

Each One Teach One Discipleship Lessons

Part Three:

FAITH THAT LIFTS UP

Learning to Share Your Faith in God

LESSON TWELVE:

DISCERNING DISCIPLES

One religious organization that has perfected the art of teaching people to "witness" to others is the *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society*, more commonly known as "Jehovah's Witnesses." You have likely met a pair of them at your door more than once. Most folks who have ever invited them in to discuss the Bible are impressed with their Bible knowledge, fervency, and smooth presentation of their material. That is, most folks who **don't know** the Bible themselves! For if you ever try to get the Jehovah's Witness to vary from his **own** order of presentation by asking unrelated questions, you will find he quickly loses his bearings and will try to steer the conversation back to the familiar path. You see, he has not been taught to understand and discuss the Bible, or even his own experience and relationship with the Lord. He has been taught to memorize *Watchtower* teachings. His presentation style has been carefully prepared by his leaders. With just a short training period, the newest convert can thus be sent out door-to-door to make more converts.

It is also common for many "mainstream" religious groups to teach canned presentations of "soul-winning strategies" in discipleship classes. Students are taught to memorize chain-references of scriptures that will lead a person to a confession of faith in Christ. Or they are shown how to make visual aids, such as simple line drawings, that clarify the salvation process.

As you are preparing to be used of the Lord to make disciples, it might be helpful for you to check with mature Christians for examples of methods that have been helpful to them in discipling others. But there is a real problem with latching on to a "sure-fire witnessing method." If it is just a "gimmick" **external to you**, you will quickly fall into the same trap as the Jehovah's Witnesses. You will be unable to respond if you have to adapt to an unusual circumstance. You must internalize the solid principles underneath the method you plan to use, so that it becomes a part of a wider perspective.

You see, in evangelism methods, there is no such thing as "one size fits all":

I Cor 9:20-22

To the Jews I [Paul] became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

***** The Apostle Paul himself realized he couldn't just give the same "speech" everywhere he went and effectively reach all kinds of people. In this lesson we are going to consider a **FIVE-STEP WITNESSING STRATEGY** that does take into consideration this principle from Paul.

The **FIVE STEPS** are:

1. **LISTEN**
2. **LISTEN**
3. **LISTEN**
4. **LISTEN**
5. **SPEAK**



Most eager new Christians--and many older ones--think **step one** is always to **speak** any time you have what looks like a discipling opportunity! They have overlooked a principle from the scripture:

[John 6:44]

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me _____, and I will raise him up at the last day.

[John 6:65]

He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has _____ him."

***** It is the **Lord** who opens up a heart to make it receptive to the Gospel! Just because someone seems willing to talk about religion or the Bible doesn't mean God is drawing them at that moment. Therefore, Step One is not to **speak**--it is to ...

1. **LISTEN--BE SENSITIVE TO--THE PROMPTING OF GOD'S SPIRIT.**

If you are sensitive to the leading of God through His Spirit, you can sense if this situation is one in which you should invest discipling time and effort. You may find that it is the right person, but the wrong time.

***** If you are unsure, the next step is to **listen** again. But this time, **listen** to the person you are trying to reach:

2. **LISTEN FOR THE MOTIVES OF THE PERSON.**

New Christians often get pulled into heated discussions with religious "hobbyists" and "dabblers" who leave the young Christian exhausted and confused. These are the kind of people who like to argue over Greek and Hebrew words, over prophecy interpretations, over the meaning of obscure passages of scripture. Paul warned Timothy and Titus about this problem. They were both experienced ministers. If Paul was concerned about them, how much more would he warn new Christians:

[II Tim 2:23]

Don't have anything to do with _____, because you know they produce _____.

[Titus 3:9]

But avoid _____ and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.

[II Tim 2:14]

Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about _____; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.

***** Jesus had an even stronger warning we would do well to consider:

[Matthew 7:6]

"Do not give dogs what is _____; do not throw your _____ to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

***** These are hard words. Of course you don't want to jump to conclusions about the deepest motives of a person, but there really **are** people out there who are out just to pick a Biblical fight. New Christians need to realize they are not obligated to continue to witness to a contentious person.



