

Talking to unchurched people about God and His plan of salvation

How do we get people to talk about spiritual things? How do we start soul-winning conversations?

"We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"(Acts 4:20 -- Peter and John to the Sanhedrin)

What do you fear the most about inviting those in your lifespaces to "come and see Jesus" at your church fellowship?

Half of the unchurched Americans surveyed by Gallup pollsters said they intend to return to active church participation some day. Of that group, one in 5 said they would start back to church if someone would just talk to them about spiritual matters.

So, how do you start that conversation which may lead people into a relationship with God and the assurance of salvation?

Look through this list to find questions which would be appropriate with:

1. Someone you just met
2. A long-time acquaintance
3. A good friend
4. A family member or a "best" friend

Some of the questions will initiate conversations that could be labeled *pre-evangelism*.

This list is not designed to be pulled out of your pocket or purse as you start talking to someone. These are given to demonstrate the variety of ways that a conversation can be steered to a deeper level.

Spiritual conversation openers

General issues

1. What gives most meaning to your life?
2. What, or who, are your sources of strength in your day-to-day living?
3. When you have problems or crises, how do you manage to get through them?
4. Is religion or God important to you?
 - o In what ways?
 - o If not, is there any particular reason why not?
5. Wouldn't you like to have faith in something? [[follow-up material](#)]

Relationship questions

1. Does God (or a Higher Power) seem personal to you?
2. Do you feel close to God?
3. What is your picture of God?
4. What has God done for you?
5. How is God working in your life right now?
6. Are you comfortable with God's guidelines and laws for living?
7. Do you feel there are any barriers between you and God?
8. Have you ever felt anything against God?
9. Have you ever done anything for which you feel God could not forgive you?
10. Do you understand the way to forgiveness and what it means?
11. Do you feel God has a plan for your life?
12. Do you feel you are living up to what you feel God expects of you?

Devotional life and practice

1. What kinds of devotional readings do you like?
2. What are your favorite authors, writings?
3. Do you like religious music? Kinds? Favorites?
4. Do you read the Bible?
5. Do you understand what you read?
6. Does Bible reading help in living? How?
7. Is prayer a meaningful part of your devotional life?
8. Do you feel you are growing spiritually?

The Church

1. Are you involved in a church?
2. Is your church helpful to you?
3. Do you attend the worship services of your church?
4. What do you like most about its teachings?
5. Are you personally acquainted with the pastor?
6. Are you a member of an accountability or nurturing group in your church?

Religion and illness, dying and death

1. Has being ill made any difference in your thinking or feeling about God or your religious faith?
2. Has it affected your devotional life?
3. When you are ill, do you have feelings that God is punishing you or that it is His will for you to be sick?
4. How do you feel about suffering?
5. Do you trust God with your future?

"So, how do I get started in witnessing to someone?"

Spiritual conversation starters

"Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked." -- Acts 8:30

Lyle Pointer published a series of "spiritual conversation starters" in a little brochure. His suggested opening lines for soul winning conversations were:

- Do you give much thought to God and spiritual things?
- Tell me about your most memorable spiritual experience.
- What do you think is a person's greatest spiritual need?
- Tell me about your church background; did you go to church as a child?
 - A. How do you feel about your upbringing and your awareness of spiritual things?
 - B. How would you describe your life with God now?
- How do you think a person begins a personal relationship with God?
- When did you feel closest to God?
 - A. What factors or influences brought you nearer to God?
 - B. What would renew that sense of closeness?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being closest to God), where do you see yourself in relationship with God?
 - A. Where do you want to be?
 - B. How do you see yourself moving closer to God?
 - C. How can I encourage you to get to where you would like to be?

Dr. Pointer gives some words of advice to those wanting to use his conversation starters:

- Ask questions that tie into former conversations.
- Listen closely. Be sensitive.
- Proceed as long as your friend shows interest.
- Affirm any amount of truth or insight offered.

What does Christian conversion include?

Is Christian conversion simply the moment of decision?

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" -- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Should conversion be seen as a process that includes (1) serious heart-searching before making a decision, (2) a decision to submit to Christ's lordship, and (3) a commitment to discipleship after coming to that decision?

