

Assurance in Witnessing



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"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Psalms 51: 12, 13

"When we have an assurance, which is bright and clear, of our own salvation, we shall exhibit cheerfulness and joyfulness, which becomes every follower of Jesus Christ. The softening, subduing influence of the love of God brought into practical lives will make impressions upon minds that will be a savor of life unto life. But a harsh denunciatory spirit, if manifested, will turn many souls away from the truth into the ranks of the enemy. Solemn thought! To deal patiently with the tempted requires us to battle with self."

Evangelism 630

A Christ Centered Approach to Witnessing

When the New Testament church was born, there was only one church. That church consisted of Jesus and His disciples. When someone joined the church they did not have to choose which church to join. There was only one church. When someone accepted Christ and followed Him they automatically became a member of the church. For the first few hundred years, there was essentially only one church. The headquarters was initially in Jerusalem and later in Rome. Then Rome split into the Eastern and Western Churches, and finally, after the Reformation, into various Protestant denominations.

After the Reformation, one had to decide, not only to accept Christ, they also had to decide which church to join. This forced an evangelistic approach built on doctrinal argument. The rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the mid nineteenth century made such a doctrinal approach even more necessary because of its distinct beliefs and unique claim to be the Remnant church of Revelation 12:17.

Since the early Adventists came from a wide spectrum of denominational persuasions, they could only experience unity through the catalyst of doctrinal agreement. This union was hammered out in early Bible conferences held by the pioneers. These historical facts resulted in looking to the doctrinal pillars held in common as the essence of the message, leaving the fundamental good news of salvation to be taken for granted.

"The early Seventh-day Adventists were largely people who had already experienced conversion, many of them in Methodism. To these, salvation through Christ was a living experience before they accepted the distinctive truths of Adventism. But as the years went by, hundreds came into the Adventist faith who had not an experimental knowledge of Christ. The lack of emphasis on salvation assumed serious proportions. During the eighties, a few of the leaders in the denomination began to feel this lack keenly. Most vocal in warning against the prevailing trends was Mrs. White. Her writings, particularly during 1887 and 1888, were full of warnings against legalism, and exhortations to accept Christ by faith." *By Faith Alone*, Pease, 122

Evangelism had become largely a process of explaining to others doctrinal truth, the assumption was that when one understood which church was teaching the truth, they would be compelled to embrace the message and join that church. This assumption was valid because most people already believed the basic claims of Christianity. Most people felt they had a valid

relationship with Jesus Christ and by embracing new truth, they were simply taking another step in their Christian walk. Our primary target group for evangelism consisted of those who are already Christians, which was the majority of the people in America. This kind of target group dwindled until today it probably constitutes a minority. This approach is not as effective as it once was. What difference can it make which day you keep to one who doesn't even believe the Bible? What significance is the 2300 days or the Millennium to one who doesn't believe in prophecy? What concern does one have for the Judgment or Christian lifestyle standards if one isn't even sure there is a God? The appropriate question now is, "Where is the best place to begin with the majority of the people today?"

The First Angel And The Gospel

"Then I saw Another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to Those who live on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, language and people." (NIV) Revelation 14:6

It is important for us to recognize that the message of the first Angel is the Everlasting Gospel. We must present the Gospel in all of its purity and assurance before we ever preach the mark of the beast and all other doctrines. First things must come first.

*"The very first and **most important** thing is to melt and subdue the soul by presenting our Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour. Never should... Bible **instruction in any line** be given, without pointing the hearers to the 'Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" 6T54*

"Bring the people right to Jesus Christ, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered. . . . As you bring to them the Word of God, presenting it in a simple style, the seed will grow, and after a time you will have a harvest." Letter 34, 1896. Ev 178

We Can Have Assurance Of Eternal Life

It is important for us to know that we **can** have the assurance of eternal life, even now in this sin sick world.

*"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that **you may know that you have eternal life.** (NIV) 1 John 5:13*

It is obvious that God wants us to have assurance of eternal life. He wants us to be sure and not doubt.

"We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved." SC 71

*"The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is **no more to doubt** God's forgiving grace." ST 19May1898*

*"Through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven **begins** here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal." DA331*

Unfortunately, not everyone believes the good news.

" Here is where thousands fail; they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor" SC52

What are the conditions?

*"**Faith is the only condition** upon which justification can be obtained, and faith includes not only belief but trust" ISM389*

"The Lord specifies no conditions except that you hunger for His mercy...Ask...The condition upon which you may come to God is not that you shall be holy, but that you shall ask God to cleanse you from all sin." Ibid., 332

Yes we can in fact have assurance of eternal life, by faith in Christ.

The Basis of Eternal Life

Before we can have assurance of eternal life, we must understand the basis upon which God gives eternal life. This may seem controversial at first but follow it all the way through and you will discover the most precious Bible truth for us today.

<p>The condition for eternal life, is and always has been perfect obedience to God's commandments.</p>
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One sin, cost Satan his place in the court of heaven. One sin and Adam and Eve plunged the world into the depths of despair and death. Life comes through obeying God's law.

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,--just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,--perfect obedience to the law of God." SC.62

The wages of sin is death, we have all sinned and we all deserve to die.

The Dilemma: God is Merciful and Just

God is Merciful, He loves us so much He does not want anyone to be lost.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

However, at the same time, God is just. He looks at this sinful world and sees the suffering, sickness and death with a determination to bring these things to an end. He knows that as long as sin is present, suffering and death are also present. He longs to deliver us from death, and in order to do that, God must destroy sin. Since He gave us the power of choice, he must also destroy those who choose to sin.

How can He destroy sin, and those who choose to sin, while at the same time save us who have also sinned? He must be faithful to His word. He said to Adam and Eve, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen 2:17) They did eat the fruit. Now the dilemma becomes clear, how can God save them and still have been telling the truth, when he said, "If you sin, you will die?" He wants to save us too. How can He save us and still be faithful to His word?

Another way to look at the dilemma is to recognize that God demands perfect obedience to his law. One sin ushered in death. We have all sinned. (Rom. 3:23), not once but many times. How can we present to God, the perfect righteousness that He demands?

The Solution:

Righteousness is a Gift that Comes From God

*Romans 3:20-22 "No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness **from** God, apart from law, has been made known...22 This righteousness **from** God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."*

Our righteousness must be the righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself, that comes from him as a free gift, it cannot be our own. Righteousness is simply another way for saying, our goodness or our obedience to God's Law. It is the perfect obedience of Christ which we receive as a gift that makes us acceptable to God and enables Him to save us.

The only way we can ever have assurance of salvation is to realize that righteousness or salvation is a free gift that comes to us from God. Grace

means we cannot merit, earn or deserve eternal life. We cannot boast, we simply receive it.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, it is the gift of God... not by works not by works, so that no one can boast. "

If we rely on our performance in any way, to measure up to a standard of righteousness, before we can be accepted, then we will never have assurance of acceptance, because our will always be less than the perfect standard of God's own righteousness which he requires. We will never have a day when we can say that we have done all that God expects of me, and have not done anything he forbids. That is why it must be a gift. And that is the only way we can have assurance of our own Salvation.

Salvation is a Transaction

The basis of salvation always has been and always will be perfect obedience to God's Law. Jesus seemed to put salvation out of reach of the Pharisees when He said;

Matthew 5:20 "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

"The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell-- perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise--harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament." ISM373

This one statement would seem at first glance to put salvation out of reach for everyone. The important thing for us to understand here is that, while it is true that God always has and always will demand perfect obedience to His law in order for anyone to be saved, the obedience that saves us is not our own. The obedience that saves us is Christ's perfect obedience which He gives to us as a free gift. Christ took our sins upon Himself, so that He could give us His perfect life of obedience to God, and it is His perfect life, His righteousness that saves us.

"God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail." ISM343

Paul actually describes salvation as a transaction.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV) 2 Corinthians 5:21

If I were to ask, "was Jesus sin," most would have a very difficult time saying yes, even though the text clearly says, "He was made to be sin." This is probably the most important verse in the Bible. It does not say that "Jesus sinned." There is a difference. God took the guilt for our sins from us and placed that guilt on Christ. He actually became guilty, even though he had no part in committing them. Jesus was just as guilty as though he had done them himself. Even though he did not sin, He felt the same guilt, the shame, and dirty feelings that you experience...multiplied times all of those who have ever lived! It was more than He could bear and it crushed His life. That is why Jesus died, not because of the nails in His hand, or a crown of thorns on His head, but because of your sins. Because of that we can know that "in Him, we become the righteousness of God." That's perfect! We stand perfect in Him. Every sin we have ever committed in the past, every sin we commit now and every sin we ever will commit in the future is forgiven, removed, and we stand guiltless, as though we had never sinned, as long as we remain in Him. And that isn't all. The last half of the verse says that, "In him, we might become the righteousness of God. In other words, God gives us the perfect righteousness (obedience) of Christ. He takes our guilt and dies for our sins, so the price is paid in full. Then he gives us the perfect obedience of Christ. That is what enables God to save us. That is why we can never be good enough for God to save us. It takes the infinite righteousness of the perfectly obedient Son God.

*"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, **we cannot perfectly obey the holy law.** We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now **He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness.** If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. **Christ's character stands in place of your character,** and you are accepted before God just as if you had never sinned." SC62*

The Saving Covenant

Salvation comes simply by asking for Christ to come into our lives.

*"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And... we know that we have what we asked of him." 1 John 5:12-15*

If we sincerely repent for our sins and ask Christ to come into our lives, we can know that He does come and He gives us eternal life.

