



“Let your speech [be] always with grace, seasoned with salt,
that ye may know how ye ought to ANSWER every man.”

—Colossians 4: 6

“...[be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man
that ASKETH you a reason of the hope that is in you...”

—1 Peter 3:15

I skimmed right over those two scriptures for decades, not recognizing their critical instruction for effective personal evangelism. All the preachers I knew had apparently missed that pivotal value, too. They continued to teach what their preachers and others whom they loved had taught them...that we Christians are supposed to “share the Gospel” with everyone with whom we come in contact. As a young Christian, anxious to meet the noble challenge, I bought-in to that message, hook-line-and-sinker. For me, the “Are you saved?” question was met with a remarkable mix of responses. It didn’t take long for me to learn to keep my presumptively righteous mouth shut most of the time. Much later, as an adult, I learned WHY. That came about like this—

Although I had studied and planned for a very different career path, I fell into the selling profession. The earnings potential attracted me. It may help you to understand that “people-watching” has always been among my favorite things to do. I still enjoy trying to figure out what makes each person “tick.” So my first objective was to learn from the practices of the most and least successful sales professionals. There were actually four groups of them. I’ll keep this short...

The least successful of them exhibited at least one of three characteristics: They were either not sold on themselves (not comfortable in their own skin), they were overconfident (sometimes arrogant, even condescending) or their mindsets were fully aligned with the “how-to-sell” training that was prevalent – at least during those years. In that third group were some high earners, but it soon became clear to me that their financial success was typically riddled with “potholes.” They must have had some sleepless nights from feelings of guilt for having taken advantage of their clients. That is why I must include them with the other two “least successful” sales professionals. (Personal success trumps financial success, you know.)

So what were/are the characteristics of the most successful professionals I was/am able to observe? They engage each new client in dialog but, most of the time, they just listen. The more they listen, the more their clients share. The occasional probing question yields even more valuable insight. Their clients notice “a difference” in them, but typically aren’t able to fathom what that difference might be! They observably like it, though, and they actually WANT to hear what their uncommonly likeable professionals might have to say! Does that fit with any scenario with which you are familiar? Do YOU like “pushy” salespeople?

The style of “pushy” salespeople is declarative. The style of the real sales professionals is interrogatory. Huge difference!

You’ll recall that Jesus spoke in parables to the masses. In fact, He never shared any of the really important stuff with anyone until AFTER they had demonstrated “ears to hear.” Why? Because He had just three years to accomplish his mission. If He had shared the important stuff with everyone, most of whom wouldn’t have had “ears to hear,” it might have taken Him 3,000 years to complete His assignment. Clearly, the efficiency of his sharing was as important as his message. So, how did He know when a person had acquired “ears to hear?” Ready for this?

Meteorologists confidently forecast stormy weather when barometric pressures fall. The lower the barometric pressure, the more intense an upcoming storm. That’s because nature abhors a vacuum. Adjacent areas of higher air pressure rush frantically towards a low-pressure area in an effort to equalize the barometric pressure. That causes wind and other familiar weather phenomena.



Human nature also abhors a vacuum: When a person gets really, really curious about something he starts asking questions, questions that appear to arise from a burning way down deep inside him. When those kinds of questions emerged from a person, Jesus knew he wouldn’t be wasting His time in sharing critical information with him, because the TIMING was right: That person’s listening efficiency was at its very highest point...similar to a barometric vacuum in nature.

I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.

I knew what my denomination believed and that’s what I taught.

Yes, I should’ve checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn’t I do that? Well, maybe I didn’t do that for the same reason that you haven’t really checked out what your denomination teaches.

“In religion and politics, people’s beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination.” —Samuel Clemens



There were some notable occasions when Jesus used a brilliant technique for purposely YIELDING a piqued listening efficiency in people who didn't already have "ears to hear." His intentional encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well is an excellent example of that technique. That can be taught, coached, practiced and mastered. Shouldn't that sort of skill-building replace the currently observable emphasis on entertainment (a.k.a. *worshiptainment*) in the visible church? Shouldn't "To be like Jesus," be much more than the poignant words of a song? Shouldn't Christians be learning the strategies Jesus used and mastering the skills He demonstrated for building the Kingdom? Isn't our time short, too? Want to follow that logic?

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_6f4b0759ee0b47efb996df936fea4483.pdf

The "Personal Evangelism" training I have observed yields recurring new waves of infant, milk-fed Christians who presume themselves ready to fulfill "The Great Commission." It's sort of like multi-level marketing: You become a distributor to sign up more distributors. The "product" is actually the byproduct. It is NOT what is sold...or bought.

Not sure about all of this? Does "The Great Commission" have anything, at all, to do with "getting people 'saved'?" Read Matthew 28:19,20 in several different Bible versions for the surprising answer. Here's some additional insight for folk who want the 1st-Century truth about that: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_3d67d6224bee4c1ab9d7f8f333c02f63.pdf

Want to learn more about the exceptional value of LISTENING in personal evangelism...and in personal relationships? https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_e6379aa253074675b6ac379fe7992a9d.pdf

The critical take-home message is this: Jesus' earthly ministry style was interrogatory; not declarative. Huge difference!

Why not share this insight with somebody you love...???


—T. C. Newsome 

PS: Comments? Questions? Scriptural rebuttals? They're all welcome! www.Link1.info/contact-us.

To participate in sensible Bible-related discussions, join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

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