

EVANGELISM

Evangelistic Strategies and Resources

Lesson #6

In this final lesson of the Evangelism class, we will consider various evangelistic strategies and evaluate them by what we have already learned from the Word of God. At the end of this lesson a list of some evangelistic resources is provided.

I. EVALUATING RAY COMFORT'S "WAY OF THE MASTER"

In recent years one of the more popular evangelistic organizations is Ray Comfort's *Living Waters Ministries*. Their website www.livingwaters.com has many helpful resources to encourage and equip Christians to fulfill the great commission (Mt. 28:19-20; Lk. 24:45-49). Living Waters also has a YouTube channel with many helpful videos <https://www.youtube.com/@LivingWaters>. Because *The Way of the Master* is one of the more popular evangelistic strategies being used today, we will consider it in some detail. To begin with, we will consider one of their popular videos presentations, "Hell's Best Kept Secret." Comfort has done many versions of this, some quite lengthy.

Losing Church Attenders

In one video I watched, statistics were given stating that churches are losing about 80% to 90% of the people who make "decisions for Christ." Many churches do not practice expository preaching or preach the gospel clearly and regularly. These churches are losing attenders. Some things to consider:

1. Local churches may lose people who profess to be Christians, but no truly born Christian, who is part of the universal church has ever been lost (see Jn. 6:37, 39; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:28-29; I Cor. 1:8-9; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 1:6; I Thess. 5:23-24; I Pet. 5:10).
2. The mission of the church *is not to keep religious unbelievers coming to a church building*. The fact that many are departing from local churches reveals *they do not know the Lord* (see Heb. 10:23-27; I Jn. 2:19). A great apostasy is prophesied as coming in the last days (II Thess. 2:3).
3. The Bible never tells us to "make a decision for Christ." The gospel calls sinners to repent of their sin, believe in or trust, receive, or look to Jesus Christ (Isa. 45:22; Jn. 1:12-13; 3:16; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:8-9). God is the One who saves sinners by His grace. Repentance and faith are granted to the elect by grace so that they believe and are born again (see Acts 16:14; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29; Acts 5:30-31; 11:18; II Tim. 2:24-26).

Comfort says people are falling away from "the faith" because of faulty evangelistic techniques. I would agree. We want to avoid faulty evangelistic methods. But the real problem is usually *the absence of biblical gospel preaching*. Evangelistic techniques don't save people, but bad evangelistic methods can prevent people from coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Clearly, Jesus saves

people through the gospel preached (see Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18). Professing Christians fall away or go apostate from local churches, but never from the *universal* church of truly born-again saints. There are also other reasons people, both saved and religious but deceived, depart from local churches, but surely inadequate gospel preaching is the major reason.

A Historical Illustration of a Bad Evangelistic Technique

During the latter part of the 1700's and early 1800's, evangelist Charles Finney was passionate about leading people to Christ. His passion for lost souls motivated him to consider how he might *get and identify more converts*. He wanted to see new converts disciplined and incorporated into the local church. All this is good and fine, but how do you go about identifying new converts? And more fundamentally, "Does the Bible tell us to identify new converts?"

I would argue that new converts identify themselves. They hear the gospel, repent, believe, and are born again by grace. Full of joy, peace, and forgiveness, they *self-identify*, telling everyone of their new faith. They become ravenous for Bible teaching as we saw many times in the book of Acts in Lesson 5. They can't stop talking about Jesus! The conversion of a sinner into a saint quickly becomes obvious to all because of the transformation that takes place by grace.

Finney, and many others in his day, thought it would be wise to try and identify who was being saved. Thus, pragmatic approaches were developed to identify who was being saved e.g., the altar call, the anxious bench, raising your hand, signing a prayer card, praying the sinner's prayer, etc. The desire of some gospel preachers were honorable. Others merely wanted to boast about how many people they led to the Lord. Regardless of the motive, evangelistic techniques to identify who were being saved have done great harm to the cause of Christ.

Finney, for example, encouraged people who were "feeling anxious about their sin" to "come to the anxious bench." Once at the anxious bench, they could pray for and be encouraged to make a "decision for Christ" or be led in "praying the sinner's prayer." If they did this they were warmly welcomed into the family of God and given assurance they were saved and could never lose their salvation. Problems abound with Finney's approach. First, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and judgment through the preaching of the Word of God (Jn. 16:8). It is normal for all who hear the Word of God preached to feel conviction or have "anxious thoughts." *But conviction is not conversion.* And the Bible doesn't tell sinners to either make a decision for Christ or pray the sinners prayer as a means of appropriating the gospel or of being saved.

