
Viewpoints for Successful Evangelism, pt. 1

It is important to maintain certain viewpoints while engaging in evangelism. Many people start out with great enthusiasm, but often get discouraged, frustrated and in some cases become apathetic. This happens even to those who are highly skilled in teaching others. When we are armed with the wrong viewpoints (or way of looking at things), many personal workers eventually lose heart. Before long, evangelistic efforts dwindle and in some cases, stop altogether. I want to share with you some viewpoints that have helped to keep me with a positive attitude when doing personal work.

In nearly every example of conversion found in the New Testament, especially, in Acts, God worked in some way to create the opportunity for the person to hear the gospel. Philip was sent toward Gaza where he would meet the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. The Lord made sure that Saul and Ananias would get together in Acts 9. Even the household of Cornelius would have an opportunity to hear the gospel from Peter in Acts 10. The conversions of Lydia and the Philippian jailor were made possible after the “Macedonian Call” led Paul and his companions in that direction in Acts 16. What I am getting at is that the first viewpoint that we need to consider is: The Providence of God is at work even before we start a work.

I know that these circumstances are in keeping with the miraculous events in establishing the church, but they still bring out the point that is just as valid for us today. That point is, the Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, and seeks those who are seeking Him, 2 Chronicles 16:9. We must believe that those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” will somehow be “filled,” Matthew 5:6.

I believe that when the Lord knows there are people who would be receptive to the gospel, like those in Corinth, Acts 18, He will open doors to give those who are seeking the truth the opportunity to be reached by those who are prepared to teach them. It may not happen when we think, but I believe that if there is a person who is “asking, seeking, and knocking” for salvation, God will see to it that at some point in their life they will have an opportunity to hear the saving message.

It should excite us to know that we are not alone in our work to lead the lost to Christ. I’m sure that God will see that every person who has an honest, good and seeking heart will one day come across that person who is prepared to explain the gospel to him/her. When we are involved in evangelism, I believe that we indeed are “God’s fellow workers,” 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.

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 new domestic mission work would be greatly appreciated. To donate, please send checks or money orders made out to Kim church of Christ, P.O. Box 132, Kim, CO 81049. Please earmark them for *The Unveiled Gospel*.

Thanks to all.

The Lord opens doors for people who are ready to serve Him. Paul wrote about an “open door” of opportunity that prompted him to remain longer at Ephesus, 1 Corinthians 16:9. He even wrote of when there was an “open door,” but circumstances prevented him for taking advantage of it, 2 Corinthians 2:12-13. We learn from Revelation 3:8 that the Lord opens doors for those people He can use. This viewpoint concerning evangelism is this: If we desire to be used by the Lord to reach those who are seeking Him, then we must PREPARE ourselves to be useful, cf. 2 Timothy 2:19-21.

What I love about this viewpoint is that it applies to both individuals and congregations. As individuals, we must prepare ourselves to be able to teach or to lead souls to those ready to teach. But congregations must also be ready to include new converts into God’s wonderful family where they can be nurtured and protected during the most important stage of their new-found life in Christ. There are also many congregations where there are no “open doors” to reach others because they haven’t prepared themselves to be a place where new converts will be cared for and nurtured properly. Therefore, we have many Christians who have not “grown-up” in their salvation because the churches have failed to prepare themselves to teach them to grow. I believe the following point is both valid and encouraging: If we will “prepare” ourselves to be useful to the Lord, He will “open doors” of opportunity to reach those who have honest and good hearts that are seeking for the truth.

Next month we will look at other viewpoints on evangelism. Evangelism in my mind is the most important “job” of the church. Without it the church suffers, for there is no other way the church will grow and prosper.

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

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A PLEA TO ALL OUR READERS FROM “The Unveiled Gospel” STAFF

From the time of our inception almost 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 a lost and dying United States (Col. 4.2-4). Thank you!

