

“RECONCILING PEOPLE TO GOD: OUR PRIVILEGED PARTNERSHIP WITH JESUS!”

“God reconciled us to Himself through Christ, not counting our sins against us. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (derived from II Corinthians 5:18-19)

The Bible tells us:

- 1) God can use any of us to help connect people to Him! For example, God used the following despite their shortcomings:
 - Noah got drunk
 - David was very young
 - Hosea’s wife Gomer was an adulteress
 - Rahab was a prostitute
 - Jephthah was the son of a prostitute and kicked out of his family
 - Joseph was sold into slavery
 - Timothy had stomach problems
 - Peter was afraid of death
 - Elijah wished he were dead
 - Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal
 - Gideon and Thomas doubted
 - Jonah ran from God
 - Moses was a poor talker
 - John Mark was refused by Paul
 - Paul was a murderer
 - Moses had a temper; he killed a man
 - David was an adulterer and a murderer
 - Others ...

- 2) God Loves us and wants to have an intimate Relationship with us ... and it brings him Pleasure!

Acts 17:24-27 (all scriptures NIV): “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth, and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands **as if He needed anything**, because He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men ... God did this so that men would **seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him**, though He is not far from each of us”.

Ephesians 1:3-5: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He **chose us** in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In **love**, He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with His **pleasure and will**”.

3) **God loves all people, and wants every person to be saved and have a relationship with Him!**

I Timothy 2:1 - 4 “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for **everyone** ... This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who **wants all men to be saved** and come to a knowledge of the truth”.

2 Peter 3:9 “... He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish**, but **everyone** to come to repentance”.

Titus 2:11 “For the **grace** of God that brings salvation has appeared to **all men**”.

John 3:16 “For God so **loved** the **world** that He gave His one and only Son, that **whoever** believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

4) **It is our privilege to partner with Jesus to help people find salvation and relationship with Him!**

Acts 1:8 “... you will be my **witnesses**....”.

We are His “**disciplers**”. Matthew 28:18-20: “... go and **make disciples...**”.

We are His “**ambassadors**”. II Corinthians 5:17-21 “... God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**. We are therefore Christ’s **ambassadors**, as though God was were making His appeal **through us ...**”.

II Corinthians 6:1 “As **God’s fellow workers ...**”.

I Corinthians 3:9 “For we are **God’s fellow workers ...**”.

5) **We should make it a priority in life to reach people for Jesus (to help connect people to God).**

Why should reaching out be a priority in our lives?

- a) **God loves all people, wants a relationship, and desires ALL to be saved (see prior verses; also refer to book of Jonah).**
- b) **Because Jesus loves us and died for us, we should live for Him and feel compelled to reach out.**

II Corinthians 5:14-15 “For **Christ’s love compels us**, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live **should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them** and was raised again.

- c) **God commands us to reach out, and our obedience is a sign that we truly love Him (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; II Corinthians 5:17-21; John 14: 15, 21, 23).**
- d) **Jesus came to save people, and modeled and taught the importance of reaching out to people from all walks of life.**

Luke 19:10 “**For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost**”.

John 3:17 “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to **save the world through Him**”.

Jesus reached out to people from all walks of life, including:

- **The rich and powerful (e.g. Zacchaeus in Luke 19: 1-9)**
- **The highly educated (e.g. Nicodemus in John 3:1-21)**
- **The social outcasts and “immoral” (e.g. adulteress Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42)**
- **The invalid, blind and people with health issues (e.g. the invalid man in John 5:1-15; blind man in John 9:1-41)**
- **“Sinners” and those looked down upon by others (e.g. hanging out with sinners in Luke 15:1-8)**

Refer to Luke 15:1-10

e) **Apostle Paul taught and modeled for us the importance of reaching out.**

Acts 20:24 “... I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task that the Lord has given to me – the task of **testifying to the gospel of God’s grace**”.

I Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God – even as I try to please everybody in every way. **For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ**”.

