

How to Be an Effective Witness

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

■ If your life is full of the Lord, it will flow out on others

You will naturally talk about what you believe in: John 3:11; Acts 4:20.

■ If you have the love of Jesus you cannot hide it!

Matthew 5:14–16.

I love to point him out!

Some years ago two boats glided past each other on the Mississippi. An aged man was conversing with a friend on deck of one of the boats when suddenly he said with zest, “Look! Yonder’s the captain!”

Asked the friend, “Why are you so enthusiastic while you call my attention to the captain?”

The grateful man replied, “Well, sir, years ago, as we were going along like this, I fell overboard. I couldn’t swim and I began to sink, but the captain rescued me. Since that day, I just love to point him out!”

When we were still lost in sin, the waves of sin all but overwhelmed us. But the Captain of our salvation, Jesus, rescued us. Should we not joyously “point Him out” to others?

■ Be sold on the product!

2 Corinthians 4:13; Psalm 107:2.

Were you ever faced with a salesman who was trying to sell you something and you’ve asked him: “Well, do *you* have one?—Do *you* use it?—How does it work for *you*?—Do *you* like it?—Are *you* sold on it?” If he enthusiastically raves about how good it is and how it really works for him, you just might buy it!

■ Fill your heart beforehand

Prepare to give answers by studying the Word beforehand: 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15.

If you’re full of the Lord’s love, His Spirit, His Word, and you want to really get it across, when you open your mouth He’ll fill it, and it will come right out of your heart: Matthew 12:34.

■ It’s the Holy Spirit that wins!

When trying to express the wonderful love of Jesus for people *our* words often seem to fall short, but the Holy Spirit can nevertheless use our words to speak to people’s hearts so they can understand what you are trying to express. See 1 Corinthians 2:4–5.

If you’re in the right spirit and are sincere and trying to do your best, the Lord will bless your witness! You don’t have to be afraid of making a mess of things, because whatever you say to try to share the truth of the Word, the Lord’s going to bless it. His Word is not going to return unto Him void and His sheep will hear His voice: Isaiah 55:11; John 10:3–4.

■ You don’t have to know all the answers!—Jesus is the Answer!

You don’t have to answer *all* their questions and their confusion and their doubts about things. If they ask you a question you don’t know the answer to, just tell them that’s something you’re not sure about yet and you’re still learning. “The Bible is a big book and it takes a lifetime of study to learn all the neat things in the Word. But one thing I do know, I sure know that the Lord answers prayer and He’s my Best Friend and He really works!”

You don't have to feel bad if you don't know all the answers! Just talk about something you do know! Give them some Scriptures you do know!

You can give them your own testimony; you can tell them what the Lord has done in your life.

The blind man that Jesus healed was a perfect example of that. When the scribes and Pharisees came up to him and asked him about his healing, he said he didn't know too much about the details, but this one thing he knew: Once he was blind, but now he could see! (See all of John chapter 9, especially verse 25.)

Just preach Jesus!

A young minister in a college town was embarrassed by the fact that many in his congregation were more educated and seemingly wiser than himself

He sought counsel from his father, an old and wise minister, saying: "Father, I am hampered in my ministry in the pulpit I am now serving. If I cite anything from geology, there is Professor A—teacher of this science, right before me. If I use an illustration of Roman mythology, there is Professor B—ready to trip me up for my little inaccuracy. If I mention something in English literature that pleases me, I am covered by the presence of the learned man that teaches that branch. What shall I do?"

The sagacious old man replied: "Do not be discouraged. Preach the Gospel. They probably know very little of that."

■ Controversial questions

Answer sincere questions honestly and show those who are really interested the truth. If they want to know, God will show them. But beware of those who ask questions, not because they want the answer, but because they're only trying to trap you, like the self-righteous Pharisees whose minds were already made up and didn't want to be confused with the facts, and rather tried to trap Jesus with His own words: Luke 11:53–54. See also: 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9.

So what about Hell?!

Fred was witnessing to Steve. The first thing Steve wanted to do was argue about Hell:

"Do you believe there's a Hell? What about Hell? Blah, blah, blah!"

Fred said, "You want to talk about Hell? You want to argue about Hell? I'll tell you what, you let me talk first, and then when I get done telling you about Jesus, then we'll talk about Hell, okay?"

