

The Role of Relationships in Winsome Witnessing:

“Those who have been *most successful* in soul-winning were men and women who did not pride themselves on their ability, but who in humility and faith *sought to help* those about them. *Jesus did this very work. He came close to those whom He desired to reach.*” GW 194

“Through *personal contact and association*...men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. They are not saved in masses, but as individuals. Personal influence is a power. We must come close to those whom we desire to benefit.” MB 59

“There is need of *coming close to the people* by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in *personal ministry*, *greater results* would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled... *Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit.*” MH 143, 144

“Your *success* will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to *find your way to the heart*. By being *social* and *coming close* to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse.” GW 193

“While He ministered to the poor, Jesus *studied* also to find ways of reaching the rich. He *sought the acquaintance* of the wealthy and cultured Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, and Roman ruler. He *accepted* their invitations, *attended* their feasts, made Himself *familiar* with their interests and occupations, *that he might gain access to their hearts*, and reveal to them the imperishable riches.” MH 24, 25

“*Go to your neighbors one by one*, and *come close* to them till their *hearts* are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. *Sympathize* with them, *pray* with them, *watch* for opportunities to *do them good*, and as you can, gather a few together and *open the Word* of God to their darkened minds. Keep watching, as he who must render an account for the souls of men, and make the most of the privileges that God has given you of laboring for Him in His moral vineyard.” RH March 13, 1888

“If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be *one hundred conversions* to the truth where now there is *only one*.” 9T 189

CHRIST'S METHOD ALONE:

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, Follow Me.” MH p.143

There are many ways to do outreach to the lost, but there's only one way that brings true success. It is the way that Christ reached people. Notice Christ’s method for reaching individual hearts:

1. Mingled with men
2. Desired their good
3. Showed sympathy for their problems & situations
4. Ministered to their needs
5. Thus winning their confidence
6. THEN, He called them to follow Him.

Note: There is much more to soul winning than merely giving doctrinal Bible studies. SOUL-WINNING IS A SCIENCE TO BE MASTERED. It is about relationships, friendships, meeting needs, and winning confidence to be able to point them to Christ so that He can save them.

Winning Their Hearts –

*“Jesus ...reached the hearts of people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them....in order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord.”
DA p. 151-152*

Note: Most people (over 99%) will never make a personal effort to come to Christ. Waiting for them to walk through the church doors will never fulfill the Divine Commission. We must seek them out in their homes, work places, and wherever else we may come in daily contact with people. They need us to go to them.

“There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit.” (Ministry of Healing 143.4)

Jesus Meets Every Need –

All through the ministry of Christ, we see Him involved in people's lives. Sometimes he was preaching and teaching. **Most of the time, He ministered one on one.**

- **Christ's method reaches out to the whole person:**
 - Socially
 - Spiritually
 - Emotionally
 - Mentally
 - Physically

- **Jesus met the needs of the people.** He was always interested in the people around Him. He looked to see what they were seeking, what were their longings, what were there needs. Throughout the book of John you see Jesus demonstrating His immense care for people by meeting their needs.
 - **In John 2 – Jesus met a SOCIAL need.** At the wedding feast at Cana, the host ran out of wine. Jesus turned six stone jars of water into refreshing new wine. He alleviated the host's social embarrassment.
 - **In John 3 – Jesus met a SPIRITUAL need.** Nicodemus, a Pharisee, asked for a meeting in the dead of night. Jesus showed him exactly what he was looking for and how to get it. He said, "You must be born again." He satisfied Nicodemus' soul, which was longing for salvation.
 - **In John 4 – Jesus met an EMOTIONAL need.** The woman at the well had an emotional need. This woman had gone through six husbands. Jesus offered her emotional support, treating her with kindness.
 - **In John 5 – Jesus met a PHYSICAL need.** A man had lain by the pool of Bethesda for 38 years. Jesus said, "Do you want to be made whole? Then He healed him.

