

The Importance and Advantages of Personal Work

by R.A. Torrey

Personal work is the most effective method of winning lost souls and is a crucial aspect of Christian activity.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "The Power of One-on-One Ministry"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the significance and effectiveness of personal work in evangelism, illustrating how simple, one-on-one interactions can lead to profound spiritual transformations, as seen in the examples of Andrew bringing Peter to Christ and Edward Kimball leading D.L. Moody to salvation. He argues that personal work is accessible to all believers, can be done anywhere and at any time, and reaches individuals that public preaching often cannot. Torrey asserts that when every Christian engages in personal work, the potential for revival and the evangelization of the world increases dramatically. He encourages the church to recognize this responsibility and privilege, highlighting that personal work, though often overlooked, yields substantial results for the Kingdom of God.

Transcript

In our study of the various forms of Christian activity, we begin with "Personal Work," that hand-to-hand dealing with men, women and children.

We begin with it because it is the simplest form of Christian work, the kind that every one can do.

It is also the most effective method of winning lost souls. The Apostle Peter was brought to Jesus by the hand-to-hand work of his brother Andrew.

Andrew first found Christ himself, then he went to

Peter quietly and told him of his great find, and thus he led Peter to the Savior he himself had found. I do not know that Andrew ever preached a sermon; if he did it is not recorded; but he did a great day's work when he led his brother Peter to Jesus. Peter preached a sermon that led to the conversion of 3,000 people, but where would Peter's great sermon have been if Andrew had not first led him to Christ by quiet personal work? Mr. Edward Kimball, a Boston business man, led D. L. Moody, the young Boston shoe clerk, to the Savior. Where would all Mr. Moody's wonderful work for Christ have been if he himself had not been led to the Savior by the faithful personal work of his Sunday school teacher? I believe in preaching. It is a great privilege to preach the Gospel, but this world can be reached and evangelized far more quickly and thoroughly by personal work than by public preaching. Indeed, it can be reached and evangelized only by personal work. When the whole church of Jesus Christ shall rouse to its responsibility and privilege in this matter, and every individual Christian become a personal worker, the evangelization of the world will be close at hand. When the membership of any local church shall rouse to its responsibility and privilege in this matter, and each {10} member

become a personal worker in the power of the Holy Spirit, a great revival will be close at hand for the community in which that church is located.

Personal work is a work that wins but little applause from men, but it accomplishes great things for God.

There are many who think personal work beneath their dignity and their gifts. A blind woman once came to me and said, "Do you think that my blindness will hinder me from working for the Master?" "Not at all; it may be a great help to you, for others seeing your blindness will come and speak to you, and then you will have an opportunity of giving your testimony for Christ, and of leading them to the Savior." "Oh, that is not what I want," she replied. "It seems to me a waste of time when one might be speaking to five or six hundred at once, just to be speaking to an individual." I answered that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was able to speak to more than five thousand at once, and yet He never thought personal work beneath His dignity or His gifts. Indeed, it was the work the Savior loved to do. We have more instances of our Savior's personal work recorded in the Gospels than of His preaching. The one who is above personal work is above his Master.

ITS ADVANTAGES.

Let us look at the advantages of personal work.

1. ALL CAN DO IT. In an average congregation there are not more than four or five who can preach to edification. It would be a great pity, too, should all attempt to become preachers; it would be a great blessing if all would become personal workers. Any child of God can do personal work, and all can learn to do effective personal work.

The mother who is confined at home by multiplicity of home duties can still do personal work, first of all with her own children, and then with the servants in the home, with the butcher, the grocer, the tramp who calls at the door, in fact, with everybody who comes within reach. I once knew a mother very gifted in the matter of bringing her own children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, who lamented that she could not do some work for Christ. I watched this woman carefully, and found that almost every one who came to the house in any capacity was spoken to about the Savior, and she was, in point of fact, doing {11} more for Christ in the way of direct evangelistic work than most pastors.

Even the one shut up at home by sickness can do personal work. As friends come to the sick bed, a word of testimony can be given for Christ, or even

an extended conversation can be held. A little girl of twelve, the child of very poor parents, lay dying in the city of Minneapolis. She let her light shine for the Master, and spoke among others to a godless physician, to whom, perhaps, no one else had ever spoken about Christ. A poor girl in New York City, who was rescued from the slums and died a year or two afterwards, was used of God to lead about one hundred men and women to Christ, while lying upon her dying bed.

