

WINNING AT WHAT MATTERS MOST
If You Are Not Winning Souls Than You're Not Winning!
Part Two: Presentation Issues
Message Six: The *Reality* of Soul-Winning- Follow-Up Principles
Dr. Greg Tyree, BBC, AM, June 26, 2005

INTRODUCTION: We have all been irritated with the lack of follow-up regarding a significant purchase or decision. For example, when you buy a brand new car, the salesperson is enthusiastic, friendly, and eager to please. After the sale, however, it is like pulling eyeteeth to get service from the customer care department.

Or, as another example, a young man treats his gal like the queen of the universe when he is "courting" her, but becomes kind of lackadaisical regarding his relationship after the wedding day.

What we have is a severe lack of follow-up. This often happens with new believers. Sometimes we are effective at leading people to Christ, but we fail to assimilate them into the Body of Christ, the Church. Worse yet, we often do not prepare people or help people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

Who knew it was so simple. Asking the children in my Sunday School class, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into Heaven?"

"NO"! the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into Heaven"?

Again, the answer was "NO"!

"Well," I continued, "then how can I get to Heaven?"

In the back of the room, a 5 yr. old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead"!

Prov. 11: 30, 31:

³⁰ The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise. ³¹ If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, How much more the ungodly and the sinner.

Here are some principles that we will reiterate on a regular basis throughout this series:

1. **The 7-Eleven Principle:** While witnessing for Christ may not be a “24-seven” pursuit, it is an “almost-all-the-time, everyday” mandate.
2. **The Sweepstakes Principle:** You can’t win the sweepstakes if you don’t enter; likewise, you can’t lead people to Christ (win at what matters most) if you don’t try!
3. **The Reap-What-You-Sow Principle:** You can’t reap souls if you don’t sow the Gospel. People can only respond to what they know, only know what they hear about, and only hear what you tell them.

This series looks like this:

Part One: Preliminary Principles (completed)

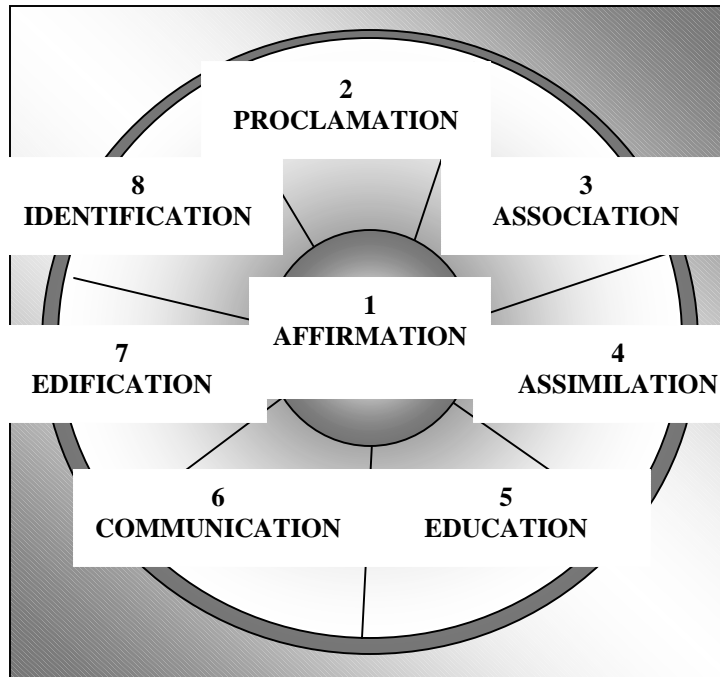
Part Two: Presentation Principles (continuing)

Part Three: Problem Principles

Part Four: Power Principles

PROPOSITION: There are eight follow-up principles that must be implemented in order to get the new Christian off on the right track.

While nothing more (than what has already been mentioned) is required for salvation, there are some “requirements,” or expectations, at least, of the new believer. It is the soul-winner’s job to start the “wheel” of discipleship turning. Here are some suggestions to help you do that.



I. ***FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE ONE: AFFIRMATION***.

Encourage the New Believer to Understand Eternal Security.

In many cases your new brother (or sister) in Christ will not “feel” any different after he or she is saved. He may be concerned about this, since so many view “religion” as subjective and will expect a subjective “feeling” when they come to Christ. This, as well as other reasons, makes it important that you give the new convert some assurance of his salvation.

The Bible teaches that salvation is eternal; that when we come to Christ we receive “everlasting” life. It is imperative that the new believer understands this. There are several ways you can assure your new brother that his salvation is secure.

