

CHAPTER IV

The Messenger

Your Testimony

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” Titus 3:8).

The Bible says to BE CAREFUL to maintain good works. You can be sure that Satan will “pull every trick” to get you to ruin your testimony. Scripture says, “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may DEVOUR” (I Pet. 5:8).

You will have to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6: 11).

Many times when a Christian is sound doctrinally and determined to witness, Satan will “sneak around the back door” and ruin that Christian’s effectiveness because he wasn’t CAREFUL in his testimony.

This is so important! God warns us, “Giving no offense in any thing, that the MINISTRY be not blamed!” (II Cor. 6:3) We should do what is proper in every situation because people will use our poor testimony to criticize Christian work.

If people find that you lie, cheat, steal, speak in an uncouth manner, gossip, are inconsiderate of others, etc., you will not be liked, and you will do GREAT HARM to your ministry. People will look at your life and say, “If that is an example of Christianity, then I don’t want it.”

The Lord cautions us to “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (I Thess. 5:22). Some things might be perfectly harmless for you to do, not sinful to you in any way, except that

some Christians would consider it a poor testimony for one reason or another. God says, in that case, to abstain from it. Just don’t do it. It isn’t worth it. Your ministry—what you are trying to accomplish in your life for the Lord—is too valuable for you to risk its losing any effectiveness. God knows your heart, and He will bless you for your faithfulness.

The Apostle Paul was in a situation similar to this. In his day it was common for meat which had been offered to idols afterwards to be placed in the market for sale. He knew the meat was neither blessed nor cursed by the idol (I Cor. 8:8). But there were Christians who thought Paul should not eat that meat.

Could Paul have eaten the meat? Yes. Did he? No! Why? He said, “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Rom. 14:21). “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (I Cor. 8 :13). In Christian work you cannot offend people . . . and neither can you let yourself be offended. If you allow people to hurt your feelings, you will not be able to have the ministry with them in their lives that you need to have.

Paul disciplined his own life in order to serve and help others.

As a soulwinner, you will probably “give up” things that the average Christian wouldn’t even question—not because you have to—but because you love the Lord so much that you wouldn’t want anything in your life to keep people from trusting Christ as their Saviour.

“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (I Cor. 6:12).

It is not a question of “Can you do this or that and still be saved?” And it wasn’t that question in

Paul's case. He knew the law could not affect his eternal life. But he kept himself from becoming enslaved by sin in his daily life (Rom. 6:15, 16) so he could be more greatly used for the Lord.

“For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5 :13) .

To be a fruitful witness for the Lord you must voluntarily discipline your life to carry the correct testimony for your Lord and Saviour. If you tell people about Christ and don't honor Christ in your life, people won't respect you and will not listen when you witness.

However, don't go to the opposite extreme either. Some Christians get so introspective that they spend all their time trying to be “holy,” spend hours in “prayer and meditation,” but neglect to tell the lost about Christ. They live “good lives” before others, but no one ever hears the gospel from their lips. If you live a good life but don't witness, you will get all the glory instead of Christ, to whom all glory belongs (I Cor. 1 :31) .

It is amazing what high standards even the world sets for Christians, and truly we should live the best possible life and testimony. You will be labeled as a “fanatic” if you witness without a life to back it up. A good testimony and a good witness go hand-in-hand. You must have both really to glorify the Lord. They are not in competition.

Satan will deceive anyone who will accept his “line,” whether that person be saved or unsaved. John 8:44 says Satan is a liar and the father of lies. Satan tries to get the lost to live good lives, deceiving them that this would help them get to heaven. Satan tries to keep the saved from living good lives, because he knows that this will keep the lost from accepting the gospel when it is presented.

I Thessalonians, chapter two, mentions many qualities Paul had as a soulwinner. As you study this passage, you will notice that he (1) was bold in his witness, (2) used no deceit or trickery, (3) fulfilled his trust and pleased God, (4) was honest, (5) didn't seek the praise of men, (6) was gentle, (7) had great love and concern, (8) labored diligently, (9) carried a good testimony, and (10) taught them to live for the Lord.

If you want to be a great soulwinner, you must be a great servant. “. . . whosoever will be great among you, shall be your MINISTER” (Mark 10:43) .

The Apostle Paul is a wonderful example of a really dedicated Christian. Listen to his own words in I Cor. 9:1 and 19. “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”

Do you realize the extent of the dedication of the Apostle Paul? Yes, he witnessed night and day for three years straight, publicly and privately (Acts 20:20, 21, 31). But what was he willing to give up to lead a soul to Christ?

Money? Position? Spare time? Sports? Home? Health? Life itself?

Did you know that he was willing to have given his OWN SOUL that others could be saved? I Thess. 2:8 tells us, “So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also OUR OWN SOULS, because ye were dear unto us.” Paul cared so much for souls that he was willing, if it were possible even to go to hell himself, if that would help his fellow Jews to be saved (Romans 9:3).



