

The Bible Speaks To Me About My Witness

Session 2: Part 2 – Soul-Winning Eyes:
Every Christian’s Business

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Session 2

Soul-Winning Eyes 2: Every Christian's Business

Session Overview

Who Is a Witness?
How do we practically become witnesses?
Application
Exam
Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

Learner Objectives

At the end of this session, you should:

- understand the biblical mandate to be a witness.
- be able to start seeing spiritual opportunities.
- understand more about the spiritual nature all people have.

Introduction

Jesus Christ gave His disciples harvest instructions. His concern was not that there would be too early a harvest, but that there were too few workers to finish the job. The words He spoke then issue a challenge for us today. "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38). Note that Jesus' plea was not for preachers, but workers. Obviously both laity and clergy are needed.



Soul-Winning Eyes 2: Every Christian's Business

Notes

When my wife, Nancy, was a little girl, her grandmother asked her to go out to the garden and dig three potatoes for supper. The neighbor boy, Edward Zimmerman, joined her in the task. Digging potatoes was fun. It was so much fun that instead of digging three, they harvested 30! Somehow Grandmother did not believe reinserting 27 potatoes in the ground would produce further growth. Nancy received a spanking she still remembers—for disobeying the harvest instructions.

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The world is Christ's harvest field. He has a claim on it. He is already at work within it. He has a right to direct the harvest operation. Though God has sufficient power to directly convert people to himself, He has chosen us as the means of bringing people into right relationship with Him. Philip (a layman) was led by the Spirit to ask the Ethiopian, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian responded, "How can I . . . unless someone explains it to me?" (Acts 8:30–31). And this "except some man should guide me," as King James puts it, is the pattern of New Testament evangelism. God uses people to bring other people into right relationship with himself.

One day Jesus went for a walk by the lake. There He saw two fishermen named Peter and Andrew casting a net into the water. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). A short time later Jesus called James and John, also fishermen, to follow Him. They obeyed. Only the call of Matthew is described later in his Gospel (9:9). Thus "these four are intended to be taken as typical of the discipleship group," wrote R. T. France in *The Gospel According to Matthew*. They were not professional clergy, nor of great scholarship, influence, wealth, or social background. They were working-class people with no great background and no great future, William Barclay pointed



out in *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1*. That means people like you and me can qualify.

Jesus did not expect them to become fishers of men on their own. He said *He would make* them fishers of men—if they followed Him. I am encouraged that the closer I follow Him, the more He will mold and shape me to be a fisher of men. The disciples used such skills as patience, perseverance, courage, and sensitivity. They matched the bait to the fish and kept themselves out of sight. Those same qualities were a part of their witnessing skills, and they should be a part of ours.

It is distressing to note that a Campus Crusade for Christ survey reveals that 98 percent of professing Christians do not regularly share their faith. The Alban Institute on Church Growth discovered that in mainline Protestantism, a person is invited to church by someone once every 28 years.

When Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, the tax collector threw a big dinner party for the Lord (Matt. 9:9–13). He invited his tax collector friends and other sinners. He wanted them to meet Jesus. To want our friends to meet Christ should be natural, and for everybody, not just evangelism specialists or clergy.

Preaching is the ministry of a few who are called and so gifted. Witnessing, however, is a method available to *all Christians*. According to Richard Peace, in *Small Group Evangelism*, the rapid spread of Christianity in the Early Church was due in large part to the witness of lay Christians.

Origen, the Early Church historian, stated that, “Christians do all in their power to spread the faith over the world.” Evangelist Leighton Ford wrote in *The Christian Persuader*, “A church which bottlenecks its outreach by depending on its specialists—its pastors and evangelists—to do its witnessing, is living in violation of both the intention of its Head and the consistent pattern of early Christians.”

Acts 8:4 tells of the spread of early Christianity: “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.” However, verse 1 more clearly defines who was doing all this preaching: “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” In other words, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. It was the laity who were scattered and spread the Word.

While it is true that some people have the gift of evangelism, every Christian is



called to witness (Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8). And while we need the ministries of nurture to those who are already Christians, there is the need for starting new life. We dare not be just “keepers of the aquarium” when Jesus calls us *all* to be “fishers of men.”

How I See People

If you had to deal with a complaining boss or a crabby teacher this week, what do you think he or she needs? It may be natural to respond, “He or she needs someone to tell him or her off!” Did you ever think that he or she needs Jesus?