*"You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. Then **believe** that He does this **because He has promised...** You are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You **believe** that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, **God will fulfill His word to you.** If you believe the promise,--believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,--God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it."*

*"Do not wait to **feel** that you are made whole, but say, 'I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God' promised.'" SC50, 51*

Ellen White gives us a beautiful prayer of acceptance.

*"The whole work is the Lord's from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: 'I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. **I need not remain a moment longer unsaved.** He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised.'" Selected Messages Vol. 1 page 392;*

Since Salvation is a Gift: It Must Come Before Obedience

It is most important for us to recognize that the nature of grace demands salvation must take place before good works or obedience. Otherwise grace would not be grace and the gift would not be a gift.

"Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." (NIV) Romans 4:4-8

Paul sees God justifying the wicked, before they make themselves righteous, even before they begin their good works. In referring to David, he does not say "Blessed is the man who does not sin," he does sin, but his "sins are not counted against him," because he is forgiven.

"If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better....

We must come to Christ just as we are." SC31

"Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity." SC52

What About Obedience and Standards?

Some question the propriety of encouraging the assurance of salvation before there are lifestyle changes and church membership. Some also fear that assurance of salvation will cause a disregard and lack of motivation for Christian Lifestyle Standards. The answer is that Love is a stronger motivation for change and obedience than fear of rejection. Have you ever noticed the miraculous change in grooming habits when a teen "falls in love?"

*"Lead them to behold Christ in His loveliness; then **they will turn from everything that would draw their affections away from Him.** This is the principle of the Saviour's dealing with men; it is the principle that **must be brought into the church.**" 6T54*

"We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith." SC61

The Danger Of Presumption

It is most certainly clear that both the Bible and the spirit of prophecy encourage us to claim assurance of our salvation. But it is dangerous to presume that God will save us regardless of our attitude towards sin. Notice that Ellen White affirms it is essential to have assurance of salvation while at the same time she warns we can never presume that assurance relieves us from the responsibility to obey God's law.

*"It is **essential** to have faith in Jesus, and to **believe you are saved** through Him; but there is **danger** in taking the position that many do take in saying, **"I am saved."** ... Many... say, "Believe, only believe, and live." Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell-- perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise--harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life, God requires of His child perfect obedience" 1SM373*

Notice that she does not say it is dangerous to say; "I am saved." She says it is dangerous to take the position that many do take in saying, "I am saved." In other words, some people who say, "I am saved" do so; meaning that salvation relieves them from obedience to God. It is obvious from the context, that Ellen White is arguing against the position that grace relieves us from the responsibility to obey God's law. She both affirms our assurance of being saved, but warns against our taking grace as a license to sin.

Comment: We have already discovered that, while it is true that God always has and always will demand perfect obedience to His law in order for anyone to be saved, the obedience that saves us is not our own. It is Christ's perfect obedience which He gives to us as a free gift.

This does not mean that as Christians, we never sin, we do, but when we sin we repent and ask God for forgiveness. We can be certain that He does in fact forgive us and cleanse us from all sin

The Danger of Carelessness

There will always be those who take the grace of God as a license to sin.

- John taught it was an error. 1 John 5:18
- Peter warned about it. 2 Peter 3:9
- Paul faced it. Romans 6:15
- Paul included a safeguard against this error.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Romans 3:31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

The problem of carelessness is not the result of emphasizing righteousness by faith; it is the result of misunderstanding righteousness by faith.

James Corrects a Misunderstanding of Paul

James and Paul must be in agreement, there is only one Gospel.

- James accepted Paul's Gospel and extended the right hand of fellowship. Galatians 2:1-9
- Paul even condemned anyone who preached a different gospel from his. Galatians 1:6

There are two kinds of faith.

Even the devils believe and that is faith, but it will not save. James 2:14-19

- Intellectual assent- a knowledge of God but no actions to confirm a belief in God
- Saving faith- One who believes so much in God that it is reflected in their actions.

Baptism Illustrates Saving Faith

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:1-4

Paul uses baptism as an illustration that we cannot go on sinning carelessly after we become Christians. When we die to sin, we are buried with Christ and raised with Him in order to live a new life for Him.

Obedience is the Fruit of a Saving Relationship

The more time we spend studying and meditation in the word of God, learning of His goodness, the more we shall see our own sinfulness. The more sinful we appear in our own eyes, the more driven we are to Him and to His Word for cleansing and strength.

Mary and Jesus. Luke 7:36-50

The story of Mary weeping at the feet of Jesus as she washes her feet with her tears clearly illustrates the intimate relationship between forgiveness and good works. The more we recognize our own sins and realize the depth of God's forgiveness, the more we will yield in loving obedience to Him.

"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Luke 7:47

The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image. SC 64, 65

Obedience is the Test of a Saving Relationship

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:3-6

Jesus taught that obedience is the test of a genuine saving faith.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:21

Many at the present day say, "Believe, only believe, and live." Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell-- perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise-- harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life, God requires of His child perfect obedience.

We need not fear the lowering of standards simply because we give people assurance of acceptance with God before they make the lifestyle changes. God accepts us first, and then the changes come out of love and gratitude for Him. We are born into the kingdom of sin and darkness, but when we repent of our sins and give ourselves to him, He forgives us and takes us out of the kingdom of darkness and makes us citizens in His kingdom of light. How can we go on behaving as though we still live in the kingdom of sin? What right does a son or daughter of God have in going places established by Satan? What right does a son or daughter of God have in wearing the uniform of Sin? Or speaking the language of sin? Or eating the diet of sin? What right does a son or daughter of God have to abuse, discriminate against or even ignore God's children and His creation?

When we do sin, God does not immediately pounce upon us and say, "You must not be a Christian you have sinned!" He says, "You are a Christian, how can you sin?"

Christ does not normally point to our misbehavior in order to call into question our Christianity.
He points to our Christianity in order to call into question our behavior.

The Danger Of Once Saved Always Saved

Ellen White also makes the following statement which is often taken out of context and used in an attempt to show that we can not have assurance of eternal life.

"Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves."

It is easy to see when we examine the full context below, she is referring to the presumption of claiming that we are saved as though we cannot subsequently fall away and be lost. She is actually warning us against dependence upon ourselves instead of total trust in Christ.

*"Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. **Self-confidence** led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that **we are secure against temptation**. Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved. This is misleading. Every one should be taught to cherish hope and faith; but even when we give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us, we are not beyond the reach of temptation. God's word declares, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." Dan. 12:10. Only he who endures the trial will receive the crown of life. (James 1:12.)*

*"Those who accept Christ, and in their **first confidence** say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan's devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. We are admonished, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12. Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ." COL 155*

The Abiding Relationship

We do not believe that once we are saved, it is impossible to turn away and be lost. But on the other hand we do not believe that we are lost every time we sin and saved again when we repent.

"Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off forsaken and rejected by God." SC64

"Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. The soul may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life" MB118

Ellen White makes a revealing statement concerning the presence of occasional sin in the life of Christians.

"The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts." SC57

This can only mean occasional sins, do not reveal an imperfect character.

We can choose to leave God and be lost, but our occasional sins and misdeeds do not automatically cause us to be lost as long as we maintain an attitude of repentance. The key to the abiding relationship is our attitude of repentance toward sin. Paul elegantly reveals this attitude:

²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:22-25

Here we see the battle going on in the mind of Paul the Apostle. He wants to do right, but seems to always fall short of the perfect ideal he has for himself. It is important to see that Paul never consciously chooses to sin, He even describes his predicament as;

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. Romans 7:14

He did not sell himself to sin, but **has been sold** as a slave to sin in his sinful body. Because of his continuous battle with his old sinful self, he maintains an attitude of repentance and hatred toward the sin at the same time he praises God for forgiveness and acceptance. This is abiding in Christ.

*"Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie--to **choose** to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to **choose** another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand." SC72*

When we become Christians we enter into an abiding relationship with Christ. All of our sins, past, present and future are forgiven, as long as we remain repentant, and abide in Him. He takes up residence in our lives and no one can take him away, unless we ourselves choose to reject Him.

Assurance Comes Only in Accepting Christ

We can have perfect confidence in our salvation, only when we trust completely in what Christ has done for us. Those who trust partly in Christ and partly in self will never know if their life is good enough to be accepted. Grace cannot be mixed with works for our acceptance.

*"Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception... This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. [legalism] God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. **All that man***

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can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Rev. 22:17)." 1SM343

Effects of Legalism

Legalism is the notion that you can earn or deserve God's Salvation by good works and human effort. Legalism teaches that if you just keep God's commandments, and obey His laws, you will be saved. A legalist relies upon what they do, in order to be accepted by God. Legalism causes many problems.

1. Legalism causes one to compare how good one is doing with how good others are doing. This inevitably leads to fanatical obedience, spiritual insecurity and a critical judgmental attitude towards others.
2. Legalism causes one to be discouraged and can even lead to giving up the faith because they just cannot seem to measure up to the standard.
3. If one does not give up the faith, legalism can cause one to bring down the standard of righteousness and excuse sin and law breaking in an attempt to find some kind of peace with God.
4. Finally, Legalism breeds reluctance to witness for God. Why should I bring someone else into the misery of not ever being able to measure up to the standard God expects for salvation?

"There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing" SC44

The Psychology Of Presenting Christ First

We need to let our imagination grasp the psychological difference in presenting Christ first as compared to the doctrinal approach. The doctrinal approach tends to give us the feeling that we are going to straighten out others on their doctrine. We must tell them they are wrong about the day they keep, the food they eat, their understanding of death, etc. and if we could just straighten out their doctrines they would be Seventh-day Adventists. We have also conceived of our message as only a **warning** message. It does have a warning in it, no doubt, but it ought to first, foremost and above all the "**Good News**."