Refer to I Corinthians 9:19-23

f) **Remember – people’s earthly lives and eternal destinies are at stake!**

God wants people to enjoy a “super abundant” life here on earth (John 10:10)

“...I have come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly”

God has great plans for Christians in the eternal life to come on the new Earth and New Heaven. He wants to show us His glory! (John 17:20-24; Ex 33:11, 18-20). And there are “new” things He wants to give us for our enjoyment with Him!!

- New special *name* (a private name known only by us and Him) Revelation 2:17; Is 62:2, 65:15
- New *home* (special dwelling place just for us) John 14:1-3
- New *body* (similar to His) I Cor 15:35-58
- A new *life* (eternal life full of incomprehensible joys, rewards, adventures and relationships) Psalm 16:11; I Cor 2:9; Rev 21 & 22, etc.

6) God gives us resources and strategies to help us be successful in connecting people to Him.

a) Partnership with Jesus

Matthew 28: 18-20 “All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations ... surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”.

b) Power from the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.

c) Power from God the Father

Eph 3:20-21 “Now to Him (God the Father) who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to **His power that is at work within us ...**”.

d) Lead with Love

Matthew 22:34-40 “... **Love** the Lord your God with all you heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘**Love your neighbor as your self ...**’.

Refer to the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 25-37

John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **By this all men will know you are my disciples**, if you love one another”.

e) Develop positive relationships with pre-Christians (follow example and teaching of Jesus and Paul)

f) Power of Prayer

Pray for ourselves and other Christians (see Colossians 4:2-6):

Power of Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)

Eyes opened to the power of God (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Good witness with our actions; good works (Matthew 5:14-16; Colossians 4:4-6)

Opportunity; open doors (Colossians 4:3-5)

Boldness (Ephesians 6:19-20; Acts 4:31)

Clear, graceful and edifying speech (Colossians 4:4-6; Ephesians 4:29)

Readiness and ability to explain (I Peter 3:15; Colossians 4:6)

Sending of workers into the harvest (Matthew 9:36-38)

Pray for pre-Christians:

Work of the Holy Spirit -- conviction, faith (John 16:7-11)

Against blinding of unbelievers; open eyes (II Corinthians 4:3-4; Acts 26:18)

Open hearts (Acts 16:14)

For binding of Satan, evil spirits, and evil influences in the name of Jesus (Matthew 16:19, 18:18, 12:29)

Gospel message to be received and to spread rapidly and be glorified (II Thes 3:1)

g) Power of the Word

God's word is "living and active" and will achieve its purposes (Hebrews 4:12-13; Isaiah 55:10-11). It is helpful to memorize some key verses and have some gospel tracts/booklets to share when the opportunity arises.

h) Invite people to hear about Jesus

Follow example of Andrew, who brought his brother Peter to meet Jesus (John 1:40-42). We can invite people to small groups, Sunday School classes, worship services, special events, etc.

i) Give money to gospel causes

We should give regularly and generously to the local church and to support missionary/gospel causes (II Corinthians 8 & 9).

7) The common pattern of evangelism in scripture is to present the gospel in relevant means for the hearers (start where they are at then end up pointing to Jesus). Some examples:

- a. Peter (Acts 2:14-41) – begins where the audience is and leads them to hear the Gospel with clarity and understanding – and with great results!**

- b. Paul in Acts 13:13-43 begins where audience is at and leads them to understand the gospel; in Acts 17:1-4, 16-34 he speaks to philosophical Greeks on their own terms and leads them to an initial understanding of God and man.**
- c. In Romans 10:12-15 Paul teaches that the Lord is the same to all, but all need someone to preach the Gospel to them so they can understand.**
- d. Paul willingly gave up his preferences, and removed unnecessary obstacles in order to help non-Christians become saved (I Cor 9:19-23 and 10:31-11:1).**

It is truly a privilege for us to partner with Jesus and connect people to God. Let's "Just Do It" until we meet up with Him someday!