
E5

An Evangelism Strategy for Prison Ministry

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Table of Contents

FORWARD	Page 3
INTRODUCTION	Page 4
E1 - EFFECT	Page 6
E2 - EARN	Page 14
E3 - ENGAGE	Page 22
E4 - EVANGELIZE	Page 29
E5 - ENROLL	Page 33
RECAP	Page 37

FORWARD

The vision for this material was birthed in the office of a humble Chaplain for The Dept. of Corrections, State of Florida. I owe much of the content of this material to the passion and zeal that Chaplain has to our Lord and the calling on his life; he asked to remain anonymous.

The objective of this material is to teach those who are incarcerated how to win their fellow inmates to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, with the intent of seeing them become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, and in turn teaching others to do the same.

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

To God be the glory!
Rick McClung

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INTRODUCTION

Every Christian has many things to learn and live out in their life as believers. It is commonly referred to as a process — the Bible describes it as the sanctification process. Day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year we are to make an intentional effort to learn and grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We learn about giving, prayer, fellowship with other believers, corporate worship, Bible study and service to our Lord.

The will of God for every believer is in some areas identical and other areas very different. For example, it is God's will for every Christian to glorify Him with our lives (**1 Corinthians 10:31**). The Bible gives us many scriptures that teach that every Christian should have a daily consistent prayer life. There are many other areas of our lives that every Christian should strive to live out. However, we also know that every Christian is not called to be a Preacher or a foreign missionary. Yes, God's specific will for each of us may be different but that one area in which we are to glorify Him with our lives is the same for all of us.

There is one area that seems to be one of the most neglected by so many people that name the name of Christ. It does not make those that step up and meet this obligation any better than those that do not, but it does in every case, makes them more complete and fulfilled than those that do not. It is the area of personal evangelism, the fulfillment of the personal burden to win people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I have personally found in the last 25 years of the Christian life that there is nothing more personally rewarding to the individual and brings more glory to God than the service of personal evangelism. In **Matthew 28:18-20** Jesus gives every Christian the marching orders for our lives until we reach heavens shores. We are to go about winning people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

I have also found that many people do not meet their God given obligation simply out of willful disobedience, although that is the case for some. I have found that many people do not share Christ with others simply because they do know how or they fear they do not know enough Bible to hold their ground. There are obviously more reasons than these, but any excuse that we have will not carry any weight when we give an account for all of the people that God placed in our path that needed Christ.

These series of lessons are written to specifically assist a person in the prison environment to "learn" how to step up and live out this God-called commitment, commonly called soul-winning. We will look at and learn different areas of prison life as it directly connects with the Christian life in order that you might reach your maximum potential in reaching others for the Lord. You will need to discipline yourself to learn and apply scripture and memorize a number of scriptures as well.

The most fruitful Christians are those who prepare themselves to be fruitful. Before they were ever "doing" they were ever learning. My prayer is that every person that completes this series of lessons will have prepared themselves for the greatest privilege of the Christian life: to share the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with others that so desperately need it, and upon completion of that preparation they will set out with God's help to do it!

The five areas we will be learning are as follows:

- E1 - Effect**
- E2 - Earn**
- E3 - Engage**
- E4 - Evangelize**
- E5 - Enroll**

E1 - EFFECT

Scripture Memory Verse - Matthew 5:16

**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

There is an area of evangelism that you may have heard described as "lifestyle evangelism". Many people believe that when a Christian lives a dedicated life to the Lord others will take notice of it and perhaps desire to become Christians themselves. Do not misunderstand me, I am certainly not making light of the fact that each of us ought to try to live a life that is above reproach and exhibits the fruits of the Spirit in order for our witness to be convincing. However, I believe that our lifestyle is simply a part of our witness and not ALL of our witness.

In twenty years of ministry I admit that I have not lived a flawless life and do wish that I had been more faithful to the Lord than I have been — I think all of us feel that way to some degree. That being the case, in the attempt to live for and serve the Lord in these twenty years, I do not recall anyone ever approaching me and saying, "because of the way you live I would like for you to share with me how I can be saved." I hope in some cases our lifestyles have helped people to see the difference in us, but it has not been the primary reason people want to be saved.

If it is not the primary reason, it is certainly part of the reason that people are attracted to the Christian life. In many cases it is because of what they see in the lives of faithful Christians. We are calling this part of our lesson "EFFECT" because as Christians our lives should have some type of positive **effect** on the lives of those who do not know Christ if we are ever going to have an opportunity to share Christ with them. We could accurately describe the word **effect** as **"the power to influence" or "the success in bringing about a change in somebody or something or the ability to achieve this"**.

The greatest tool that we will ever have to learn to share Christ is the Word of God. We will look at scriptures that will teach us how to apply the five different areas to our lives in order that we might be all we can be as fruit bearing Christians.

First, we will look at the following verse, learn what it means and learn how we can apply it to our lives so that we might have a "godly effect" in our areas of influence.