A. Note the Scriptural ***Evidence*** of Eternal Security.

First, there is the Scriptural evidence of “eternal security” (see the section on eternal security in Chapter One). If someone has a clear understanding of salvation, they will easily conclude that it is eternal, because he will know that his salvation is “sealed” by God the same way it was “initiated and implemented” by God, and not by any work or merit on behalf of the Christian. 1 John 5:13 is a good “proof text” of eternal security:

These things have I (John) written unto you (Christians) that believe on the name of the Son of God (the method of salvation); that ye may know that ye have eternal life (assurance of salvation- eternal security), and that ye may believe (or

“continue to believe”) on the name of the Son of God (continued belief is evidence of a genuine conversion).

B. Note the Practical **Expression** of Eternal Security.

Second, you may want to write the date, place and time of the new believer’s conversion in the front of his Bible (if he does not have one, give him one). Additionally, you will want to write your name as well, signifying that you were a “witness” to this blessed event. This way if he has any doubts (about his salvation) at a later time he will be able to see this written reminder and be assured that he had received Christ and can trust in His promise to “keep” him.

C. Note the Personal Encouragement of Eternal Security.

Finally, encourage your new brother in Christ to call you whenever he may feel discouraged or have doubts about his salvation. You will be able to instruct him from the Word of God and assure him that if his conversion was authentic, he is on his way to Heaven, regardless of how he “feels.” Teach him to confess sin to God, and to claim the ongoing power of Jesus’ blood to forgive sin. First John 1:9 says:

If we (Christians) confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (keep us saved).

II. ***FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE TWO: PROCLAMATION.***

Encourage the New Believer to Tell Others

I grew up in a church that had a pastor who loved to remind us of the Biblical mandate, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.” This is very important for the new Christian. I would recommend that you assist your new convert with telling at least one person about his new relationship with Jesus. If you have led him to the Lord after a church service, this is simple. Have him go up to someone like a friend or family member, or, if he has come alone, a Sunday School teacher or the pastor, and tell them about his decision to follow Christ.

Furthermore, encourage him to “witness” to his family, his colleagues, and his friends. As the Church Growth Institute (Forest, VA) teaches, suggest that he tell “FRAN” about Jesus (FRAN stands for Friends, Relatives, Associates, and Neighbors). The very first thing a new Christian should do is to tell another person about his faith in Christ. By the way, it wouldn’t hurt if all of us were tell FRAN!

III. ***FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE THREE: ASSOCIATION.***

Encourage the New Believer to Make a Public Profession at Church

While witnessing to others is, in a sense, a “public” profession, the new believer must take it a step further and proclaim his relationship with Christ to the church. While this is difficult for some people, it nonetheless is necessary. If your newly saved friend is “nervous” about standing before the church, agree to stand with him. This will not only encourage the congregation and give them a reason to rejoice, it will also encourage them to witness, as they see the joy it brings to you, the soul-winner! Additionally, this is a source of accountability, which the church needs more of anyway. Your pastor should lead the worshippers at your church to give the new believer “the right hand of fellowship,” and offer to pray for their new brother (or sister) in Christ.

IV. FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE FOUR: ASSIMILATION.

Encourage the New Believer to Attend a Bible- Preaching Church (Preferably Brookdale!)

All Christians should make church attendance a priority. Though church attendance is not necessary for salvation, it is necessary for Christian maturity. While it is not difficult to find a Christian who does not attend church, you will not find a “spiritual” Christian who does not regularly worship with a local body of believers. It just doesn’t happen, because it is in God’s plan that Christians gather together. Offer to personally take your friend to the very next worship service of your church. Make sure you sit with him and introduce him to as many of your Christian friends as possible.

V. FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE FIVE: EDUCATION.

Encourage the New Believer to Read His Bible

The Bible is God’s “love letter” to His “Bride.” The new Christian needs to read the Bible on a regular basis, learning its truths, studying its precepts, applying its principles, and obeying its commandments. Encourage the “babe in Christ” to begin in a place that can be quickly grasped and applied, such as the Gospel of John. Teach him to write down notes and questions, and let him know he can ask for your help whenever he has a question or concern.

I have found it to be a great help if I read whatever I have asked the believer to read. For example, if I suggest that my new brother read the Gospel of John, I might say, “I am going to read John, as well. Let’s agree to read three chapters a day, beginning tonight. Next week we will talk about what we have read and learned. Will you do that with me?”

Insist that your friend keep it simple at first. There is no need to get into studying how to remove leprosy from the scalp or becoming an expert in the book of Revelation right away. Remember, also, that people grow and learn at different paces. Use discernment and encourage the new Christian to learn as much as he can comprehend and assimilate. The new Christian, just like the mature Christian, must stay challenged and interested. There is nothing more exciting than learning new things.

