

Building Relationships. . .

Sowing Seed . . .

Reaping a Harvest . . .

Cooperating With The Holy Spirit! . . .

**The following extra studies will give guidance,
challenge the heart,
and give insights toward reaching the lost!**

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What About the Harvest?

- What is the thing God the Father is the most concerned about?
- What is central to God's will and heart?
- What is Christ's plan and desire for us?
- What will we be doing if we are main-stream in the ***will*** of God?
- If I am yielded to God's plan for my life, for the world, what would it be?
- Why do we need strong, victorious families? What is God's heart-beat for the family?

I. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF ABUNDANCE:

John 4: 34-38 ; I Cor. 3:6-9; Psa. 126:5-6; Matt 9:36-38

1. There is a multitude of grains of wheat in a wheat field, or in many fields.
(So there is a multitude in the *field, that is the world.*)
2. In a granary, that holds the wheat there is a multitude of grains.... grains in abundance, so in the world there is an abundance of people.
3. Christ is speaking of abundance -- there are people everywhere, in need of Him. An abundance of people without Christ, how will they be reached?

II. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF ACCESS:

1. It is not hidden, it is around us -- Consider Acts 2, 8, 10, 13, etc.
 - In all these portions of Scripture, people in need of Christ were everywhere.
 - Nobody needs to hunt for people in need of Christ.
2. The harvest (of people) is accessible. It is at our arms length.
3. Holy Spirit knows **why** -- **where** -- and **when!** **We need to be available.**
4. The Holy Spirit would bring --
 - the lost person and the witnesser together
 - It is up to us to be ready and willing -- Jh 15:26-27
5. He is ready to do His part in the harvest of souls. -- Jh 16

III. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF A PROCESS:

1. **There must be the *Tilling of the soil*** -- Rom 10:13; Acts 16:30,31; 9:15, 22
 - a. Hearts must be soft, pliable, receptive, or open if they are to accept Christ.

- b. This demands that we build a relationship; winning hearts for a hearing.
- c. Most unsaved do not have a prepared heart!
- d. What is a prepared heart?

2. We must sow the Seed -- Matt 4:14; I Cor. 3:7-8; A sower went forth to sow. The seed is the Word of God, and the field is the world.

- a. God put *life in the seed*, His Word, (Consider I Peter 2:23.)
- b. We should expected an increase, a harvest when we sow the seed.
- c. The farmer would not bother to sow any seed --
 - if he did not think there was life in the seed
 - and also if he did not expect an increase.
- d. We must build ***Need and Desire*** in the heart of the hearer -- stairstepping people to Christ -- little by little!
- e. If we don't sow, why should we have a harvest? There must be sowing, sowing, sowing.

3. We must water the Seed -- with ***tears*** -- Psa. 126:5-6

- a. Maybe we would like a harvest without investment.
- b. There must be tears of concern - compassion - burden - Gal. 4:19; Matt 9:36-38
- c. Illustration: Old deacon -- who was a blacksmith -- story of his burden.

4. Then, we can expect the Harvest -- when the other things are done.

- a. The harvest is promised. Jh. 4
- b. The harvest is a result of the process. Psa. 126:5-6
- c. Many must be involved in the process.

IV. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF DANGER -- John 4:34-36

- 1. The harvest is already *white unto harvest*;
- 2. We must be led to right place at right time, led of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. There is the danger of missing the Holy Spirit's work. He is at work. - Jh 15:16
- 4. Consider Acts 8 -- 10 -- 11 - 18 -- What took place in these portions?

5. Christ's ministry had prepared a harvest --

- in which the disciples had not labored.
- He spoke of this in John 4:34-38.

6. Consider: Acts 20:20; 5:42; Gal. 4:19; I Thess 2:9; II Thess 3:8

V. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF PREPARATION:

- What is true of a physical harvest on the farm is also true in the harvest of souls.
- The process must take place and as God gives the increase the harvest brings with it the need of preparation.

