

Back to the Basics of Witnessing

“One day, after having several testy weeks in a row with tons and tons of bantering going back in forth in Pastor Billy’s opening jokes, Russ and Mary Jane decided to get away from it all and go on a cruise.

And everything was going along just fine and they were working well on their relationship until suddenly a storm appeared on the horizon and as it got closer and closer to the boat, it make the boat start to rock back and forth.

And Russ and Mary Jane were trying their best to be romantic and stand back at the boat watching the moon, but a wave came up and washed Mary Jane overboard.

Well of course, they searched for days but they couldn’t find her. So the captain sent Russ home with the promise that he would notify him as soon as they found something.

Well, three weeks went by and finally Russ got a fax from the ship and it read: ‘Sir, we’re sorry to inform you that we found your wife but she died in the ocean. We hauled her back up to the deck, and found an oyster attached to her hindquarters. And inside it was a pearl worth \$50,000. Please advise?’

So Russ wiped the tears from his ears and faxed back the instructions: ‘Send me the pearl and re-bait the trap!’”

Now folks, how many of you would say that Russ is going to go on a cruise alright, he’s going on a cruise right back to the funeral home, you know what I’m saying? Whoa! I mean, \$50,000 bucks is a lot of money, \$30,000 more than what Mary Jane got last week, but come on! You don’t throw your wife back into the ocean to rebait the trap! How many of you guys would say this **friction** is seemingly never going to end in their

relationship? And folks, believe it or not, I see this same kind of **never-ending friction** happening to Christians all the time. Only it's not in their earthly marriage, it's in their spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ! And it's not when they find out their spouse through them back into the ocean to get another pearl. Get this. It's when they consider hanging out with God **as if it were going to make them hurl!** Can you believe that?

And so that's the obvious question, "How in the world did it ever get that way? How did it ever become a detriment to spend time with God, the Creator of the Universe? It didn't start off that way, right? I mean, when we first got saved, we couldn't wait to spend time with God, we longed for God, we really loved God, right? And so that's the question is, "How did it ever get like that?" Well folks, as we've been seeing, what I've learned over the years is it's simply this...when we **lose sight** of what we have in Jesus Christ, what He died on the cross for...the joy set before Him...**A beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe. That's what He died on the cross for!**

And folks, I'm telling you, when we lose sight of that, all of a sudden, just like that, overnight, your once loving vibrant walk with Jesus Christ, just turned into dry, stale, stupid, boring, man-made religion called Churchianity. Not Christianity...Churchianity! And as we've been seeing

folks, this is a deadly horrible wretched disease! It's rotten! It's totally rotten! And once you get infected with that thing, you start crying out one of two things. "Help! I'm a Christian and I can't grow up!" or "Help! I'm a Christian and I'm dead as a stump!" You ever been there? Yeah, **unfortunately** it happens all the time!

Therefore, to stave off this deadly horrible disease called Churchianity, we're going to continue in our study called, **Back to the Basics**. And what we're doing is **revisiting** all the **Basics of Christianity** but this time, we're doing it **through the eyes of a relationship**, a loving relationship, a personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe! And so hopefully this time we can recapture the **right motive** for doing what we do as Christians **and this time...stay there!** Amen?

And so far we've already seen that the **first basic thing** we need to get acquainted with through the eyes of a relationship was **The Basics of Prayer**. The **second basic thing** we need to get acquainted with through the eyes of a relationship was **The Basics of Worship**. The **third basic thing** we need to get acquainted with through the eyes of a relationship was **The Basics of Serving**. The **fourth basic thing** we need to get acquainted with through the eyes of a relationship was **The Basics of Bible Study**. And last time we saw the **fifth basic thing** we need to get

reacquainted with through the eyes of a relationship was **The Basics of Fellowship**. And what we saw there was that fellowship, wasn't something mystical or magical or something that only the super duper bored who had no life, or the crazy wacko people know how to do. No! Anybody can do it! You celebrate what God has done for you with other Christians who are also celebrating what God has done for them. It's a big ol' giant family party and anybody can do it! And then we saw **when you do do it**, you don't do it with an attitude of Isolation, or Rationalization, or even Inaction! No! We wouldn't be able to survive if you did that on a football team, so why would we expect to survive if we do that on God's fellowship team? Amen? And we saw once we realize this, we're finally on our way to getting rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff, amen?

But that's not all. The **sixth and final basic thing** of Christianity that we need to get reacquainted with through the eyes of a relationship is **The Basics of Witnessing**. But don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

Matthew 28:16-20 "Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Now folks, according to our text, we not only have some very comforting words from Jesus, we have some very important instructions from Jesus. And I say that because it's His very last words before He ascends to the right hand of the Father. And how many of you would say a person's last words are kind of important? Uh uh! Slightly! And so notice what He says. **One**, we are to understand that He, Jesus, has been given all authority in heaven and in earth, so we don't need to be afraid and freak out because He's in control of all things, right? Great news, amen? **Two**, we are to know that even in His absence we are not alone because He's with us wherever we go as His child, and we have become His temple, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He's intimately with us...**always**...even to the very end of the age, right? Isn't that great news? You bet it is! And **Three**, notice what was tucked in right between those two. We are to get busy sharing this Good News, that what the word "gospel" means, with who? The nations, right? Which is the code word for everybody on the planet! Hello!

And so here's the point. Surely that's what we're doing, right? I mean, surely we're not sitting on this good news and keeping it to ourselves, are we? I means, surely we realize that this is Jesus last words, and He wants not just us to know, us four and no more, but the whole world to know,

right? Eeeench! Wrong answer! Folks, let's be honest. For most of us, when it comes to witnessing, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, we act like it's the bad news and we're going to get ostracized, like this guy.

