

THE IMPORTANCE OF WITNESSING

Please open your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5:

Eph 5:15-17 See then that ye walk circumspectly (that is 'carefully, cautiously, watchfully'), not as fools, but as wise,
16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding what the will of the Lord is.**

People talk about being in the 'CENTER' of God's will.

I wonder, just where in the world would that be? I've also thought

how would you know if you were getting close to the 'EDGE' of God's will ...

so you could scoot back toward the 'MIDDLE'?

We have published a tract entitled "ISO (that's In Search Of) God's Will"

because so many people ask the question, "How can I find the will of God?"

We just read that God wants us to know His will in Eph 5:17. He has actually already told us what it is --- so we don't even have to hunt for it:

Eph 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

We simply go to the Word --- under the dispensation of grace so we'll be in the right program that God is operating today --- for God's will:

1 Tim 2:3-6 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (There is it in a nutshell!)

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (Now is the time to bear witness of these wonderful truths.)

Another verse that specifically states what God wants for all men is:

Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the **mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

So, very basically, God revealed His desire for everyone

to be saved and understand the truth ---

which is to believe the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ

(that He died on the cross to pay for our sins,
was buried, and rose again the 3rd day)

AND --- to understand the mystery revelation He committed to Paul

(so that they're not confused by the different programs God administered).

So, quite simply, for us to do the will of God, or be in the will of God --

we're going to have to WITNESS to others

the message of salvation by grace and right division.

WITNESSING WILL BE REWARDING

We'll be working as God's crew, according to the blueprint He gave Paul:

1 Cor 3:5-8 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and **every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.**

WITNESSING IS WORKING WITH GOD

1 Cor 3:9-11 For **we are labourers together with God**: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me (Paul), as a wise masterbuilder, I (Paul) have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

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

We'll have confidence now --- and be rewarded on judgment day

if we our work is carefully kept on Paul's structure:

Rom 16:25-26 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and **the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Jesus never changes in His person, essence, and character:

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

But Paul presented Christ in a different light --- than did Jesus' 12 disciples:

2 Cor 5:16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth (from now on) know we him no more.

The 12 knew Jesus was the Son of God,

who would someday set up God's Kingdom and rule on the earth.

Paul was given further information that

Jesus was going to catch the Body of Christ up into His Heavenly kingdom.

We must witness according to the body of truth God committed to Paul to be rewarded. **1 Cor 3:10 is the correct foundation --- under grace.**

1 Cor 3:12-15 Now if any man build upon **this foundation** (that is **Jesus Christ - according to the revelation of the mystery**) gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 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.

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

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Now that we've got the outline --- let's go on to fill in the details ---

by looking at the Apostle Paul's example

(who God said is our pattern to follow - 1 Cor 4:16, 1 Cor 11:1, Phil 3:17).

WITNESSING TO OUR FAMILY

Surely **YOU** love your relatives more than anyone else does!

Rom 9:1-3 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 **For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:**

What amazing love! **Paul** -- God's chosen vessel as the dispenser of grace **and Moses** -- the man God selected to dispense the law

are the only two people that I know of, ever recorded in scripture,

who would have sacrificed their own soul --- for their people:

Exo 32:31-33 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; **and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.**

33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

Paul wished his people would accept the truth but they would not.

They were plenty religious --- but that wouldn't work for them:

Rom 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Jesus had already revealed to Paul that Israel would not hear:

Acts 22:18-21 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Israel's continual refusal resulted in Paul 'moving on'

to someone else --- who WOULD listen:

Acts 13:43-46 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Anytime you have opportunity, you should keep trying with your family.

Paul's kinsmen even had him imprisoned:

Acts 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that **for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.**

Next, let's consider talking to people we know as we

WITNESS TO FRIENDS

There should not be 1 person that we're well acquainted with --- that we haven't shared the gospel and right division with.

A woman, speaking to my wife, said, "I'm so concerned for my neighbor who is dying of cancer."

My wife asked, "Is she saved?"

She answered, "I don't know I've never asked her."

My wife then questioned, "You have lived beside her for 14 years, you visit with her every week, but you have never talked to her about her soul?"