1. Preparation of **time** set aside for the harvest.
2. Preparation of **priorities** to get the work done.
3. Preparation of **investment** that is necessary to care for the harvest.
4. Preparation of **oversight** and **care** to glean the harvest.
5. Preparation of **equipment** what must be used for the harvest.

VI. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF DEMANDS:

1. There is the **dedication** needed in the whole process -- II Tim. 2:9
2. There must be **determination** for and in the work.
3. There must be **Zeal** -- willing effort; surrender to leadership
4. Matt. 9:38-39

VII. THE HARVEST SPEAKS OF JOY -- FULFILLMENT:

1. Gathering fruit brings great joy. -- Jh. 4:36
2. Gathering together with others bring much joy. -- Jh. 4:35- 38
3. Gathering rewards in the future brings great joy. -- I Cor. 3:8
4. Gathering with God is a blessed privilege. -- I Cor. 3:7, 9a
5. Gathering and caring for the harvest brings great fulfillment. There is also the need of safety and protection for the harvest.

Witnessing In the Spirit!

Jh 16:7-14; 15: Acts 1:1, 5, 8 Acts 5:32;

Introduction

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK IN THE LIVES OF LOST PEOPLE:

- A. If the Holy Spirit was not at work in the lives of the lost no one would come to Christ or find salvation. Acts 10:19, 20, 44
- B. His work is absolutely vital to bringing a lost person to Christ. Acts 5:32
- C. The witnesses never *takes the presence of God to anyone*.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit does this.
 - 2. He is already there to prepare the lost person for the witnessing experience.
- D. We can depend upon the work of the Spirit in the life of the lost. Acts 9:31
- E. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth of God's power and existence to the intellect, emotions, conscience, and to the will of the person to bring them to God-awareness and God-conscienceness! Jh 15:26

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS:

- A. The Scriptures use the word *conviction* to describe the convincing work the Holy Spirit. Jh 16:8-11
- B. He is the ONE who probes the mind and heart to bring an uneasy but **inescapable understanding** of one's true condition.
- C. Without the **convincing**, (the convicting work of the Holy Spirit) man would remain spiritually blind and insensitive to the true nature of his sinful condition. Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 4:3,4
- D. He convinces the lost of their lostness of their need of righteousness and the fact of impending judgment. Rom. 3:9-19
- E. The lost are convicted of the character of their condition.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS THE SINNER OUT OF DEATH INTO LIFE:

Acts 26: 18

- A. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring transformation at the moment of acceptance of Christ. Jh 3:1-7; Titus 3:5
- B. The sinner is reborn then freed from the power of sin and death and wholly put into the family of God. Col. 1:14; Rom. 8:33-50; Jh. 10:27-28
- C. The Holy Spirit acts with enabling power in the life of the lost person as they are converted. Rom. 8:1-4, 9, 11

IV. WE MUST LEARN TO DEPEND UPON THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT:

- A. He is the One who **does** the work in the life of the lost.
- B. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He works in the lives of lost people. Jh 15:26-27; 16:7-11; Acts chapters 8, 9, and 10
- C. He is the one who **precedes the witness**-- working to convict and convince the lost to accept Christ as Savior.
- D. His leadership is **vital and assuring** -- for it is not our work but His and we merely cooperate with Him. Study chapters in Acts 8, 9, 10, 13
- E. We *do not wait* for some *special feeling* before we go witnessing -- regardless of feelings we are to take the **initiative and look for an opportunity to witness.** Acts 13, 18
- F. Often the Holy Spirit's leadership is evident only **after we have taken the step of faith to begin to witness.**
- G. He will GUIDE the presentation (Acts 8, 9, 10, 16) for He is the ONE who is at work and He **knows what HE is DOING** in the life of the lost person.
- H. He will be at work **IN the circumstances, the events, and in the conversation** as we deal with the lost person. One of the most exciting things about witnessing is the thrill of seeing the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the lost person -- Acts 9, 10
 - *guiding us and utilizing the training,*
 - *and the knowledge, and the personality of the witnesser -- we must allow Him to use us.*

