

How to Proclaim the Gospel:

A Guide to Personal Soulwinning

Notes and a Sample Method for Evangelistic Preaching and Personal Work

by

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Preliminary Notes

Do you want to learn how to effectively preach the gospel to people, one-on-one? Then do it! Covenant with God that you will speak to at least one person a day, and unless providentially led otherwise, give tracts and speak to people everywhere (all the people at the bus stop and the people around you on the bus, people on the sidewalk, people in stores, cashiers, and so on). Go house-to-house or participate in similar evangelistic outreaches of your church weekly. Ask God to give you, and others in your church, doors of utterance to proclaim the gospel (Colossians 4:3). Ask Him to give you courage and boldness (Acts 4:13, 29, 31) in bearing the reproach of the cross. Carry tracts with you always, and leave them in magazine racks, bathrooms, restaurants, with bills (paid on time), and so on. Carry a Bible whenever possible. Use good tracts that clearly present the gospel and have your church address on the back.¹

Practice “lifestyle evangelism,” Biblically—evangelize as a lifestyle. Proclaiming the gospel is a necessary part of living a holy life for God (cf. Ezekiel 33:8). If you want intimate fellowship with God, you must witness! The Lord Jesus left Heaven to become a man and even endured the horrors of the cross so that the world could be saved (Luke 19:10, 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-11). He has paid it all—the believer is simply responsible to tell others, which is reasonable service (Romans 12:1) and part of the total surrender to God’s will that the Lord demands of His own. Also, do not give up! It is not your job to miraculously regenerate people, but to accurately convey Christ’s message as His ambassador. Whenever you proclaim the gospel, you are glorifying the Savior,

¹ A variety of tracts and pamphlets are available as Microsoft Word documents for downloading and personalization for individual churches at <http://faithsaves.net/all-content/>.

whether or not anyone is saved. You do not win if someone trusts the Redeemer and lose if nobody does; you win whenever you testify of the Lord, for God gets glory (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)—though, of course, it is a tremendous blessing for someone to come to Christ in repentant faith after you have pointed that person to Him!

Submit to the control of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who empowers you to witness (cf. John 15:5) and who does the convicting. Ask God to open up the hearts of those to whom you witness (Acts 16:14), and ask that you will plainly and boldly speak His words in a way that honors the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:12; Ephesians 6:19-20). While presenting Scripture, pray that the person with whom you are conversing will understand, be convicted, and be saved (cf. Romans 10:1). Witnessing angers Satan greatly; he would have you do practically anything other than present the gospel. You are charging with the battering ram that shatters the gates of Hell; you are wielding the Word of God, that living, piercing sword that cleaves the darkness enwrapping a lost soul to let in the Light (Hebrews 4:12) and overthrows spiritual powers of darkness in high places (Ephesians 6:12), so you can expect the devil to throw some fiery darts your way. Trust in the Lord Jesus, and you will have the victory. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Your motive should be loving service to God and compassion for souls on their way to hell, not a desire for recognition, pride, or a love of contention (cf. Philippians 1:15). Such attitudes are sin. The Lord Jesus yearned for the souls of the lost (Matthew 23:37) and went without food that people might be saved (John 4:31-39). Paul wept over the plight of poor condemned sinners (Acts 20:19-21, 31; Philippians 3:18-19). You, too, should model this godly pattern set forth in the Scriptures. The salvation of sinners is very dear to the heart of the Lord, bringing great joy in heaven (Luke 15:7). If you confess the sin of lacking a heart for the salvation of the lost to the Lord and ask Him to give you such a heart, you can expect an answer to your prayer, as it is clearly God’s will for you to care about lost souls (1 John 5:14). Be controlled by the Spirit, not the flesh, and make sure that if a lost person gets angry with you it is not because you are doing something wrong. Be polite; be “blameless” (Philippians 2:15). Present the gospel in love, keeping in mind the wretched, desperate, horrifying situation in which the poor lost sinner finds himself. Remember that you are an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). Since you are Christ’s representative, while being polite, do not leave out any part of your Sovereign’s message due to fear of a negative response, because of a worldly pragmatism, or for any other reason (Ephesians 6:20; Colossians 4:4). Such practices do not characterize Biblical soulwinning: indeed, it is unloving to ignore sin or pretend that someone who is lost is just fine; such compromises on the gospel are a cruel and wicked misrepresentation of the truth

that result in the unsaved being less likely to repent. You have no right to water down or alter the King's message to the lost one iota. Obviously, the high calling of gospel proclamation also requires a surrendered heart and appropriate outside; if you have an aroma of tobacco or alcohol, or dress immodestly, you are a bad testimony, and Christians must not engage in such vices (or any other vice) in any case. Be filled with the Spirit and the Scriptures, not with sin. If you are a man, you should look like a godly man, and if you are a woman, you should look like a godly woman. Do not do anything that would put a stumbling block in the way of someone getting saved—be modest, neat, and clean. While you do not have to dress in formal attire as you engage in all the daily activities of life, you should remember that, whenever you witness, you act as the messenger of the living God speaking “in Christ's stead” (2 Corinthians 5:20). During those times—hopefully at least weekly—when you specifically go out to evangelize, you ought to dress formally. While it is appropriate to strive to relate well to people (1 Corinthians 9:19-23), your primary goal in your appearance is not to relate, but to represent your Lord as His ambassador. If men representing the temporal governments of this world can wear a suit and a tie, a man representing the Lord of hosts, the eternal, Almighty Sovereign of the universe, can do the same. Whether you are going house to house, engaging in personal evangelistic Bible study with the lost, preaching on the street, in a nursing home, or in a jail, or, dress appropriately for your high service as the messenger of the Holy One of Israel.

Try to present the gospel completely and carefully so that there is no room for misunderstanding. A person can mumble some words to “receive Christ” without understanding salvation and be just as lost as he was before. Remember that the unregenerate have tremendous roadblocks to understanding spiritual matters; indeed, Scripture presents them as spiritually blind, deaf, and dead. What is obvious to the children of God is at best vague and murky to those without Christ. You would do well to generally have the lost person read Scripture passages you turn to himself, and then ask him to explain them, leading him with questions, rather than just telling him what something means. Helping a lost soul think through and consider the Scripture himself is of great benefit.

Furthermore, do not assume someone is saved simply because he claims to be. It is far better to spend some time evangelizing a saved person, who will almost surely be edified because of it, than to take a lost soul at his word and let him burn in everlasting fire. If you ask someone, “Are you 100% sure that when you die you will go to Heaven?” and he responds “Yes,” inquire what that assurance is based upon. For example, does he think that good deeds or baptism are part of salvation? You can also ask, “If you stood before God, and He asked you why He should let you into heaven, what would you say?”

Try also to find out what church (if any) the person is attending. If he frequents an apostate denomination (Roman Catholic, liberal Protestant, Campbellite, etc.), or has no interest in spiritual things and does not go to church, he is probably lost, even if he uses Christian terminology. A Charismatic Catholic, for example, will probably employ Christian expressions. He might say that he “received Christ,” but not mean that he recognized that he was a lost sinner and turned from his corrupt system to trust in the completed sacrifice of the Son of God. On the contrary, he might think that he “receives Christ” when he participates in ceremonies. He “receives Christ” in the Mass, in baptism, in confirmation, and even in mass ecumenical campaigns with evangelicals. An evangelical may know many Christian terms but, instead of trusting in Christ alone, be relying for salvation on the fact that he walked to the front of a building after hearing an “altar call.” Likewise, an Arminian Baptist who believes in salvation by works will probably use Christian terms, as will apostate “Baptists” who believe in baptismal regeneration. Pentecostals who confuse conversion with mystical experiences are also very likely to employ Biblical terms. Additionally, it is wise to avoid becoming sidetracked. This is not to say that if a lost soul has a question, you should ignore it and continue with your explanation as if the query never happened; the Lord Jesus answered people’s questions in the Gospels rather than ignoring them (cf. John 4:19-24). However, you ought to turn the conversation back to the lost sinner’s greatest need, conversion to Christ (cf. John 4:25ff.). The lost do not need to understand all the fine points of the seven seal, bowl, and vial judgments of Revelation, but they do need to understand the gospel. As always, remember to be in prayer and follow God’s leading.

You should likewise be prepared to help those with special needs and adjust your presentation of the gospel to suit the person to whom you are speaking. Those heavily involved in false religions, whether they are Mormons, atheists, or members of the Watchtower society, generally require a different approach than would without a strong commitment to a false religion. The author of this study carries in his vehicle or in a professional-looking bag specific literature for atheists, agnostics, evolutionists, Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed paedobaptists, Muslims, Jews, members of the Watchtower Society, Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, Evangelicals, charismatics, “Jesus only” Pentecostals, annihilationists, homosexuals, baptismal regenerationists, and opponents of eternal security.² He also has in his possession each of the lessons of a seven-part evangelistic

² These resources are available at <http://faithsaves.net/resources-about-salvation/>; <http://faithsaves.net/different-religions/> & <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-studies/>.

Bible study and some careful presentations of the gospel in both English³ and in foreign languages that are found in his area, such as Spanish.⁴ While carrying all these materials may sound overwhelming, they all fit comfortably in one small bag. Since the Spirit uses as His Sword the specific texts that deal with the false beliefs of various individuals,⁵ it is wise to be prepared with resources designed for people with specific spiritual needs, whether one employs the particular pamphlets and studies mentioned above or not. Physical doctors do not prescribe the same way treatment plan to every patient that comes to them, and the Lord Jesus, that blessed spiritual Physician, did not deal with every lost person the same way but gave each one exactly what he needed to hear (cf. Matthew 19:16-22; John 3:1-21; 4:5-30). Similarly, while having a standard piece of gospel literature and a standard method through which you explain the gospel is good, you ought be ready to tailor your vocal and written preaching to the specific needs of those with whom you come in contact. To do so is to love one's neighbor as himself. If you were a Muslim, or a secular humanist, or a Mormon, or a Buddhist, would you want a soulwinner to come to your house prepared to minister to you specifically, and with gospel literature designed to deal with your specific spiritual strongholds, or would you want someone to come who is both ignorant of your religious system and unable to effectively evangelize you, equipped with nothing but one tract that, because of your background, you could not even understand—so leaving you to perish eternally in your unbelief? If the Lord Jesus administered His spiritual physic in a manner tailored to those with whom He interacted, Christ's servants ought to follow their Master and do likewise.

A Sample Gospel Presentation:

³ For example, Jonathan Edwards's *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* powerfully presents the negative side of the gospel's warning of deserved judgment, while William Reid's *The Blood of Jesus* clearly explains the positive side of the work of Christ and the necessity of faith in him. Charles Spurgeon's *All of Grace* is another wonderful work for the seeking sinner. Copies of these compositions can be downloaded and printed at <http://faithsaves.net/soteriology/> and <http://faithsaves.net/sinners-in-the-hands-of-an-angry-God/> or acquired through ministries such as <http://www.lvbaptist.org/book-heaven/> or <http://www.chapellibrary.org/literature/>. (Note: while Chapel Library reproduces these pamphlets and many other worthwhile resources, as they are TULIP Calvinists and a Bible church, their doctrinal system is in important areas unbiblical.)

⁴ See <http://faithsaves.net/other-languages/>. The pamphlet "Ultimate Questions," by John Blanchard, is available in quite a number of languages other than English (see <http://epbooks.org>). See also <http://chapellibrary.org/literature/other-languages> & <http://gospeltranslations.org>. (Note: while much foreign language material, including gospel literature, is found on these websites, a great deal is also found that promotes unsound doctrine; the unsaved should not be sent to browse such sites, but discerning believers in strong Baptist churches can evaluate, in conjunction with their church leadership, what foreign language resources are useful and acceptable for use in ministry in their local churches.)

⁵ See "Evangelizing Biblically: Spiritual Warfare and the Skilled Use of the Sword," by Kent Brandenburg, at <http://faithsaves.net/ecclesiology/>.

