

We are a far cry from the pattern of the first century church and for numerous of reasons, but we will only cover one of those reasons here.

Not everyone can be an Aimee Semple McPherson, Charles Finney, Jimmy Swaggart, Billy Graham, Jim Bakker or Watchman Nee and few ever survive such exalted positions, the warfare is immense. Fifty percent of those I just mentioned have crashed and burned, destroying their testimony, undermining the work of Christ and even ending in shameful and tragic deaths. Jesus, in His earthly body, could not be everywhere at the same time and there were only 12 men initially chosen to carry the "Message" yet their numbers multiplied **daily**, not just in their weekly worship services.

HOW???

Now I have a few more questions to ask but want you to realize they are not presented to cause you sadness or shame nor the opportunity to boast. None of those are a part of His Kingdom; righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Ghost is our lot in this life. I need you to be very careful, honest and realistic in that response to your Heavenly Father as HE knows the truth about everyone of us.

1. How many of you have personally led someone else to Christ **one on one**?
2. Do you remember what was it like, how it felt?
3. How many of you, on any level, have mentored someone in their faith?
4. Has your fruit remained?
Are they still walking with Him today?
5. When was the last time you experienced either? Has it been a while?
6. If you've not experienced these things, or would like to again, seriously consider the things you're about to read.

The woman at the well (Jn. 4:7-54) was not an evangelist nor did she take a Navigators course on "How to win Souls for Christ", yet a whole town came out to see Jesus and asked Him to stay; many were saved. She merely told "her" story, she shared "her" experience. So why did anyone listen, who was she, what made her different from others? It was the change they saw in her, they knew her, they were familiar with her character and demeanor and she was NO LONGER that same person.

Are you different from what you were before you met Jesus or from those around you in the world or is there no distinction between the two? Now I'm not talking about an overbearing obnoxious even arrogant proclaiming of the Bible and it's truths coming across critical and condemning nor of any other difference that drives people away from you, there's more than enough of that going around. I'm speaking of that which draws those seeking the truth to you, a humble, caring, genuine and sincere demeanor that is always ready to share your faith which then opens doors of opportunity to introduce them to Jesus and pray with them to be "born again from above". Many of those driven by an evangelistic motivation write off all who reject them saying "they just don't want to hear the truth". Although true in a general sense "WHY" then was Jesus so successful, why did thousands flock to Him??? It may be true that today not as many desire truth as in His day, but there are still some, more than you realize, and we need to be those who draw them to Him, HIS magnet so to speak. So if "ALL" are rejecting you or your "gospel" you may need to re-assess who you are and how you're perceived. Self righteousness only brings condemnation, it **never** produces salvation. For those of you who are happily married I have a question. When you met your spouse were you concerned about whether or not others would accept them? Did this determine your love or commitment to them? If you're answer to the second question is yes then it was not LOVE you had but a poor substitute of some kind. It is only natural that you would desire others to accept

them, but it would not affect your desire of them or commitment to them. Nor would it curtail your enthusiasm to tell everyone about them. You would want everyone to meet and to know this awesome person you love so deeply.

So here we have the two extremes; the one driving those seeking away with an overbearing persona and the one who never speaks. Neither are the byproduct of an all consuming love. But there is a balance and that is "ZEAL driven by LOVE and COMPASSION". The zeal keeps you ready in the moment, searching for opportunity, and the love and compassion keep you from crushing the bruised reed or driving away the timid soul. This attitude keeps you ever watchful of what your Heavenly Father may be doing "in the moment" and always striving to hear His voice that you may be given "apples of gold in settings of silver". Pr. 25:11 You tell someone all that they ever did (or some semblance of that) and I guarantee they will listen to whatever you have to say. Jesus said **YOU** will do **ALL that He ever did** and **MORE**. (I Cor. 12:8) He will give those abilities and experiences to **all** who believe.

(Mk. 16:4-20)

Still later, as the Eleven were eating supper, he appeared and took them to task most severely for their stubborn unbelief, refusing to believe those who had seen him raised up. Then he said, Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God's good news to one and all. Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.

17-18 These are some of the signs that will accompany believers: They will throw out demons in my name, they will speak in new tongues, they will take snakes in their hands, they will drink poison and not be hurt, they will lay hands on the sick and make them well.

19-20 Then the Master Jesus, after briefing them, was taken up to heaven, and he sat down beside God in the place of honor. And the disciples went everywhere preaching, the Master working right with them, validating the Message with indisputable evidence.