THIRTY SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDY – SUGGESTION TEN

Suggestion ten for Bible study is that Bible studies take time and one's baptism cannot be rushed if it comes at the price of not teaching what needs to be taught first (Acts 2.14-42; 8.26-40; 10.34-48). In each of the three referenced Scriptures, those Christians doing the teaching taught their non-Christian listeners all that they needed to know prior to baptism. Still, it is not known everything the non-Christians were taught by their Christian teachers beyond what the Bible reveals in all three passages. Nevertheless, the one thing all Bible readers can be assured of when reading these passages of Scriptures (and every other like them) is that they were taught the gospel of Christ (Rom. 6.1-11; 1 Cor. 15.1-4). Yet, no person should ever be rushed into baptism without first being taught the gospel of Christ.

Conversely, rushing people into baptism before they are taught and understand the gospel can be physically/temporally and/or spiritually/eternally devastating to all involved. It is equal to one blind person guiding another blind person, and both will fall into a pit (Matt. 15.12-14; Luke 6.39). For example, in the not-so-distant past, an older Christian man who fancied himself an evangelist set up a Bible study with a thirty-something married couple. Accordingly, the Christian man asked his congregational minister to go to the Bible study with him as a “completely silent” partner. With his curiosity aroused, the minister agreed and off to the study they went. At the Bible study, about the only thing the Christian man said to the couple was to ask them the essential question, “Are you ready to be baptized?”

Speechless and not knowing or understanding what to say, the couple responded, “Yes.” Though they were baptized, the Christian man had taught the couple “absolutely nothing” about the gospel of Christ even though the minister had tried to follow up with them. As it turns out, the couple originally wanted to study the Bible with the Christian man to help them solve their marital problem. But he failed to listen to them being concerned only in baptizing them. Consequently, the couple's marital problem remained unsettled until the husband hurt his wife ending in her hospitalized and him in jail. Hence, the suggestion's moral is as follows...listen to why people want a Bible study, help them by teaching them the gospel, do not rush them into baptism, and let them choose when ready (Josh. 24.15).

Tom Wright, church of Christ, Limon CO

EVANGELISM - MINISTRY ACTIVITIES OF *The Unveiled Gospel*:

December:

The Unveiled Gospel continues to work with the church in Sioux City, IA. Through the efforts in December we found a wonderful family who were looking for the Lord's church and were able to visit and restore them to God's people in Sioux City.

The Unveiled Gospel went to Henderson, TN to conduct a class on evangelism, Tom will be going back to conclude the class. If you have questions, contact Tom Wright (719-964-8493) for more information on class schedule.

January:

The Unveiled Gospel will continue working with the Lord's church in Sioux City, IA. Prayers are requested for a great opportunity of unity between the brethren in Sioux City as talks begin between congregations to unite together.

The Unveiled Gospel will continue their evangelism class in Henderson, TN.

Help Needed!!

The church of Christ in Sioux City, Iowa is looking for an evangelist to come and help them grow spiritually and numerically. This is a mission field in need of help! The congregation has some support, but more is needed to fully support an evangelist and his family. Sioux City is a metropolitan area of 100,000+ in population, with all the amenities that come with a large city. If you are interested in helping financially support the work or coming to Sioux City to evangelize please call Orvis @ 712-258-2206 or Nick @ 712-202-3806.

The church of Christ in Walsh, CO is looking for an evangelist to come and help them grow spiritually and numerically. This is a mission field in southeastern CO and the congregation can provide some support, but more is needed to fully support an evangelist and his family. Walsh is a community that hasn't been evangelized in a long time, so the field is white. We are a lovely community that has many souls in need to help. If you are interested in learning more about the work please contact Kenton Dykes @ 719-688-1148.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

It is a true pleasure to share a series of articles from the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5 – 7. Since the time Matthew recorded this message, volumes have been written about the value of Jesus' sermon. The lessons taught still remain critical for Christians of any age. As we consider this sermon together through the year, think about how we can each live nearer to what Jesus taught, and thereby be an example for others.