Introduction

The presentation below is fitted for use in a house-to-house evangelistic encounter. Nevertheless, it is easily applied to other evangelistic settings, from speaking to strangers who have received tracts on a street corner, to fellow-travelers on a bus or airplane, to interested co-workers or neighbors, to those who seek counsel after hearing preaching in church services. One who truly practices evangelism as a lifestyle will grow skilled in employing and personalizing his standard approach in many different settings.⁶

Upon someone answering your knock at his door, smile, say your name, the name of your soulwinning partner, and your church's name. Then offer the person a gospel tract. You might say something like this: "Hi! My name is X, this is my friend Y, and we are from ZZZ Baptist Church." Then, immediately offering the person a tract, say, "This tract explains what the Bible says about how you can have know God and have eternal life."⁷ Introducing yourself immediately and stating what church you represent is a good way to begin, since Christians should be able to say of themselves the truth of 2 Corinthians 4:2: "[We] have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Unlike cults, true churches do not seek to hide their beliefs from people. They differ from, for example, Mormon missionaries who act as if they are monotheistic Trinitarians, worshippers of the holy Christian God, when their religion actually teaches that legions of father and mother gods and goddesses spend their days in carnal relations to populate new planets. They are also unlike Seventh-Day Adventist proselytizers who employ "prophecy seminars" to indoctrinate people in Adventist theology and the ideas of their "inspired" woman preacher, Ellen White, while concealing their cultic affiliation. Indeed, Biblical Christians have nothing to hide, but rather ought to be direct, bold, and clear.

In offering a tract right away and mentioning something about knowing God and receiving eternal life, you provide a clear reason for your knocking on that door. If the Lord providentially guides, you may, of course, speak about a shared common interest in something else. Often, however, people have other things to do than talk to total strangers

⁶ Note the "how-to" video using this soulwinning presentation at <http://faithsaves.net/evangelism-video-proclaim-gospel/>.

⁷ An alternative but excellent and Biblically sound method of opening a gospel conversation is set forth in "A Door to Door Evangelism Encounter," Pastor Kent Brandenburg (<http://kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com/2014/12/a-door-to-door-evangelism-encounter.html>). Pastor Brandenburg's explanation of and Scriptural justification for his method is worthy of a soulwinner's careful consideration.

at their door, so it is often wise to directly state your purpose for coming. Saying “this tract explains what the Bible says about how you can know God and have eternal life” or “how you can know for sure your sins are forgiven” or something of that nature is better than saying “This tells you a little bit about our church; we are here to invite you to church.” For many reasons, it is generally better not to say, “We are here to invite you to church.” First, inviting people to church is not the Great Commission. Christ commanded, “Go . . . preach the gospel,” not “Go . . . invite people to attend church services.” Second, your main purpose is not to invite the lost to come to the church house, but to invite them to Christ, since that is precisely what the Lord commissioned His congregations to do. Third, you are less likely to be able to preach the gospel if you state that your purpose is to invite people to church, making the focus your church, not the gospel. The lost person can then say “I already go to church” and close the conversation at that point, without giving you the chance to present any truth from Scripture. He may slam his door in your face no matter what you say, but you are probably more likely to receive that reaction if you make your church the initial and principal issue. If you bring up eternal life instead, you have something to begin to talk about. (One other advantage of offering a tract immediately is that you are able to get the gospel into the lost man’s hand right away. Even if he does not have time to talk right then, he now has something in his possession that explains the way of life.

Having offered him the gospel tract, two responses are possible: receiving or refusing it. People will often take a tract presented immediately. Assuming that the soul has taken the tract, it is important to discover where he is spiritually; otherwise your presentation may well be off track. As discussed above, a Catholic needs a differently directed presentation than a Mormon, or a Jew, or an unsaved evangelical, or a Muslim. Ask, “Do you have any kind of religious beliefs?” You may also ask, “Do you go to church anywhere?” The first question is often preferable, as you can get more information; of course, you can ask both. The person will then give you some details: “Yes, I go to St. James Lutheran church,” or “No—I believe in God, but that is about it” or “I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” You now have some information that can help you to figure out just what your contact is likely to believe spiritually. You can also observe the person’s clothing, house, and so on. You have discovered something important if, for example, you notice that the soul is dressed in rags and is holding a beer can, or is wearing a big crucifix. Similarly, you have noted something important if you observe a woman inside of the same age as the man at the door, a woman who obviously also lives there, but neither of the two are wearing wedding rings. You are trying to be a careful spiritual physician of the sin-sick soul you have called upon.

Having asked, “Do you have any kind of religious beliefs?” you should also ask, if the person is in the realm of Christendom (and often, but not always, for those outside Christendom also), “How do you think a person can have his sins forgiven and go to heaven?” Or, alternatively, “If you were to stand before God, and He were to ask you, ‘Why should I let you into heaven?’ What would you say?” Along with a question of this nature, you can offer the soul a few of the commonly given answers. You can ask, “How do you think we can have our sins are forgiven? Do you think it is by being a good person, by keeping the Ten Commandments, by baptism, by faith alone, by confessing our sins every day, by all of the above together, or by something else?” His responses are very important. As needed, ask follow up questions to make certain that you understand what the lost person believes. You should also be aware of the typical doctrinal errors and heresies in his religion without his having to specify them.

Do not fear that finding out what the lost person believes is too time consuming. Nor, as you go through the gospel in the manner set forth below, should you be extremely concerned, in most situations, about not having time to finish the presentation in one sitting (cf. Acts 13:42). Clarity of understanding is essential; finishing your presentation in a short time frame is not. The lost are commanded to “strive to enter” into the kingdom (Luke 13:24)—if they are not willing to seek the Lord or strive enough to even listen to the gospel, they will not be saved. After listening to and discovering where the lost are spiritually, you can take the time to help them understand and, by God’s grace, be persuaded of the truth (Acts 18:4; 19:8; 28:23). What is more, you have given the soul a sound gospel tract that plainly explains what he needs to know to be saved. If he needs to leave before you finish but he is truly ready to be converted, he can read the tract and turn to the Lord even before you return to finish explaining the way of life. Lastly, you are aiming to establish an evangelistic Bible study,⁸ not only to give the gospel at the door alone. Someone unwilling even to allow you to discover where he is spiritually will not be willing to complete a Bible study. The “sword of the Spirit . . . is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17), the particular words and particular passages that deal specifically with the spiritual errors held by the lost individual. You cannot properly do the work of reconciliation, or properly apply the Word to the lost, unless you know what they believe and what things are keeping them from Christ. Use the Word, the Spirit’s sword, to pierce their hearts (Acts 2:37) by dealing with their specific needs. You cannot break up the

⁸ See, for example, the evangelistic Bible studies at <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-studies/>. The Biblical basis for doing evangelistic Bible studies with the lost, and a great deal of other exegesis that relates to evangelistic methodology, is set forth in “The Biblical Mandate for House to House Evangelism” at <http://faithsaves.net/Biblical-mandate-house-to-house-evangelism/>.

fallow ground properly (Jeremiah 4:3-4) without knowing where the hard and packed areas are that need to be plowed and broken up.

Both after you have found out what the lost person believes, and in the process of obtaining this information, you should agree with the contact when possible. If he says he goes to church, you can say, “Well, the Bible does talk about going to church.” If the soul says he says he is a Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc., you can say something like, “So you believe in the Bible, right?” and then, when he agrees (as he very frequently will), you can say, “That is good!” You want to identify with and commend the sinner when you can; it is Biblical (Acts 22:3). However, you should never say, “I’m not trying to take you away from your church.” By so saying, you renounce the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus. You want the lost person to repent and believe, then be baptized, join, and faithfully serve God in your church, while beginning to make disciples himself and so repeat the process (Matthew 28:18-20). Thus, you not only want to take him away from his church, but you want him to reach the point where he is also himself actively seeking to take others away from it. If he is not willing to forsake his false religion, he is not ready to repent in any case (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1). If you say that you are not trying to take him from his church, you either have a faulty understanding of Christ’s Commission to His church or you are not being honest. Neither of those options will make it more likely for the Holy Ghost to miraculously work in renewing the lost sinner to repentance through the Word you are presenting.

Having determined what he believes, and agreed with him if it is possible, you should ask something like, “Can I show you what the Bible says about this subject?” or “Can I show you some verses that deal with this matter of how our sins are forgiven?” If he says no, you will not be able to go much further, probably—there are some things you ought to do, including warning him that he is making a terrible decision (Ezekiel 3:18-19; Matthew 3:7; Acts 20:31; Colossians 1:28), but they will not be examined further here. If he says yes, you can go on to the actual preaching of the gospel. It may be appropriate, if the contact gives you permission to open the Scriptures and explain the gospel to him, to say something like: “I want to be thorough with this to be sure you understand it. Explaining the Bible’s teaching on this may take some time—is it a good time for me to explain this to you now?” Taking up lots of his time without his permission is rude, and if he really wants to know but does not have time right then you can set up an appointment to explain the gospel later. If he says he has, say, only twenty minutes, you can give him an abbreviated presentation. Asking him for permission to open the Scriptures with him and asking him for permission to take up his time may not be good high-pressure salesmanship, but you are Christ’s representative, not a huckster trying to manipulate people into a certain

course of action. Of course, you should make it clear that what you have come to explain to him is extremely important and urgent—asking him for permission before opening the Scriptures with him does not by any means indicate that you are to give him the idea that the message you are bringing is unimportant or that it is a matter of indifference if he hears it now, later, or not at all. On the contrary, you have the most important message in the universe, sent, by your mouth, from the very Creator and King of that universe. Consequently, you must properly represent His righteous and truthful character by evangelizing Biblically and not employing worldly and manipulative salesmanship.

The gospel presentation below is keyed to someone who possesses a standard works-salvation mindset; he believes keeping the Ten Commandments, living a good life, and perhaps other acts of righteousness (potentially mixed with “faith” in God as well) will bring him salvation. He has told you that this is his way of getting to heaven, and has given you permission to show him what the Bible teaches on the subject. You would do well to have all the verses discussed in the presentation below memorized. It would not take that long to do, and you can then go on to memorize key passages for dealing with various specific false religions.⁹ However, until you memorize these texts, if you write the reference to follow after the one that comes before it in the margin of your Bible, you can begin to use this presentation without first committing it all to memory. All you need to do is remember, or in some other way mark in your Bible, that the first verse to use is Galatians 3:10. Then write down Matthew 5:48 by Galatians 3:10, then Matthew 5:21-22; 27-28 by Matthew 5:48, or Romans 3:10-12; 23 by the verses before it, and so on. In such a manner you can cover the whole presentation without having first memorized all of it. Of course, as you gain practice and skill in preaching the gospel, you will naturally get better and better at explaining these passages and remembering where other relevant references are. Also, you would do well to carry with you a complete Bible rather than lacking three-fourths of Scripture by carrying only a New Testament. Have you ever tried to evangelize a Jew with only a New Testament? Besides, who goes to war leaving three-fourths of his offensive weaponry behind (cf. Ephesians 6:17)?

