

*The Urgency of the
Great Commission*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Before He ascended into heaven, the Lord Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20a).

The job you perform every day is your occupation—whether it is housekeeping, road construction, or corporate management. But every born-again Christian has also been called to a vocation, which is to win the souls of men to Jesus Christ. We go, we win souls, we invest in their lives and make disciples of men and women, boys and girls. This is our eternal purpose on earth.

All souls belong to God. The soul that refuses to accept Christ shall die, but the soul that is justified by God will surely live (Ezekiel 18:4-9). “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). It is

vital that we understand this principle. Before salvation, we have everlasting life—created life that has a beginning but no ending. Since sin entered the world, we were destined to remain in hell for eternity after our bodies die.

When we accept Christ as our personal Savior, however, we receive God's eternal life—new life that has no beginning and no ending. Instantly, we are seated above in our spiritual position (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 1:13), having all the rights to our heavenly inheritance on earth, until we go home to be with our Father in heaven forever.

This booklet will reveal the value of a soul, the value of being a soul winner, the importance of redeeming the time, and what this means for all of eternity.

Chapter One
BUILDINGS THAT STAND
THE TEST

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

“Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:35-38).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest:

for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

No other foundation has been laid but Jesus Christ. How Christians build upon that foundation will be examined at the Bema Seat of Christ in heaven, where God will evaluate the life of every saved believer.

Gold speaks of a believer in whom Christ is able to reproduce His nature. This believer reveals a divine predisposition, having Christ's temperament through the incorruptible seed.

Building with silver speaks of redeeming the time (Ephesians 5:16) through the Word of God. We are to have a prayer life and a schedule where we determine on purpose to bring God's redemption to people and situations through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

"...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). All things

have to be reconciled unto Christ who reconciled us unto Himself and has given us a ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, we purpose in our hearts to redeem the time with our thoughts and our words, everywhere we go (Daniel 1:8).

Maybe we will not have an opportunity to openly share the gospel of Christ, but we can reveal the gold of His divine nature as we redeem the time.

The Value of a Precious Stone

To build with precious stones is to disciple a new believer, teaching him to live according to his true value and true honor as a Christian. It is to operate under the principle of Matthew 28:18-20, going into all the world and teaching men and women to live unto God.

A precious stone is a person who is developing his true value as a Christian by living as one who is a new creation in Christ. Our rewards—which include gold and silver as well as precious stones—are eternal decorations that shall last for ever and ever. All the wealth in the world does not compare to the treasures being stored up for us in heaven.

Natalie grew up as the daughter of a very wealthy man. She had it all. “Anything I saw, I

could have, and I was always given anything I wanted,” she said. “I was just so empty. When I left all of that, I realized how lost I was.” Her testimony today is that she was lost and now she is found.

“The important thing is that someone sought me out. My aunt and my mom saw that even though I had everything, something was missing. They cared for my soul. They knew that those things weren’t going to work for me for the rest of my life.”

“God sought me out through everything I went through,” she said. “I don’t think I appreciated what I had until I left it all. But when I had nothing, I realized how lost I was—and that I was just as lost as when I had everything.”

Natalie’s life has completely changed. She can still have anything she wants, but her values are different now. A changed life is the most beautiful treasure in the world.

Materials That Burn Away

On the other hand, there is the wood, the hay, and the stubble.

“Wood” refers to something that produces energy. It isn’t an eternal production such as gold, but it does have value as it relates to our

humanity.

Wood, however, in terms of a Christian's life, is something that doesn't last. Even though a person may believe in the Cross, wood represents the energy of human good, the energy of the flesh without the Cross.

"Hay" speaks of the fruit of a Christian who lives in circumstantial moods—how he feels. He experiences life through his feelings. But like hay, the feelings burn up very quickly. There is fire, some energy is produced, and then it is all gone.

"Stubble" speaks of one who is a hearer of the Word of God but not a doer (James 1:22-23). He hears the Word, but he does not practice it. This person is saved, but the Word he receives is aborted before it ever produces fruit. Therefore, the production of his life in terms of eternity is worthless, like stubble.