Some things aren't even a poor testimony in themselves, but they “bog” you down, they are “weights,” they take up valuable time which you should be using for the Lord. Hebrews 12:1 says to “lay aside every weight.”

Your life can become filled with so many “good” things of this life that you haven't the time to do much for Christ. If you really want to join in this battle for souls, heed the Scripture which says, “No man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (II Tim. 2:4).

No one can tell you how to run your life . . . what to include in your schedule, and what to leave out. You could probably rationalize and excuse any activity which you wanted to. But between you and the Lord you must decide what is best for your service to Him.

Your time is your life. You do not know how much you have. How you spend your time each day will determine the total worth of your life. Your future is being determined by what you do each day. If your life is made up largely of sports, money, pleasure, television, clubs, etc., then your life will come and go—and not much will be accomplished for Christ in it.

Paul said that for him to live was “Christ.” He spent his time on things that were valuable to Christ. How do you spend your time? Mostly on yourself, or mostly for Christ? Can you say, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”? (Phil. 1:21) If your time is spent for Christ, dying truly will be gain for you, for you will have much reward in heaven.

Your Bible

God says in II Tim. 3: 15, “. . . the holy Scriptures . . . are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

God exalts His Word even above His own Name (Psalm 138:2). With such high recommendation from God Himself, we certainly should know the Bible WELL, for our own personal comfort and exhortation and to bring the gospel message to the lost.

In many parts of the world today the governments will not allow Bibles to be printed, and Bibles have to be smuggled into the country. If there is one printed copy of the Word of God in the entire congregation, the people consider themselves fortunate . . . and this one Bible is passed from family to family, who eagerly copy portions by hand, so that they may have some of the precious Word of God written down for use in their homes. Today in America we sometimes don’t stop to realize how fortunate we are with our open Bibles.

The familiar verse, II Tim. 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” should be taken very seriously.

Yes, it is possible to win souls with very little knowledge of Scripture. A baby is not expected to have the knowledge of a college graduate. But when a baby remains infantile all his life, it is certainly a great tragedy.

God says, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may GROW thereby” (I Peter 2:2). Those who desire to be FRUITFUL soulwinners should be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh (him) a reason of the hope that is in (him) . . .” (I Pet. 3: 15).

Paul said he was “. . . READY to preach the gospel . . .” (Rom. 1:15). To be ready to preach the gospel in such a way that will answer people’s questions will require that you spend time MEMORIZING Scriptures on salvation and studying thoroughly the passages which answer people’s questions.

GOD’S WORD IS POWER! Knowledge of God’s Word and how to best present it is your greatest “weapon” in witnessing. “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4 :12) .

Even when you are talking to someone who says he doesn’t believe the Bible, don’t stop using it. A soldier doesn’t throw down his sword just because the opposition doesn’t think it will work. The lost will never see salvation without the Word of God. It is the entrance of God’s Word that gives light to the lost (Psalm 119:130).

Yes, there are times when a person needs a lengthy explanation of something, and you will need more than a verse of Scripture to adequately answer his question. But be watchful that you don’t embark upon a philosophical discussion of no profit to the man’s salvation.

The Apostle Paul was highly educated by the finest instructors of his day, and yet he said of his witnessing, “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of MAN’S wisdom, but in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD” (I Cor. 2:4, 5).

Paul was concerned that his children in the faith might not always keep their message simple and Christ-centered, and warned them of Satan’s tactics, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his SUBTILTY, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (II Cor. 11:3).

Satan won’t say to you, “Hello, this is Satan speaking, and if you just simply present the gospel, most people will accept it, but I want people to go to hell, so please complicate the gospel by using technical words, or having a philosophical discussion, or by adding man’s good works and righteousness for salvation, so they won’t receive Christ as their Saviour.”

NOT AT ALL!

Satan comes in with a sweet, quiet voice and might say, “Look, Christian, this person is a very moral, intelligent, up-to-date citizen. If you start talking to him about the Bible, sin, Jesus’ blood, and having faith, etc., he will think you are absolutely NUTS.

“So what you should do is to approach this person on an intellectual plane, so he will think you are educated and on his level. Tell him how good he is, how wonderful it is to be broadminded. Don’t offend him by talking about the blood of Christ, but rather, discuss the love of God and the wonderful achievements of modern man and society today, and you could slowly turn his thoughts toward religion and a belief in God.”

MANY people are fooled by this trickery of Satan. Don’t fall for Satan’s lie. DON’T BE FOOLED! Give out the gospel purely and simply.

USE THE SCRIPTURES!

Even some students in Bible college, who really love the Lord and His Word, are blinded by Satan into thinking they could effectively win souls through some “philosophical approach” rather than by using the Word of God, depending upon the Holy Spirit. Paul also said, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and NOT AFTER CHRIST” (Col. 2:8).

