
Viewpoints for Successful Evangelism, pt. 4

In Galatians 6:7, Paul gives us the principle of sowing and reaping. Successful people in different walks of life understand that the key to success is to increase the number of their efforts. The conclusion for us is obvious: If we want to *reap* more, we must be willing to *sow* more! Many people fail in the area of evangelism because they "sow sparingly" and get discouraged by the meager results. If we increase the level of sowing, the level of reaping will rise. But again, to avoid discouragement, we need to set goals on how many are being taught, not on how many are being converted!

Sometimes our problem is that we forget that often times one person will sow and another one will reap. Winning souls involves both "sowing" and "reaping." Jesus used these terms in talking to His disciples as recorded in John 4:35-38.

Sowing is the work necessary to one day being able to reap! In farming, sowing involves preparing the soil and planting the seed. In winning souls to Jesus, sowing also involves preparation and planting:

- In the fact that hearts are being prepared to receive of the gospel
- Then the hearts are first introduced to the gospel and its principles

Reaping is the "harvesting" of what has been sown. In farming, reaping is the collection of the fruits which have produced by the sowing. In evangelism, reaping is the harvesting that happens when souls who have had the Word planted in their hearts decide to obey it!

It is important to appreciate the statement quoted by Jesus in John 4:37, "One sows and another reaps." Those who sow do not always see the reaping. Many times, those who reap are benefiting from the work of those who did the sowing before them. In evangelism, this means that oftentimes you will be sowing the seed and it may seem that you are not getting any results. But sometime later those souls you were trying to reach may decide to finally obey the gospel and another Christian may actually do the reaping in your place! Then, there will be times when people just sort of "fall into your lap," ready to obey the gospel with little effort on your part. In this case, you are reaping what others have sown!

The three-fold purpose of *The Unveiled Gospel* is as follows.....

1. To help our subscribers grow in their Bible knowledge through articles from various writers.
2. To offer our subscribers Biblical weekend seminars to encourage the faithful.
3. To assist our subscribers in evangelizing their own communities.

*For more information, please call Danny @ 719-980-0587 or Tom @ 719-964-8493.
You can also send an email to info@theunveiledgospel.org.*

To subscribe, send email to danny@theunveiledgospel.org or tom@theunveiledgospel.org. Please include how many copies are needed for congregational or personal subscriptions. Also, include address, contact name, phone number and email address. All subscriptions are free for now. Still, any donations made to this domestic mission work would be greatly appreciated. To donate, please send checks or money orders made out to *The Unveiled Gospel*, P.O. Box 132, Kim, CO 81049.

Thanks to all.

The point to keep in mind is that evangelism involves both "sowing" and "reaping," and there will probably be times when what you sow will be reaped by someone else. Let this be an encouragement to you when it appears that you are not reaping as you would hope. You might actually be making it much easier for some brother or sister in the future!

~Danny Aragon, church of Christ, Kim CO

The Staff at *The Unveiled Gospel* is happy to offer:

1. Gospel Meetings – designed to encourage the brethren
2. Weekend Seminars – designed to teach participants how to evangelize
3. Door-knocking Campaigns – designed to canvass the local area in order to look for people who are looking for Christ
4. Fill-in preaching/teaching – designed to help congregations during times of preacher absence

To set-up one of these offers, please call Danny Aragon @ 719-980-0587 or Tom Wright @ 719-964-8493.

A PLEA TO ALL OUR READERS FROM "The Unveiled Gospel" STAFF

From the time of our inception over a year ago, our goal was and remains not only to talk the talk of evangelism, but also to walk the walk of evangelism. As the result of this goal, two awesome godly events are taking place. First, the circulation of our publication is continuing to grow. Second, the number of congregations from among the churches of Christ seeking our help to teach them on how to evangelize and/or help them evangelize their locales is growing. Consequently, we are in need of increased financial support to maintain the growth of our circulation and bring on more experienced staff evangelists to help us help the churches. We are praying to God, to use all of you, to open these doors to us to continue our evangelizing the lost and dying in the United States (Col. 4.2-4). Thank you!

SUPPORTERS OF The Unveiled Gospel:

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The Unveiled Gospel

We are so excited to announce the new website for *The Unveiled Gospel*. Please visit our site www.theunveiledgospel.org and let us know what you think. May God bless you all.