The Bible commands us to be soul winners. Five times before He left this earth, Jesus commanded that we seek the lost. If these verses are received by one whose reward is stubble, he won't change when he hears them. That person will offer excuses and rationalize away the Great Commission.

Chapter Two

A HARVEST SO READY

Consider the life of Christ and what He did while He was here.

In Luke 8:1, He entered into cities and villages with the twelve. In Luke 9:6, He entered into towns. The disciples entered into villages (Acts 8:25). Philip ministered in cities (Acts 8:40).

Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That says "every creature." Why would God say "be witnesses to every creature?" That is because every creature without Christ is lost, and Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

Jesus always saw people. In John 3, it was Nicodemus. In John 4, it was the woman at the well. In John 5, it was the man who hadn't walked in thirty-five years. In John 9, it was the man who was blind. In Luke 8:2, it was a woman who had seven demons. Every one of those peo-

ple was lost.

Jesus always sought out individuals, and He always proclaimed to them the Kingdom of God.

The Faint and the Scattered

Matthew 9:35-38 tells us that Jesus went into every city, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Kingdom of God, and healing every sickness and disease. It says that He saw the multitude and was moved with compassion because they fainted and were scattered as sheep without a shepherd.

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).

The laborers are still few, and people are fainting.

Jay came to Christ many years ago, but according to his testimony, he came on his own terms—“playing the odds” to guarantee a way into heaven. Soon after, he fell back into more than twenty years of drug and alcohol abuse. All of that changed when he responded to an invitation from his sister to see an Easter play at our church.

“God touched my heart to the point where, while sitting in that seat, I made a decision to listen to the Word of God. The miracles God has performed in my life are too numerous to mention. He has totally changed me. Now, instead of looking for what I can do for myself, I look for what I can do for God. And in turn, He does everything for me.

“I realize that my life on earth is to communicate the Word of God with others. That’s why in the Bible, He told us to go. That’s what I try to do every day of my life now. I have tremendous joy and tremendous peace knowing that I am doing God’s will. My life is full, happy, and joyous because of it.”

Bill was a professional musician who spent years in a lifestyle that left him bankrupt, emotionally and spiritually, until he was left crying out to God for direction.

Someone invited him to church, and by hearing the Word of God and becoming hid in the Body of Christ, his whole life changed. “I enrolled in Bible college, and now I find myself thinking with God more and more,” he said. “It’s amazing how God works through people to bring us around. He cares for our souls. He sends people to minister to us. Without certain

people coming to me and spending time with me, personally investing in my life, I wouldn't be where I am today. It is just so exciting for me to be involved in the work of God."

People come to Christ in so many different ways. Scores of them had everything, and scores of them had nothing. But each and every one had one need—to be saved.

Elizabeth, by her own testimony, was "on the fast track, in the jet set"—a young executive who achieved much success by the age of twenty-three. By the world's standards and her own, she had it all together. "Then one of my employees had the nerve to confront me and to say that Jesus loved me and that there was value in my soul."

"I was completely angry, and really offended. I thought, 'What audacity!' Thank God, she continued to talk to me. When she said that my soul had value, it touched something deep inside of me. I had believed a lie, and it was causing me to live such a fast life that I probably wouldn't be alive today had I continued down that road. I was amazed at what she was saying. No one had ever told me that before."

"Now I find that it is just so important to share with people the value that they have.

There is such value in each one of us. God loves us so much. He has a reason and a purpose for us to be on this earth. Unless we tell people, there is no way anyone will know.”

Chapter Three

GAINING DEGREES OF GLORY

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:40-42).

These passages reveal that just as there is a difference in the degrees of brightness among the sun, the moon, and the stars, there is a difference in how we will shine forever and ever. Varying degrees of glory will be given to us in

heaven based upon our witnessing to the lost and discipling new believers. Some Christians will have an amazing raiment of light over their glorified bodies (see Revelation 3:4), while others will have glorified bodies with no added brilliance.

