

A List of Prospects

Lesson I: Good Neighbor Evangelism

Intro:

- → **last series, four introductory lessons: Personal Work and Personal Evangelism** — something congregation very interested in doing more actively
 - **Lesson 1: Be a good neighbor** — paradigm, view, perspective, way of thinking
 - live by the golden rule: have compassion for people, move to show mercy
 - “good neighbor” personal work
 - “good neighbor” evangelism
 - **compliment congregation**
 - “good neighbor” attitudes that exist
 - **personal work that is occurring:** encouragement, meals to sick
 - e.g., all the encouragement and help given me and my family
 - **illus.:** received two card in the mail last week, as have before, both totally made my day
 - **Lesson 2: Don’t worry, just do it!**
 - **sometimes we are afraid of rejection, afraid we’re not perfect**
 - **solution:** believe that the battle belongs to the Lord — its not about you, its about God
 - **don’t worry, just do it** — God already equipped you, know you can do it
 - e.g., **David and Goliath** — the battle belongs to the Lord
 - **Lesson 3: What works today, to bring people to Christ?**
 - **authority for this discussion:** apostolic examples, use expediencies to take the gospel to others
 - **recent history of expediencies** used by brethren:
 - gospel meeting, cottage meeting
 - **visitor’s meeting works today**
 - **Lesson 4: Good personal workers are good stewards!**
 - **careful to be good stewards** of our personal resources (time, energy, \$), spend some of them to build relationships and reach the lost
- → **this series, four lessons: Good Neighbor Evangelism** — first three lessons relate to the flow chart — **review chart** — **next series will get more into specifics**
 - **Lesson 1:** A List of Prospects
 - **Lesson 2:** Build Bridges — four steps
 - **Lesson 3:** Let the Traffic Flow, Share the Gospel — four steps
 - relate to the Visitor’s Meeting, above
 - **Lesson 4:** A Lesson You Can Share

➤ #1 What is a prospect list?

→ It is an essential first step.

- One of the very first steps in reaching people, is developing a prospect list.
 - A list of people who are potentially interested with what we have to offer, that we have a chance to reach.
- **illus.: In business**, it can be the difference between success and failure.
 - if a business person waists time talking to people who aren't interested in his product, he will go broke

→ It is:

- a list of people with whom we can potentially develop a relationship, and share the gospel.
- We may not be the one who teaches them, but simply introduce them to others who can teach them.

→ It's not:

- an exclusive list, that prevents us from sharing the gospel with anyone, whether they're on the list or not.

➤ #2 Why is a list of prospects (flow chart) helpful?

→ The prospect list helps us avail ourselves of God's providence, as He works in peoples' lives.

- **God opens doors**, giving us opportunities to meet people and teach them
 - **Read - 1 Cor. 16:8-9** God opened up a wide door for Paul in Ephesus
 - **Read - 2 Cor. 2:12-13** God opened a door for Paul in Troas, that he couldn't take advantage of at that time
 - **Application:** the prospect list / flow chart, helps us make the best use of God's open doors
- **We must be prepared**, before God uses us and opens doors to teach others
 - **Read - Rev. 3:8** brethren in Philadelphia were prepared for God to open doors
 - **Read - 2 Tim. 2:19-21** God will use us to bring the lost to Christ, if we prepare ourselves "For every good work"
 - **Application:** the prospect list / flow chart helps to prepare ourselves to be useful in God's service, and do our best when God opens doors (opportunities to teach the lost)
- **God's providence brings** teachers in contact with people willing to obey His word.
 - **illus.:** Acts 8, persecution of Christians caused the gospel to spread throughout the world quickly
 - **illus.:** Acts 8, Philip was sent toward Gaza where he would meet the Ethiopian Eunuch
 - **illus.:** Acts 9, the Lord sent Ananias to preach to Saul
 - **illus.:** Acts 10, the Lord sent Peter to Cornelius
 - **illus.:** Acts 16, Paul had a vision and perceived that God wanted him to preach in Macedonia
 - **illus.:** Acts 18, Apollos preached in Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila heard him, took him aside, explained to him the way of God more accurately
 - **Application:** a prospect list and flow chart helps us work the hardest we can, with those God brings us in contact with

➤ → The prospect list helps us prepare to sow God's word, in the hearts of men.

- **parable of the sower:**
 - **Read - Lk. 8:4-8** parable
 - **Read - Lk. 8:11-15** Jesus' explanation
- **lessons:**
 - **our job is to sow and water the seed**
 - **Read - 1 Cor. 3:5-9** sow and water, God gives increase, receive reward, God's fellow workers
 - **we don't have to be polished experts to do our part — sow and water**
 - **Read - Is. 55:10-11** power is God's word: it doesn't return to Him empty, it accomplishes and succeeds
 - **Quote - Rom. 1:16** (power God's word) For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for it is the **power of God for salvation** to everyone who **believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - **accountability:**
 - **sower and water:** do our job, best of our ability (cf. Matt. 25:14-20, parable of the talents)
 - **ground (men):** hear, good and honest heart, bear fruit (obey)

next: cont. reasons prospect list helps - concentrate our efforts

- → **The prospect list helps us stay in our priorities.**
 - It helps us remain **prayerful**:
 - **Read - Col. 4:2-4** devoted to prayer, open door, make God's word clear to others
 - **Quote - Rom. 10:1** (Paul's example, pray for lost) Brethren, my heart's desire and my **prayer** to God for them is for **their salvation**.
 - It helps us **make the best of our time**:
 - **Read - Eph. 5:15-16** make most of your time; i.e., stay in your priorities
 - It helps us **be a good neighbor**: — good neighbor evangelism
 - **Quote - Matt. 22:39** (Jesus, second greatest command) "The second is like it, `YOU SHALL **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF**.'"
 - **illus.:** we all know that we perform better when we use lists - e.g., PDA, to do lists