Others at the time encouraged people to "come forward at an altar call." Some preachers had people bow their heads in prayer and ask those who wanted to make a "decision for Christ" to "raise their hand." Those who raised their hands would be identified and encouraged after the service to make "a decision for Christ" or "pray the sinner's prayer." Still other preachers encouraged inquiring sinners to "sign a prayer card" and put it in the hands of an usher to express their desire to be saved. Those who signed a card would later be contacted by an

evangelism team and encouraged to make a “decision for Christ” or to “pray the sinner’s prayer,” or “ask Jesus in their heart,” concepts foreign to the Bible.

Thus, biblical ways to appropriate the gospel were replaced with a man-made works substitutes. These practices are still common today in many churches.

Desiring to see people saved or boast of how many converts they had, many churches coaxed people to the altar with lilting music or manipulated people to perform some work if they wanted to be saved. In the end, many so-called converts *looked to themselves, rather than Christ for salvation*. Over the course of time, most of those “evangelized” in this way went apostate from local churches. This subtle, but tragic approach is often referred to as “decisional regeneration.”

Finney’s approach put emphasis on what men had to do to get saved rather than on what Christ had already done to save men. Later in life, Finney saw the error of his way. He realized most who were coaxed to “make a decision for Christ” under his ministry departed from the faith. After Finney, others like Billy Graham in his crusades had many thousands of professions of faith, but churches in the area of his crusades grew very little. Finney’s approach continues be used to lead people into false assurances of salvation to this day.

The damage done by Finney’s approach is that many who made “decisions for Christ” were encouraged to be baptized and become members of local churches. Though spiritually dead and still the children of Satan, they were asked to serve, teach Sunday school, and become leaders in the church. Some entered into the ministry as unconverted pastors, still slaves to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Local churches were polluted with religious pretenders who thought they were saved yet were still perishing.

Most, however, fell away from the faith like the seed sown on the road, the rocky soil, or among the weeds (Mt. 13:1-9, 18-23). The long-term effects of “decisional regeneration” convinced many who went apostate from the church, that the gospel was a hoax and had no power to deliver someone from slavery to the lusts of the flesh. Even today, the entire eastern seaboard of the United States, where Finney ministered, is referred to by some as “the Finney Burn Out Zone” and remains one of the most difficult places to evangelize the lost. The Finney debacle is a prime example of what Ray Comfort rightly laments, bad evangelistic techniques.

Jesus’ Approach to Evangelism

Ray Comfort, in his “Way of the Master,” implies that Jesus had “a way” in which He evangelized. The rich young ruler in Mk. 10:17-22 is often used an example of Jesus’ “way.” Let’s quickly work through the text to remind ourselves of what Jesus taught and make a few observations.

Mk. 10:17 says,

As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

This is evangelism T-ball to have someone ask you how to inherit eternal life. Notice how Jesus responds in vs. 18-19:

And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. "You know the commandments, 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.' "

Notice Jesus doesn't tell him, "You need to believe that I am the Messiah, the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no one can come to the Father but through me." He doesn't tell him that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Me (though it is!). Instead, Jesus rattles off a sampling of the Ten Commandments (see Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21). Remember, Jesus was a Jew, born under the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:4). He was living in the Old Testament and the New Covenant had not been inaugurated yet. It almost seems Jesus is implying that salvation is by works, yet what Jesus is doing is *presenting the law* to expose the rich young ruler's sin. Notice how the rich young ruler responds in vs. 20:

And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

The rich young ruler's answer reveals his self-righteousness. He is basically saying, "I have been a good person all my life and have kept the commandments of God." He didn't see himself as a sinner in need of salvation. Remember, in vs. 18 Jesus said, "*Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*" God alone is good because God alone is sinless. Jesus, by mentioning the Ten Commandments, exposes the young ruler's self-righteous view of himself. The rich young ruler doesn't see himself as a sinner. Instead, he sees himself as good – like God! When someone sees themselves as righteous, they don't need a Savior. Jesus came to call sinners to repentance (see Lk. 5:32). Jesus attempts a second time to show the rich young ruler his sin by asking him to give up his idol. Vs. 21 says:

Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

In order to obey Jesus' words, the rich young ruler would have to turn his back on his idol – money. He would have to trust God completely, not his earthly possessions. He would have to demonstrate with his actions that Jesus meant more to him than anything the world had to offer (see Mt. 13:44-46). Mark then writes in vs. 22:

But at these words he [the rich young ruler] was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

The rich young ruler's god was money, which he was not willing to give up in order to follow Christ. He wanted to keep his self-righteousness and his money more than he wanted Jesus and so he departed grieved.

