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The making of an evangelist

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A day in the life of an evangelist should be God's day. A God directed day and a labouring with Christ in the plenteous over-ripe harvest fields of the world.

It is very interesting to note that Jesus said at the end of His life on earth, 'I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do'. In other words, He did what the Father wanted Him to do, no more, no less.

Paul, at the end of his life said something similar. 'I have finished my course, I have kept the faith'.

In these days of 'burn out', it is essential to note carefully what those two scriptures are saying. Proverbs 16:3 says, 'Commit your works to the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established'.

Jesus is the Lord of the harvest in the ripened harvest field of the world. We, His servants, are but day labourers and reapers with Him in the part of the field in which he requires us to serve.

I made a great mistake when I had been in full time evangelism for about only three years. I was tired out from trying to do too much. You see, I had accepted the smart cliche of godly men who said, 'It is better to burn out than rust out'. I brought my condition to the Lord in prayer. Not long after I came across a saying by D.L. Moody, the famous evangelist. He said that it is better to 'last out'. That statement, and the fact that there is a Lord of the harvest, brought me to a better perspective of my life's work. I had been greatly burdened by the lost state of mankind, that I felt I must keep working as hard as I could to reach as many as possible with the good news.

I still have the concern, and as Paul exhorts us, I try to buy up every opportunity to redeem time because the days are evil but now it is to buy up every opportunity as the Lord of the harvest directs by His Word and Spirit.

You see, Jesus went out of His way, it seemed, to go to reach a woman of Samaria, a woman with a clouded past. On other occasions, He seemed to pass some people by who appeared to need help.

Also, Paul would have gone to some people to share the Gospel but the Spirit did not permit him to go there.

If we intend to do the work God gives us to do, and to finish our course, then a woman of Samaria may be a strategic person to seek out for the Lord, in the overall purpose of God.

Part of our planning in our service for God should include a prayer similar to the one below:

Lord, lay soul upon my heart,
And win that should through me,
That I may gladly do my part,
To bring that soul to Thee.

Or, another prayer in the words of a chorus:

Lord crucified, give me love like Thing,
Help me to win [or love] the dying souls of men,
O keep my heart in closest touch with Thee, And give me love, pure Calvary love,
To bring the lost to Thee.

God hears that kind of prayer and answers it. As He does a prayer centred on Matthew 4:19, 'Come after me and I will make you (to become) fishers of men'. In the Living Bible paraphrase it says that Jesus called out, 'Come along with me and I will show you how to fish for the souls of men'. So you can pray that the Lord will show you how to fish for men.

All of the above spells out for us the necessity of keeping in close touch with God by regular Bible meditation and prayer, especially noting how the soul winners of the New Testament went about things. We should also read what experienced, and God-blessed soul winners of the past, say about soul winning. However, always remember that God's word is the final authority on anything that men say.

You would find great help in the small book in the Moody pocket book series called ÓGreat Personal WorkersÓ, or in a similar book of its kind. Check the book stores.

To sum up the life in a day of an evangelist, I will list some steps which may help you.

1. Commit your day to God.

2. Check your appointment diary for the day, also scan for future appointments in the next week or so. Ask God for His will to be shown clearly to you in the things you must do; you should do; you may do, if time permits.

3. Pray the prayers mentioned earlier in this study or similar prayers.

4. Draft out a plan of work for the day under number two above.

5. Bathe everything you have as appointments or anything you are shown, in prayer, for without Christ we can do nothing of spiritual value.

6. Allow for buffer time in your priority planning to allow for God's interruptions. They are phone calls, people coming for help, or to discuss programs, etc.

7. If buffer time is not filled, then use it in some other useful way.

8. Pray before, during and after planning.

ÓPrayer timeÓ
During crusades, I have a secret which I learned from famous God-blessed evangelists. Keep your afternoons free of appointments, if at all possible. Spend two to three hours having an appointment with God. You see, your day can become upset earlier because you have had to keep working after evening crusade meetings up until midnight or later. Sometimes the Lord did not have time to eat.

This way of working isn't the norm, but is only for those special occasions when there is a special must be done which obviously seems to be the will of God for you.

When you are not in a crusade situation, and have a more normal routine to follow, scale your prayers and meditation on the Word of God to fit in, in the best possible way. Ask God about that too.

Concerning family time, recreation and sleep

Remember, the Creator made us so that we need sleep. Rest is important in His creation. For example, the heart beats, then rests. The land grows crops and then needs resting at times. Metals can get 'tired', and fly apart. So get sleep, recreation and family time. Live a disciplined life. When possible, plan for each area of life.

The value of five minutes, and the academic hour

John Wesley said there can be great things done in a spare five minutes. Plan for something or part of something. When studying, or writing for hours on end, use the 'academic hour'. Fifty minutes work, 10 minute break. Use the 10 minutes break to exercise to do some small chore.