“Many years ago, a Christian who owned an old-fashioned barber shop became convicted about his need to share Christ with others. So he determined that the next Saturday, he would share the gospel with someone who came into his shop.

So throughout that day, many opportunities arose, but each time, because of his fear of rejection, he froze up and found himself unable to say anything. Well, by the end of the day, the tension was building, and he knew he had to say something.

Finally, five minutes before closing time, the last customer came in the door and asked for a shave. The barber swallowed hard and said to himself, ‘This is the one!’ So he cranked up his courage, lathered the man's face, pulled his straight razor out, and began to sharpen it on the leather strap.

As he nervously walked around to the front of the chair, he knew this was his last chance. Now his lips quivering and his hand that was holding the razor was shaking like crazy, so he hurriedly shouted, ‘Brother, are you prepared to die?’

The guy immediately jumped out of his chair, smashed through the door, and ran screaming down the street!”

Now folks, how many of you can identify with that guy's nervousness there? Uh huh? I think it's pretty commonplace! Hopefully no one's tried witnessing like that in a barber chair; that was kind of freaky! But seriously folks, when it comes to **witnessing**, isn't that our attitude? We either flat out **don't want to do it**, or we don't **look forward to it**, or when we **do do it**, we freak out and act like it's going to kill us or them! But people, that's not

what we just read! This is the Good News not the bad news! And I don't know about you, but our world could use a whole lot more Good News right now, amen? Therefore, let's get **Back to Basics!** Let's revisit this topic of witnessing **but this time** through the eyes of a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe! And let's dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff once and for all!

And the **first basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is, "**Why Do We Witness?**" Well, let's take a look. I think it's pretty obvious once you look at this text.

Luke 16:22-28 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

So he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire. But Abraham replied, Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.

And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us. He answered, Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Now folks, can I simply translate what I believe is the appropriate response to the question we posed, "**Why do we witness?**" Let me see if I can be as blunt as I can...**BECAUSE IT'S HOW PEOPLE GET OUT OF**

HELL!...that's why! Folks, **are we crazy?** What's going on there in the text there? What'd it say? This is Jesus speaking mind you! He said what? Heaven's not just real people, but so is what? So is hell! How many of you guys would say the ol' rich man there wasn't having a great time ol' time where he was at? How many of you would say he wasn't partying it up with his buddies like you hear people say today! Are you kidding me? The word **torment** gives it away! He wasn't partying, he was in pain, horrible pain, unending pain, non-stop pain for all eternity!

And so here's the point. Surely as loving Christians we're doing, whatever we can, as much as we can, to get God's Good News out to, as many people as we can, including our loved ones, that they don't have to end up in a place like that, right? I mean, think about it! Isn't that awesome! What a privilege! We're not just sharing with people that the economy is improving or there's a temporary tax break on the horizon! No! That's a **lie!** Rather we have the privilege to tell **the truth**, the greatest news of all time! God has made a way to escape from having to go to hell and through the sacrifice of His very own Son Jesus Christ, we can instead go to heaven! I'll take that Good News any day of the week over a stupid improving economy or a temporary tax break, right? I mean, this lasts forever and it's **free** unlike what the government says, like this person shares!

“We are now ‘gifted’ with a health care plan that we are forced to purchase and fined if we don’t.

Which purportedly covers an additional ten million Americans and twenty million illegal aliens, without adding a single new doctor, but provides for 16,000 new IRS agents.

Written by a committee whose chairman says he doesn’t understand it, passed by a Congress that didn’t read it but themselves are exempted from it.

And signed by a President who smokes, with funding administered by a treasury chief who didn’t pay his taxes, for which we’ll be taxed for four years before any benefits take effect.

By a government which has already bankrupted Social Security, Medicare and the Treasury, all to be overseen by a surgeon general who is obese, and financed by a country that’s broke!!!!

Oh yeah! What could go wrong!”

Now folks, how many of you would say, “We’re being lied to!”

Hello! But seriously, when we share the Gospel, the Good News, we’re not lying to them! We’re not giving them empty promises that will not and cannot be fulfilled like in a stupid health care bill! No! We’re not agents of the government, we’re witnesses of Jesus Christ! And we have the privilege of telling other people that Jesus Christ came to this earth and died on a cross to set them free of the disease of sin, and the penalty of sin, namely hell, and that He wants to give a true health care plan, an eternal health care plan, a place called heaven... **for free!** Hello!

And so here's the point. Why wouldn't we want to tell people about that? Why wouldn't we want to tell people about God's health care plan? Why wouldn't we want to tell people the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Doctor they need and He really can heal them on any and all diseases including the death sentence of hell? Hello! But that's not all. Flip it around! Can you imagine if somebody knew this and you didn't **and they refused to tell you?** Some friend huh? The next thing you know you'd probably get a letter like this in the mail.

Dear Zack,

I died today. It's a lot different than I thought. You see, I always thought that dying would bring me to a world that's foggy and hazy. But this place is crystal clear. It's even more real than my life on earth. I can think, I can talk, I could even feel.

Right after the wreck I could feel my spirit feeling my body it was the weirdest thing Zack I thought I heard you screaming out to me man, must have been imagining things.

At first I was just standing in line getting registered I guess they asked me for my name, they began to look in this thing called the book of life, I guess they couldn't find it though, cause this huge angel standing next to me grabbed me by the arm and started dragging me away.

I was terrified. I had no idea what was going on. I asked the angel where he was taking me, but he didn't answer. So I asked him again and he told me and said only those whose names were written in the book of life could enter heaven. And the rest would be condemned to hell forever. Man I was scared.

