

CHAPTER XXI

Helpful Hints

1. AIDS TO MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE VERSES

Use 3x5 file cards, writing the verse on one side and the address on the other. This way you can go through the addresses to see if you know the verses, and through the verses to see if you know the addresses.

As you learn your verses, try quoting them as frequently as possible, and you will implant them more firmly in your mind. It is a well-known fact that when you compound reading, hearing, and speaking in the learning process, your retention will be progressively increased. Just listening or reading alone cannot give you skill and effectiveness in USING your knowledge. You must PRACTICE. It is well said that “practice makes perfect that which you practice.”

A periodic review of your memory verses is a good idea, even for the ones you feel you know quite well. If you have your 3x5 cards handy, you can make good use of time that perhaps you would otherwise waste . . . waiting for a bus, sitting in the beauty shop, etc.

Work toward knowing the verses so well that you can quote them immediately upon hearing the address, a portion of the verse, or subject material which the verse could answer or deals with.

Be able to quote them with almost no effort at all. In this way you can quote the verse to the person and actually be free to be thinking of what you will say next, or to be sensing the person’s reaction to it. The value of being able to do this is great.

2. DON’T ARGUE

Winning an argument might make you feel good—until you realize that doing so might result in the person’s ego being so hurt that his judgment is impaired and he won’t trust Christ as his Saviour.

One reason why so few people have a very fruitful soul winning ministry is that they are just plain inconsiderate of the feelings of the person to whom they are witnessing.

It is TRUE that the lost person must repent. He MUST change his mind and come to see that anything he has been trusting in other than Christ alone for his salvation cannot save him.

Christ IS “THE way, THE truth, and THE life.” And as you present the plan of salvation the lost person will discover that he has been wrong in his preconceived idea.

Because of this, BE KIND. You know how bad YOU feel when YOU are wrong about something, so remember the lost person also has feelings, and take great care in HOW you show him the truth of the gospel and the error of anything else.

(Of course, this should never involve a compromise in doctrine. This is just using good sense. Ephesians 4:15 says to speak “the TRUTH in LOVE.” One does not exclude the other. They should go hand in hand.)

If you have ever been in the position of talking to many people and getting to know their problems, you have already discovered how very lonely and hungry for love and understanding people really are.

The soulwinner who realizes this and will really be kind and considerate of the lost will not only win many souls, but will win life-long friends as well.

3. USING ILLUSTRATIONS

As you read through the Gospels you cannot help noticing our Lord's frequent use of illustrations. They are very valuable in making your points clear and understandable (as well as more interesting) to the person. If we will notice several things about Christ's illustrations and apply them to our own, we will find our illustrations very effective.

- A. They should be about subjects familiar to the person.
- B. As much as possible, they should be concrete, rather than abstract, forming a picture in the person's mind.
- C. They should be short and to the point, not taking up too much time. Don't get carried away with illustrations to the point that they usurp the proper place of Scripture in your presentation. Always bear in mind that your illustrations are a means to an end—to throw additional light upon the Scriptures—and not an end in themselves.
- D. Never use illustrations with shady tones. This certainly would defeat your purpose of getting the person's mind more on the Scriptures and the Lord Jesus Christ. It will cause the person to think less of you and less of your message.
- E. When you use an illustration from a book or from a person's life, don't tell it as if it happened in your own life. Although examples out of your own experience will naturally carry a certain added interest, it is not necessary that they be so. Just don't lie about it.

4. LOOK NICE

Would you expect the representative of a life insurance company to look neat, clean, and nicely dressed? How long do you think you would listen to his sales talk if he were shabby, dirty, and needed a shave?

Would an ambassador of the United States be representing our country properly as he met to discuss important issues with the ambassador of an important country if he wore an unpressed suit, had grease stains on his tie, needed a haircut, and had "B.O."?

Would the receptionist of a large, important company have her job long if she came to work and interviewed clients with her hair all messed up, her nail polish peeling off, yesterday's supper still in her teeth, and her dress needing ironing?

OF COURSE NOT!

As Christians, as ambassadors for the King of Kings, desiring to influence people to receive the gift of eternal life, we certainly should look as clean, neat, and attractive as we possibly can.

With careful planning there is no reason why a person should not be able to have an adequate wardrobe even though he is not a millionaire. This doesn't mean you must have every new "fad" that comes along in your closet, but you should make every effort to be reasonably stylish in accordance with the people you come into contact with.

