

HOW TO LEAD A PERSON TO CHRIST – Session 1

There is an old story about when Jesus ascended to heaven and was met by all the angels and all the saints. They were extolling His victory and cheering His return. After things settled down, they asked Him, “So what is your plan? What is next?” Jesus parted the heavens, and they could all see the disciples. Jesus simply said, “They are the plan.” At that point, the company of heaven gasped. They remembered Peter’s denying Jesus three times. They remembered the arrogance of the “sons of thunder” fighting over who would sit at the right hand and who would be at the left. They recalled the unbelief and the many times the disciples were “afraid.” Certainly, there was a better plan.

As we all know, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, and everything changed. Peter became fearless, the disciples walked in power, there was boldness and confidence that Jesus was the savior of the world, and everybody was invited to receive Him as savior. Salvation was the message. The cross removed all barriers between sinful humanity and a Holy God. The price was paid. The debt cancelled. IT IS FINISHED.

Jesus has entrusted the church with the eternal message of salvation, and it is through the church – God’s people – that this message is proclaimed. It is the privilege and responsibility of each follower of Jesus Christ to bear witness to His love, His redemption, His forgiveness, and His salvation. No matter what else we do in the church, Salvation is the PRIMARY PURPOSE for our existence.

**If this is so important,
why do we struggle as a church to “lead people to Christ”?**

Some people think it is only the job for the pastor. Some people fear rejection. Some people feel inadequate. Some people do not want to be pushy. There are many reasons for “why” this is a struggle, but I want to suggest the biggest reason and the most obvious: Most do not know how. Most Christians have had very little training and even less experience in leading people to Christ. They are intimidated and awkward when it comes to sharing their faith with others.

But that is not the only problem. The second reason we struggle is we have not received the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told the disciples,

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they

had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:4-8

Jesus told them to WAIT for the Promise of the Father, which is the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. It was only after they received the power of the Holy Spirit that they became powerful witnesses. It was the Holy Spirit that gave the boldness to the early church to evangelize. People were led to Christ by the “signs and wonders” by the miracles and by the testimony of those filled with the Holy Spirit. It has been my experience that people with the Holy Spirit are much more likely to witness others and be directly involved with the work of evangelism.

A third reality is that many churches do not have a real BURDEN FOR THE LOST. Somehow the urgency of telling others is more of a smoldering wick than a roaring bonfire. People without Jesus are eternally separated from God, they are destined to a lake of fire and eternal torment. Jesus spoke more about hell than any other person in the bible. Without Christ people are LOST, SPIRITUALLY DEAD, ALIENATED FROM GOD, HOSTILE TO GOD, and REBELLIOUS AND UNDER GOD’S JUDGMENT AND WRATH. Look at this amazing passage from St. Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus:

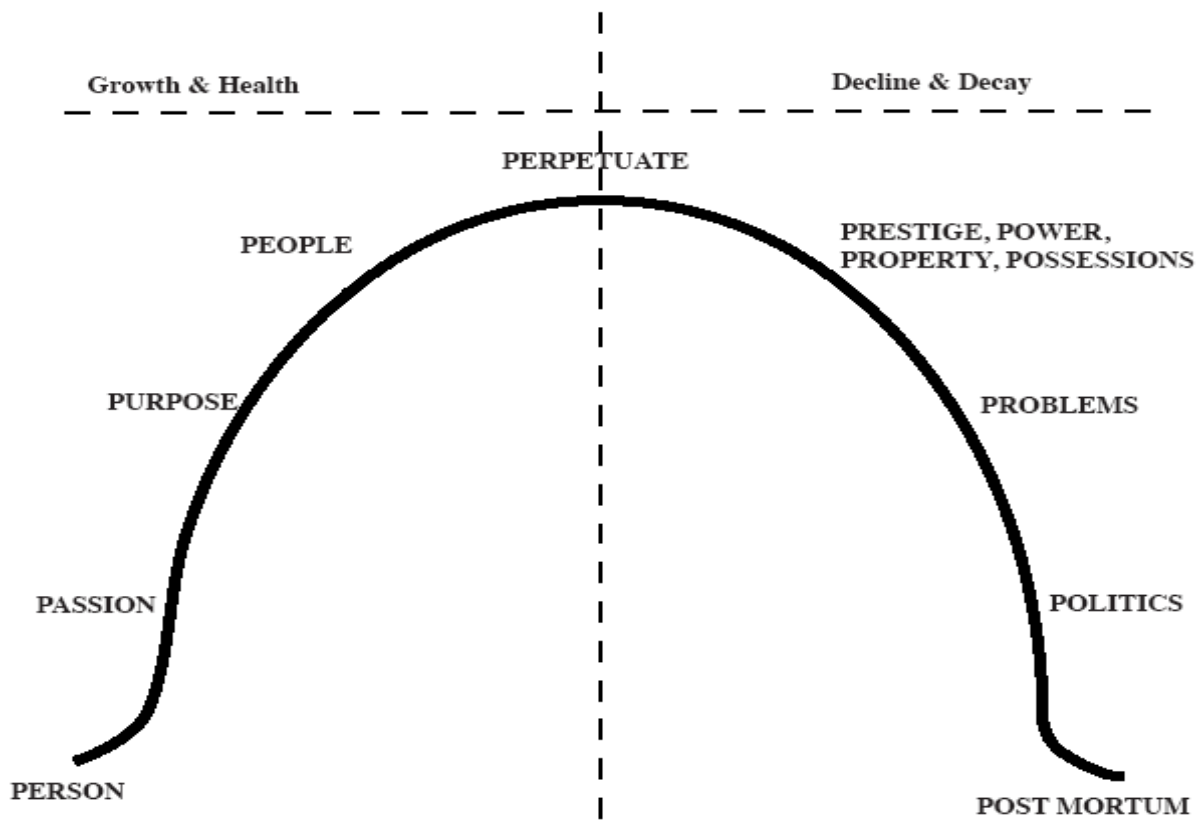
And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Therefore, remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time, you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:1-3; 11-12