V. AS WE WITNESS -- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK IN THE LIFE OF THE LOST:

- A. He will be right there **validating** the truth of the Word of God.
- B. It is as though He is **saying** to the lost person, "*Listen, what this person is telling you is true, you need to believe.*" I Cor. 1:6
- C. He **confirms** the truth to the testimony which we give. Jh 15:26-27
- D. He is **at work** -- not through our eloquence, or wisdom or persuasion, but through the Word of God as we share it. Rom. 1:14-16; Heb. 4:12
- E. The witnesser is **never alone -- the Holy Spirit is the active partner in the witnessing process.**
 - 1. He is there at work through the cultivating process,
 - 2. the sowing of the seed,
 - 3. the watering with tears of compassion, and
 - 4. the harvest.
- F. We need to **keep in step** with the Holy Spirit allowing HIM

1. to lead us --
2. to train us --
3. to empowers us --
4. to embolden us --
5. to anoint us -- and
6. to faithfully use us -- **as we obey the command to go.**

Conclusion:

THIS IS CALLED WITNESSING IN THE SPIRIT--

1. For He is the ONE who gives the **freedom** to act and to lead.
2. He is the ONE who does the work in the life -- we are **vessels** He can us.
3. He is given the **right to work** in the life -- He cannot use a silent witness -- even as a silent witness in a court would be useless and effective.
4. In the Spirit means **operating** through the control of and in the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Through HIM alone we gain the power, have the authority, and ought to have the wisdom to **effectively** share the gospel message.
6. **The book of Acts authenticates all of these truths.**

Building Redemptive Relationships

Relationships is what Christianity is all about!

1. The result of sin is a broken relationship between God and man.
2. The death of Christ reestablished a relationship between the heavenly Father and His lost children
3. Christ is the way to God and as the Friend of sinners His desire is to build people unto Himself.
4. Evangelism is making contact with a person and motivating him to give an honest hearing to the message of the gospel.
5. We build relationships, so, as the soul winner we can:
 - take the sinner by the hand and
 - lead him over the threshold into eternal life. II Cor. 5:19-20
6. Christ, who dwells in the believer, is communicated to the unsaved person in a relationship that we must build.

I. HOW TO ESTABLISH AND BUILD REDEMPTIVE RELATIONSHIPS:

A. We need a vision of what can be accomplished!

1. It depends upon vision -- Prov. 29:18
2. There must be an accurate vision of the condition of the unsaved.
3. There must be a vision of what God can do through us.
 - We are commanded; we have the tools to do the work. Rom. 1:16;
 - God will do it through us; **we must be available!** I Thess. 5:18

B. We must get a vision of the method:

1. Acts 1:8 The method is witnessing by sharing Jesus Christ with friends. Being a witness is not optional for Christ said, ***“You shall ... not you should or you may or you might be witnesses.”***
2. He commanded believers to be witnesses. Therefore, the only choice a believer has is whether he will be a ***good witness or a bad one.***
3. Vision is prerequisite to success in establishing redemptive relationships. We need a vision of networking our friends to the gospel. We too often say “I can’t or I quit” before we ever get started. Think: To win the person unknown to us is *“a stranger introducing a stranger to a Stranger.”* We as a person unknown to the lost person are trying to get this stranger to accept a Stranger-- the Lord Jesus.

C. We must make friends of the unsaved.

1. Build redemptive friendships by learning names, smiling, looking friendly, and showing a sincere interest in others.

2. A person's name is said to be one of the most pleasant sounds he can hear.
3. The use of the name shows personal interest. Look pleasant! Try to look like the kind of person that a stranger would want to know.
4. Be a good listener. Don't talk all the time -- tune in to their frequency and listen attentively.
5. Center the conversation around their interest rather than your own.
6. Make every effort to make the new acquaintance feel important.
 - A good way to do that is to seek his advice and/or assistance in some area of his ability or expertise.
 - These simple efforts will show genuine interest in him as a person.
7. Talk about things like job or profession, sports, hobbies, family interest, trips, current news, books, cars, boats, campers, gardening, religious background. etc.

