

THE LACK OF WITNESS
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"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and forever" Dan. 12:3.

The creator of all things could have designed a special race that would automatically represent Him and spread the good news of the Gospel. A group of creatures untouched by fear or muffled by pride. Whose great persuasion would allow no rejection of His claims of love and sure redemption through His grace. A force of mental persuasion and power that would sweep all men into the kingdom of God. This He chose not to do. Instead, He ordained that those who believe in Him should accept this responsibility. God chose us to team up with His Spirit and the Word to be the sole propagators of the good news that Jesus saves. The vast majority of Christians never win a soul and most do not really try. Why? Here are some of the reasons.

Today's believers have a tendency toward a **WRONG SENSE OF VALUES**. It seems so easy to forget the value of a soul. God's measure reminds us "*what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul*" Mark 8:36. We tend to focus on the physical and neglect thinking in the lasting realm of the spiritual. Our lost relatives and friends around us are more precious than life itself. All earthly things will pass away. The soul is eternal and its value incalculable. Earth's greatest tragedy is not polluted water, fouled air, or the ozone hole but millions of lost souls about to be lost forever. We must refocus on the value of eternal souls.

Today's believers are wrapped up in **THE SQUANDER OF TIME**. I do not believe a busier generation has ever occupied this earth. We are like ants, rushing about to repair and enjoy our environmental hill; squandering most of our time and efforts on temporal things that will pass away. "*For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*" James 4:14. It is so very sad to pack our days with the things that are temporal. In the meantime, the souls of millions will pass into eternity while we scurry about in our busy schedules. It is time to slow down and be "*redeeming the time because the days are evil*" Eph. 5:16. At the judgment, our time card will reveal how much of our time we spent for self and how little for the Master. We certainly suffer further from **DISOBEDIENCE TO CLEAR COMMANDS**. There

is no question about the mandate we have been given. "*Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord*" Isa. 43:10. We cannot escape the clarity of "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit*" John 15:16. The pursuit of lost souls is not just for the specialist but the responsibility of each of us who were pursued by another. Where would you have been if the one who won you had cared so little about lost souls? Failure to witness is clear rebellion to the orders of our commander in chief. Whatever you accomplish for God, the winning of souls should always be first. Failure in this will result in tears, shame and loss of rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.

Most believers have never grasped or have **FORGOTTEN THE REALITY OF HELL**. "*The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God*" Psm. 9:17. Do you really believe this to be true? Jesus said it would be better for man to cut off his hand or foot, or pluck out his eye to stay out of hell. I

have often illustrated by dropping the church like an elevator down a shaft into hell. With a little honest imagination you can picture yourself there. We would only have to feel the heat, sense the burning, hear the cries of the damned and see the flames, to be persuaded to leave. Souls in hell cannot do so. They must everlastingly remember. Thoughts of wasted living, hidden sins and foolish choices will cling to them like an inescapable plague. They cannot run, they cannot hide for hell is the final judgment of God on all sinners that reject His Son. Such a brief visit would revitalize your desire to reach your loved ones and friends. You would not sit and watch your neighbor's house burn down around them. You would cry out and do your best to reach them. Oh wake up, dear one, to the tragedy of a cold heart of unconcern which can believe in such a place and yet do little to cry a warning.

Most believers suffer from **UNGRATEFULNESS**. How can we forget all the love and sacrifice that went into our own salvation. Our eternal Father gave His only Son to save us. Christ came willingly down from heaven's brightest noonday to earth's blackest midnight. His great love "*hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" II Cor. 5:21. No man has ever suffered for us like the Saviour. His great heart never forgot His mission to make a way for lost souls to be saved. How will we who care so little for others look into His face? I think too of all those who worked to bring us the Gospel. For those who have preached it, suffered for it, and many who gave their lives that we might hear and believe. We owe our salvation to so many and we must not break the chain of witness. We must not be the tongue-tied, ungrateful recipients of such glad tidings. Would you have been saved if the one who told you cared as little about witnessing?

