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Holiness Writers

WITNESS TO WIN

By

Evangelist, Asa Sparks

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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INTRODUCTION

by
Dr. Edward Lawlor

Soul winning is both a spirit and a method. Asa Sparks is a full time evangelist who exemplifies both. However, evangelism was never meant to be the prerogative of the full time evangelist only. Every born again believer is included in Paul's admonition in II Timothy 4:5 ". . . do the work of an evangelist." This is what this book is about. Every Christian must "witness to win," or our mission to our generation will fail.

This then, is a book about witnessing and winning. May the sense of urgency that gripped the writer as he wrote, enable all who read these pages to catch the vision, receive the stimulation and accept the challenge to witness. Confronted with a lost world and a generation of spiritual indifference, every Christian must give his witness with holy boldness. Witnessing that sparkles through a redeemed personality is not only the responsibility, but the opportunity of the radiant Christian in our crisis-caught day.

— EDWARD LAWLOR —

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PREFACE

This book is presented with a desire to share with others the many happy experiences which have come through witnessing to win by the author.

There is a difference between the direct and the indirect witness. The direct witness seeks to make an easy approach and not to be too intense but nevertheless to do hand-to-hand battle with the forces that bind the sinner. The indirect witness may not even let his mission be known immediately.

THE AUTHOR

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WITNESS TO WIN

TEXT: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10).

"It took more courage to witness this afternoon than it did to jump out of an airplane but I am glad I did it," said Jim to the evangelist on the closing night of the spring revival. The evangelist said, "Paratrooper?" "Yes, Paratrooper!" said Jim. The evangelist quickly replied, "Jim, I do not know how much courage it takes to jump out of an airplane for that has not been one of my experiences but do know that it takes the best in us to witness sometimes and the Lord always has someone to challenge us; obedience at this point may cause the heart to pound."

Witnessing to win revives the heart of the one witnessing; the revival must begin in us. Above all other manifestations that one is a Christian is the fact that he has a Christ-like spirit and if there is a Christ-like spirit and the direction in which God is moving can be found and the individual moves in that direction with Him, then a revival has begun. God is more interested in a revival now than any individual is.

SEEK AND TO SAVE

Three main thoughts outline the text: First, "He is (has) come." These words are from the Bible but it is not necessary to turn to the Bible to find this for it is a fact of history and one can turn to the pages of secular history to find that He came. More than that, He came to my heart one day and lives there today, now; He saved me from my sins and I know that He is living today. Does His Spirit bear witness with your spirit that He lives now?

Second, the text states why He came; He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." We make a lot out of the second word that He came to "save," and rightly so but we do not make much out of the first word that He came to "seek" the lost. Maybe the reason is that we do not do much seeking; however, the first word is just as much a part as the second one; He did come to seek them out and save them from their sins. We often hear, "I am afraid I will drive someone away if I seek them out to be saved." There is always that possibility, of course, but remember, there is always another possibility and that is that you may get someone into the Kingdom and wouldn't that be just wonderful and thrilling to your soul? A second thing might happen to you also; you might stir yourself and certainly we all need stirring. It is a great thing for any Christian to be stirred way down deep in his soul. It is impossible to witness to win without getting stirred and feeling revived; fresh, new spiritual life will come into the soul. When we see seekers getting through at the altar, this is the result of a revival; the revival itself must begin within the hearts of God's children. A third thing might happen to you and that is that the pristine desire which was in your heart when first converted to see others saved may come back again; it is in the heart of every young convert; if it is cultivated it will grow but if it is not cultivated it will die and you show me someone who has lost his concern for others and I will show you someone who will soon be lost to the Church, eventually will be lost

to God and in the end will lose his own soul. It is impossible to keep a state of grace without a concern for others.

Third, the text tells us who He saves, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save THAT which was lost." The word "them" is not in the text. God can take out of your heart everything sin put in there and He can put back in your heart everything sin took out. There is nothing that will do God's people as much good as seeing someone else get saved. There is no song that can be sung, no sermon that can be preached that will do the Christians as much good as seeing someone else get saved; what a thrill! what an experience ! what a reality just to feel Him come now in saving power!

