



Winning Friends for Christ

Plan Ahead



Opening Prayer

Course Summary

Synopsis

Winning Friends for Christ Book

Purpose of the book - 1 Peter 3:15 = Always be prepared to give an answer

1. = It is possible to be prepared
2. = You never know when you will have an opportunity, It's important to be ready
3. = People need help and encouragement getting ready

Be Prepared

Who is included in the priesthood that needs to be prepared to share the gospel?

1 Peter 2:4-5 = YOU and I - All believers, Not just full-time pastors and ministers

What purpose does God have for appointing us regular people into His priesthood?

1 Peter 2:9 = That we may declare His praises - Tell others about what He has done

Besides being ready to tell others what He has done, how else are we to stay prepared?

1 Peter 2:12 = The way we live our lives can assist or hinder our effectiveness

Be A Witness

Do we need to be prepared with sermons to spout off when we recognize opportunities?

Acts 1:8 = No, we are to be witnesses

What is a witness?

= A person who has seen or knows something,

Funk & Wagnalls

= and is therefore competent to give evidence concerning it

Is a witness expected to perform with a slick, well-rehearsed speech?

Proverbs 12:17 = No, witnesses are to give honest testimony of the truth - in own words

Living Evangelism

What word does the Bible use for people who witness to the gospel?

2 Timothy 4:5 = Evangelist - literally: *one who announces good news*

Evangelism is not a _____ = program - Though programmatic efforts can assist evangelism

Evangelism is not an _____ = event - Though certain events can help Christians share faith

Evangelism is a _____ = lifestyle - Sharing Christ in your daily life

George Barna: *Success in evangelism is that people active in the church are intentionally and obediently sharing their faith with non-believers*

_____ % of pastors say their members are effectively prepared to witness = 12

_____ % of Christians who actively witness would like to be better trained in evangelism = 85

Winning Friends for Christ

Plan Ahead

Page 2

The Harvest Field

Did Jesus come to save only those who are members of His Church?

1 Timothy 2:3-6 = No, He came to save all people - all belong to Him
Since God's wants to save all people, will all be saved?

John 3:36 = Only those who have faith in Jesus will be saved

What is God's plan to get the saving message of the gospel to all people?

John 20:21 = He sent His people to spread the good news

God's Plan

When Jesus ascended into heaven, the angel Gabriel approached Him and commented, "Master, you must have suffered terribly for men down there."

"I did", He said.

Gabriel asked, "Do they know all about how you loved them and what you did for them?"

"Oh, no," said Jesus, "not yet. Right now only a handful of people in Palestine know."

Gabriel was perplexed. "Then what have you done to let everyone know about your love for them?"

Jesus said, "I've asked Peter, James, John and a few more friends to tell other people about Me. Those who are told will in turn tell other people about Me, and My story will be spread to the farthest reaches of the globe. Ultimately, all of mankind will hear about My life and what I have done."

Gabriel frowned and looked rather skeptical. He knew well the sinfulness and irresponsibility of people. "Yes," he said, "but what if Peter and James and John grow weary? What if the people who come after them forget? What if way down in the 20th century people just don't tell others about You? Haven't You made any other plans?"

Jesus answered, "I haven't made any other plans. I'm counting on them."

Twenty centuries later ... He still has no other plan. He's counting on you and me. His early disciples adopted His priorities and devoted themselves to reaching their world. Christ counted on them and they delivered. Have we done as well?

Did Jesus make a mistake by giving us this responsibility?

What happens if we do not accept this responsibility?

Are you willing to accept and respond to this responsibility?

What ways have you responded to this responsibility in the past?

Your Friends

How are we to systematically make disciples of all nations?

Acts 1:8 = Trust in Spirit's power; Work from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the ends

What is our world? Where is our Jerusalem?

Luke 5:27-32 = The field where we live. To the people around us

How should we consider the relationships we have with unchurched people?

Esther 4:14b = We may be here as THE opportunity for our friends to get the gospel

How do we respond to our calling as God's way for our friends to hear His saving message?

Acts 4:20 = *We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard*

What kinds of things do you share with your friends and neighbors?

= Recommend doctors, restaurants, schools, activities....

Winning Friends for Christ

Plan Ahead

Page 3

Free Cars

John Smith was the greatest car dealer ever. He went out of his way to make sure everyone could get the car of their dreams. People came from all over to buy cars from him.

His commitment to putting everyone behind the wheel of a great vehicle became even more obvious when he died. In his will, he gave instructions that the zillions of dollars of his estate be used to buy brand new cars for everyone in the community.

Mr. Smith's dealership posted signs announcing the good news of the free cars. Some people responded and picked up new cars. Many others didn't believe it could be true so they just ignored the signs.