Comfort rightly points out that Jesus *first went to the law in order to expose the rich young ruler's true problem* – sin. Sadly, that approach didn't work with the rich young ruler. He didn't come to grips with his sinfulness. This is why Comfort encourages evangelists to *first preach the law* to expose and bring sinners under conviction of their sin, so that they see their need for a Savior. After that the gospel is preached as the solution for sinners who are under God's judgment. If the rich young ruler would have humbled himself and confessed his sin, Jesus would have probably called him to repent and believe in Him. Jesus' approach is surely biblical and it always wise to follow Jesus' example.

Is Preaching the Law and then the Gospel “the Way” of the Master?

Simply stated, no, it is not “the only way” but “a way” of the Master. Jesus didn't always do evangelism in the same way. The most common “evangelistic technique” employed by Jesus early in His ministry *was performing signs and wonders* (e.g., Isa. 35:5ff; 61:1-3; Mt. 11:2-6; Lk. 4:38-44). While this method cannot be duplicated by us today, it is worth noting. It was prophesied that the Messiah would heal the sick and preach the gospel. Jesus went from town to town doing just that. His miracles revealed the power of God and authenticated Him as the Messiah and His gospel as from God (see Jn. 2:11, 23; 7:31).

Nicodemus, the Pharisee, acknowledged that Jesus' miracles authenticated Him as being from God saying, “*Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him,*” (Jn. 3:2). Jesus gave His disciples authority to heal the sick and cast out demons for the same reason (see Lk. 10:1-22). But since we are not given authority to do signs and wonders, we need to use a different approach. But please note—doing miracles, then preaching the gospel is another “way” of the Master.

When calling the disciples, Jesus used a very simple evangelistic approach saying, “*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,*” (Mt. 4:19). Surprisingly, even men like Matthew, a traitorous, greedy tax collector “*left everything behind, and began to follow Him,*” (Lk. 5:27-28). At times Jesus merely called people to repent, believe, or follow Him. These are other “ways” of the Master.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5-7, *Jesus preached the law, but not at first*. He started with beatitudes that kingdom saints possess (Mt. 5:1-12). He then told those listening they were to be salt and light in the world. He told them that their righteousness had to surpass that of the scribes and pharisees (Mt. 5:13-20). Jesus then went into a lengthy discussion of the law, contrasting what the rabbis taught and what God meant. Jesus ended by telling His listeners to be as perfect as His heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:21-48)! Jesus then went after specific sins, violations of the Law of Moses prevalent in their culture. He exposed religious hypocrisy, the need to forgive, to store up heavenly treasure, to serve God alone, to not be anxious, to not judge hypocritically, and to obey the golden rule (Mt. 6:1-7:12). At this point their sin was exposed and at this point they should have felt their sin, guilt, and need for a savior.

After exposing the sin of His listeners, Jesus transitioned into the gospel, told them they needed to strive to enter the narrow gate, warned of false teachers,

religious hypocrites, of self-righteousness, and the need to hear Jesus' words and act upon them (Mt. 7:24-28).

Calling sinners to repentance was another common approach Jesus used when doing evangelism. In Lk. 5:32 Jesus says, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Twice, in Lk. 13:3 & 5, Jesus merely says, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Though repentance leading to salvation is a repentance from sin and implies that one must have a knowledge of sin, Jesus didn't always preach the law before calling sinners to repentance. Granted, He usually preached to Jews who knew the law, but many did not see themselves as sinners, even though they already knew the Law of Moses. So, knowing God's law doesn't always lead people to see their sin and need for a savior.

What we learn from searching the gospels is that there isn't a single "way of the Master." There are many "ways" Jesus evangelized the lost. But Ray Comfort is wise to advocate a law/gospel approach in his "Way of the Master" approach to evangelism. It is a good method to use in a biblically illiterate world. People need to understand they are sinners, understand the consequences of their sin, and that to escape judgment they must repent of their sin and place their faith in Jesus Christ. Preaching the law of God first and then the gospel as the solution to man's sin is a biblical approach, but not the only biblical approach.

