

WITNESSES FOR GOD

INTRODUCTION

We all want to know “How can we be effective witnesses?”

- “UP - Clip”

Sometimes we can be a bit wooden like that.

Many of us want some easy steps to witnessing:

“6 simple steps to sales success – Internet Making Money

- 1. First contact communication is the key.*
- 2. Ask your customer what interested them in your product*
- 3. Closing the deal*
- 4. Always keep your word.*
- 5. Always keep in contact with your customer.*
- 6. Never lose your humour.”*

Wouldn't it be easy if we could follow some steps?

How many of us like to hear a sales pitch?

Before we even think about how to witness we need to see **WHY** we witness?

WHY?

Work

“Most of us go to work because we have to.

Some of us enjoy it but most find it hard. You have a manager telling you what to do. Always pushing you and setting unobtainable targets.

We persevere as good Christians but inside find our joy and energy sapped.

We either move on or just dig in.”

Who can relate to that?

Now I'm going to read the same thing again but I have changed only 2 words.

Witnessing

“Most of us witness because we have to.

Some of us enjoy it but most find it hard. You have a God telling you what to do.

Always pushing you and setting unobtainable targets. We persevere as good Christians but inside find our joy and energy sapped.

We either move on or just dig in.”

Can you relate to that?

The dictionary says a **Witness** is *“One who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced”*

Many of us, *including myself*, can easily slip into doing CHRISTIAN things for the sake of doing them. **We no longer experience God or His love.**

It’s hard to develop that love relationship. E.g. *My relationship with Amanda*

Story on relationship ???

How then can we tell people about Jesus effectively?

Back to Basics

In order to be effective we have to go back to basics and fall in love with Jesus.

Ephesians 1:4-7 says:

*“⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. **In love** ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with **his pleasure and will**— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the **riches of God's grace**” (NIV)*

Romans 5:1-3 says:

*“¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (NIV)*

God loves us and we have peace with Him. WOW! John 3:16

Meditate on these things, God’s love and enjoy His presence.

Let’s read from **St Bernard of Clairvaux – “On Loving God”**:

“Why we should love God and the measure of that love?”

You want me to tell you why God is to be loved and how much. I answer, the reason for loving God is God Himself; and the measure of love due to Him is immeasurable love. Is this plain? ...

We are to love God for Himself, because of a twofold reason; nothing is more reasonable, nothing more profitable. When one asks, Why should I love God? he may mean, What is lovely in God? or What shall I gain by loving God? In either case, the same sufficient cause of love exists, namely, God Himself.

And first, of His title to our love. Could any title be greater than this, that He gave Himself for us unworthy wretches? And being God, what better gift could He offer

than Himself? Hence, if one seeks for God's claim upon our love here is the chiefest: Because He first loved us (1 John 4.19). Ought He not to be loved in return."

Let's not make our Christian lives about doing things but about loving God.

Will focusing only on God's love mean we become complacent? No!
To focus on God's love only energises and motivates us.

"Relationship not Religion" We say! But we practise the opposite!

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

John 15:4 (NIV)

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

John 15:12-15 (NIV)

"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS! EVERYTHING SHOULD COME FROM OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

Brother Lawrence lived in France in the 1600's. He joined the army as a young man because he was poor. After a while he got injured and eventually left the army and joined a monastery to punish himself for his failings. After years there, he realised that the love of God was the meaning of life and so dedicated himself to loving God. He worked tirelessly in the kitchens and repaired sandals, being ordered about for the rest of his life yet people would come and see him from all over the area, seeking his guidance as he always exuded peace. When he died, the vicar of the Archbishop of Paris wrote a book all about his life and the way he lived. He wrote:

"That he had always been governed by love, without selfish views; and that having resolved to make the love of GOD the end of all his actions, he had found reasons to be well satisfied with his method. That he was pleased when he could take up a straw from the ground for the love of GOD, seeking Him only, and nothing else, not even His gifts.

That he had been long troubled in mind from a certain belief that he should be damned; that all the men in the world could not have persuaded him to the contrary; but that he had thus reasoned with himself about it: I did not engage in a religious life but for the love of GOD, and I have endeavoured to act only for Him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of GOD. I shall have this good at least, that till death I shall have done all that is in me to love Him. That this trouble of mind had lasted four years; during which time he had suffered much.

That since that time he had passed his life in perfect liberty and continual joy. That he placed his sins between him and GOD, as it were, to tell Him that he did not deserve His favours, but that GOD still continued to bestow them in abundance. That in order to form a habit of conversing with GOD continually, and referring all we do to Him; we must at first apply to Him with some diligence: but that after a little care we should find His love inwardly excite us to it without any difficulty.”

CONCLUSION

It's not about religion, it's about relationship and His grace and love in us.

Spend time letting God love you and you loving Him, Prayer, Worship etc..

Then...

We will have something to witness about:

1. **Colossians 4:4-5:** *“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone”.* (NIV)
2. **1 Peter 3:15:** *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason **for the hope that you have**. But do this with gentleness and respect”.* (NIV)

Let Christ's love compel us to witness and serve.

Brother Yun says:

“When the Holy Spirit fills you, you can achieve more of eternal worth in a moment than in years of your own striving...How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? It's quite simple. Fall on your knees and ask God to release you from your prison of dead religion and to overflow you with His real and vibrant presence...

Our God is a good and loving Father, and He desires to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Not only does He want to fill you, but He wants streams of living water to overflow and bless those with whom you come into contacts.

This is what some people call “ministry”. **Living Water**

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive”

John 7:37-39 (NIV)