EVANGELISM - MINISTRY ACTIVITIES OF The Unveiled Gospel:

April:

The Unveiled Gospel continues to work with the church in Sioux City, IA. Please be praying for the churches at Glass St. and 6th St. as they continue talking about uniting as one congregation. In March, there has been two restorations in the church, making it a total of four (4) restorations since *The Unveiled Gospel* started working with the 6th St. church of Christ in Sioux City.

The Unveiled Gospel has been working with the church of Christ in Holly, CO and the congregation has enjoyed classes and lesson brought to them by Tom. Attendance seems to be increasing, encouraging everyone who attends.

The Unveiled Gospel will be holding an informative class on the Seminars we offer at the Fort Dodge IA church of Christ on April 29th as well as conducting their Bible class and worship hour. Please pray for this effort.

July:

The Unveiled Gospel will be holding an evangelism seminar for the Columbine church of Christ in Greeley, CO.

October:

The Unveiled Gospel will be hosting a door knocking campaign in Sioux City, IA. Eight (8) students from the Bear Valley Bible Institute International from Denver, CO will be helping in this door knocking campaign.

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Luke 19:10

THIRTY SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDY – SUGGESTION THIRTEEN

Suggestion thirteen for Bible study is that Christian teachers must maintain control of the Bible studies with all those they teach or else they might take control of it (Acts 19.8-10). For example, the apostle Paul was in the synagogue in Ephesus teaching those who came there about the kingdom of God. In a general sense, the kingdom of God is the church of God (Acts 20.28) that is the church of Christ (Rom. 16.16) who is Jesus (John 20.30-31). Equally, the Way figuratively references Jesus as the only path or road to God the Father (John 14.6). Thus, the Way is inclusive of Jesus Christ, His teachings, His disciples, and Christianity. Consequently, what Paul was actually teaching in the synagogue in Ephesus to those who heeded him was no more or less than the gospel of Christ (Rom. 15.18-19).

Nonetheless, some were receptive to Paul’s Bible studies with them, and others were not. During Paul’s life, most of his Bible studies with other people involved him using the Old Testament Scriptures and Holy Spirit given verbal and/or writing inspiration (Acts 26.27; 1 Cor. 7.40; Gal. 1.1, 11-12; 2 Tim. 3.16-17; 2 Pet. 1.20-21). The New Testament books were not fully written during his lifetime. Nevertheless, those unreceptive to Paul’s Bible studies became hardened (stubborn) and disobedient (unbelieving) toward them. As to be expected, the stubborn unbelievers responded to Paul’s Bible studies with some others by speaking evil (worthless reviling) of the Way. Accordingly, through no fault of his own, Paul lost partial control of his Bible studies in the synagogue because of the evil speakers.

However, to once again regain and maintain full control over his Bible studies with those who became or would become believing disciples, Paul moved to the school of Tyrannus. Therein, over the next two years Paul was fully able to teach the gospel of Christ (without disruptions from the evil speakers) to all who came to him. Concluding, the Bible studies of the twenty-first century are no different than the Bible studies of the first century. If a Christian teacher of today loses control of a Bible study or studies for whatever reason(s), the teacher must do as Paul did and regain control in any Biblical way possible. If not, two things might happen. First, the gospel of Christ may not be able to be taught in truth to those earnestly seeking it. Second, souls may become and/or remain lost as end result.

Tom Wright, church of Christ, Holly CO

Strengthened Marriage

“What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mark 10:9).

Isn't it ironic that we wouldn't think about applying for a job without the proper education and training, yet we are so willing to jump into a lifelong marriage without any training at all? The passage above has been recited at many marriage ceremonies, but has been forgotten throughout many marriages. We have taken God's institution of marriage and “humanized” it. When God said, “Let no man separate” it was a command not a mere suggestion. But we as humans have taken authority out of God's hands when it comes to marriage as well as many other aspects of life. But this article will focus on the marriage.

God's word reveals much truth when it comes to marriage. He instituted marriage to provide companionship and comfort to the man He created (Genesis 2:18). When husband and wife work together there is a great comfort provided to both. It is getting the two flesh to become one that is the work. God provided divine instructions to help accomplish what might otherwise seem impossible: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). A good work is anything done to accomplish God's will and His will is for marriages to last a lifetime. For the strength, it takes to remain in a relationship throughout the trials and temptations we face we must rely on God's power (Philippians 4:13).

