

# Soul Winning: The Christian's Business

by

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## Chapter Thirteen Your Jerusalem

Mrs. Smith went to her pastor distressed because her husband would not go to church with her. The pastor agreed to talk to her husband. He went to the home, and gradually worked the conversation around to where he could speak to Mr. Smith about his relationship to CHRIST. Smith turned his head toward the kitchen where his wife was and then turned back to the pastor. He shook his head sadly and a voice that was both kind and determined, said, "There isn't room in this house for two of us like her."

Then he went on to explain that his wife nagged him about a thousand things that seemed petty to him.

The minister could say no more. The wife had closed the door by her actions. When, a few days later, the wife came to the pastor's study to inquire about the result of his conversation with her husband, he told her the truth. The color drained from her face and she admitted, "He is right. I have not been kind in speech and action to my husband. I love him, but I have allowed some of the things he does to annoy me. But the day will come when you can speak to my husband about his soul and I won't be a stumbling block."

She kept her word. A few days later her husband broke her favorite vase. Carefully and quietly she picked up the pieces. Surprised, the husband asked, "Aren't you going to bawl me out?"

"No," she replied and explained that she meant to live more Christ-like in the home. It was but a matter of months before her husband received CHRIST as his Saviour and the home was united. Winning your own is your first responsibility. The Lord gave the divine order when He said, "**Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea . . .**" (Acts 1:8).

Jerusalem, the disciples' hometown, came first. And your family, your in-laws, should come first.

Often, they are the hardest to win. "**A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house**" (Matthew 13:57). They know you too well to be impressed by your

preaching. You have to win them by your living.

Rod is a young people's worker in the church, but he has never been a testimony to his in-laws. He is thoughtless. He will walk by an empty garbage pail on the curb a thousand times and not think to carry it to the house. But his unsaved brother-in-law is thoughtful and in the eyes of the in-laws more of a Christian than Rod. Rod cannot see the importance of cultivating thoughtfulness of others. But until he does he will not win his in-laws.

The most trying in-law to win is the unbelieving husband.

The woman married to one really has to learn to "**mortify the deeds of the body**" (Romans 8:13). She has to live up to her husband's standard of a Christian and they are usually high. The Apostle Peter, a married man who knew the problems of the home, wrote, "**Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [behaviour] of the wives**" (I Peter 3:1). It may take years of patient living, but GOD will honor His Word.

My own husband was not a professing Christian when we were married. He came from a Baptist home but he drifted into the ways of the world. I know that in my zeal I made many mistakes in trying to persuade him to attend church with me. He went reluctantly one day as I was praying for the souls of others. The thought came to me that my first responsibility was winning my own husband.

I took as my prayer promise, "**Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full**" (John 16:24).

I felt that nothing I had asked in the past was as anything compared to the eternal salvation of my husband. So I prayed on that ground. To me, who loved him, the answer seemed slow in coming.

At first he began going to church with me. Next he was willing to say grace at meals. Then we began having daily devotions. Finally, he was baptized. Being too close to him myself to trust myself to talk to him about his salvation, I have had several minister friends discuss his spiritual state with him. All have told me that he is without a doubt a Christian man. You may wonder why I have been so slow to believe. But he is a man of few words and I love him too deeply to have him merely go through any form to please me. I had to know. After twenty-seven and one-half years of married life, and now a widow, I rest in the knowledge that he was a Christian, that to him "**absent from the body**" means "**to be present with the Lord**" (II Corinthians 5:8).

"Oh, I'm sorry, I can't come. We've a new baby at our house, and you know how much time one takes," is an excuse frequently given and readily accepted.

The same mother-responsibility will have to be taken by the sincere, successful soul-winner. A new baby takes time. Winning souls is not a baby-sitting job where you are called for a few hours, but is equivalent to the job of parenthood.

A "born again" Christian is born through travail of soul, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "**My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you**" (Galatians 4:19).

Once he is born again, it takes time to watch over the young Christian's growth. At times a spiritual mother will grieve over her child's failure, but she will stand by her young one in CHRIST.

Stand by to encourage. Receiving CHRIST as Saviour is but the beginning of the Christian life. The way is long, and GOD has made provision for the way.

The first thing you must do is encourage the Christian to be baptized, following the Lord's instruction, "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16). (It is true that the verse continues "**but he that believeth not shall be damned.**" Only lack of belief damns.) The Lord however does expect that the one who believes in Him will be baptized.

Also, you should encourage him to join a Bible-believing church.

Many people belittle the church because it is not perfect. There are both ministers and church members who have obvious faults. Nevertheless, the visible church is one of the means GOD uses to help Christians "**grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour**" (II Peter 3:18).

Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews admonishes, "**Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**" (Hebrews 10:25).

Stand by to comfort. When a young baby cries in fright, a mother picks him up to comfort him. There will be times when the newly-born Christian will cry, not necessarily audibly, but in heart-doubt: "Am or am I not a Christian?" He will insist that he does not feel like a Christian. Feeling, fortunately, is not the test of faith. It is true that there are times of ecstasy of the spirit, when a person feels the nearest to GOD. But there are also dry spells when all the Christian can do is plod on.

When a young convert comes to one of these spells, his spiritual parent, or adviser, should remind him that it is the set of the heart, not the emotional up and down, which counts. The Lord made this plain when He said, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**" (John 5: 24).

It is his believing that counts. The belief which is belief unto everlasting life, is of the heart. The Christian may not, and probably does not understand all the mysteries of CHRIST, but in his heart he trusts the Lord JESUS to save him. As the dictionary says, "*Belief, n. faith, confidence; trust.*" It also adds "Belief and faith, though often used interchangeable, are not quite parallel, for belief may or may not imply certitude in one who assents and faith, in its older religious and Scriptural sense, always does even when there is no evidence of proof" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*).

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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