Bearing a negative message of warning is a dreary work at best. There is little doubt that ministers and laymen alike would be far more enthusiastic about bearing good news to lost people. The psychology is dramatically different. The doctrines and warnings must be given, but they are given and received in a new and positive light when Christ and salvation have come first.

"Often doctrinal subjects are presented with no special effect; for men expect others to press upon them their doctrines; but when the matchless love of Christ is dwelt upon, His grace impresses the heart. There are many who are sincerely seeking for light, who know not what they must do to be saved. Oh, tell them of the love of God, of the sacrifice made on Calvary's cross to save the perishing"
CM42

"The love of Jesus will melt and win hearts when the mere reiteration of doctrine will accomplish nothing." DA826

"To the Gentiles, he preached Christ as their only hope of salvation, but did not at first have anything definite to say upon the law. But after their hearts were warmed with the presentation of Christ as the gift of God to our world, and what was comprehended in the work of the Redeemer in the costly sacrifice to manifest the love of God to man, in the most eloquent simplicity he showed that love for all mankind,--Jew and Gentile, --that they might be saved by surrendering their hearts to him. Thus when, melted and subdued, they gave themselves to the Lord, he presented the law of God as the test of their obedience. This was the manner of his working, --adapting his methods to win souls" Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers.--No. 6. p55

Satan Opposes Assurance

"Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God" SC53

"Satan is exultant when he can lead the children of God into unbelief and despondency. He delights to see us mistrusting God, doubting His willingness and power to save us... Satan ever seeks to make the religious life one of gloom. He desires it to appear toilsome and difficult; and when the Christian presents in his own life this view of religion, he is, through his unbelief, seconding the falsehood of Satan. Many, walking along the path of life, dwell upon their mistakes and failures and disappointments, and their hearts are filled with grief and discouragement... In this they bear false witness against our Heavenly Father." SC116, 115

Assurance Is Crucial To Witnessing

The reason we have spent so much time discussing the assurance of salvation is because it is essential for us to have ourselves if we are to be effective witnesses for God.

"When we have an assurance which is bright and clear of our own salvation, we shall exhibit cheerfulness, and joyfulness, which becomes every follower of Jesus Christ. The softening, subduing influence of the love of God, brought into practical life, will make impressions upon minds that will be a savor of life unto life. But a harsh denunciatory life spirit, if manifested, will turn many souls away from the truth into the ranks of the enemy. Solemn thought! To deal patiently with the tempted, requires us to battle with self." Letter 1a 1894

Our inability to accept new Christians as equally accepted by God as we are will hinder our ability to witness. The workers in the vineyard and the prodigal son's brother both illustrate the attitude one has towards repentant sinners, when they themselves are not sure of their own salvation. This attitude will make new believers feel unwanted and rejected and will greatly limit our ability to win souls for God's kingdom.

People Want To Know How To Be Saved

Doctrinal truth is important. The great warnings of prophecies are important, but the lost are more interested in how to be saved.

"There are many who want to know what they must do to be saved. They want a plain and clear explanation of the steps requisite in conversion... to especially make plain the way that sinners may come to Christ and be saved. They should point them to Christ, as did John, and with touching simplicity, their hearts aglow with the love of Christ, say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." RH 02-22-87

"There are more souls longing to understand how they may come to Christ than we imagine. Many listen to popular sermons from the pulpit and know no better than before they listened how to find Jesus and the peace and rest which their souls desire... The people are more ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation and need more instruction upon this all-important subject than upon any other." 4T394

Assurance in Witnessing

Our approach to witnessing is to first assure the we ourselves have assurance of acceptance with God, and then to provide a brief, simple organized presentation of the Gospel which can easily be given by using the booklet, "The Way to Eternal Life."

You may feel that you are not capable of giving a gospel presentation, take heart;

"The minister's work should be the work of a teacher... Let them blunder and make mistakes, and then kindly show them how they can do it better, ...be educating, until you have men and women who have experience in the things of God and can carry responsibility, and that is what we have been suffering for." EGW 1888 Materials, 150

How to Present a Winning Testimony

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." (NIV) Revelation 12:11

This verse mentions two things as a means of conquering power: 1) The blood of the **Lamb** and 2) the word of their **testimony**. We have no difficulty recognizing the power of the Blood, but I am not sure we truly understand the power of our testimony.

"Those who have put on Christ will relate their experience, tracing step by step the leadings of the Holy Spirit--their hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God..., the results of their searching of the Scriptures, their prayers,...and the words of Christ to them, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." ...And as they make known the rich treasures of God's grace, more and still more of the grace of Christ will be imparted to them. They will have the heart of a little child in its simplicity and unreserved obedience. Their souls will pant after holiness, and more and more of the treasures of truth and grace will be revealed to them to be given to the world." COL 125

Testimony Defined:

A testimony is a statement of first hand experience, a witness given to personal knowledge.

"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." Romans 10:9, 10

Paul is saying here that witnessing is more than simply relying on your lifestyle to tell others about God and Christ. He is saying we must confess with "**our mouths**."

"Now we can look forward to the salvation God has promised us. There is no longer any room for doubt and we can tell others that salvation is ours. For there is no question that he will do what he says." Hebrews 10:23 Living Bible

Spirit of Prophecy Encourages Testimonies of Assurance

*"It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. **Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory.**" TM517*

"We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you." SC 71

It is Obvious that God wants us to
testify about our assurance of Eternal
Life in Christ!

The Power Of Love

"The love of Jesus will melt and win hearts when mere reiteration of doctrines will accomplish nothing." DA826

In fact, no matter how right we may be if we do not communicate the truth in love, we can actually drive people away from God.

"Whenever the power of intellect, of authority or of force is employed and love is not manifestly present, the affection and will of those whom we seek to reach assumes a defensive and repelling position and their strength of resistance is increased." 2T135

The Power of Testimony

The early Christians turned the world upside down because of the force of their personal testimony.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life." 1John 1:1

A whole city was turned around by the testimony of one man to whom Jesus said, "Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you." Mark 5:19 And the Scripture says, "He went throughout the whole city telling how much God had done for him." That city had begged Jesus to get out of town! It says they begged him to depart from them. Jesus left the city, but he left a man there with a testimony; and a few weeks later when he returned a whole city was waiting for Him and they welcomed Him. So amazing had been the transformation that now they not only were ready to listen to Him, but the whole city believed that He was the miracle-working Son of God. Next to the word of God, a soul winner's testimony is the most powerful tool he has.

On another occasion, the woman of Samaria led a city to Christ and the Scripture relates that many believed on Him *"because of her testimony"*. John 4:39 There are many other examples like these in the Bible.

Peter said the reason God has called us is to testify for Him. "That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2:9

The word "testimony" has boring connotations for many. We have all attended testimony meetings where repetitious, meaningless stories seemed to never end. The testimony seems to be a springboard for individuals to dump their aches and pains, trials and tribulations on the congregation. We are not talking about that kind of testimony. We are talking about a humble, yet forceful and exciting report of one's personal experience with Jesus Christ. This personal report of what Christ has done in the life, becomes a powerful evangelistic tool. This is the method Christ chose to communicate the gospel. He wants a testimony from person to person through the warm hearts and joyous lips of loving Christians.

"As a witness for Christ, John entered into no controversy, no wearisome contention. He declared what he knew, what he had seen and heard. He had been intimately associated with Christ, had listened to His teachings, had witnessed His mighty miracles. Few could see the beauties of Christ's character as John saw them. For him the darkness had passed away; on him the true light was shining. His testimony in regard to the Saviour's life and death was clear and forcible. Out of the abundance of a heart overflowing with love for the Savior he spoke; and no power could stay his words." AA 555

The Testimony is More Powerful Than Arguing Doctrine

Notice in the statement above that John entered into no controversy. He simply declared what he knew about his experience with Christ. It is difficult to argue against a testimony. It is easy to argue against doctrine.

Doctrine (Arguable)	Testimony (No argument)
Jesus is the Messiah. □	Jesus brings peace and harmony into my life. □ □
The Bible is God's infallible Word □	The Bible Changed my life. □

"The Savior knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts, or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness. He knew that His disciples must receive the heavenly endowment, and that the gospel would be effective only as it was proclaimed by hearts made warm and lips made eloquent by a living knowledge of Him who is the way the truth and the life." AA31

The Testimony Provides Irresistible Power

"Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power, that works for the salvation of souls." DA 347

"The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power. Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; when they repent, He imparts to them His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy." DA826

We have established the importance, and power of testimony. Now we want to focus on developing a two to three minute testimony for use at any time, but especially in a Gospel Presentation.

In the Gospel Presentation, the testimony comes just before the two questions. We are about to delve deeply into the spiritual life and experience of the individual we want to share Christ with, and we must have some way that will not seem probing or manipulative, but powerful and caring. The testimony provides that means. It enables God to act with irresistible power.

Three Parts to a Winning Testimony

*"So everyone may be able, through his own experience, to "set his seal to this, that God is true." John 3:33. He can bear witness to that which he himself has seen and heard and felt of the power of Christ.....**I needed help, and I found it in Jesus. Every want was supplied, the hunger of my soul was satisfied; the Bible is to me the revelation of Christ. I believe in Jesus because He is to me a divine Savior. I believe the Bible because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul.**" 8T 321*

This statement suggests a three part progression to a winning Testimony:

1. My Life Before I accepted Christ
"I needed help."
2. How I became a Christian
"I found the Bible to be the voice of God to my soul."
3. My Life After I became a Christian
"In Christ, the hunger of my soul has been satisfied."

