

In today's GLEANING we offer the last four of seven points to remember as you think about, pray for, and speak to your neighbors, acquaintances, friends and family members who are lost and on their way to hell unless they call on the Savior. Please refer to the GLEANING of November 15, A.D. 2015 for the first three.

**4.** People of the world gossip about everything. Christians should "gossip" about the Gospel! In Deuteronomy 6:5-9 we are commanded to love the LORD with all the heart, soul, and strength, and to have the words of God's Law upon the heart. They are to be taught to children, and talked about while sitting in the house, walking by the way, lying down, and rising up. If such devotion under the Law was required, how much more must we be devoted in this day of the glorious Gospel, in which the Law is not abolished, but fulfilled in and by Jesus!

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praise worthy – meditate on these things" (Phiippiansl 4:8). Surely, when the inspired apostle refers to "these things" he means the precious truths of salvation. They are to be our constant meditation, and the topics we discuss with the greatest facility.

**5.** Be a living Gospel decoration, but not the centerpiece. Some approach bearing witness for Christ as an occasion to talk about themselves. I this, and I that - on they chatter. That little vertical pronoun \* I \* can get in the way very easily! Personal testimony has its place, but sinners must be led to take hold by faith on Jesus alone for salvation! Our message is the message of what Jesus did almost 2,000 years ago when He lived a sinless less, died a sacrificial death, was buried, and rose again for the justification of His people: this is the Gospel! (1 Corinthians 15:1ff)

Our good behavior is the adornment on this message; the icing on the cake. Let's refer again to the apostolic injunction, "...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..." (1 Peter 3:15). Note well, this assumes that people will ask Christians what makes them tick!

When a lost unbeliever sees a serious, committed Christian living joyfully in the ways of godliness, he or she will ask! Christians who do not "decorate" the Gospel by winsome ways will not be asked. "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

**6.** STRESS so often robs us of peace. Cultists were mentioned above, those who apparently believe that their false god is pleased according to how many doorbells they ring. They often seem so joyless and stressed as they walk through the neighborhood, trying to work their way into Divine favor! The service of the true God is perfect freedom. Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden light.

"Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18). Don't be stressed out about witnessing. It's OK to let people know you're not a super christian. It's OK to tell someone you can't answer that question now, but that you will get an answer for them (but don't forget!) It's OK to avoid proud, belligerent people who are interested only in fighting. Not everyone is called to be a preacher. Some, in fact, are called to win souls without a word: "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives..." (1 Peter 3:1)

**7.** Get beyond the small talk! "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). Suppose you see your unbelieving neighbor one afternoon as you both arrive home from work. Suppose the neighbor remarks in some disgusted way on current weather conditions. Suppose you reply, "Well, God is in control of all things, He must know what He is doing."

That is a true and bold, but inoffensive reply, and it's not likely that your neighbor hears it every day! Perhaps he would think about it, and your boldness will have earned an opportunity for further discussion at another time. In a variety of ways and in different circumstances, a similar boldness can be effectively used. Go and do likewise! May God bless all His missionaries, serving Him worldwide.