I heard about what Mr. Smith had done and picked up my new car. It was that easy. I just had to accept what he had already bought for me.

I told you about it and you got your new car. As you drive around the neighborhood in your new car, you notice your neighbors working on their old klunkers trying to keep them running. You wonder why no one has told them about the new cars waiting for them.

As you keep driving, you see your brother walking along the road. You stop to pick him up in your new car and take him the rest of the way to the grocery store. After you drop him off, you make a wish that someone will tell him about the car waiting for him.

The next day at work, one of your co-workers arrives a half-hour late because his car broke down. If only he would pick up his new car so he wouldn't have such problems.

You sit back in your chair and think about how much you love your new car. It fits you just right and it was exactly what you needed. Mr. Smith did a really great thing for you.

As you think about this great gift, you remember your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers who are desperately in need of a new car like yours. If only someone would tell them that new cars are waiting for them to pick up.

You decide that you need to get involved and do something about it. You decide to write a letter to the dealership complaining that they aren't getting the word out enough. You ask them to do a better job of sending out people specially trained in sharing the good news.

How is this story similar to what Jesus did for us? = He paid for a great gift that we just accept

What is the best way for your brother to find out about the new car? = You tell him

What would you risk by telling others about the new cars? = Ridicule from disbelief

What would you gain by telling others about the new cars? = Gratitude, Satisfaction...

Would you react as in the story, or would you tell your friends and neighbors without hesitation about the great gifts waiting for them?

Do you tell others about the greatest free gift awaiting them?

I'm So Overwhelmed

Why do we get afraid of simply telling others about the great gift God has waiting for them?

Luke 10:1-3 = Harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; Satan will resist us

How large is the harvest field?

Matthew 28:19-20a = All nations

How does He expect us to make disciple of all nations?

Matthew 28:20b = He is with us always

A woman walking across the beach one morning was surprised to see hundreds of starfish scattered all over the beach. She was saddened by the thought that they would all die on the hot, dry beach before the next high tide would cover them with water.

She looked up and saw a weathered old man stooping to pick up a starfish. He threw the starfish into the water and reached down to pick up another one. She watched as he again and again bent down to lift a starfish from the sand and launch it into the distant surf. Finally she asked him what he was doing.

"Many mornings when I come to the beach I find lots of starfish stranded by the night's high tide." He said. "If someone doesn't throw them back, they'll die!"

She exclaimed, "But there are thousands of them. You can't possibly throw them all back. What difference can you make?"

The old man paused for a moment, then silently bent down to pick up a starfish lying at his feet. As he threw the starfish into the sea, the woman heard him say, "Made a difference to that one!"

Winning Friends for Christ

Plan Ahead

Page 4

The Unchurched

US citizens who call themselves Lutheran: _____ million = 12

Lutheran churches record a membership total of _____ million = 8

Gallup Poll of US population: = Dechurched is usually open to nurturing by a Christian friend

_____ % actively involved (attend regularly, give sacrificially, serve willingly) = 12

_____ % just members (attend irregularly, minimal support) = 28

_____ % dechurched (years away from church, often consider selves Christian) = 44

_____ % unchurched (little or no interest or background in Christianity) = 16

Where to Find The Unchurched

Jerusalem - Family and close friends = See weekly or daily, Share confidences, Discuss things

Judea - Regular acquaintances = Coworkers, neighbors, parents of other kids on a team

Samaria - Under the rug = Cross paths regularly but find little in common, May dislike them

Ends of the Earth - Within your heart = Others you know, Expect it to be tough to witness to

Homework

1. Make lists of people in your life under each category
2. Arrange the names in a "web". Draw lines showing how you are connected.
Are there any names you missed? Write them in.
Are there any other connections between the people you have identified? Draw them in.
3. Picture these people in your mind. What specific needs do you know about?
What are their strengths? What gifts has God given them that He could use in His kingdom?
Are any going through any transitions in their lives?
4. Pray for the people you identified.
Pray for God's guidance to be a friend to someone who needs to hear about Jesus.
Pray for help in overcoming personal obstacles that would interfere with relationships.
5. Choose one person on whom you are willing to focus.
Watch for where God may put you in the right place at the right time with the right person.
6. If you have the book, read Chapter 1 and answer the questions at the end (page 20).

Questions You May Have

What am I doing here? - God has chosen you to be a friend & empowered you to share His gift.

Why am I doing this? - You can't help it. God has motivated you through love for your friend.

How do I have the right to talk to others about their relationship with God? - You are a redeemed child of God, perfect in His eyes. God gave you things in common with others to open opportunities to share your own experiences and moments of doubt and faith.

Closing Prayer