Most people spend too much time talking about the first part of the testimony and not enough time on the second and third. People are not interested in a personal autobiography. They don't care about all of the little details of our early life. What is important is that we describe the fears, the uncertainties, the emptiness, the guilt, the enslavement, hopelessness that possessed us before we came to Christ. Take some time to think through the specific symptoms that plagued you before you became a Christian.

Be Pleasant and Positive

1. Practice your personal witness for Christ until it becomes a part of you.
2. Give your personal testimony in a clear concise and coherent manner.
3. Pray that your face will radiate Christian faith and let your smiles speak the language of heaven.

"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you." Psalm 51:12,13

"In Christ is the tenderness of the shepherd, the affection of the parent, and the matchless grace of the compassionate Saviour. His blessings He presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them. So His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift. The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing." DA826

Things to Avoid

1. Don't use denominational jargon which fails to communicate properly. Avoid such phrases such as: "Since I came into the message;" "after I accepted the truth." Keep your witness Christ centered. It is better to uplift Christ as Savior with such phrases as: "Since I accepted Christ;" and "after I Accepted Jesus as my personal Savior."
2. Don't glamorize sin by telling in detail "how wicked you used to be."
3. Avoid being wordy. Keep your witness brief. Brevity gives others an opportunity to ask questions.
4. Don't speak critically of other churches; all comments should be seasoned with love and tact.
5. Do not give a long list of sacrifices you had to make, the things you had to give up, the hardships you faced in becoming a Christian. Instead, you should emphasize the positive. "Go and tell how great things the Lord has done for you."

Don't Reveal the Answers to the Questions

There is another very important point that we need to remember in giving our testimony. If we are going to present the gospel, we should not give away the answer to the two questions we are about to ask.

If we discuss the two questions concerning how we can know that we have eternal life, during our testimony, then we will not get answers that are a true reflection of their own experience. This in turn limits our understanding of their spiritual needs and our ability to be the best help to them.

How to Start Writing Your Own Testimony

We have discovered that even though the sequence for a testimony should be; 1) My life before I became a Christian, 2) How I became a Christian, and 3) My Life After I became a Christian, it is usually easier to begin with the second part, How you became a Christian.

Begin With Part II: How Did You Become A Christian?

Begin by identifying the particular point and time in your life when Jesus became real and meaningful to you. It could have been:

- A dramatic conversion
- An Evangelistic Meeting
- A Week of Prayer
- Personal Bible Study
- A particular Bible Text
- Maybe even a gradual realization of God's Love

What happened at that time and How?

What About Those Who Have Been Raised as Christians?

Those who have lived devoted Christian Lives since childhood will have to put more thought into the preparation of their testimony than one who had not been living a Christian Life. Pick a point at which you had spiritual growth, and build your testimony around that point.

Never assume that the testimony of a reformed, notorious sinner is more effective than that of a lifetime believer. It should be the other way around. Gross sin leaves scars which will always mar the image of Christ.

It is true that those with a Christian background must use more insight, looking into their hearts to recognize what the true nature is, what they would be-- or would have become, without the power of Christ in their life, and without their Christian training. It doesn't take much imagination to see what we would be without Christ; but it might take considerable Christian humility to acknowledge it! The point is this, there can be no testimony of what Christ has done until we tell the truth about what kind of person we are without Him. And you see, when this is done, the interests feel a common bond with the Christian, they both have the same basic needs. They begin to see that Christ is the Answer to their problems too.

Next Write Part I: Before I Became a Christian

Answer the Question, "What was my life like before that time?"

1. Perhaps your inner anxieties or guilt brought on sickness.
2. Maybe it caused unhappiness in your home life.
3. Maybe it led you to try alcohol, drugs or sinful pleasures in a vain search for fulfillment.
4. You should attempt to include an element of the fear of death. The Bible tells us this is a universal fear and it provides an opportunity to

share the only solution. In addition, it makes an easier transition into the two questions.

5. Be general here, not too specific.

Finally Do Part III: Since I Became A Christian

Finally, you should rejoice in your life after becoming a Christian:

1. The peace you have found
2. Forgiveness from sin
3. The Joy of knowing that you will live forever in perfect happiness in heaven.
4. The health and happiness God has given you
5. Genuine friendships you have made with others
6. The caring fellowship of God's people
7. The sense of purpose and meaning you now have in knowing who you are and why you are here.

These things should be stated in as specific terms as possible rather than in a general way.

And Now Write it Out, Practice it, and Use it

We will probably never develop a good testimony to use in soul winning work until we make the effort of writing it out. Only in this way can we properly polish it, removing denominational clichés and trite expressions that Christians commonly use. The Word of God says "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that is within you." All effective soul winners will obey this command and polish and develop their own personal testimony.

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." Revelation 12:11

My Own Personal Testimony

My Life Before I Became a Christian:

How I Became a Christian:

My Life After I Became a Christian:

Outline of the Gospel Presentation

I. Introduction

- A. Their secular life
- B. Their church life
- C. Our Testimony
- D. The Two Questions
 1. Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where if you were to die right now you would know for certain that you would have eternal life? (1 John 5:13)
 2. Suppose that you were to die tonight and when you meet God, if He were to ask, "Why should you have eternal life in Heaven?" What would you say?

II. The Gospel

A. Grace

1. Eternal life is a gift (Ephesians 2:8,9)
2. We can't earn or deserve it

B. Man

1. We are sinners (Romans 3:10)
2. We cannot save ourselves (Romans 6:23)

C. God

1. Is Merciful--does not want to punish us (John 3:16)
2. Is Just, therefore must punish sin (2Peter 2:9)

D. Christ

1. The Infinite God-Man (John 1:1,14) (Hebrews 2:17)
2. God's punishment for sin was placed on Him (2 Corinthians 5:21)

E. Faith

1. By faith that trusts Christ alone (John 1.12)
2. Distinguish from intellectual, temporal faith (James 2:19)

F. Acceptance

1. Receiving the gift of Eternal Life (1John 5:12-15)
2. Our Covenant (agreement with God)

III. The New Life

- A. Sins forgiven
- B. New Creation
- C. Sons & Daughters of God
- D. Winning Life
- E. Eternal Life

IV. The Commitment

- A. Qualifying Question--Do you see what Christ wants to do for you?
- B. Commitment Question--Do you want to receive the Gift of Eternal Life that Christ left heaven and died on the cross to give you?
- C. Clarification of Commitment
 1. Transferring trust from self to Christ
 2. Christ must be Lord as well as Savior
- D. Prayer of Commitment

If this is really what you want, we can go to the lord in prayer. I can lead us in prayer and we will tell Him what you have told me just now. Pray for, Pray with, Pray for.
- E. Assurance
 1. Acquaint with last page of Way to Eternal Life, booklet
 2. Fix in the mind the texts of assurance. (John 6:47)

V.. Welcome to the family of God! (John 1:12)

A Sample Presentation of the Gospel

(Ray Dixon answers by knock on his door.)
Hello

Good morning, Ray Dixon, right? I'm Elden Walter and with me here are Diane Clark and Bob Hall from the Adventist church.

I. Introduction

(This prospect has visited our church, hence this type of introduction of ourselves. If the Prospect is a VOP, IIT, FFT, etc. interest, we would not mention the church because it might raise a barrier of prejudice; we would instead introduce ourselves as representatives of the source of their interest.---VOP, FFT, IIT) Do you have a few moments? May we come in?

Yes, do come in

Thank you.
I'd offer to shake your hand, but I just came in from the garage from working on my car. Just a moment and I'll wash up....

Is working on the car a hobby you enjoy, Ray, or is it just the money you save?

A. His secular life

It's a hobby. I really get a kick out of it. In fact, the car I'm working on is not the one I drive. I bought two Volkswagens that were damaged and I'm repairing one and scavenging the other, hoping that my spare time hobby will bring a few dollars for my labor when I get it finished.

Sincere Compliment

That's real interesting. I admire someone who enjoys repairing things. I get a real satisfaction myself out of fixing something that doesn't work. I enjoy working on my car whenever I can find time to do it, and I need to save the money too! Do you particularly enjoy foreign cars---Volkswagens, or does this just happen to be what you ran into?

It's just what I happened to find. I haven't worked on Volkswagens before, but I'm enjoying it. They are different.

Well,, you're ahead of me, Ray, I've never gotten into a Volkswagen. That would be a new experience...I'm so glad we found you home this evening.

I feel honored at your visit.

Oh, not at all. We just appreciate so much the opportunity to get better acquainted with you and we want you to know how happy we are that you came out to visit our special church service a week ago. We hope you'll come back again. (or,

we're so happy to find people interested in our Bible study program, or whatever gave rise to your visit.)

No doubt I will. I enjoyed the service. A friend I work with at the shop has been inviting me for a long time. I'm afraid he thought I never would get around to coming.

We're so glad you did. I'm sure you feel as we do that the spiritual side of life is the most important, and to find real spiritual fulfillment and peace in these difficult days is top-priority, Ray, what church were you brought up in?

B. His church life

My parents went to the Community church. I really haven't spent much time with religious things. My folks went to church quite regularly, but I didn't go much after I was very young. Not very much of what was said seemed to have meaning for me. I will say that there seemed to be a note of conviction and certainty at your service that I'd never noticed before at any other.