**Trying to disciple a person
who is not being drawn by the LORD to himself
will only exhaust you!**

If you have listened for the prompting of the Spirit, and are assured by listening to the person that his communication is sincere, it is **still** not time to speak! **Listen** again. But this time:

3. LISTEN TO THE PERSON TO FIND OUT HIS **REAL NEED**.

You may have to ask questions to "draw him out," but don't be tempted to jump in with your own comments or teaching yet. You may totally misunderstand where this person is in relation to the Lord. You may think you are dealing with a person who is a terrible "backslider," when in fact he may be a wounded Christian who has been hurt by his experiences in some religious group. You may think you are dealing with a "model citizen" who just needs to make an easy choice to begin fellowshiping with Christians, when underneath he is a tormented person beset by a hidden life of lust, addictions and guilt. **Listen** to him--**not** to judge him, but to understand him and find out his real need.

[James 1:19]

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to _____, slow to _____ and slow to become angry.

[Proverbs 18:13]

He who _____ before _____ -- that is his folly and his shame.

[Proverbs 20:5]

The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of _____ draws them out.

***** You have **listened** to the prompting of God's Spirit, **listened** to the person's motives, **listened** to understand him. You have figured out **just** the method to use to reach him where he is. Surely it is time to **speak**, isn't it?! No--now it is time to

4. LISTEN TO THE LORD TO KNOW **HOW TO MEET THE NEED.**

[Proverbs 16:1]

To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the _____ of the tongue.

[John 5:30]

By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I _____, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

[John 8:26]

"I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have _____ from him I tell the world."

[John 14:24]

He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are _____; they belong to the _____.

[John 16:13]

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will _____ only what he _____, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

***** Jesus Himself spoke **only** what he heard from the Father! How foolish of us to think we should "speak our own mind"!

The final step to our **FIVE-STEP WITNESSING STRATEGY** is:

5. SPEAK ONLY WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND **FROM THE LORD.**

***** Does this mean you can never "prepare ahead" for discipling opportunities? No--there is one thing in particular you can do:

[I Peter 3:15]

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you _____ the hope that you have. But do this with _____.

Be prepared to explain what you believe and why you believe it. **Know** your Bible. **Walk** with the Lord. Then He will **prepare hearts** for you to reach, and you will understand clearly from Him what you should speak.

***** We need to be **Discerning Disciples**, who listen to the Lord and to others **first**, to **discern** how the Lord would have us approach them in the task of discipling.

REVIEW:

1. We need to **discern**, by **listening**, **how** to approach others.
2. **Listen** to the prompting of God through His Spirit to know **whom** to approach.
3. **Listen** to the person to make sure he is **sincere and receptive**.
4. **Listen** to the person to find out his **real spiritual need**.
5. **Listen** to the Lord to find out **what to say** to meet that need.
6. **Speak** only what you **understand from** the Lord, not just your own thoughts.

MEMORY VERSES:

LESSON TWELVE MEMORY VERSE:

I Pet 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Always be prepared to give an answer

To everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have.

But do this with gentleness and respect.

LESSON NINE MEMORY VERSE:

John 8:31B-32

... Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

LESSON TEN MEMORY VERSE:

John 13:35

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

LESSON ELEVEN MEMORY VERSE:

I Tim 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

QUESTIONS:

1. How can you be always "ready to give an answer"?
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2. Have you ever talked with a "religious hobbyist"? Tell about it.

3. We are told not to be ashamed of the Gospel. Describe how you can be open about your faith without insisting on trying to disciple everyone you meet.

4. Outline the four ways you should **listen** before you **speak**.

4. Write this part of I Peter 3:15 from memory: Always be prepared to _____

5. Fill in the blanks in these scripture quotes from past lessons:

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my _____.

By this shall all men know you are my disciples, if _____.

Set an _____ for the believers in speech, in life...