

WINNING AT WHAT MATTERS MOST
If You Are Not Winning Souls Than You're Not Winning!
Part Two: Presentation Issues
Message 8: The *Reality* of Soul-Winning- Children and Evangelism
Dr. Greg Tyree, BBC, AM, July 10, 2005

INTRODUCTION:

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW:

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 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.
2. **The "Be Yourself" Principle:** Don't try to be Billy Graham or Charles Stanley or Pastor "so and so." Be who God made *you*. Authenticity is a vital component of the evangelism process. God is real; you be real, too.
3. **The "There Is No Plan B" Principle:** There is only one "plan" of salvation. Whether dealing with children or adults, cross-culturally, or with any "category" of persons, there is only ONE WAY to heaven- a genuine faith in the risen Lord, Jesus Christ!

This series looks like this:

Part One: Preliminary Principles (completed)

Part Two: Presentation Principles (continuing)

Part Three: Problem Principles

Part Four: Power Principles

“Child evangelism” (the process, not the organization known by that term) is a controversial topic. The child-evangelism spectrum runs in two directions: 1) the extreme idea that children under a certain age (usually ten to twelve years of age or so) cannot be saved; and 2) any child who makes a verbal “profession of faith” is saved. Christians on both ends of the spectrum are passionate about their viewpoint. Let’s take a closer look at each extreme.



CHILD-EVANGELISM SPECTRUM

Child-Evangelism Extreme One: No Child Under a Certain Age can be Saved

This extreme is invalid for at least three reasons.

1. **This View is Unbiblical.** Nowhere does the Bible say that small children cannot be saved. Nowhere are we told that we must possess a certain amount of knowledge to be saved.
2. **Jesus Accepted Children.** The idea that children can’t “come to Christ” or “can’t understand” is contrary to the Bible.
3. **This View is Impractical.** To say that salvation is offered only to the initiated or learned is, as already established, unbiblical, but it is also impractical. Common sense, experience, Church History, and the Scriptures teach us that children do indeed come to Christ, and often these conversions are genuine and lasting.

Child-Evangelism Extreme Two: Any Child Who Makes a Profession is Saved

This extreme is invalid for at least three reasons.

1. **The Bible Never Teaches that Mere “Profession” Saves Anyone.** This goes for everyone, including children. Just because a child responds to a public invitation and makes a “profession” or goes forward at a children’s rally or says, “Jesus, come into my heart,” doesn’t mean that child is necessarily saved.

2. **There is No Salvation Apart from Repentance.** While many will argue against this statement, their argument is not Biblically viable, because the Scriptures are unambiguous about this: repentance is necessary for salvation. While a truly repentant child can be saved, an unrepentant one (or non-repentant one) cannot be saved, for the same reason that any unrepentant person can't be saved.
3. **Salvation is Intellectual as Much as It is Emotional.** While knowledge in and of itself does not save anyone, and while salvation requires very little knowledge (in comparison to what can be known about God), any person receiving Christ must make an intellectual ascent (even if on a child-like level) to at least three truths:
 - a. **Jesus is the Only Way to Heaven.**
 - b. **All Persons (Including Children) are Sinners.**
 - c. **Jesus was Literally Resurrected in His Body.**

If a child makes a “profession of Christ” that is not Spirit-induced, but is merely a rote recitation of a “plan of salvation” formula; or if a child has not come to a place of understanding of the true meaning of sin and subsequent repentance (willingness to turn from) of that sin; or if a commitment to Christ is no more than an emotional response to an emotional story, that child is not truly saved.

“Not Saved” Is Not Necessarily the Same as “Lost”

When dealing with children who have not yet reached a point of understanding the Gospel (or their sinfulness and responsibility, or the plan of salvation), being “not saved” is not the same as being “lost.”

PROPOSITION: If these two child-evangelism extremes are invalid, what is the Biblically balanced view of child-evangelism? To answer this question we will develop eleven thoughts.

I. WHEN CAN A CHILD BE SAVED?

- A. Example One: Pastor Greg, Age 11.
- B. Example Two: Lauren Tyree, Age 6.
- C. Example Three: Stephen Tyree, Age 8.