D. We need to use hospitality as a means to an end.

1. Rom. 12:13 The warmest climate for building a meaningful friendship may be provided by your own home.
2. Think of every activity that you have an interest in, arrange them in order of your priority, as you get to know the person --
 - take a mental inventory of his/her interests.
 - Match points of interest.

II. UNDERSTANDING FRIENDSHIPS:

A. A friend makes you comfortable.

1. Prov. 17:17a; A true friend is one who not only loves you for yourself, but in spite of yourself. (We must be that kind of friend to the unsaved.)
2. A friend recognizes your imperfection, frailty and weakness and chooses to go on loving you anyway. (We must be that kind of friend.)
3. A friend's motive is to **give** not to get (II Cor. 12:14) Friends do not wear a mask of pretended perfection. You can relax, and be yourself. (So we must be that kind of friend to the unsaved.)

B. A friends can always be trusted! Prov. 27:10;

1. Friends may not always agree on all things, but they can agree to disagree and still remain friends. Do we build that kind of friendship?
3. There are times when a sincere rebuke is essential to friendship.
 - He is no friend at all who allows wrong to continue uncorrected.
 - But such rebukes are no threat to true friendship because true friends can be trusted. (Prov. 27:6) Do we build that kind of friendship?

C. A friend gives encouragement!

1. A true friend is one who helps you through the trials and tests of life.
2. When the world and the devil attack from the outside and the flesh is undermining your strength within, a friend will be there to encourage and build you up. Prov. 27:9, 17
3. The unsaved need that kind of friend!

D. A friend will make sacrifices!

1. Friendships are not found, they are established and developed through the investment of time and effort. So, we must do toward the unsaved.
2. A real friendship is an emotionally intimate relationship.
3. It involves caring and sharing in the life of another person.
4. Rom. 12:15 -- it will include such care and desire.

III. COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL!

- Evangelism is meeting eternal needs of the lost friend!
- The ultimate reason someone gets saved is because he is lost. He needs salvation through the blood of Christ.
- But most people do not realize they need God. Some are outwardly good, others live in the dregs of sin; neither feel a need to repent and turn to God.

A. People are cut off from God.

1. When Satan tempted Adam in the garden, he had the ability to make a moral choice, but fell into sin. Sin cut him off from God.
2. Not only Adam, but everyone from that time forth was cut off from God's presence. Rom. 3:23, 5:6, 8; 5:12; 5:19
3. Man is a sinner three ways --
 - a. First, anything less than God's perfect holiness is sin.
 - Sin is similar to an arrow **falling short** of the target. (Rom. 3:23)
 - Man can't attain to the perfect standard. So every person born into the world does not measure up to God's perfect standard.
 - b. Second, **rebellion is sin** -- usually translated "**transgression**."
 - Sin is the breaking of God's law, (I Jh 3:4)
 - either volitionally or ignorantly.
 - c. Third way man sins is **by inherent wickedness or moral impurity**.
 - This is described as filthy or uncleanness, **iniquity!**
 - and is abhorred by God, who is pure and holy. (Isa. 53:6)

Sin blinds the sinner, (II Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 4:17) Usually man does not recognize that he is a sinner and that he is cut off from God. Therefore a sinner needs the gospel communicated to him, to reveal that he is a sinner.

B. People become their own point of reference!

1. When Satan promised Eve, “*Ye shall be as gods,*” he somewhat fulfilled that promise, as a result man is his own god.
2. Each person is his own standard of measurement. (Cf. Prov. 14:12, 14)
3. Each person becomes the *focus of the circle* in which he lives.
4. The fall of man has created an upside-down condition. Instead of man placing God on the throne of his life, man sits there in supreme ignorance that he has usurped the place of God.