Potential Problems with Ray Comfort's "Way of the Master" Approach

There are "potential problems" with any biblical approach to evangelism. Often a biblical approach is twisted, distorted into a not-so-good evangelistic method by those who haven't thoroughly studied the Word of God. They learn a biblical approach, but have not done the necessary study that produced it. Therefore their biblical discernment is low and they can wonder from what is biblical to what is not, without even knowing it. Here are some examples of how people have distorted the Way of the Master approach:

1. *First potential problem* is that Ray Comfort seems to imply that Christians might "fall away" from the faith. Religious pretenders fall away from the faith, but no true believer falls away from their faith for they are kept by God and sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. This is not to say that Ray Comfort denies the doctrine of eternal security. I am not sure what he believes. But his statements seem to imply that true believers in churches are falling away from "the faith" which is an impossibility (see Jn. 10:27-30; Rom. 8:28-39; I Cor. 1:8-9; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 1:6; I Thess. 5:23-24; I Pet. 5:10). The New Testament often uses the term "the faith" to describe the entire body of Christian teaching and doctrine (see Acts 6:7; 13:8; I Cor. 13:16; II Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:23; I Tim. 4:1; 6:10; Jude 3; etc.).
2. *A second potential problem with The Way of The Master approach* is that it implies that faulty evangelistic techniques are "THE" reason people fall away from the faith. While it is surely a major reason, it isn't the only reason. Paul knew how to preach the gospel and yet even he had converts who fell away from the faith (see Col. 4:14 cf. II Tim. 4:10). Judas who was called by Jesus went apostate. It is true that faulty evangelistic techniques

are a major problem today, yet there are other reasons people fall away from the faith. In the parable of the soils, Jesus spoke of persecution, the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches as reasons people fall away (see Mt. 12:20-22).

3. A *third potential problem* I came across among those who use *The Way of The Master* approach to evangelism is a confusion about the Law of Moses versus the Law of Christ. This confusion can be seen for instance on the back of the Giant One Hundred Dollar Bill gospel tract. Part of the tract discusses that the penalty for breaking God's law is death. Then the tract reads, "Let's see if you have broken this Law (The Ten Commandments)." The implication is that we are under the Ten Commandments as a law system i.e., the Law of Moses.

The Bible teaches that there are two great commandments, love God and love one's neighbor. These two commands are the foundation of the Law of Moses (see Mt. 22:35-40) and the Law of Christ (see I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2). The Ten Commandments are an expanded version of the two great commandments in the Law of Moses. The first four commandments deal with loving God directly, the last six of the Ten Commandments deal with loving God indirectly by loving our neighbor. However, the New Testament is quite clear that we are not under the law of Moses, which would include the Ten Commandments (see Gal. 3:13, 19; Eph. 2:14-16; Heb. 7:18-19, etc.). Do you see the problem?

If when doing evangelism we infer that people should keep the Ten Commandments, then we are implying that they need to be under the Law of Moses. Christians are under the New Covenant (see Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:23-28; Lk. 22:20; II Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8-9:28). Law of Christ, the royal law, the law of liberty is a completely different law system (see I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; James 1:25; 2:8, 12). The Law of Moses was set aside or superseded by *a new law system, the law of Christ, when the New Covenant was inaugurated with Christ's death*. The law of Christ is found in the gospels and New Testament letters to the churches. In the great commission, Jesus said we are to make disciples, "*teaching them to observe all I commanded you*" i.e., the Law of Christ (Mt. 28:19-20).

Primary reason for confusion about the Ten Commandments is that *there is overlap between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ*. Both law systems are derived from the same two great commandments. Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the Law of Christ. But the fourth commandment about keeping the Sabbath holy is permanently entered into through faith in the gospel (see Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:16; Heb. 4:2-3). It is true that all Scripture is profitable for believers of any age, including the Law of Moses (see Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:6, 11; II Tim. 3:15; etc.). However, we must not imply when doing evangelism that everyone is under and will be judged by the Law of Moses.

4. *A fourth potential problem* I have seen with *The Way of The Master* approach is a legalistic adherence. I have seen some *Way of the Master* groupies condemn others who use different evangelistic approaches. If you choose to use *The Way of the Master* approach—fine—but be on guard against a censorious, condemning attitude towards others who choose to use a different biblical approach. Be like Paul who when speaking of those who had faulty motives for preaching the gospel said in Phil. 1:18, “*What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.*”

5. *A fifth and final potential problem* with *The Way of The Master* approach to evangelism is that it seems to disregard the law of God written in men’s hearts (see Rom. 2:15). The Apostle Paul, in Rom. chs. 1:18-3:20 argues that all men are guilty before God because of *natural revelation*. Natural revelation is what can be learned about God in nature and what has been created.