Well, Ray, your discernment is an encouragement to us, for we do believe that it's the privilege of the Christian to experience real, genuine assurance of eternal life and peace, and we hope that it shines through. I remember only too well what my outlook on life was before I knew Christ as my personal Savior. I guess I could best describe my life as a mixture of loneliness and fear of the future. Of course, I found a lot of happiness in life, too, and I was quite successful in my work and education, but there was definitely something missing and I kept hoping for it where the bright lights and bold advertisements said it could be found, but it wasn't there. I finally started looking for the answer back in church and after a time, a friend there helped me to know what Christ really came to do for me, and I've never been the same since. Not only did this experience bring complete fulfillment to me, but I can really say that the greatest joys I've experienced looking for the answer back in church and after a time, a friend there helped me to know what Christ really came to do for me, and I've never been the same since. Not only did this experience bring complete fulfillment to me, but I can really say that the greatest joys I've experienced since then have come in sharing with others how I found that missing ingredient to life.

C. Our Testimony

I've occasionally heard others say something like that, but I figured it was just words. Is there really something to it?

Yes, there is, Ray, as real as life itself. In fact, life is complete only when we find the assurance of eternal life in Christ. Would you mind Ray, if I asked you something?

No, I guess not, go ahead.

D. The Two Questions

1. "Do you know for certain that you have eternal life?"

Ray, have you come to the place in your spiritual life where, if you were to die tonight, that you would know for certain that you have eternal life?

I guess I didn't really think anyone could know for sure.

You know, Ray, I've some good news for you. The Bible says we might have that certainly. In I John: 5:13, we read "These things were written... that you might know you have eternal life." God wants us to have that assurance and that confidence. And we can have it! Isn't that great? (Heb. 10:23 LB might also be used here.)

It surely would be.

Well, Ray the only way on can give a confident answer to that first question is to understand how we may have eternal life. May I ask you something else?

Yes, go ahead.

2. "Why should you have eternal life?"

Suppose you were to die right now and when you stand before God, if He were to ask you, "WHY, should you have eternal life in heaven?" What would you say?

I don't really know. I never thought of answering a question like that.

I'm not trying to put you on the spot, Ray, but you see, what we think about the answer to this question is really very important. In fact, I guess we could say that unless we know what the basis of eternal life is we wouldn't know how to find it, would we? So, Ray, what do you think your answer would be? If God were to ask you in the judgment day, "Why should you have eternal life? What do you think you'd say?"

Well, I suppose that one would be entitled to eternal life if he does what God says and tries sincerely to live by the Golden Rule and keep God's commandments.

Identify with the prospect.

You know, Ray, I think your answer is an accurate reflection of what most Christian's think about the requirements for eternal life. I know it's the same thing that I'd said for many years, but I came to realize that this very answer was the cause of my anxiety. Let me just say that I believe I have the most wonderful news that you've ever heard. When I discovered how I could have the assurance of eternal life on a basis which would not waver, I found the first complete satisfaction of my life. Would you like for me to share with you how I made that discovery, and how you can know it too?

Yes, I'd like to know for myself.

II. The Gospel

Ray, the most important realization is this: That no matter how earnest our efforts to do the will of God and keep His commandments, because of our human weakness, those efforts will still be less than perfect. Don't you agree? And even if we lived a life that was perfect from this moment on, our life has been stained by disobedience and so there's no hope of our earning or deserving eternal life on the basis of what we are or our good works. Do you see? That's why the Bible teaches that **God's grace GIVES to us eternal life** and that our works have no part in making it available to us.

The bible says "by grace you are saved, and that not of yourselves. **It is the Gift of God**, not of works, lest we take credit for it." (Titus 3:5, Romans 6:23 and Phil 3: 8,9 LB might be added here if needed)

How much do you pay for a gift? If we paid anything at all, it would cease to be a gift, right?

Eternal Life is a **Gift**

We realize why this is so when we **see what the Bible says about man in general**, and we know it is something that's true about us as individuals, God says, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one." And in Romans 7, Paul talks about the law of our sinful desires and inclinations. We're born with sinful tendencies and with selfishness in our hearts. I think most of us are only too keenly aware of how true these statements are. If we were to try to add up all of the times we have violated God's will in word or thought or deed, it would be overwhelming, wouldn't it? And Ray, God says the wages of sin is death.

We're doomed to die. And we can understand the reason for this, too. If God should condone sin, there would never be any hope of peace and happiness in the universe. If there's ever to be a world without selfishness and greed and hatred and war, sin will have to be punished and eradicated.

But you know, Ray, God loves us. He made us to be like Himself the scripture says, and He wants us with Him forever in wonderful fellowship. "God so loved the world," remember, so He doesn't want to punish us with death.

But on the other hand, a part of real love is **justice** and God's justice has to punish sin. The Bible says, "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil!" and if God should excuse sin or let it go without punishment, He would not be a God of justice. What would we think of a judge here in our locality who would let criminals go free just because he was soft-hearted? We'd demand another judge, wouldn't we? Experience has shown that letting a criminal go without punishment doesn't reform his life, it only sets him free to continue his criminal activity and it encourages others to do the same. So a God who truly loves, must also be just and must punish sin and "the wages of sin is death." So thus far, what we know about ourselves and God would leave us hopeless, doomed to die. But that's where the good news of the gospel comes in, Ray. That's not the end of the story!

I think, it is right here, Ray, that we can really appreciate the best known text in the Bible..."God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Scripture says that, "while we were yet helpless Christ died for the ungodly." "God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Paul tells us all of these things in Romans the fifth chapter. And you know, it is very important that we understand just who Jesus is. Ray, I'd be interested in your opinion about Christ. Who do you think He is?

We; you quoted a text that said He was the Son of God and yet He called himself the Son of Man. I don't really think I ever understood about Christ.

A. Grace

- 1. Heaven is a gift**
- 2. We can't earn it**

B. Man

- 1. We are sinners**

- 2. We cannot save ourselves**

C. God

- 1. God Is Merciful**
- 2. God Is Just**

D. Christ

1. Christ is God

It is important that we realize that when Christ died for us, this was the Infinite God accepting our punishment for sin. If Christ were merely a man or even an angel, it would not have paid the price of our sin. The Bible says Jesus is God.. In the first chapter of the gospel of John we read, "In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God...the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." " And His name shall be called Wonderful...the Might God...the Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. When we realize that One who is God, was willing to bear our punishment and purchase for us eternal life, surely we can see how much God really does love us.

2. God's punishment for sin was placed on Christ

The Bible says that God put all of the punishment for our sins on His own Son. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree." "And for our sake God made Christ to be sin for us when He had never sinned, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

He became guilty that we might be pardoned.

That's got to be a miracle, hasn't it, Ray? It is hard for us to understand how Christ could become guilty for our sins when He had no part in committing them. And yet we can believe it was just that real! because although we are guilty of sinning we can actually feel pardoned when we receive Christ and His forgiveness. When we know He is our Saviour, the burden of guilt rolls away and we come to realize that we're children of God, and we even approach God's throne in prayer and with boldness and call Him our Father! That would be presumption, Ray, outside of the miracle of forgiveness. And just as surely as we experience pardon and forgiveness, just so really did Christ experience guilt. This is one of the mysteries of our salvation-- how we can be made guiltless when we are the sinners and Christ was guilty when He had never done wrong. So Christ paid the penalty for our guilt and sin and in doing so, He purchased heaven and eternal life for us. **And He wants to give us this life!**

He want to give us the life he purchased

The gift of God is eternal life, the Bible says. **But how do we receive it? By receiving Christ as our Saviour and Lord.** As many as received Him to them gave He power to become sons of God...He who has the Son has life." The eternal life we receive is in Jesus Christ and by receiving Him we have everlasting life. We receive Him, Ray, by faith, by accepting Him because we believe Him and trust Him."

E. Faith

"By grace are you saved **through faith.**" Eph 2:8

Sometimes people ask, Do I have enough faith to be saved? We can all have enough faith. But it takes the **right kind of faith.**

1. Not simply intellectual faith

You see, there are those who believe all about Jesus. They believe that he lived and died, that He worked miracles and that He taught what the New Testament says,---but this is more or less an **intellectual faith** that doesn't really establish a personal relationship with Christ. And then there are those who have a **temporal faith**,---that is they believe that God will answer their prayers for protection and for their daily needs and they have experienced this many times and so they trust what God will do for them in the material things of life.

2. Saving faith that trusts Christ alone for Salvation

But neither **intellectual faith nor temporal faith** is necessarily **saving faith.** Saving faith is a faith that **accepts the gift of eternal life, entering into a personal covenant with Christ.**

Let me say it this way. If I hold here in my hand an ordinary dollar bill and you look at it and are convinced that is a good dollar bill, it has been used many times, it is genuine,

you'd have intellectual faith in that dollar bill. That is you believe in its existence and its reality and its worth. Further, you know what the dollar bill will buy. You have temporal faith in what it will accomplish. And then I tell you that I want to give it to you, and you believe what I say. You have faith in everything about that dollar bill and in my offer to make it a gift to you, but does simply extending my hand to you with this dollar bill, with the offer to give it to you, does that make it yours yet?

No, not really. Not unless I take it and put it in my pocket.

