

How to Tell Someone the Good News

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Study Five: How Not to Dread Presenting Testing Truths

I. INTRODUCTION: DON'T BE AFRAID OF A CRISIS.

1. What preparation must precede presenting the "testing truths"?

Note: "You should not feel it your duty to introduce arguments upon the Sabbath question upon meeting the people. If persons mention the subject, tell them that this is not your burden now. But when they surrender heart and mind and will to God, they are then prepared candidly to weigh evidence in regard to these solemn, testing truths" (Evangelism, p. 228; 1895).

"Do not make prominent those features of the message which are a condemnation of the customs and practices of the people, until they have opportunity to know that we are believers in Christ, that we believe in His divinity and in his preexistence. Let the testimony of the world's Redeemer be dwelt upon. ... Let the outsiders understand that we preach the gospel as well as the law, and they will feast upon these truths, and many will take their stand for the truth" (*ibid.*, p. 231; 1889).

2. Note how Stephen gained the attention of his audience: Acts 7:2, 3. And how Paul gained the goodwill of his audiences: Acts 13:16, 17.

Note: Although these were sermons and not informal Bible studies, the principles apply. Stephen and Paul first gained the confidence of their listeners, and then presented the testing truths for their time (Acts 7:51, 52; 13:38-41).

"To the Gentiles, Paul preached Christ as their only hope of salvation, but did not at first have anything definite to say upon the law. But after their thoughts were warmed with the presentation of Christ as the gift of God to our world, and what was comprehended in the work of the Redeemer in the costly sacrifice to manifest the love God to man, in the most eloquent simplicity he showed that love [agape] for all mankind—Jew and Gentile—that they might be saved by surrendering their hearts to Him. Thus when, melted and subdued, they gave themselves to the Lord, he presented the law of God as the test of their obedience. This was the manner of his working—adapting his methods to win souls" (*ibid.*, pp. 230, 231).

3. When you have prepared the way, do not hesitate to present the full message of the "testing truths." 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Acts 20:26, 27, 31-33.

Note: "When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away. ...

"Frequently, when a congregation [or family] is at the very point where the heart is prepared for the Sabbath question, it is delayed through fear of the consequences. This has been done, and the results have not been good. ...

"Lift up the standard, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Make this the important theme. Then, by your strong arguments, make it of still greater force. Dwell more on the Revelation. Read, explain, and enforce its teaching.

"Our warfare is aggressive. Tremendous issues are before us, yea, and right upon us. Let our prayers ascend to God that the four angels may still hold the four winds, that they may not blow to injure or destroy until the last warning has been given to the world. Then let us work in harmony with our prayers, let nothing lessen the force of the truth for this time" (*ibid.*, p. 229).

"The eighteenth chapter of Revelation reveals the importance of presenting the truth in no measured terms but with boldness and power. There has been too much beating around the bush in the proclamation of the third angel's message" (*ibid.*, p. 230).

II. EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PRESENT THE SABBATH TRUTH.

1. Remember that "the truth ... is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21). You have presented His agape-love in His life, His death, and His resurrection; now present His example. Luke 4:16, Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 23:50-56 (GNB is very clear).
2. Present the reason for the Sabbath: Rev. 1:10; Heb. 4:4-9 (explain the meaning of "rest" — "a keeping of the Sabbath").

Note: The weekly Sabbath is our lifeline to heaven, our banquet of spiritual food, our "main" aqueduct through which we enjoy a fresh supply of the water of life. Present also the need for fellowship with others who believe the truth (Heb. 10:25; Lev. 23:3, "an holy convocation").

3. Present the law of God as ten "new covenant" promises. Ex. 20:1-17; Rom. 3:31; 6:12-15; Heb. 8:6-11.

Note: We have not presented "the law" correctly unless we have made plain that it is a revelation of agape (Rom. 13:10), and that it is in reality ten powerful promises. "The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. ... That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, 'This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.' There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus" (Ellen G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1105).

Remind your student of the Good News in Matthew 11:28-20. Jesus says it is "hard" to resist the leading of the Lord (Acts 26:14). "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

4. You can trace the Sabbath all through Scripture.

Note: At creation (Gen. 2:1-3); Noah knew of it (7:4; 8:10); Abraham kept it (18:19); Israel knew of preparation for it (Ex. 16:22-25); David sings about it (Psalm 92); Isaiah loved it (58:13, 14); Jeremiah honored it (17:27); Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament kept it (Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14).

5. A lesson on "how to keep the Sabbath" will rivet attention on the truth. (See Glad Tidings Bible Study Guides, lesson 29.)

Note: Understanding how to keep the Sabbath focuses light upon this holy day and clearly reveals how it is different from ordinary Sunday-keeping. At this point in a series of Bible studies, an invitation to a Friday evening supper and opening of the Sabbath will be a blessing to your student, to let him see what a joy Sabbath-keeping is.

At this point, a sincere truth-seeker will want to attend Sabbath School and worship services; God grant that his first impression of an Adventist meeting will be a good one because the presence of the Holy Spirit will be there!

III. PRESENTING OTHER TESTING TRUTHS.

1. Be careful in presenting "the state of the dead." 1 Thess. 4:14-18.

Note: One of our popular lessons has been entitled, "Are the Dead Really Dead?" It is an unfortunate idea to present; the truth is that the dead are not "really dead," they are "asleep." None will be "really dead" until at the end of the millennium (Rev. 2:11; 20:14). Since the world began only one man has ever truly died— Jesus; all the rest have gone to "sleep." Read John 11:11-14, 43, 44. Emphasize that the dead are asleep "in Jesus," and thus they know nothing until the resurrection. The fear of death is wiped out by this blessed truth. If the truth is presented in a kind, gentle, even tender manner, objections will probably be minimal.

2. What is the best way to present Christian standards?

The answer is: Health reform, temperance, diet, amusements, wearing of jewelry, etc., will be easy to present in the light of the great Day of Atonement. This will be our next topic.