Matthew 5:16

**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

Wherever you are on the compound, like anyplace else, it is imperative that we all keep our testimony above reproach. Whether in the dorm, on the recreation yard, eating meals with others or coming and going to all of these places, it is important that our walk with the Lord is evident. Someone once asked, "If we were ever accused of being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict us?" The answer to that question would hopefully be, "Yes"!

What are some of the ways that we can make sure that our testimony is all that it needs to be in front of others?

It is important for all of us if we are ever going to have a verbal witness that we be a "living and walking" witness as well. All of us have been around hypocrisy and sadly to some degree or another, all of us have also been guilty of it. Most people want to see that what we have in our relationship to Jesus Christ is real and that it is so real to us that we are willing to live it out at all cost in front of others in spite of the temptation to simply blend in.

There is a simple answer to what many people have thought to be a complicated question. The question being, **what does God want me to do?** The answer is: God wants us to glorify Him with our lives! We just mentioned this in the beginning of our lesson.

1 Corinthians 10:31

**Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do,
do all to the glory of God.**

As we take a closer look at **Matthew 5:16**, we will see how we can apply this verse to our daily lives and reach our objective in terms of the godly effect that we have on people that are in our areas of influence.

First we will look at: **An Important Description: You ARE the light of the world.**

Matthew 5:14

Ye are the light of the world.

A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

We see this description that Jesus gave to His followers, "You ARE the light of the world." He did not say that this was something they ought to be, He said it was something they ARE.

In **Genesis Chapter 1**, we read of the creation account.

- **Genesis 1:1-4 -**

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

³And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

⁴And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

⁵And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

We learn from this account something very interesting. We learn that after God had created the "heaven and the earth," the first thing that He created was "the light" and God divided "the light from the darkness" and it has been divided ever since that time.

It may seem like a very simple fact in the physical realm, but it is a very profound truth in the spiritual realm, that light and darkness cannot occupy the same space. Wherever the light is, the darkness is not. The light can be surrounded by the darkness but it cannot be extinguished by the darkness. We also know that the light can pierce through the darkness — and depending on the amount of the light — can extinguish the darkness all together.

What does this truth make you think of when you think of the light and the darkness in your personal walk with the Lord?

Having a better understanding of the spiritual concept of light and darkness will better equip us to live out the instruction of Jesus to “let your light so shine before men.”

Look at the following scriptures to see more examples of the distinction between light and darkness:

- John 3:19 - And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds [things that occupy them] were evil.
- John 8:12 - Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Ephesians 5:8 - For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
- John 12:46 - I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide [to remain] in darkness.
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion [things in common] hath light with darkness?
- 1 Peter 2:9 - But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
- Colossians 1:13 - Who hath delivered [rescued] us from the power [authority over] of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:

In the first chapter of **John (1:6-9)** Jesus is described as the “Light” and that John was sent to bear witness of that Light. We notice in the previous verses that there is a clear contrast between light and darkness as it pertains to the Christian. The light that we are to shine is the Light of Christ that is in us and the darkness that is described is what the Bible teaches that we “have been called out of.”

Light is something that illuminates or "lights up." Our Christian life should "illuminate" what is going on in our hearts and lives because of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Darkness, as it pertains to spiritual things, is "that which is ignorant regarding godly things and the associated ungodliness and immorality that accompanies a life without Christ."

What should the light in us show others?

Ephesians 5:8 describes this very clearly when Paul wrote that "you **WERE** sometimes darkness, but **NOW** you are light in the Lord, so walk as children of light." Paul was simply reinforcing something that Jesus had already said when He told His listeners that they **ARE** the salt of the earth, they **ARE** the light of the world.

So then, as we have a better understanding of this contrast between light and darkness, it will help us to better understand what it means to "let our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven."

Several things that we see in this verse:

A. Our Willingness — LET your light so shine before men

If we miss this, we will miss a very important truth that is essential in carrying out this Christian responsibility. Jesus said, "Let your light shine." He did not say that we can make it shine, or force it to shine; He said that we must **LET** it shine. To **let**, means "to allow, permit or agree to." It is the active, willing participation of allowing God to work through me that others might see Him doing so.

For our learning: When we do not allow God to work through us, all that a person can see is us. Our objective in this life is to no longer have the desire to be seen, but to have the desire for God to be seen in us. As we begin to allow "God's will to work through us", we will allow God to be seen **IN** us.

What are some ways in your daily life that people can see God IN you?

B. Our Light - Let your light so shine before men

We see in this verse that Jesus is teaching that this "light" is a personal light. It is not my friends' light, my Mom's light, my Dad's light, my church's light or anyone else's light – it is MY light that must shine!

One of the most common and dangerous spiritual mistakes that people make is trying to live the Christian life on somebody else's light! You and I cannot "**shine the light**" by association, it must first come by RELATION!