C. People suffer alienation and isolation!

1. Sin is not just punishment after death. (See Eph. 2:1-3.)
2. People also suffer the consequences of sin in this life.
3. Sin results in isolation or alienation from God.
4. Spiritual death is the ultimate form of isolation from God. (Rom. 5:12, 19)
5. As a result of man’s sin, he needs eternal salvation to bring him into fellowship with God.
6. Sin also cuts off people from others in this life.
 - Man is a social person who needs relationships to keep him healthy.
 - A soulwinner must give acceptance, not rejection. Not that we are to accept his sin, but accept his *personhood*. (Rom. 15:7).

D. People are filled with anxiety!

Any life this is separated from authority and purpose is like a boat without an anchor; it is drifting.

1. A person may be anxious because he does not have all the answers to the questions raised by others, or even the questions asked in his heart.
2. Every person has basic needs within his heart. He knows that something is missing but he usually refuses to identify it as God.
 - He looks for answers and does not find any.
 - The vacuum created by God’s absence produces anxiety.
 - “*Anxiety*” is a state and is another word for **fear, depression, jealousy**, or any other condition that keeps man in an emotional disequilibrium.

E. People are searching for meaning!

1. Because man is isolated and affected by sin he usually has a lack of meaning in life.

2. Those who are slaves to drugs know that narcotics do not lead to happiness or meaning in life.
3. The same is true of wealth, fame, or even success.
4. Some people do not know where to go or how to get where they want to go.
 - But they want to go somewhere.
 - They have not found the secret of peace in life.
 - They need the God that gives purpose for which men should live.

F. People are marching inevitably toward death!

1. Thousands die annually of some form of cancer and that frightens most.
2. We experience the same fear when a friend is killed or we hear of a tragic accident.
3. The threat of death is all about us.
4. Within our decaying bodies we realize death is our enemy.
 - We want to rise above the limitations of the body. Yet we see dimly because our eyes are wearing out .
 - Our arms ache because of arthritis.
 - Even the 30 year old feels the inevitable rising tide of age when a younger man takes his place. Rom. 6:23; 5:12, 19

IV. EVANGELISM IS COMMUNICATION:

A. Evangelism is giving the gospel -- Rom. 1:14-16

1. The gospel -- a glorious message
2. The gospel -- a proposition
3. The gospel -- a Person

B. Evangelism leads to the plan of salvation.

Giving the message: See other chapters of these studies!

Stairstepping Your Friends to Christ!

Illustration: Lady died in his arms.... coming home, etc.

I. PERSONAL DESIRE: Mark 5:18-20; Luke 8:26-37, 38, 39

1. We would rather stay close with Christ, probably, as this man desired -- *Perhaps out of great fears, of evil spirits, etc.*
2. If we were there, our concerns would be the same.
 - a. Maybe fearful he would fall back into his former condition.
 - b. Maybe fearful no one would want to listen to him, or have anything to even do with him.
 - c. Maybe fearful to be alone, would it not just be joy to be with this ONE who healed me. Maybe he will be harassed?
 - d. The crowds seem to love Christ -- there were those who followed him and stayed with Him, and so why not I also?
 - e. Maybe he desired to stay with HIM for instruction, for fellowship, for love's sake or perhaps for food or attraction. It is natural to cling to his deliverer.
 - f. Without doubt he had been alone, lonely, forsaken by his family.

II. PRACTICAL ADMONITION: (Mark. 5:19)

1. Christ had been asked to leave and now could not stay.
2. Christ had use for him; he could help. He could see many prepared for the Savior. They would come to know Christ because of his ministry.
3. He must GO HOME, and TELL what great things Christ had done for him. Others would be invited to thus believe and receive Christ as theirs.
4. He must go and tell of Christ's great compassion -- His love and His work in him and for him. So we are to go and tell of Christ's great work in us and for us.

A fireman rushes to scene of a blaze, only to find scores of people already there alas, only to observe... not participate.

III. PRACTICAL OUTCOME -- POWERFUL (Mark 5:20)

1. He tells his friends. What a meeting that must have been -- picture it.
2. How could this be the same person in such terrible condition? Could he now be so different? The crowd was probably half believing and half fearful.
3. He told of marvelous love, mercy, salvation, and commended them to Christ.
4. Men marveled as his message was successful.