Point #1 in giving the gospel: *Show him his violation of God’s Law—his sin.*

When Jesus Christ spoke to a man who considered himself good, the Lord set before him the law for the purpose of convicting him of his sin. The man needed to see

⁹ The verses in gospel tracts such as “Do You Know You Have Eternal Life?” (<http://faithsaves.net/salvation/>) and the pamphlets for various false religions at <http://faithsaves.net/different-religions/> provide examples of sources for evangelistic passages to memorize.

that only God was good and therefore he was sinful (Matthew 19:17-20). While it is not wrong to immediately use verses that contradict works salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:5) with someone who thinks he is good and will be saved on that basis, if you instead first show the sinner how, based on his own standard, he is lost, his interest is more likely to stirred, and he is more likely to come to feel his need for the blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. Galatians 3:24 reminds us that the “law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ.” If the soul says “salvation is by works,” and you say, “no, it is by faith,” and give him a verse on this, he may just say, “Oh, OK,” and now agree with you intellectually, but have no comprehension of his spiritual need because he was not convicted of his lost estate. Therefore, a good verse to begin with for someone who says he will be saved by obedience or goodness is Galatians 3:10: *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

As already noted above, it is good to give your Bible to the sinner and have him read the verses for himself, rather than reading the verses for him. If you simply read the passages out loud to him, his mind is more likely to blank out, which is what Satan wants (Mark 4:15). Ask him to read the texts to you, preferably out loud. This helps you understand if he comprehends what he is reading. If he cannot pronounce the words, or if you can tell that he can barely read—as is the more common the lower the income of the area in which you are preaching the gospel—you need to know, and the sooner the better. However, if he does not want to read out loud, do not insist that he do so. After he reads verses, you would do well not to simply tell him what they mean, but ask questions, so that he recognizes what they teach for himself. Ask, after showing him Galatians 3:10, “According to this verse, if we are ‘of the works of the law,’ if we are trying to be saved by doing good works, by keeping the Ten Commandments, etc. (repeat whatever the sinner said about how he thinks salvation can be achieved), what does the verse say we are?” The answer is “cursed.” (It is very possible that the prospect will not know the answer when you ask the question, and will have to read the verse again—that is fine, for he will pay attention the second time and try to figure it out.) Lead him to recognize that he is cursed if he is “of the works of the law,” that is, trying to achieve salvation by means of the law. Once he recognizes that those who are of the law are cursed, say something like, “That’s right! Now isn’t that the opposite of what we would tend to think? We would tend to think that someone who is trying to achieve salvation by keeping God’s law is blessed, but the verse says he is cursed. Why does the verse say he is cursed?” He may or may not be able to figure this question out; it is more difficult. If he cannot figure it out, lead him to understand, or simply tell him, the reason given: those “of the law” are cursed, “for”

(because), “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Explain to him the reason for the curse: “If you want to be saved by keeping God’s law, you have to have kept it perfectly your entire life! The law says you are cursed unless you *continue*, that is, unless you continually obey, *all things*, every single thing, in the book of the law. If you want to be saved by keeping God’s law, you must have never told a lie, never complained, never missed church, always honored your parents, perfectly obeyed the Bible, and never done any sin of any kind even once in your whole life. Unless you have perfectly obeyed every single thing in the Bible your entire life, you are cursed, according to God’s law!” At this point, the sinner should have an understanding of Galatians 3:10, and, by God’s grace, he should now have a sound recognition of his sin problem. Such a recognition is likely to be used of the Lord to bring him to a point of spiritual conviction and some interest—for now he sees that his merit will never bring him to heaven.

Matthew 5:48 is a good verse to back up your explanation of Galatians 3:10: *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* This Scripture sets up the “ruler” by which God will judge mankind. When people convince themselves that they can be saved by works, they do it by comparing themselves to others around them. They have to see that they will be compared to God, not to their neighbors. When contrasted with the absolute purity of Jehovah, who is a “consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29), man wakes up to his sinfulness. (If necessary, you can use 1 John 3:4 to define and explain what *sin* is. Sin is any nonconformity to God’s character in act or nature. It can be explained this way: “Sin is either not doing what God says to do, doing what He says not to do, or not being what He says to be.”) The sinner should now see that God’s standard for him is sinless perfection, and anything less than Divine purity leaves him under the curse, even as James 2:10 states: *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

You can illustrate James 2:10 with a broken window; whether it is broken only in one place or shattered in multiple places, it is still broken. So it is with God’s law—even one failure to perfectly obey it makes one fall short of His standard of sinless perfection and makes one worthy of God’s curse. At this point, you can begin to give the individual a few specific examples of sins, preferably ones that he has almost certainly committed, to bring him under deeper conviction. Scripturally, if you can tell that the soul is guilty of a particular sin, it is usually a good idea to mention that one. If he is to get saved, he is going to need to turn from that sin, and a Biblical evangelistic methodology points out specific sins of the lost (John 4:18; Matthew 19:21-22; Acts 17:22), rather than specifically leaving them out for fear of offending them. Your goal in explaining the sins of the lost is to use

the sword of the Spirit to prick them to the heart (Acts 2:37); when this is done, they will be convicted, and they will either respond positively and desire salvation (Acts 2:41) or respond negatively and at times become angry, even extremely angry (Acts 5:33; 7:54). Empowered by the Spirit as He uses the Word you give them, an effective presentation of the gospel will not leave the listener unmoved (Acts 26:25, 28). If the lost are always unaffected, you are not doing a good job explaining the gospel. You want them to be saved or to be convicted, recognizing their need to come to Christ. If some become angry and hardened as a result of what you have shown them from the Bible (note—because of the truth you show them from the Bible, not because you were personally carnal and offensive), you have not done anything wrong.

A variety of specific sins can help the prospect see his wickedness and his need for redemption. Going through the entire Ten Commandments and showing the soul that he has broken all of them is an effective means of allowing God's Spirit to convict him of "sin, righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:8).¹⁰ You can also point out a few of the commandments he has broken.¹¹ Matthew 5 contains two easy-to-use and convicting references to the Ten Commandments. You can first employ 5:21-22: *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

Before having the sinner read these verses, you can ask him, "What do you think would be an example of a really bad sin?" Very frequently people will say "murder." Murder is one of the few things still considered wrong in American culture (at least as long as it is not of a preborn baby or an old and sick person), and, of course, murder is indeed a terrible crime, even if it is not Biblically the worst sin. You can then ask, "Do you think murderers deserve to go to hell?" The usual answer is, "Yes." Showing Matthew 5:21-22 to the individual at that point is especially effective. You should explain that Jesus compared unjust anger (v. 22) to murder (v. 21)—note the parallel "shall be in danger of the judgment" with "whosoever shall kill" and with "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause." After pointing out that unjust anger is murder, you can tell him that

¹⁰ See, e. g., the use of the Ten Commandments in Bible Study #3, "What Does God Want From Me?" at <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-studies/>.

¹¹ See "The Good Person Test" (<http://www.goodpersonstest.com>) and the "What Standard?" video (<http://whatstandard.com/>) for examples of using the Ten Commandments to lead people to see their sinfulness.

“Raca” was a term of contempt, an insult—so one has murdered in his heart whenever he offers an insult out of anger. Similarly, calling someone a “fool” in anger makes one in danger of hell fire, for it makes one a murderer at heart. The only just cause of anger is righteous indignation at sin (Mark 3:5). If someone blasphemes God, or is engaging in an act of rape or murder in front of you, anger at his sin is justifiable, but any other cause of anger is murder in the heart. Thus, over 99% of anger in the world is sinful. If a man gets really angry because of something someone did to him, but he would not care nearly as much if this action were done to someone else, his anger is unquestionably sinful and murderous. After explaining the text, ask the sinner, “Have you ever gotten angry for an unjust cause? Have you ever gotten angry and been wrong to do so?” The great majority of people will confess to having insulted someone or having unjustly gotten angry. Then ask, “According to the Lord Jesus, are you a murderer in your heart?” You should lead the person to admit this fact. If he said, before you showed him Matthew 5:21-22, that murderers deserve to go to hell, you should ask him, “If you are a murderer, according to the Lord Jesus, then where do you deserve to go for your sin?” He should admit that he deserves to go to hell. If he says something like, “I do not get angry in this way very often,” you can ask, “How many people does someone need to kill to be a murderer?” The soul will admit, “Only one.” Then ask, “How many times do you have to get angry unjustly before you are a murderer in heart?” Likewise, the answer is, “Only one.” It is possible that he will not want to admit it—who wants to admit to being a murderer? If he fights against the admission, it is a good indication that you need to give him more examples of sins he has committed; he is not yet awakened to and broken by his sinful condition.

Another convicting passage immediately follows the one just cited above: *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* (Matthew 5:27-28). This passage is fairly self-explanatory. You can simply ask the soul, “Have you ever had a lustful thought?”¹² and, since just about everyone will say “yes,” you can then ask, “So what does the Lord Jesus say you are?” You have now gotten the person to admit that he is a murderer and an adulterer. Another passage that can be useful (this passage will be used later in point #2 of the gospel below) is Revelation 21:8: *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the*

¹² Especially when witnessing to someone of the opposite sex, however, consider what is seemly and proper in explaining Matthew 5:27-28.

lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. After having the sinner read the verse, ask him, “Have you ever lied?” No honest person will say no. Then ask him, “What have you earned for lying?” The answer, of course, is the lake of fire. If he protests that he does not lie a whole lot, ask a question similar to the one mentioned above about the number of murders to make a man a murderer: “How many times do you have to lie to be a liar?” The answer, of course, is only one. One lie makes a sinner deserve hell.¹³

If the person’s pride prevents him from admitting that he has sinned in these ways, you can refer him to Proverbs 6:16-19: *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.* Ask him if he is proud. (It is hard to say, “No, I am not proud.”) Then ask, “What does God say pride is?” He says pride is something hateful, an abomination. As already noted, the rest of the Ten Commandments can also be used to produce conviction. Romans 1:28-32 also gives a large list of sins, and nobody can be honest and say that he has never committed any of the sins in the list—but v. 32 declares that those who do such things are worthy of spiritual and eternal death. Therefore, the person you are talking to deserves death for his sin. (More on this fact in point #2 of the gospel below.)

You can also ask the soul if he has, every moment of his entire life, loved God with all his heart, soul, mind (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37, Luke 10:27)—which, if he did so, would involve perfect obedience (John 14:15). Since such love is the greatest command, failing to possess such love is the greatest sin. The prospect has, therefore, broken the greatest command of all innumerable times—indeed, he breaks it continually. You can also ask the soul if he loves his enemies as much as himself (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27-37, Romans 12:14). You want him to see that he has broken God’s law, and that his particular sins are very great and very terrible.

Having given your contact a number of sins he has committed, you should go on to explain that sin is a universal problem, using Romans 3:10-12, 23. You could read all of 3:10-23, but vv. 10-12 and 23 are the ones to emphasize at this point: *As it is written,*

¹³ While it is very rarely necessary to mention this fact to a prospect while soulwinning, one ought to be aware that Revelation 21:8 actually speaks of those who practice the sins mentioned in the verse, and thus evidence a lack of the new birth. The passage is not, strictly speaking, a declaration that everyone who has ever in his life lied one time is certain of hell, whether he knows Christ or not, as all who come to the Lord Jesus are forgiven for their lies, and are treated as if they had never sinned, because of the imputed righteousness of their Savior. Furthermore, all the redeemed are transformed by God’s Almighty grace from being characteristic liars and rebels into being characteristically obedient (cf. Revelation 22:14-15; 1 John 3:7-10).

There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Explain each phrase of this passage. You want the soul to apply each of these terms to himself, so that he sees, “*I am not righteous; I do not have spiritual understanding,*” and so on. It is not wrong to say something like, “We are all naturally without any righteousness,” but the Scriptural pattern supports a personal application, so that “*You have no inherent righteousness; you do not seek after God of yourself*” is generally superior. In Acts, evangelistic preaching declared: “*you have sinned, you are guilty*” (cf. Ac 2:23, 36; 3:13-14; 4:10; 5:30; 7:51-53, etc.) far more frequently than “we have sinned and are all guilty.” The Apostolic pattern is best. If you do employ first person plural pronouns instead of second person singular ones in your explanation, you must not say things like “We are all under the wrath of God and are all headed to hell for our sin.” The redeemed are not under the wrath of God, nor are they headed to hell for their sin. As a blood-washed Christian, are you still under God’s wrath and headed to hell? If not, then you ought not confuse a lost person by telling him such a falsehood.

What, then, does Romans 3:10-12, 23 teach? *There is none righteous.* That is, nobody has inherent righteousness before God. *There is none that understandeth.* This clause refers to spiritual understanding of the things of God. Their sin nature prevents the lost from having any spiritual understanding. *There is none that seeketh after God.* Here, you can explain, “You are so bad because of your sin nature that, left to yourself, apart from God’s working in you to draw you to Himself, you would always choose evil instead of that which is good and pleasing to the Lord.” (Compare John 6:44, discussed below.) *They are all gone out of the way.* Explain, “God has His narrow way of righteousness, but you have gone your own way instead.” *They are together become unprofitable.* The lost have nothing in themselves that is inherently valuable to God; in His sight, they are of no spiritual value, and deserve to be cast away, indeed, to be condemned to hell forever. *There is none that doeth good, no not one.* Explain that the lost do not, of themselves, do any spiritual good in God’s sight. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* This verse explains both the soul’s status as a sinner, and the standard God has—His glory. Sin is not simply doing a few “really bad” things. It is everything that falls short of God’s perfect holiness, righteousness, purity, and majesty. It is important for the lost to grasp this alarming fact.