Right you are! You could believe everything about the dollar bill, but unless you actually reach out and take it and make it your own it never becomes yours. Ray, there are so many who believe everything **about** Christ, but they've never believed **in** Him. That is they've never received Him as their Saviour. They've never reached out to accept the gift of life and tell Him that they accept Him and the eternal life He offers, giving themselves to Him for eternity, and you see this can make all the difference in the world in what kind of assurance we have. **If you've reached out and taken the dollar bill and put it in your pocket and someone asks you, "Do you have it?" You'd say, "Yes I do."** But if it's still in my hand, even though you believed that I'm willing to give it to you, you could never be certain that it was yours.

This makes our acceptance a covenant, an agreement with him. We have agreed to accept the gift of life and to receive Him as our personal Saviour. This brings us into a new covenant relationship with Him. Ray, until your acceptance of Christ is as real as this and you have that kind of confidence that you have eternal life, there will always be something missing in your life. If we to know real peace, we must have this kind of assurance.

Let me mention some of the things that Christ promises to do for you when you become His. He'll forgive your sins, the guilt will be gone. He'll give you a new spiritual life that is something entirely new. A life that appreciates spiritual truths and fellowship with God's people. A life that makes worldly pleasures seem strangely unimportant

The Bible puts it this way. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things are past away, all things become new." You become a child of God. "To as many as received him gave He power to become sons of God."

You have a life that wins. I really like what the Apostle Paul says in Romans 6: .."we know that our old self was crucified with Him that we might not longer be enslaved to sin, for sin will have no dominion over you." One translation puts it this way, "Sin will never again be your master." And most important of all, we receive eternal life when Christ comes in. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, he who believes in me has everlasting life."

Ray, do you see what Christ wants to do for you?

Yes, I do.

Do you want to receive this gift of eternal life that Christ left heaven and died on the cross to give you?

I guess a man would be foolish to reject it, wouldn't he? Yes, I do.

F. Acceptance

1. Receiving the Gift

2. Covenant agreement with God

III. The New Life

A. Sins Forgiven

B. Spiritual creation

C. Victorious Life

D. Eternal Life

IV. Commitment

A. Qualifying Question

B. Commitment Question

**C. Clarification
of
commitment**

Before we do that, Ray let us be certain that we understand **that assurance can only come if we trust Christ alone for eternal life.** In other words, if you're trusting in any degree **what you are or what you do** to bring eternal life, you can never be confident that you have it, because of course, what you are and what you do will not be perfect. The realization of that imperfection would always leave you in doubt about your salvation.

**1. Transferring
trust from
self to Christ**

So you see it's only when we realize that Jesus paid the whole price and that our salvation rests solely in this perfect gift from Him that we can have confidence that it is ours. His sacrifice was perfect His atonement on Calvary had no fault at all. Therefore, if we trust this alone, then, and only then can we have confident assurance that we have eternal life. Then as the text says, "we can know we have eternal life." And there's another thing, Ray, about which we should be very honest with ourselves.

**2. Christ must
be Lord as
well as
Saviour**

Christ comes into our lives not only as **Saviour, but Lord.** That means that He is on the throne of our lives, when we receive Him as our Saviour. We will always put His will first in our lives. This means we will purpose to live according to His will, turning from the ways of our past life that are not pleasing to Him. Does receiving Christ into your life mean all of this to you, Ray?

Yes it does.

Obedience is our response of love.

Obedience is our
response of love.

You see, a Christian wants to obey the Lord because of his response of love. The Lord has given us eternal life because of His love for us. We did not deserve it in the least. Now we do His will because of our love for him, not because we think we can buy His love or forgiveness with our obedience.

(If someone tries to buy our love, it is an insult? If this is the case with human love, it is even more true in regard to God's love.)

You can't keep loving someone if you keep hurting them carelessly.

It's so important for us to realize what effect disobedience would have on our love for God. You know, **you can't keep loving someone if you keep hurting them carelessly!** That's a thought we need to think through. If in a business partnership, one [partner begins to take advantage of the other, or begins to steal from the other, he will soon begin to **find fault** with his partner to justify himself for what he's doing. Then if he keep on wronging him, he begins to **blame him** to excuse himself and finally he comes to the place where he **despises** his partner and they can't work together at all. You just can't keep loving someone if you keep on hurting them carelessly.

We see this same principle at work in marriage relationships that are deteriorating. A man who is cheating on his wife may claim at first to love two women, but it isn't long before he begins to find fault with his wife---this helps him to salve his conscience for what he's doing. If he keeps hurting his wife in this way, he soon begins to **blame her**, to excuse his wrong-doing. Then before long he despises her and wants to leave her. You just can't keep loving someone if you keep hurting them carelessly. It's a law of love. If we carelessly transgress the will of our Lord who died to give us eternal life, we will not be able to love Him or appreciate His salvation. We'll soon be separated from Him and lose the assurance of His presence in our lives.

We've been speaking of the effects of careless or willful transgression. We should not confuse this with the errors human weakness which the Lord in His mercy and grace does not censure. Our relationship with Christ is an abiding relationship, like marriage, or a father and his son. As such it is not severed by faults and failures or stumbling occasioned by our human weakness, any more than we would disown a child for his imperfections or get divorced every time we failed to show appropriate love to husband or wife.

Taking Christ into our life is more like taking a wife in marriage than anything else. In Romans 7, Paul used the comparison. A man can court a girl. They can talk of their love for each other. They can finally talk of a home and marriage and even promise that they will marry one another, but are they married yet?

No

The meaning of "Covenant."

You see, they may believe in each other's love. They may talk of love. They may want to get married. But none of this actually brings them to a married state. It's only when two people who love each other come before God and witnesses and make an agreement, which we might call a covenant, (that is the word the marriage certificate uses), that they are married. They promise with just a few simple words that they will love one another and give themselves to each other in marriage. When this is done the minister says, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." At the reception I've often heard a Husband married couple say, "Are we really married now? I don't feel any different than I did a couple of hours ago!" But the fact is they **are married. It is an agreement they made with one another and with God that makes them know they are married.** Interestingly, I have never seen a newly married couple worry about "not feeling like" they're married---they always take off on their honeymoon **knowing that they really are married.**

The meaning of "Covenant."

The necessity of knowing we have made our covenant for eternal life.

You see, they know by reason of their marriage covenant, not because of feeling. Likewise, Ray, when we know that we have received Jesus by making our covenant with Him, then there is no uncertainty about our relationship. We have accepted His gift of eternal life. We have given ourselves to Him and it is real.

Jesus put it this way. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him." This is a promise from God. When we open the door, we make our agreement with God, or covenant with God to accept the eternal life He offers, and to accept Christ as our Lord and Master.
Would you like to open the door and welcome him into your life now?

Yes, I would.

Ray, the Lord says that wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there will He be in their midst. He is here with us now and we can talk to Him in prayer. I can lead us in prayer and we can tell Him what you have told me just now. Shall we pray?

D. Prayer of Commitment

Dear Heavenly Father, We come to you just now so thankful for what Jesus has done for us on Calvary's cross and thankful that we can share this good news with others. We are so happy that your love has reached Ray's heart and mind and we pray just now that his acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour may be deeply sincere, and real to him. We pray

Pray For

for the presence of your Holy Spirit as he makes this covenant and may the angels be the joyful witnesses to this acceptance.

And now Ray, as we remain in prayer, I will word a prayer of acceptance phrase by phrase that you can say after me, if this is really the expression of your heart. Remember that God is looking at your heart more than He is listening to your lips and He understands your sincere desire. So Ray, repeat these words aloud, after me, if the is the prayer of your heart.

Pray With

Pray With

Lord Jesus, (he repeats each phrase) I want you to come into my life right now...I am a sinner...I realize that I cannot save myself...I cannot be good enough to deserve heaven or eternal life....so now I put my trust in you.....I accept you as my personal Saviour.....I believe you died for me...I receive you as Lord and Master over my life.....Help me as I turn from my sins and follow you.....I accept your gift of eternal life.....I am not worthy of it.....but I thank you for it.....Amen.

Pray For

Pray For

Dear Heavenly Father, You have heard Ray's prayer and your promise is, "Him that cometh to me i will in no wise cast out, and whosoever will may come." Your word tells us that you are "able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Jesus Christ." We claim these promises just now. Ray has received Jesus as his Lord and your word says that "He who has the Son has everlasting life." We believe that Ray has become your child just now, because your word says that, "as many as received him to them gave He power to become sons of God." We thank you for these precious promises and we claim them through Jesus Christ. Amen.

E. Assurance

(Turning to the last page of the presentation booklet, "The Way to Eternal Life")
Now, Ray I would like to ask you to read this text from John 6:47

"Truly, I tell you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life."

Did you just believe in Jesus for salvation?

Yes, I did.

**1. Do you know
that you have
eternal life?**

Now Ray, let us ask that first question that we started with; Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where if you died tonight that you would know that you have eternal life?

Yes, that's what the Bible says, doesn't it?

Do your claim that promise?

Yes

(If there is a hesitation, I John 5: 11-13 can be used in the same way to underscore the promise of Christ)

Now Ray, would you read this other text in John 1:12?

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God."

Did you just now receive Jesus, Ray?

Yes, I did.

Are you a child of God?

Yes, I am according to the promise of God's word.

These are the promises of God. Our hope and confidence is based on His Word. He said, "heaven and earth may pass away." We can be sure, can't we? Now, Ray, let us ask that other question, too. If you were to stand before God and He were to ask you, "Why should you have eternal life? What would you say?"

I would say, because of what Christ did for me on Calvary. I trust Him alone for my salvation.

Ray, take my hand. Welcome to the family of God!

