

THE DOCTRINE OF WITNESSING

1. The character of witnessing.
 - A. Witness of the life.

2 Corinthians 3:3, 6:3, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed."
 - B. Witness of the lips.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21, 6:2. "For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."
2. The Holy Spirit is the sovereign executive of witnessing.
 - A. The unbeliever has no human spirit, therefore, he lacks the means by which he can receive the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - B. The Holy Spirit acts in place of the human spirit to make the Gospel understandable, since it is spiritual phenomena.

John 16:8-11, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on Me; Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."
3. The Bible is the means of witnessing.
 - A. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

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."
1 Corinthians 1:8, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - B. The Bible is the absolute norm or standard for Truth.

2 Peter 1:19-21, "We have also a more sure Word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."
 - C. The Bible is the source of the Gospel.

Luke 16:28-31, "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

- D. The Bible is Divine power.
Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - E. The Bible never returns void.
Isaiah 55:11, "So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."
 - F. The Bible endures forever.
Luke 21:33, "Heaven and Earth shall pass away: but My Words shall not pass away."
 - G. The Bible is the mind of Christ.
1 Corinthians 2:16, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."
 - H. The Bible is the Word and Plan of God the Father.
Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - I. The Bible is the voice of the Holy Spirit.
Hebrews 3:7, "Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, To day if ye will hear His voice...)"
4. The believer is the agent of witnessing.
- A. Witnessing is the responsibility of every member of the Body of Christ.
Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth." Ephesians 6:15, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."
2 Timothy 4:5, "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
 - B. Ability to witness depends upon the following conditions:
 1. The filling of the Holy Spirit.
Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth."
 2. Assurance of eternal security with resultant stability.
Romans 8:38, 39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
1 Peter 1:4, 5, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 3. Correct and accurate information found only in the Word of God.
1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."
Ephesians 6:17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."
Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

4. Proper emphasis on the Gospel, especially reconciliation.
Ephesians 2:14-17, "For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."
5. Witnessing is the extension of the believer's ambassadorship.
 - A. The believer is given the ministry of reconciliation.
2 Corinthians 5:18, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."
 - B. The believer receives a Divine deposit which is the Doctrine of Reconciliation.
2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation."
 - C. The believer is given the message of reconciliation.
2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
6. The issue must be clearly presented.
John 3:18, 36, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
 - A. Give the unbeliever pertinent information regarding salvation. Christ is the issue, the person's attitude towards Him is the determining factor in salvation. Christ is the object of our faith; there is merit in the object, not in the faith.
 - B. A person cannot live the Christian way of life until he is a Christian. Do not put the cart before the horse! He must be saved first.
 - C. There are certain boundaries to the Gospel.
1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And the He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."
Remember that the Gospel is GOOD NEWS, not "bad news." It is bad news that man is a sinner; the GOOD NEWS is that Christ did something about sin on the cross. Declare the Gospel clearly so that the person witnessed to is in a position to make a decision for Christ. Your witness must match up with the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - D. Do not add to the Gospel of GRACE. Nothing is accomplished toward salvation by persuading the unbeliever to give up or feel sorry for his sins, improve his personality or behavior pattern, join a church, be baptized or give money. Salvation is ours by GRACE, not by works.
Ephesians 2:8, 9, "For by GRACE are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
 - E. Never try to force a decision for Christ. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in common and efficacious GRACE.
 - F. Remember that the first Divine Institution is free will, which includes both freedom and privacy of decision. Provide Gospel information but leave the results with the Lord. The Gospel is designed to persuade, not to compel the unbeliever to accept Christ.

- G. Avoid gimmicks. Emotional begging, public invitations to raise hands or walk aisles constitute "jumping through "psychological hoops" and have no bonafide part in witnessing.
7. Effectiveness of witnessing depends on the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
- A. Toward the believer: The Holy Spirit in control of the believer's soul.
 Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth."
 2 Corinthians 3:3, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."
- B. Toward the unbeliever: Conviction.
 John 16:8-11, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on Me; Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."
 2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place."
8. Clarity of witnessing is contingent upon the believer's understanding of the judgment of human good.
- A. Human good was rejected at the cross, only sin was judged.
- B. Human good will be judged in the believer at the judgment seat of Christ.
 1 Corinthians 3:11-16, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"
- C. Human good will be judged in the unbeliever, and it becomes the basis of his indictment at the Last Judgment.
 Revelation 20:12-15, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS. And death and hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
9. The biblical pattern of witnessing is found in 1 Thessalonians 2.

10. Observe the pitfalls in witnessing:
 - A. Avoid arguments.
 - B. Do not be sidetracked by false issues.
 - C. Be flexible in your approach to the Gospel.
 - D. Deal with the individual alone where possible.
 - E. Do not set quotas.
 - F. Never measure your spiritual life by your witnessing.
 - G. Do not judge others by their apparent failure to witness.
 - H. Never brag about your experience in witnessing.
 - I. Avoid false motivation in witnessing.

11. **Fishers of men.**

Matthew 4:19, "And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

 - A. Fishermen must have a desire to fish.
 - B. Fishermen must be equipped to fish.
 - C. Fishermen must go where the fish are.
 - D. Fishermen must use the right bait.
 - E. Fishermen must be patient.
 - F. Fishermen must keep out of sight.
 - G. Fishermen will be rewarded.

12. Conclusion:
 - A. Witnessing is the communication of the Gospel to the unbeliever on a personal basis, called Personal Evangelism.
 - B. Witnessing is the responsibility of every believer.
 - C. Witnessing functions apart from mass evangelism, church evangelism, or the preaching of the believer who has the gift of evangelism.

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