Having shown the sinner that he has transgressed often and grievously, and, as explained earlier in Galatians 3:10, that every one of his sins merits God’s curse, you can go on to show him that his problem is even worse than his innumerable actual sins—as

already touched on in Romans 3:10-12, 23, he has a sin nature, and is totally depraved. Show him Jeremiah 17:9: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* You can illustrate “desperate” wickedness by speaking of someone who is drowning. A drowning man has only one focus—not dying. That is the sole, complete focus of the drowning person. He is not calmly reasoning through things. He does not care about what would seem very important at other times. All his attention is set—intensely, fanatically, and rabidly—upon not drowning. So it is with the heart of unregenerate man. His heart is *desperately* wicked. It is set on wickedness, intensely focused on it, passionately in favor of it. Tell the person that his heart is so wicked that he cannot even understand how bad it is: *who can know it?* This depraved nature is the reason for his many sins. He sins because he is a sinner, because he has had a sin nature from conception (Psalm 51:5; 58:3). Explain to him that not only does every sin he has ever committed place him under God’s curse, but his sin nature is itself enough to merit Divine wrath.

You can then show him Isaiah 64:6: *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* Explain to him that not just his sins, but also his “righteousnesses,” the things he thinks are good, are “like filthy rags” before God. His sin nature, like a poison corrupting his whole nature and tainting all his actions, affects everything he says and does, so that all becomes unacceptable. You can illustrate Isaiah 64:6 by asking him what he would wear if he were to meet the President of the United States. Of course, he would wear his very best clothes. (If you think the prospect is strongly opposed to the President politically, use someone else—ask him, for example, what he would wear for his wedding, or on some other very important occasion). Someone who wore the filthy garments he uses to clean out a dumpster when he went to visit the President would convey a great insult. How much worse, then, is it to try to stand before God in filthy rags? (Later you can compare these rags with the pure white robe of the righteousness of Christ which the saints wear before God, Revelation 7:14.)

Furthermore, explain to him that when Adam sinned, he sinned (Romans 5:12-19; you do not need to go through the whole passage necessarily, or spend much time on it, but you should mention it). By Adam’s *disobedience many were made sinners*, Romans 5:19. Tell him that he deserves God’s curse because of Adam’s sin, because of his sin nature, and because of each and every sin that he has committed. Tell him that when he stands before God to be judged, He will have to give an account for all three of these things, and the only acceptable standard is *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*, Matthew 5:48.

Finally, show him that since his sin nature corrupts everything he does, as someone who is simply “born of the flesh,” he has never truly pleased God his entire life. He may have been moral, and have done a variety of things that are outwardly good, but, notwithstanding, Romans 8:8 states: *they that are in the flesh* [unsaved people, people without the new birth, John 3:5-7] *cannot please God*. Thus, he has never truly pleased God in his whole life. In fact, he is unable to submit to the law of God (Romans 8:7). (Tell him that “enmity” means “the enemy of,” or something similar; do not assume that he knows what Bible words mean.) You can show him John 6:44: *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day*. Explain that (as touched on already) his heart is so wicked that he would not even choose God apart from His enabling grace.

A valuable illustration of the truth of total human depravity and (apart from grace) total inability can be made with an illustration of two plates of food. You can ask the soul, “What is something that you really like to eat?” He will tell you something or other. You can then say, “Let’s say I had two plates of food here. One is your favorite dish—smelling delicious and looking incredibly savory. The other dish was some rotting meat that I had gotten from a garbage can: it was filled with worms, ants, and mold, and smelled nauseating. I then set before you the two plates, the one with the rotting meat and the other with your favorite food, and said, ‘Here—take your pick! Eat whichever one you want!’ Which one would you choose?” The person will reply that he would, of course, select his favorite dish. “Did I have to force you to eat your favorite dish instead of the rotting meat?” you may ask. “Of course not,” he will reply. You can then ask, “Now imagine that you were a worm, or a vulture, or some creature that really loved rotting meat but hated normal human food. Which dish would then appear to be very attractive?” In that case, of course, the rotting meat would be what was considered delicious and attractive. What is the difference? You have a human nature that likes fresh, human food, but the other creature has a nature that makes it like rotting food. The creature’s nature determines what it freely chooses. In a similar way, you can explain, “Your sin nature corrupts your will, so that you can never even truly desire God or choose to obey Him apart from His drawing you and giving you that desire.” That is how bad the desperately wicked heart of man is! (This explanation is also valuable later when you illustrate what happens when someone is born again and receives a new nature, 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

Your goal is that, at the end of the explanation of the first point of the gospel, the Holy Spirit has used the Word of God to bring your prospect to the point where he sees that he is in deep trouble because of his transgressions. He needs to see that he has committed many sins, that he has a sinful nature, and that even the “best” things that he does are not

acceptable to God. He needs to see that God views him as abominable. You want the sinner to be what classical, pre-20th century evangelicalism called being “awakened” or “alarmed.”¹⁴ You want the soul to see that, in the holy God’s sight, he is a horrible person who is very wicked, has committed many wicked acts, has a wicked heart, and is unable to do anything that is truly spiritually good. You want him to “give up”; that is, you want him to come to a specific point where he abandons all his false hopes of salvation by his own merit, by his false religion, and by whatever else he is trusting in and he sees himself as totally helpless and hopeless in himself, utterly lost and unable to do anything spiritually good. He needs to see himself as a wicked and rebellious sinner through-and-through. As the Spirit leads, you can tie into the presentation of information in point #1 of the gospel with information in point #2, which will now be explained. It is essential for the lost man to be brought to see the deep trouble that he is in on account of his sin. Otherwise, while you may bring him to make a shallow decision that is not the new birth, he will never genuinely repent and believe the gospel (Luke 5:31-32).

Point #2 in giving the gospel: *Show him that he deserves and is headed for hell.*

Having brought the soul to see that, in the sight of God, he is a great and horrible sinner who has never truly pleased God in his entire life, you should then bring him to see the penalty his sin deserves—spiritual death and an eternity in hell: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 6:23). Explain that “wages” are what someone earns; you can illustrate this truth by discussing one’s rightful ownership of his paycheck and the injustice of withholding wages that are properly due a worker. “Let’s say that at your job your boss told you, ‘[The person’s name], you are doing a great job here at work. We want you to continue working here forty hours a week. In fact, we want you to work overtime—lots of it. However, we aren’t going to pay you for a while—months, in fact. Also, the wages you have earned already and that are supposed to be on your upcoming paycheck—you aren’t going to get those. We just aren’t going to pay you.’ Would you be fine with that?”

“No, I would not be fine with that at all!” would be his likely response.

“Of course; such an action would be totally unjust,” you might tell him. “You could even go to court and demand your wages, and you would win. You could say, ‘I

¹⁴ See pgs. 122-168 of *Today’s Apostasy: How Decisionism is Destroying our Churches*, by R. L. Hymers & Christopher Cagan (<http://faithsaves.net/soteriology>) for a fine model of personal evangelistic counseling that seeks to bring the lost to spiritual awakening and alarm and then to faith in the great Savior from sin.

earned that pay; it is mine; the company needs to give me my wages!’ and you would be exactly right. In the same way, the ‘wages’ you have earned from God for your sin is spiritual death. You have earned that—it is what you deserve—and since God is not unjust, spiritual, physical, and eternal death are exactly what you have coming to you.” God’s justice requires that He punish sin. What is sin’s just penalty? Death—that is, spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1-3), physical death (Hebrews 9:27), and the second death—the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8). Death is *separation*; spiritual death is separation from God, physical death is the separation of the soul and the body, and the second death is eternal separation from God in conscious torment in hell. Show the sinner Revelation 21:8 (you can use Revelation 20:11-15 or 20:14-15 if you have already employed Revelation 21:8): *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Ask him what the second death is. He should tell you that it is the lake of fire. Explain to him that, because of his sin, he deserves the lake of fire. You can also explain some more about what hell is like;¹⁵ an easy place to turn back to is Revelation 14:10-11, which you can explain without getting into the mark of the beast, something that is very likely to be a distraction at this point, although you should answer questions if asked about it. Mark 9:43-48 is another passage you can use; there the Lord Jesus says that it is better to be horribly maimed and deformed than to be in hell, a place of unquenchable fire.

After explaining hell to the soul, show him that the Bible specifically states that his damnation is just, using Romans 3:8-9. The passage teaches that *damnation is just* for every sinful son of Adam. In v. 8 Paul explains that those who slandered the Apostle by claiming that he taught that people should do evil so that good may come—the enemies of the gospel—deserved to be damned. Then in v. 9 Paul asks if he and his readers at the church of Rome were better than those people who deserve to be damned. His answer? “No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin” (v. 9). Therefore Paul recognized that he himself, and the members of the church at Rome, because they had sinned, were no better in any way than those enemies of the gospel whose damnation was just; the church’s damnation was just, also. Consequently, all people, both saved and unsaved, deserve hell. You can get into the explanation if you wish, or you can simply point out the phrase in v. 9 that affirms that damnation is just.

¹⁵ See, for example, the tract “Prepare for Judgment” or the sermons “Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God” and “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners” at <http://faithsaves.net/do-the-lost-suffer-forever-in-hell/>.

Explain that because of his sin in Adam, his sin nature, and his many individual sins, the Bible teaches that he is worthy of hell.

After explaining how his sins make him deserve hell, ask the person the three following questions: 1.) According to the Bible, do you deserve to go to hell? 2.) If you were to die right now, where would you go? 3.) Do you think God would be fair to send you to hell? The answer should be a clear “yes” to question #1, “hell” to question #2, and “yes” to question #3. If he answers something other than “yes” to question #1, he does not understand points #1 & 2 of the gospel yet. If he says “I’m not sure,” “heaven,” or anything other than “hell” to question #2, he does not yet agree with God about his lost condition; he is not yet ready to receive the positive truths in points #3 & 4 of the gospel below. You can review points #1 & 2 more with additional verses or go to specific texts that show that all without the new birth are lost (John 3:3).

There may be circumstances where you think it is right to explain the positive side of the gospel despite the contact’s unwillingness to admit his lost condition, but in such a case you should definitely *not* urge him to turn to Christ right then, unless you make it very, very clear that he cannot do so without agreeing with the Lord about his lost, hell-bound, and hell-worthy condition. The Lord Jesus will save only those who are willing to acknowledge they are lost. God warns the lost man, “You are a wicked sinner, you are going to hell, and you deserve it,” and the attitude of repentance is, “Yes, Lord, I am a wicked sinner, I am going to hell, and I richly deserve it!” Someone who does not think he both deserves and is on his way to hell is not yet ready to repent (cf. Luke 19:10; 5:31-32). The necessity of agreeing with God about one’s lost condition explains question #3; soulwinners will probably with some regularity run across sinners who admit that the Bible teaches that they deserve hell, and that they are indeed going there, but they do not think that God would be fair to condemn them. Someone who makes such an affirmation is not truly awakened and is not ready to repent. If the soul agrees that he deserves hell, that he would go there if he were to die, and that God would be fair to send him there, you can explain that God has marvelous news for sinners who see their need in this way, possibly showing him Luke 5:31-32 or Luke 19:10. You can explain that the Lord Jesus did not come to save those who thought they were righteous, but He purchased a glorious salvation for sinners who see their need.

Point #3 in giving the gospel: *Show him the substitutionary work of Christ.*

Whether or not you specifically showed the contact Luke 19:10 or 5:31-32, you can explain that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).

Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:21: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Explain that the first “he” is God the Father, and the “him” is Jesus Christ, God the Son. At this point you can mention that the Bible teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, that the one God exists in three distinct, equal, and eternal Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7). The contact cannot be saved if he does not believe in the Trinity, because he follows a false god; eternal life is knowing the Triune God (John 17:3; 8:58; cf. Acts 19:2). This is not to say that the lost need to know all kinds of fancy theological terminology, but they do need to know that the one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In modern post-Christian Western culture, one cannot assume that people have even the most rudimentary knowledge of the Biblical God. In some situations (such as dealing with those with backgrounds in Eastern religion and those who appear to be utterly devoid of any Biblical background whatever) you may even need to explain that there is only one God, and that He is personal, all-powerful, eternal, invisible, good, and so on. If the person listening to the gospel says he is familiar with and believes in the Trinity, then you can go on to explain the saving work of Christ on the cross—spending three minutes or less asking a soul if he knows who God is cannot be a bad use of time, since salvation involves faith in the true God and the true gospel.

