



Witnessing – May 3, 2018

Verses Covered

Matthew 28:18 – 20

John 3:16

Romans 5:8

1 John 3:16

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:34

Romans 10:9 – 10

John 1:12

2 Corinthians 7:10

John 2:23 – 25

1 Corinthians 5:12 – 13

James 2:14 – 26

John 5:22 - 23

So we're going to cover a great bit of ground today. We're going to start in Matthew 28:18 – 20. We're going to talk about witnessing today; both with adults and children. This is the Baptist verse. It's what I grew up on. It makes this statement; as a matter of fact, this is really one of the last things Jesus says to them. It's the final, we call it in Baptist life, the Great Commission. It's His final marching orders to us.

¹⁸And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

“Go therefore” is a bad translation. Literally in the Greek it's “while you're going.” In other words, while you live on this earth.

There are two qualities to discipleship. There is baptism and there is teaching. Now it's interesting, He says, “you baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Why? Because in Ephesians 1, remember God the Father chose to redeem us, God the Son accomplished that redemption, God the Spirit makes that redemption real. That's the key point for what we're going to look at today. So you baptize in the name of all three persons of the Trinity and we teach

them everything that Jesus said. Now the baptism is an obvious precursor, we understand somebody's got to be saved to be baptized. So there are two aspects to discipleship. There really is a point of conversion. There's a point at which you get saved. When people say to us, "I've always been a Christian." That is a terrifying statement to me. Nobody has always been a Christian. At some point the Holy Spirit's convicted you and you've come to realize that you need Jesus Christ. And you've responded to that which I'll explain in a minute.

Now there are basically two ways to witness. There are only two. You take opportunities or you make opportunities. That's it. There's nothing in between. Most Christians today unfortunately, and really there are two extremes. I think some Christians just absolutely wait and never seek anybody out for Christ. Now that's one really bad extreme. You should be seeking opportunities. Now the other extreme is we're so concerned about witnessing, we get way out here where I think, and there was a guy that said something to me one time that I think was right. He said, "Your bad way of doing evangelism is better than my no way of doing evangelism." And I think there's some legitimacy here. But you can get out here, the new rage, there's kind of a rage back, I noticed when we were at CAPS last week with the young guys. There's a new rage back to go door to door. As a matter of fact, one of the guys was telling me that what they do is they go to a door, they knock on it, people answer, and they say, "Can I have 60 seconds to tell you about Jesus." And he's got a little kind of a soliloquy you memorize and he shares the gospel literally in 60 seconds. And then when they're done, he says, "Would you like to pray and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins?" I mean, any kind of evangelism is better than no evangelism, but if you're waiting on the conviction of the Holy Spirit, I'm always troubled by that kind of quick evangelism.

I think you can get almost anybody to say yes to four questions. And I think we have to really be careful because I fear sometimes you can get out here and be so concerned with, alright let me just say this. I want to be careful here, but I think you can get out here sometimes and you're witnessing out of guilt more than you are actually touching someone. If someone's under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that doesn't come overnight. Particularly on an adult. So I'm really hesitant to do the door to door thing. I've got a guy, there's a seminary professor who's head of evangelism at Southwestern that I really love. He's going to come down, we're talking tomorrow, he's going to come down and we're going to figure out just some training. And I think that's a real key. I want you to be trained. There's all sorts of new interesting techniques to use that are really good. There are different things. So we're going to look at some of those. But I do think you need to make an opportunity. And the critical reason why is because the staff and I don't work with lost people. It's on you. We don't really hang out with lost people. I mean Annalee is the closest thing I've got to a lost person. Other than that, we don't really hang out with lost people. And I'm telling you, I think what you have to assume is that, I really do believe that when we die we're going to be stunned at the number of people God put in our life that we ignored and that He sovereignly put in there for us to tell them about His son. So I think you've got to make opportunities and I think the best way to do this is you set aside some budget money, and it doesn't have to be a lot, but you take a worker or a friend if you're a stay at home mom, and you ask them to go to lunch, and you simply say to them, "I know Jesus. I want you to know Jesus." You don't have to preach. I'm going to walk you through what to say today. But I really do think you need to pray about that. One of the things I liked in the children's building, for example, we're going to have it open and I think you can make a phone call up here. We have a big commons area with an indoor playground. One of the reasons we did that is for moms to be able to come up here with their kids, let them go

nuts, they can't destroy a lot. They sit down with lunch and take a break here rather than Chick-Fil-A. It's a great opportunity to sit down with some friends, let your kids play, and then gently ease into the conversation of who you are in Jesus Christ and their need of Jesus Christ. So I think you've got to make those opportunities. I really do. I don't think you just sit around and wait.