Families That Are Focused

Every Christian who believes that the Bible is true, who believes that heaven and hell are real, should be a soul winner. Every father and mother should teach soul winning in their home. Following the command of God can do wonders for a family.

Jediah is a teenager in our church. Recently he gave a testimony stating just how thankful he is that his parents answered the call of God and what that has meant to his life. He grew up learning about and loving God, and he remembers asking Christ into his heart when he was four years old.

“But the devil does so much to try to rob us young people,” he explained. “The demons put so much junk out there through the television and the radio. They are trying to tell us who we are. But that is not who I am, praise God. Jesus lets me know who I am through the Body of

Christ and the Word of God.”

In tears, he thanked God for parents who raised him properly. “I have just had an amazing life knowing God and being raised in a Christian home. I can’t thank God enough for that.”

Every member of any church should go soul-winning and disciple those who come to Christ. This isn’t the policy of a man; this is what the Bible says in Matthew 28:18-20, in Mark 16:15-16, in Luke 24:44-48, in John 20:21, and in Acts 1:8. Jesus commanded it just before He ascended, and the Holy Spirit made certain it was recorded five times in the New Testament. Winning the lost is not to be approached as a matter of convenience. It needs to be a priority.

When I was a young pastor, God gave me a vision for a live radio broadcast. That vision expanded to television, books, tracts, Christian day schools for K through 12, and Bible colleges at home and abroad to train up missionaries who would then go into all the world. Through the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit, God showed me that we were to go into prisons and nursing homes, to set up neighborhood Bible clubs, to have street meetings. He said, “Go into all of America.” Then He said, “Go into all the world.” And we have.

Today He is saying, "Keep doing it, keep doing it." That is our entire purpose for living. This is our vocation. It is our life.

Wisdom for the Winners

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

How much do we really believe that one soul is worth more than every single thing in the world? If it is true, then why is it so difficult to give up one hour a week to win souls? A faithful few willingly go door-to-door or participate in the many outreaches developed to fulfill His Great Commission.

"And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his feet in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron [speaking of discipleship] and brass [no condemnation]; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:24-25).

This passage describes a soul winner. I may not actually win every person that I talk to, but I do make him accountable. If I go out and not one person accepts Christ, I have still made each one I have talked to accountable before the Lord. And I do let these people know that they are now accountable before God.

“Oh, I am a mother. I can’t go,” you say. I know mothers with young children and babies who go. They arrange times with other mothers and work out a way for all of them to go at certain times. It can be done. We know how vital it is to receive the Word of God from a pastor on a regular basis. And it is equally important that we find time to pour out what we have received to others. It quickens us. It keeps our hearts on fire. It is keeping in touch with the heart of God. Don’t settle on your lees (Jeremiah 48:11).

What Will You Say?

Are you a soul-winner? Do you go on purpose? Or, are you too busy? Are you so busy that souls go to hell because you don’t have time? What are you going to tell Jesus at the Bema Seat when He is judging you on the basis of silver, gold, and precious stones?

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

Jesus gave His life. He died and went into hell to set the captives free. The Pharisees and priests and leaders of His day said He was guilty of death (Matthew 26:66). They wanted

Him crucified. In fact, Jesus was guilty of everything possible: He took upon Himself every sin that every man would ever commit—past, present, and future.

Jesus did not come to have a comfortable existence. He came to seek and to save the lost. We are called to be witnesses and ministers of the truth. Wherever we go, there is no such thing as an off-duty Christian. We have to give an account to God for what He has commanded us to do.

Go soul winning on purpose. Go with other believers on purpose. Be a testimony on your job. Of course, we must operate with wisdom, having God's love for the lost as our motive. Therefore, if we offend someone—not because of our attitude but because of the truth—that is better than not obeying God.