Immediate follow-up

Promise to return

This booklet 'The Way To Eternal Life', will be a great help ray< if you will read it through again before you go to sleep tonight, review the promises of the Bible has made to you. Pray the prayer of acceptance again and say, "Lord, I prayed that prayer today accepted your gift of eternal life. I meant it then, and I still mean it. I am your child." Then do the same thing again in the morning. Do this every morning and evening for at least three or four days until these promises of God's love are really fixed in your mind. I want tot come by again in a few days Ray, and rejoice with you and pray for you. Maybe I can find something to bring for you to read, which will be a blessing as you grow in Christ.

Well, it has been good to be with you, and I am so happy we could share this wonderful moment in your life. (As we stand to leave, we say in a casual way). We would be so happy to have you come to church with us this week-end. Would you enjoy that?

Yes, I really would like to come.

Well, listen Ray, I'll just drop by and we'll ride over together. That will be next Saturday morning. You see we go to church on Saturday---that probably doesn't make any difference to you right?

No, that's fine.

Great, I'll see you Saturday morning at 9:00 o'clock.

**2. Do you know
you are a
child of God?**

**Welcome to the
Family!**

Understanding the Presentation and the Interest

1. The Introduction

The introduction sets the tone for the entire visit.

You cannot win people to Christ who don't like you.

"Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them at their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs" DA151

Use The Fort Formula

Family-

Look for opportunities to compliment them on their families, children, homes, or even hobbies or interests they may have.

Occupation-

Get them to talk about their work and how they feel about it.
Don't do all the talking, let them talk.

Religion-

Move into spiritual things as soon as possible.

They know why you are there.

Don't ask "What church do you go to?"

You may embarrass them if they don't attend.

Ask, "Which church were you brought up in? Do you still attend?"

Do you ever think about spiritual things?

Be careful not to criticize their church or beliefs.

Testimony

We have already devoted an entire chapter to the importance of the personal testimony in witnessing.

We Must Learn How To Ask Soul-Searching Questions.

During the course of the presentation, we will be asking some soul searching questions. Questions about their deepest feelings regarding their eternal life is a very personal matter.

It is inappropriate and even rude to intrude into the most personal concerns of the soul until or unless we have earned the right to do this by our own genuine interest in them as individuals.

The personal testimony will be one of the most significant ways to be successful in leading souls to Christ, it paves the way for asking the two questions.

2. The Two Questions

The First Question:
If you died right now, would you know for certain that you would have eternal life?"

Some feel that it is a little indelicate to ask "If you were to die right now..." Notice what part of the presentation the question is located in. It comes right after our testimony. We have talked about the assurance of eternal life, and our being delivered from the fear of death. These are concerns to every heart.

The question is necessary for our diagnosis

The genius and importance of these two questions cannot be overstated. We must know where they are in their spiritual experience before we can lead them into deeper truth.

"Wherever a church is established, all the members should engage actively in missionary work. They should visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition" 6T296

The questions are necessary for their awakening

Changing The Two Questions For The Sick

Obviously you would not ask a sick person, "If you were to die right now...."

You can simply ask:

"Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for certain you have eternal life?"

The Four Causes Of Spiritual Insecurity

1. Righteousness by works
2. Willful sin
3. Lack of identifiable covenant
4. Needs to know that he can know

Interest Needs To Have Hope

It is essential to establish hope for the interest as a solid foundation from the very beginning. The interests are going to have to face their sin and lost condition during the presentation; and to realize that your goal is a certain knowledge of eternal life will give them hope, even during the time you are pointing out their lost condition.

The Second Question

Suppose that you were to die right now, and when you meet God, if He were to ask, "Why should you have eternal life in Heaven?" What would you say?

Three Possible Types of Answers

- Genuine Assurance In Christ
- Claim To Assurance Can Be Presumption
- Some Are Actually Trusting In Their Own Works

How To Help One Who Says He Has Assurance, But Is Trusting Self

Very often, the interest will answer the second question with a mixture of ideas that add up to trusting Christ plus works. We must learn to quickly recognize any answer to the question which mixes righteousness by faith and righteousness by works.

We are not trying to undermine their assurance, but help them build it on a solid foundation that will never waver.

This kind of answer usually sounds something like this:

"I think that I am saved because I have faith in Jesus and I live a good Christian life."

You might respond with:

"You know, I used to feel the same way, in fact most people give that answer. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I made a lot of mistakes, and I would begin to wonder if I had done enough to be sure I was going to heaven. When you make mistakes, do you ever wonder if your life is good enough to actually be sure you would be saved if you were to die right now?"

Futility Of Pursuing Righteousness By Works

"There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion " worth nothing." SC44

We Must Not Judge

Do not be too quick to assume their answer which mixes grace and works actually means they have no assurance. It is possible to have the right understanding but not be able to verbalize it properly.

Avoid the impression of trying to trap them into giving a wrong answer. We simply want to lead them to a firmer relationship with Jesus Christ.

It is also possible to hold wrong views of the plan of salvation and still be in the grace of God.

The second question is vital to indicate whether they are trusting in themselves or do they have a valid assurance of eternal life.

The Wording Of The Question

The wording of this question is very vital. The question might be phrased so as to bring out automatic Bible-text answers that have been conditioned into church-going people.

For example:

"What should we do to be saved?"

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved."

Necessity Of Getting A Definite Answer

Many will not attempt to answer this question the first time.

It is so important to clearly understand what their belief is on this matter that we must get an answer or we cannot really help them.

It is also important to repeat the answer they give and solidly establish it.

You can say:

"Now if I understand you correctly, you believe..."

The failure to clearly identify, and bring to their consciousness, their understanding of this question, will result in the interest saying during the close, "You know, that is what I have always believed."

We must be able to go back to the beginning and say, "Will, I understood you to say that you thought if we should have eternal life it would be because of our good life....etc."

We must help them understand why their mistaken concepts have led to their uncertainty and doubt. Then we can bring them to a point of assurance.

Four More Ways To Ask Second Question

What do we do if the interest says, "I don't know what I would say."

There are four more ways to probe for an answer to the second question.

1. What Do You Think You Would Say?

Re-emphasize the importance of the question and it's answer. This is the most important question in life. Our eternal salvation hinges on it. If we don't understand the basis of salvation clearly, how can we find eternal life?

"I realize that this is probably something you hadn't prepared a formal answer to, but if God were to ask you 'why should you have eternal life in heaven?' **What do you think you would say?**"

2. Use A More General Question

"Tell me, from the things you have observed or heard, **what do you think the basic requirements are for eternal life?**"

3. Share Common Misconceptions

"I thought, and most people think, that if we do the best we can, live by the Golden Rule and the commandments, we will receive eternal life. Is that the way you see it?"

This does put words in their mouths, but they may never have thought through the question before, so it tends to be leading; but it is the best thing we can do at this point.

4. Agree That He Does Not Know The Answer

If there is still no answer we would want to help them tactfully yet firmly and clearly admit that they simply do not know how to find salvation.

How We Ask The Second Question When There Is No Assurance

If they do not have assurance of eternal life, then use the second form of the second question above.

It is still important to ask the second question even if they have no assurance. We want to discover what their background and teaching has led them to believe about salvation.

Get Misunderstandings Clearly Established

By the use of one of these forms of the second question we must discover and establish the interest's understandings or misunderstandings of the basis of eternal life; or we are in danger of coming to the end of the presentation and having them claim that they understood it all along.

These questions help them discover their need, before we even present the gospel.

You can say, "You know, I gave that same answer for a long time, in fact most people believe that way. But I came to realize that my understanding of why a person should have eternal life was not just the way the Bible teaches, and that it caused me to fear and be uncertain about being saved. When I found out what the Bible really says about how I can be sure that I have eternal life, it was the greatest discovery that has ever come to me. It brought great joy and peace to my heart. May I share with you how I discovered this assurance on a basis that would never waver, and how you can have it too?"

What The Results Of The Introduction Should Be

We have established friendship
They are ready for a Gospel Presentation

We Must Use Great Tactfulness

It is essential to continually point out and remind them of their mistaken ideas. If we do not, we have no hope of changing the way they think so they will have assurance of eternal life.

At the same time, it is essential for us to be extremely sensitive and tactful. Use statements like, "That is the way I understood it too." Or "I struggled with those very same things."

What To Say When You Meet The Assured Christian

They are prepared for the traditional doctrinal studies.
"It is encouraging to find others who are already part of the family of God! So few today have really trusted Jesus for eternal life. I am glad to have found you. One of the things that has meant most to me since becoming a Christian, was a systematic Bible Study Course on the great themes of the Bible, and Bible Prophecies. I would like to come back and show you. Would you like to spend a few minutes each week studying the lessons?"

Be Enthusiastic

The Interest will place a value on the gospel in direct proportion to the enthusiasm that we show for it's wonderful provisions.

"Put into your work all the enthusiasm that you can" EV177

"His blessings He presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them. So His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift" DA826

Grace

The important thing to emphasize here is the fact that eternal life is a gift and you cannot earn a gift.

Man

It is not too difficult to establish the fact that man is a sinner by nature. For the few who seem to feel satisfied with their goodness, we can point out the difficulty of even a sincere Christian living one day without some kind of mistake. When this is multiplied by the days in a year it soon begins to add up to hundreds and thousands of sins for which we are all guilty.

God

There was a time in Christian history when God's justice in punishing sin was the overwhelming concept people held of God. Today's concept is just the reverse, therefore, it is best to mention first God's love and mercy and His desire to save us, and then to spend most of the time on this section in showing from the Bible that God must also be just.