Some evangelicals concentrate solely on the single moment or point of conversion (soul-winning). They neglect the "before" and "after" steps of a what a call to become a believer means for most people. Those "before" steps may be brought on by activity that some have called pre-evangelism.

Hesselgrave's stages of conversion

In his book *Communicating Christ cross-culturally* (Zondervan, 1978, pages 446-452), David Hesselgrave points to several stages which generally occur in authentic Christian conversion. Believers wanting to win others to Christ should see that they are trying to assist people to complete a process which Hesselgrave outlines with alliteration:

Discovery

"There is a person called Christ whom the true God is said to have sent into the world to be the Savior and Lord of human beings."

Deliberation

"Should I forsake my old ways and follow Christ?"

Determination

"I will repent and believe in Christ."

Dissonance

"Forces are trying to draw me back to the old ways. Shall I resist them and continue to follow Christ?"

Discipline

"I will identify with the people of Christ in His church. I will live in submission to His lordship and church discipline."

Thus, the point in time when a person acknowledges Christ as Savior may be very specific. However, the path leading to that point may have been a long one. A praying mother, a godly professor, a Christian book, a dramatic play, a loving friend, a personal crisis . . . all may have played a part in that person coming to the decision to repent and accept Christ's lordship. (I Corinthians 3:5-10; John 4:34-38)

12 steps to Christian Conversion based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We have admitted we are powerless over sin -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that only a power greater than ourselves could restore us.
3. We decided to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to other human beings the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We have made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continue to take personal inventory. When we are wrong, we promptly admit it.
11. We seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we carry this message to others.

Your personal testimony: talking to people about a relationship with God and His plan of salvation

Are you a contagious Christian? Is your faith infectious?

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith." -- Philemon 1:6

Writing out your testimony will help you be ready to tell your story about Jesus to anyone who asks.

There are three reasons why personal testimonies impact people.

1. People who know you are interested in you and your life.
2. Other people can relate to your story.
3. They can't argue with the fact that your life has been changed.

Read Acts 26 to hear Paul telling his story.

1. Acts 26: 4-11 **Before**
2. Acts 26:12-18 **How**
3. Acts 26:19-23 **After**

Your answers to the following questions form your testimony.

- A. **Before:** your life before you knew Christ
 1. Before you came to Christ, where were you spiritually? How did that affect you -- your feelings, attitudes, actions, and relationships?
 2. Before you became a Believer, what were some ways God began drawing you to Christ?
- B. **How:** your conversion
 1. What motivated you to invite Christ into your life as Lord and Savior?
 2. Specifically, how did you come to Christ, receive His forgiveness and submit to His Lordship?
 3. If a church played a part in your conversion, how did you come in contact with that congregation? Who and what do you remember from your first visits?
- C. **After:** your new walk with Christ
 1. What changed in your life after you accepted Jesus as your Savior?
 2. Finish this sentence: *"My prayer is...."*

Have You
Heard
of the **FOUR**
SPIRITUAL
LAWS?

Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern your relationship with God.

Law 1

God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.

God's Love

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

God's Plan

[Christ speaking] "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" [that it might be full and meaningful] (John 10:10).

Why is it that most people are not experiencing that abundant life?

Because...

Law 2

**Man is sinful and separated from God.
Therefore, he cannot know and experience
God's love and plan for his life.**

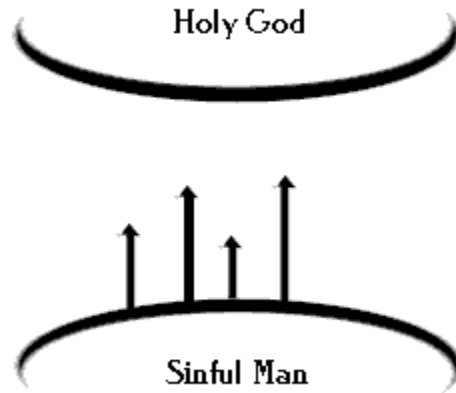
Man is Sinful

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Man Is Separated

"The wages of sin is death" [spiritual separation from God] (Romans 6:23).