We seem to further show a tragic **LACK OF COMPASSION**. Many in today's world express care for the physical needs of others. It is fashionable to go all out to provide food, clothes, housing and health assistance for those in need. These things are commendable but fall short of the real need of man. He must be brought to see the futility of his earthly struggle and the crucial need of eternal rescue. Hard hearts can be tendered through true tears of compassion. The crying baby is picked up and loved. The hurting, whimpering child is hugged and comforted. Tears are the God-given method to show concern for others. "*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seeds will doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him*" Psa. 126:6. You have tried argument, persuasion, bribery, and every conceivable angle to reach your friends. Why not do it God's way? Genuine tears of concern will melt away the barriers that have built up. How can we possibly convince folks of their plight without showing our personal concern? Bathe the witnessing Word with sincere tears of concern and watch sinners begin to respond. Nothing touches a heart like tears on the face of another. A night of weeping and prayer beside the bed of a lost husband will bring great results. Tearful pleading before a wayward teen will soften the hard heart. We must simply use tears as a true tool of compassion. Another of Satan's tools to hinder witness for Christ is **THE FEAR OF MAN**. Teens are not the only ones controlled by peer pressure. The plain truth is that we mostly fear man more than God. "*The fear of man bringeth a snare*" Prov. 29:25. Workers forgo witness because they think it will endanger their job. Teens are so afraid of what their friends will think of them if they share Christ. Families remain split because the believer hesitates to press for decision. The whole matter is very clear. Who am I trying to please? Ought we not to fear God more than man? We seem to have it all

backward. How sad to fear those in need and not the orders of the one who commands us to witness.

I must further mention a few **HABITUAL EXCUSES**. First, so many of us have been convinced we cannot talk well or have a bashful nature. This excuse erodes immediately during political discussions, a club fund raising drive, or many an avid discussion on our favorite topic. Sometimes a believer will say, "I don't want to hurt their feelings." Would you worry about feelings as a doctor who has discovered cancer in your patient? The rescue of their soul is far more important than the feelings of the body. There are some who fear pushing someone into a false decision. This sounds slightly spiritual but the need must be presented clearly before we worry about the sinners response. It is God's power that truly saves and we must leave that to Him. Sometimes you may think there is someone that can do it better. This is a cop out. Never underestimate the value of your personal testimony and efforts on the behalf of a friend. New converts in a meetings are often the best soul winners of their friends while more mature believers look on and do little. Perhaps you feel you do not know how to witness. Then get with your pastor, Sunday School teacher or others who will be happy to help you know a few verses to use. This writer has turned many thousands to Christ through eight verses in the book of Romans. One must learn how to do anything you want to do well. Perhaps the question of all questions to ask is "Who will reach them if I don't?"

I cannot close this chapter without pointing out the **CRIMINALITY OF FAILURE**. Human law and government still outlines our personal responsibility toward others. The drunk who uses his car as a hurtling weapon of destruction is to be held accountable. The peddler of drugs, the pornographer and the abuser of others can

be tried and found guilty in the courts of law. The courts of man are not always fair, but the judgment of God is inescapable. Currently the unborn child has no rights and perhaps the old and suffering will soon be terminated. Again however, it is the court of God that will make the supreme decision and all mankind will appear in judgment. Please consider this warning from Ezekiel 3:18, *"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."* Careful study of the surrounding verses establishes our responsibility toward the lost, warns of the consequences of failure and the need for crying out the warning. We certainly cannot win everyone but we should try to tell everyone. Remember, those whom God brings across your path become your responsibility. A crucial responsibility that we will face at the judgment bar of God. Please let me lovingly ask "How much blood is on your hands?"

I sincerely hope this chapter hovered over by the Spirit will bring tears to your eyes, new boldness to your tongue and a new urgent pursuit of the souls of man. No earthly accomplishment can outshine the glories reserved for those who have spent a lifetime winning souls. I urge you to ask for forgiveness, see the plight of sinners around you and get about the Master's main business. Get started winning souls and a new reason for living will put sparkle in your life. A winner of souls is WISE!