Now you don't need perfect theology. I'm going to give you like four things you need to know today. You do not need to know the kenosis theory of the incarnation to be able to lead somebody to Jesus Christ. You're dealing with a lost person. Everybody's always terrified, "What if they ask me something and I don't know the answer?" There's a lot of stuff I don't know and you're dealing with a lost person; they don't really know anything. You're smarter than they are, in this. So don't worry about that.

First thing you're going to do is you're going to tell them is:

1. God loves them.

We're going to go through a real simple thing. You're going to tell them that. We've got John 3:16.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

We've got Romans 5:8.

⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Look at 1 John 3:16.

¹⁶We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

So you're got these clear places that say that God is in love with us. I do think you need to start there. Now that's where Joel Osteen stops. That's all that Joel Osteen knows. Nothing else I'm going to share with you does Joel know. Do y'all ever read the Babylon Bee? It's my favorite thing to read. I get it weekly or monthly, however it comes out. They had this great Meme of Joel Osteen leaping off the stage because a guy had his Bible open and was about to read it, to stop him. And the greatest line in it was, "Joel responded to an unfamiliar sound of Bibles pages being turned." So this is all Joel's got, right. He stops. Now that's the good news. Here's the bad news. Romans 3:23

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Now here's the problem you have today. This is the one thing that you do have to work through. You've got to figure out the words we use, they don't understand. You say "sin" they're not really getting that. This guy uses the word corruption. I don't care what you use.

2. All have sinned

It's a great way to say, and you're leveling the playing field, you're not better than they are. So you've got a great point here. "I'm just like you." This is one of the things you're going to say. "Listen, God's in love with you and I'm just like you. We're both bad." You want them to understand; you don't want to pass judgment on them. You want them to understand that you're what they are. On Wednesdays I do kids and I had this little guy in yesterday and I walked him through these various questions. And so one of the questions is, "Have you sinned." And this little guy looks at me and he goes, "Yeah, a lot. It's like seven." I'm going, "Wow! OK." So obviously the Holy Spirit can convict early in life. Apparently he's been selling drugs in elementary school, but whatever word we want to use. You want to use some kind of word. You want to explain something to them; the basic idea of sin. This is difficult for us because if they know you're Baptist, they're going to assume it's a bunch of crappy rules you've got. So I think the best way to talk about this is that you're going to say, "Look we are not reflecting in our lives the character of God. His character we have lost and we are violating it and that's what sin is." You don't want to talk about Baptist rules. And I'm telling you, you've got to get out of the Baptist rules. Stay on what the scripture says. If the scripture doesn't say it black and white, you don't address it.

Number 3, you're going to let them know that Romans 6:23;

²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Jesus is the answer.

You're not going to go into a long dialog about all the different stuff. You're just going to say Jesus on the cross, you've got to put it in there somewhere that His blood paid for their sin. That there is a, and literally the Greek is, there is a ransom payment that He made for our sin. We were in trouble, but Jesus made a ransom payment by His blood. He is the antidote to our problems. We're not as holy as God. Jesus makes us as holy as God. And again we're not trying to get into heavy theology. You can do this quickly. But I would tell them two things: their sin is gone and they are declared holy by what Jesus did. Those two things. So they don't have to, and I think this is important because this takes care of their past and this takes care of their future. They don't have to, because sometimes they'll think, "Well OK if I start over, I've really got to be holy." No. You're declared holy for the rest of your life. So you want to tell them that. You want to explain to them that they have to respond. Look at John 1:12. And then we'll also look at Romans 10. I'll tell you what. While you're in Romans, go to 10:8. Listen to the scripture.

⁸But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" – that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame."

So I would say, and then John 1:12 says:

¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

So you're going to talk about then that they have to respond, not to you, but to the Holy Spirit. He's going to convict them. So you're going to give them four things.

God loves them; He shouldn't, but He does so much that He put His Son on the cross, and if they'll believe that and confess that, with their mouth that they will say, "God I believe Your Son died and I want You to forgive me."

4. Confession

If they make that confession, this is all they've got to do to be saved. But again, I want this to be deep. Go over to 2 Corinthians 7:10. Now this is key for me because I think, this is why I don't like just door-to-door and I don't like quick stuff. Here's what it says.

¹⁰For Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Whereas worldly grief produces death.

