

The Character of Soul-Winning

Creflo Dollar
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Scripture References

Proverbs 11:30	Hebrews 12:11, <i>NLT</i>
Matthew 28:19	1 Corinthians 10:31-33
1 Corinthians 9:19-27	Philippians 2:3, 4, <i>NLT</i>
Mark 10:45	1 Corinthians 11:1, <i>NLT</i>
1 Corinthians 9:27, <i>NLT</i>	

Summary

*Jesus has commanded believers to proactively win souls for the kingdom of God. Often, the most effective way of doing that is not through what we say, but what we do. We never know who may be watching us in any given situation; the good example we set by our godly behavior can turn us into living epistles. Actions speak louder than words; even if people do not read their Bible, they may be reading **us**. Therefore, when we go out to fulfill the Great Commission, godly character is necessary before any soul-winning can take place. This type of character is displayed by a willingness to serve others and put their well-being before our own. When we prioritize correctly by putting God first, others second, and ourselves last, people will be drawn to the image of Christ they see in us.*

A. Witnessing is good, but people pay more attention to what we do than to what we say.

1. Part of winning souls involves inviting people to church. However, we can win souls even without saying a word when others see how we conduct ourselves. For us to fulfill the Great Commission, we must learn the art of situational soul-winning.
 - a. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30).
 - b. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).
2. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:19-27).
 - a. "Gain" in this context translates to "win over." Paul was referring to situational soul-winning; he used the language of winning people to Christ and to the Gospel of Grace.

- b. Paul displayed the character and qualities of an effective soul winner. He did what he had to do to save whomever he could, but refused to compromise his Christian character.
- c. There is a difference between the act of soul-winning and the character of a soul winner. If the *character* of a soul winner is absent then the *action* of soul-winning will not be as effective as it should be.

B. There are several characteristics of soul-winning:

1. A servant's heart.
 - a. A genuine servant of God seeks to meet the real needs of others. Jesus was our perfect example in this area.
 - b. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
2. Discipline.
 - a. We must not use the grace of God as an excuse to avoid disciplining ourselves. Paul used the term "temperate in all things" to refer to self-control and discipline.
 - b. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:27, *NLT*).
 - c. The people who are trying to decide if they want to be born again are looking at the ones witnessing to them. Therefore, when we are out soul-winning, we must be careful to set a good example; it reflects our character.
 - d. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way (Hebrews 12:11, *NLT*).
 - e. Just because something is painful does not mean it's not from God. A willingness to endure some pain to shape our character benefits us in the end. Soul-winners must take care to practice what they preach.
3. A selfless attitude.
 - a. We must stop trying to give ourselves credit for something that *God* did. People will not be saved by viewing selfishness. We show humility by avoiding self-centeredness; soul-winning is all about taking an interest in others' wellbeing.
 - b. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved (1 Corinthians 10:31-33).
 - c. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too (Philippians 2:3, 4, *NLT*).
4. Christlikeness.
 - a. The quality and character of a Christian should be something others want to imitate. The best way to win a lost soul to Christ is to let them see Him in us.
 - b. And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1, *NLT*).

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