Have you ever wondered why you have seen people around you that have the light of Jesus Christ shining in their lives, and you keep trying to emulate what they are doing without having the Light in you that they have in them? You must understand that this Light, Jesus Christ, must first be IN you before it can shine out of you!

- John 1:12 - But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:
- Colossians 1:27 - To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:
- Romans 8:9 - But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

C. For our learning: Many times in this series of lessons have we described the necessity of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If you have tried everything that you can think of to get things to work out the way that you want them to work

out and have never experienced God working in your life, then what may be missing is God working IN you.

- 2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates (disapproved).

Briefly describe the time in your life when you received Jesus Christ as your Savior.

D. Our Shining - Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works

When a candle shines, it does so because that is what it was made to do. Shining is the natural result of something that possesses light, and we are to have a holy influence upon people because of the Light that is really in us. We have all made unsuccessful attempts to **appear** good, but we would be far more successful in our lives if we would seek to **BE** good. The great Charles Spurgeon said that "The natural result of a renewed **heart** is a renewed **life**, and the natural result of a renewed life is that people see it and glorify God."

Notice the verse says that they will see your "good works." No longer will it be a life of good intentions, but it will be a life of good works. Good talk sounds good to most people but it takes a whole lot more than talk to light up a room! Good works are the expression of a life that is full of the Light of God!

If we are ever going to have an opportunity to share Christ with others we must first begin by setting a godly example before those that are able to watch our lives. Our confidence is first and foremost in the power of God enabling us to walk in such a way

E2 – EARN

Scripture Memory Verse - Matthew 7:12

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

In our previous lesson we looked at the importance of “letting our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.” We learned that if we are ever going to be effective in winning people to Jesus Christ, we will do so because we are living a practical, consistent Christian life in front of them. In so many areas of life people want to make sure that what they are getting is real. Sadly, we have all been guilty of not being real in many areas of our lives. Many of us have been deceptive and it has certainly not been to our benefit. Trust is a difficult thing for many people for various reasons, but the need to be trustworthy as a Christian is essential.

Anyone that has ever been in or around the prison environment knows that the code above all things is **respect**. Respect is and should be a big deal for all of us, but for many of us it might only go one way. Not just in prison life, but in all areas of life people desire, or in some cases, demand respect. We want to be respected for what we believe, for who we are and for what we say. Many of us — perhaps all of us — have been guilty of wanting respect in all these different areas, but not being respectful to others in terms of the same things. If we are not careful, we take on the attitude of being dogmatic about what we believe and the way we live, and become disrespectful and judgmental concerning what others believe and the way that they live.

Do not misunderstand me — I am not saying that we live in a world where everything is simply relative to the way that people choose to live. There is a Way to live and the way that we are expected to live is the way that the Bible teaches us to live.

There is something that we can call absolute truth, and it can be found in the Person of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Jesus said in **John 18:37**” **and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.**” A familiar verse that many of us have committed to memory is found in John 14:6...” **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”**

What we must understand if we are going to be effective in the area of personal evangelism is that just because we do not agree with what others believe that is contrary to what the Bible teaches, we do not disrespect them because of their spiritual ignorance. When we continue this second part of our series called “Earn” our objective

will be to learn how we might “earn” the trust of those who are unsaved so that we might then have an opportunity to share the gospel with them.

In the prison environment — perhaps more so than any other environment — you will need to intentionally be aware of the importance to earn people’s trust. No one is going to “buy into” what we believe until there is sufficient evidence for doing so. When people begin to trust us simply on the grounds that they believe that we care — with no strings attached — they will be more likely to be open minded to receiving the gospel message that we desire to share with them.

So then, **our objective is to earn the trust of others** so that we might share the gospel with them in order that they might be saved. With that in mind we will look to the Scriptures to learn how we might do so.

A. “What we should do”

- **Matthew 7:12 - Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**

Many and perhaps all of us have heard this verse quoted in some way or another. It has commonly been referred to as “the golden rule.” Like many other Bible verses, hearing and knowing does not always equate to doing. All of us have been guilty of treating others far worse than we may have wanted to be treated ourselves. In fact when it comes to our treatment of others, if we were consistently treated the same way, we would have strong objections to the way we are being treated.

A Bible principle is best carried out when we first have a better understanding of how that can be accomplished. There is no sense in our pretending that we all have this “golden rule” principle figured out, when all we really have to do is take a brief look at our past to admit it is not so. Treating others the way that God would have us treat them is, above any other way, the best way for us to earn someone’s trust. In fact, when we consider the way that we have treated others that are contrary to the way that God would have us treat them, we create quite the opposite — people will never trust us.

I think all of us would agree that trust is something we earn and it is earned over time. It would be foolish for any of us to simply place our trust in something or someone until we have been given enough reason for doing so.

Many of us have grown up in environments where we have been taught not to trust anyone and in the prison environment it is even more so than others. Always keep in mind that everything that we have learned in the past may not always be the best way to live. However, we must also be realistic. I really do not find the instruction in the Bible where we are to just lay everything down and openly trust anyone and everyone. To say that would be a foolish way for us to live would be an understatement.