I don't think you read that to them, but you keep that in mind. There's a difference between repentance and remorse. But they've got to repent. Now you're not going to use that word because that's in all the 50's western movies where the goofy preacher's screaming, "Repent!" at the top of his voice, you wicked adulteress, foul Baptist. So we don't want to use the word repent. This is for you to remember. John 16, the Holy Spirit will convict the world. I want you to find people that the Holy Spirit's been working on and you're just sharing what they need to know to respond to the Holy Spirit. You're not leading them to Christ. Somehow we got that term/phrase in Baptist life. You don't lead anybody to Christ. God sovereignly deals with them, but you step into their life as God speaks and you give them what they need to know to be saved. And this is all they need to know. So this is not rocket science. You're going to walk them through. So God's going to convict them, you're going to come along behind the conviction. It's interesting, I think sometimes, not all the time, sometimes you can tell. I had a young man in my office, a college student, years ago. He came in, as a matter of fact, I ended up marrying him and his wife. He came into my office and he said, "Man, I want to ask Jesus into my heart." For some reason when I walked through this with him in my office, he kind of had just this glazed look. So I said, "Cliff, look, I don't think you're ready." And he was fine with that. So he came back six months later. He said, "Man I've been thinking about this for six months." And I mean it was a whole different guy. Prayed to received Christ in my office and ultimately he married a Godly lady. He's in Houston now. They've been in church. I mean an absolute conversion. But you could literally tell the difference and so he was ready the first time. If I had said, "Let's pray." He would have prayed. You've got to allow God to do His work. And this is what you're doing. Your job is to tell them what God's bothering them about; you've got the answer, and it's in those things.

Now when you deal with children, this is all your kids need to know. When I have kids in my office, I walk them through a series of questions. It's always fun when I ask them, and I have some preliminary questions. I'll say, "If I gave you tomorrow and you could do anything you want, what would you do?" It's always fun to watch the parents, because they don't know. They're waiting for the answer. And I love, I had, you know some kids say, "I want to go to Disney World." I had one little girl that was so terrified at being in the pastor's office. I said, "If you could do anything you wanted to do, what would you do tomorrow?" She said, "I would praise Jesus all day." I said, "It's not really where I'm going here." Disney World or the mountains? I love kids. So I walk through a set of questions.

Do you know what sin is?

Have you sinned? *And I want to hear when they know what sin is that it's a violation of God.*

Have you sinned? *Yes*

What do you do to get rid of your sin? *I ask Jesus*

What did He do that lets Him forgive you? *He died on the cross.*

Now they've got to process that. I've had some kids that when I said, "Have you sinned?" They looked at me and said, "I don't think so." Now they're not ready to be saved. Now Mom and Dad, when you deal with this, let me explain something. You know why God put His Son on the cross? Because He wants your kids saved more than you do. So don't freak out, don't try to get them down the aisle at age 4. "He's ready. He knows." No. He's coming down because he wants to be part of the family. I don't want him being saved because he wants to be a part of the family. I want him or her being saved because the Holy Spirit's convicted them. Well how do you know the Holy Spirit's convicted them? I think two things. I think God gives parents an intuitive understanding of when their kids ready. Number two: you put him off. You put her off until they're wearing you out on a Sunday morning, or whatever, saying, "I want Jesus!" You put them off. If you can put them off, then they're not ready. I remember we had done that with our son. And I'm telling you, I really do believe God gives you an intuitive deal. When my son, my wife remembers all the dates, I don't remember, but we had had one of the normal nights with my son, right. "Go to bed. No, no more water. Go to bed. No, you don't need to use the bathroom." The normal routine. And finally my wife and I are sitting in the kitchen and I remember we were in the old house on Red River and we hear him coming in after this long deal. And I looked at my wife and I said, "I'm going to kill him." He strolls in and he goes, with a little serious look on his face, and he goes, "I want to ask Jesus in my heart." And normally I would have said, "Yeah, that con job's not working tonight, buddy. Don't try that on the father." But we both knew. And sure enough he came to Christ. And the reason we know he came to Christ is because we had a son that always had a better idea than what we had and we were wrong at whatever we thought. And it was interesting, after he came to Christ, it was a couple weeks later, something happened and he walked up to his mother and he said, "I'm really sorry, and we're like "Oh my gosh, the Holy Spirit's in him." So I do believe, and I just want you to remember, He really does want your children saved more than you do. And let me tell you, the later they can be saved, the better. You get them saved really young, I think sometimes, it's difficult for them to process, and I think it really puts the onus on you that you've got to make sure, you have a kid saved anywhere from 7 to 9, when they get to be 14 or 15, the enemy's going to come along and really dog them. One of the things I do is I have their child write down the prayer and then we date it and laminate it.

Because the enemy's going to come along when they hit 15 or 16 and say, "How do you know what you prayed?" I don't remember what I prayed two weeks ago. I want them to be able to pull it out and say, "I was with my mom and dad. I prayed the right thing. I'm good to go." I want them to have faith because what I don't want is inevitably I hear this frequently, somebody will come in and say, "You know, I'm doubting my salvation." Then somebody will say, particularly to a teenager, "Hey, listen, let's just nail it down. Let's just go ahead and ask Him in right now." You don't want to do that. Because now he's going to spend the rest of his life doubting and asking and doubting and asking and doubting and asking. I don't want your kids running down that road. So we're going to settle it. I want the Holy Spirit to convict them. You're going to give them the truth. That's all they need to know.