The Lord's Methods Are to be Followed-

*"In every city that is entered, a solid foundation is to be laid for permanent work. **The Lord's methods are to be followed.** By doing house –to-house work, by giving Bible readings in families, the worker may gain access to many who are seeking for truth. By opening the Scriptures, by prayer and exercising faith, he is to teach the people the way of the Lord."
Testimonies 7 p.38*

Notice Christ's methods for the work:

1. House to house work (Most of Jesus work was one on one)
2. Giving Bible readings (studies)
3. Opening the scriptures
4. Prayer for the people
5. Faith in what God can do

6. Teaching the people the *way of the LORD...not our own way!* God has His methods of soul-winning that work.! We are not to do things our own way! Remember, Christ's method alone will bring success.

Note: We do not develop friendships with people for the purpose of sharing the gospel with them. We develop friendships because we care for them, as an expression of God's love that is operating through us. We do it because it's a way of life for us, a lifestyle of service and giving. We do it because Christ is living in us and working through us. We do it because we live for others, not for ourselves. Yet, true friendship and true love will compel us to share the gospel. It will make a difference - having compassion on people and rescuing them from the fire. It is only as we share the truth of God's love and man's binding obligation to obey and surrender to the authority of God's word that we can develop a friendship that will last for eternity.

Notice, again, how Christ's method works:

"Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray with them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds." (Christian Service 116)

We come close to people **UNTIL** their hearts are warmed, confidence is won, and trust is gained. **THEN**, we share God's word. This is the method of Christ.

It's important to remember Christ's method in ALL our relationships. Our one purpose in relating to others should be to work unselfishly for their salvation. This includes times when we relate to our boss, our fellow church members, leaders, co-workers, our spouse, or our children. In order to be effective and have true success in sharing God's word with them, we must first ask: "Do I have their confidence and trust?" If not, seek to gain their trust. Be trustworthy. Show love. Get close. Watch for the time when their heart is soft. Then share God's Word.

How to Reach All Classes of People:

We must go to the people as Jesus did. We often spend most of our time with those who are openly searching for truth, but what about others? What about our neighbors who show little or no interest in religion or those who are openly angry or resentful towards anything religious? How can we reach them?

Throughout the Bible we notice *Jesus seeking us*. Here are some examples:

- God came calling and looking for Adam and Eve in the garden ,in Genesis 3, even when they were running and hiding
- Jesus met Jacob and wrestled with him; all the while Jacob fought back and said, "Let me go!"
- In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd (Jesus / His followers) searched for it.
- In the plan of salvation, Jesus, Emmanuel -"God *with* us", humbled Himself and came down into our world *as one of us* to seek and save that which was lost (mankind).

"In order to reach ALL classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord." (Desire of Ages 152)

"Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love." (Christian Service 116)

"The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work

was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands. We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are. When the word has been preached in the pulpit, the work has but just begun. There are multitudes who will never be reached by the gospel unless it is carried to them.” (Christ Object Lessons 229)

We Must Reach the Heart

People appear very, very different on the outside. They have different clothes, different habits, different hobbies, different joys and sorrows. People have different personalities, learning styles, religious beliefs, customs, family relations, and socio-economic backgrounds. It is as we follow Christ’s method, mingling with them, desiring their good, and sympathizing that we will come to know how to reveal God’s love to them in a meaningful way.

Understanding people’s differences goes a long way toward winning their confidence. Yet there is something that is even more important, we need to understand what it is that’s the *same* in all people.

What is common to all people regardless of race, family, religion and background? This common factor is the “HEART” or core of all human experience. It is the center of people’s basic desires. It is the place where Jesus wants to abide and live. It is the place, where without Jesus, people experience:

- Fear
- Guilt
- Shame
- Pain
- Loneliness
- Confusion
- Hopelessness

These emotions of fear, guilt, etc are common to all people who have not yet experienced the power of the gospel. Christians who can gently and powerfully touch people’s hearts ~ giving love and hope ~ are the soul winners who will find the greatest success. They are the soul winners who can reach *ALL* people.

“Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse.” (Gospel Worker 193)