Internal Natural Revelation

- a. All men have a knowledge of God (see Rom. 1:19, 21).

- b. All men have the law of God written in their hearts, an instinct of right and wrong (see Rom. 2:14-15).

- c. All men have a conscience that accuses or defends them of doing right or wrong according to law of God within them (see Rom. 2:15).

External Natural Revelation

- d. It can be seen in creation and what has been made that God exists (see Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20).

The Way of the Master approach seems to deny the existence of natural revelation in claiming the law of God must be preached. Everyone knows there is a God. Everyone has God’s law written in their hearts. Everyone has a conscience accusing or defending them of right and wrong. Everyone can observe in creation that God exists. Granted, all men universally suppress the truth of God’s natural revelation in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:19), just as they often suppress the law of God revealed in the Bible in unrighteousness, or the gospel preached. But natural revelation and the law of God written in men’s hearts explains why we don’t always need to preach the law first before preaching the gospel. Everyone already has God’s law written within them.

This is not to condemn the law/gospel approach, but merely to suggest some of the potential problems that can arise when zealous, but untrained evangelists use the approach, but don’t clearly understand how it was derived from the Word of God. Yet as we shall see in the next section, the law/gospel approach promoted by Ray Comfort was used by notable preachers and evangelists of the past.

II. HISTORICAL EVANGELISTIC STRATEGIES

- A. **Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)**, the father of Protestantism, preacher, theologian, and driving force of the German Reformation, in a sermon entitled, *Christ's Answer to the Question John Asked Him; His Praise of John, and the Application of This Gospel*, said:

“Thus, the Law of God convicts us, even by our own experience, that by nature we are evil, disobedient, lovers of sin, and hostile to God's laws.”

He goes on to say:

Despair follows when man becomes conscious of his evil motives, and realizes that it is impossible for him to love the law of God, finding nothing good in himself; but only hatred of the good and delight in doing evil. Now he realizes that the law cannot be kept only by works hence he despairs of his works and does not rely upon them. . . Thus, man is crushed and put to naught, and truly humbled.

Finally, Luther says that after the law:

. . . has worked deep despair and wretchedness in our hearts, then God comes and offers us his blessed and life-giving word and promises; he pledges and obligates himself to grant grace and help in order to deliver us from misery, not only to pardon all our sins, but even to blot them out, and in addition to this to create in us love and delight in keeping his law.

Thus, we see that the father of the German Reformation believed it was necessary to preach the law first in order to convict people of their sin, that they might see their need for a Savior and receive the gospel in faith.

- B. **The Puritans (mid 1500's to late 1600's)** arose out of the English Reformation. They were called “Puritans” because they wanted to conform everything “purely” to the Word of God. It is beyond reasonable attestation that the Puritan era produced some of the greatest preachers, theologians, and pastors of all time. Because the English Reformation saw great revival, the Puritan's approach to evangelism should be of special interest. J. I. Packer, who has written extensively on the Puritans, in an article entitled, *Puritan Evangelism* wrote:

The Puritans taught that, as a general rule, conviction of sin, induced by, the preaching of the Law, must precede faith, since no man will or can come to Christ to be saved from sin till he knows what sins he needs saving from. It is a distinctive feature of the Puritan doctrine of conversion that this point, the need for "preparation" for faith, is so stressed. Man's first step toward conversion must be some knowledge, of God, of himself, of his duty and of his sin, . . . the wise minister, seeing that the fallow ground is now ploughed up, urges the sinner to turn to Christ. This is the

right advice to give to a man who has shown that with all his heart he desires to be saved from sin; for when a man wants to be saved from sin, then it is possible for him genuinely and sincerely to receive the One who presents Himself to man as the Savior from sin. But it is not possible otherwise; and therefore, the Puritans over and over again beg ministers not to short-circuit the essential preparatory process. They must not give false encouragement to those in whom the Law has not yet done its work.

We leave Packer as our expert witness to the fact that Puritans, as a rule, preached the law first, before applying the good news of the gospel.