Now inevitably people are terrified because they're afraid you're going to ask really hard questions. Let me give you a deal. Number one, you're going to have somebody say to you, Well there's all sorts of errors in the Bible. So I have the perfect answer. What you need to do is say to them when they say that, and do it gently and kindly, don't be obnoxious, but say, "So could you give me one?" Because they'll look at you and go, "Well, I, I, I just know." They don't have any idea what they're talking about. So when they give you the errors in the Bible thing, that's my first thing. Can you name one? What I'm going to work with you tonight, you are going to have some people object to things. You don't want to get into an argument ever. If you're arguing with somebody, that's not the conviction of the Holy Spirit. If they're convicted by the Holy Spirit, they want to know. So if they're arguing, they're probably not convicted. Don't argue with people! If they say, "I'm not a sinner." They're not ready. Don't try to convince them they are. So they're going to give you this stuff. They're going to say, "I don't believe the Bible's true." There's your answer.

They're going to say, "There are hypocrites." Now there's a great thing in John 2:23 – 25. I want you to listen to what the Bible says about Christ.

[23](#)Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. [24](#)But Jesus, on His part, (I love the Greek) did not believe in them, for He knew all men, [25](#)and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

When it says "He did not entrust Himself to them", both times, it's *pisteuo*,

There were people that said, "Yeah, I like the signs." But Jesus doesn't trust them. They're not legit. You're going to have people in the church that are not legit. When they say to you, "Well there are hypocrites in the church." Your response is going to be, "You bet there are." I might even say, "You know, I'm one." I don't always live out what I profess. And you want to say this kindly. You don't want to be an obnoxious jerk. You want to say this kindly, but I would say something like, "I'd rather live here temporarily with some hypocrites than live in hell with them eternally." And you want to say that gently because that can come across really obnoxious. So you want to be careful how you say it.

They're going to say to you, you may hear a theodicy question. This is one that people do use. And again, that is, it's a combination of two Greek words; justice and God. But they're going to

say, “The world’s bad. How can God be good when there’s so many bad things in the world?” They’re going to ask you that. I would take them to Psalm 56:8. You’re going to read them Revelation 21 – 22. You’re going to talk about the fact that the world is broken. You’re going to read them Genesis 3 and then you’re going to read them Revelation 21 and 22. If you get a chance where it’s a dialog here, they’re not arguing with you, they’re really asking, “I don’t understand. If the world’s so bad and God’s so good, why are things like it is?” You’re going to read them Genesis 3 and say, “Look we wiped it out.” (Revelation 21) But He’s going to fix it one day, but right now, it’s broken. You’re going to tell them the world’s broken. It’s not the way God made it. He’s going to fix it. And then you’re going to read this to them. It’s one of my favorite verses in the entire word of God. He says:

⁸You have kept count of my tossings; You put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?

They actually have unearthed, you can find them in Israel, they have unearthed bottles that really were tear bottles that the Jews used to remind them of what it was like in Egypt and that sort of thing. But it’s interesting to me because I love that verse because what it says is, and this is what you’re going to tell them. “Look we’re in a broken world. It’s shot. God’s going to fix it one day. But right now, even when you go through something bad, He’s capturing your tears and remembering them because He’s going to reward you one day for what you’re going through here. So even though things are bad, He’s still got this. And even in the middle of all this mess, He’s not only going to fix it, but He will not forget the things you’ve gone through in this world.” So it’s a great verse to use to say to them. And what you’re doing, anytime you’re answering an objection, you’re not arguing with them. You’re pulling them back to God. So when they says here, “Man the world’s really bad.” You’re going to go, “Yeah, He’s going to fix it and He remembers everything you’re going through. He doesn’t forget it. He’s going to bless you for it.” So you’re going to pull them right back to Jesus.

Then they’re going to argue with you about evolution. They’re going to say, “Well I think man just evolved.” Again, you’re not going to get into some scientific argument. When they do that to me, there are all sorts of things you can say. I don’t go there. What I do say to them is, “Look if we did evolve, there are only two ways we’re here. We are here so there are only two ways. Time and luck or there’s a creator. There isn’t anything else. Those are the only two ways we’re here. Time and luck or a Creator. If it’s time and luck, you have no purpose, you have no meaning, you have nothing coming to you when you die. If there’s a Creator, if that’s true, then I need to figure out what He wants from me so that I will be OK when I die. These are the only two ways. We are here, this is all. So you’re not going to argue about the anthropic principle or geology or any of those things. There are all sorts of books out there that handle that. You’re going to go here. “Look there are only two ways we’re here.” The only thing I would say to them is, Rushmore. I would say to them. The only thing I would say is, “Look when I see Mt. Rushmore, I’m pretty sure this didn’t create this.” You can sit a rock out for eternity, you’re not going to have four president’s heads on it. No matter how much time, this is not going to create this. And we are far more complex than Mt. Rushmore. So this has got to be true. So I do take them to a simple understand, and again, I’m not trying to argue with them about evolution. I’m pulling them back to the Creator. Always taking them back to Christ.