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the GOSPEL is the power God uses to save people. Now I do not mean by this that you do not adapt your illustrations and examples to interest the particular person you are witnessing to. You should witness with his background in mind. For instance, you would use the scientific-statements in the Bible to interest a chemistry major in college, or astronomical or medical statements in the Bible with those interested in astronomy or medicine, etc.

Use the things in your own testimony that would establish rapport between you. For instance, when I talk to a Jewish person, I usually mention that I am part Jewish and attended synagogue for two years. When I talk to a Catholic, I might mention I took a six-month catechism course in a Roman Catholic church. When talking to a Protestant, I can mention that I spent three years attending different Protestant churches. All these things are true, and yet they would not all interest every person to the same degree. So I try to think in terms of the other person’s background and establish some common ground between us.

This does not mean a compromise on DOCTRINE, but it allows me to have an empathy established, which is very helpful in witnessing. Think back upon your own life and you will be amazed to discover what interesting things have happened to you (they MUST be true) that you can profitably use in witnessing. And then, DO use them. People are usually interested in what has happened to someone else. It doesn’t seem to put THEM on the “spot.” This helped Paul’s witnessing, too (I Cor. 9:19-23).

But it is the SCRIPTURES, it is the GOSPEL that will save—not your wisdom. Because of man’s natural pride, it will be very easy to fall into this snare of Satan’s of using too much of your own philosophy and not enough of the Word of God.

How To Study Your Bible

If at all possible, it is wise to set aside a special time for your Bible study and not to let Satan sidetrack you to do something else during that time. You will never “find” time

to study, pray, or witness—you must “make” time. People usually manage to have time for whatever is really important to them. To study your Bible so that you have a thorough working knowledge of it is important to you as a soulwinner for many reasons:

(1) It is God’s command to you (II Tim. 2:15).

(2) God’s Word brings faith (Rom. 10:17).

It will not only bring to the lost the knowledge of salvation, but it will also strengthen your own faith.

(3) You will use the Word to edify, exhort, guide, and comfort Christians under your care (II Tim. 4:2).

(4) The Bible is your own guidebook for every situation of life, and you will want to have what God says at your “finger-tips” (Matt. 4:4) .

(5) The Word of God is part of your defensive weapon against Satan’s attacks upon you (Eph. 6:17). Remember how Christ rebuked Satan by using Scripture (Matt. 4:10, 11).

Below are some hints toward successful Bible study.

A. *Read with the INTENTION OF REMEMBERING* what you read.

B. *GO OVER* what you have read until it is clear in your mind.

C. *MAKE NOTES* on the things that impress you as you read.

D. *COMPARE SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE* to understand the passage in its proper relationship with the rest of the Word of God.

E. *ANALYZE the verse:*

1) Who wrote it?

2) To whom was it written?

3) What general topic is being discussed? (Consider the context.)

4) What does it NOT say?

5) What things COULD it mean?

6) Eliminate the possible meanings by comparing it with other Scripture until you feel you have the right one.

F. *If you still do not understand a passage:*

1) LOOK UP WORDS which are unclear to you in a concordance. A good one is Strong’s Concordance, published by Abingdon Press, which lists every word in the English Bible and gives the Hebrew or Greek word and its translation. It is the work of over one hundred scholars.

2) LOOK UP THE PASSAGE in other good translations of the Bible. Some are: American Standard • Williams • Amplified

3) STUDY the passage with the help of GOOD COMMENTARIES. Some are:

DeHann
Ironside
G. Campbell Morgan
Spurgeon
Woodbridge

4) Discuss the passage with another Christian and get his viewpoint of the Scripture.

G. KEEP A NOTEBOOK. When you are satisfied with a particular explanation, write down your conclusion and file it under a topical heading. After a while you will have collected much good information that will help you greatly in your private study and public teaching ministry in the future.

H. REFERENCE YOUR BIBLE. When a verse stands out in your mind as the key verse on a given subject, use that verse as a place to list the references of other verses on that subject in the margin right beside it.

I. SELECT A BIBLE WITH CLEAR PRINT. We like the Scofield Reference Bible, which is a King James translation and has notes and references which are very helpful in study. Get the Bible with the best cover and paper that you can afford because it will last the longest.

Treat your Bible with care. When a cover becomes too shabby, you might want to have it rebound rather than to transfer your notes into a new Bible. If you do get a new Bible, try to get the same kind where the same passage is found on the same place on the page. This is good because much of your memory is “sight-oriented.” You will automatically find yourself looking for the verse where you are accustomed to seeing it on the page.