The angel threw me into some kind of holding cell where I've been sitting and thinking for a long, long time. Do you want to know what I've been

thinking about? I've been thinking about you. Zack your a Christian, you told me so yourself.

I mean we talked about it three different times today Kelly brought it up and you laughed it off, coach Adams brought it up and you changed the subject. I mean it came up before the wreck. And the question I cant get out of my mind is Zack...

Why haven't you ever told me how to become a Christian? You say you're my friend but if you really were, you would have told me about this...Jesus. And told me how to escape this terrible that I'm headed for.

I can feel my heart pounding in my chest. The angels who have been chosen to cast me into hell are coming down the hallway. I can hear their footsteps. I've heard of this hell Zack, they call it the lake of fire. I can't stand it Zack. I'm terrified.

The angels are at the door, oh no...oh no! They're coming in and pointing at me. They're grabbing me and carrying me out of the room, I could already smell the burning sulfur and brimstone. I can see the edge of the cliff where hell burns.

This is it. I am without hope. Were coming closer...and closer!...closer!... my heart is bursting with fear. They're holding me over the flames! I'm damned forever! This is it. They have thrown me in. Fire! Pain! Hell! **Why Zack didn't you ever tell me about Jesus?**

Signed,

Your friend Josh

P.S. Wish you were here.... Wish you were here....

Why do we witness? Because I don't want to get a letter like that one, from anyone...**ever!** What we have to share is the Good News, not the shameful news. And the sooner we see that, the quicker we're on our way of getting rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff, amen?

But that's not all. The **second basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is, "**What is Witnessing?**" Well let's take a look. Again, from the words of Jesus just prior to Him going to the right hand of the Father.

Acts 1:6-9 "So when they met together, they asked Him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

Now folks, according to our text, notice that Jesus didn't about His followers that we need to be seriously **thinking** about being powerful witnesses, right? He didn't say **launch a committee** to consider the possibility of being a powerful witness. I like what one guys said, "For God so loved the world that He did **not** send a committee!" No! What did He say? He said you **will be** my witnesses, right? It's a command, not a suggestion. That's why it's called the Great Commission, not the Grand Suggestion! Hello!

But seriously folks, here's my point. Surely, we all know this, right? Surely we know that every Christian who's ever lived is ordered by Jesus to be a witness for Him to everyone who lives around them, right? Are you kidding me? Folks, let's be honest. For some reason, when it comes to

witnessing, we think it's some mysterious religious thing that only the "super-duper" Christian who has memorized the whole Bible knows how to do. Or only those who have mastered some "super-duper" religious debate technique to engage others in battle. **Or**, here's the most popular one, "It's only for those who are "gifted" with that sort of thing," right? Say what? People, that's not what we just read! That passage didn't say that only those followers of Jesus who knew the Bible backwards and forwards, or knew how to debate, or had that sort of gift were able to **witnessing**. No! The Bible **again** simply states that every true Born again Christian has the privilege of witnessing for Jesus Christ!

And I really think the reason why we don't even consider it a privilege, is because we don't even understand what the word itself means. The word **witnessing** comes from the Greek word "martureo." And it simply means "to beseech with great intensity of feeling what one has seen, heard, or experienced. Or to put it in even simpler terms, the Crone translation, in the context of a relationship... **Witnessing** is simply **passionately sharing something that's dear to your heart**. And in this context, it's Jesus and the Good News of the Gospel. That's it! Nothing more. Nothing less. **That's what witnessing is!**

And again, just like with prayer, worship, serving, Bible study, and fellowship, witnessing is something we can all do. God picked something we can all do! It's not that complicated! For instance, how many of you can passionately share with somebody some topic or some truth that's important to you? Well guess what? You know how to witness whether you realize it or not. Turn to somebody and say, "**You Jesus freak**, you!" Or how many of you have been able to talk for hours and hours about a special person in your life to someone else? Well guess what? You have the ability to witness for hours and hours if necessary whether not you realize it. Turn to somebody and say, "**You soul-winning machine**, you!" Folks, that's all **witnessing** is. Nothing more. Nothing less. You're just **sharing what's dear to your heart**, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you're joyfully inviting others to experience the blessedness of knowing Him too.

And that's precisely the problem. It's not that we don't witness. We do witness. We witness all the time. It's just that we witness about all the wrong stuff, or unnecessary stuff! We'll witness about politics, we'll witness about weather, we'll witness about anything and everything as long as it's not that Jesus Christ stuff! Folks, let's be honest. When it comes to witnessing for Jesus, it's not something we **look forward** to...it's something

we **worry** about **having to do!** And people, I'm telling you, once we get here, it produces even more horrible side effects of Churchianity.

And the **first side effect** is **We Think We Have To Worry About Remember Everything**. Say what? Folks, that's not what our text just said! Jesus didn't say, "And you will be my witnesses in all the world, **only after**, you have memorized the whole Bible from cover to cover! Are you kidding me? Yet folks, let be honest, isn't that our attitude? We act like **we do** have to memorize the whole Bible and be able to readily answer every single possible objection people might have **before** we will witness to someone. But stop and think about it. Not only is that **not** what Jesus said, but let's apply this faulty logic to another scenario.

If someone were drowning, would we wait until we knew the exact temperature of the water and the precise angle to jump in for a maximum dive? Or maybe we would send out a surveyor to accurately measure the distance between us and them to determine the best rate of speed in which we paddle to reach them. Or no, we would establish a committee to decide on the most effective of five programs specifically designed for saving a drowning person? We would have to come up with the curriculum ourselves! No! We wouldn't do that? That wouldn't only be foolish but what

would happen if we did that? They'd die before any of that could ever happen! Hello!