If necessary, you can illustrate this point by telling the story of a local judge who would repeatedly release criminals who break into homes to steal, kill and rape, because he is merciful and loves them so much. Does he really love the society he serves? If God ever hopes to restore peace and harmony in the universe again, He must destroy sin. Love demands justice.

Christ

Do not assume that everyone understands that Jesus was actually God as well as man. You may need such passages as John 1 to help them. They must see that the sinless Son of God, the Infinite God-Man willfully gave His own life to save us.

Spend Time At The Cross

It is equally important to help them realize that Jesus became guilty for our sins and died in our place on the cross. He did more than simply accept our punishment for us, or take a whipping for us.

He actually became guilty for our sins,
and that guilt crushed out his life.

This is the point in the presentation where conversions take place.

It is important to spend time with 2 Corinthians 5:21. I like to demonstrate this principle by placing my Bible on my right hand saying, this represents the guilt for my sins. It is weighing heavy on me. But Jesus takes it and becomes guilty for my sins. Place the Bible on your left hand. He died guilty for my sins and the debt is paid in full. Now God can look at me as though I had never sinned (hold up your right hand). Even more, God takes the perfect life of Christ, and gives it to me for a free gift. Put the Bible back on Your right hand and hold it up. So now when my name comes up in the judgment, I need only be concerned about the perfect life of Christ. This is my key to heaven.

It is also important to stress the suffering of Christ, and how he actually became guilty, and felt the guilt for our sins. It was our sin that killed Jesus.

Faith

The two main points to stress here are that:

1. Faith must be in Christ not in ourselves.
2. Distinguish between saving faith and mere intellectual faith.

*" It is not enough to believe **about** Christ; we must believe **in** Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. But **saving faith is a transaction**, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation " God." GW261*

This is the entire basis of Assurance in Witnessing.

Acceptance

Acceptance should be an identifiable transaction in the life.

The dollar bill illustration in the Sample Gospel Presentation does a very good job of making this point clear.

New Life

This section emphasizes the importance of a true life changing commitment to Christ. It shows how God gives us power to overcome.

The emphasis of the power God gives us to live obediently will encourage the interest. It is important to be enthusiastic here.

A balanced emphasis is needed

- Too much can be discouraging or can lead to legalism
- Too little makes Christianity meaningless

The Commitment

We have completed the presentation of the Gospel and we must see if the interest understands it and desires to make a commitment to Christ.

Qualifying Question

"Do you see what Christ wants to do for you?"

The answer to this question dictates the direction we take with them.

If the response is positive, we can continue on.

If not, there could be one of two problems.

- They are not ready to make a commitment to Christ. (Should have been caught in the beginning.)
- They are not yet clear. We must clarify the points of confusion.

Commitment Question

Do you want to receive the gift of eternal life that Christ left heaven and died on the cross to give you?

You must be able to ask this question in your sleep. Memorize it, and use it word for word just the way it is written.

There is always a possibility that our interest will reject Christ even after the clearest and most winning presentation. Even Jesus Himself did not win all for whom he labored.

We Must Love Enough To Risk Rejection.

Clarify The Commitment

If the interest is willing to make a commitment to Jesus Christ, then we must clarify that commitment for them.

1. Trusting Christ alone for salvation, not our own performance.
2. Willingness to repent and obey.

I like to say that, "When we invite Christ into our lives, He comes in not only as our Saviour but as Lord and Master too. This step is actually the Repentance Step.

Repentance is a theological word, and it is not essential to use at this point. Remember, even repentance is a gift.

"God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel." Acts 5:31

The Prayer Of Acceptance

If we have properly laid the groundwork for the prayer of commitment, it will seem the natural step to take at this point.

Entering The Covenant With God

The statement leading into the covenant prayer is very important. It too should be memorized and used word for word.

*If this is really what **you** want, **we** can go to the lord in prayer. **I** can lead us in prayer and **we** will tell Him what you have told me just now.*

Notice the pronouns in this statement. If they think that we are going to ask them to formulate a prayer and to pray all on his own they will be frightened. The pronouns indicate that we will lead in prayer, but that they will also make their own commitment to the Lord.

Take Your Time In Leading The Interest In Prayer

First we pray for them, then we pray with them and then for them again.

Pray for them that God will make this a special experience for them. Then repeat the prayer that they are to pray. We need to take this slowly and deliberately and if, after the first phrase they hesitate, we can say again, "Repeat after me, one phrase at a time." Then they will follow along and express the desire of their heart.

After they have prayed the prayer of acceptance, we pray for them again, praying that God will make this experience real in their lives, and that they will have the assurance that they are now children of God.

Assurance

If you have given the presentation from memory, now is the time to take out the "Way to Eternal Life" booklet and open to the last page. Point to the texts of assurance and ask the first question again.

When they say yes, then you can put out your hand and say, "Welcome To The Family of God."

Proper Follow-up is Important

*"Preparation before the effort is not half as important as follow up after."
EV432*

Be sure you invite them to study further with you and you can also invite them to attend church or to a home Bible study meeting.

You can say, "God has some great things in store for you. I know that you want to make sure that your new found faith in Christ continues to grow. One of the things that has meant most to me since becoming a Christian, was a systematic Bible Study Course on the great themes of the Bible, and Bible Prophecies. I would like to come back and share it with you, would you like that?"

The following steps are helpful in following up the interest:

1. Encourage them to review "The Way to Eternal Life" booklet daily for a while and to pray the commitment prayer. Not because God needs reminding but because we need to get used to thinking that way.
2. Return in about three days with copy of Steps to Christ.
3. Begin the Doctrinal Bible Studies.
4. Encourage them to attend Church and a home Bible Study Group.
5. Begin introducing them to other church members as soon as possible.

How to invite the interest to church.

We simply say: "Our church services have been so helpful and meaningful to me, that I just want to invite you to share in that experience. We meet on Saturday mornings at our church, but that shouldn't be a problem for you, would it?"

Interruptions And Difficult Problems

When We Get Involved In The Warfare, We Find Out Who Our Enemy Is!

Satan attacks when we begin leading souls to the cross.

Team Work Helps

- It is good to go in at least pairs, threes are even better, provided one is a female. Never visit with three men.
- One of the team members can help attend to children, boiling beans etc.

Two Common Devices Of Satan

- Argument
- Getting off of the Subject

Resist the Temptation To Argue

You may win a debate but you will seldom win a soul.

Anticipate Objections and deal with them in advance.

Agree with as much as possible in what they are saying. Look for the truth in their statements and agree with that truth.

Getting Back To The Presentation

If the individual manages to get to things that will be covered later in the presentation, say "I'm so glad you said that, we will be coming to that in just a moment." Continue on with the presentation.

Common Questions To Adventists

You will often be asked about the Sabbath, Health questions or Lifestyle questions, while in the middle of the presentation.

You can say, "I am glad you asked that and I am looking forward to explaining that to you. but the subject we are talking about now is so important I would like to finish it first, and then the others will be a lot clearer.

Doubters Of The Bible

Help them to think seriously about the real questions of life.

1. Recognizing a supreme Intelligence

"You know, many scientists and thinking people in recent years have come to the conclusion that the order and design of the universe necessitates the existence of a supreme intelligence. Where there is a design, there must be a designer; where there is a plan, there must be a planner. Whether we are looking at the minute atom or the galaxies in space or the things around us in this world, or even to our own existence, these things argue that there must be a first cause, a great intelligence behind it all. Do you agree with this?" Most people will.

2. It Must be a loving Intelligence

If there is a God intelligent enough to create all these things, and create us with a capacity to love, then He must be a loving intelligence.

3. Loving Intelligence would communicate truth.

Any being with love and intelligence would want to communicate to his children and instruct them in the best way of life. The Bible is the only book that claims to be a communication between God and man.

4. Ask him what the Bible teaches about the way to eternal life.

"Make it clear that you are not asking if they believe what the Bible teaches, but if they understand it."

Fulfilled Prophecy

Another very effective way to approach this problem is to read some of the Old Testament prophecies and show how they have been fulfilled.

Helpful Suggestions

1. Do not use the word Questions, but simply say, "Can I ask you something?" This avoids appearance of interrogation.

2. Learn to ask questions that will bring helpful answers. Leading questions have the answer you are looking for in the question. They are not helpful in letting you know what the interest thinks.
3. Keep in mind the Biblical and spiritual illiteracy of our generation. Do not assume they know all of the Bible stories and events.
4. When we have more than one interest ask the questions of the one who seems most likely to give the wrong answer first. If not then one may just parrot back the answer given first.
By getting one "no" answer, you can continue with the presentation.
You would reverse this process when asking for a commitment.
5. Ask for permission to continue.
6. Don't criticize other ministers or denominations, even if they ask your opinion and indicate their own prejudice.
7. Always leave on happy note.
8. Grooming and sweet breath
9. When to talk and when to listen.
All members of the visiting team should enter into conversation during the time of the introduction. It is rather stilted for all but the leader to sit mute, just listening. But once the leader brings the conversation into the spiritual phase and asks the two questions, the other members of the team should not speak unless spoken to, until the presentation is over. and then they should enter into the conversation again just before leaving the home.
10. How to arrange seating.
Make every effort for the one presenting the Gospel to be seated not too far from the interest and where he and the interest can easily see each other without having to turn a great deal.
11. Where to look when you are not giving the presentation.
Team members should not stare at the interest. They should naturally let their eyes follow to whoever is speaking at the time.
12. Don't use names in giving oral reports
When sharing your visits, be sure you respect the privacy and confidentiality of others and not use their names.

13. Pray, Pray, Pray!
You re taking part in a miracle at the foot of the cross.