What if she dies, and you don't even know where she'll spend eternity?

How tragic! You need to give her the gospel as soon as you see her again."

Paul was thankful for his friends who helped him in his ministry:

Rom 16:1-4 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer (a helper, assistant, who gives aid) of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Even while confined, Paul was allowed visitors to encourage him:

Acts 24:23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

Friends can help rejuvenate us:

Acts 27:3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

The comradeship of friends should be based upon sound doctrine:

Rom 1:12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Good friends share our ups and downs, and exhort us in our common faith:

Rom 12:15,16 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

We should talk with our friends about the scriptures

to inspire and edify them:

2 Cor 12:19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

We shouldn't fuss or cuss or gossip or complain with our friends:

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

If you have a friend that you haven't spoken to about the TRUTH you now understand, you ought to do it the next time you see them.

We love our friends, so we ought to be nice to them

and not be easily offended or hold a grudge. We know the doctrine!

We don't forgive others because we have to in order to be forgiven by God.

We are able to forgive because we have been forgiven:

Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Let's all make sure that we are faithful to ask every FRIEND we have:

1) if they are saved

and 2) if they understand Paul's unique ministry of rightly dividing.

Don't just accept a "Yes, of course," answer ---

without questioning, "How do you know?" ---

THEN you may find out they don't know and you can tell them!

Next, we'll think about

WITNESSING TO STRANGERS --- PEOPLE WE DON'T KNOW

Paul not only testified in his own country

but he also made it a point to take his gospel where no one else had been:

Rom 15:19-20 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

We already discussed Paul's unique message in the dispensation of grace --- and how God chose HIM to lay the foundation for those doctrines.

When Jesus called and commissioned Paul He directed him to go among the 'nations' who had never been given an apostle before:

Acts 26:12-18 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, **to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;**

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from **the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,**

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that **they** may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

If people aren't trusting in the gospel Paul presented then they honestly aren't saved. We ought to be honest with them, and tell them:

2 Cor 4:1-6 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, **nor handling the word of God deceitfully;** but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 But **if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:**

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Anytime we have at least 5 minutes with a person

we should ask them about the destiny of their eternal soul.

You can start a conversation with them about anything --

then jump right in, and say:

“When you die, do you know where you will spend eternity?”

The Apostle Paul spent the focus of his ministry on people in cities and countries --- that were classified as ‘**outsiders**’ to Israel:

Eph 2:11-13 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (But Paul had ‘good news’ for them):

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Yes, Paul was God’s specially chosen man to send to the strangers:

Rom 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

The gospel of the grace of God has been rightly called the ‘every man’ gospel --- in that, it is for every man --- regardless of gender, age, race, religion, social status, physical health, nationality, etc.

Speaking of Christ, Paul writes:

Col 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

We should talk to every person we can about the scriptures.

Finally, we'll consider

WITNESSING IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

We should not be discouraged if (really, 'when') people oppose us.

Paul had some very rough times --- when many people would have QUIT:

1 Thess 2:1-6 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were **shamefully entreated**, as ye know, at Philippi, **we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.**

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

It is awful that the Jews didn't want the Gentiles to be offered

salvation by grace but they were angry and mad about it:

1 Thess 2:14-16 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 **Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved**, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

We ought not be deterred from witnessing, by rejection or nor by resistance:

Phil 1:27,28 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 And **in nothing terrified by your adversaries**: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

Paul requested prayer that he would be BOLD in witnessing
the mystery:

Eph 6:19-20 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may **open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,**
20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may **speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Again, Paul's prayer request -- was for boldness to speak the mystery:

Col 4:3,4 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, **to speak the mystery of Christ,** for which I am also in bonds:
4 That I may **make it manifest, as I ought to speak.**

It's important to make sure we're speaking the 'pure' word of God
to understand why the KJV is our final authority
and to reject corrupt English versions ---

.... so that we know we witness God's truth:

2 Cor 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

In conclusion, the importance of witnessing all boils down to this:

"If you believe it then share it with everyone who will listen!"

2 Cor 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; **we also believe, and therefore speak;**

This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"