



Who Me—A Soul Winner?

By Kurt von Schleicher

Fishin'—It Oughta Happen Without Constraint In And Outside Of The Four Walls!

Have you ever envisioned yourself being used of God in an evangelistic way? Perhaps you've wondered how you could become successful in witnessing for Christ. Maybe you've thought, not me, there's just no way God would choose me. WAY! And here are some thoughts to keep in mind.

There's an old hymn that I just love that goes like this: ***"Lord, lay some soul upon my heart and love that soul through me; and may I humbly do my part to win that soul to Thee."***

Is that what you want? Jesus lovingly commanded His disciples, ***"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"*** (Matt. 4:19). Are you His disciple today? You can be. But what are the implications of His words here? It's this... if we are really *following the Lord, then we'll be fishing* for people (a.k.a. soul-winning) and doing that for the purpose of glorifying God and seeing Him use us to win them to righteousness. The topic of Jesus' last words should be one of our first concerns among all concerns. They were, ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"*** (Matt. 28:19). That is dealing with personal evangelism plus further friendship building.

The Christians in the New Testament sought the Lord daily, they lived the life by the Spirit's power and they went everywhere, preaching the Word to see people repent and believe (Acts 8:4).

1. Ask God to give you a deep supernatural heart-felt concern for others that will move you with evangelistic passion. Ask Jesus to give you His sight and perspective. Request of him in prayer, to help you see the people in the world just like He sees them, and to lay upon your heart a burden for at least a handful of people for whom you can earnestly pray and speak to. Pray over those people by name every day. Keep a little prayer list if you need to, and pour out your heart to God asking for an opportunity—an open door of utterance where you can reach out to them with the Gospel.

2. Choose to work on the construction crew rather than on the demolition derby relationally—be a bridge-builder rather than a wall mason or grenade-tosser with others. The Lord loves us all the same, but only those who have made reservations in advance through faith in Jesus will be allowed entrance into Heaven. When the Lord shows you people needing Christ, seek to tactfully build a relationship with them. Be a real friend rather than just going after a scalp. You remember how Christ visited the home of Mister Zacchaeus where many other sinners had gotten together. Follow His example. We must never allow lost people or others who are less-than-spiritual Christians to pull us down. A real friend must show themselves friendly and wise. You and I are called to carefully cultivate friendships with those needing Christ. God wants sharp-shooters with his truth rather than reckless machine gunners so to speak. Too many are out there telling mixed crowds that they're going to experience God's wrath and go to hell. Too many are misrepresenting Christ's love. Maybe God has put you in your particular family or school or club or workplace to reach those for whom no one else could reach.

3. If the right door doesn't open naturally, don't bang that one down. Just find another one that God is opening. Pray for opportunities indeed to share the Gospel or your testimony. Sometimes we Christians wait too long, looking for just the perfect situation. Sure we want God's timing to share Christ or to invite someone to church, but don't pass up the people God brings you just because you don't feel "Holy Ghost goose bumps" or see angels ascending and descending upon them. There often comes a point when we must segway on in with the spiritual topic of salvation by grace alone, by faith alone, by Christ alone ... and boldly introduce them to the Person they need most—Christ.

4. Learn the basic Gospel Message. Jesus died in your place... in my place to pay the penalty for our sins, and He rose again from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures so that we each could be forgiven and born again. Ongoing preparation is very important. Be busy seeking, growing and learning truth so you won't have time to go backwards or into sin. Prayerfully memorize the following verses, and practice reciting them to another Christian until you're comfortable sharing them with someone really needing Christ: Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9, 10, 13; 1 John 5:1, 13.

5. Watch for openings to share what the Bible says about Jesus Christ. Learn the Bible so well and all about the Spirit that inspired the human writers to pen it, that you will be able to know what is not of God. Learn essential Christian doctrine for our unity is formed around the essentials and the Bible Christ. Learn in an ongoing way about how cults and other aberrant Christian groups teach contrary to what the Bible clearly teaches. Remember to not play Holy Spirit trying to convict the sinner—we don't want to reform sinners so that they will merely switch idols. They need to hang a U-turn to Christ. You want to brag on Jesus the most, rather than on yourself and your good deeds; rather than on your wonderful pastor who does good; rather than about your favorite Christian band, or speaker. Magnify Christ! Peter said: ***"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you"*** (1 Peter 3:15).

6. In close contact with Christ; be empowered to live a consistently victorious and holy life before the people. You remember how Jesus said, *"You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"* (Matt. 5:14-16). Are you honest and bonafide or merely a poser? We might make mistakes but we must be authentic and live obedient lives of integrity and genuine faith. It's about close relationship and looking to Christ to meet all your needs and you help others discover that their needs can be fully met in Him too. We must love when others hate, and forgive when others are indifferent or harbor grudges. We must remain trusting when others panic, and be people of integrity when all around us are cooking the books. Only Christ was sinless, but we can confess and seek forgiveness when we fall. But we must have a growing, maturing Christian life that others recognize and respect.

7. Leave the results with God. We're responsible for sharing the Gospel in faith, but only God can convert or save an unregenerate soul. Having done your best, commit the rest! There are only two kinds of people in this world—those who have found salvation in Christ and those who are still looking, even if they are looking in all the wrong places. There are only two kinds of sinners—open sinners and closed sinners. I stop telling the closed ones when they tell me to stop showing respect and I tell the open ones the Gospel. Teach them if they are teachable. Tell them if they are open to that! Persuade them if they don't tell you to walk south until your hat floats. Sell them on Christ (free of charge) so to speak and then let God do the rest. And if you ever feel you've botched the job, think of Edward Kimball. He was determined to win his Sunday school class to Christ, including a teenager named Dwight Moody who tended to fall asleep on Sundays. His heart pounding, Kimball entered the store where the young man worked. "I put my hand on his shoulder, and as I leaned over I placed my foot upon a shoebox. I asked him to come to Christ." It didn't seem to go well, and Kimball left thinking he had botched the job. Moody, however, left the store that day a new person and eventually became the most prominent evangelist in America during his generation.

8. Close the deal if it is at all closeable! I hate to use sales terms, but what I mean is this: If the person is ripe for the harvest and willing, then reap them into the Kingdom there on the spot. They and you are not promised to live through today or tomorrow and too much is at stake. Do not try to force or reap unripe fruit so to speak. If their heart is saying no, don't pressure them for a premature yes.