

“To Bear Witness of the Light”

HOW TO BE A WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST

Lessons About Winning Souls From the Book of John

LESSON 3: SEIZING AN OPPORTUNITY

(Chapter 3)

The Book of John tells us several stories of personal evangelism: Andrew with Simon, Philip with Nathanael, Jesus with the woman at the well, Jesus with the blind man He healed, and more. Personal evangelism (one-on-one witnessing) is and always has been a very effective way of winning people to Christ. In the story of Nicodemus, the Lord Jesus shows us how to *seize* an opportunity to point a person to salvation.

1. The Work of God (verses 1-3).

When we speak of *seizing an opportunity* to witness, we are referring to situations where God provides a clear opening to present the Gospel. Such was the situation the night Nicodemus the Pharisee came to Jesus. Notice who he was:

- a. A Pharisee belonging to the strictest sect of the Jews (Acts 26:5), very religious;
- b. A ruler of the Jews, respected and responsible, a man highly esteemed;
- c. An unusual Pharisaic ruler in that he appreciated Jesus, when most of them opposed Him!

Nicodemus “*came to Jesus by night*,” probably to avoid the criticism that meeting with Jesus could bring to a Pharisee. He spoke to Jesus about his conviction that He was indeed “*a teacher come from God*,” and as he spoke, the Lord seized the opportunity to turn the conversation to the New Birth. It was God that brought Nicodemus to Jesus that night, and it was God’s work in this man’s heart that caused him to draw his conclusions about the Teacher. God had brought him as far as he had come toward faith in Christ for salvation. The opportunity was wide open for him to be brought the rest of the way. It is very important for us, as witnesses for Christ, to recognize opportunities like this when they are presented to us!

2. The Work of the Witness (verses 3-9).

The Witness in this case was Jesus Christ Himself (Note what Revelation 3:14 says!). As our Example, the Lord shows us how to witness! Notice how He seized the opportunity to witness to Nicodemus:

- a. He turned a remark about God into a conversation about seeing the Kingdom of God.
- b. He provoked questions by the way He spoke.
- c. He spoke of salvation in a way that indicated the sinner’s need of it.

Remarks about religion, church, God, eternity, or even death can bring a response from us about salvation. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we must look for ways to move a spiritual conversation to the need of men for a Savior.

1. **The Work of the Truth** (verses 10-21).

When Nicodemus asked, "*How can these things be?*," Jesus taught him clearly how to be "*born again.*"

- d. It is necessary for salvation (vs. 3-7).
- e. It is invisible (vs. 8-9).
- f. It happens on earth in this life (vs. 10-13).
- g. It involves the Son of Man being "*lifted up*" (on the Cross) for our salvation (vs. 14-15).
- h. It involves the Son of God being given for us to have everlasting life (vs. 16-17).
- i. It happens when men come from darkness to the Light by believing (trusting) in the name of the only begotten Son.

Every Christian should learn how to use scripture to explain the way of salvation! Memorize the references of verses you will use. Carry a New Testament, and be prepared to show somebody the way. Every presentation of the Gospel must deal with three issues: sin and its consequences, Christ and His sacrifice, faith and its meaning. The Word of God is "*quick and powerful*" (Hebrews 4:12), and the Gospel is "*the power of God unto salvation*" (Romans 1:16). When God's plan of salvation is presented logically from the Bible, it works in the heart of the sinner. If we would learn how to seize the witnessing opportunities God gives us, and move right into presenting the Gospel with Bible verses, we could win many more to Christ.

USING JOHN 3 TO SHOW THE WAY!

- 1. Ask if the person has ever heard of being born again.
- 2. Ask if you can show him from the words of Jesus *how* to be born again.
- 3. Show him the need for the new birth in verses 3-7. Explain the issue of sin and its consequences.
- 4. Show him from verses 8-13 that men are born again by a miracle in the heart.
- 5. Show him in verses 14-15 what Christ did to bring us salvation and new life. Refer to the story in Numbers 21.
- 6. Show him from verses 16-17 how to believe in Christ.
- 7. Show him in verses 18-21 what his decision must be. Ask him if he is willing right now to pray and tell the Lord Jesus that he will trust Him for his salvation. Offer to pray with him and show him how.
- 8. A shorter way to do it would be to deal with the need in verse 3, with the issue of sin in verses 6-7, with the issue of Christ in verses 14-16, and with the issue of faith in verses 17-18.