So Fred started talking about Jesus, and before you knew it, Steve was asking Jesus to come into his heart. When he finished praying, Fred asked:

"Well, now what do you want to know about Hell?"

Steve said, "Oh, I don't care anything about Hell now, I'm not going there!"

Other men's wives

Billy Sunday, the fiery evangelist, was once interrupted in his preaching by a heckler, who shouted the question, then famous in all agnostic or atheistic circles, "Who was Cain's wife?"

Billy Sunday shot back the reply, "I respect any seeker of knowledge, but I want to warn you, young man, don't risk being lost to salvation by too much inquiring after other men's wives."

■ The Printed Word—giving out literature

Don't underestimate the power of the printed Word! Giving out tracts and other Christian literature is a wonderful way of sharing the message. The literature will remain after you are gone. There are countless testimonies of people finding the Lord only through the written Word, never having received a personal witness!

Try to have a selection of tracts with you at all times. You can give a tract to anyone, even if you don't have an opportunity to talk with them: the ticket collector, the sales assistant, the beggar on the street. See Psalm 119:105.

Let the Lord speak! You've got the greatest Speaker in the universe to speak to them!—The most eloquent, the most expressive, the most discerning, the most beautiful, the most wonderful! Give

them the Word! If you have a good tract or a poster that presents the message with the Word and Scriptures, you can let them read that. Let the Lord speak to them personally and directly.

A good tip some of us have found regarding books or something lengthier that you want someone to read: The best way to get people to read books is not to give them the books, because then they may just put them on the shelf and plan to read them someday. But loan them the book and then they feel obligated to read it and return it.

The tract that went “astray”

From Philip and Meekness, Namibia

A few months ago, 18-year-old Marcus found a crumpled piece of paper on the street. It turned out to be one of our tracts, which had somehow made its way to the town where Marcus lives, 800 km away, near the Angolan border. He wrote to the address on the tract, and asked to enroll in the free correspondence Bible study course that we had advertised.

Our correspondence began, and before long Marcus was asking for Family posters and tracts—“especially ones about the Endtime”—to pass out to his friends and acquaintances. “There are lots of youths in my city, and I want to do something for them,” he wrote.

Since then, Marcus has given out about 1,000 posters and over 1,200 tracts single-handedly. He has witnessed to his classmates and teachers, and as a result 15 others from his school are also taking our Bible study course.

Yesterday we were able to meet Marcus and two of our other correspondence-course students for the first time. It was wonderful for all of us! We gave them another big box of posters and tracts to distribute.

How many people do you suppose will be in Heaven as a result of what Marcus and his friends are doing?—All because one little tract made it into the right hands!

The Bread of Life

Sadhu Sundar Singh (a famous Christian from India who lived 1889–1933) was distributing Gospels in central India. He came to some non-Christians on the train and offered a man a copy of John’s Gospel. The man took it, tore it into pieces in anger and threw the pieces out of the window. That seemed the end. But it so happened, in the providence of God, there was a man anxiously seeking for truth walking along the line that very day, and he picked up, as he walked along, a little bit of paper and looked at it, and the words on it in his own language were “The Bread of life.”

He did not know what it meant; but he inquired among his friends and one of them said, “I can tell you; it is out of the Christian book. You must not read it or you will be defiled.” The man thought for a moment and then said, “I want to read the book that contains that beautiful phrase!” and he bought a copy of the New Testament. He was shown where the sentence occurred—our Lord’s words “I am the Bread of Life”; and as he studied the Gospel, the light flooded into his heart. He came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and he became a preacher of the Gospel. The little bit of paper through God’s Spirit was indeed the Bread of Life to him, satisfying his deepest need.

Just one tract in Burma

A son of one of the chiefs of Burdwin was converted by a single tract. He could not read, but he went to Rangoon, a distance of 250 miles. There a missionary’s wife taught him to read, and in forty-eight hours he could read the tract through. He took a basket full of tracts, and with much difficulty preached the Gospel in his own home, and was the means of converting hundreds to God. He was a man of influence; the people flocked to hear him. In one year 1,500 natives were baptized in Arrecan as members of the church. All this through one little tract!

Bible or dinner?

In the island of New Guinea, a chieftain sat peacefully reading the Bible, when he was interrupted by a French trader. “Bah,” he said in French, “why are you reading the Bible? I suppose the missionaries have got hold of you, you poor fool. Throw it away! The Bible never did anyone any good.”