Chapter Four

THE REALITIES OF ETERNITY

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

“And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

“And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that me may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

“But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou

in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

“And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

“Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house:

“For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

“Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

“And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:19-31).

The rich man was dead There was no second chance for this man. It was over for him. Now, it is no sin to be rich. Abraham himself was extremely wealthy in this life. The sin that sent

him to hell was that he rejected Christ as his Savior.

Jesus Christ gave this account. He was not lying, and it was not a parable. It was a true story about real people. The people we work with are one heartbeat away from hell. Hell is a real place where there is nothing but endless torment. If you burn wood in a fire, it will eventually be consumed. But the flames of hell cannot consume a soul-body. Revelation 19:20 tells us that the beast and the false prophet will be cast into hell. One thousand years later, Satan will be there, to be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10)—and the beast and the false prophet will still be there, alive.

Several times Jesus groaned and wept because of our unbelief (see John 11:33-38). But in Luke 19:41 and Hebrews 5:7, He wept because He knew what people will face if they reject Him as Savior. What more could Jesus do? God is just. Christ satisfied the penalty of sin. But those that will not receive the free gift of His righteousness are destined for torment in hell.

God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes on Christ is not condemned; but he who believes not is

condemned already. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" (see John 3:17-20).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Love That Constrains

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

"Wherefore henceforth know we know man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:14-17).

Be a soul winner. Win people to Christ. Find a time when you can purpose to do it. This is not an easy message, but it is chapter and verse, line upon line, from the Bible—the infallible Word of God.

Some people have said, “I’m a soul winner in my own way.” But make sure it is God’s way. Your own way without God is not God’s way. If you can speak—with your voice, through sign language, or on paper—you can share Christ with those who are eternally doomed and destined for the dungeon of darkness forever. You can bring them the free gift of salvation. You can bring them the message of deliverance. *You* can bring the glorious gospel to the lost.

Many people are soul winners, and many are learning how. Thank God for each one. Yet, some people think they are just too busy. Most assuredly, they will not be too busy when it is time to meet God at the Bema Seat.

Making the Difference

There are people who have gone out as missionaries into various places in the world. Why? A ministry that believes in the Book believes in soul winning. They are people who obeyed the Great Commission to go into all the world and

preach the gospel to every man, woman and child. Missionaries have been raised up to serve in every corner of the world, from highly industrialized countries to Third World nations. When these Christians face God, their record will show that they did not go only when it was comfortable and convenient. They read that Christ has commanded us to go. There was an urgency to the call, and they were obedient from the heart.

An employer requires his people to show up for work. He commands his people to be faithful in the duty of working. How much more should we honor Jesus Christ who made us, loved us, redeemed us, made us part of His family, and paid for our sins with His blood. It is He who commands us to go.

He didn't say, "Go when it is convenient." He said, "I command you to go, and if you love Me, you will go." That is what the Bible says. That is the Word of God. Perhaps you already serve God in some capacity, whether as a teacher, a secretary, a counselor, or even a pastor. Never think that the work you do for God takes the place of investing in lost souls.

This kind of message will come from my pulpit until I go home to be with God or until the Rapture, whichever comes first. Because it is

the truth, people respond. It is why we have Bible colleges and Christian day schools filled with students that are on fire for God. It is why we have a full church on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights.

The Bible says we are to stir up ourselves in the most holy faith. Whoever you are—mothers, fathers, doctors, returned missionaries, teenagers, all people—let the Word of God stir you up to obedience. You have fantastic value, and you have a message that will get people into heaven forever. All you have to do is tell them the truth.

What if the truth is not received? That is not our problem. Our part is to be a testimony. In the end, we will have told the truth, and those who have heard it will have no excuse if they reject it.

Some by Compassion, Some by Fear

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy [Spirit],

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

“And of some have compassion, making a difference:

“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 20-24).

There are two approaches to bringing the gospel to people. I thank God for every time that I can use a compassionate approach. But it is still compassion that motivates the stronger, more direct approach.