Now at the end of 1 Corinthians 5, he's talking about discipline in the church. And he makes the statement that we're responsible for judging those within the church, but we are not to judge those outside the church. One of the things when you're dealing with people that don't know Jesus Christ, is it's messy. And we're living in a day when people are messier than they've ever been. Virtually nobody's getting married any more. Virtually everybody is living together. I can't tell you how many couples come to us in the church and they're living together and it doesn't even bother them. And because in their mind, it's a brilliant move because they're checking to see if they can endure each other and then marry. The problem is, you're a man and a woman, unless you're in a homosexual relationship, you're a man and a woman. And it doesn't matter what woman or what man, it's the same. Women really are emotional. Men really are stupid. And it doesn't matter how long you live with each other. Those are true. The lost world is different than it was 40 years ago. So you're not going to pass judgment on them. They don't know Christ. I don't expect lost people to do what I do. They shouldn't. You're not worried about their lifestyle. You're not going to be judgmental about their lifestyle. IF they say to you, "You know I'm in a lesbian relationship." You don't care. It's not an issue for you. If God's put you in a place where they're under conviction, then your issue is to give them this. There are some things you can do if they begin to argue with you. And I'm telling you, you can tell if they're really arguing or if they're really asking a question. I mean, I've had some people that look at me and say, "You know, my three-year-old child died. How can you tell me God loves me?" Well it is hard. But I'm going to go back to, "Look the world's broken. He's got your tears in a bottle. And he'll reward you for that. So I am pulling them back to the Creator. You're not going to argue with them; you're going to pull them back to Christ.

I do think every one of us in this room has a responsibility to witness. I would say this to you, and this is a little bit brutal, but I would say this to you. So just take this in a kind way. If you're not discipling somebody, you're not obeying Christ and I think at least it takes, I think the last state was, it takes 37 Baptists to win one person to Christ in a year. That's not good. I would ask God to give me the wisdom not to share, but with whom to share that He's brought into my life. I would say, this is what I would do, now if you do this, it's going to happen, so you need to be prepared. But I would go home and I would say, "God, bring to my mind three people You've put in my life You want me to tell about You." And whatever names come to you, I would call them up, whatever point they are in life, whatever age they are, and I would say, "Can we go to lunch." And when you go to lunch, I would sit down with them and say, "Look I'm not going to preach to you, but I do want you to know I've met Jesus, He's changed my life, and here's what I discovered. He was in love with me even while I was a sinner. And He figured out, He set up a system where He could forgive me. And if I embrace that system, I'm going to be OK." I'd walk them through the simplicity of those four things. And then because the Holy Spirit is going to do the convicting, you're going to let God handle that. You're not going to argue with them. If they get mad at you, that's not your problem. They're not mad at you; you're just the messenger. Because you're going to do this kindly and gently. I mean I grew up in the old Baptist days of two week revivals. And we've had these nut cases come in and I mean screaming and hollering at us. I remember this, it's a terrible story, but it's a true story. This evangelist, those guys are nuts, by the way. So this evangelist is running around the town witnessing to people. And he runs into a guy, he doesn't know, but the guy's got some mental issues. And he just smiles all the time and he doesn't really know what's going on. The evangelist doesn't know that. So the evangelist starts popping him about Jesus and finally, of course the kid is not responding, and finally the evangelist gets mad.