- C. **George Whitefield (1714– 1770)** is arguably the greatest preacher and evangelist that has ever lived. He drew gigantic crowds and revival followed in the wake of his preaching wherever he went. Whitefield, in a sermon entitled *The Gospel, A Dying Saints Triumph* discusses the purpose of the law in gospel preaching, saying:

“. . . some say, you must not preach the law: You cannot preach the gospel without preaching the law: for you shall find by and by, we are to preach something that the people must be saved by; it is impossible to tell them how they are to be saved, unless we tell them what they are to be saved from. The way the Spirit of God takes, is like that we take in preparing the ground. Do you think any farmer would have a crop of corn next year unless they plough now? You may as well expect a crop of corn on unploughed ground, as a crop of grace until a soul is convinced of its being undone without a Savior. That is the reason we have so many mushroom converts, so many persons that are always happy! happy! happy! and never were miserable: Why? Because their stony ground is not ploughed up; they have not a conviction of the law: They are stony ground hearers: "*They hear the word with joy, and in a time of temptation, (which will soon come after a seeming or real conversion,) they fall away.*"

Whitefield too believed and practiced preaching the law first, to “plough up the stony heart” before casting in the good seed of the gospel.

- D. **John Wesley (1703 – 1791)** was a contemporary of George Whitefield and another great evangelist. In a *Letter on Preaching Christ* (London, Dec. 20, 1751), Wesley wrote:

Some think, preaching the law only; others, preaching the gospel only. I think, neither the one nor the other; but duly mixing both, in every place, if not in every sermon.

I think, the right method of preaching is this: At our first beginning to preach at any place, after a general declaration of the love of God to sinners, and his willingness that they should be saved, to preach the law,

in the strongest, the closest, the most searching manner possible; only intermixing the gospel here and there, and showing it, as it were, afar off.

After more and more persons are convinced of sin, we may mix more and more of the gospel, in order to “beget faith,” to raise into spiritual life those whom the law hath slain.

Thus, we see that John Wesley also believed and practiced the law/gospel approach when preaching the gospel.

- E. **C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)**, often referred to as “The Prince of Preachers” is arguably one of the greatest preachers who ever lived, and one who has, and still continues, through his writings to slay his ten thousands for Christ. Spurgeon said in a sermon entitled *The Perpetuity of The Law of God*:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” I say you have deprived the gospel of its ablest auxiliary when you have set aside the law. You have taken away from it the schoolmaster that is to bring men to Christ. No, it must stand, and stand in all its terrors, to drive men away from self-righteousness and constrain them to fly to Christ. They will never accept grace till they tremble before a just and holy law; therefore the law serves a most necessary and blessed purpose, and it must not be removed from its place.

In another sermon entitled *The Seed by the Wayside*, Spurgeon wrote:

He who preaches the gospel without preaching the law may hold all the results of it in his hand, and there will be little for him to hold. Robbie Flockhart, when he preached in the streets of Edinburgh, used to say, — “You must preach the law, for the gospel is a silken thread, and you cannot get it into the hearts of men unless you have made a way for it with a sharp needle; the sharp needle of the law will pull the silken thread of the gospel after it.” There must be ploughing before there is sowing if there is to be reaping after the sowing.

I will give one last example of many that might be given from Spurgeon’s ministry. Spurgeon frequently discussed the necessity of preaching the law before the gospel. In a sermon entitled *Our Manifesto*, Spurgeon wrote:

If we preach the gospel faithfully, we must preach the law. You cannot fully preach salvation by Christ without setting Sinai at the back of the picture, and Calvary in the front. Men must be made to feel the evil of sin before they will prize the great Sacrifice which is the head and front of our gospel.

It is easy to conclude that a survey of faithful gospel preachers and evangelists in church history vindicates the law/gospel approach to evangelism as championed by Ray Comfort. As Paul said to the Galatians in **Gal. 3:24**, *“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.”*

III. MISCELLANEOUS EVANGELISTIC PREACHERS AND STRATEGIES

A. OLD TESTAMENT

1. Jonah, reluctant, grumpy, bitter, and coerced prophet, preached, *“in forty days Nineveh will be overthrown”* (see Jonah 3:4). We don’t know what else, if anything, Jonah preached. Regardless, Jonah’s preaching led to the single greatest mass conversion of sinners in the history of the world (see Jonah 3:5-10; Mt. 12:24)!
2. Ezra, in Neh. Chs. 8-9, was used by the Lord in a mass revival that started with a six-hour sermon. The law of God was preached, and the meaning of the law was explained to the people so that they understood the reading. They then brought forth fruit in keeping with repentance.

