

FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Understanding and communicating the gospel to those who differ.

Section II - Helping Those Who Differ Understand



Section II

5 STEPS TO UNDERSTANDING OUR ROLE AS WITNESSES

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 2 Tim. 2:4

UNDERSTAND GOD

We are never too young or too old to study Bible truth. The Holy Spirit has a unique way of preparing us in advance for upcoming encounters when we study *His Word* in advance (2 Tim. 2:15). The time to make ourselves usable is now! The first and most important lesson the effective servant of Christ learns is that the Bible is not at all a book about religion. It is a book about God. Everything the Bible teaches relates back to the God we serve, especially as He is uniquely revealed in Christ. The wise witness is not one who memorizes a formula or simply one who knows how to bring down the defenses of the Christ resister (2 Corinthians. 5:10). The wise servant learns, over time, how to direct every discussion back to Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44-48).

UNDERSTAND OURSELVES

Spiritual warfare requires spiritual weaponry (Ephesians 6:10-18). God uses clean vessels who are in submission to the Holy Spirit and sensitive to the needs of others.

Avoid the intellectual vortex. God has equipped us with wonderful minds and a complement of spiritual gifts to aid us in our witness for Christ, but He never intended that we rely on the arm of the flesh, our own ingenuity, or debate skills. When we begin to talk to others caught up in non-biblical belief systems, one thing becomes very clear. Our adversary, the devil, will provide us with plenty of occasions to showcase our own skills! He knows how to flatter, and he knows how to ensnare us in

useless deliberations. Our God wants His Word to shine forth, not His messenger! Our day to shine forth as stars will come later.

UNDERSTAND YOUR LISTENER

Win the person, not the argument! We are dealing with a live human being, a soul for whom Christ died. There is a time to depart from false teachers, but not until we are convinced that they have *hardened their hearts to the truth*. Each year, hundreds and hundreds of folks are won to Christ as a result of folks who took time to care for them and love them before engaging them in all out warfare!

Stop: We will always be too busy. It will always be easier to postpone than to engage (Romans 1:15).

Look: (John 4:35, Matthew 9:36, Acts 17:16). Compassion and respect for those in bondage are nurtured through the eyes. Too often, we look, but we do not see. It's not a Jehovah's Witness knocking on your door, it is a lost sinner who desperately needs Christ. Look past the "elder badge," the hand holding the AWAKE magazine, and the turban top, and look with Christ on one who needs compassion.

Listen: Too often, we are so engaged in deciding what we plan to say next, we do not even listen to what folks are saying. We do not answer the questions they really want answered. What is he really saying? What drives him? When we give someone else an opportunity

to speak, we gain precious time to observe him and time to allow the Holy Spirit to move us toward our next response.

Witnessing is not a boxing match, it is spiritual arm wrestling where we allow God to empower and control our arms.

UNDERSTAND YOUR TOOLS

Though it may have a strange ring, we do not enter the witnessing arena with blind dependence upon the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing. Our dependence is certainly upon the Holy Spirit and not upon ourselves. However, our dependence is equally upon the Word of God.

This means not one, but two things. It means we learn the truths we want to convey from God's Word (1 Peter 3:15), but it also means we have taken the time to learn and observe how the Lord Jesus and the Apostles *handled* the Word of God. The serious witness for Christ will master passages such as John 3, and 4, and Acts 17, not simply for the content they contain, but because we are sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus and the apostles as they used God's Word.

During the course of this study we will teach you how to:

Grow your skills,

How to control the witnessing conversation,

Five Things You Should Know

- How to keep your focus on your goal,
- How to reason back to first principles,
- How to divide and conquer,
- How to bait and set your fishing hooks,
- How to plant seeds of doubt when necessary, and
- How to end your witnessing conversation.

However, if we should never go further than this study, remember, your best teachers are the Lord Jesus and the apostles themselves.

UNDERSTAND YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S PLAN

Culturally, we are ministering at the end of the modernistic period of history and we are often inflicted with its maladies. Not the least of such maladies is the need to feel we are productive and that success is determined by visible results and fruit at all times.

The mature believer knows that this is a deception. We are called to be faithful, period. One may sow, one may water, another may harvest, but God gives the increase and the fruit in *His way* and in *His time* (1 Cor. 3:6-7; 2 Cor. 9:10). We witness out of love and even duty. We witness because we cannot stop ourselves from witnessing. We witness because we love and care for the lost. But, we never witness in order to grow a church, put a mark on a chart, or to demonstrate our spirituality.