He looks at him and he says, "Let me tell you something boy, five minutes in hell will wipe that grin off your face." That's old witnessing. We used to really be strong on busting their chops on sin. Joel busts them here, but he doesn't bust them at all. You've got to sit down with your people and lovingly share the truth. And when you do that, I always struggle with this part, if you ever deal with guys and women that are salesmen, one of the things they're taught is you close the sale. I've never liked that. I generally look at somebody when I finish sharing in my office, if they do come in that way, and I say, "Look I don't want you to do this because of me. You go home and tonight, if you're ready, you pray and ask Christ in your heart." I rarely lead somebody to Christ in my office unless they ask me to. I generally don't because I want it to be their decision. So I'm probably, and it may be bad on my part, I probably real careful, but I'm not a close the sale kind of guy. I really believe if the Holy Spirit's convicting them, they'll respond. I just tell them how to do it and what to do. And I would have, on hand, Kathy does a great job. When she goes to a restaurant, she has tracts. She always leaves them for the water, which is really good. If you do that you've got to tip. So you want to do two things. You want to tip them and be nice. You can't be a jerk to them and say, "Man this meal is horrible! But Jesus loves you." You can't do that. So you've got to be nice to them. You want to tip them. But I don't think that's a bad thing to do at all. And I might even add one caveat. Now be careful about this. But I would put down, even if you want to, put our church name and phone number down. I don't necessarily think you want to put your cell phone down, because you never know what you're dealing with. But I do think you could put the church's name down and say, "Listen you've got any questions, there's people here at the church. You call and they will answer any questions that you've got." And if you want to get in contact with me, they'll have me call you." Because I don't like the idea of leaving your cell phone with someone you don't know. So there are opportunities out there.

Questions

Q. What's a good current tract to use? Some of them are so outdated.

A. Yeah, I don't know a good one yet. I've got a couple in my office. I still use the four spiritual laws. The old Billy Graham thing. I don't use the Campus Crusade ones because the Campus Crusade one used to have a picture of your life, everything's in disarray, when the cross is out here. And when the cross comes in, everything's fixed. I don't like that because it's like I'm coming to Jesus so everything in my life will be OK. I want them to come to Christ because they've rebelled against the Creator. But the Four Spiritual Laws is still good. It's real simple. Real clear. And I'm telling you, offering them a chance to respond is critical. Did I tell you about Joel Osteen's Easter sermon a couple years ago? Did I tell y'all about that? I was stunned. It was so good. I'm telling you it's one of the best Easter sermons I've ever heard. He stood up and he addressed the difference between the blood of bulls and goats and the blood of Jesus. And I'm listening to this and literally, I'm mesmerized. And I'm thinking, "This is great!" And all my feelings are dissipating. I'm thinking, "Wow!" Got to the end, full arena, right. It's Easter. Got to the end and here's what he did. It was subtle, but here's what he did. He got to the end and he said, "So the blood of Jesus does for us what the blood of bulls and goats don't." And then he stepped forward and he said, "You all have that." So what he just said to all the lost people in that congregation is, "Because you're here today, you have the blood of Jesus." You

can't ever do that. At some point you've got to say to these people, "You need to make a response to what you feel in your heart is true or not true."

Q. I think we should make a tract.

A. You know, Tina, that's not a bad idea. I'll have Sherry get right on that. That's really not a bad idea actually. I hate to admit that, but I think that's great.

Q. I struggle with this. I have so many people in my life that say they're Christians, but they don't walk as Christians. How do you approach that because every time you go to them they're like, "Yes. Yes. Yes." But you know from no fruit and years and years of being with them.

A. I tell you we all deal with that. You're exactly right. Tammy's question is what do you do with people who profess Christ but clearly they're not living it. It's a struggle for me because I think there are a couple kinds of people. There's some people that really are struggling in their sin and they just don't know what to do. There's some other people that really don't know what's right and wrong. I mean, seriously, we have Christians now, I'm really serious, that really believe they're moral because they're living together. Because their argument is, "I'm going to see if this works because I don't want to sin and get divorced. So we'll live together so that we know whether or not we can live out God's commandment." So there really are people that are just skewed, and that's one other reason why they're doing what they're doing. And then there are other people that clearly say they're Christian and there's nothing in their life that even comes close to validating it. I would, if I were you, and you have this ability, I would gently pull out the section in James where it says,

Faith without works is dead.

It talks about, particularly where it says the demons believe and they tremble. But obviously they're not saved. I would read them James 2:14 – 26. I would give that to them and say, "Look there's got to be an alteration in your life or you really don't know Jesus." And I would let them know that. For example, it says in verse 19:

¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well; even the demons believe, and shudder.

I'd read them that. I would give them that and say, "Look I love you. I'm not judging you. But you say you're a believer. Read this and think about where you are." Because the Bible says judge whether or not you're in the faith. So I would read them that. I wouldn't read them that. I would give them that and say, "You need to go home and look at this and process your own life." Because we all do that. I deal with it all the time in the office. It's a difficult thing.