- → **The prospect list helps us avoid discouragement.**
 - **Satan has always used "discouragement"** against God's children.
 - **Quote - Num. 32:9** (Moses, regarding Israel entering the Promise Land) For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land, **they discouraged the sons of Israel** so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them.
 - **Quote - Ezra 4:4-5** (rebuilding the temple) Then the people of the land **discouraged the people of Judah**, and frightened them from building, and **hired counselors against them to frustrate their counsel** all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.
 - **Quote - Neh. 6:9** (rebuilding Jerusalem's wall) For **all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, "They will become discouraged with the work** and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen my hands.
 - **How does the prospect list / flow chart help us from becoming discouraged?**
 - **helps us chart our progress and glorify God** for the "small" successes
 - process to bring one to Christ can take years, this helps us stay positive through the process
 - e.g., Farler and McGough, baptized later in life
 - **we're encouraged by doing the best we can do** — making the most of our time
 - stay positive as sower and water, patient for the increase from God (**above**)
 - **keeps us working together as brethren**, to bring people to Christ
 - part of the process is using one another in the congregation to help us with our friends, to expose them to the church (body of Christ)

- → **What's this mean to you — using the prospect list / flow chart?**
 - **you'll be much more successful** with personal evangelism if you have a list of folks to concentrate your efforts, and work in a systematic fashion
 - **you'll stay encouraged** / become less discouraged
 - **you'll make better use of your time**
 - **you'll bring lost souls to Christ**

next: suggestions for setting up a prospect list

➤ **#3 Suggestions for setting up a list of prospects:**

➔ **Pray for wisdom.** Ask God to help setting up the list of priorities.

- **Quote - Ja. 1:5** But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

➤ ➔ **Make a broad list, which you can narrow down later.** Include:

- your family, friends, and neighbors
- visitors at church
- spouses of members
- new residents in your neighborhood
- relatives of members
- unfaithful members
- friends of members
- coworkers
- children of members
- prospects furnished by recent converts
- classmates at school
- people you've talked to recently that have shown interest, but you've not followed up

➤ ➔ **Sift through the list and determine whom to give priority first.** Keep the list so that you can add other to the priority list later. Include:

- People you believe are closest to obeying the gospel.
- People with whom you have open communication.
- People who have shown spiritual interest (but are “unchurched”).
 - The unchurched are often easier to bring to Christ.
- People whose respect and friendship you have already gained.
- People for whom you have been praying regularly.
- People you may have a limited time to reach.
 - They might be moving from your area.
 - They may not have long to live, according to human reasoning.
- People who have a Christian spouse.
- People in whom others have already invested some “sowing” and “watering”.
- People who seem to repeatedly come across your path.
 - This may be God’s providence, opening a door.
- People for whom you have the greatest concern

➤ ➔ **If your list is more than 10 (+/-) people, narrow it down.** Keep the list to add other to the flow chart later.

- These are the people (no more than about 10), you feel are your best prospects.
- Keep this list in some prominent place where you will see it daily.
 - e.g., Allan, make a flow chart on a single index card, put on my dresser

➔ **Summary:**

- once we prayerfully have a list of the folks we have the most influence over, we can start working toward bring them to Christ with the gospel

next: How do we get started, bring these folks to Christ with the gospel?

➤ #4 How do we get started, bring these people to Christ with the gospel?

→ Start by praying for these people, daily. — assignment

- Ask God for **opportunity to be of service to these people**.
 - **Quote - 1 Cor. 3:5-7** What then is **Apollos**? And what is **Paul**? **Servants** through whom you believed, even **as the Lord gave opportunity** to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.
 - **Quote - Col. 4:2-3a** Devote yourselves to **prayer**, keeping **alert in it** with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, **that God will open up to us a door for the word**. . . .
- ● Ask God for **wisdom to make the most of your opportunities**.
 - **Quote - Col. 4:5-6** Conduct yourselves with **wisdom toward outsiders**, making the **most of the opportunity**. Let your **speech always be with grace**, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will **know how you should respond** to each person.
- ● Ask God for **boldness to share the gospel when the right opportunity avails itself**.
 - **Read - Eph. 6:18-20** Paul needed prayer, we need prayer — boldness, share gospel with others
- → **What's this mean to you?**
 - everyone, young or old, can do this work to bring people to Christ
 - need everyone's participation
 - **Quote - Ja. 5:16b** The **effective prayer** of a **righteous man** can **accomplish much**.
 - more than anything, we need prayer - ourselves, the lost
 - when we have someone obey the gospel, it is because of your work - in and outside of the congregation
 - **saying:** it takes a congregation, to bring people to Christ, for the saving of their souls

Inv.:

- if you are here, not saved, opportunity
- What has Jesus commanded you to do?

Audio sermon notes:

- ➤ denotes where to proceed to the next slide PowerPoint slide.
- All Scriptures are NASB, unless otherwise noted.
- Sermon recorded 1/15/2006, Church of Christ, South Livingston Ave. In Lutz, FL, Allan McNabb, BibleStudyGuide.org.