Replied the chieftain, calmly, “If it weren’t for this Bible, you’d be in my kettle there by now!”

■ The miracle of music

Somebody once wrote, “Music is the speech of angels.”

The witness contained in a song is a powerful way to get across the message. We have many witnessing songs that you can learn to sing and play, and they will wonderfully augment your witness. What inspires people about our music is that it’s happy music and makes them happy! It’s good music and makes them want to be good. It’s friendly music and makes them want to be friendly! It’s godly music and makes them want to be godly! It’s saving music and makes them want to be saved! It’s enjoyable music and makes them want to join in! It has good fruit and makes them want to do good and be good! Psalm 40:3; Acts 16:25.

■ Be a sample of love

Your personal example is an important aspect of your witness that will help to win others: Philippians 2:15–16a; 1 Timothy 4:12b; 2 Corinthians 3:2; Titus 2:7–8; John 13:35.

Your greatest witness is love, for the only love of God they can see is the love they see in you. If you don’t show them love they can see and feel, they’re going to have a hard time believing that there *is* Someone up there Whom they don’t know and that He *really* loves them.

You should always drop a little love into the hearts of those you pass by, even if only with a word, a smile, or a look of sympathy, so they will know that God has loved them that day!

■ Jesus’ main message was His sample of love!

By His example of kindness, His example of concern for the people, they knew that He must have something that was real and genuine and that love does exist and God does exist. We should endeavor to follow His example: John 13:15; Romans 2:21–24.

■ Don’t forget that part of your sample is the joy of the Lord!

Portray the Lord as He is—a happy God, Who loves and rejoices in love and happiness. A joyful countenance helps to win others.

When samples speak louder than sermons

People must learn to love you first before they can learn to love your God! The world-famed personal evangelist Dr. Dwight L. Moody used to say that, “The only Bible the World reads is bound in shoe leather!”—Meaning you!

■ Relating and adapting

In winning people, you have to inspire their faith in you before they can believe God: John 13:20.

You need to establish points of contact with them. There must be something in common in order for people to communicate. So use the kind of language that will win them. If it takes strong language to get the point across, use it! If it takes sweeter language, use that! But if you use platitudes with the lost, wandering youth, they will reject it! Ask God for wisdom: James 1:5; Proverbs 11:30.

One of the most needed abilities in witnessing is adaptability, being able to be anything to reach anybody and to become all things to all men. This tactic of adaptability was largely responsible for much of the apostle Paul’s soul-winning success. See 1 Corinthians 9:20–22.

■ Don’t give up!

Even though you might not see the results of your witnessing right away, in some way you’re getting results. The Lord has promised that His Word will not return unto Him void; it will accomplish His purpose!

You will not see some of the results until you get to Heaven because you don’t always know the results of the seeds you plant in someone’s heart, how or when they will take root. Perhaps the

person you have witnessed to will eventually find the Lord due to something that you said, or your witness will have worked in their heart to cause them to be more open and receptive when some other Christian witnesses to them.

We can't always expect to be the sowers *and* the reapers, because the Lord said that some sow and some water, but God gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

No matter who you are trying to witness to—those you know personally, or strangers—if you don't succeed after the first attempt, try again! No matter what happens, when you're witnessing personally or giving out literature or whatever you are doing, don't ever give up just because you have a few defeats.

Witnessing never fails! Even if you don't feel like a success as far as winning converts, you are doing the job that the Lord gave you to do, so you're succeeding!

Food for Thought: His Healing Touch

A testimony of the results of praying for those you meet!

From Thomas, England

One Friday evening I was going door to door in our neighborhood, introducing people to our Family literature and audio and video materials, when I met Anne. As we were talking, Anne suddenly cried out in pain. My reflex reaction was to offer to pray for her immediate healing, but she said she didn't believe in God and didn't wish to pray. Before I left I told her that my wife, Rose, and I would pray for her later that evening, which we did.

When I visited her again on Sunday evening, she said that the pain she had been having for 18 weeks had ceased on Saturday morning. During that visit, her two sons prayed with me to receive Jesus as their Savior.

I visited her again on Thursday, and she was in good health. She had already begun telling her family and friends that Jesus had healed her, in answer to our prayers. Having experienced a special touch of His love and healing power, she was eager to meet the Great Physician and found that He was only a prayer away!