Q. Now what are you telling these couples that are living together.

A. We've wrestled with that for a long time. Because if they're coming in for counseling, I certainly don't have any problem with counseling them. We pretty much have a policy now where, depending on where they are in their walk, if they've been Christians 20 years and they're living together, we won't marry them. If they're brand new people, and they're just struggling, they don't really get it, we will marry them, but we do counsel them. I have had a number of couples, one couple as a matter of fact that I married, they're now living in California, they came in they sat down in my office, they're living together and I said, "Look this isn't what God wants for you." And the little girl teared up and she said, "We know that." So they separated and he went somewhere else. And I've had more than one couple do that. It's odd. I probably had the same number of couples do that as I've had not do that. So I think, again, it depends on where they are in their walk. There are some couples that go, "Man I need to get serious about Jesus." Some couples that don't care. But I think that's one thing we clearly do. And we want to do everything we can, particularly in counseling, to pull them into Jesus. So we do everything we can. The problem is today; I mean the church is a hospital. It's going to be messy with certain people and so it's difficult. And I struggle with people living together. But that's this generation's probably most glaring sin other than homosexuality.

Q. When I go to the Bible, people's respond, "How do you Christians say that this is true and valid any more than any other book?"

A. I forgot one thing. That's a great point. Again, you're not going to argue with them. If they don't accept it, then you can't go anywhere.

Q. But I had one girl specifically, she was genuinely asking, "How do you know this is true?"

A. Because it claims in itself that it is true, Isaiah 48. The word of God endures forever. But again, I'm not going to argue with them because that's the only basis you've got. I forgot to mention one thing to you. John 5:22 – 23 and of course, John 14, Jesus claims to be God. People are going to say to you, "Well I believe Jesus was just a good man." Here's the best response to that. "He thought He was God so He can't just be a good man. He either is God or He was an idiot." You can't go in the middle option if He was a good guy. That doesn't play with Him saying He was God. If He didn't say He was God, then maybe He is just a good man. But He said He was God. So He's either a liar or He is God. So I don't let them say to me, "I just think Jesus is a good man." My response is, "No, He's not. He's either a liar which would make Him a bad man, or He's who He claimed He was." So I walk from that. And that's probably one of the other things. But you can't argue with them about scripture. I can't prove the Bible's true.

Q. So having an adult friend that grew up in the church, but cannot remember or pinpoint a specific time that they actually asked Jesus into their heart, but they believe all the things that we've gone through.

A. I do think some people come to Christ in a process. I don't really remember, I remember seeing Billy Graham and this is what's fuzzy to me. We moved right after I got saved, I think, from Louisiana to Alabama. So I remember asking Christ into my heart, going back to my bedroom, I distinctly asking Christ in. But if you ask me exactly what day, what time, I think I was in Louisiana, I made it public in Alabama. That's kind of the quickness of it. I don't care if somebody doesn't remember a date or day. I just want somebody to remember some point at which they knew they weren't and knew they were. That's all I want to know. I think some people come in a process where all of a sudden they just, "Hey, I do believe this. I accept this."

Q. The comment to me was, "I do believe all of this, but I don't remember there ever being a time that I actually said.

A. The bottom line is the Bible doesn't say anything about a time. It really does indicate, (1 John 5) I've written these things to those who believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know you have eternal life. So I think it's between them and Christ what they believe and where they are. I do say to people, "Look I do think there needs to be some time where you weren't and where you are. But that's all I say. I can't fix those things.

Q. OK, Chris, when dealing with elderly, when they're really, really old and in a nursing home or about to go into a nursing home, how do you feel about, and they're really sick, going in through the back end. Like here's what will happen when you die.

A. It's weird you ask that question because I have a seven o'clock breakfast meeting with a young pre-marital couple. Then night before I get a text from a guy in the church, he said, "My father-in-law's dying and he told me the other day, 'I don't think God wants me.'" And he said, "I don't know how to respond to that." So we met at 6 A.M. before I met with this couple. I said, "Look use this as your segue. Go home and say, "God wants you, but He can't have you because you don't know Christ." Walk him through and see where this goes. And he texted me back and said, "Hey, man, I went and talked to my Father-In-Law, walked through what you said, he asked Christ into his heart." Sometimes people realize "I'm heading over the threshold." It's interesting how many deathbed confessions are there in the Bible? One. The thief on the cross. So you have one. So it can happen, but you have one because it's not likely. The other difficulty is when they get to this place today, they're generally drugged up so much they don't know what they're thinking or where they are. So it's a difficult thing today, but this guy just yesterday led his father-in-law to Christ.

Q. Chris, isn't it important that when we're walking people through this and they do get to the point that they want pray the prayer, that we make sure that they know that they need to not just say I believe?

A. I don't think so because if the Holy Spirit's convicting them, they'll feel that. I used to think that. I used to think you've got to preach Lordship. You've got to tell them He's got to be Lord or you're not going to be saved. But I realized one day, if the Holy Spirit is telling me I'm bad, Jesus is good, and He's my only shot, if I realize my sin is wrong and put Him on the cross, when I get under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, I will want what put Him on the cross gone. I will want what He did that got Him on the cross in my life. And that's ultimately repentance and Lordship right there. And so if the Holy Spirit's convicting, belief's an automatic response. Romans says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. That's an incorrect translation. The Greek says, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word about Christ. Which is a huge distinction because what it says is, when I bring the message of Christ to somebody and the Holy Spirit convicts, He installs faith in their life. I don't have to tell them about it. He makes the installation. So it's automatic. So I don't try to argue them to say, "You've got to really believe this." I let the Holy Spirit handle that.