Then people, how foolish is it when we apply this same faulty logic when witnessing to those around us? They really are drowning in the depths of sin, and unless we do something, they are going to perish! No! We don't have to **remember everything**, we simply share what we know whenever and wherever the need arises. That's all witnessing is!

Oh but that's not all. The **second side effect** is **We Think We Have To Worry About Rejection**. Say what? That's not what the Bible says!

Acts 17:16-20,32-34 "While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, What is this babbling trying to say? Others remarked, He seems to be advocating foreign gods. They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, We want to hear you again on this subject. At that, Paul left the Council. A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others."

Now folks, according to our text, when the Apostle Paul was witnessing to the people in Athens, he wasn't worried about rejection was he? No! He just saw an opportunity and took it! **Why?** Because he knew what apparently we've forgotten! Every time we share the Gospel we are going to have one of three responses. What did it say there? Some people will accept it, some people will reject it, and some people will tell you to come back later, right? And notice he wasn't freaked out or bummed out or even worse talked himself out of doing it in the first place because he was afraid of how people would react. No! He just shared when God gave him the opportunity and realized that they weren't really rejecting him, they were unfortunately rejecting God. But because he cared, he wasn't going to let their rejection of God stop him from telling them about the Good News of God, amen? That's all witnessing is folks! Nothing more. Nothing less. Some people are going to accept it, some people are going to reject it, and some people will tell us to come back later. Let's at least give them a fighting chance to do one of the three, amen?

Oh but that's not all. The **third side effect** is **We Think We Have To Worry About Results**. Oh, here we go to the other end of the spectrum. Instead of being freaked out about having to remember everything or even experiencing a possible rejection, so we don't witness at all. Here we finally

do get around to witnessing but we shoot ourselves in the foot and discourage ourselves needlessly by thinking if we don't get results right off the bat, i.e. they get saved right on the spot, that it wasn't worth it! Say what? People, that's not what the Bible says! That should be none of our concern.

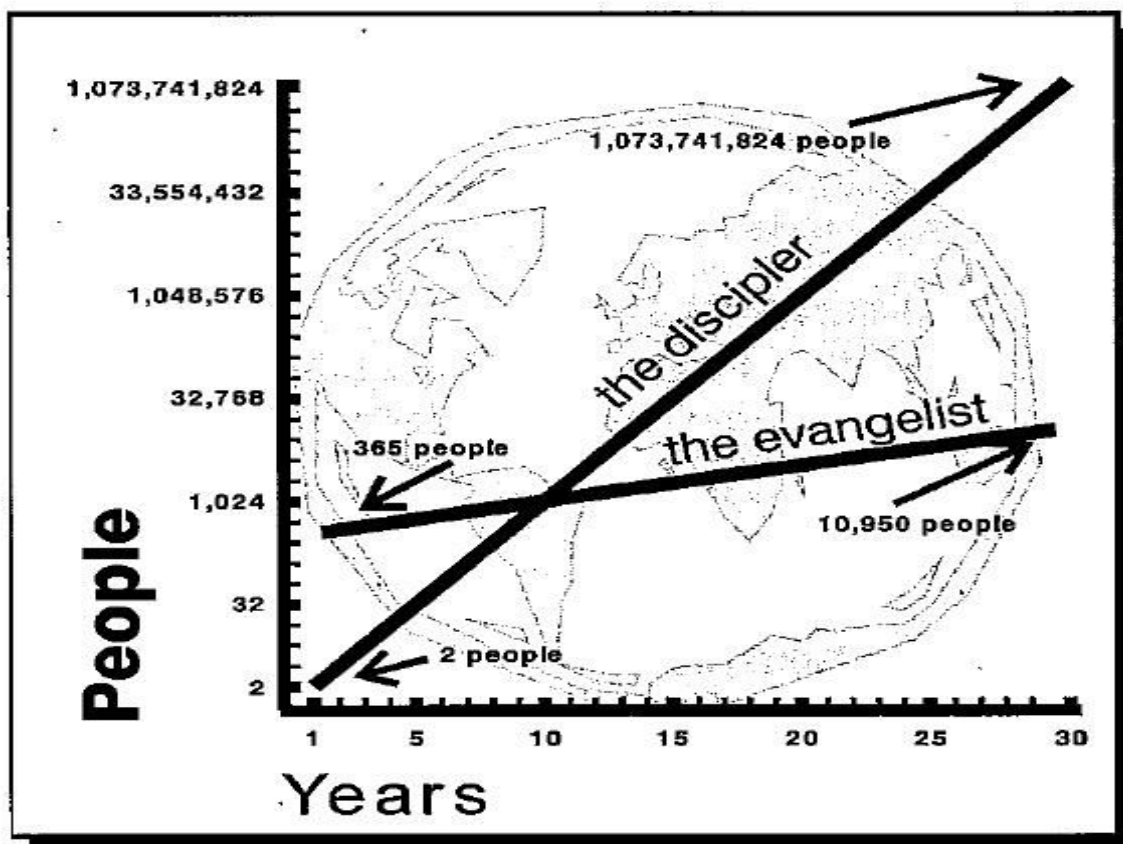
1 Corinthians 3:5-8 “What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.”