B. NEW TESTAMENT

1. John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance to prepare people for the coming Messiah (see Mt. 3:1-12; Jn. 1:19-35).
2. Jesus and the Twelve did miracles and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Mt. 10:1-42; Mk. 6:7-13).
3. Jesus and the Seventy did miracles and preached the gospel (see Lk. 10:1-24).
4. Jesus and His Disciples
 - a. In Jesus’ “great commission in Mt. 28:19-20 we are called upon to “make disciples of all nations.”
 - b. In Jesus’ “great commission” in Lk. 24:45-49 He reminds his disciples of His suffering, death, resurrection, and the need to call all nations to repent to receive forgiveness of sins in His name.
 - c. In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells the disciples that they will receive power from the Holy Spirit, then they will become Jesus’ witnesses, and as Jesus’ witnesses they will have an ever widening gospel impact, even to the remotest parts of the earth.

IV. **EVANGELISM EXPLOSION INTERNATIONAL**

The ministry of Evangelism Explosion was very popular in years past and still exists to help train and equip people to do evangelism www.evangelismexplosion.org. Evangelists are encouraged to memorize many key gospel texts and are given assistance in evangelizing different kinds of people who might be coming from different perspectives and walks of life. Evangelism explosion made popular the question, “If you were to die today, do you think you would go to heaven?” If the answer is yes, then the question, “Why?” is asked, which usually produces a works righteousness answer, leading to an opportunity to preach the gospel of grace.

Drawbacks to the Evangelism Explosion approach is that students are required to do a lot of homework and Scripture memory in order to prepare to do evangelism. While there is nothing wrong with being thoroughly prepared to do evangelism, it can be discouraging to some. It may also lead others who want to share the gospel that they can't unless they do a lot of homework and Scripture memory first, which isn't true. Many have come to faith in Jesus Christ through very simple gospel presentations by ill trained believers and even unbelievers. The power to save is in the gospel, not in the preparation of the gospel preacher.

V. **GOSPEL TRACTS**

Gospel tracts have for a very long time been a favorite of some. They can be distributed to people or set out as “gospel landmines” waiting for someone's eye to fall upon them. There are many different gospel tracts produced by a wide variety of ministries, churches, and individuals. We will survey a sampling of gospel tracts which I purchased from www.tractplanet.com in a downloadable Power Point Presentation ([Click here for Review of Gospel Tracts presentation](#)).

VI. **BIBLE DISTRIBUTION**

There are certain evangelistic ministries like Gideon's International www.gideons.org or the American Gospel Society www.ministry.americanbible.org that focus on distributing Bibles. Bibles given away by the Gideons often have a gospel presentation section printed in them. Many have come to faith in Jesus Christ from reading the Word of God.

VII. **MISCELLANEOUS EVANGELISTIC STRAGIES**

A. **Trickle Down Evangelism**—seeks to convert high ranking, powerful, or influential members of society in hopes that their influence will trickle down to the lower echelons of society.

- B. **Your Home A Lighthouse**—use your home to invite people over for an evangelistic Bible study which you might just style as a Bible study. The book by Bob and Betty Jacks *Your Home a Lighthouse* teaches this methodology.
- C. **Lifestyle Evangelism**—understand that truth flows through relationships. So, cultivate relationships in order for the gospel to flow through you to other people. This approach is detailed in Joe Aldrich's *Lifestyle Evangelism*.
- D. **Child Evangelism Fellowship**—a parachurch organization whose missionaries do vacation Bible school type events in the summer or after school in an attempt to reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- E. **Bible Study Evangelism**—this approach realizes that people often need to hear the gospel many times before they come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Friendships are cultivated and then the person is asked if they would like to do a one-on-one Bible study. If they say yes, then you might take them through a superficial survey of the gospel of John, emphasizing the gospel as you work through John's gospel.
- F. **Event Evangelism**—comes in many shapes and sizes, but in general, the church sponsors some sort of event in an attempt to attract people. During the event the gospel is preached.
 - 1. **Revival Meetings**—a series of days are planned when everyone in the church invites people to the “revival meeting” and the gospel preached to all who come.
 - 2. **Sports Events**—A well-known professional coach or athlete is used to draw people to a church sponsored sports event, training, competition, etc., and the gospel is preached to those who attend.
 - 3. **Concerts/Music**—Christian musicians put on a concert and during the concert the gospel is preached.
 - 4. **Holiday Events**—You put on a Christmas play, evening service, Easter service, etc., the congregation invites people and the gospel is preached to all who come.
 - 5. **Funerals**—the gospel preacher says yes to all opportunities to perform a funeral service or memorial service and preaches the gospel.
 - 6. **Weddings**—the gospel preacher performs a wedding ceremony and includes the gospel in his message.
 - 7. **Come to Our Church Service**—people invite friends, family, or coworkers to church so that they can hear the gospel preached.
 - 8. **Radio, Television, Video, and Internet**—churches have websites and produce video, audio, and podcasts that preach the gospel.