Today, make a decision to strengthen your marriage by leaning on God's word to guide you in your marriage. Give Him total authority in your relationship with your spouse. Base every decision upon His word and watch your relationship grow. God wants us to live happily with the partner He has given us, but we can only find true happiness looking to His love to guide our hearts in the direction of His blissful peace.

~ Cub Orcutt, church of Christ, Azle TX

WE LIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE (Part 2)

Counting how many times have I listened to someone bemoan not living their faith would be impossible. However, what we are really trying to articulate is that the mind is intelligent enough to know the Truth when we hear it, but the heart was sold to the world some time ago, and the heart just does not want to come back. Each one of us DOES live exactly what we believe. If this were not true, we would be living some other way. Do you choose to Worship with those who study and then follow the pattern set in God's Word for the life that pleases Him? You do this because you believe this.

On the other hand, should you have the opportunity to attend the greatest event that will ever be, but it is on Sunday, you'll live your faith. Should you tell yourself that ‘just this once’ won't be noticed, then this one act demonstrates that you do not believe that walking in the Light of God is most important. By forsaking the assembly of the saints this one time, (Hebrews 10:25), are you setting precedent for other times to come? Perhaps this is the beginning of a new habit that will make it easier to see other events as more important than Worship. Can you hear the words in your head right now? ‘I'm at Worship three times a week; surely it won't hurt to miss, just this once, for something I've waited for, always. Besides, what's God done for me lately?’

Really? What's God done for me lately? Besides saving me from eternal damnation (John 3:16)? How about making sure my loved ones are watched over while away from me (Ps.3:4-5), or giving His Son to take the just punishment of death instead of me (Rom. 5:8), and seeing to my every need (Matt.6:33)? Asking what has God done for me lately, is a bit like asking what's so great about air? Only putting God first will we let Him know that He is most important in our lives.

Now for the hard stuff. Those precious children who look to us, their parents, for the how-to's and what for's in their own lives. When our children see us choose one thing over another, they make note of which was more important to us. Do we refrain from unseemly language only when in church? Then our young ones understand that our faith is only valid at church. The same is true for the Word. How often do our conversations at home turn to Scripture, past or present blessings, speaking Parables to life by applying them to present living? How often does one of life's worries bring you to the Word of God, seeking guidance? Have your children ever seen you pray when you weren't about to eat?

When parents only wear their faith at the church building, or only use Scripture to force desirable behavior, your child will, most likely, learn that faith is only a thing of convenience, to be brought out for some worldly use. Those around you know if you believe in the One God. They also know what, if anything, is more important than the One who died to save you from what you deserve.

~ Faith Smalling, church of Christ, La Junta CO

Patterning Our Evangelism After Jesus

The state of the modern church is in jeopardy. Everywhere you look congregations are dwindling, or holding their own at best. Few congregations are growing in America. Reports of baptisms are far and few in between. To compound the problem the average age of church members is older. Should these trends continue, one must wonder what lies in store for the future of many small and struggling congregations. Will they even survive?

Churches are looking for answers. Hardly a month goes by that our congregation doesn't receive some type of advertisement for a conference for church leadership. Frequently cross-denominational evangelism seminars are held in our area. Church members seem to be lost – seeking a magic formula for evangelism that will provide the necessary tools to seek and save the lost. Apathy is another dilemma facing the church. Many Christians aren't evangelizing but also show little concern that they aren't. There appears to be an overall lack of urgency to do something – anything to save lost souls.

Jesus is the answer. Jesus and the apostles were the most successful men to ever evangelize. They didn't operate a complicated program. Their methods didn't require enormous budgets or modern forms of advertisement. In fact, all it took was a heart that was willing to share the love of God with someone who was lost and hurting. It took someone with enough courage to help someone else see the devastating effect sin on their soul and their relationship with God.

If we want to learn how to evangelize, the first thing we must acknowledge is that God's way works. So if I want to succeed, the best chance for success is to utilize the divine pattern. If it worked for Jesus and the early church it will work for us - believe in it.

When we look at the ministry of Jesus we see a ministry of giving, and not merely asking something from others. We see a "giving first" approach in Jesus' ministry constantly. "...they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them." (Mat. 4:24) As the crowds followed Him and became hungry Jesus fed them (Mat. 14:21-31; 15:29-39). He had a ministry for helping to distribute money for the needs of the poor (Mat. 19:21; Jn. 12:5). Jesus' ministry wasn't merely one of preaching, asking the masses to change. Jesus gave first. In fact, His life was so centered on giving that He gave life itself, He gave until there was no more left to give (Jn. 15:13). John later looked back on the life of Jesus and remarked about the extent to which we should follow that example, saying, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 Jn. 3:16). We only know love, John said, because Jesus gave.