Now folks, according to our text the Bible simply declares that when we are fulfilling the task that God had called us to do, be it witnessing or whatever we do, that we don't focus on the immediate results of the opportunity, but the what? The ultimate reward for the opportunity, right? **Why?** Because the Apostle Paul knew what we've forgotten. That when it comes to sharing the Gospel, we don't do the saving... **God does!** What'd it say there? Sometimes we'll get to **plant**, i.e. be the first one who shares the Gospel with somebody, or sometimes we'll get to **water**, that is share even more after someone else already planted the seed, right? And here's the point. We shouldn't get hung up on the results because of why? Only God can give the increase, only He can make it **grow**, i.e. only He does the saving, right? Why should we get upset over something we can't control?

For instance, if I'm a newspaper boy and I'm called to deliver the newspaper, do I worry at all about what my customers do with the newspaper after I deliver it? No! That's not my job! I mean, can you imagine if a newspaper boy freaked out and stopped delivering the news after seeing what people did with the newspaper. You go up to him and ask him, "What's wrong son?" "Sniff, sniff. Did you see what they did? They left it on their front porch all afternoon and didn't even touch it. And then I drove down to another house and I noticed it was still in their bushes two days later! I can't take this pain...I quit!"

Now folks, how many of you would say that's pretty crazy for a paperboy to act like that? That's stupid, right? That's not his job! That's not his concern! And people it's the same thing when we share the Good Newspaper of God! We don't worry about results! That's not our job! We just share! And this should be a huge load off our shoulders, to know that it's not up to us, it's up to Him, and the good news is He can use us to save souls in spite of ourselves, anybody notice that? Yeah, praise God for that! And people, I'm telling you, once we get back to this, i.e. leave the results with God and get back to being responsible with one opportunity at a time, one person at a time, amazing things can take place.

For instance, check this out. You tell me one person can't make a difference. Let's suppose that I am an evangelist and I win a person to the Lord every single day. Meanwhile, you win just one person to Christ, but you disciple them and show them how to witness as well. In the second year, I as an evangelist win another 365 people to Christ. You however, together with the one person you disciplined and showed how to witness, you each win one more person to Christ in that second year and you then disciple the two new Christians and so forth. At the end of 32 years, what will the result be? Well, a look at the following chart reveals the answer. The evangelist won



10,950 people to Christ in 32 years, but you won 1,073,741,824 people to Christ.

Gee, it looks like one person really can make a huge difference. And that's why if we would just stop worrying about having to remember everything when we witness, or having to possibly experience rejection when we witness, which is really God not us, and if we stop worrying about results when we witness... **and just do it** one person at a time, one opportunity of a time, then one person can make a world of difference, like this man did, true story, on George street.

“A number of years ago in a Baptist church in Crystal Palace, in southern London, the Sunday morning service was closing, and a stranger stood up in the back, raised his hand, and said, ‘Excuse me pastor, can I share a little testimony?’ The Pastor looked at his watch and said, ‘You’ve got three minutes.’

And this man proceeded. He said, ‘I just moved into this area, I used to live in another part of London, I came from Sydney, in Australia. And just a few months back I was visiting some relatives and I was walking down George Street, you know where George Street is in Sydney, it runs from the business hub out to the rocks of the Colonial area.’ And he said, ‘A strange little white-haired man stepped out of a shop doorway, put a pamphlet in my hand and said, ‘Excuse me sir, are you saved? If you died tonight, are you going to heaven?’

He said, ‘I was astounded by those words. Nobody had ever told me that. I thanked him courteously, and all the way on British Airlines, back to Heathrow, this puzzled me. I called a friend who lived in this new area, where I’m living now, and thank God, he was a Christian. He led me to Christ. And I’m a Christian, and I want to fellowship here.’ And Baptists love testimonies like that. Everyone applauded and welcomed him into the fellowship.

That Baptist Pastor flew to Adelaide in Australia, the next week. And ten days later, in the middle of a three day series in a Baptist Church in Adelaide, a woman came to him for counseling, and he wanted to establish where she stood with Christ.

And she said, ‘I used to live in Sydney. And just a couple of months back, I was visiting friends in Sydney, doing some last minute shopping down George Street, and a strange little white-haired man, elderly man, stepped out of a shop doorway, offered me a pamphlet and said, ‘Excuse me ma’am, are you saved? If you died tonight, are you going to heaven?’

She said, ‘I was disturbed by those words. When I got back to Adelaide, I knew this Baptist church was on the next block from me, and I sought out the Pastor, and he led me to Christ. So sir, I’m telling you that I am a Christian.’

Now this London Pastor was now very puzzled. Twice, within a fortnight, he’d heard the same testimony. He then flew to preach in the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Perth. And when his teaching series was over, the senior elder of that church took him out for a meal. And he said, ‘Mate, how’d you get saved?’

He said, ‘I grew up in this church from the age of fifteen through Boy’s Brigade. Never made a commitment to Jesus, just hopped on the bandwagon like everybody else. And because of my business ability, grew up to a place of influence. I was on a business outing in Sydney just three years ago, and an obnoxious, spiteful little man stepped out a shop doorway, offered me a religious pamphlet (Cheap junk!), and accosted me with a question, ‘Excuse me sir, Are you saved? If you died tonight are you going to heaven?’

He said, ‘I tried to tell him I was a Baptist elder. He wouldn’t listen to me.’ He said, ‘I was seething with anger all the way home on Quantus Two to Perth.’ He said, ‘I told my pastor thinking he would sympathize with me, and my pastor agreed. He had been disturbed for years, knowing that I didn’t have a relationship with Jesus – and he was right. And my pastor led me to Jesus just three years ago.’

Now this London preacher flew back to the U.K. and was speaking at the Kesseck Convention in the Lake District, and he threw in these three

testimonies. At the close of his teaching session, four elderly pastors came up and said, 'We got saved between 25 and 35 years ago, respectively, through that little man on George Street giving us a tract and asking us that question.'

