

Stepping it Up in Our Verbal Witness

What blocks me from witnessing for Jesus?

- Do I know how to show genuine interest in people, asking good questions?
- Am I confident that I have something worth telling them about that God has done for me?
- Do I love them enough to break out of my comfort zone and perhaps laziness to share with them and warn them?
- Do I know how to depend on God, hear His voice and be led by Him?
- Do I place myself where people are that don't know Jesus?

What would help me become more effective in witnessing for Jesus?

Genuine Interest and Caring Questions

"Sympathize with them in their trials, their heartaches, and disappointments. This will open the way for you to help them. Speak to them of God's promises, pray with and for them, inspire them with hope" (The Ministry of Healing, 157-159).

- What are some excellent questions for getting acquainted with a person?
- What questions will help me really get to know what someone needs, believes, and values?

Affirmation and Opposition

"Often, as you seek to present the truth, opposition will be aroused; but if you seek to meet the opposition with argument, you will only multiply it, and that you cannot afford to do. Hold to the affirmative. Angels of God are watching you, and they understand how to impress those whose opposition you refuse to meet with argument. Dwell not on the negative points of questions that arise, but gather to your minds affirmative truths, and fasten them there by much earnest prayer and heart-consecration" (Christian Service 126).

"In laboring in a new field, do not think it your duty to say at once to the people, We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe that the seventh-day is the Sabbath; we believe in the non-immortality of the soul. This would often erect a formidable barrier between you and those you wish to reach. Speak to them, as you have opportunity, upon points of doctrine on which you can agree. Dwell on the necessity of practical godliness. Give them evidence that you are a Christian, desiring peace, and that you love their souls. Let them see that you are conscientious. Thus you will gain their confidence; and there will be time enough for doctrines" (Gospel Workers, 19-120).

"Sound an alarm throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned. We might have been in the place of the poor souls that are in error. We might have been placed among barbarians. According to the truth we have received above others, we are debtors to impart the same to them" (Christian Service 78).

"Bring earnestness and fervency into your prayers, and into your Bible readings, and into your preaching, that you may leave the impression that the sacred truths you are presenting to others are to you a living reality. Whatever you do for Jesus, seek with all your powers to do it with earnestness. Never feel that you have attained to the highest point, and can therefore rise no higher. . . . Set your mind to task, that you may present the truth in a manner to interest them. Seize the most interesting portions of Scripture that you can bring before them, come right to the point, and seek to fasten their attention, and instruct them in the ways of the Lord" (Christian Service 144).

"Not with tame, lifeless utterance is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances. Hundreds are waiting for the warning to escape for their lives. The world needs to see in Christians an evidence of the power of Christianity" (Testimonies, Volume 8, 16).

- Am I more likely to argue a point, moving quickly to points of difference or to focus on similarities, moving too slowly to warn and share essential differences?
- How might I grow in the area I need to regarding positive affirmation or earnest warning?

Testimonies

“Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls” (Desire of Ages 347).

“To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a duty as is prayer. We are to show to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that we appreciate the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by recounting His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children.

These exercises drive back the power of Satan. They expel the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and the tempter loses ground. They cultivate those attributes of character which will fit the dwellers on earth for the heavenly mansions.

Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ (Christ’s Object Lessons 299-300).

- What has God done for me that I think others should know?
- How could I find more opportunities to share these stories from my experience?

Ask God to Lead You and Speak to You

“This Ethiopian represented a large class who need to be taught by such missionaries as Philip—men who will hear the voice of God and go where He sends them. There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in. An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts” (Our Father Cares, 194).

“Christ took upon himself human nature, but daily he linked it with the divine nature. He devoted whole nights to prayer, leaving an example for all humanity; for as he relied upon God, the Source of all strength, so are we to be invigorated and refreshed, to be strengthened for duty and braced for trial, through communion with God.

Christ labored for his vineyard. The Prince of heaven, he was yet the intercessor for man, and he had power with God, and prevailed for himself and for his people. Morning by morning he communicated with his Father in heaven, receiving from him daily a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Lord awakened him from his slumbers in the early hours of the new day, that his soul and his lips might be anointed with grace which he should impart to others. His words were given him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that he might speak in season to those that were weary and oppressed. Of Christ we read, “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” (Isaiah 50:4-5)” (Signs of the Times, Nov. 21, 1895).

“It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be so susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell sinners of their peril, and point them to the place of safety” (Gospel Workers 15).

- Share an experience where God impressed you to go somewhere or say something.
- How do you think you could develop the ability to have more of this kind of experience with the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit and the Message

“The Saviour knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness. He knew that His disciples must receive the heavenly endowment (the Holy Spirit); that the gospel would be effective only as it was proclaimed by hearts made warm and lips made eloquent by a living knowledge of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life” (Acts of the Apostles 31).

“After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so filled with love for Him and for those for whom He died, that hearts were melted by the words they spoke and the prayers they offered. They spoke in the power of the Spirit; and under the influence of that power, thousands were converted” (Acts of the Apostles 22).

- In what ways do my conversations with others reveal that I don't love them as I should?
- How can I have more of this kind of love in my words and prayers?

