

Four Steps for Witnessing

Similar Quotes from Ellen White

1. Listen and Care

“In all our associations it should be remembered that in the experience of others there are chapters sealed from mortal sight. On the pages of memory are sad histories that are sacredly guarded from curious eyes. There stand registered long, hard battles with trying circumstances, perhaps troubles in the home life, that day by day weaken courage, confidence, and faith. Those who are fighting the battle of life at great odds may be strengthened and encouraged by little attentions that cost only a loving effort. To such the strong, helpful grasp of the hand by a true friend is worth more than gold or silver. Words of kindness are as welcome as the smile of angels....

Sympathize with them in their trials, their heartaches, and disappointments. This will open the way for you to help them. Speak to them of God’s promises, pray with and for them, inspire them with hope” (The Ministry of Healing, 157-159).

“Christ was a teacher from his youth up. At twelve years of age he was found among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions. He asked such questions as suggested the discovery of deep truths that had been lost from the doctrines that were taught, and yet which were vital to the salvation of souls. Wherever he went, he presented himself as one hungering and thirsting for a knowledge of God. His questions were of such an order as baffled the wisdom of the wise men, yet every question he asked put before them a divine lesson, and placed truth in a new aspect. They could see that their teachings were out of harmony with the real meaning of the Scriptures. But while presenting deep truths to their minds, his manner was modest and humble. Though perplexing the scribes and learned doctors with his deep questions, yet he was gentle and unassuming” (Signs of the Times, April 2, 1896 par. 7).

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

2. Affirm Our Similarities

“The prince of teachers, He sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His instruction was so direct, His illustrations were so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. The simplicity and earnestness with which He addressed the needy, hallowed every word” (Ministry of Healing 23).

“In laboring in a new field, do not think it your duty to say at once to the people, We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe that the seventh-day is the Sabbath; we believe in the non-immortality of the soul. This would often erect a formidable barrier between you and those you wish to reach. Speak to them, as you have opportunity, upon points of doctrine on which you can agree. Dwell on the necessity of practical godliness. Give them evidence that you are a Christian, desiring peace, and that you love their souls. Let them see that you are conscientious. Thus you will gain their confidence; and there will be time enough for doctrines” (Gospel Workers 119-120).

“If you walk humbly with God you may unite with the students not of our faith, agreeing with them as far as possible by dwelling upon points wherein you harmonize. Make no effort to create an issue. Let them do that part of the work themselves. Let them see that you are not

egotistical, pharisaical, thinking no one loves God but yourselves, but draw them to Christ, thus drawing them to the truth. All heaven is engaged in this work. Angels wait for the cooperation of men in drawing souls to Christ. ‘We are laborers together with God’” (Manuscript Releases, Volume 4, 49).

“Agree with the people on every point where you can consistently do so. Let them see that you love their souls, and want to be in harmony with them so far as possible. If the love of Christ is revealed in all your efforts, you will be able to sow the seed of truth in some hearts; God will water the seed sown, and the truth will spring up and bear fruit to His glory” (Evangelism, 140).

“Our ministers need more of the wisdom that Paul had. When he went to labor for the Jews, he did not first make prominent the birth, betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, notwithstanding these were the special truths for that time. He first brought them down step by step over the promises that had been made of a Saviour, and over the prophecies that pointed Him out. After dwelling upon these until the specifications were distinct in the minds of all, and they knew that they were to have a Saviour, he then presented the fact that this Saviour had already come. Christ Jesus fulfilled every specification. This was the ‘guile’ with which Paul caught souls. He presented the truth in such a manner that their former prejudice did not arise to blind their eyes and pervert their judgment” (Evangelism, 141).

3. Share Differences Through Testimonies and Stories

“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” (The Desire of Ages, 347).

“As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing” (The Desire of Ages, 340).

“So it should be now. The people of the world are worshiping false gods. They are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better. God’s goodness is to be made known. ‘Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.’ Isa. 43:12” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 299).