If, during your initial questioning of the contact’s religious background, you have found out that he has been influenced by anti-Trinitarian false religions, you will need to explain to him who God is. For example, Mormons sometimes say that they believe in the Trinity, but what they really mean is that their god the father, god the son and god the holy ghost are three different gods among many. Their god the father has a body of flesh and bones and is nothing but a man who became a god like any good Mormon thinks he can. They believe that the word “LORD” in the Old Testament refers to Jesus, and the word “God” refers to the Father, and that they are two different gods (contrast Deuteronomy 4:35, 10:17; 1 Kings 8:60; Psalm 118:27; Isaiah 44:8). When the Watchtower society attempts to “refute” the Trinity, it misrepresents the orthodox position by stating that the Father is the Son, the Son is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the Father (a heresy called modalism, which leads one to conclude that the Father was crucified among other wicked things). Oneness Pentecostals, on the other hand, truly are modalists and they think that Trinitarianism is a belief in three different gods. As opposed to all these false religions, the Bible teaches that the Father is Jehovah (Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 63:16; Ephesians 1:3), the Son is Jehovah (Isaiah 50:1,6; Matthew 3:3 & Isaiah 40:3), and the Holy Spirit is Jehovah (Jeremiah 31:33 & Hebrews 10:15-16; Isaiah 6:1-10 & Acts 28:25-27), but there is only one true God, Jehovah (Matthew 28:19, Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah

44:6). The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in essence, equal in nature, and distinct in Person and role. Adjust your explanation to what the person needs.

After asking him if he knows about the Trinity, proceed to explain 2 Corinthians 5:21. Give a brief narrative of the gospel history. Explain that the Lord Jesus Christ was eternally God the Son, but He became truly Man, so that He now is one Person with two natures. Explain that He lived a sinless life, died on the cross, was buried, and rose bodily from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is going to return again (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Then explain that on the cross the Father placed the sins of the world on His Son, so that Christ died in the sinner's place, instead of him, as his Substitute; that was how the Father made Christ sin for him. Explain that Christ "knew no sin"—He was the only One who perfectly kept the law of God, and who was indeed perfect, as His Father in heaven is perfect. (You can refer back to Matthew 5:48, which you employed earlier; it works very, very well with 2 Corinthians 5:21). Explain that Christ died in the sinner's place so that he could be "made the righteousness of God in him." What the lost soul needs is perfect, sinless righteousness—he needs the "righteousness of God." God must view him as if he had no personal sins, no sin nature, and no sin in Adam, and as if he had perfectly fulfilled His law. The Lord Jesus died in his place, being able to perfectly represent him because He became truly Man, and being able to suffer in full for and make a sufficient payment for the sins of the world because He is truly God. As the God-Man, Christ can perfectly bring men to the Father. The sinner needs the righteousness of God, and since the Lord Jesus is God, He can give that righteousness to him. (Do not forget that if you are going to use that wonderful Bible term "righteousness," since it is a big word, make sure that the soul knows what you mean—that also goes for all other big Bible words.) Explain: "Remember how Matthew 5:48 said that we need to be perfect? This is how we can be perfect; not by means of our own 'righteousness,' but by having Christ's perfect righteousness given to us." You can use the illustration of a debtor who was in debt billions of dollars. Ask, "Imagine that you were in debt billions of dollars. Could you ever pay off that much debt, even if you worked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?"

The answer, of course, is "No."

"Could you even pay the interest on that much debt?"

"No."

"You're right—your debt would just be growing, every day, by leaps and bounds. That is like your sin debt—you could never pay it off by any 'good' deeds that you might try to do, or in any other way whatsoever—it would just keep growing and growing, more and more. You would have to pay the penalty for getting into that much debt, and you would never be able to get free. Now imagine that you were friends with the richest man in

the world. Let's say that he had vastly more money than your debt. Let's say that he paid off every cent that you owed and then signed some papers to switch bank accounts with you, so that now you not only were totally free from debt—since he became liable for it all—but also had all of his wealth instead. Could creditors keep hounding you to pay your debt? Would you still be liable to pay, if he paid it for you and gave you all his riches?"

The answer, of course, is "No."

You can explain that this is like what the Lord Jesus did; His death and shed blood is a perfect payment, sufficient for all of the soul's sin, and able to account him perfectly righteous in the sight of God. You can show him Hebrews 10:14: *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* Explain that by Christ's one offering those that belong to Him are made "perfect," and are perfect "for ever." (The verse refers to the positional sanctification or state as "set apart" of all the people of God rather than emphasizing the gradual transformation of progressive sanctification. It is probably not necessary to explain the sense of "sanctified" in the verse to a lost person beyond simply stating that the text refers to all Christians, but you ought to know what *sanctification* means in Hebrews 10:14.)

You can quote 1 John 1:7 and Revelation 1:5 at this point also, explaining that the Lord Jesus' blood is able to wash away all of the person's sin. Tie in Revelation 7:14's reference to believers having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" to your earlier explanation of Isaiah 64:6.

"If the Lord Jesus' blood washes your sins away," you can explain, "instead of God seeing you in the filthy rags of your own (non) 'righteousness,' He will see the spotless and pure robe of Christ's righteousness."

There are other passages that you can use, as necessary, such as Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-11; 1 Peter 3:18; or Mark 10:45. Two other illustrations of substitutionary redemption that can be valuable are those of a substitute teacher and that of switching names on a piece of paper.

You can ask, "Did you ever have a substitute teacher when you were in school?"

The individual will almost certainly answer, "Yes."

You can then ask, "Why did the substitute come in?"

You can then lead the lost person to see that the substitute was there in the place of, instead of, or in the room of the normal teacher. The illustration of switching names on a piece of paper will be explained below under point #4 of the gospel.

When you have correctly explained point #3 of the gospel, the sinner will have been brought to the point where he understands that the difference between heaven and hell rests upon whether or not the death and shed blood of Christ is personally applied to his sin debt

and he is accounted righteous by the merit of the Substitute God provided. When he understands this truth, you can go on the fourth point of the gospel.

Point #4 in giving the gospel: *Explain repentance and faith and call on the sinner to come directly to the Lord Jesus.*

Having explained the saving work of Christ, you must clearly show the lost soul how he can personally appropriate that saving work and receive the gospel by repentance and faith. Show him Mark 1:15: *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.* Explain (if you have not already done so) that the word *gospel* means “good news”—that Christ died for his sins, was buried, and rose again, so that he could be saved.

Then ask, “What does the Lord Jesus command in this verse?”

The answer is to “repent” and to “believe the gospel.”

Explain to him that the way he can personally receive the payment Christ made on the cross is by repentance and faith. You can explain here, or when you begin to show him what “faith” is, that one cannot repent without believing, and one cannot believe the gospel without repenting. Then go on to explain to him what repentance is.

I. Repentance

First, you can show the lost person Luke 13:3 and explain that if he does not repent, it is absolutely certain that he will perish in hell. Christ’s warning is unambiguous: *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* You should explain to him that repentance is *turning away from his sins to God, or turning from his own way to submit to God as his Lord.*¹⁶ Whether you specifically use Luke 13:3 or not, you would do well to turn to 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 to illustrate saving repentance: *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* Explain that when the people in this passage received the gospel, they turned from their sins, such as idolatry, and they turned to God, and they did so with the intention of serving Him with their lives and

¹⁶ Exegetical justification for these definitions is found in the study on *repentance* at <http://faithsaves.net/repentance-change-of-mind-change-of-action/> and in Bible Study #5 at <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-studies/>. The study at <http://faithsaves.net/historic-baptist-lordship-salvation-free-grace/> gives a historical perspective.

trusting in His Son, who had risen from the dead and was going to come again. You want the soul to clearly understand that repentance involves a desire to serve God and follow Him, but that saving repentance is not itself a process of serving and following—it is an instantaneous decision to forsake sin and come to Christ that results in a lifestyle of service.

Another very clear verse that you can use is Ezekiel 33:11: *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* God calls on the lost to turn from their sins or suffer eternal death. Mark 8:34-36 gives a good illustration of what saving repentance is: *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*¹⁷ Explain that someone who was carrying a cross in Christ's day was going to a humiliating, public, and shameful death. Repentance involves denying self and being willing to follow Christ as Lord, whether such a decision results in a shameful death or the rejection of any sin short of that ultimate extreme. Repentance results in following Christ (note that the "following" is a product of repentance in this passage—while it is a certain product, it is not the repentance itself). Repentance also involves losing one's life—turning from his own way of living and lifestyle. Those who lose their lives in this way will save their souls and receive eternal life, while those who hold on to their own way of living will lose their life eternally in hell.

Explain that when a sinner repents, he is "born again" (Jn 3:3) and receives a new nature. Show him 2 Corinthians 5:17: *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* Through the new birth, the sinner comes into union with Jesus Christ and his old life and old ways are done away. God gives him a new heart and desires, flipping the "chooser" inside of him so that his will is no longer bent away from God and towards sin. God now makes his will incline towards God, towards holiness, and away from iniquity. Regeneration delivers the new Christian from bondage to sin, so that he receives the blessed promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom 6:14).

You can remind the soul of the illustration employed earlier about choosing delicious food or rotting meat and how one's nature determines which of the two items one

¹⁷ It is exegetically indubitable that Mark 8:34-36 refers to the conversion of the lost. See <http://faithsaves.net/all-believers-disciples/> for evidence.

finds pleasant and which one is freely chosen. Explain that through the new birth God will give him a love and desire for righteousness and an ability to follow the Lord, something that he is currently utterly powerless to do. Sometimes a lost person thinks that he is unable to be saved because he has no strength to give up his sin and to follow God. You can explain, in response to such an objection, that the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit conveys ability to obey. God will enable him to overcome sin if he will come to the Lord Jesus and be saved by Him. Once he is saved, he both can and will do what he could never do in his own strength.

When explaining repentance, it is appropriate (as mentioned above) to bring up specific sins that you know the soul engages in. The Lord Jesus brought up the sins of those He evangelized, whether sins of immorality (John 4:18), sins of coveting wealth (Matthew 19:21-22), or sins of false religion (John 3:10-12). Repentance naturally leads to identification with Christ in baptism and a holy life (Acts 2:38, 41-47). Consequently, Christ and the Apostles explained to the lost the sacrifice and obedience involved in the Christian life so that the unregenerate could count the cost and understand that to which they were committing (Luke 14:35; Acts 2:38; 26:20). Repentance is taking up the cross with the intent to follow Christ; it is turning from sin with the intention of serving God (Mark 8:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Repentance is about the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In fact, clearly telling the lost that they must turn from their sins to trust in Christ as both Lord and Savior is faithful obedience to the Great Commission (cf. Luke 24:47; Mark 16:16), while refusing to do so because it could decrease the number of people who make outward decisions is employing the hidden things of dishonesty and handling the Word of God deceitfully (2 Corinthians 4:2) instead of trusting in the converting power of the Holy Ghost. The idea that one should pass by the specific evils that a lost person practices and finds attractive cannot be Biblically justified in any way. This false teaching appeals to the soulwinner's flesh, as he no longer needs to (as he supposes) say things that could cause a lost man offense. It is also common in unscriptural modern salesmanship teachings¹⁸ disguised and mislabeled as soulwinning helps.¹⁹ However, it is simply and flatly wrong

¹⁸ For a particularly clear and revolting example of salesmanship disguised as soulwinning, see "The Carl Hatch Squeeze," pgs. 13-15 of *Fundamental Baptists and Quick Prayerism*, David Cloud, elec. acc. http://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/fbs_and_quick_prayerism.php.