It is absolutely inexcusable to irritate people with "B.O." and bad breath. Today's provisions against these things are too readily available for you to be offensive here. There is no substitute for cleanliness.

5. SINCERE COMPLIMENTS

Often just one compliment will so soften a person that he will relax and open up to the gospel right away.

When witnessing to a brilliant person, let him know you know he is smart. Compliment, for instance, a good lawyer on his abilities, or a great physician on his accomplishments. And remember, you do not have to study law to witness to a lawyer, or medicine to witness to a doctor. The gospel is your power.

6. AGREE

When a person is right, agree with him. Agree with him vehemently whenever possible. And when you must disagree, please do so in as pleasant a way as you can . . . as it has been said, many Christians are “dispensationally correct, but dispositionally wrong.” The Bible says “be ye kind one to another.”

7. USE “THE HAND GESTURE”

This method of securing the person’s attention and then explaining the gospel to him as you use a gesture is fully pictured and developed in Chapter 23. This is one of the most effective things we have ever found to make the gospel clear and understandable to the lost. Use it!

8. TOO MANY VERSES

Because we love the Word of God and find many verses so precious to us, we sometimes find ourselves using so many verses with a lost person that he gets confused. When one verse clarifies the point, leave it there. If you need another verse, fine; use another one. But usually the person’s problem will not so much be one of needing many verses, but rather that he does not understand or believe the verse you have just shown him.

9. USING QUESTIONS

Aristotle was famous for teaching by means of asking questions of his students. In this way the student could think out the truth of what he was trying to get across better than if he just lectured them. This is also true in witnessing. If a verse says, “whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” you might ask: “Does this verse say, whosoever works, and joins the church, and pays the tithe will not perish? Does this verse say that those who believe will have life until they start sinning again?” Questions will help the person think WITH you about the Scriptures.

10. TELL THE TRUTH

If you are asked a question which you cannot answer at the moment, don’t bluff it. Say you don’t know, and offer to find the answer and give it to him at a later date. In your own notebook you might want to keep a list of questions and their answers which are difficult for you to answer, along with explanations of passages that are difficult for you to explain. In time, after experience, you will find greater ease even in answering these.

11. HE DOESN’T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE SAYING

If the person doesn’t grasp what you are trying to put across, instead of implying that he is “stupid,” why not rather suggest that perhaps you haven’t made it clear enough? This will let him “save face” and you will be able to continue your ministry with him.

12. “CHRISTIAN” AMERICA

Since the majority of people in America feel that they are Christians, it isn’t good to ask a person if he is a Christian. Most people will say “yes” to this even if they are unsaved, and then you have to prove them wrong before you can lead them to the Lord.

Rather, ask questions like, “What do you think you have to do to go to heaven?” or “Do you know where you are going when you die?” Their answers to questions like these will give you a better idea of what to say to lead them to the Lord.

13. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

If you hear your preacher use a good illustration . . . if you see another soulwinner using a particular method in his soulwinning . . . if you find someone uses a particular phrase which increases his effectiveness in making the gospel clear . . . don't be afraid to do the same.

When a man is leading people to the Lord, try doing what he does. In I Cor. 4:16 the Apostle Paul urged his children in the faith to follow his Christian example.

The important thing isn't who originated this or that . . . the important thing is doing everything we can to make the plan of salvation understandable to the lost. All the glory belongs to the Lord.

14. SUGGESTIONS IN WITNESSING TO MEMBERS OF CULTS

A. They are still people. Just treat them as you would any other persons in need of salvation. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone (including the cultists) if they will believe. Try not to give the appearance of "shock" if you discover some "odd" thing they believe.

B. Often people are attracted to a cult or false religion because of the interest shown to them by the members of that group. Christians ought to show genuine love and concern for people and be all the more careful to "speak the truth in love."

C. The disciples of cults are usually quite zealous about their beliefs and love to talk. Let them. Don't be rude. Listen attentively so that when they are through with the presentation you may be better equipped to meet their needs in your presentation of the gospel.

D. Remember that these people are blinded by Satan. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not . . ." (II Cor. 4:4). The entrance of God's Word will give them the light they need (Psalm 119: 130).

E. Be careful not to get off onto "side issues" which are of no profit to the person's salvation. Stay with the main issue which, in most cases, will still be "grace and works."

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