We had a young couple in the community where we were pastoring by the name of Walter and Shirley; Walter was tall, dark and handsome; he had a good job right down town and was acquainted with a lot of people; his influence for the Lord could be very great. Shirley was a blue-eyed blonde and a wonderful homemaker. They had a little blue-eyed blonde boy by the name of Jett Lee. Oh, how we did so covet them for the Lord and the Church, but they were not saved yet. We met at the church on visitation night which was usually Tuesday (we tried just about every night in the week and found Tuesday to be the best). The pastor held up the card with the name of Walter and Shirley on it; the pastor's daughter, Martha, laughed with glee that she would be able to visit in that home this evening; they were just the kind of a young couple that a young person would enjoy visiting with in the home. Again, we met at the church and the pastor held up that card with the name of Walter and Shirley on it and said, "We won't need this card in our visitation file any longer for in our last revival Walter went to the altar and was wonderfully saved and he went back to the altar a second time and was gloriously sanctified. Shirley, his wife, went to the altar and was saved and went back a second time and was sanctified and on the last Sunday of the revival they stood up together at the church altar with their little boy and joined the Church of the Nazarene.

It was a thrill to all of us just to know that we could have a part in getting a fine young couple into the Kingdom and into the Church. The pastor and wife took up the responsibility of visiting and caring for them now and the visitation group could work on someone else. What a thrill it is to see someone else get the victory; we need to get all kinds of people saved and sanctified and into the Church now. Dr. Hardy C. Powers said, "We need all strata of society in our churches." This is so true and there is nothing that will do God's people as much good as seeing someone get saved now.

NOTHING TO FEAR BUT FEAR ITSELF

Our greatest problem is fear; just plain everyday fear. You can be saved and sanctified and love the Lord with all your heart yet, when you come to witness to that one who is your greatest challenge, the physical will act up on you; this can bring defeat. The Bible says, "Perfect love casteth out fear" but it did not say "all fear." Perfect love does, however, cast out a man-fearing spirit. There can be something about witnessing to a certain individual that will challenge the very best that is in you now and the Lord seems never to let the Christian get caught up; when he has witnessed to that one who is his greatest challenge, there is always someone else on up ahead that will take the best if faithfully witnessed to now.

Now, when you invite people to church your heart won't pound and this is a good thing to do for sure. When you tell them how good the Lord has been to you your heart won't pound but just the moment you begin to think, "I am going to tell him that Jesus saves me now and He will surely do the same for anybody else," your heart pounds, your ears roar, your knees buckle, your flesh quivers and your nerves tingle and then you begin to wonder what in the world is happening to you. You know why that is? Do you remember that night when you were converted? You were under deep conviction; as you stood toward the back of the church and listened a voice whispered, "Today is the day of salvation; my son, give Me thine heart." Another inner voice whispered, "not now, there is plenty of time yet; you are mighty young to make such a big decision." As you stood there in the back of the church and listened, your heart pounded so that you wondered if the person who stood next to you could hear it pound. Have you ever had your heart pound so that you wondered if the fellow standing next to you could hear it pound? When you stood there for a moment you decided, "This is the time to go and settle it;" then you took one step toward the aisle and every step you took the burden lifted a little; finally, about half way down you just threw up your hands and said, "Oh, Lord, You can have it all; if you will just save be now I will serve You the rest of my life." He did it right there; He saved you there and then. Do you know why that was? The Lord wanted you to go and the devil didn't. But you had the deciding vote and cast it; the victory came to your heart. When you think of witnessing to that individual, remember the Lord wants you to and the devil does not, but if you will obey some of the greatest victories will come to your heart that you have felt since the day He sanctified you.

WITNESS, WITNESSING, TESTIFY

To a young convert all the instruction about personal work, personal evangelism was confusing indeed but one day I discovered something and that is that you can break almost any rule of soul winning and still win a soul; it is not more know-how that we need so much as it is more do-how; determine to do it and don't be a slave to anybody's method. A young man at Louisville said, "This is where I failed; we both worked in the big electrical plant together; he left work that night and was killed in a car accident. Not once had I witnessed to him there on the job; he is in eternity now; it was just too late. May the Lord help us to become stirred and "Wake Up and Witness."