Even the servant girl can do effective personal work. Lord Shaftesbury, the great English philanthropist, was won to Christ in a godless home by the effective work of a nurse girl.

Traveling men have unusually good opportunities for doing personal work, as they travel on the trains from town to town, as they stop in one hotel after another and go from store to store. A professional nurse once came into my Bible class in Chicago, and at the close of the meeting approached me and said: "I was led to Christ by Mr.--- [a traveling man connected with a large wholesale house]. I was in a hotel parlor, and this gentleman saw me and walked across the parlor and asked me if I was a Christian, and when I told him I was not, he proceeded at once to show me the way of life. I was so startled and impressed to

find a traveling man leading others to Christ that I accepted Him as my Savior then and there. He told me if I ever came to Chicago to come to your Bible class." I have watched this woman for years since, and she herself is a most devoted Christian and effective worker.

How enormous and wonderful and glorious would be the results if all Christians should begin to be active personal workers to the extent of their ability! Nothing else would do so much to promote a revival in any community, and in the land at large. Every Pastor should urge this duty upon his people, train them for it, and see that they do it.

2. IT CAN BE DONE ANYWHERE. There are but few places where one can preach. There is no place where one cannot do personal {12} work. How often, as we pass factories, engine houses, lodging houses and other places where crowds are gathered, do we wish that we might get into them and preach the Gospel, but generally this is impossible, but it is altogether possible to go in and do personal work. Furthermore, we can do personal work on the street, whether street meetings are allowed or not. We can do personal work in the homes of the poor and in the homes of the rich, in hospitals, workhouses, jails, station

houses, and all sorts of institutions -- in a word, everywhere.

3. IT CAN BE DONE AT ANY TIME. The times when we can have preaching services and Sunday schools are quite limited. As a rule, in most communities, we cannot have services more than two or three days in the week, and only three or four hours in the day, but personal work can be done seven days in the week, and any time of day or night. Some of the best personal work done in this country in the last twenty years has been done on the streets at midnight and after midnight. Those who love souls have walked the streets looking for wanderers, and have gone into dens of vice seeking the lost sheep, and hundreds upon hundreds of them have thus been found.

4. IT REACHES ALL CLASSES. There are large classes of men that no other method will reach. There are the shut-ins who cannot get out to church, the street-car men, the policemen, railroad conductors, sleeping-car men, firemen, the very poor and the very rich. Some cannot and others will not attend church or cottage meeting or mission meeting, but personal work can reach them all.

5. IT HITS THE MARK. Preaching is necessarily general; personal work is direct and personal.

There is no mistaking who is meant, there is no dodging the arrow, there is no possibility of giving what is said away to some one else. Many whom even so expert a Gospel preacher as Mr. Moody has missed have been afterwards reached by personal work.

6. IT MEETS THE DEFINITE NEED, AND EVERY NEED OF THE PERSON DEALT WITH. Even when men are aroused and convicted, and perhaps converted, by a sermon, personal work is necessary to bring out into clear light and into a satisfactory experience one whom the sermon has thus aroused, convicted and converted. {13}

7. IT AVAILS WHERE OTHER METHODS FAIL. One of my best workers told me a few weeks ago that she had attended church for years, and had wanted to become a Christian. She had listened to some of the best-known preachers, and still was unsaved, but the very first inquiry meeting she went into she was saved because some one came and dealt with her personally.

8. IT PRODUCES VERY LARGE RESULTS. There is no comparison whatever between what will be effected by good preaching and what will be effected by constant personal work. Take a church of one hundred members; such a church under an excellent pastor would be considered as doing an

exceptionally good work if on an average fifty were added annually to this membership. But suppose that that church was trained to do personal work, and that fifty of the one hundred members actually went at it. Certainly one a month won to Christ by each one would not be a large average. That would be six hundred a year instead of the fifty mentioned above. A church of many members, with the most powerful preaching possible, that depends upon the minister alone to win men to Christ by his preaching, would not accomplish anything like what would be accomplished by a church with a comparatively poor preacher, where the membership generally were personal workers.

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