Remember that we said that trust is something that is earned; it is not something that is blindly given. No, I cannot find where we are to trust anyone and everyone, but I do see plenty of Biblical expectations placed upon us as believers to be trustworthy. Inmate to inmate, if you are ever going to have a consistent verbal witness for the Lord and see other inmates come to Christ because of that witness, you will have to be trustworthy. I think Paul said it best when he made the following statement.

- **1 Corinthians 9:14 - Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.**

In our last lesson (E1) we learned the importance of **"letting our light shine before men so that they might see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven."** This statement from Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth teaches us if we are going to communicate the gospel we had better be living what we are saying in order that people might trust what we say.

With that being said, let's look at this principle that Jesus laid before us concerning what we have described as "the golden rule." In doing so, we will set out to live this principle in order that we might gain the trust of others which will help create opportunities to share the gospel.

B. A Personal Consideration.

- **Matthew 7:12 - Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**

Several things that we see in this verse:

I am not sure if Jesus could have been anymore straightforward than He was when He gave this instruction. Jesus came to teach us, not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do. In some cases He taught what we are to know and do

concerning God, and in other cases what we are to know and do concerning people. In this verse that we are referring to we see that we are being instructed as to our treatment of others.

"A personal consideration" will first allow us the opportunity to apply the treatment of others to the way that you and I would choose to be treated. With that in mind we will mention a few things that might help us to carry this out. First we should mention a few things we should not do and then mention a few things that we should do.

We should not do to others the evil they have done to us or the evil they would do to us if it were in their power to do so.

- **Matthew 5:44 - But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**

This statement is not to suggest that the only people that we will have an opportunity to be a witness to will be our enemies. However, how we treat our enemies is not only being observed by them, but we are also being observed by others who are not our enemies. In other words, how can I be trusted as a follower of Jesus Christ when others see me respond to my enemies the same way that everyone else does?

What is one of our first instinctive reactions to our enemies and what are some ways that we might overcome them?

We should not make ourselves appear to be better than anyone else.

- **Philippians 2:3 - Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**

- **Romans 12:3** - For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Humility is a Christian character that each of us should demonstrate. Being saved by the grace of God does not make us any better than anyone else. One way that we might overcome the temptation to think too highly of ourselves is to always remember where we came from. When we do so, it will enable us to keep our pride in check and will help us think more of others.

There may not be anything more distasteful in the eyes of lost people than for a Christian to think they are better than someone else. We will never gain the trust of anyone if we appear to putting ourselves on a higher level than they are. A fellow inmate, like anyone else, needs to see that we are genuine and that we have genuine concern for other people. Thinking that we may have "arrived" to some level in the Christian life that manifests itself in our being "too good" to interact with people who are not saved will only alienate us from a lost world that we have been called to win to Christ.

What are some ways that we can be tempted to think we are better than others and how might we overcome these ways?

A Personal Application. How we live this Bible principle out will make all the difference in terms of winning the trust of other inmates in order that we might share Christ with them. To *know* is half of the work — it is when we *live out* what we know that we reap the benefits. The question is: How do I live out "the golden rule" in order that not only I reap the benefits of it, but most importantly others reap the benefits as well?

Several things for our consideration:

In the treatment of others, never forget that we were in some way just like they are.

Yes, the details in many cases are different but the one thing that we all have in common with someone who is not saved is that we at one time were not saved either. It should never surprise us when an unsaved person acts a certain way that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible. Didn't we do the same thing? Do we need to look far into our own past to see the same types of behavior that we are seeing in them?

What do you see in the lives of other inmates that you can remember at one time being in your life?

Take a moment and ask the Lord to help you not to judge others for the things they do, but in turn, to help you to see them the way He sees them.

When we make a conscious effort to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will show us when we are being judgmental towards other people. Not forgetting where we came from will help enable us to resist the temptation to judge others for the way that they live. When we give into the temptation, we will not only look at that person in a different light and perhaps not have a desire to witness to them, but we will also give them reason to reject the gospel message.

In our treatment of others we must conduct ourselves in a manner as if it were our own case.

This takes discipline. To consistently be aware that every person we deal with could have at one time been our case or even could at one time in the future be our own case will shed a whole new light on the way that we treat them. In other words, we are disciplining ourselves to putting ourselves in their situation and treating them accordingly. In doing so, we will assure ourselves and assure them as well that we are being fair and sincere in the way that we are treating them.

How can putting ourselves in the place of others help to begin to earn their trust?

This takes change. I would venture to say that — in spite of hearing this Bible principle — many of us pay little or no attention to it in our daily lives. We are so quick to judge others when we see offensive behavior in their lives, and are more likely to be harsher in terms of what we think should happen to them because of their offensiveness. I think in part, this is what Jesus was talking about — we should not be stricter, more demanding and more expectant of others than we would have them to be with us. But if we are going to do so in order that we might gain their trust, we are going to need to be honest with ourselves and the Lord, and make some serious changes in the way we have treated others in the past.