We hear a lot about personal work and personal evangelism but really these expressions are not found in the Word of God; the idea is there, of course, but not the expressions. There is a word that is found however, and that is "witness." Why don't we begin to talk scripturally and use the terms the Bible uses, witness, witnessing, testify. Take the book of Acts and find these words in almost every chapter or on an average of once to a chapter throughout the entire book. The early Church "With great power gave witness of the resurrection." We can do the same today if we only will. Let us' remember that when we are witnessing we are trying to find the one that the Holy Ghost is dealing with the most and you will not go very far until you find tears and when that happens there is nothing else to do but have a prayer meeting and help the one who is in need now. We see literally thousands of young couples who come to our Sunday Schools and go home after it is over and do not stay for the morning worship service; we must find some way to reach them where they are; in their home, on the street, at work or play. Some way we must find a way to get to their hearts; we dare not fail God or them; it will be just too bad if we are permitted to live in the push button age and have all at our finger tips so conveniently and yet, fail God. Dr. V. H. Lewis said, "From

somewhere a man must find the desperate determination to climb beyond the usual and become a great soul winner." ^[1] We get these people to one service sometimes and if a little conviction seizes them, away they go and do not return in the revivals; what can we do, fail them? "No!" We must go where they are and tell them that Jesus saved us and what He has done for one He will do for another. We must take our witness right out to the front line of this battle and tell men and women of His power to save in the Space Age. We have in the Church of the Nazarene the possibility of having the greatest revival since the days of the Great Awakening in Colonial America. There is no group on earth that has the possibility of having a genuine revival like the holiness people have; let's go all out and have it now; we are sure that God wants to give it to us in our day.

DUTY OR PRIVILEGE

There is a difference in witnessing to people from a sense of duty and "Witnessing to Win them." You can pray from a sense of duty; you can read from a sense of duty and you can witness from a sense of duty but there can come a time in your life when you are witnessing with a purpose in mind, with a goal in view, with a strong perspective that would compass the salvation of that individual. A good prayer to pray would be, "Oh, Lord, here is a soul, give to me the grace of sincerity and help me to win that soul for Thee." There is a thrill that comes in witnessing to the lost.

PRACTICALITY

It is one thing to read a book on prayer and another thing to pray; it is one thing to read about witnessing and it is another thing to witness. Roscoe Pershall said, "The main thing is to do it."

Sometimes we tell our children that they cannot go to the places of the world and keep the victory in their hearts and this is right but we fail them in that we do not take them to the places they can go; we found that the children could enjoy the Preachers' Meetings; it was not always easy to take them to the institutes, camps and Assemblies but this we tried to do; they are all in the Church today and we are thankful. The greatest heritage we can give our children is not that we should leave them a million dollars but leave them the spiritual heritage. We had gone to the General Assembly this time; the Church we were pastoring had been kind; they had taken up an offering and paid most of our expenses to the Assembly. It occurred to me that it would be best not to plan a vacation for that summer other than going to the General Assembly but when we returned we had two calls for revivals; it seemed to be of the Lord to go and hold these meetings. It is true that it is no vacation to hold a revival but let me ask the reader a question: don't we all really do what we want to do when we take a vacation and then when the vacation is finished we have to take three weeks to get rested up from the vacation? This is just about the way it works. Well, I wanted to go and hold those revivals so asked the Church Board for permission to go; the vote of the Board was unanimous and we went.

The first one began on Tuesday night and was to run through Sunday; the second was to begin the following Monday and go through Saturday night. When we arrived for the first meeting on Tuesday we had a good service that night and started out calling early the next morning. The pastor was unable to go because of a preachers' meeting of the local ministers so they sent me with two ladies to call. The first place we went to was the home of a young building contractor whom the Church

was very anxious to win for the beautiful new church building was not completed yet and they needed him to finish the main auditorium. Services were being held in an auditorium to the rear of the main sanctuary. A lady answered the knock at the door and informed us that the young contractor was not at home but already out on the job. It was easy to see by the new home that he had built and now lived in that he was a very able man; in fact, the pastor had pointed out several other homes of the ranch type that he had built. The ladies who had come with me asked for the young contractor's wife; the lady at the door assured them she was not there but was working, too. I stepped between the two ladies and introduced myself; the lady inside the door said, "I am Mrs. Clark, the baby sitter." We went inside and were seated in the front room. After a short visit with Mrs. Clark and being assured that the baby was in his bed and contented we proceeded to witness to Mrs. Clark; she readily heard and began to weep about her lost condition. It was just a short time till she was thanking God for saving her soul that morning. We left the home. The next day the pastor and evangelist returned to find the young contractor gone. Sunday night came; a fine-looking young fellow was at the altar; when asked, the pastor said, "It is the young contractor." We had not met him but as a result of his baby sitter getting saved in the home he came and was saved that night. It was a glorious victory for him and for the Church.