“The apostles endeavored to impart to these idolaters a knowledge of God the Creator and of His Son, the Saviour of the human race. They first directed attention to the wonderful works of God--the sun, the moon, and the stars, the beautiful order of the recurring seasons, the mighty snow-capped mountains, the lofty trees, and other varied wonders of nature, which showed a skill beyond human comprehension. Through these works of the Almighty, the apostles led the minds of the heathen to a contemplation of the great Ruler of the universe.

Having made plain these fundamental truths concerning the Creator, the apostles told the Lystrians of the Son of God, who came from heaven to our world because He loved the children of men. They spoke of His life and ministry, His rejection by those He came to save, His trial and crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension to heaven, there to act as man’s

advocate. Thus, in the Spirit and power of God, Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Lystra” (Acts of the Apostles, 180).

“Should we not strive to make our words a source of help and encouragement to one another in our Christian experience? If we truly love Christ, we shall glorify him by our words. Unbelievers are often convicted as they listen to pure words of praise and gratitude to God” (The Review and Herald, January 25, 1898).

4. Invite them to Experience Truth

“The secret of our success and power will be found in making direct, personal appeals to those who are interested, having unwavering reliance upon the Most High” (Pamphlet 118, 2).

“With an unction of the Holy Spirit upon him, giving him a burden for souls, he will not dismiss a congregation without presenting before them Jesus Christ, the sinner’s only refuge, making earnest appeals that will reach their hearts. He should feel that he may never meet these hearers again until the great day of God” (Evangelism, 280).

People Effectively Learn about God through Nature

“The most effective way to teach the heathen who know not God is through His works. In this way, far more readily than by any other method, they can be made to realize the difference between their idols, the works of their own hands, and the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth. . . . In itself the beauty of nature leads the soul away from sin and worldly attractions, and toward purity, peace, and God” (Counsels to Teachers, 186).

Earnestness and Sincerity Essential

“Bring earnestness and fervency into your prayers, and into your Bible readings, and into your preaching, that you may leave the impression that the sacred truths you are presenting to others are to you a living reality. Whatever you do for Jesus, seek with all your powers to do it with earnestness. Never feel that you have attained to the highest point, and can therefore rise no higher. . . . Set your mind to task, that you may present the truth in a manner to interest them. Seize the most interesting portions of Scripture that you can bring before them, come right to the point, and seek to fasten their attention, and instruct them in the ways of the Lord” (Christian Service, 144).

“But the teacher of sacred truth can impart only that which he himself knows by experience. ‘The sower sowed his seed.’ Christ taught the truth because He was the truth. His own thought, His character, His life-experience, were embodied in His teaching. So with His servants: those who would teach the word are to make it their own by a personal experience” (Christ’s Object Lessons 43).

Focus on Jesus, Especially on the Cross

“The name [Christian] was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, their teaching, and their conversation. Continually they were recounting the incidents that had occurred during the days of His earthly ministry, when His disciples were blessed with His personal presence. Untiringly they dwelt upon His teachings and His miracles of healing.

With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of His agony in the garden, His betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which He had endured the contumely and torture imposed upon Him by His enemies, and the Godlike pity with which He had prayed for those who persecuted Him. His resurrection and ascension, and His work in heaven as the Mediator for fallen man, were topics on which they rejoiced to dwell. Well might the

heathen call them Christians, since they preached Christ and addressed their prayers to God through Him” (Acts of the Apostles, 157).

“Never should a sermon be preached, or Bible instruction in any line be given, without pointing the Hearers to ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29. Every true doctrine makes Christ the center, every precept receives force from His words” (Testimonies Volume 6, 54).

Absolute Necessity of the Holy Spirit

“The Saviour 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 (the Holy Spirit); 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” (Acts of the Apostles, 31).

“After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so filled with love for Him and for those for whom He died, that hearts were melted by the words they spoke and the prayers they offered. They spoke in the power of the Spirit; and under the influence of that power, thousands were converted” (Acts of the Apostles, 22).