J. As you study, memorize the plan of salvation in a brief outline form, maybe just seven points . . . for instance:

- 1) All sinners—Rom. 3:23
- 2) Result—death—Rom. 6:23
- 3) Heaven perfect—Rev. 21:27
- 4) Cannot earn—Eph. 2:8, 9
- 5) Christ paid and gives righteousness—II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9
- 6) Only believe—John 3 :16
- 7) Know you have eternal life—I John 5 :13

This will be extremely valuable when you witness . . . not that you will quote it verbatim as you witness . . . but your mind will then be free to start right in with the gospel even when you are nervous and may perhaps otherwise be caught tongue-tied for lack of knowing what to say.

Memorizing the main points of what one wants to cover has been a successful procedure in business where person-to-person contact is required in any type of sales or persuasion. The soulwinner should use any Scriptural methods and techniques that work as an aid in his witnessing.

Your Love

In Romans 1:1 Paul says he is a “servant” of Jesus Christ. The Greek word for servant is “doulos” and

means “slave.” Paul served the Lord with a voluntary love. A person in love feels compelled to please the one he loves and yet is not forced to. No law says the young man must be courteous and kind to the girl he loves . . . he does not have to, but he finds he wants to. What girl would want flowers if the boy felt he had to bring them? What girl would want a gift of candy or perfume if her boy friend felt he was obliged to give her a present? When you are in love, you desire only voluntary expressions of it. Force would take away any meaning it might otherwise have had.

God did not choose to make us puppets that would act as He manipulated them, bowing when He pulled one string, speaking when He pulled another. Our loving God is the person who wanted us to have a great capacity to love—to love Him—and to love others . . . but love must be voluntary, or it isn’t really love at all.

One of the many serious flaws of communism is that it can never bring satisfaction to its subjects because there is no place for love in its system. God created us with an enormous capacity and craving for love. No human being can completely fill the need of another for this love. One philosopher, Pascal, said well, “There is a God-shaped vacuum in every man, and only God can fill it.”

It was verses like John 3: 16, which tell of God’s great love, that caused me to accept Christ as my Saviour. It does something to me when I realize that the God who made everything in the entire universe actually loves me. I do not understand how this could be, but I believe it and do so respond to His love that it has changed my whole life.

Something about my make-up causes me to want to please someone who really loves me. I cannot be indifferent to a person who loves me. Can you?

It is not always easy to analyze why we love someone, but when it comes to our love for the Lord, the reasons are abundant. A Christian cannot read his Bible for very long without finding so many characteristics of our Lord that just compel us to love Him more and more.

The more you serve the Lord, the more you “put on the line” for Him, the more your love for Him will grow. Many Christians express a desire to feel closer to the Lord. Reading His Word will help greatly, but one sure way is actually to get out and SERVE the Lord with your whole heart. Working “hand in hand” with the Lord forms a great bond of sweet and conscious fellowship that is very satisfying. I believe this is part of what the Apostle Paul was bringing out in Galatians 5:22, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

. . .” The result of letting your life be controlled by the Spirit, obeying God’s leading, really brings love into your life—love for the Lord . . . love for the lost . . . and love for Christians, too.

This love for the Lord is not some “gushy” love. It is a very practical love that causes Christians to do many things for the Lord, some of which can even be unpleasant things in themselves.

A mother who gets up in the middle of the night to take care of her sick child is not doing so because she just “loves” to lose sleep, and just “loves” to be around vomit . . . but because she has a real, deep LOVE and CONCERN for her child.

Can you imagine what Christian service would be like if God had kept us under law, and not under grace, for us to live by? Because we are saved as a gift of God’s grace, we feel such an overwhelming debt of gratitude to the Lord that just anything we can do for Him is a real pleasure. How could we possibly begin to repay God for what He has done for us?

In Luke 7:47 Christ explains that one who has been forgiven of much sin will certainly love God much; haven’t we, therefore, much capacity to love Him?

It is a very sad thing to hear of seemingly sincere members of various religions living lives of terrible, physical and mental torture, thinking this would somehow please God. If only they would believe God when He says over and over again in the Bible that He does NOT delight in our “sacrifices and offerings” for salvation, and that furthermore, it is the “love of Christ” that should constrain us to serve Him, not fear. Yes, fear will. But God would so much prefer that we serve Him because we love Him.

Stop and think . . .

God saved you by His grace,

God keeps you saved by His grace,

God leads and guides you by His grace,

God enables you to see Him by His grace,

God rewards you with love, joy, and peace in this life for serving Him by His grace,

God rewards you in heaven for having served Him on earth . . . SUCH GRACE!

Surely, God is good, and with the Psalmist we must say, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” (Psa. 116:12)

I love the Lord, don't you?

Please address any questions or comments to:

The Gracenet

info@gracenet.com

http://gracenet.com/



**For a printed bound copy,
please contact**

Rev. Wally Morillo

P.O. Box 775

Pharr, TX 78577