9. Creation Evangelism—this can be done in gospel tracts, in events, or in casual discussion with people. Questions are asked about the origin of life, creation, evidence for creation, problems with evolution, etc., and then the gospel is preached.
10. Archeology Evangelism—some ministries focus on biblical archeology and use people’s interest in archeology to preach the gospel through events, videos, or podcasts.
11. Conferences—you promote a marriage, parenting, Bible prophecy, end times events, or some other subject of interest to the community. People in the church invite as many people as they can, and the gospel is preached to all who attend.
12. Street Preaching—is just as it sounds. Someone stands in a busy location, train station, tourist attraction, courthouse, etc., and preaches the gospel to those passing by. Some street preachers use props, some use megaphones, some stand on a box, some do artwork on white boards, but the gospel is preached to all within earshot.
13. Street interviews—people go around with cameras and microphones to engage people on college campuses, public places, beaches, etc. People are asked questions that open the door to preaching the gospel.

VIII. BAD OR WEAK EVANGELISTIC STRATEGIES

A. Extrabiblical or Truncated Gospel Messages

1. Not mentioning sin.
2. Not mentioning judgment.
3. Not calling sinners to repent of their sin.
4. Not asking sinners to count the cost.
5. Not mentioning Jesus’ death, burial, or resurrection.
6. Not calling upon people to believe in Jesus Christ.

B. Extrabiblical Ways to Appropriate the Gospel

1. Come Forward at an Altar call
2. Ask Jesus in Your Heart
3. Raise Your Hand
4. Pray the Sinner’s Prayer
5. Make a Decision for Christ
6. Accept Jesus
7. Receive the Love of God
8. Try Out Christianity

C. What the Gospel Can Do for You Approach to Evangelism

1. Jesus will repair your marriage.
2. Jesus will help you be a better parent.
3. Jesus will make you happy.

4. Jesus will make you rich.
 5. Jesus will make you healthy.
 6. Jesus will make your life easier.
 7. Jesus will make all your problems go away.
- D. **Ashes to Go** is a Roman Catholic method of distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday in an attempt to gain converts to the cult of Roman Catholicism.
- E. **Healing Services** rarely include the gospel, but are often conducted by those who claim to be gospel preachers. These are con men who do not know the Lord, but scam people in the name of Jesus.
- F. **Angry, Bitter Street Preachers and Evangelists** are people who have a strong desire to do evangelism and regularly go out sharing the gospel. They look at other people in the local church who aren't as passionate about evangelism as they are and who seem to be apathetic and unconcerned about souls perishing in the lake of fire for eternity. This makes them angry, and that anger often grows into bitterness. They talk to their church leadership, but nothing is done. They fail to realize that though everyone is called to share the gospel, not everyone is called to be a street preacher or called to make evangelism their primary ministry. So, they leave their church, bitter and discouraged. They get a giant foam cross or soap box to stand on and in bitterness and anger snarl the gospel at passersby. They never win anyone to Christ, but they console themselves that at least they are doing God's will.

IX. RESOURCES

A. Websites/Video Resources

1. The Way of the Master/Living Waters www.livingwaters.com and YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@LivingWaters>
2. The Master's Seminary Lectures on Apologetics and Evangelism <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fZmt-TOAWI&list=PLF94646B41B12DA99>
3. Glen James "Life According to Jesus: 321" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnpU6nUHzRc>

B. Books

1. J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*
2. Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan for Evangelism*
3. Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*
4. Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully Lovingly*

5. Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive*
6. Joseph Alliene, *An Alarm to the Unconverted*
7. Richard Baxter, *A Call to the Unconverted*
8. Philip Doddridge, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*
9. John Angell James, *The Anxious Inquirer*

C. Sermons

1. Steve Lawson, One Passion Ministries app evangelistic sermons.
2. John MacArthur, Grace to You, GTY app evangelistic sermons.
3. Charles Spurgeon, [*The Soul Winner*](#)
4. Charles Spurgeon, [*Compel Them to Come In*](#)
5. [Spurgeon Archive](#) has many of Spurgeon's Evangelistic sermons
6. Jonathan Edwards, [*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*](#)