The disciples went to a Samaritan town to buy food (John 4:8). On their return, they were amazed to find Jesus witnessing to a Samaritan woman (v. 27). It was more of a shock when many of the Samaritans responded to Christ because of the woman’s testimony (v. 39). The disciples had been shopping from some of these same people and perhaps had only thought of the quality and price of their groceries. Maybe they left no witness.

During this event, Jesus talked to the disciples about soul-winning eyes. We read about this in John 4:34–38.

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest?’ I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

These verses teach:

1. Christ’s greatest satisfaction was to win people to himself and the Kingdom (v. 34).
2. In the field of people around you, there are some ready to accept Christ now (v. 35).
3. You do not have to do all the work in order to reap. Someone else may sow the seed. This prepares the person to receive Christ (vv. 36–37).
4. Both sowers and reapers are valuable to God (vv. 36–37).
5. If you do reap, you must not take credit. Someone else has done the



hard work of preparation (v. 38).

As an example of this, consider the situation of Beverly and Sharon. As Beverly prepared for Sunday morning church service, she prayed she would meet someone she could influence for Jesus. That same morning Sharon got in her car and began driving. She was hurting emotionally and needed help. She thought church might be the answer.

That morning Beverly and Sharon arrived at the same church. They struck up a conversation and started a friendship. Beverly witnessed to Sharon and had the privilege of seeing her accept Christ. Sharon was ripe for harvest, and Beverly was looking for the harvest. She was seeing people with soul-winning eyes.

People may appear tired, lonely, or even jubilant as we meet them. But there's more—each individual has a spiritual condition as well. He or she is:

- in one of two realms: darkness or light.
- under one of two powers: Satan or God.
- traveling one of two ways: broad way or narrow way.
- in one of two relationships: against Christ or for Christ.
- in one of two groupings: tares or wheat.
- going to one of two destinies: hell or heaven.
- either: dead or alive.
- either: lost or found.

Many who don't know Christ are hungry to find Him. Sadly, there are those who profess love for Jesus, yet winning another person to Christ never crosses their minds. Oh, that God will give them soul-winning eyes. May we all begin to see others as people for whom Jesus died.

When you see people with soul-winning eyes, your love for them is deep enough that you want to affect their eternal destiny. Your eyes of concern will realize they are trapped in sin. They may invite you to participate in actions that are not right. It is important to determine what habits you will practice as a Christian. It is also important to keep them consistently. Our world laughs at inconsistency. Even though we may have settled the issues of personal convictions, we must not *condemn* the person for whom we are concerned.

Imagine you have only recently met Jim. You are working a construction job together and are carpooling. On the way home from work your first day together, Jim is driving. He says, "Boy, it's been hot today. Let's stop for a cold



beer.”

Let's assume that as a Christian you have a conviction against the use of alcoholic beverages. How will you answer him? You might say, “No thanks, Jim. I don't drink. I'm a Christian.” But that answer may sound like you are condemning him. Consider the following answer: “No thanks, Jim. I don't drink. But you know, my wife and I would like very much to get to know you and your wife better. Would there be an evening next week where we could have you over for dinner?”

The guideline here is clear: If an unsaved person suggests a wrong activity to you, with your refusal suggest an alternative activity. From this, the person will know you are not rejecting him or her. In Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4:4–26), He carefully built a friendship with her before dealing with her sin.

Soul-winning eyes not only will cause us to look at individuals differently but also will affect our decisions about organizations and strategy. In a visit to Korea, my wife and I met Pastor Lee at the An-Jung church, who told us that in his village of 10,000 people there were 2 Nazarene churches. Recently he had received 25 new members, bringing his present church membership to 785. This is the daughter church of the In-gwang church. While it is smaller than the An-Jung church, the In-gwang church has started 16 daughter churches. The In-gwang church has soul-winning eyes, believing that all across that region churches must be planted. No wonder there has been such rapid, church growth in this region of Korea. They have soul-winning eyes.

Soul-winning eyes, or seeing people as people for whom Christ died, results in a passion for souls. Former district superintendent Wil Spaitte noted that though the Church of the Nazarene was one of the two fastest-growing denominations in the 1930s, there was little organized training. In recent years, we have had a great increase in seminars and training.

In the early 1990s Nazarenes in the USA and Canada were still growing. Dale Jones, former research director for the Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center reported:

From 2010 to 2017, the annual change for the Church of the Nazarene in the USA/Canada region has averaged as 0.5% loss in membership and 1.7% loss in worship attendance. The total number of adherents (people associated with the church, but not necessarily members or even



regularly attending) has increased 0.2% annually for the same time period.

