

"To Bear Witness of the Light"

HOW TO BE A WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST

Lessons About Winning Souls From the Book of John

LESSON 4: CREATING AN OPPORTUNITY

(Chapter 4)

Not every opportunity to witness will be dropped in our laps by God! It would be wrong only to present the Gospel when the Lord has obviously paved the way. Jesus told us to *"preach the Gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15), and so everybody is somebody who should be told! In order to give the Gospel to everybody, we must learn to *create* opportunities to witness. The Lord Jesus shows us how to do this in the fourth chapter of John.

1. Where to Go (verses 1-6).

Creating opportunities to witness involves knowing where to go to find people who need a witness. The beginning of John 4 tells us that Jesus *"left Judea"* (in the south) and headed north to go back to *"Galilee."* He made this move because *"the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John."* In this we see that both Jesus and John the Baptist were hard at work turning people to God. Not wishing to seem in competition with John in Judea (note Chapter 3, verses 22-36), Jesus went back to His home in Galilee. Between Galilee in the north and Judea in the south was Samaria in the middle. So Jesus *"must needs go through Samaria."* Although the Samaritans were generally antagonistic to Jews (for reasons we will understand in a moment) Jesus, a Jew, found a good prospect for a Gospel witness right in the center of their country. People who need the Lord and would be willing to listen to the Gospel are literally everywhere! Look at what Jesus said in verse 35, and believe it.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

See in verses 39 through 41 that He found many receptive souls in Samaria. See in verse 42 that Jesus was called *"the Saviour of the world."* Everybody in the world is a prospect for salvation (Remember Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15). We can find people to win in their homes (Acts 5:42), downtown, in parks, in doctors' offices, just everywhere. We need to become conscious of people's souls, and willing to witness to anyone anywhere!

2. What to Say (verses 7-14).

Creating an opportunity to witness also involves knowing how to make statements and ask questions that turn an encounter with a stranger into a witnessing situation. Look at what Jesus said to the woman He met at the well of Sychar.

a. *"Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."* (v. 7)

- b. *“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”* (v. 10)
- c. *“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”* (v. 13-14)

He took the subject of water (a natural subject to bring up at a well) and directed the conversation to the subject of eternal life! He broke down the racial and religious barriers between them by simply talking to the woman. (Hostility between Samaritans and Jews began back in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah). We should each come up with a few different plans for turning ordinary small-talk into a witness for Christ.

Evangelist Carl Hatch will turn to a man with a newspaper and ask to see it for a moment. After looking over the front page he will say, “Just as I thought—the birth of the Son of God!” When the man with the paper asks about this remark, Dr. Hatch says that the birth of Jesus is mentioned on the front page. After looking it over, the man will usually ask where it is. Dr. Hatch shows him the *date* and reminds him that the number we use to designate the year is the number of years since the birth of the Son of God.

You and I may not be as creative as Dr. Carl Hatch, but we can come up with some useful ideas. Gospel tracts provide an easy way to open a conversation about Christ. Just offer one to somebody, and tell him that the message in it has really helped you. Ask if he has ever received a pamphlet about how to have eternal life and know it. Then ask if you can show him what the tract says. It will take some boldness on your part, but God will give it if you ask (See Acts 4:29 and 31, as well as Ephesians 6:18-20).

We must bring up the subject of salvation and ask for an opportunity to show the way if we are going to create a witnessing opportunity. Notice that Jesus actually got the woman to ask Him to show her the way (v. 15).

3. **Where to go with what you say** (verses 15-29).

When the stage is set, explain clearly the way of salvation. Don’t just try to slip it in as part of light conversation. Set the stage first. Have the person agree to let you show him the way to eternal life (vs. 14-15). Remember the three issues to cover.

- a. The issue of sin (vs. 16-24). She was sinning, and she didn’t know how or have the means to worship God. She was lost!
- b. The issue of Christ (vs. 25-26). She was a sinner and He was the Savior. That’s all she really needed to know. Remember what the Lord had said in verse 10.
- c. The issue of faith (vs. 10 and 14). He described saving faith as asking and as taking a drink. Eternal life is living water. If you ask for it from the Right Person (the Savior) and take a drink of it, you will be both saved and eternally satisfied.

Notice in verses 28 and 29 the woman's reaction. She "*left her waterpot*" (evidence symbolically that verse 14 had happened in her heart), and went out witnessing for Christ! See the results of her witnessing as a new convert in verses 30-42. Notice also in these verses that we should seek to reap a harvest as well as sow seed. Witnessing is commanded and is needed, but actually winning souls is also our goal! This week let's see if God will help us to create witnessing opportunities, and also help us win a soul to Jesus Christ.

HELPING A SINNER TO ASK!

In John 4:10, Jesus said that if a sinner knew "*the gift of God*" (which is eternal life—Romans 6:23), and Who can give it (Jesus the Savior Who died for our sins), he would ask the Savior and He would give him everlasting life (compare verse 10 with verse 14). Salvation is free for the asking. This is why we should learn how to encourage a sinner to pray and ask for it. Use a few questions in your Gospel presentation:

1. Do you know for sure that you are saved (have eternal life, are born again, or are going to Heaven some day)?
2. (If yes) How do you know?
3. Could I show you some passages in the Bible that tell us how we *can* know for sure?
4. (After presenting the three issues from Scripture) Do you believe from what we have seen in these verses (or this verse—Romans 10:13) that if you were to call upon Jesus Christ from your heart, and ask Him to save you, that He would hear that prayer and save your soul?
5. If I could help you, would you be ready and willing to ask Him right now?