He then flew the following week to a similar Kesseck Convention in the Caribbean, to missionaries. And He shared the testimonies. At the close of his teaching session, three missionaries came up and said, 'We got saved between 15 and 25 years ago, respectively, through that little man's testimony and asking us that same question on George Street in Sydney.'

Coming back to London, he stopped outside Atlanta, Georgia, to speak at a Naval Chaplain's convention. And when his three days of revving these Navy Chaplains up, over a thousand of them, in soul winning, the chaplain general took him out for a meal. And he said, 'How'd you become a Christian?'

He said, 'Well it was miraculous! I was a rating on a United States Battleship, and I lived a reprobate life. We were doing exercises in the South Pacific, and we docked in Sydney Harbor for replenishments. We hit King's Cross with a vengeance. I got blind drunk. I got on the wrong bus – got off in George Street. As I got off the bus, I thought it was a ghost. This elderly white-haired man jumped in front of me, pushed a pamphlet into my hands and said, 'Sailor, are you saved? If you died tonight, are you going to heaven?'

He said, 'The fear of God hit me immediately. I was shocked sober, and ran back to the battleship, sought out the chaplain, the chaplain led me to Christ and I soon began to prepare for the ministry under his guidance. And here I am in charge of over a thousand chaplains and we're bent on soul winning today.'

That London preacher, six months later, flew to do a convention for 5000 Indian missionaries in a remote corner of northeastern India. And at the end, the Indian missionary in charge, a humble little man, took him home to his humble little home, for a simple meal. And he said, 'How did you, as a Hindu, come to Christ?'

He said, 'I was in a very privileged position. I worked for the Indian diplomatic mission. And I traveled the world. And I am so glad for the

forgiveness of Christ, and His blood covering my sin, because I'd be very embarrassed if people found out what I got into.'

He said, 'One bout of diplomatic service took me to Sydney. And I was doing some last minute shopping, laden with parcels of toys and clothing for my children, walking down George Street. And this courteous, little white-haired man stepped out in front of me, offered me a pamphlet, and said, 'Excuse me sir, are you saved? If you died tonight are you going to heaven?'

He said, 'I thanked him very much, but this disturbed me. I got back to my town, I sought out the Hindu priest, and he couldn't help me. But he gave me some advice. He said, 'Just to satisfy your curious mind, nothing else, go an talk to the missionary in the mission house at the end of the road. And that was fateful advice.

He said, 'Because that day the missionary led me to Christ. I quit Hinduism immediately, and then began to study for the ministry. I left the diplomatic service, and here I am, by God's grace, in charge of all these missionaries, and we're winning hundreds of thousands of people to Christ.'

Well, eight months later, the Crystal Palace Baptist pastor was ministering in Sydney, in Gymeir, southern suburb of Sydney. And he said to the Baptist minister, 'Do you know a little man, an elderly little man who witnesses and hands out tracts on George Street?'

And he said, 'I do. His name is Mr. Genor. But I don't think he does it anymore, he's too frail and elderly.' The man said, 'I want to meet him.'

Two nights later, they went around to this little apartment, knocked on the door. And this tiny, frail, little man opened the door. He sat them down and made them some tea, and he was so frail that he was slopping tea into the saucer as he shook. And as he sat with them, this London preacher told him all these accounts over the previous three years. This little man sat with tears running down his cheeks.

He said, 'My story goes like this.' He said, 'I was a rating on an Australian warship and I lived a reprobate life. And in a crisis, I really hit the wall, and one of my colleagues whom I gave literal hell, was there to help me. He led me to Jesus and the change in my life was night to day in 24 hours and I was

so grateful to God. I promised God that I would share Jesus in a simple witness with at least ten people a day – as God gave me strength.

Sometimes, I was ill – I couldn't do it, but I made up for it at other times. I wasn't paranoid about it, but I have done this for over forty years, and in my retirement years, the best place was on George Street. There were hundreds of people. I got lots of rejections. But a lot of people courteously took the tracts.'

And he said, 'In forty years of doing this, I've never heard of one single person coming to Jesus until today.'

Now I would say, that has to be commitment. That has to be just sheer gratitude and love for Jesus to do that. Not hearing of any results. Margarita did a little count. That's 146,100 people that simple little, non-charismatic, Baptist man influenced somehow to Jesus.

And I believe that what God was showing that Baptist minister was the tip of the tip of the tip of the tip of this iceberg. Goodness knows how many more had been arrested for Christ and were doing huge jobs out in the mission field.

Mr. Genor died two weeks later. And can you imagine the reward he went home to in heaven? I doubt if his face would have ever appeared on *Charisma* Magazine. I doubt if there would have ever been a write-up with a photograph in Billy Graham's *Decision* Magazine – as beautiful as those magazines are. Nobody except a little group of Baptists in southern Sydney knew about Mr. Genor.

But I'll tell you his name was famous in heaven. Heaven knew Mr. Genor, and you can imagine the welcome and the red carpet and the fanfare that he went home to."

Why? Because he knew what it means to witness. You don't have to remember everything, you don't worry about rejection, and your focus is not on the results. You just simply do what witnessing is all about. You just **passionately share what's dear to your heart**, Jesus Christ, one person at a

time, one opportunity at a time, and God will make a world of difference. That's **what witnessing is**. Nothing more. Nothing less. And once we see that, we're finally on our way of getting rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff, amen?

But that's not all. The **third basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is "**How Do We Witness?**" Well again folks, it's not that hard to understand, **if** you're not suffering from Churchianity. If you look at it through the eyes of a relationship, it makes total perfect sense. Just ask Andrew.