A simple question like the following might be a question that we should all keep in the forefront of our minds when we are attempting to gain the trust of others.

If I were walking in the same shoes and under the same burden and difficulty, how would I desire and expect to be treated?

We can never go wrong by doing right! Most importantly, we can never go wrong by living out an instruction from the Word of God. When Jesus gave this instruction He knew that we would be challenged with the temptation to place ourselves on another level than we should place ourselves. He knew that our gradual distaste for the sins of our past would be revealed in the lives of others after we have been delivered from them. However, He also knew that by us living out this instruction we might have the opportunity to reject the temptation of standing in judgment and accept the responsibility to treat others the way that we would want to be treated, and the way that He would treat them. When we do so, we will begin to earn their trust that will help pave the way to sharing the gospel in order that they might be saved.

Ask the Lord to help you live out this very important instruction so that He might use you in the lives of others for His glory.

Begin to develop a list of inmates that you are intentionally beginning to try to earn their trust. Begin to make their names part of your prayer list each day.



E3 - Engage

Scripture Memory Verse - Acts 8:35 -

**Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture,
and preached unto him Jesus.**

Since we began our study, we have learned about the effect that our walk with the Lord can have on a person that does not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. We also learned how we are to treat them and respond to them in the same way we might have others treat us. In doing so, we will begin and continue to earn their trust in order that we might have an opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

In this part of our study, we will begin to learn how we might intentionally “engage” in conversation with others in order that we might eventually share the gospel with them.

Most people believe that it is difficult to talk to unsaved people about the things of God. There seems to be this sense of anxiety that sometimes overcomes them when they have the opportunity to speak up for Jesus Christ. Then their anxiety might be accompanied by a lack of confidence concerning their Bible knowledge on any given subject. When these feelings occur, we are often tempted to retreat and not say anything rather than step out and engage in conversations about spiritual things. Unfortunately, we give into the temptation to retreat because it sometimes feels like the much safer choice of the two.

What we will learn from our Biblical example is that when God orchestrates the conversation, He will give us the words to say. We will also learn that when He orchestrates the conversation He does so in order that we might follow His lead and obey. When God opens the conversation we are experiencing the absolutely amazing privilege of being used as His instrument to plant seeds that He wants to use to bring a person to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and it doesn't get any better than that!

By you should have already begun to make a list of at least five people that you have begun to pray for. You should be praying that in some way God might use to be an influence in their life in order that they might be saved.

Before we continue in our study, take a few moments and lift this list of names before the Lord and ask Him to help you to be that influence that they might need so that they might be saved.

Our scripture for this part of our study is found in Acts, Chapter 8. We will look at this Biblical example in the life of Phillip, and see how God so intentionally set up circumstances in order that Phillip might have the opportunity to be a witness for Christ.

- **Acts 8:26-38 - And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.**
 - ²⁷And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
 - ²⁸Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.
 - ²⁹Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.
 - ³⁰And Philip ran thither to [him], and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?
 - ³¹And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.
 - ³²The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:
 - ³³In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.
 - ³⁴And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?
 - ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.
 - ³⁶And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
 - ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 - ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

A. What we can learn: Obedience

- **Verse 26-27a - Direction given to Phillip and Phillip follows the directions.** And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." ^{27a}And he arose and went:

During this day and time it was a special providence by God to dispatch His angels for the delivery of certain messages. Phillip must **go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza**, through the desert or wilderness of Judah. We might think that Phillip would have never considered going through the desert to go to Gaza. It was not the most likely path that a person would have taken, but nevertheless, he followed the direction of the angel and went. We do not see him debating about why he should go or what might be the likelihood of finding any good to do on his way — He just went.

As we follow one direction, the Lord will give us more direction. As this story unfolds we are going to learn that God opens doors of opportunity often in places that might seem, to us, the least likely places for Him to do so.

What are some examples in your life today where God has shown you to walk through one door in order that He might open another?

- **Verses 27b,28 - A divine scheduled appointment.** And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, ²⁸Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

Ethiopia was looked upon as the most despicable of nations, but the gospel of the grace of God is sent to them. This man was a person of quality, a great man in his own

country. He served under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians and had the charge of her treasure which speaks of his character and integrity. He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, not being a Jew but came to Jerusalem to worship. There he waited by the divine appointment of God as God had already stirred his curiosity for spiritual things.

Upon his return he brought his chariot to a halt and was reading the Book of Isaiah. Perhaps it was the text that he heard expounded upon when he was in Jerusalem and he could not part from the truth of it. Or perhaps he had read the text before and was compelled to read it again in order that it might make better sense to him than it did the last time. Whatever the case, we know that his appetite to know more had been awakened and his need to understand the truth had yet to be met.