Evangelizing is about offering something, not merely asking for something. Modern evangelism often leaves this element out which is why it is so unsuccessful. Modern evangelism is essentially centered around trying to receive – to get people to do something with you (usually attend church or study the Bible). But that is what *we want*. From their perspective, its for us. What they have to gain from these things is difficult for them to see in the beginning.

But Jesus' pattern of evangelism was built on a foundation where He initiated a relationship first. His ministry was much more than a series of sermons or invitations to study the scriptures. He understood that the first thing He had to do was to touch the heart. Only then could the head hear Him.

We need to understand something else. Look at the story where the demon-possessed boy is healed (Mark 9:14-29). Although only the boy is healed it touches the father deeply. When you do for others you touch those who love them also.

An old saying is true: People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. So the next time you evangelize, try starting the conversation with "Hi I'm _____. I'm a Christian and I like to talk to people and see if there is anything they need. Christians have helped buy diapers and formula for families in need. We can get clothes if you need them. We just want to show others we care about them by living like Jesus." Even if they don't have a need (most won't) tell them you know one thing they need and ask them if they would mind if you pray for them, then say a short prayer for them and thank them for their time. You might leave a card or some contact information. The goal isn't a Bible study at this juncture. The goal is to let them know that you genuinely care.

Many people are going to be afraid to do this. You might be wondering if people are going to take advantage of you and by the end of the day you'll have 10 packages of diapers to buy. (Rarely will that ever happen.) But if it does, don't sweat. You are only promising to *try* to get them some help (make that clear to them). If you can't, you can't. Some needs will be bigger than you can handle. And remember, you don't need to bear the burden on your own. This is where your faith gets tested. Use Facebook and other forms of social media. Ask friends or members of your church for help. You'll be surprised at the number of people who are willing to help. But more importantly you will begin to see doors of opportunity to share the gospel with people you would otherwise have no hope.

Now go evangelize like Jesus.

~ Mike Mahler, church of Christ, Sioux City, IA

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Suggestions or Commands?

Have you ever had to deal with something that was terribly hard to deal with? In those times of difficulty, we go through different emotions. We may get fearful, or worry, or we may find ourselves getting anxious about the situation. We may find it hard to act like we are not completely stressed out, it might even be hard to smile. In those times, we may confide in another person, often, they will give us advise to help us get through those difficult times. Whatever suggestions they give, we may think to ourselves, "that's easy for you to say, you are not dealing with this problem."

We can be certain, the apostle Paul had many situations as I have described, take his imprisonment (Phil. 1:7). As he writes his letter to the Philippians he could have had feelings of depression and anger, but he is grateful for the Philippians and their participation of the gospel (1:4, 5). Paul may have had many emotions as he sat in jail writing the letter, I'm sure many thoughts are going through his mind, the most pressing is that he may be killed, but even in this, Paul has one emotion filling him, he is rejoicing. As both Paul and the Philippians suffered conflict from their opponents (1:28-30), Paul wrote in 4:4 for them to "rejoice," in fact he tells them twice. When we endure afflictions, it can be hard to express any kind of joy or happiness, emotions cannot be changed at the flip of a switch. But Paul is not giving them a suggestion, this rejoicing is an imperative, in other words, it is a command.

It is hard to rejoice in the face of conflict, we may want to fight back. So, Paul further expresses that they should be known as "gentlemen," by those in, and out of the kingdom (4:5). As they endured conflict, the Philippians church members should be known for their gentle spirit. And guess what, it is also a command. Be gentle and rejoice in conflict, are you serious Paul? But he is not finished, he next tells them to "be anxious in nothing," and you guessed it, it also is a command.

When we go through difficult times in our lives, we may find it very hard to find anything to rejoice in. But as Paul says in 4:4, "the Lord is near," a day is coming when our Lord will come for us, and how will he find us, sad, depressed, or anxious state from the cares of the world, or rejoicing in what He has done, and will do for us. We must be mindful of those in the world, for as our Lord watches us, they do also. We will never know who our joyful spirit under conflict will persuade to be a Christian, so let us remember the words of Paul, for they are not mere suggestions, but commands.