John 1:35-42 "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, Look, the Lamb of God! When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, What do you want? They said, Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying? Come, He replied, and you will see.

So they went and saw where He was staying, and spent that day with Him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, We have found the Messiah (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus."

Now folks, according to our text, when Andrew was given the opportunity to tell somebody about Jesus, i.e witness, he didn't **worry** about having to remember everything, did he? He didn't **freak out** over the possibility that somebody might reject him, and he certainly didn't **psyche himself out** by being corned about results. No! What did he do? He just

went and told somebody about Jesus! That's it! **That's how you witness.** It's not complicated. Nothing mystical or magical about it. You just bring them to Jesus. That's it! And notice there was no hesitation. Not even one bit! He didn't even have time to take a class. He just instantly went and told someone the Good News of Jesus, that the Messiah has finally come, to save us from our sins, right? And folks again, if you look at this through the eyes of a relationship, it makes total perfect sense.

And that's why the **first way** we **do not** witness, since it's just sharing a relationship, is with **An Attitude of Procrastination.** And to help illustrate the foolishness of doing this in our personal relationship with God and other people, let's take a look at it through the eyes of another personal relationship, via the help of Me and my wife Brandie! And what we're going to do here is I am going to be confronted by my wife about my lack of willingness to share with other people the news about our new relationship, and I'm going to have this attitude of procrastination, and you tell me how it goes.

Brandie: "Oh hey Billy, it's so great to see you again! Man, it's seems like forever since we last talked. I'm just so excited about our marriage! In fact, I'm so excited about it that I've been telling everyone I know about you and me and just how excited I am about the whole thing. How about you? What have people been saying? Are they happy for us too?"

Billy: "Oh, yeah....telling other people...about...us. Well you see, I was planning on doing it...eventually...I mean, really I was, but you see I just

ran out of time. Yeah, I mean, what with work and sports and all, I just have too way many things going on in life right now. Maybe after the holidays or New Years. No, no, no! I tell you what. Come this spring when things really slow down, I'll be sure to tell at least one person...somebody...somewhere about you and me. You understand, don't you Brandie?"

Brandie: "Excuse me? You don't have time to tell other people about me? How much time does that take? You just say, 'Hey, I'm married to Brandie now,' what the big deal? What was that? Two seconds? And speaking of work, hello, the people are right there! Just open your mouth! That doesn't take much time! And speaking of which, you take the time to talk to them about sports everyday, and the weather everyday, and all kinds of things...every...single...day! Why can't you take the time to talk to them about me? Billy are you ashamed of us? What kind of husband are you anyway? Thanks a lot...Billy!"

Ooooooh! Now how many of you guys would say that I am already headed for the doghouse in with my relationship with my wife there? Wow! I mean, what a husband, huh? I don't have the time to talk about my wife, but I can talk up a storm about anything else to anyone else every single day, all day long. And then, to top it off, how insulting is that? I want to just put it off until some future date when life supposedly slows down, which will never happen. Hello! How goofy is that, right?

So folks, **here's the point**. What do we think we're doing when we do that in our relationship with God? You don't have the time to speak about Jesus but you can talk about sports, weather, news, finance, politics, whatever it is. Just as long as it's not Jesus! And then, you throw out some mystical magical date when life supposedly slows down **when it won't** and

you never even get around to doing it? Year after year! How insulting is that? All you got to say is, “I’m in a relationship with Jesus.” How hard is that? You don’t need a ton of time. You just need two seconds!

But that’s not all. The **second way we do not** witness, since we’re sharing a relationship, is with **An Attitude of Overpreparation**. For instance, what if I was confronted by my wife Brandie about my lack of willingness to share with other people the news about our marriage, and I’m going to have this attitude of overpreparation, and you tell me how it goes.

Brandie: “Oh hey Billy, it’s so great to see you again! Man, it’s seems like forever since we last talked. I’m just so excited about our marriage! In fact, I’m so excited about it that I’ve been telling everyone I know about you and me and just how excited I am about the whole thing. How about you? What have people been saying? Are they happy for us too?”

Billy: “Oh, yeah....telling other people...about...us. Well you see, I’d like to...but...I’m not sure how. I mean, I just don’t know what to say?”

Brandie: “What do you mean, you don’t know what to say?” How hard is it to say, ‘Hey, I’m married to Brandie now,’ what the big deal with that?”

Billy: “Well, true, but I don’t want to mess it up either. I mean, what if they ask me a question about your family history or about what your favorite color is and I don’t know the answer to that? I mean, I just don’t know if I can handle the embarrassment.”

Brandie: “Embarrassment? What are you talking about? You just explain that we’re married now and it’s only natural that you don’t know everything about me yet. That’ll come in time and you’ll get back with them later on that. And besides, that’s not the main thing you’re trying to accomplish. You’re just telling other people about me...not every single nook and cranny about my history!”

Billy: “Well that’s true Brandie, but what if I offend them? I mean, I don’t want people to think I’m some sort of Brandie wacko and scare them off and lose their friendship, you know what I’m saying?”

Brandie: “Say what? A Brandie wacko? What is wrong with you Billy? What is so wacko about letting other people know that you are married to me? Are you ashamed of us Billy? What kind of a husband are you anyway? Thanks a lot...Billy!”