¹⁹ The extremely confusing error that the lost must not be told to repent of the specific sins they are involved in is proclaimed by, for example, those who adopt Jack Hyles's heresy that the lost do not need to repent of their sins: "There are those who say we have to repent of our sins in order to be saved. No, we have to repent only of the thing that makes us unsaved, and that is unbelief" ("Misunderstood Repentance—An Enemy of Soulwinning," Chapter 4 of *Enemies of Soul-winning*, Jack Hyles). Spiritual wolves such as the late Jack Hyles are consistent when they refuse to tell the lost to turn from evils in which they are engaged. However, those who embrace a true gospel must not follow such diabolical false teaching. The same sort of

and is unfaithfulness to the Lord Jesus. Nor can one say “I’ll just let the Holy Spirit deal with his specific sins; I will speak only in generalities.” Yes, the Holy Spirit must deal with his sins, but God the Spirit uses human messengers—faithful church members who will open their mouths with boldness (Acts 9:27; cf. John 7:26) and speak as they ought to speak in their proclamation of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19-20). If the fact that the Holy Spirit must deal with the lost absolves you of responsibility to name sin and preach repentance, why tell the lost anything at all? Why not say nothing, stay home, and sleep, so that the Holy Spirit can do it all? The fact is that there are no examples anywhere in Scripture of godly preachers or soulwinners who decided to speak in vague generalities instead of convicting specifics, ascribing their vagueness—or, more accurately, their cowardliness—to the Holy Spirit. Only false teachers acted this way (Isaiah 30:10). If you engage in this ungodly practice, God will require at your hand the blood of the lost who never repented and were damned due to your unfaithfulness (Ezekiel 33:8). It is possible that a lost person will repent of his sins without being called upon to do so by one who is explaining the gospel to him; in this way a sinner could be saved despite the grievous omission made by his unfaithful spiritual guide. However, the lost are far more likely to be genuinely converted if both repentance and faith are plainly and clearly explained than if repentance is omitted. Any lost person who does not make a profession of conversion because a faithful soulwinner called upon him to repent of his sins would not have been saved even if an unfaithful convert-seeker had led him to an outward decision by leaving out repentance. The Lord Jesus gloriously saves all of His people not only from the penalty but also from the power of sin, and a lost person who does not want to be freed from his sins does not really want the Savior—he wants to avoid hell but be saved *in* his sin, while the Lord Jesus Christ always saves sinners *from* their sins.

II. Faith

Second, explain to the lost the nature of saving faith. The material in the evangelistic Bible Study *How Do I Receive the Gospel?*²⁰ is very helpful at this point; essentially, one would do well to somewhat condense the material there on saving faith in

error is also adopted by some dispensationalists who follow Lewis Sperry Chafer’s flawed doctrine of salvation: “God’s call to the unsaved is never said to be unto the Lordship of Christ . . . no more important obligation rests on the preacher than that of preaching the Lordship of Christ to Christians exclusively, and the Saviorhood of Christ to those who are unsaved. A suggestion born of this theme is that in all gospel preaching every reference to the life to be lived beyond regeneration should be avoided as far as possible. To attend to this is not a deception nor a withholding of the truth from those to whom it applies” (pgs. 385-388, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, Lewis Sperry Chafer. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993).

²⁰

See <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-study-5/> and <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-studies/>.

explaining belief to the lost. Point out John 3:16-18: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Ask, “What does this passage say is your responsibility if you are to receive everlasting life?” Verse 16 supplies the answer; the lost must believe. You can also ask, “Does it say ‘Believe and get baptized,’ or ‘believe and do good works,’ or does it just say ‘believe?’” (Do not be shocked if a lost soul gives a wrong answer here—but if he does, patiently explain to him the correct answer!) Salvation is simply a matter of trusting the Lord Jesus, of fully depending upon the price the risen Lord and Savior paid upon the cross. When one recognizes that He paid for salvation in full on the cross, and trusts His payment to be delivered from the penalty and power of sin, he is instantly saved forever. You can point out the tremendous love involved in the Father’s giving of His Son, since the goodness of God leads men to repentance (Romans 2:4). You can also point out that v. 18 teaches that the very instant one believes on the Lord Jesus, he is immediately not condemned, while all who have not believed are still under condemnation. Clearly, the very moment one believes on Christ, His death and shed blood cleanse the trusting sinner from all his sin. John 5:24 is also very explicit about this reality.

You might then show the soul Ephesians 2:8-9: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.* Here ask the person if people are saved by faith, or by works. You may be astonished that, for many people, salvation by works is so deeply ingrained that they will say, “by works”! If the contact does give such an answer, make him read the passage again until he sees salvation is by faith. You ought to go clause-by-clause through these two verses, explaining them clearly. Explain that *grace* is “undeserved favor,” God’s giving people what they do not deserve. Since grace is undeserved, no one can earn it. Nobody will be in heaven because he went to church every service, gave a million dollars to the poor, tried to obey the golden rule, and so on. Explain that the way one receives the salvation that is based on grace alone is through faith alone. It is *not of yourselves*—nobody is saved because of any good thing he has done, is doing now, or will do in the future. You can point out that truth is a tremendous blessing, because, as you two have discussed earlier (in point #1 above), until one is already saved, he does not have any good works anyway, but even his best deeds are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and nothing he does is truly pleasing to God (Romans 8:8). Salvation, consequently, is *the gift of God*. You

might then ask the sinner if he has ever received a gift, say, on his birthday. Practically everyone will say that he has received one. You can then ask, “How much did you pay for that gift?”

“Nothing.”

“That is right—a person who receives a gift does not pay a penny for it. The person who gives the gift is the one who pays for it in full. Imagine if I said, ‘I am going to give you a fancy new sports car. It is a gift! However, you need to pay me \$150,000.’ Would that be a gift?”

Most people will understand that such a “gift” is no gift at all.

You can then ask, “What if you had to pay just \$10—would it be a gift?”

The answer is still, clearly, “No.” It might be a very good deal for the car, but it would not be a gift, because gifts are totally free to those who receive them.

For the car to truly be a gift, he could not be required to pay a single penny for it. Explain that since salvation is “the gift of God,” it is God who paid for the gift in full when the Lord Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of the world on the cross. Sinners can freely receive the gift without any payment of any kind. Clearly, then, salvation is *not of works*. You can stress this truth again here. Then explain that salvation is free, a gift, not by works, but by God’s grace alone and received through faith alone, so that He alone gets the glory for anyone being saved.

Nobody will be able to *boast* in heaven with a proud attitude of “Well, I’m here because I was SO good. You should have seen all the merit I earned by all the great things I did.”

No, everyone in heaven will know that he deserved nothing more than hell and nothing less than to be eternally redeemed. As you explain Ephesians 2:8-9 and salvation as the “gift of God,” you can also remind the soul of Romans 6:23 and explain the contrast between what the lost receive—earned “wages” that lead them to spiritual and eternal “death,” and the unearned “gift of God”—not the “wages from God,” but the “gift of God”—that brings them “eternal life.”

Remember that while the truths of Ephesians 2:8-9 are very clear to you as a Christian, they are utterly against everything that a lost man is inclined to think. While you may have heard these two verses explained countless times, and explained them yourself to others on innumerable occasions, you must not forget that it is very likely the first time the lost soul has ever heard anything remotely like this truth. Furthermore, not only is it unfamiliar and utterly contrary to what he has likely thought his entire life and been taught by others, but it is also something that he must come to understand with a blinded mind and with deaf ears (how necessary is the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit!).

You cannot have anything like an “I told him once, he ought to get it” attitude—rather, you must remember the terrible spiritual darkness of the soul to whom you are speaking, and, as you are explaining the gospel as a whole, and saving faith in particular, must recognize your inability to bring the soul to the spiritual, supernatural understanding and embrace of Jesus Christ that is essential to saving faith. Recognize your helplessness and trust God to work by His Spirit through the Word as you set forth Christ and call the lost to faith in Him (Romans 10:17). God can miraculously open the eyes of the lost to trust in Christ even as you are going through this fourth point of the gospel. As He commanded the light to shine out of darkness in His creation of the world, He can shine creatively into the dark hearts of the lost, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

You can then tie Ephesians 2:8-9 in to Romans 11:6: *And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.* This verse clearly teaches that, in relation to justification, grace and works are mutually exclusive; salvation is either 100% by God’s grace or 100% by works. Many cults and false religions, from Roman Catholicism to Seventh-Day Adventism, redefine God’s grace as the ability to do works so that one can earn salvation. Similarly, while the Book of Mormon affirms that “it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23), God’s Word teaches that since salvation is by grace, it is not at all based on what men can do.

Reference also Romans 4:1-8 (sometimes you can use only a portion part of this passage, such as 4:4-5): *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.* Romans 4 shows that if one could be justified or declared righteous by works, he would have a cause to glory or boast—but such is not the case, for the Scripture teaches that when one believes, he is accounted righteous (vv. 1-3). Those who work receive their reward by merit—it is owed, not graciously given (v. 4). By contrast, salvation is “to him that worketh not, but believeth.” The lost person cannot believe on Christ unless he entirely stops working to be saved. Those who are working to merit salvation actually do not believe in Christ at all, whatever they may acknowledge in

their heads or lisp with their mouths. By contrast, those who recognize that they are “ungodly” and simply believe on Christ are immediately justified (note the explanation of this key theological term below)—through the instrumentality of faith alone they are accounted righteous through Christ’s righteousness credited to their account (v. 5). The fact that God credits or imputes “righteousness without works” was also taught by King David (vv. 6-8). What conclusion must be drawn from all of this? *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law* (Romans 3:28). You must make clear to the lost person that he must entirely cease from working to earn salvation and simply trust in the Lord Jesus to instantly obtain it. He cannot trust even 1% in what he has done, is doing, or will do in the future; he must trust 100% in what the Lord Jesus has already done.

An illustration employing switching names on a piece of paper is very valuable in illustrating point #3 of the gospel, the substitutionary work of Christ, and also the nature of justification in point #4 of the gospel—you can employ it at this point in your presentation or use it earlier when explaining the cross of Christ. Take a piece of paper and write the lost person’s name on the left side of it. (In most cases, it is better to write his name than just use some generic person, or yourself, because you want him to take this illustration personally, not only think of it as some interesting facts.) Then start asking him questions that relate to the first two points of the gospel, such as “Have you ever sinned?” When he says “yes,” write “sinner” underneath his name. You can then ask him again about some specific sins, such as those he has already admitted he has committed.

“Have you ever told a lie?”

“Yes.”

Then write “liar” down beneath his name.

“Have you ever stolen anything?”

“Yes.”

Then write down “thief” beneath his name. You can then ask about his sinful nature. “Do you have a good heart or an evil heart?”

“An evil heart.” (If he answers this one incorrectly, you have not properly done your job in explaining points #1 and 2!)

Write down “evil heart” beneath his name.

“What are even your best deeds, your ‘righteousnesses,’ like?”

“Filthy rags.”

Write down “Nothing truly righteous at all.”

“Does your sinful heart corrupt everything you have ever done?”

“Yes.”

Write down, “totally corrupt.” After writing down a number of things of this nature, ask him questions that relate to point #2 of the gospel. “Because of your sin, do you deserve the wrath of God?”

“Yes.”

Write down “wrath of God” under his name. “Do you deserve to go to heaven or to hell?”

“Hell.”

Write down “deserves hell.” After reviewing the second point of the gospel and recording the appropriate words on the left side of the paper, draw a line down the middle of the page, and put the name “Jesus Christ” on the right side. Ask questions that relate to points #1 and 2 of the gospel in relation to the Lord Jesus. “Did the Lord Jesus Christ ever sin?”

“No.”

Write down “sinless” on the right side of the paper.

“Did He have a sinful nature or an evil heart?”

“No.”

Write down “pure heart” on the paper.

“Was He perfectly righteous in His thoughts, words, and deeds?”

“Yes.”

Write down “perfectly righteous.”

“Did the Lord Jesus deserve to suffer under the wrath of God, or was the Father pleased with His Son?”

“He was pleased with Him.”

Write down, “perfectly pleasing to God.” “Did the Lord Jesus deserve to go to hell, or did He deserve the glories and blessedness of heaven?”

“Heaven.”

Write down, “deserves eternal glory in heaven.” After asking questions such as these, you will have a very stark contrast set forth on the piece of paper underneath the name of the lost person and underneath the name of the Lord Jesus.