Q. What can you do when you have a friend who was raised in the Catholic church and you've talked to them and asked them what their view is as far as Jesus Christ being the way to heaven, and they are kind of iffy on that because they have been taught good works. I don't know how to approach that when you don't want to be a jerk. And she's really smart about stuff, and I know that they have been taught to back what they believe.

A. I would do two things with her. And, again, I'd do it in a dialog, not a preaching moment. I would sit down with her and I'd read her Ephesians 2:8 – 10. Baptist verse. Salvation's the grace of God through Jesus Christ, not of works. Lest any man should boast. So I'd read her that clearly. The other thing I would do to her, and this is, here are the three distinctives between us and Catholics that are critical. Number 1 – out authority is scripture alone. Theirs is the Pope ex cathedra, when he speaks from the throne, they the early church fathers, they have the priest, and they have the Bible with additional books we don't have. Second thing is, and these are the two critical ones. If you ask her, "Do you believe the blood of Jesus pays for your sins?" She'll probably say, "Absolutely." But the huge distinction is they believe the blood of Jesus is placed in their life by the mass. That's why you have the mass at birth. That's why you have the mass at death. That's why you have the mass at a wedding. That's why you have the mass every Sunday. The priest turns the wafer and the wine into the body and blood of Jesus. He literally does that so that I embrace that through the mass. I would say to them that what the Bible teaches is that it doesn't come through a man. There's one mediator between man and God, the man, Christ Jesus. And I would say to them, "I'm not saved by what your priest does for me. I'm saved when the Holy Spirit speaks to me and I put my faith in what He tells me about Jesus. It's a personal response, not the priest giving me the blood, but Jesus giving me the blood Himself. The third thing is that is critical which is always difficult, the Bible talks about two things, right, the kingdom of God and the church. They're not the same thing in scripture. The church is where the kingdom of God people meet, but there are other people

not in the kingdom that meet in the church. But everybody that's a believer is automatically in the kingdom. They equate the two which is brilliant. Because if the church is the kingdom, I can't leave the church. Which is why you have Catholics listen to us on TV, but they're never coming here because they'd be leaving the kingdom. It's brilliant. So you have three key components I think. You have authority you have to wrestle with. You have the kingdom and the church together. But the real issue is how the blood of Jesus is given to me. And that's where I would walk her through.

Q. So after you go through these four things and they decide, yes, how do you disciple them after that?

A. That's a good point. You take what I taught you here and you run them through it. Seriously. I think, if they do come to Christ on your watch, then God gave them to you to disciple. And I'd take them to this material. I'd walk them through. It's interesting, Jesus says, "Baptize them." In other words, I would say two things to them. I would say, "Look if you're really saved, you need to tell people in your family you're saved." We've made baptism a private celebration instead of a public confession. We've got people coming in, nobody in their family knows they're saved, but we know. So I would make them go home and share that with everybody in their family. The second thing I would do is, Jesus says, "Teach them the things I've taught you." And I would just walk them through the scriptural teaching. I would sit down and lovingly say, "Let's see what the Bible says." Because if they come to Christ, they want to know. I think the hungriest I'd ever been was right after I got saved listening to Billy Graham. I wrote him and I said, "I've been saved." They started sending me, I mean I'm in Junior High School, they starting sending me material that I would read the scripture and answer questions. I did like six books. I'd fire them off. I mean I was crazy. I know they were going, "Dang this kid hadn't read anything. He's just writing stuff down." I mean I was pumped. So right after they're saved is the best time for discipleship because they're ready.

Q. I used to do the Billy Graham phone center and I would tell people to read certain scriptures, like certain books of the Bible to start with. What are your suggestions?

A. That's a real good question, because a lot of people go, "What do we do with the book?" We start from beginning to end. Genesis is OK. Exodus is OK. Leviticus and Numbers; they're done. Do not lie with a dog like you do with a person. They're going to go, "Oh my gosh what in the world is going on here?" So they're out of there, man. I would make them read the gospel of Mark. It's very short. It gives them a clear understanding of Christ. I might move them into John. I'd have them read Colossians, Ephesians. What is the old thing: General Electric Power Company. I'd have them read Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Those are four good books. They're simple. They're pretty easy to understand. Colossians, for example, has the greatest Christological passage in the entire New Testament. So they get a real good picture of Christ. And I would do everything I could to be in their life while they're doing it.