

Soul Winning By James Moriello

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at Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI*

“He who wins souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30b, NKJV)

The salvation of souls is God’s work, and His alone. However, He calls Christian men and Christian women everywhere to participate in His work. The command to preach the gospel is a universal one: *“Go, therefore and make disciples”* (Matthew 28:19). Nobody can be a disciple without first becoming a Christian. *“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Corinthians 2:14). A second birth—a spiritual birth—is required. *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3). A clear presentation of the gospel is necessary in order that the weak and weary sinner might understand the grace and hope that the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone can bring. *“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher”* (Romans 10:14)? And here is the gospel: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). The facts which must be believed are presented concisely by the Apostle Paul: *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

There are four main points which we will bring out that speak to why soul winning is wise. First, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because many souls are lost and it is a needful ministry. Second, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because it is every believer’s responsibility. Third, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because it strengthens one’s own faith. Fourth, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because the soul winner stores up treasures in heaven. Finally, we will define various categories of sinners, and offer practical instruction for winning each kind.

First, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because many souls are lost and it is a needful ministry. The Lord Jesus counsels sinners to *“enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it”* (Matthew 7:13). *“The harvest (of souls) truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few”* (Matthew 9:37). In other words, the number of needy souls far exceeds the number of those who are willing to work to meet the need. Are you a Christian looking to be of use to the Master? Are you unsure of how to serve He who paid so great a price for the redemption of your soul? Heed then the counsel of Solomon. *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might”* (Ecclesiastes 9:10a). As

long as there are unsaved souls in your family, neighborhood, and workplace, a need exists right now, right where you are. There are sinners all around each of us who need the Savior.

Second, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because it is every believer’s responsibility. We said in the opening that soul winning is part of the Great Commission. For too many professing Christians, there is a ‘Great Omission’ with regard to evangelism and discipleship. The Lord holds us accountable not only for sins of commission (anger, lust, and the like), but also for our sins of omission. If we saw a man in a burning building, would we not rescue him if we were able to do so? Why then will we not rescue the same man who is facing an eternity apart from God, being scorched by the flames of hellfire?! Heed the divine command. *“Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this’, Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds”* (Proverbs 24:11-12)? The Apostle Paul was a faithful steward of the Gospel of God. Heed his inspired words. *“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel”* (1 Corinthians 9:16)! Notice that for Paul, proclaiming the gospel was not optional. And he backed up his talk by walking the walk.

Third, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because it strengthens his own faith. God gives us commands for our own spiritual benefit. Our faith is strengthened as we obey the Lord, and see Him work through us (redeemed sinners) to minister hope to lost sinners. Those who take seriously the call of God to be light bearers are of necessity much in prayer and much in the Bible. Soul winning is spiritual work, and we must be connected to the vine which is Christ if we expect to be successful in the work. Jesus said, *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5). Soul winning is spiritual work which engages the heart and the mind. This being so, Christian worker, you are called to *“be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). As we continually pray and spend time in the Scriptures each and every day, our faith is strengthened and we bear spiritual fruit unto the Lord. What a great and glorious thing it is to rejoice with the angels of heaven when we see lost men and women coming to Christ because we were faithful to God’s charge (Luke 15:7)! Now a word to the discouraged soul winner: *“the testing of your faith produces patience”* (James 1:3). There will be times, even seasons, when you are faithful but the gospel falls on deaf ears and hardened hearts. It is the will of God that we learn patience through such experiences. Persevere through those times in prayer, and continue to share the hope that is in you, knowing that the work is ultimately the Lord’s and not your own.

Fourth, *“he who wins souls is wise”* because the soul winner stores up treasures in heaven. *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and*

where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). Alfred P. Gibbs, in his book 'Personal Evangelism', poses this question: "Suppose you were offered \$1,000.00 for every soul you earnestly sought to win for Christ. Would you, for this reward, seek to win more souls for Christ than you are doing right now? If so, your love for money is greater than your love for Christ or your fellow man." The greatest treasures are heavenly ones. Salvation is a treasure of eternal value (John 3:16). Every soul that makes it to heaven because we are the mouthpieces of God is a heavenly treasure. What are your priorities and perspectives, and are they in need of rearrangement?

Finally, we will define various categories of sinners, and offer practical instruction for winning each kind. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is meant to provide general aid to the soul winner. Notice the difficulties presented in each case. Occasionally, the Lord will send a ready hearer with an open heart to receive the gospel, but this usually is not so.

1. Mr. Careless: This sinner is living life as if God does not exist, without a care in the world with regard to spiritual things. In most cases, this person is not averse to God. The challenge is to awaken this sinner to the danger of neglecting spiritual truth. Scriptures to use: *Proverbs 27:1; Mark 8:36; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:15*
2. Ms. Skeptic: This sinner is usually awakened to his or her spiritual need. Many are legitimately skeptical because of upbringing, background, or lack of understanding of the Christian faith. Gracefully and patiently answer and show this person in the Bible the answers to his or her questions. Scriptures to use: *John 3:3; Romans 3:10-23, 6:23, 10:13; Hebrews 7:25*
3. Mr. Smokescreen: This sinner is using skepticism as a smokescreen to evade accountability to God. These often consider themselves atheists or agnostics. These sinners will continually raise objections to Christian truth at every turn, and the soul winner should seek to meet these objections, which are really excuses, with Scripture based responses. Keep bringing the discussion back to the gospel, with emphasis on its objective truth and its claims on the individual. As a baseline, seek an agreement for both parties to be perfectly honest in discussion. Scriptures to use: *Isaiah 1:18; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23; Galatians 6:7; James 2:10*
4. Ms. Deceived: This sinner has misconceptions about the gospel and the Christian faith. Be aware that for many, these false beliefs are sincerely held and deeply rooted, and Ms. Deceived is often deeply 'religious'. Be patient in pointing out the errors, making it a point not to 'attack the person'. Do it by showing this person where Scripture speaks on

a matter, for often this person has a high view of God's written revelation. Scriptures to use: General (*Isaiah 8:20; John 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16*), To those who have been taught that salvation can be lost (*John 6:37, 10:28; Ephesians 1:13*), Roman Catholics who are often confused about the role of works in salvation and the role of Mary (*Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 10:10-12*), Oneness Pentecostal Cult and other Charismatic groups which deny the Trinity and/or teach that speaking in tongues is required evidence of salvation—which is a false gospel (*Matthew 3:16-17; John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:30, 13; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5; Revelation 22:18-19*), Jehovah's Witnesses which deny the deity of Jesus Christ (*John 1:1-3, 8:58, 10:30*).

There was a king in ancient Israel named Solomon. He is famous for asking for wisdom, and *"the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing"* (1 Kings 3:10). Do you wish to please the Lord, dear Christian friend? If so, I encourage you to seek wisdom and do wise things. Here is a place to start, for the Scripture says that *"he who wins souls is wise"*.