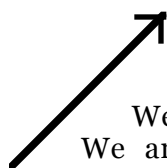
He did as Christ spoke and commanded. Decapolis was a Greek area with 10 cities. The harvest was local -- the conquest for Christ was local.

5. He was sent to those who knew him -- sent to those who would be dramatically impacted by what God had done for him.
6. The people doubtless were moved from being non-receptive to being receptive to the message.

IV. PERSONAL APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES!

A. Please allow me to use a term -- *stairstepping people to Christ*.

1. Stairstepping is using the natural relationships of friendship to influence a friend toward salvation and to Christ.
2. Being a friend and talking about your faith over a period of time -- can take them up the steps closer to Christ, closer, closer, ever closer until they do come to Him.



We share Christ and salvation openly, lovingly confronting!
They see Christ in us, see our love - His love to us!
We are honest about our struggles, open, yet enthusiastic about Christ
We gradually share our testimony in Christ as opportunity is there
We are transparent- friendly with them; they see a difference
They are indifference/ ignorant/ maybe even rebellious

3. You and I can positively influence friends for Christ,
 - without arm-twisting
 - or pressuring them...
 - God would use us -- if we would just DO what this man did.
4. When you stairstep someone to salvation,
 - they move first from a negative rejection to Christ to a neutral position,
 - then they move to a positive belief *about* Christ (mental acceptance)
 - for they must move from a God-rejector position toward acceptance.
 - Lastly, they must move to acceptance of Christ's finished work on the Cross.

B. There are reasons why we do not work at stairstepping people to Christ:

1. Some may be afraid because of bitter hostilities when they tried to witness; such as being cursed.
2. Some may think they would never have results, so why try.
3. Witnessing should be natural -- happens like when **two friends have coffee** together -- the Christian talks about his salvation and shares what Christ means to him.
4. Witnessing ought to take place in the flow of life where we are -- where God has put us!
5. The credibility of the Christian is reinforced because his friend knows what used to defeat him.

6. Even if you don't try to win that friend right then to Christ -- you can move him closer to that decision.

We must build a network -- like a spider's web --

- incorporate your friend into your struggles;
- they need to see Christ in your life;
- they must see genuineness;
- sermons may roll off them or they will not even come to hear one --
- they need to see what grace/conversion means to us;
- Why CHRIST IS REAL!

C. Other reasons why we don't staircase people to Christ!

1. We are so concerned about getting our friends to bow their heads and come to Christ, that we don't *first work to prepare their hearts*.
 - We put the *emphasis upon immediate results*, rather than on the conditions that **will lead** to the results.
 - We so *readily push them* to a decision prior to their being ready for that decision.
 - If our friends **refuse** -- *then we have destroyed the relationship* we had with them because of our pressure.
2. We shy away from trying to witness to our friends because --
 - we think that witnessing is getting them to sign on the bottom line --
 - they are uncomfortable with *our pressing for a decision*, so we don't try at all.
 - Witnessing is sharing our faith with our friends -- but does not necessarily include leading them through the plan of salvation that takes place when they are ready for the decision.
3. Witnessing is putting salt on their tongues -- making them thirsty for Christ and salvation.
 - Making them thirsty for the water of life --
 - hungry for the bread of life.
4. Often we must first win them to ourselves -- first in friendship, then to Christ -- **often it is 3 steps--** to ourselves; to the church, then to Christ.
5. Because friends share with friends -- sharing your faith ought to be a natural thing and this is pre-conversion witnessing. There must be loving confrontation -- but preparation first of their heart.
6. We think evangelism should primarily focus on strangers -- not on our friends.

Your most effective influence is with your friends -- not the stranger. While we ought to witness to many around us. It is the people God places in our lives naturally, daily, to whom we ought to give our witness.
7. The majority of New Testament witnessing centered on witnessing to friends and relatives. **We ought to be motivated by love and not guilt.**
(I Jh 4; Rom. 5:5; II Cor. 5:14; Rom. 10:1; 9:1)