

Witness-1

When you limit yourself only to the human perspective of God's salvation offer, it's a miracle that anyone ever receives Christ. Even with the Holy Spirit's direct involvement, very few find the narrow way, much less walk it.

The preaching or teaching about a crucified Christ is a stumbling block to those who require miraculous signs. And it is foolishness to those who look for worldly wisdom. In general, people are easily disconcerted by Jesus. Many go so far as to despise him.

Those who think of themselves as being superior intellectuals are most likely to be offended by Jesus Christ. That may be why Jesus personally addressed this dilemma. Apostle Paul assures us he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and he encourages Timothy not to be ashamed.

What is needed for us to work well with this stumbling block, this offensive rock?

A good dose of genuine humility is essential. We need to swallow our sophisticated pride and exercise a lot of childlike faith...trust... confidence in God.

And, we should never forget that the foolishness of God is wiser than the best of man's wisdom. While the gospel appears to be weak to the unrepentant, it is the power of God to those who believe.

What is so encouraging and reassuring to us is that the Holy Spirit works with us as we endeavor to share our faith with the unsaved. He works with us and he works with those lost individuals we are trying to reach. He is the invisible divine person who brings a saved person and an unsaved person together. As foolish and scandalous as it seems on the surface, we have the privilege of sharing God's good news with spiritually hungry persons. The Holy Spirit should be very much involved – both with you and with the person you are striving to win.

And we can be more helpful to God's Spirit if we have an understanding not only of divine nature but also human nature.

Here are seven ideas to help us work better with both the Holy Spirit and with those to whom we are witnessing.

One. Work closely with the Holy Spirit in regard to bringing individuals to Christ. Without his participation, you will not be able to bring anyone to a born-again experience.

Two. Don't be intimidated by so-called intellectuals. An intellectual is a thinker who thinks he has thought of "everything." You don't have to know everything about everything to have a rational discussion with him. You need only to ask good questions. The Holy Spirit will give you insight as to what kind of questions to ask. God knows everything and yet he asks a lot of questions.

It's better that an intellectual talks himself into a corner and uncovers his own limitations, than for you to expose his empty arguments or erroneous beliefs. With Spirit-prompted questions you will be able to take your co-conversationalist into areas where he has never been or dared to go. Your questions will force him to analyze his convictions more

honestly and thoroughly. You will make him see his theories for what they really are – groundless and useless.

Three. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the “key” to an individual’s heart. Each person is unique in personality, experience, education, culture, philosophy of life. The same approach does not work for everybody. We can learn from how Jesus introduced the truth of salvation to various individuals: Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Zacchaeus. Keep in mind that even though the Lord has a key to everyone’s heart, the person can still keep the door locked from the inside.

Four. Give the prospective believer time and space to think about the claims of Christ. You know from experience the value and urgency of salvation but, to the unsaved, all of this could be very new and even foreign. You can depend on the Holy Spirit to show you when you should back off or come on strong. Keep in mind that Satan does not surrender souls willingly or easily.

Five. If possible, first become a friend. A friend is usually believed and trusted more easily than a stranger.

Six. It helps people to accept the gospel if they can see it in action, see it lived out before their eyes. We are to be salt – not just dispensers of it.

And Seven. I should take *God* seriously, take his *word* seriously, take his *people* seriously and take his *work* seriously. But, I should not take *myself* too seriously – as though I am indispensable, as though everything depends on me. ◇◇◇