II. HOW ARE CHILDREN SAVED?

III. CHRIST ACCEPTED CHILDREN.

In Mark 10:13-6 we read, “¹³And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁵Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

IV. WHAT IS THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY?

The “age of accountability,” when dealing with salvation in Christ, is that age at which a child understands the basic premises of Biblical salvation and his responsibility to respond to God’s exclusive command to receive Christ His Son or spend eternity apart from God. When a child (or adult with a child-like mind, such as the mentally incapacitated, etc.) reaches such a point of understanding and conviction, he is accountable to God for his actions concerning salvation. If a child dies at such a point without having accepted Christ’s on God’s terms, that child will spend eternity in Hell. If such a child does receive Christ on God’s terms, that child will be with Christ for eternity. Since each person reaches this point at different stages in their lives, there is no “set age,” though it is reasonable to think that all rational and even limitedly intelligent adults have reached and passed this “age.”

V. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVANGELIZING CHILDREN?

- A. The Christian Parents or Guardians of a Child
- B. The Christian Extended Family of a Child
- C. The Corporate Church
- D. Individuals in the Local Church

VI. HOW ARE CHILDREN EVANGELIZED?

- A. No Two Children are the Same
- B. All Children Share Certain Characteristics

- C. Children are “Smarter” Than We Often Think
- D. Children are not as “Smart” as We Sometimes Think
- E. Children Learn by Example
- F. Children Will Listen to People They Trust
- G. Children, Like Adults, Relate to Stories
- H. Children Usually Can Understand Symbols
- I. Children Usually Have to be “Invited” to Christ
- J. Young Children are Generally Not Predisposed to Reject Christ
 - Keep in mind that some 85% of people who come to Christ do so before they are eighteen! Time is of the essence.
- K. Older Children May be Predisposed to Reject Christ
- L. Children are Not Promised a Certain Amount of Time

Read them James 4:14:

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

And Psalm 27:1:

Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

VII. SHOULD CHILDREN BE BAPTIZED?

VIII. ASSIMILATING CHILDREN INTO THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- A. Encourage and assist a child in making his faith in Christ public.
- B. Encourage the child, with the parents’ permission, to be baptized.
- C. Get the child into a Sunday School class.
- D. Allow children to worship with adults when they are ready to do so.

- E. Provide avenues of service for children, such a singing, drama (skits), reading Scriptures, etc.
- F. “Expect” them to behave and treat them like the important people they are.
- G. Visit in children’s homes when possible.
- H. Talk about kids often from the pulpit. “

IX. WHERE DO “UNSAVED CHILDREN” GO IF THEY DIE?

King David lost his son to death when his little boy was only two years old. When he heard the news of his son’s death, he said, “*While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*” (In 2 Samuel 12:22, 23)

X. WHAT ABOUT THE MENTALLY INCAPACITATED?

XI. TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE SOUL-WINNERS.

- A. Be a soul-winner yourself.
- B. Decide in your own mind children *can* be soul-winners.
- C. Teach them to memorize verses that will help them be soul-winners.
- D. Encourage them to tell others, especially those in their peer group, the story of how they were saved.
- E. Help them articulate the plan of salvation (like Romans Road) on a level they can understand and communicate.
- F. Teach them while they are young to have a burden for lost souls.
- G. Don’t be afraid to talk about Hell with them.
- H. Talk positively about church in front of them.
- I. Communicate the brevity of life to them in a way they can understand.
- J. Encourage them to invite their friends and loved ones to events, like VBS, Sunday

School, church, concerts, cantatas, plays and dramas, etc.

K. Don't pressure them to be soul-winners.

L. Encourage them to be soul-winners

¹³And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁵Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” (Mark 10:13-16)

APPLICATION:

1. Be sure you are saved yourself.
2. Seek the salvation of your own children (and other's children).
3. Be a soul-winner yourself.
4. Instill in your children and other's children a desire to share the Gospel.
5. Live an exemplary life that the children can emulate.