Before I left, the Sunday School Superintendent said, "I have always invited them to church but this witnessing to win that you talk about I have never done; however, after this meeting I am sure I can do it." We assured him he could, and have every reason to believe that he is doing it today. After four years we went back for a second meeting and found him witnessing to win. The young contractor was there, too, and the pastor told of a project that he was doing in the church building which would cost some \$1500 to complete and he was doing the work and paying the bill.

In the second meeting which began on Monday night following we had a good service the first night. The next morning we were out calling by 9:30 a.m. in the community, the pastor, his wife and the evangelist. It was the second home that we called in that it happened; the pastor was knocking on the door; here came a woman around the house in a hurry saying, "Please don't wake up my husband; he just got in the bed and to sleep and if you wake him up I will not get a thing done around here today." We hurried out to the side yard for we did not desire to wake him up, either. The pastor informed her of the revival and invited her to service that night; she said, "I am out here in the wash house getting ready for the wedding and will not be able to come tonight." Then he asked her about the next night; she replied that it would take every night this week to get ready for the wedding so he then said, "Come Saturday night;" she stated that the wedding ceremony would be performed that night. He told her that the meeting would be over Saturday night. It seemed that now was the time to help her if we expected to do so at all. I asked her if she were saved and she replied, "Yes." It sounded like she really meant it. Then I asked if she had been sanctified; she replied, "No." In simple words I told her that He had sanctified me and surely would do it for her; she agreed. We prayed a short prayer standing there on our feet in the side yard and left. One can never tell just who he will win or get through to when he is witnessing for Jesus. Then, too, we need to testify to being sanctified also for this is the way we keep the blessing. One young mother lost the experience because she quit testifying to it in prayer meeting; when she got back to the Lord in sanctifying power she said that she never intended to make that mistake again. Fletcher lost the experience five times because he failed to testify to it. Keep the experience of entire sanctification alive in your heart by testifying to the experience. That night this lady came to the service; she had found a way; she

was gloriously sanctified and gave a strong witness. The next night she came back to the church and brought her teen-age son. God literally melted his heart and he was saved; he was a fine-looking young man who had never been saved before in his life. It was a wonderful sight to see mother and son rejoicing together at the church altar. This is just the way that witnessing works. Witnessing for God is contagious. It not only helps the one witnessing but the one being witnessed to. There must be a deliberate effort on the part of the church to reach out into the community where its place of worship stands. If there is that effort there will be results. It will be too bad if we are allowed to live in the push button age with most every convenience at our finger tips and yet fail God.

THE WAY JESUS DID IT

Clarene was a young mother of two boys and had a husband who did not profess to be a Christian; he had at one time been saved however, and knew more about the Christian way than she did. She seemed to have the feeling that there would be opposition if she gave her heart to the Lord and started to church. Each time the pastor and wife visited her one of them would witness to her; she would cry and they would ask her to pray; she would kneel and pray awhile; then all of a sudden, she would dry up her tears, get up off of her knees and it was all over; they could not get her to pray any more that trip; they would go away, come back and the same process would be repeated; she had a very tender heart and the thought of not being saved always brought the tears to her eyes. Every time they came and witnessed to her she would cry and kneel for prayer but it would happen again; up she came, dried her tears and they could not get her to pray any more. Finally, one morning the pastor and wife decided to go out to Clarene's home the first thing; she had more tears; her prayers were more fervent than ever before; it seemed that she was just about to get saved. She had a little three-year-old boy by the name of Bobby; when his mother began to pray and cry it scared him so that he cried every way he could to get her to stop; he thought the pastor and wife were hurting his mother. He pulled her hair, slapped her face and did everything possible to get her to stop crying and praying. In desperation she said, "I just cannot make it this morning for Bobby." The pastor said, "Alright, when we are gone and Bobby take his afternoon nap, you go into the bedroom and lock the door and ask God to save you." She said that she would and they left; by the time they were back at the parsonage the phone was ringing; it was Clarene. She said, "I did what you asked! He has saved me and I know my sins are gone." It was a time of real rejoicing for it had taken nearly two years for this to happen.