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion -but he inevitably fails.

The third law explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

Law 3

**Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin.
Through Him you can know and experience
God's love and plan for your life.**

He Died In Our Place

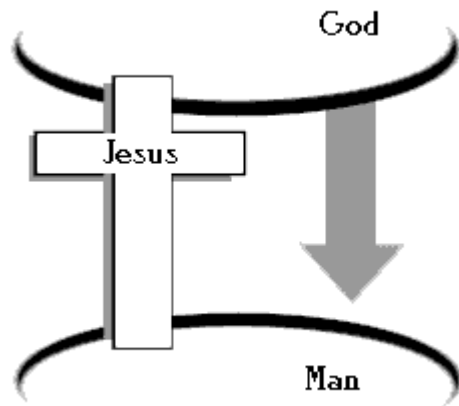
"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

He Rose from the Dead

"Christ died for our sins... He was buried... He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures... He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred..." (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

He Is the Only Way to God

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me'" (John 14:6).



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough just to know these three laws...

Law 4

We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

We Must Receive Christ

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

We Receive Christ Through Faith

"By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as result of works that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth

(Read John 3:1-8.)

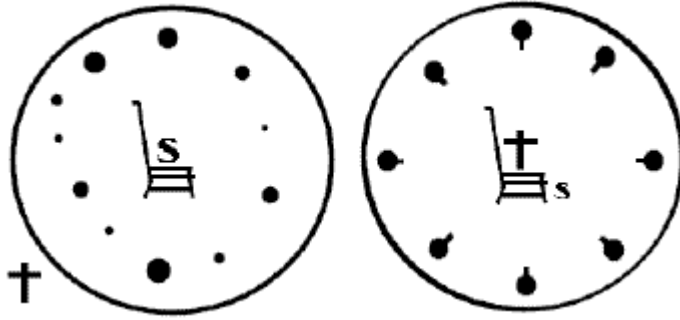
We Receive Christ Through Personal Invitation

[Christ speaking] "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20).

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree **intellectually** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an **emotional** experience.

We receive Jesus Christ by **faith**, as an act of the **will**.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives:



Self-Directed Life

S-Self is on the throne
T-Christ is outside the life
●-Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

Christ-Directed Life

T-Christ is in the life and on the throne
S-Self is yielding to Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan
●-Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

Which circle best represents your life?
 Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

The following explains how you can receive Christ:

**You Can Receive Christ Right Now by Faith Through Prayer
 (Prayer is talking with God)**

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, I invite you to pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into you life, as He promised.

The Roman Road to Salvation

The ROMANS ROAD....is a pathway you can walk.

It is a group of Bible verses from the book of Romans in the New Testament. If you walk down this road you will end up understanding how to be saved.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

We all have sin in our hearts. We all were born with sin.

We were born under the power of sin's control.

- Admit that you are a sinner.

Romans 6:23a "...The wages of sin is death..."

Sin has an ending. It results in death. We all face physical death, which is a result of sin. But a worse death is spiritual death that alienates us from God, and will last for all eternity. The Bible teaches that there is a place called the Lake of Fire where lost people will be in torment forever. It is the place where people who are spiritually dead will remain.

- Understand that you deserve death for your sin.

Romans 6:23b "...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Salvation is a free gift from God to you! You can't earn this gift, but you must reach out and receive it.

- Ask God to forgive you and save you.

Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us!"

When Jesus died on the cross He paid sin's penalty. He paid the price for all sin, and when He took all the sins of the world on Himself on the cross, He bought us out of slavery to sin and death! The only condition is that we believe in Him and what He has done for us, understanding that we are now joined with Him, and that He is our life. He did all this because He loved us and gave Himself for us!

- Give your life to God... His love poured out in Jesus on the cross is your only hope to have forgiveness and change. His love bought you out of being a slave to sin. His love is what saves you -- not religion, or church membership. God loves you!

Romans 10:13 "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

- Call out to God in the name of Jesus!