The intent of *The Unveiled Gospel* is to encourage evangelism, and so you may wonder what the Sermon on the Mount has to do with evangelism? The speaker of this sermon is the One evangelism is about, and He instructs us how to live. Living for Him helps make us all better evangelists. The people we desire to reach will be more open when we walk the walk instead of just talk the talk. These are words to live by, but without Jesus in our lives it not possible.

Prior to Jesus sitting down on the mountain in the presence of the crowds and His disciples, He had been baptized “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15), and He had withstood the temptations from the devil in Matthew 4. After calling His first disciples, Jesus had gone throughout all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people (Matthew 4:23).

Jesus lived by the standards taught in this sermon, and taught His disciples to do likewise. If He had preached one way of life and lived by another, then Jesus would have been guilty of the very hypocrisy His opponents were guilty of. This is the hypocrisy that many in the world accuse Christians of today. If we hope to influence people toward the Christ, we need to learn and live what Jesus taught.

Jesus' instructions were, and are, contrary to worldly living, but godly living far exceeds anything this world offers. Everything, from the first beatitude to the last image, in the Sermon on the Mount presents us with the way to truly be happy in a world filled with the greed and selfishness. When we put ourselves first then we fall into the worldly trap. Genuine happiness is found only when we live for Jesus and others.

At the outset of this sermon, Jesus presents nine ways to be blessed, beginning with “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). Each of them must be who we are rather than something we do from time to time. Pray that with Jesus' help we can grow in this way from this moment forward. The lost in the world will recognize how blessed we are. The first beatitude tells us not to be arrogant, but to understand that we are sinners, and when we recognize this we are blessed. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom and we can be a part of it when we are poor in spirit. Next month we hope to consider the beatitudes in more detail. Have a blessed day, week, and month!

~Terry Smalling, church of Christ, La Junta CO

NEW STAFF AT The Unveiled Gospel



As readers know Terry Smalling is on the staff of *The Unveiled Gospel*. But you may not know Faith Smalling (Terry's wife). She is a professional illustrator who will be producing our illustrations when needed, as well as contracting with our readers and supporters when needed to do illustrations of all kinds for them. Terry and Faith may be contacted respectively at 719-468-7157 and 719-468-7786 or they can be emailed at info@theunveiledgospel.org.

SPECIAL SUPPORT NEEDED FOR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL IN UGANDA

ELITE SCHOOL (in Uganda) aims at enabling the children of the chronically poor, the orphans, and the unwanted children to go in school like the rest and reach the end of their education in primary, secondary and post secondary levels. This is made possible by offering bursaries to them and acting as an alternative home to those that stay in hostile households. This way we will reduce the number of school dropouts in respective communities, cut down the negative criminal activities that follow after a child has left school such as early marriage, drug abuse, theft, robbery, and sexual immorality. The intervention of **Elite** will reduce the suffering of the children in the households where they are unsafe by providing an immediate safe temporary settlement away from home. For more information on this worthy project, please contact **Mbusa Benard** (see below).

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TIME FOR INVENTORY

Inventory is a necessary thing for most businesses; and it is also wise to have your inventory list up-to-date. A businessman can get a good reading of his company's position through an inventory and if any changes needed could be made in the coming year.

For Christians, there ought to be a daily inventory, because we too have a need to sit down and evaluate where one has been and make some concrete plans for the future. Paul gives us the principle in 2 Corinthians 13:5 where he states that we are to, "examine yourselves.... test yourselves." It is so easy to get caught up in the mundane activities that come up in our lives but through an objective inventory we are able to sort out the things that aren't contributing to the glory of God, our spirituality, or to the welfare of others. The wise Christian checks things on his inventory list and keeps only those things that build up. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life it doesn't seem one has the time to take inventory much less make a list. We need to be willing to do what it takes to make an inventory list, not that this list are checkboxes but are check points for our Christian lives. Here are a few areas where attention seems to always be needed.

Soul Winning: The wisest man to ever walk this earth (after Jesus, of course) said this, "he who wins souls is wise," Proverbs 11:30. I hope we as a church or individuals have not lost the fact that we are to "seek and save the lost." We need to re-evaluate our priorities on this matter and make changes if needed. Why not set a number of the amount you want to lead Christ this year?