A church without a burden for the lost is basically dead. In *Revelation 3:2* such a church is described, “*I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*” This church had a name, some good works that looked like Christianity, but in Jesus’ eyes they were DEAD.

Jesus had a similar critique toward the Church at Ephesus when He said, ***“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works” (Rev 2:4-5).*** The Church at Ephesus was begun by St. Paul and was known for its evangelical zeal. From this church the gospel went forth throughout Asia Minor. It was a powerful church. However, in less than forty years it had lost its first love.

LIFE CYCLE FOR CONGREGATIONS



When a church forgets the Person (Jesus) everything else will eventually atrophy and decline. They may continue for a season with outward signs of health (activities, resources, programs, etc.) however, from a kingdom perspective they are “dead.” If you discover you are on the downward side of the graph (see previous page) then you simply must go back and refocus on the PERSON – Jesus Christ – and reignite the PASSION.

The purpose of this manual is to “train and equip” the people of God to do the work of Evangelism. It is designed to give you a simple, straightforward, and practical game plan to engage in the PRIMARY work of the church – *Leading People to Christ!*

TRAINING AND EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY (Eph 4:12)

In the Baptismal Covenant we are asked, “Will you continue in the apostles teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers?” These are practical faith responses that address – study, community, worship, and prayer. All four are critical to sustaining a healthy walk with Christ. All four are intended to help us mature and effectively labor to advance the Kingdom of God while we are on the earth.

What does it mean to continue in the apostles teaching? Years ago, I attended a conference where the leader said this:

- If you believe what the apostles believed, and
- If you teach what the apostles taught, and
- If you do what the apostles did, then.
- You will experience what the apostles experienced.

When we continue in the apostles teaching, we are challenged to read what they wrote, believe what they taught, do what they did and experience what they did. This means we must become students of the scriptures.

Also, if you remember what Jesus told the disciples at the end of Matthew’s gospel, He commanded them to go and make disciples. By definition, disciples are “learners.” This is a life long process.

This Lay Training Manual is designed to help you “continue in the apostles teaching” and “become a disciple.” It is intended to teach you practical skills so you can be effective in ministry; both within your church and out in the world.

Beloved, there are no shortcuts in this process. The Bible encourages us to be diligent in our study knowing that the Lord rewards those who seek Him in earnest. If you faithfully apply yourself to this study, you will grow in your faith and ministry.

THE VALUE AND NECESSITY OF TRAINING

Making Disciples

As a young pastor I quickly learned that most of the people in my church were biblically “illiterate” and were unable to articulate their faith with much clarity or confidence. They simply were not “trained.” These were wonderful people. They attended church functions, gave their money, and worshipped regularly. I began to address this challenge by offering training and equipping opportunities. Over time the entire church culture changed. As people got trained, they became mature in faith and the church grew. Attendance increased, giving increased and ministries increased. I discovered a valuable truth: training is absolutely essential. It is how Jesus made disciples, and we are to do the same.