At times, we will be led to let the Word of God go forth like a fire. Some who reject the gospel become very arrogant. So I just say to them, “I charge you this day that you have rejected the gospel of Christ. If you were to die today, based upon your rejection you will go to hell. You will face God, and the opportunities He has given you will be made known at that time.” If there is still no response and God has been totally rejected, I do not argue the point. I just say good-bye and leave.

Privileges for Soul Winners

Every Christian reading this booklet believes this message. God has recorded every word in

an eternal ledger, according to Malachi 3:16. Furthermore, He has recorded the names of everyone who has heard this message.

None of us would be saved if someone had not pointed us to Christ through the gospel. Jesus created the entire world, and if He humbled Himself and found the time to seek and to save the lost, then of course we should seek the lost. He has given us the message and the motive; people make a decision with their volition to receive or reject the Savior; and He will do the saving. If you desire to go but you want to learn how to win souls, of course you can contact us. We will make sure you get the material you need to get started. We strongly recommend that you find others who go, and learn with them as you go. There are many “methods” and styles of evangelism. But there is nothing more effective than a life that is changed, a heart that has been touched by God and is on fire with His purpose.

We win some souls when we go on purpose, on a schedule. Others are won because God puts them in our pathway, even when we were not planning it. That is why we live a prepared life—always ready to meet the Lord, never knowing what He has prepared for the day.

In Matthew 28:20, a special manifestation of

God's presence is with those who go out to win the lost. They have special protection from afflictions and diseases (Mark 16:15-18). They receive special promises from God for going out (Luke 24:48-49) and special peace, according to John 20:21, 22. They will have special power for work, for business, for whatever they do (Acts 1:8). This power comes because they have obeyed the purpose for which they were put on earth, which is to go out and share the good news of salvation with the lost.

CONCLUSION

During a recent testimony, Paula, a student in our Bible college, said, “I was thinking about the availability of one person to make such a difference in another person’s life. I was so trapped in my misconceptions about God’s nature until someone told me about the Finished Work. Now I have such an amazing life. Just knowing really and truly how God thinks about me has made all the difference.

“We have such *good* news to tell people. How can we keep something so great to ourselves? If we don’t share it, who is going to tell them? And if we can share that with other people, it’s going to revolutionize the world. God so desires that people know His heart toward them. We need to step out, reach out, and open our mouths in faith. I don’t even know what comes out of mine half the time, but God is faithful. And as we go, He works in people’s lives through us.”

This is the testimony of a woman who understands the urgency of God's commission to us. Purpose to seek the lost today. God will use you. He is great, and His ways are far beyond anything we could ask or think.

It is never the right of anyone to invade another believer's privacy. I have given the message that I was told to give from the Word of God. The ball is now in your court. You are a believer priest before God. No one is in a place to judge, evaluate, or question what you do. This is between you and God. No one will check out those who are or who are not going out. As a pastor, however, I have to preach the whole counsel of God, and I have done just that.

Dear God, bless these words to our hearts because of the sacredness of Your heavenly sanctuary and the glory of who You are in the revelation, knowledge, and illumination of Your truth. In sanctification, may this truth be imparted to our memories and souls for the work of obedience.

God, bless us as we go out. May we go forward crucified, resurrected, and energized in the life of this message, which is for this hour. Do not let us go out because of guilt or negative reactions. There is no condemnation. Instead, may we go out in faith, praying for You to help us in Christ's name. Amen.

If you have never asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior, please make that decision today. Speak to Him as One who loves you and knows you intimately and one day gave His life for you. Pray, *“Dear Jesus, thank You for shedding Your blood and dying on the Cross for me. Come into my heart so I can have your new life to share with others. Amen.”*

Get to know the Lord Jesus personally by spending time with Him in prayer and reading His Word, the Bible. Ask Him to lead you to a Bible-believing church where you will sense God’s presence. There, you will find a pastor-teacher who will teach you the whole counsel of God, and you will discover your value as a child of the King.