- B. For our learning: A desire to know truth** will always be met in some fashion by the receiving of the truth. In this case, we see the eunuch with a strong desire to know the truth strategically placed in the path of a believer that had been equipped to communicate the truth.

Now we have half of the equation. God has begun to set the scene for evangelism. He has allowed the eunuch to have the opportunity to come in contact with a believer in order that he might have an opportunity to be saved. But if the other half of the equation (Phillip) does not respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, there will be an opportunity wasted and the man will continue on that day in his ignorance.

What are some of the ways that you are beginning to see God orchestrating opportunities for you to share your faith?

- **Verses 29,30a - The Spirit clearly speaks and Phillip willfully obeys.**
Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.
And Philip ran thither to him

None of us find the instruction of the Holy Spirit to be confusing in any way, shape or form. He clearly tells Phillip what he is to do and he is to do it right now. It seems like a no brainer, but it is vitally important for all of us to understand that if we are ever going to be a verbal witness for the Lord we will have to place ourselves in the company of those who are unsaved. But understand something that is equally as important; we are to be lead to the people that God would have us witness to.

We do not need to place ourselves in the middle of a pig sty in order to find out that there are pigs there. God will allow our paths to cross the path of those that He is already preparing to hear the truth; all we need to do is to be sensitive to His leadership in order that we might know when He wants us to speak.

- C. **For our learning: Evangelism** is always intentional, but it may not always work out the way that we think that it should work out. We will discuss our ability to share in the next study but now we are concentrating primarily on our availability.

Notice the first part of verse 30 tells us that when the Spirit spoke to Phillip and told him to go to the eunuch's chariot, he ran and did what the Spirit told him to do. There was no delay and there were no excuses from Phillip as to why he should or should not go to the chariot of the eunuch.....he simply did what he was told.

Can you describe a situation(s) that you can say with confidence that God has already led you to speak to someone about the Lord?

Now we see by the example of Phillip how important our obedience is in terms of the timing of God. In this story, we see a very small window of time where all these particulars need to come together in order to get the gospel to the eunuch, and if Phillip does not obey it will not happen on this day at this time.

Take a few minutes and ask God to help you to be available and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit when He desires to use you in a moment's notice.

- **Verses 30b-35 - Engaging in conversation and getting to the main point.**
... and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? ³¹And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³²The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: ³³In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. ³⁴And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

So here it is! Phillip finds what he was sent in the desert to do. The table is set and the appointment has come together just the way that the Holy Spirit had planned for it to happen. No sooner did Phillip make his way to the chariot, he asks the eunuch a very simple, non-confrontational question, "**Understandest thou what thou readest?**" Then without hesitation, the eunuch answers the question with another one. **And he said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?"** Following the admission to his lack of knowledge, he invites Phillip to sit down and join him so that Phillip may be able to explain what he is reading. It doesn't get any better than this!!

In the course of the average day as an inmate, there have been times and there will be more times where God orchestrates "divine appointments" in the activities of your day. You will need to be sensitive when these times occur and obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Engaging in conversation about spiritual matters is something that we must do intentionally or it might not get done.

On the other hand, there will be times when we are not always the initiators of the conversation, but instead, we are invited into a spiritual conversation based on the subject matter of what is being discussed. Either way, whether we are the one that starts the conversation or we are the one that responds to the conversation, we must trust the Lord to lead us to say what He would have us to say.

Notice the end of verse 35 that tells us that Phillip's response was not his way of impressing the eunuch with his command of the language of his day. It was not a show of his articulateness or his intellect and it certainly did not include him portraying himself as better than the eunuch. He kept the main thing the main thing and "**preached unto him, Jesus**".

D. **For our learning:** Always remember that we are not trying to win an argumaent or prove a point when we are sharing the gospel. We are not trying to convince someone of what we believe in order that they might believe the same thing. **We are sharing the truth of God's word concerning Jesus Christ!** When we do that we are leaving the response to His word in the lap of the listeners, and it will be their choice as to whether or not they will receive His truth or reject it.

In what ways could we send the conversation in the wrong direction by trying to win an argument or prove a point?



E4 - Evangelize

Scripture Memory Verse - Romans 1:16

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:
for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth;
to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

Our memory verse pretty much says it all when we consider what it is that we are to share in order that other might be saved. It is the gospel and it is the gospel and the gospel alone that is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. By this time in our series of lessons we have learned (1) the importance of **"letting our light shine so that men may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven"**.

We have learned (2) the importance of gaining the trust of other inmates in the way that we try to live a consistent Christian life before them.

We have learned (3) in order for us to ever share the gospel, we will need to be sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit as He opens doors of opportunities to engage in conversations about spiritual things.