Dr. Spaite wondered what Nazarenes of the 1930s had that was so special. He wrote, "It was because most of the Nazarenes had a *caring love to see the lost won to Christ*. The eternal destiny of family, friends, and neighbors was so much on their hearts that *they loved them to Christ*."

This is what I mean by a passion for souls, and it must be cultivated anew. The passion for souls was with Abraham as he pleaded with God for Lot and Sodom. It was with Jesus as He wept over Jerusalem. It was with Paul who said, "Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved" (Rom. 10:1). Is that passion a part of your life?

As I was going through the checkout counter at my favorite drugstore, I was distressed to note a man in front of me purchasing a pornographic magazine. I decided to speak to the druggist about it. I'd built a little friendship with him, and felt I could say something. I said, "Everett, I like your store. I have the feeling you want to help me. You provide medicine and products that promote health and heal my body. That's why it concerns me that you would sell something that poisons the mind."

I had his interest. He asked me what I meant. I told him about the magazine. He told me the name of the person I should contact in the drugstore company, and I did. The magazine was removed from the shelves.

But dealing with the social evil of pornography is not enough. I am concerned for Everett's spiritual welfare as well. At a later time in the store I visited with Everett again. I complimented him on his helpfulness. I asked if he and his wife had a church home they attended regularly. He said they didn't, and I invited them to attend my church. They responded to my invitation. Not long after, I visited the pharmacy again. I heard that Everett's son, Eugene, was getting out of the military. I asked Eugene if he would be willing to talk to my church youth group about his military experience. He did.

Ten years passed, and I was teaching at the seminary in Kansas City. As my class was leaving, a tall, good-looking guy walked in. He stuck out his hand.

"Remember me?" he asked. "I'm Eugene. The first time I ever attended the Nazarene church was at your invitation. Since then I've been saved, joined the church, and now I'm in seminary studying for the ministry."



I'm glad I went to the drugstore that day with soul-winning eyes. Be sure you are seeing with soul-winning eyes. Someone you know needs Jesus now. Jesus said, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." As a previous evangelism campaign in the Church of the Nazarene proclaimed, "We shall have all eternity to worship—but only this lifetime to witness."

Application

Your concern must become action. List five people you know who need Jesus now. Be sure at least three of them are near enough to you that they might come to your local church. Begin praying that God will draw them to Himself. Pray He will help you witness to them.



EXAM – Session 2

1. Jesus urged us to “ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field” (Matthew 9:38). Which of the following is correct?
 - a) By workers, He was specifically wanting preachers.
 - b) Though God has sufficient power to directly convert people to himself, He most often uses witnesses to bring people to himself, as with Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:30–31).
 - c) When Jesus said He would make Peter and Andrew “fishers of men,” He expected to primarily use workers with wealth, influence, and great scholarship.
 - d) This should not be of great concern to us because over 75% of professing Christians regularly share their faith.

2. We dare not be just “keepers of the aquarium” when Jesus calls us all to be “fishers of men.”
 - a) True
 - b) False

3. Jesus talked to His disciples about soul-winning eyes in John 4:34–38. This was in conjunction with Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman at a well. Which statement is *not* true to Jesus’ teaching?
 - a) Christ’s greatest satisfaction was to win people to himself and to the Kingdom (v. 34).
 - b) In the field of people around us, there are some ready to accept Christ now (v. 35).
 - c) It will be up to you to do all the hard work of both sowing and reaping (v. 36–37).
 - d) If you do reap, you must not take credit. Someone else has done the hard work of preparation (v. 38).



4. You and Jim have been working on a construction job. You are a Christian with a conviction against the use of alcohol. Jim gives you a ride home. He says, "Boy, it's hot today. Let's stop for a cold beer." Your best response is _____

- a) "No thanks, Jim. I don't drink. I'm a Christian."
- b) Give him the silent treatment.
- c) "No thanks, Jim. I don't drink. But, you know, my wife and I would like to get to know you and your wife better. Would there be an evening next week when we could have you over for dinner?"
- d) "Jim, your life would be so much better if you would just quit alcohol."

5. In the 1930s, the Church of the Nazarene was the second fastest growing church in the USA. In the 1990s, we were still growing. From 2010–2017, the church declined in membership and worship attendance. What is most needed to change this trend is _____.

- a) a new music style in worship
- b) longer sermons
- c) Nazarenes to have a caring love to see the lost won to Christ, or a passion for souls
- d) better church organization and administration



Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. What are some of the ways we can build relationships with people who need Christ?
2. What would it mean for you to have soul-winning eyes?
3. What are some Biblical or historical examples of people with a passion for souls?
4. What steps might you take to develop a passion for souls?
5. Discuss your prospect list.