

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

Lesson #12

TEXT: **2 Tim. 2:2**

INTRODUCTION:

- A. GOD WANTS ALL TO HEAR THE GOSPEL(**Mark 16:15-16; Rom 1:16-17**).
- B. BUT WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO REACH PEOPLE TODAY?
- 10,000 people this question asked: "**What was responsible for your coming to Christ and this church?**" Their replies were . . .
 - I had a special need - 3%
 - I just walked in - 3%
 - I liked the minister - 6%
 - I visited there - 1%
 - I liked the Bible classes - 5%
 - I attended a gospel meeting - 0.5%
 - I liked the programs - 3%
 - A FRIEND OR RELATIVE INVITED ME - 79%**
(**The Institute For American Church Growth**).
- C. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM A SURVEY LIKE THIS?
- If churches are to grow, it will be through the efforts of **individual members**.
 - Preachers, programs, classes do help edifying the congregation.
 - Such congregational efforts are needed(**Eph. 4:11-16**).
 - The greatest potential lies with personal contacts of members of the church.
 - Each of us have contact with people who need the gospel of Christ.
 - We need to utilize these contacts as well as meetings, worship, etc.
- D. TWO THINGS NEEDED TO UTILIZE THESE CONTACTS:
- CONCERN** for the lost(**Matt. 9:36-38; Rom 9:1-3; 10:1**).
 - KNOWLEDGE** OF HOW we can increase our opportunities with those with whom we frequently come into contact.
- E. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOW DO WE GO ABOUT REACHING OTHERS.

I. DO THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR A CARING CONGREGATION.

- A. LOVE WILL SHOW WHO WE ARE(**John 13:35**).
- Correct doctrine, organization, worship, etc., is important
 - Our mutual love will convince others that we are truly disciples of Christ!
- B. OUR LOVE MAKES US USEFUL TO THE LORD(**Rev. 3:7-8**).
- C. HERE ARE SOME "ACTION STEPS" TO TAKE..
- Make it a point to get to know ALL the members by name.
 - Get a church directory and begin to place names with faces
 - Try to learn someone new at each service until you know them all
 - Practice "hospitality" towards the members(**1 Pet. 4:8-9**).
 - Invite them into your home, or out to eat .
 - Visit other Christians frequently (esp. the sick, shut-ins, new members, absent members)

II. MAKE A LIST OF THOSE YOU WOULD LIKE SAVED.

- A. THIS MAY NOT SEEM IMPORTANT, BUT IT IS!
- It utilizes a helpful technique used by people successful in all walks of life (i.e., having a "things to do" list).
 - It helps focus on those we hope to reach for the Lord, and not neglect them.
- B. START WITH THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO YOU AND WORK OUT.
- Family
 - Friends
 - Co-workers
 - Neighbors
 - Relatives of fellow church members
 - Regular visitors to the services of the church
 - Casual acquaintances (mailman, clerk, etc.)
- C. LIMIT THIS LIST TO 5 OR 8 (too many will prevent focus efforts effectively).
- D. GIVE PRIORITY TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT "IN A CHURCH."
- Who are not active members of any denomination or particular religion.
 - Active members of a denomination or religion are often very satisfied receptive to the pure and simple gospel of Christ.
- C. KEEP THIS LIST WHERE YOU WILL SEE IT DAILY.
- So you will be constantly reminded of these people.
 - So you will be more likely to do the things mentioned next.

III. PRAY FOR THESE SOULS ON YOUR LIST DAILY.

- A. THAT GOD WILL WORK TOGETHER WITH YOU.
- For "opportunities" to do good for them(**Col. 4:3; 2 Thes 3:1**).
 - For the "wisdom" to make the most of those opportunities(**Eph. 6:19-20**).
- B. THAT THOSE ON YOUR LIST WILL:
- Have the opportunity to hear the truth

2. Have honest hearts to be open and receptive to the truth
- C. REMEMBER, IT IS GOD WHO GIVES THE INCREASE(**1 Cor. 3:5-7**).

IV. DO THINGS WHICH DEMONSTRATE YOUR LOVE.

- A. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUGGESTION.
1. "People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care!"
 2. A demonstration of love will make a person more likely to be receptive to the gospel of love when it is shared!(**1 Pet. 2:12**).
- B. SOME "ACTION STEPS" TO TAKE.
1. Show them hospitality and friendliness.
 2. Be a good neighbor.

V. INVITE THOSE ON YOUR LIST TO ATTEND SERVICES.

- A. REASONS TO WANT THEM ATTENDING SERVICES.
1. They should have an opportunity to see a caring congregation in action.
 2. They will have an opportunity to be presented with the gospel.
- B. AS YOU PREPARE TO INVITE THESE SOULS, BE SURE TO PRAY.
1. Asking for "wisdom" to invite them in the best manner(**Col. 4:2-6**).
 2. Asking for "boldness" to offer the invitation to attend.

VI. DEMONSTRATE LOVE TOWARDS THOSE VISITORS WHO DO ATTEND.

- A. WHETHER INVITED BY YOU, SOMEONE ELSE, OR ARE "WALK-INS"
1. Greet them, let them know they are welcome.
 2. Call or visit them, after they have attended(**Heb. 13:2; Rom. 12:13b**).
- B. DOING THIS, YOU ARE PREPARING THEIR HEARTS FOR THE GOSPEL.
1. For by demonstrating love as a congregation of Christians...
 2. ...they will be more likely to believe in the love of God demonstrated in the life of Christ!(**1 Pet. 2:11-12**).

VII. SEE THAT THEY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR THE GOSPEL.

- A. THIS SHOULD COME AFTER SEEING THE GOSPEL WORK IN OUR LIVES.
1. By our love, hospitality, etc.
 2. Both as individuals and as a congregation.
- B. IF YOU ARE CONFIDENT TEACHING OTHERS, THEN APPROACH THEM YOURSELF. SUGGEST A HOME STUDY OR CORRESPONDENCE COURSE.
- C. IF YOU DO NOT FEEL YOU ARE YET CAPABLE...
1. Bring it to the attention of members who are able and willing to teach.
 2. Provide opportunities for the teacher and the prospect to become better acquainted, and the teacher can take it from there

CONCLUSION:

- A. THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE OFFERED WITH A FIRM BELIEF THAT THEY WILL BE FOLLOWED, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WILL BE GREATLY INCREASED!
- B. THIS APPROACH IS ONE OF THE MOST NATURAL AND SUCCESSFUL IN REACHING THE LOST FOR CHRIST.
1. One doesn't have to be able to teach to be effective in leading others to Christ!
 2. One simply has to be a FRIEND to Christians and to the lost!
- C. IF WE DON'T CONVERT ANYONE WE WILL HAVE FULFILLED OUR OBLIGATION TO TEACH OTHERS AND WE WILL BE BETTER NEIGHBORS AND CHRISTIANS.