Now we will learn how to verbally communicate "the gospel" in order that we might lead someone to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

As we learn, it will take discipline to devote ourselves to learning different verses and becoming familiar with those verses in order for us to effectively communicate the scriptures. Learning takes time and there is nothing in this world that is any more important for us to learn than to learn how we can use the Bible and lead a person to Christ. As we have said before, always remember that it is God who does the saving, the Holy Spirit who does the "drawing," and for the verbal witness, it is the obedient Christian who does the sharing. We are not communicating our story, although it may be included. We are communicating God's story, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When we are sharing the gospel, we are sharing God's word with people in order that they may have an understanding of their need for Jesus Christ. Look at it like this — with the Word of God we are sharing absolute truth concerning:

- A person's need for forgiveness.
- God's provision for their forgiveness.
- Their responsibility to respond to God's provision.

Before we begin to learn what these verses are and how we are to share them, take a little time and reflect on what you have learned up to this point in our study. Write down some of the things God is teaching you.

Assuming that you have now been practicing some or most of what we have learned, and God has begun to make it clear that He is placing people in your path for you to witness to, we can now begin to learn how we will share the gospel with them.

In each one of our studies, we need to continue to remind ourselves that our dependence is upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We learned that He will orchestrate the circumstances and conversations — we simply need to be obedient. When we share the gospel with others, we must remember the same thing. Do not place all the responsibility upon yourself to get the results that you desire. We all want to see people saved or we would not be participating in this series of lessons, but the results are to left up to God. We are just a link in the chain, a planter, or one who waters and God will do the work that only He can do.

So then, you have been given the opportunity to share what the Bible says that a person needs to do in order that they might be saved. You are right in the middle of a "God appointed" time and you take the Bible and begin to share the following:

A. Admit that you are a sinner.

- **Romans 3:23 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

B. We all have sin in our hearts. We all were born with sin.

We were born under the power of sin's control.

- **Romans 5:12 - Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

Our sin was handed down from our parents. We were all born that way since Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Every person who was born after him has been born a sinner.

C. Understand that you deserve death for your sin.

- Romans 6:23a - The wages of sin is death...

Sin has an ending. It results in death. We all face physical death, which is a result of sin. But a worse death is spiritual death that alienates us from God, and will last for all eternity. The Bible teaches that there is a place called the Lake of Fire where lost people will be in torment forever (Revelation 20:15).

D. Understand that we cannot do anything to earn our way into heaven.

- Romans 6:23b - ...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Salvation is a free gift from God to you! You can't earn this gift; you must reach out and receive it.

- Ephesians 2:8,9 - For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.

E. Understand that God has already made a way for your forgiveness.

- Romans 5:8 - But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

When Jesus died on the cross He paid sin's penalty. He paid the price for all sin, and when He took all the sins of the world on Himself on the cross, He bought us out of slavery to sin and death! The only condition is that we believe in Him and what He has done for us. He did all this because He loved us and gave Himself for us!

F. Understand that you must respond to what God has already done.

- **Romans 10:9,10 - That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**
- **Romans 10:13 - Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

His love poured out in Jesus on the cross is your only hope to have forgiveness and change. His love bought you out of being a slave to sin. His love is what saves you, not any kind of religion or being good enough. God loves you just the way you are, He just doesn't want you to stay that way!

Give your life to God by asking Him to forgive you and inviting Jesus Christ to come into your life to be your Savior.

At this time, when a person is in agreement with what the Bible says about their need to be saved, invite them to pray and ask the Lord to save them. Volunteer to lead them in a prayer that they can repeat after you **to the Lord**.

Remind them that we cannot save them, nor can we ask God to forgive them. It must be a personal commitment from them to God. Ask for permission to lead them in a prayer such as the following:

Dear Lord Jesus,
I know that I am a sinner and I believe that you died for my sins on the cross. I believe that you were buried and that you rose again from the grave. Please forgive me of my sins, please come into my life. I now receive you as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you for dying for me. Thank you for saving me. Please help me learn how to live the Christian life. In Jesus name, amen!

Friends, if you have the privilege of leading someone in the sinner's prayer you will experience the greatest act of service that a Christian can experience!

Mark these verses in your Bible and mark the verse that you would turn to next as you share the gospel. Discipline yourself to memorize these verses. The more you share them the more familiar you will be with sharing them. In the next and final session (E5), we will learn what to teach a new believer concerning their "next step." ■

E5 - ENROLL

Scripture Memory Verse - 2 Timothy 2:15

**Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.**

We have arrived at the last lesson of our study. How to instruct someone concerning what they are to do after they receive Jesus Christ as their Savior is extremely important. Many of us have had the unfortunate experience of getting saved and not beginning to grow following our salvation experience.

Growth in the Christian life is essential and if we are not diligent about assisting people to grow we are a disservice to them and to our Lord as well. When we consider the last instruction from our Lord before His ascension, we all might agree that it very well may have been His most important instruction.

- **Matthew 28:18-20 - And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.**

These are the marching orders for all who name the name of Christ. We have been given the responsibility to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who are lost. Following their conversion we are to also instructed to "go the extra mile" and assist in the process of their spiritual growth. We see this instruction carried out in the lives of the disciples in the days of the early church. We see many examples like the following verses that show us their passion for the carrying out of the "Great Commission".