This lay training manual is designed to give you biblical truths and teach you skills. This is a “How To” manual intended to help you learn a skill and become successful in a certain area. You will read and learn from the Bible, and this is what makes disciples.

Confidence and Competence

Another discovery I made was this: nobody wants to look foolish or fail. If you ask your people to “do something” and do not train them to succeed they simply will do nothing. They do not want to be embarrassed. They will lack confidence and competence. You can talk about evangelism all you want, but if you do not train your people they will not evangelize. You can talk about giving all you want, but if you do not teach biblical stewardship the increase in giving will not be seen. You can preach about lay ministry with eloquence and inspiration but if you do not introduce the power of the Holy Spirit (the giver of the gifts) little will happen. You get my point. With foundational training you will establish confidence and competence in your people that will reap huge results.

The Release of the Laity

The Lord never intended the clergy to do the entire ministry. The old adage “ministers minister and congregations congregate” is unfortunately all too true. What the Lord had in mind is spelled out in *1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4* and elsewhere. Basically, everybody has been uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit and is expected to offer their gift for the good of the entire body of Christ. All are gifted and all are to contribute. Nobody gets the pass – there are no “pew potatoes” allowed.

When you invest in training your laity they are then released to minister. Scripture records 25 or more giftings for the church. There is administration, teaching, help, healing, hospitality, mercy, giving, prophecy, pasturing, evangelism, serving, and so much more. This training manual is designed to train and equip the laity for the work of the ministry.

THE INTENDED OUTCOME

Biblical Foundations

This training manual is mostly scripture. The lessons will have you looking up Bible passages to helping you become conversant with scripture. As mentioned above, many in our churches are not students of the Bible. They know the big stories – Noah and the flood, Daniel and the Lion's Den, Moses and the Burning Bush, but if you scratch below the surface, it does not go much deeper. One of our intended outcomes is Biblical literacy.

Theological Foundations

Another intended outcome is a good, solid theology and understanding of the faith. This training manual is grounded in the historical Christian faith and will teach from a well-grounded theological perspective. The fall of mankind and original sin; salvation is Christ alone, grace verses work; mercy and forgiveness of sins, the power of the Holy Spirit and all the major doctrines of the church are the bedrock for this and all our training manuals.

Multiplication

A third intended outcome is multiplication. The goal of the training is not simply to equip someone for ministry, but to enable those trained to train others. This type of reproduction is essential. Each generation must pass on what it has learned to the next generation to sustain the church. In a sense the church is only one generation away from extinction. We must learn so we can teach others. As you learn through this teaching you will be able to teach others. When you learn how to lead a person to Christ you can teach others. When you learn how to pray you can teach others to pray. When you learn how to study the Bible you can teach others to study. This manual is not an end in itself, but a powerful tool to train you so you can train others!

Lesson One: Prayer

Personal Preparation

- Be dependent on the Lord
- Submit to the Lordship of Christ
- Confess all known sins
- Allow His anointing to teach
- Put on the whole armor of God

John 15:4-5
1 Peter 3:15
Isaiah 59:20
1 John 2:27
Ephesians 6:10-20

Who to Pray For

- All your contacts – for leading to specific persons.
- Specific persons to come to Jesus.

Personal Preparation

- Opportunities to share with the persons
- Right opening or approach with boldness & tact
- Right words
- Responsiveness e.g., hunger for
 - spiritual things
 - spiritual understanding
 - openness to receive the gospel.

Col 4:3
Eph 6:19
Col 4:4, 6

2 Cor 4:4

When to pray

- Before approaching the person pray regularly with other Christians
- During conversation with a person, pray silently for wisdom, for sensitivity.
- After encounter with the person, praise God for the results, commit. progress to the Lord and pray for solution to difficulties.

How to pray

- Pray in the Spirit
- Pray with authority
- Pray in faith

Rom 8:26
Matt 12:29
Mark 11:24

Lesson One: Prayer

John 15:4-5 ⁴Remain 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. ⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

1 Peter 3:15 ¹⁵But 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,

Isaiah 59:20 ²⁰ "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," ²⁷As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Colossians 4:3 ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Ephesians 6:19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

Colossians 4:4-6 ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be 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.

2 Corinthians 4:4 ⁴The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Romans 8:26 ²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Matthew 12:29 ²⁹"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

Mark 11:24 ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Luke 18:1-8 ¹Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ²He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴"For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' "

⁶And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"