Prayer: Luke 11:1 states that the, "disciples said to him, 'Lord teach us to pray.'" It seems that if those who walked with Jesus everyday realized they needed to learn more on prayer, what makes us think we don't. We need to study this important aspect of a Christian's walk with God. Prayer is our time to talk to our Father in heaven.

Bible Study: The greatest downfall or fault of the disciples of Christ in our generation is the fact that so many of us think we know it all. God's word is an amazing tool to cause us all to grow, from the newborn babe to the fully mature Christian. Peter states that we are to "long for the pure milk of the word."

Involvement: Are we supporters of the programs of the church? Do we get involved when we find someone who is less fortunate than us? If we take a look at the world and see what is missing, we can realize that it is people are not getting involved. Let's not let that happen in the church! GET INVOLVED!

Inventory is needed in business, but it is also needed in our Christian walk. There is room for improvement in all of our lives.

~ Danny Aragon, church of Christ, Kim CO

USING HUMOR IN EVANGELISM

Many times when a preacher gets up to preach, he is confronted by the fact that people all too often come to Bible studies either sad and downtrodden or just in a really angry mood. In this state of mind, they really don't want to hear what the evangelist has to say. Regardless of this, the evangelist's job is to both teach the truth but do it in love.

Often, it helps to use humor which is one way the evangelist can lift someone's spirit in a godly way by making one laugh. Solomon wrote, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine..." (Prov. 17:22). These words help when one is sad or in a bad mood. Thus, when the spirit is uplifted, the soul can be rescued as well.

One way to use humor in evangelism is by telling funny stories that are Bible and/or church related. One such humorous story told me by my dear brother Garland Elkins was the one about *The Preacher and the Song Leader*, and goes as follows.

There was once a church where the evangelist and the song leader were not getting along. This began to spill over into the worship service. One week the evangelist preached on commitment, and how Christians should dedicate themselves to service. The song leader then led the song, *I Shall Not Be Moved*.

The next Sunday, the evangelist preached on giving and how Christians should gladly give to the work of the Lord. The song leader then led the song, *Jesus Paid It All*.

The next Sunday, the evangelist preached on gossiping and how Christians should control their tongues. The song leader then led the song, *I Love To Tell The Story*.

The evangelist became very disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday he told the congregation he was considering resigning. The song leader then led the song, *Oh, Why Not Tonight*.

As it came to pass, the evangelist resigned and the next week informed the church that it was Jesus that led him there and it was Jesus that was taking him away. The song leader then led the song, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*.

So, when a merry heart does good like a medicine, a spirit is uplifted and a soul can be saved.

~ Ben Estes, church of Christ, Henderson TN

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**RECAP OF FIRST TEN SUGGESTIONS
(OF THIRTY SUGGESTIONS)
FOR BIBLE STUDY**

1. Bible studies are for people looking for Christ, and not for people not looking for Him.
2. Bible studies are for bringing people to Christ, and not for driving them away from Him.
3. Bible studies should be used to train Christians and non-Christians to think in spiritual and eternal terms instead of physical and temporal terms.
4. The fundamental goal of Bible study is for one to discover what one's relationship to God is whether right or wrong, and then use the study to make any necessary corrections.
5. Bible studies are for Christians to teach all the erring and unfaithful Christians and non-Christians the gospel of Christ, and never the other way around.
6. As Christ was in the grave three days, three times of inviting one to a Bible study to come out of one's own spiritual grave is usually enough without over-aggressive pressuring of one.
7. When a Bible study is set up, it is preferable to begin it immediately or it can begin later as long as it begins.
8. When a Bible study is set up, the appointed time(s) for it to begin and end should be established right away or it may never be established.
9. One should always be on time for scheduled Bible studies.
10. Bible studies take time and one's baptism must never be rushed if it comes at the expense of not teaching what needs to be taught.

Tom Wright, church of Christ, Limon CO