VI. FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE SIX: COMMUNICATION.

Encourage the New Believer to Pray Daily

I used to erroneously believe that “the Bible is God’s way of talking to us and prayer is our way of talking to God.” While this statement contains truth, it is not totally true. In reality, God also communicates (talks) to us through prayer. I do not mean that God speaks to us “audibly.” I mean that God reveals His will (both negatively and positively) to us through prayer. I further believe that prayer is not a way for us to “get our way,” but rather is a way for us to discern God’s will (God’s way). Prayer is not telling God our thoughts (since He already knows our thoughts) or telling God what to do (as the “name it- claim it” advocates suggest). Prayer is a way by which we know the “mind” of God.

Through prayer the new believer confesses sin, asks God for direction, and worships and adores God. Through prayer she acknowledges God’s sovereignty, affirms His deity, and celebrates His holiness. Through prayer we become humble, dependent on God, and vulnerable. In prayer we are made stronger, more confident, and better equipped for the Master’s service.

A godly Christian is a praying Christian. When it is all said and done, there are really only a few ways to know the mind of God: through His Word; through a personal relationship with His Son; through the leading of His Holy Spirit; and through prayer. Prayer removes anxiety, improves discernment, and develops in the believer a sensitive heart for God. Prayer works. It works for you, it works for me, and it works for the new believer.

VII. FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE SEVEN: EDIFICATION.

Encourage the New Believer to Call You Anytime

If you care enough about a person’s soul to lead him to Christ, you should care enough for him to “be there” in the days and weeks ahead. This does not mean that you have to “drop everything” at a moment’s notice and hasten to the new believer’s every beckoning call. It does mean that you should make an effort to be there for your new brother in Christ as much as is *reasonable*. As with almost everything in life, starting out right as a Christian is paramount in succeeding as a growing, dynamic believer in Christ.

After some time, you may want to turn the new believer over to another Christian in mentoring relationship. This mentor should be of the same gender as the new convert, spiritually mature, and reasonably available. The mentor should commit to no less than six to eight weeks of discipleship (meeting with the new believer about once or twice a week). There are many resources available on discipleship and mentoring. Ask your local bookstore about what books they have on this subject. Also, see my book, *The Thirteen Essential Laws of Discipleship*, which guides a new Christian through his first year as a believer. Your “investment” will pay eternal “dividends.”

VIII. FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPLE EIGHT: IDENTIFICATION.

Encourage the New Believer to be Baptized by Immersion

I do not recommend that you bring up the subject of baptism the same day a person receives Christ (this may confuse him into thinking that baptism is necessary for salvation). You do, however, need to encourage baptism early on in the new convert’s walk with the Lord. There are several reasons for this.

First, the Scriptures mandate baptism by immersion following faith in Christ (historically this is called “believer’s baptism”). There is no doubt that baptism is a requirement for true discipleship (not for salvation, but for spiritual growth). I challenge you to find a post-Gospel (from Acts through Revelation) conversion experience in the New Testament wherein the convert was not baptized. As one theologian said, “The New Testament simply does not entertain the prospect of an unbaptized Christian.” In the Bible baptism *always* follows conversion, which precludes the baptism of infants and baptism, by any form, of pre-saved persons. Baptism by immersion into water *must* follow the decision to receive Christ.

Second, baptism is a symbol associating the believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is “an outward sign of an inward event” (salvation). It is a public covenant to be a true follower of Jesus (disciple) and is the first commandment given to the new Christian.

Third, baptism is part of the “Great Commission” in Matthew 28 (don’t take my word for it, read it). When we are flippant about baptism, we are showing a great disrespect for God’s Word.

Finally, as an act of obedience, believer’s baptism is a way to “start out on the right foot.” The new believer who submits to baptism by immersion (regardless of church background, refutation of tradition, ostracizing by families, or “disappointment” of loved ones) is well on his way to obeying God in other (and all) areas of his life. Refusal to be baptized is a sign of rebellion, lack of faith, or misunderstanding of salvation. Even children who have been truly saved should not be denied baptism or discouraged from being baptized. (Many reason that a child will not “understand” baptism. If a person, including a child, can understand salvation, they will easily

understand baptism. I have yet to face an exception to this fact.)

If you are uncomfortable about suggesting baptism to the new believer, please delegate this to someone else. Your pastor or other mature Christian will jump at the chance to help the new believer start off correctly. If you have not been baptized yourself, you need to be. Not only will it strengthen your walk with Christ, it may improve your success at soul-winning, as your disobedience may hinder the Lord's best blessing on your life. This is a serious issue. Treat it that way. If you would like a very thorough treatment of believer's baptism, see my book, *What the Bible Really Says About Baptism*.

APPLICATION:

If you take the follow-up of a new believer seriously, he will be on his way to a dynamic, exciting, and wonderful life in Christ. There is nothing greater you can do for God, apart from being a true worshipper, than lead others to Him. As I often tell my congregation; the only thing you can take to Heaven is other people!