Then cross out the contact’s name and write “Jesus Christ” above it. Explain, “This is what Christ did when He suffered on the cross as your Substitute. He endured the wrath of God as if He were a sinner, taking your sin upon Himself and suffering to pay the penalty that you deserve in hell.” Then cross out the name “Jesus Christ” and write his name (e. g., “Fred,” “John,” etc.) over it. Explain, “Jesus Christ suffered in your place as your Substitute so that you could be treated by the Father as if you were as sinless, righteous, and holy as Christ is. If His blood washes away your sins, God the Father will

treat or account you before His judgment bar as if you were as pure and holy as His very own Son.”

In this manner you can clearly illustrate what Christ accomplished on the cross (substitution) and what will happen if the contact will repent and believe (justification). The illustration is very clear; just be careful that he does not think that he is automatically saved because Christ died without him personally receiving the gospel, and also be generous in your use of judicial and “reckoning” terms so that he does not think that Christ actually became a sinner on the cross, or that justification is inwardly making him holy, rather than judicially treating him as righteous.

If you are dealing with someone who has a background in baptismal regeneration, a good way to quickly demolish that heresy is to point out texts in 1 Corinthians that are absolutely incompatible with salvation by baptism. Paul defines the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, explaining that “the gospel . . . [is that] by which also ye are saved” (vv. 1-2), and those who “received” it “believed” (v. 2). It was “preach[ed], and . . . believed” (v. 11) in “faith” (vv. 14, 17). While faith is mentioned, Paul defines the gospel without any reference to baptism; the ordinance is, therefore, not part of the gospel, and is not a prerequisite to justification. Paul confirms in 1 Corinthians 1:17 what he teaches by omission in 1 Corinthians 15, stating, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (cf. Acts 26, Galatians 1:11-16). He specifically contrasts the gospel, which saves from sin (15:2, cf. 4:15), and baptism, which does not. Paul also thanks God that he did not baptize people (1:14) and does not remember if he baptized others (1:16). How strange these assertions would be if baptism was essential to obtain forgiveness! Furthermore, Paul tells the church at Corinth that “though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). Paul was the one through whom the church had been born again—but he had baptized only a tiny fraction of the membership (1:14-17). In summary, Paul states in 1 Corinthians that the gospel saves (15:2; 4:15). He also excludes baptism from the gospel (15:1-4; 1:17) and informs the members of the Corinthian church that he was the means through which they had been born again, although he had not baptized them (4:15; 1:14-17). Paul also affirms that on the road to Damascus, when he saw the risen Christ (Acts 9), he was “born”²¹ again (1 Corinthians 15:8), although yet unimmersed. Paul’s

²¹ The phrase “born out of due time” translates the Greek *ektroma*. With this word in 1 Corinthians 15:8, “Paul refers to himself, but the event in question is the appearance of Jesus to Paul, evidently on the road to Damascus. The reference, therefore, would seem to be his being born as a Christian[,] [his] spiritual birth” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, eds., New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1989, 2nd ed.).

statements about baptism and the gospel in 1 Corinthians definitively disprove baptismal regeneration. You should be equipped to deal more thoroughly with the doctrine that baptism saves and be able to demonstrate that the passages employed to defend that heresy actually do no such thing.²² While it is important to deal carefully with this Satanic spiritual stronghold if the lost person to whom you are speaking believes it, a simple explanation that baptism does not save is sufficient if the soul has no commitment to baptismal regeneration.

After explaining Romans 4, show the lost soul Galatians 2:21: *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* You can use this verse to explain to the sinner that if he could have obtained righteousness by keeping God's law, then the Lord Jesus would never have needed to die. The very fact that Christ came into this world to suffer on the cross for the sins of mankind shows that salvation by works is impossible. Indeed, trusting in the law to even the smallest extent is to reject the work of Christ, to "frustrate the grace of God" and affirm that "Christ is dead in vain"—it is to teach that what the Son of God did is not good enough, but that sinful men can and must, somehow, add to and improve His supposedly insufficient saving work! Of course, such a thought is blasphemy—bring the sinner to see the terrible but inevitable consequences of placing even a partial confidence in his own works for salvation. Clearly, there is no law of any kind that has ever been given that can give life (Galatians 3:21), so sinners must be saved simply by believing (Galatians 3:22). Second Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:5 are other verses that clearly teach the essential truth that justification is by faith alone apart from works.

Hebrews 11:13 demonstrates that saving faith has three aspects; *knowing the facts, accepting them as true, and trusting or relying on Christ* as offered in the gospel. The verse, speaking of the faith of Old Testament saints, reads: *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* First, justifying faith requires *knowing the facts* ("having seen them"). One cannot place his faith in Christ without first knowing the facts of the gospel. Second, justifying faith involves *accepting the facts as true* ("were persuaded of them"). One may have heard that the Lord Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, and also know that He promised to save all who trust in Him but think Christ's promises an unreliable fable, and the Word of God nothing but error. Such a one does not have saving faith. Furthermore, a person can even

²² See, for example, *Heaven Only for the Baptized? The Gospel of Christ vs. Baptismal Regeneration*, Thomas Ross, elec. acc. <http://faithsaves.net/heaven-only-for-the-baptized-the-gospel-of-christ-vs-baptismal-regeneration/>.

intellectually assent to the propositions of the gospel, like the devils do (James 2:19), without exercising saving faith. Therefore, in addition to knowing the facts and accepting their truth, justifying faith *trusts or relies upon Christ as promised in the gospel* (“embraced them”).

This third aspect is key—many people know the facts of the gospel story, but they never actually transfer their dependence for salvation from their works, or whatever else they are relying on, to trust in or depend upon the Savior for pardon. After knowing and receiving the facts as true, one must actually trust in Christ to be saved. (“Confessed” in Hebrews 11:13 refers to a result of saving faith; compare Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10.) The three aspects of saving faith can be illustrated by a person escaping or being saved from a burning building. You can say something like this:

“Imagine that you were in the top story of a burning building. The lower floors are already engulfed in flame; you cannot escape down the stairs. The situation seems hopeless, and death certain. However, firemen arrive, spread a net, and tell you to jump out a window into the net. They promise you that, if you jump, you will be safe, but if you do not jump, you will surely die. Your escape to safety involves the same three aspects as saving faith. First, you need to know that the firemen are there with the net; if you did not see or hear them, perhaps because you were not by the window, you could not leap to safety. You must *know the facts*. Then you must accept the declaration of the firemen as true; you must be convinced that, upon jumping, the net will not break, although it is such a long way down; that the firemen are not going to pull the net away and let you die; and that unless you jump, you will certainly burn up; you cannot think that, perhaps, some other and better way of escape will come along. You must *accept the facts as true*. However, if you stop there, you will still die. You then must actually trust your life to the firemen and their net by casting yourself out the window; you must *trust or rely* upon them in accordance with their promise. Likewise, saving faith requires that you know and accept the facts, but then you must come to a point where you actually trust in the Lord Jesus Christ; until you trust Him, you are still lost.”

Verses such as 2 Timothy 1:12 explain that saving faith is more than just intellectual assent but involves a confident *trust* in the Redeemer. Paul’s belief involved being “fully persuaded” that God could keep his soul, which he had “committed” into the Lord’s care, until the day the Apostle appeared in God’s presence. Likewise, Romans 4:20-21 indicates that saving faith, the kind through which people receive “imputed . . . righteousness,” involves “being fully persuaded, that what [God] had promised, he was able also to perform.” It is not always necessary to actually turn to these supplemental passages; often simply explaining Hebrews 11:13 is sufficient.

You would do well to show the lost soul that God keeps His people eternally secure once they believe in Him; once they are saved, they are always saved. Explaining this blessed truth when preaching the gospel is valuable because the idea that one is saved by faith, but he loses salvation if he does not do enough good deeds, is really a form of salvation by works. A lost person who entertains this false notion is very likely to be confused about the nature of the gospel. John 10:27-30 is a simple passage to use to

explain eternal security: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.* Explain that believers are compared to God's sheep, and they are forever in His hand. They have "eternal" life, and one cannot have something *eternal* for only a short time. (Note that in Scripture "eternal" and "everlasting" life are synonymous.)

You can then illustrate the concept of "everlasting" life with a household appliance. "If I said I was going to sell you an everlasting refrigerator, and it broke down in half an hour, would it have been everlasting?"

"No."

"If it broke down in an hundred years, would it have been everlasting?"

"No."

"For something to be everlasting, it must go on for ever. God gives His people eternal or everlasting life—from the very moment that they receive it when they believe on Christ, they have *life*, a kind of life that will go on forever and ever. Since God gives believers eternal life at the point of faith, once they are saved, they are always saved, and no true believer can ever lose salvation."

The Christian's security is also seen in the "hand" image of vv. 28-29. Believers are in the hands of Christ and of the Father, and to pluck them out someone would need to be stronger than the Almighty God. Clearly, once one is saved he is always saved. This truth may lead to the question, "But what if someone believes in Christ and then, because he is eternally secure, goes around sinning with all his might, committing murders, adulteries, thefts, and so on?"

In answering this question, you can point out that 10:27 is a promise (not a condition) for all the people or sheep of God, just like 10:28-29. God will work in His people so that they will desire to obey and actually will in practice follow Him. While, sadly, believers can sin and disobey the Lord at times—though when they do they are still eternally secure—nonetheless the promise of v. 27 guarantees that God's sheep will characteristically follow their Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, as God promises to work in His people to will and do right until the day Christ returns for them (Philippians 1:6; 2:13). "They follow me" is just like "I give unto them eternal life" and "they shall never perish"—all three are blessed promises and fruits of the application of the work of Christ to the soul. It is not always necessary to explain in depth the blessed certainty of God's preserving His saints and causing them to persevere when preaching the gospel and touching on the Christian's eternal security—the goal is for the lost soul to clearly

understand the gospel, and that does not require that he comprehend in detail the way that God works to keep His people. Nevertheless, it is generally a very good idea to explain that once one is saved he is always saved—and that this permanent and eternal salvation includes both certain deliverance from hell and certain deliverance from the reigning power of sin. Second Corinthians 5:17, which you explained earlier, can be referenced at this point in regard to the Lord’s transformative power in His saints.

You have been successful in explaining this portion of the gospel when the lost soul clearly understands the nature of saving faith. Once he understands what is involved in repentance and faith, you are ready to call him to entrust himself to Christ. A great passage for this purpose is John 3:14-15, which, of course, is right above the John 3:16-18 text that you have already explained.

III. Come to Christ

Having explained the nature of repentance and faith, call on the lost soul to turn from his sin to trust in the crucified and risen Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:14-15, in conjunction with Numbers 21:5-9, constitute great passages to employ for this purpose; they also provide further helpful information on the nature of saving faith. John 3:14-15 reads: *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* Explain that v. 15 teaches that eternal life is given to everyone who believes, as you have discussed already. Then explain that the analogy in v. 14 was understood immediately by the person to whom Christ was speaking, for he knew the Old Testament well (John 3:1), but the Lord Jesus’ allusion will not be as immediately clear to most people today. You can then state that Christ referred to Numbers 21 and turn to Numbers 21:5-9. Explain that Numbers 21 took place when the children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt and were on their way to the Promised Land. They began to complain (v. 5; (explain that “loatheth” means “detests” or “hates” if the sinner does not know what that word means), and God punished them for their sin by sending snakes to bite them (v. 6). The people then admitted their guilt and acknowledged their need for salvation from the poisonous snakes (v. 7). The salvation God provided is then set forth in vv. 8-9: *And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.* The Israelites who had been bitten and were going to die from the poison in their bodies on account of their sin were instantly

healed physically when they looked at the brass serpent that Moses made and put on a pole. This physical deliverance, Christ affirms in John 3:14-15, pictures saving faith in Him.

Explain the appropriate portion of the following comparisons, taken from the section on saving faith in the evangelistic Bible study²³ covering that topic:

As the Israelites were going to die from the poison in their bodies, which was there because of their sins of complaining and discontent, so we all begin life doomed to suffer spiritual death because of the poison of sin. Just as the Israelites had no remedy for the poison in themselves, but death was certain unless God provided a solution, so spiritual death is certain for the lost man unless God delivers him. The Israelites were not ready for a solution until they saw they were in trouble; so the lost are not ready to be saved until they see their need and are willing to repent. The solution God provided in Moses' day was a brass serpent on a pole, which tells us about Jesus' death on the cross.

