a survey and found that 8 out of 10 Americans claim that they pray on a regular basis. They discovered that 73% of

Americans believed that prayer could help to heal the sick. The Bible teaches that prayer is worthless though, unless it is focused upon the Lord! The address is important.

"Hurry is the death of prayer"

- Samuel Chadwick

Prayer is taking the time to talk with and listen to your heavenly Father. The Lord just loves to hear from us! God's not religious. He is very practical, so you don't need to formulate lofty, formal, hyper-spiritual sounding jive. Prayer should be simple, honest, and to the point. It should be about what's important to you and what's important to God, as we can see in the Bible. You can pray anytime you want to – driving your car, riding your skateboard, on your knees, wherever and whenever. Staying in-touch vertically will make you effective in helping others horizontally get in-touch. It will keep you in the move of God.

Nothing Is Too Big Nor Too Small To Bring To God! All Through The Day, With Or Without Words, Pray And God Will Understand. He Will Intervene.

"Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

To Enter Into His Presence, Pray According to Acts:

- A Adoration**
- (Confession**
- T Thanksgiving**
- S Supplication**

All these elements are found in the Lord's prayer, [see Luke 11:1-14; Matthew 6:9-13]. You can look this prayer up and use it to pray from, as an outline, taking your liberty to fill in the blanks as the Spirit gives you the specifics of what He wants you to cover. There is great power when we pray God's own words too.

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
(Psalm 34:1).

Watch out for the quiet time thieves; *Dave, Jay, and Saturday Night Live.*

Only stay up past 10 p.m. for something that's more important than your appointment with God in the morning. Shakespeare said, *"It's hard to be a philosopher and have a tooth ache at the same time."* I say it's also hard to fellowship with God when you're dog tired!

Through Intimacy We Reach Our Destiny

Try writing out your prayers in your quiet time to log what's on your heart—verses and answers that come to you!

Here's a journaling
sequence for your quiet
time:

Relax
Read
Reflect
Record

Thoughts and words seem to disentangle themselves when they pass through the lips and the finger tips. Dawson Trotman

READ: PHILIPPIANS 4:6, JUDE 20, LUKE 18:1,
ISAIAH 55:6, ECCLESIASTES 5:2, LUKE 11:5-13 AND PSALM 145:18

HOW DO I FIND GOD'S WILL?

Doing God's will His way is a great thrill! As Christians, it is very important that we know God's will for our lives. God wants to guide us into His perfect will! He reveals His will because He desires that we become truly happy as He uses us to our optimum potential (and beyond). As we continually return to Jesus for fellowship, asking Him what we should do, He will speak to us and give us the details on how, where, when and with whom we perform God's will, as well. Seeking Godly Counsel is wise to confirm what we are hearing from the Lord. *"For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counselors there is safety"*(Proverbs 24:6).

To Know God's Choice, We Must Hear His Voice.

Christian, you are a minister, but you have no valid ministry until you've heard from God. Remember young Samuel in the Bible? Real ministry begins when we've heard from Jesus. It's important to know that God will usually speak to you on the spiritual level, in your inner man, rather than with an audible voice. So, you must listen, study His Word and with practice from time alone with Him, develop spiritual ears. Jesus said that His "sheep"

(those who follow Him) "hear His voice" (John 10:4). He can speak to us in many different ways. I find that approximately 80% of the time that God speaks to me is when I'm reading the Bible.

In the book of 1 Kings, the 19th chapter, a prophet of the Lord named Elijah was waiting to hear God speak to him in a spectacular way. But God spoke to him in a still, small voice. Likewise, God will sometimes speak to us in a "**still, small voice.**" We must learn to quiet our hearts and hear it with spiritual ears.

At the same time, however, Satan will often try to deceive us into thinking we are hearing God's voice when it's really a counterfeit. If Satan is unsuccessful in pulling you back into sin, he will try to push you into serving God so much that you're a workaholic for Christ. He would love to make you so anxious and fearful about God not meeting your needs, especially when *you think He should*, because he wants you to distrust God. We distrust Him when we don't know Him. He doesn't want you to run ahead of Him, moving into premature action, maybe even trying to help God out in fulfilling His promise. Abraham did that with Hagar, remember? What a long-term mess that created! For that reason, we must wait on the Lord and test all voices with God's lie detector:

THE BIBLE!

There are three buoys that must line up in order for you to steer your life into the harbor of God's perfect will:

- 1. The Bible:** God will never contradict the Bible (Acts 17:11). Go to the Scriptures in times of decision. Remember to read the Bible passages in the context in which they are found along with the other verses that deal with that topic. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible! (More on this later...)
- 2. The inner peace of God:** "And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from the Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts – deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds – [in that peaceful state] to which [as members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful – appreciative, giving praise to God always" (Colossians 3:15 Ampl).
- 3. The circumstances of life:** Outward things like finances, necessary time and key relationships, (everything) will fall into place as God leads you. (But remember, make your decisions primarily upon the principles given in God's Word).

ABIDING OR STRIVING, EITHER ONE OR THE OTHER

In John's gospel, Jesus said, "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).

What a promise! The word "abide" means: a permanence of position, maintaining unbroken fellowship with another. We need to sink our spiritual roots deep into the Lord! Besides being our loving Deity, He also wants to be our closest, dearest, most intimate friend! Jesus said, "**Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me**" (John 15:4).

Contrary to popular belief, Jesus expects more than just faithfulness. He expects spirit-filled fruitfulness too. You might ask, but how do we know if or when we are filled to overflowing with the Spirit? According to 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5, we have God's love flowing out of our life continually. The fruit of the Spirit is love [agape]. "**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness**" (Galatians 5:22). There's no comma in the Greek after the word *love*. These words that follow "agape" are the manifold expressions of agape—they define love. The fruit of the Spirit is love and the results of having this love is the character of Jesus. If we want the fruit, we must die to self and walk in the Spirit (w. 24-25). Having character really matters to God! Yes, primarily the "fruit" Jesus is speaking of is agape love and when we allow the Spirit to express this love to others, it will produce the fruit of a harvest (winning souls).

The Bible also tells us that whoever continually abides in Him will not deliberately sin (1 John 3:6). Apart from Jesus Christ we can do nothing! But, when we abide in Christ, we can say with the Apostle Paul, "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**" (Philippians 4:13). Bloom and bear fruit where He plants you—in a Bible teaching church.