Connect to the Familiar

“We should do as Christ did. Wherever He was, in the synagogue, by the wayside, in the boat thrust out a little from the land, at the Pharisee's feast or the table of the publican, He spoke to men of the things pertaining to the higher life. The things of nature, the events of daily life, were bound up by Him with the words of truth. The hearts of His hearers were drawn to Him; for He had healed their sick, had comforted their sorrowing ones, and had taken their children in His arms and blessed them. When He opened His lips to speak, their attention was riveted upon Him, and every word was to some soul a savor of life unto life” (Christian Service, 119).

“It is well, in presenting the truth to unbelievers, first to present some subjects upon which they will agree with us. The principles of health and temperance will appeal to their judgment, and we can from these subjects lead them on to understand the binding claims of the fourth commandment. This work our physicians can help in doing. When the people see the value of instruction given regarding healthful living, it gives them confidence to believe that the teachers of these principles have the truth in other lines” (Counsels on Health, 545).

- How can I more frequently make bridges in my conversations from everyday life to spiritual truths?

Lift Up Christ

“The name [Christian] was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, their teaching, and their conversation. Continually they were recounting the incidents that had occurred during the days of His earthly ministry, when His disciples were blessed with His personal presence. Untiringly they dwelt upon His teachings and His miracles of healing.

With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of His agony in the garden, His betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which He had endured the contumely and torture imposed upon Him by His enemies, and the Godlike pity with which He had prayed for those who persecuted Him. His resurrection and ascension, and His work in heaven as the Mediator for fallen man, were topics on which they rejoiced to dwell. Well might the heathen call them Christians, since they preached Christ and addressed their prayers to God through Him” (Acts of the Apostles 157).

“Talk to souls in peril, and get them to behold Jesus upon the cross, dying to make it possible for Him to pardon. Talk to the sinner with your own heart overflowing with the tender, pitying love of Christ. Let there be deep earnestness, but not a harsh, loud note should be heard in the voice of one who is trying to win the soul to look and live. First have your own soul consecrated to God. As you look upon our Intercessor in heaven, let your heart be broken. Then, softened and subdued, you can address repenting sinners as one who realizes the power of redeeming love. Pray with these souls, by faith laying them at the foot of the cross; carry their minds up with your mind, and fix the eye of faith where you look, upon Jesus, the Sin Bearer. Get them to look away from their poor sinful selves to the Saviour, and the victory is won” (Evangelism 298).

- Am I comfortable talking freely about Jesus?
- How can I grow in my freedom to speak confidently and joyfully about my Savior?

Matching Your Testimony To People's Needs & Interests

1. Listen carefully to your friends and new contacts to understand their problems and interests.
2. Bridge from what is important to your friends to a story of what God has done for you. "May I share how I found courage when I was struggling with something similar?" Or "What you are facing sounds a lot like what my cousin went through. Would you like to hear his story?"
3. Bring in Bible texts gently, as part of the story, such as "I remembered God's promise 'I will never leave you' and I was encouraged." Or "There is a scripture that has really helped my relationship with my wife."
4. Pray for your friend in your heart before, during, and after you talk. As God leads you, ask if you can pray for him or her.
5. Invite your friends to test for themselves what you have just shared. "I found a lot of peace and actually seemed to have more money after I started tithing. Would you be willing to give it a try for three months?"
6. Keep fresh in your mind what God has done for you. Prepare to share by thinking about what God has done for you. Try buying a notebook or choose a place on your computer or phone to write down your stories. Add other people's experiences and stories. You could even divide your notebook into various areas like the ones below which are some of the most important areas to people. Add Bible promises and counsel so you can readily access ideas to share.

1. Health problems

Share a story of how God healed someone, or how a natural remedy helped the same situation, or how God gave courage and peace during the illness. Share Bible health principles (Psalm 103:1-5).

2. Worries, fears or stress

Share a story of how God gave protection from danger, or of trust and peace in the middle of worrisome and stressful circumstances. Share Bible promises of peace (Isaiah 26:3,4).

3. Hobbies and Topics of Interest

Use illustrations and parables from the Bible or your own that match his interests. If you don't know much about what he likes, ask him questions and pray for wisdom on how to use his interests to draw him to God. Find Christian books or videos that match these.

4. Hopes and Dreams for the Future

Share a story of how God helped fulfill someone's dreams. Share promises of God's leading (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

5. Bad Habits

Share a story of God's power setting someone free from a bad habit. Share Bible promises of victory (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 4:4)

6. Financial Problems

Share a story of how God helped someone have enough money, or blessed him for paying tithe. Share Bible promises or financial principles (Philippians 4:19; Malachi 3:10).

7. Family Members and Relationship Problems

Share a story of how God helped a husband and wife reconcile, or children become obedient. Show Christian love principles (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 5:28).

8. Spiritualistic Practices and Fears.

Share a story of God's power over evil spirits. Explain the great controversy. Share promises (Mark 16:16,17; 1 John 4:4).

9. Grief

Share a story of God bringing comfort during grief and the hope of the resurrection. Share encouraging words from the Bible (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

10. Religion

Share testimonies of how God's power helped you change to be what you struggled to become on your own. Share the story of the cross and Bible promises (Ephesians 2:8-10).