Romans 10:9,10 "...If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you shall be saved; for with

the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

- If you know that God is knocking on your heart's door, ask Him to come into your heart.

Jesus said,

Revelation 3:20a "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..."

- Is Jesus knocking on your heart's door?

Believe in Him.

Ask Him to come in to your heart by faith, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you.

Open the Bible to the Gospel of John and read what God says about Jesus, about you, and about being born again.

God will help you. He loves you.

You need to look for a local church where God's word is preached. The Bible says that we are to desire God's word like a newborn baby desires mother's milk.
Aren't you hungry to know the truth?

Water baptism is one of the ways you first show that you have been joined to Jesus. This is an action, and actions will not save you. However, it is an act of obedience and a symbol of commitment.

The symbolism is this:

When you go down in the water you show that You have been crucified and buried with Him,

And when you come up out of the water you show that you have been raised to walk with Him in newness of life.

(See Romans chapter 6)

You have been born again.

(See John chapter 3)

Your body has become God's temple. Your heart is where He lives.

Forgiveness is yours in Jesus. And you belong to Him.

You were sin's slave. But now... *You are a child of GOD!*****

John 1:12

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name!"

Evangelism Explosion: <http://www.eeinternational.org/>

DO YOU KNOW FOR SURE 

.....that you are going to be with God in heaven?

If God were to ask you, " **WHY SHOULD I LET YOU INTO MY HEAVEN** " what would you say?

If you are uncertain or hesitate for a moment to answer that question, this booklet has the ...

BEST NEWS you could ever hear!

The few minutes it will take you to read the following pages may be the most important time you will ever spend! Did you know that the Bible tells how you can **KNOW FOR SURE** that you have eternal life and will go to be with God in heaven?

"These things I have written to you ... that you may know that you have eternal life. " I John 5:13 **Here's how you can KNOW FOR SURE...**

1. HEAVEN (ETERNAL LIFE) IS A FREE GIFT.

The Bible says, ". . . *the GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:23b)

And because heaven is a gift like any other genuine gift.....**IT IS NOT EARNED or DESERVED** . Therefore, no amount of personal effort, good works, or religious deeds can earn a place in heaven for you.

"By grace you have been saved through faith, and that NOT OF YOURSELVES. it is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast. " Ephesians 2:8.9

WHY is it that no one can earn his way to heaven? Because ...

2. MAN IS A SINNER.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory, of God. " Romans 3:23 Sin is transgressing God's law and includes such things as lying, lust, cheating, deceit, anger, evil thoughts. immoral behavior, and more. And because of this**MAN CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF.**

If you wanted to save yourself by good deeds, do you know how good you would have to be? The Bible says you would have to be perfect. *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. "* Matthew 5:48

With such a high standard, no one can save himself for God also says, *"Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."* James 2:10

In spite of our sin, however ...

3. GOD IS MERCIFUL,

and therefore DOESN'T WANT TO PUNISH US. This is because ...

"God is love. . . " I John 4:8b and He says, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love."*

Jeremiah 31:3b But the same Bible that tells us that God loves us also tells us that . . .**GOD IS JUST, and therefore MUST PUNISH SIN.**

He says ...*"I will by no means clear the guilty"*

Exodus 34:7b

"The soul who sins shall die."

Ezekiel 18:4

We have a problem; we have all sinned. The penalty for sin is death. We need forgiveness so that we can have a right relationship with God. God solved this problem for us in the Person of ...

4. JESUS CHRIST Who exactly would you say Jesus Christ is?

The Bible tells us clearly that He is the infinite **GOD-MAN.**

"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) ... and the Word (Jesus) was with God ... and the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us. . ." John 1:1,14 Jesus Christ came to earth and lived a sinless life, but while on earth ...

WHAT DID HE DO?

He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven. *"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every, one, to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all."* Isaiah 53:6

God hates our sins but because of His love for us, He has placed them all on His Son. Christ bore our sin in His body on the cross. Now Jesus Christ offers you eternal life (heaven) as a free gift.

This gift is received by ...

5. FAITH

Faith is the key that opens the door to heaven. Many people mistake two things for saving faith:

1. Mere INTELLECTUAL ASSENT, that is, believing certain historical facts. The Bible says the devil believes in God, so believing in God is not saving faith.