Ooooooh! Now how many of you guys would say that I am headed on the same cruise to the funeral home as with Russ that we saw at the beginning? Whoa! What a husband, huh? I actually tell my wife I don’t know how to say, “Hey, I’m married to Brandie now,” or I’m afraid I’m going to mess it up. What’s there to mess it up with, ‘Hey, I’m married to Brandie now,” right? And then talk about an insult! Saying if I do share, that I might lose friends over it because people will think I’m a Brandie wacko! Well, hello! If I really loved her, I really would be wacko about her, right? And if friends can’t handle that, then I guess they’re not really friends are they? Gee whiz! What a husband, huh?

So folks, **here’s the point.** What do we think we’re doing when we do that in our relationship with God? Saying we don’t know how to witness, or we don’t want to mess it up when we witness? Hello! How do you mess up, “Hey, I’m in a relationship with Jesus now.” **And then talk about an insult!** Saying if we do share, that we might lose our friends over it because they might think we’re some sort of Jesus freak! Well, hello! If you really

loved Jesus, you really should be freaking out over Him. Especially after all He's done for us! Hello! Nice Christian, huh?

But that's still not all. The **third way** we **do not** witness, since we're sharing a relationship, is with **An Attitude of Deviation**. For instance, what if I was confronted by my wife Brandie about my lack of willingness to share with other people the news about our marriage, and I'm going to have this attitude of deviation, and you tell me how it goes.

Brandie: "Oh hey Billy, it's so great to see you again! Man, it's seems like forever since we last talked. I'm just so excited about our marriage! In fact, I'm so excited about it that I've been telling everyone I know about you and me and just how excited I am about the whole thing. How about you? What have people been saying? Are they happy for us too?"

Billy: "Oh, yeah....telling other people...about...us. Well you see, I'd like to...but... I think I need to take a class on it before I speak. I mean, maybe after an intensive ten to twelve week training course on how speak to other people about my wife, I might feel a little more comfortable. How does that sound?"

Brandie: "How does that sound? What are you talking about? You need a class, a training course to speak about me to other people? How much training do you need to say, 'Hey, I'm married to Brandie now,' you don't need a class for that!"

Billy: "Well true...that does sound pretty simple. But to be honest with you Brandie, I just don't think I have the gift for that. I mean, maybe you should get somebody else can speak better than me. Surely they can do it. Maybe you should ask them."

Brandie: "Excuse me? You want me to get some other person to tell other people about you and me? Are you nuts! It's 'our' relationship! Why should somebody 'else' announce it! And what's with this giftedness stuff? You don't have to have a gift to tell other people about me! How much giftedness

does it take to say, 'Hey, I'm married to Brandie now,' you don't need a gift for that Billy! Just open your mouth! What's wrong with you? Are you ashamed of us? What kind of husband are you anyway? Thanks a lot...Billy!"

Now how many of you guys would say that I am about to be thrown out into the street? Uh huh! What a husband, huh? Wow! I mean, saying I actually need to take a class on saying, "Hey, I'm married to Brandie now," or you just flat out don't do it saying I'm not gifted in that area? **Or even worse**, I try to pawn the responsibility off to somebody else who you say can speak better than me? Excuse me? What kind of baloney is that?

So folks, **here's the point**. What do we think we we're doing when we do that in our relationship with God? Saying we need to take a class on saying, "Hey, I'm in a relationship with Jesus now." Why do you need a class for that? **And then talk about ridiculous!** Trying to pawn off your responsibility to witness on to some other Christian saying, you don't have the gift for that? Excuse me? You have lips don't you? How hard is it to say, "Hey, I'm in a relationship with Jesus now." You don't need a gift for that!

People, I'm telling you, if we're ever going to get rid of this goofball wretched disease called Churchianity, it is high time that we in the Church get back to witnessing, true Witnessing, and start Jesus with others as much as we can. There's nothing to be ashamed about the Gospel. Are you kidding me? We're just letting people know the most amazing news of all time! That

our Heavenly Father, God, the Creator of the Universe, has loved us so much, and He so much wants to have a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with each one of us, that He actually allowed His very own Son to be crushed for our sins, in order to be saved from certain doom, like this father did for his son.

“There was a man who had the responsibility of operating a drawbridge that spanned a river. And so when a steamboat came by he would put the bridge up, then lower it so that a train could cross when it came by.

Well, one day, he brought his son to work; and together they watched the bridge go up to let a steamer go through but when it was time to lower the bridge, his son was nowhere to be found.

But just then the father heard the cries of his son and he saw to his horror that the boy was caught in the massive gears that controlled the movement of the bridge.

Then to make matters worse. A train whistle blew which meant only one thing. A trainload of people was on its way. And so in a split moment the father realized had a decision to make.

To save his son he would have to raise the bridge once more; but, if he were to do that, the train would go into the river killing many people. So with his heart wrenching, the father made his decision.

He voluntarily chose to lower the bridge and crush his boy. And a moment later the train whizzed by and the passengers waved at the man, totally oblivious to the price he had just paid for their life.”

People, there’s nothing to be ashamed of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. It’s the greatest news, the greatest True Life Love Story we could ever share, and that our world so desperately needs to hear. That God,

the Creator of the Universe, loved us so much, like that father did with his son, that He gave us His only Son, so that we might live. “That whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Oh people, if you're reading this today and you're suffering from this horrible wretched disease called Churchianity and witnessing to you has become something dry, stale, stupid, and boring and the last thing on your list, then I've got good news for you. It doesn't have to be this way! You see, sometimes before you can move forward in your walk with Jesus Christ, you just need to get **Back to the Basics, the Basics of True Witnessing**. And get back to just simply **sharing what's dear to your heart**, Jesus Christ, and let others know the good news, that they too, like you, can have a **beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe**. That's what gets rid of the disease. Amen? Let's pray.

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