- **1 Corinthians 9:16 - For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!**
- **2 Timothy 2:2 - And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**

- **1 Peter 2:2 - As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**
- **2 Peter 3:18 - But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever.**

These are just a few examples concerning the fact that Paul and others had a handle on keeping the main thing the main thing. They understood that it was all about seeing people saved, seeing them baptized and seeing them learn and grow in the Lord.

When we go back to our story in segment E3 of our series, we see an example of the order in which we are to follow. You will remember in **Acts 8:26-38** the story of Phillip and the eunuch, and how the Spirit led Phillip to a specific place at a specific time in order that he might have the opportunity to share the gospel. Phillip engaged in conversation with him and "preached Jesus unto him". In that part of our lesson we did not go any further in the story in order that we might pick it up where we left off in this lesson.

- **Acts 8:36-38 - And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.**

Here we have what we could accurately describe as "the rest of the story". After Phillip had given the eunuch a thorough explanation of the scriptures concerning Jesus, the eunuch assumed that all he needed to do was to be baptized. Perhaps when he was in Jerusalem he saw others getting baptized and tried to make the connection to satisfy his religious curiosity. Or perhaps when he heard of others being baptized and realized that he had not done the same, he would act upon his good intentions and get baptized himself. Whatever the case was, we know that it was not because of a lack of desire that he could not get baptized, but it was in fact because of a lack of commitment. He had not yet repented of his sin, received Jesus as his savior and committed his life to Jesus Christ.

He asks a very humble, sincere question, "**See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?**" The word hinder means to "prevent or forbid." The eunuch was asking what it is that would currently prevent him from being baptized, and Phillip's answer was that he must first believe in order that he might then be baptized. Here we have a

Biblical example of the order the Bible teaches concerning baptism. It was imperative that the eunuch first believe before he was baptized and we see that's exactly what he did before he was.

We also see another example in Acts, Chapter 2.

- **Acts 2:41 - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.**

Again we see the same order, "they that gladly received his word were baptized." In fact this verse teaches us another very important lesson. Those that were saved that day were baptized the first chance they had to do so.

When you have the privilege of leading a fellow inmate to Jesus Christ take the personal responsibility to assist them in following the Lord in baptism.

Let's take a look at the importance of baptism and what the Bible teaches about it.

A. We are baptized to follow the example of Jesus.

- **Matthew 3:13-15 - Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? ¹⁵And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer [it to be so] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then He suffered (to permit or allow) him.**

B. We are baptized to follow the command of Jesus.

- **Matthew 28:19,20 - Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.**

C. We are baptized by immersion.

The English word baptize is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*, which means "dip, immerse." This by definition is the reason we baptize this way. In addition and most importantly, this was the method by which Jesus was baptized. He is our example.

- **Matthew 3:16 - And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him:**

Make sure that you are educated in the process in which the Chaplain's office handles the order by which an inmate must follow in order to be baptized. Follow-up and make sure that you do your part in helping to make that process go as smoothly as possible.

In all of the institutions that I have had the privilege of serving, every one of them has a very good chapel system in place for providing the spiritual growth of the inmate. Some institutions may have a different process than others, but all of them have opportunities for every inmate to grow if that is their desire. Follow the process to get the new believer involved and growing in the Lord, and before too long they just might be doing the same thing for someone else.



RECAP

The following is a recap of some of the things that we have learned and a practical way to follow our "E5" plan so that you can be used by God for His glory.

- E1** — Be sure you are paying close attention to your walk with the Lord so that you are growing and learning in order that you might have the proper godly **"effect"** upon the fellow inmates of the institution.
- E2** — Be sure you are paying close attention to **"earning"** the trust of your fellow inmates in order that they might see that you are sincere about your walk with the Lord.
- E3** — Be sure you are asking God daily to fill you with His Holy Spirit so that you might be sensitive to the opportunities to **"engage"** in spiritual conversations with other inmates, in order that you might have the privilege of leading them to Christ.
- E4** — Be sure you study, learn and memorize the plan of salvation that we studied in the Book of Romans in order that you can **"evangelize"** someone from the Word of God about their need for Jesus Christ.
- E5** — **"Enroll"** — Be sure you are educated about the procedures of the Chapel Ministry of your institution so you can help inmates who have been saved to take the necessary steps for their spiritual growth.

There is only one way that all of what we have learned will help us and that is if we set out to do it. Yes, there is a lot more that we can learn and we should. But what we have learned can be put to good use and it should. In every institution in America, and even around the world, there are thousands and thousands of people that need to hear of the good news that Jesus Saves! It is our responsibility as believers to get that word to them. If we do not, nobody else will.

We are blessed and God is glorified when we share the good news with others. Depend on God for the results and may God depend on us for the witness. Men, you are currently on one of the greatest mission fields in the entire world — go and make disciples!!