2. Mere TEMPORAL FAITH, that is, trusting God for temporary crises such as financial, family, or physical needs.

Now these are good, and you should trust Christ for these, but they are not saving faith!

SAVING FAITH is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. It means resting upon Christ alone and what He has done rather than upon what you or I have done to get us into heaven.

"Believe (trust) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. . . " Acts 16:31a

Faith is like the hand of a beggar receiving the gift of a King. We don't deserve the gift of eternal life. But we can have it, if we will receive it by faith.

You have just read the greatest story ever told about the greatest offer ever made by the greatest Person who ever lived - Jesus Christ. The question that God is asking you now is ...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE?

Because this is such an important matter ... LET'S CLARIFY just what this involves.

It means, first of all, that you TRANSFER YOUR TRUST from what you have been doing to what Christ has done for you on the cross. It means, next, that you RECEIVE THE RESURRECTED, LIVING CHRIST into your life as SAVIOR.

He says, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock [at the door of your life]. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him."* Revelation 3:20

It means further that you **RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST INTO YOUR LIFE AS LORD** . He comes as Master and King. There is a throne room in your heart, and that throne is rightly His. He made you. He bought you and He wants to take His rightful place on the throne of your life. It means, finally, that you **REPENT OF YOUR SINS**. That means that you are willing to turn from anything you have been doing that is not pleasing to Him and to follow Him as He reveals His will to you in His Word.

Now, if this is what you really want ...

YOU CAN GO TO GOD IN PRAYER right where you are. You can receive His gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ right now. *"...with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation ... for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*Romans 10: 10, 13

If you want to receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, then call on Him, asking Him for this gift right now.

HERE'S A SUGGESTED PRAYER:

"Lord Jesus Christ, I know I am a sinner and do not deserve eternal life. But, I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in heaven for me. Lord Jesus, come into my life; take control of my life; forgive my sins and save me. I repent of my sins and now place my trust in you for my salvation. I accept the free gift of eternal life."

If this prayer is the sincere desire of your heart, look at what Jesus promises to those who believe in Him. *"Most assuredly, I say to you., he who believes in Me has everlasting life. "* John 6:47

WELCOME to God's Family!

If you have truly repented (forsaken, turned away) from your sins, placed your trust in Jesus Christ's sacrificial death, and received the gift of eternal life, you are now a child of God! Forever! Welcome to the Family of God! *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."*

John 1:12

TODAY is your SPIRITUAL BIRTHDAY

a day that you will always want to remember!

"Who were born, not of blood, nor of the Will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. " John 1:13

When you were physically born, the day of your birth was attested by a birth certificate. And so today, to help you recall what God had done in your life on this important day, we invite you to sign and keep the following

SPIRITUAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE

"For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13

Knowing that I have sinned and that I need the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. I now turn from my sins and trust Jesus for my eternal life. I ask Jesus Christ to forgive me and to deliver me from sin's power and give me eternal life. I now give Jesus Christ control of my life. From this time forward, as He gives me strength, I will seek to serve Him and obey Him in all areas of my life.

Date _____ Signature: _____

WHAT'S NEXT?

Just as a newborn baby grows physically, so you will grow spiritually by taking the following steps:

1. Read one chapter of the Book of John in the **BIBLE** each day. *"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word (of God), that you may grow thereby."* I Peter 2:2
2. Spend time each day in **PRAYER** conversing with God. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ..."* Philippians 4:6
3. **WORSHIP** regularly in a church that teaches you the Bible and honors Jesus Christ. *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'"* Psalm 122:1
"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
John 4:24
4. **FELLOWSHIP** with Christians who will help you grow in faith. *"Those who gladly received his word ... continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:41,42*
5. Be a **WITNESS** by telling others what Jesus Christ means to you! Jesus said, *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before My Father Who is in heaven."*
Matthew 10:32,33

Remember to attend regularly a Bible-teaching CHURCH where Jesus Christ is honored. Confess your faith in Christ to them and join it.