The Savior is compared to a serpent, a symbol for sin and evil in the Bible, instead of a lamb or some other animal, because on the cross Christ was "made sin" for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Brass in Scripture often represents judgment, so a brass serpent shows us that the Son of Man endured the wrath and judgment of God for our sins on the cross. For the Israelites in the wilderness to be physically saved, they needed to look at the serpent; so spiritual salvation is by looking to the crucified Savior in faith (Isaiah 45:22; Hebrews 12:2). As healing was immediate upon looking at the serpent, so spiritual salvation is received the very moment one believes in Christ; it is not a process through which one gradually becomes justified or forgiven. The instant the snake-bitten Israelite looked at the brazen serpent, he was completely healed physically; so the moment one looks in faith to the Crucified One, he is perfectly and eternally saved—the poison of sin is completely gone!

Let us imagine that one of the children of Israel had been bitten by a snake, so he said, "I have been bitten! I will go to the tabernacle and offer a sacrifice, and so I will be saved from death." Would he be saved?

No! God told him to look at the serpent for healing. What if he had said, "I have been bitten; I will fervently pray to God for healing, and He will save me." Would he be saved?

No! God told him to look at the serpent, not pray for healing.

What if he said, "I have been bitten; this is because of my sin of complaining; I will try to do better, and sin no more. I will do many good deeds, and so pay for my sins, and God will save me from the snakebite." Would he be saved?

No! God did not promise healing based on doing good deeds, but promised that all who looked at the serpent would be immediately healed. In the same way, many people today do not look to Jesus' death to save them.

Instead of looking in faith to Him, they say, "I will be religious, and so I will be saved," or "I will pray and ask God to forgive me of my sins when I commit them; so I shall be saved," or "I will try to sin no more, but do good; so I shall be saved."

However, all who trust in prayer, religion, good works, or anything other than the blood Jesus shed on the cross, will not be saved—they do not have saving faith, for they are looking to the wrong thing. Saving faith does not look to one's inward spiritual condition, or to good works done in the past or planned in the future. Nor can you look to faith itself for salvation.

²³

Bible Study #5: How Do I Receive the Gospel? at <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-study-5/>.

Faith is not the Savior; it is only the instrument or means through which Christ has promised to save. It is not as if you must have a pint and a half, or two quarts, or three gallons, or some other amount of faith, before Christ's blood will wash away your sins; someone who says, "I do not know if I have a strong enough faith to be saved" is not looking to Jesus, but to faith itself to save him, and is yet unconverted. Nor is the object of faith conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit; while no one will look to Jesus without the work of the Spirit, it is the Christ who died, not the Holy Spirit, that saving faith looks to. The Israelite would not look at the serpent unless he knew he was dying, but if he did no more than stare at the place he was bitten, he would perish. So conviction of sin will precede saving faith, but one does not look to the conviction, but to Christ.

Whether the Israelite was faint from snakebite so that he could barely turn his eyes upon the serpent, or whether he stared strongly at it, the result was the same—perfect healing. So when one looks in faith to Jesus, spiritual salvation comes immediately. Justifying belief looks outside of and away from oneself to Jesus' death, and rests its full confidence upon Him and His saving work. All who look in faith to the crucified Savior are immediately and eternally forgiven of all sin. The Lord commands, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is none else*" (Isaiah 45:22). Look to the Lord Jesus—He died for your sins on the cross! Look to Him—He was the spotless Substitute, who took your place to give you His righteousness! Look to Him—He was buried, and rose again victorious! Look to Him—He sits at the right hand of the Father, and has sworn to immediately save all who trust in Him! Oh sinner, look to Him and live!

Upon properly explaining Numbers 21, the soul will understand his need to look to the crucified Christ in repentant faith to receive instant and perfect salvation from his sin. Indeed, a lost person could, through the mighty working of God's Spirit, even look to Christ in faith and be saved as you explain the picture the Lord Jesus employs in John 3:14-15.

After explaining John 3:14-15, you can summarize the entire presentation you have given. Review the four points of the gospel you have covered above. Explain the following, preferably using second person pronouns so that the soul applies the truth personally to himself:

"1.) You are a terrible sinner who has broken God's Law many times. You also have a wicked and evil heart. Even your 'best' actions are like filthy rags compared to God's standard of sinless perfection. Until you are born again, nothing you have ever done, are doing, or will do in the future is truly pleasing to God. 2.) Because of your sin, you deserve to go to hell. If you were to die right now, that is where you would go, and God would be fair to send you there. 3.) The Lord Jesus Christ died as your Substitute on the cross to fully satisfy the penalty that you owe for your sin. He gave up His life in your place and shed His precious blood, after which He rose again bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven. His payment is sufficient to completely take away your sin and give you a perfect standing before God. 4.) To personally receive the benefit of Christ's death, you must repent—turn from your sins to Him—and believe—trust fully and solely in the Lord Jesus and what He did on the cross to redeem you. You cannot save or even help save yourself, but if you will turn from your sin to entrust yourself to Him, He will save you. He will deliver you from hell, give you eternal life, and give you a new heart and the ability and desire to serve Him."

You should then explain that the soul should immediately trust in Christ as Lord and Savior. Second Corinthians 6:2 states: *For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured [helped] thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* Today, "now," is the only acceptable time to be

saved—waiting is nothing other than spending a longer time in rebellion against God and a longer time in fearful danger of eternal damnation, and only today, if one has the desire to be saved, can he be sure that God will succor or help him. No one will come to Christ without God drawing him (John 6:44), so resisting the conviction and drawing of the Holy Spirit puts one in great danger of God’s giving him over to his own hard heart and rebellion and so leaving him to perish in his sins.

What is more, Scripture states: *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth* (Proverbs 27:1). No one knows if he will be alive tomorrow, and Christ could return at any moment—in either case, it would be too late for a sinner to be saved if he delays coming to Christ right now. You can also remind the sinner of Mark 8:36, which you covered before in your explanation of repentance. Explain to him that nothing is more important than that his soul be saved.

If the soul expresses a desire to be saved, you can tell him that, as soon as you leave, he should find some place where he can be alone and he should there turn from his sins and trust in Christ. You can encourage him with Christ’s promise in John 6:37: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* You can show him Luke 18:13: *And the publican [tax collector], standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* You can explain to him that sometimes prayer helps people come to Christ, and if it helps him to pray, he can do so, confessing his sins and crying out to the Lord Jesus for mercy, seeking Him in prayer until he finds peace by faith. What you must explain, however, is that the key thing is not whether he prays or does not pray, but that he looks in faith to the finished work of Christ on the cross and trusts in Him alone.

Note: It is very important that you do not point him away from directly trusting in Christ to the idea that if he asks to be saved and means it God will save him, for the Bible teaches the former, not the latter. You should not tell him to ask Jesus into his heart, nor should you tell him that if he repeats the “sinner’s prayer” by confessing Christ with his mouth and calling upon him in prayer he will be saved, for those concepts are not taught in Romans 10:9-14; Revelation 3:20; or in any other passage of the Bible.²⁴ You certainly

²⁴ Soulwinners are very highly encouraged to read the studies *Will I Be Saved if I Ask Jesus to Come into my Heart or Repeat the Sinner’s Prayer?* and *An Exegesis and Application of Romans 10:9-14 for Soulwinning Churches and Christians* at <http://faithsaves.net/ask-Jesus-Christ-into-heart-sinners-prayer-saved/> and <http://faithsaves.net/Romans-10-sinners-prayer/>, as well as other resources on evangelistic methodology at <http://faithsaves.net/soteriology/> and <http://faithsaves.net/ecclesiology/>. In modern times evangelistic methods have changed for the worse in vast portions of Christendom. No longer are lost sinners who have come under conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit called to come directly to Christ in faith, enabled by God’s miraculous grace. Instead, seekers are lead to repeat the “sinner’s prayer” and make a merely

should not have him repeat the words of a “sinner’s prayer” after you and then tell him that he is saved, for there is little reason to think that performing such an action will lead him to trust in the Lord Jesus. The Son of God and the first century Christians simply called the lost to repentance and faith; there is not the slightest Biblical authority or example for having the lost repeat prayers after a personal worker and then providing assurance of salvation to those who perform this ritual.

What you can do, instead, is simply encourage the soul to come to Christ immediately—if the Holy Spirit is renewing him to repentance (Hebrews 6:6) through the Word, he will understand what he needs to do and will be enabled to do it without your telling him to repeat a prayer. Since God produces faith through His Word (Romans 10:17; James 1:18), you can also encourage him to read John’s Gospel, as it was written to show sinners how they can have eternal life (John 20:31), and you can give him good literature that clearly explains the gospel in more depth.²⁵

You should also attempt to set up a time to begin an evangelistic Bible study, whether or not the sinner says that he is ready to be saved right then; it is also appropriate to mention the times for your church services and invite the soul to attend church. You should make sure that you have his address, phone number, and other valuable contact information, such as an e-mail. If, next time you see him, he tells you that he has trusted in Christ, you should rejoice at that statement, and tell him what the Lord Jesus said to those who had just believed on Him: *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:31-32). Explain to him that those who have become Christ’s followers or disciples through the new birth will continue in His Word. Proceed to explain the teaching of Scripture on assurance of salvation so that the Holy Spirit can give him assurance as he recalls the promises of God (John 6:47), experiences the witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16), and progressively grows in fellowship with the Lord and manifests the holy life, love for the brethren, and obedience to Scripture that characterize the children of God (1 John). You want the Holy Spirit to give him assurance through His Word, for that will be far more effective than you giving him assurance through your

human decision. The historical development of these extremely negative changes, and methods through which a return to Biblical evangelistic work can take place, are delineated in *Today’s Apostasy: How Decisionism is Destroying our Churches*, R. L. Hymers & Christopher Cagan, and *The Sinner’s Prayer: A Historical and Theological Analysis*, Paul H. Chitwood (both available at <http://faithsaves.net/soteriology>) as well as *Considerations on Revival in American History*, Thomas Ross (<http://faithsaves.net/considerations-revival-american-history/>).

²⁵ For example, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* by Jonathan Edwards; *The Blood of Jesus* by William Reid, and *All of Grace* by Charles Spurgeon (all of which are available at <http://faithsaves.net/resources-about-salvation/>).

words. It is important for Christians to have assurance, for it helps them grow in faith (cf. 1 John 5:13c), so you want those who truly come to Christ to know that they are saved. When the new Christian sins, he should not fear that his salvation is now lost, but should recognize that his heavenly Father still keeps him eternally secure and loves him with all the height of eternal love that led Him to give His Son for him (Romans 8:28-39). The Father's immeasurable love and the accomplished and applied salvation that resulted from it, the "mercies of God," should lead the backsliding Christian to renewed surrender (cf. Romans 1-11; 12:1). Meditation on the personal love of the Triune God for his soul will lead him to brokenly confess his sins—an act that characterizes the people of God (1 John 1:8-10).

At the same time, even the best soulwinners cannot completely avoid false professions (cf. Acts 8:6-13), and those who make false professions ought not to have assurance, but to be warned that they are still lost (cf. Acts 8:14-23). Someone who professes conversion but then refuses to attend church, is never baptized, and never follows Christ should by no means be told that he is a Christian and on his way to heaven (cf. Acts 2:41-47), but rather be warned that those who forsake the assembling of the church and the Christian life should fear "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:25-39; Matthew 24:13).

You should also explain to the soul that he ought to study the Bible and pray daily (2 Timothy 2:15; Matthew 6:9-13), faithfully attend, worship with, and serve in a historic Baptist church (Hebrews 10:25), and identify with Christ and His congregation in believer's immersion (Romans 6:1-4), like true converts did in the Bible (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; Mark 16:16). Explain to him that the Christian life is one of fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that while he must strive against sin with all his might, victory comes only through the energizing enablement of God the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:13; Hebrews 12:4; John 15:5). Begin to disciple him so that he can observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded His churches and saints in Scripture and begin himself to preach the gospel to others and disciple those who come to Christ through his witness (Matthew 28:18-20).

And now, it is time for you to fall on your knees and hit the streets, for the glory of your Savior who came to seek and save the lost!

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”
(Proverbs 11:30)

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3)

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:13-15)

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. . . . And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-19)

<http://faithsaves.net>