When the Lord saved her that day He knew what He was doing, for in just about two years from that day she was dead. When God pulls hard on your heart, dear reader, He knows what is up ahead; He knows the future. He never pulls hard on the heart of anyone without a good strong reason, and we should listen. Her husband awakened about 4:00 o'clock one morning and Clarene had slipped off during the night to be with Jesus Who had so wonderfully saved her. During the two years she lived she got sanctified, joined the Church of the Nazarene and became an outstanding Sunday School worker in the local church. The greatest surprises will come to us sometimes through the folks that we are able to win if we become an active witness. We read the Bible daily; we pray daily; it is not asking too much that we witness at least once a day and if we miss, make it up later. "We are His witnesses of these things and so also is the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." (Acts 5:32). When we witness we are trying to find the one that the Lord is dealing with the most; tears are a good sign. The Lord has a financial plan that will work, the tithing system. He

also has a plan to reach the lost that is sure and will work now. A record of this plan is found in Mark chapter 6 where Jesus sent forth His disciples "two by two" (preachers) and in Luke 10 where He sent forth the "Other seventy also," (laymen). The only reason the plan does not work better is that we do not work it. We need to get back to the Bible and do it the way Jesus did it for the same will work today as worked in His day.

WITNESS WITH ENTHUSIASM NOW

Personal enthusiasm is highly contagious; witnessing is one of the greatest Christian service opportunities anyone can have; refuse to consider it a "chore" or a duty that has been forced upon you; it is a happy privilege — a golden opportunity; refuse to complain or be apologetic for being a witness; be glad and proud of the privilege you have today; if your witness has a grip on you it will have a grip on others when you give it. Instead of giving others the impression, "I have to do this!" or "I can't do this!" make them feel, "This is my day of opportunity and by His grace my soul is feeling the thrill of being a joyful witness for Him." It will thrill you when your testimony begins to take hold and walk enthusiastically in the life of someone else.

Be positive when you witness; this will put the emphasis on what they are saved to (eternal life) rather than what they are being saved from; "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee."

You will not always succeed in your witness; sometimes you will fail; Jesus failed. When the rich, young ruler came to Him saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said, "Keep the commandments." He replied, "All these have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?" Jesus said to him, "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." This fine young man walked away and oh, how the tender heart of the Son of God must have ached that day.

Sometimes you will succeed and it will bring the greatest thrill to your heart that has come since the day that you were sanctified "wholly." When the pastor and his wife knocked on Wanda's door she answered right away; she was a very young single girl with a pleasant smile. They witnessed to her, prayed a short prayer standing in the open door of the home, invited her to church and left. She accepted the invitation, came to church, went to the altar and was wonderfully converted; a little later she was sanctified and joined the Church. She went straight home like Andrew of old and brought her mother to church and she was gloriously saved. She went back and brought her sister and she was saved. She went back and brought her brother and he was saved. She went after her other sister and she was saved and then she brought in the little crippled girl in the wheel chair to the church and she was saved; the congregation bought the little crippled girl a new wheel chair and she became regular in her attendance and radiant in her testimony. Wanda's father had been reared a Roman Catholic and it was not so easy to get him saved but she had been praying hard and had a lot of people praying for him. The pastor was trying to help by being a faithful witness to him; he felt the jar of the pastor's witness and began to run. When the pastor would come in the front door Wanda's father, Phil, would go out the back door. The Bible says, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth". No one was chasing him but he could feel the jar of the witness and knew that he was being shaken loose from his sins. One day it happened and it was not the pastor this time; one of the faithful laymen of the church

came by, witnessed to Phil and he prayed through to victory. The news spread fast in the congregation and the community; he made a glowing Christian. The pastor was happy because this time the Lord had chosen to use one of the laymen of the church to bring Phil into a definite experience of saving grace.

Each one win one till the work is done;
Each one win one till the victory is won;
From highways and the hedges go bring the lost to Jesus;
Each one win one till we hear, "My child, well done."

ENDNOTE

1 Lewis, V. H. The Church Winning Souls, Nazarene Publishing House, 1960, p. 16.