

LET'S GET PERSONAL!

TEXT: Acts 2:41-47 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

INTRO.: A. In the early church salvation wasn't just an individual thing, it was a community thing! **V.44** *"And all that believed were together and had all things common."* Then things began to deteriorate. In Acts 6 the *"widows were neglected..."* Something had to be done.

1. They Leadership was sensitive to the problem & took immediate action. **6:2,3**
2. They set priorities (the Word & prayer could not be neglected). **V.4**
3. They chose servants – helpers are a part of the solution. **V.3**
4. Their solution built unity: *"The saying pleased the whole multitude."* **Acts 6:5**
5. Then there was a fresh reception to God's Word; more converts resulted! **6:7**

B. Notice that the outcome of solving this problem wasn't a new "outreach" or soul-winning program. It was a "ministry" begun. They got personal with people. It isn't about programs, it's about people. Sometimes our Outreach gets in the way of our Ministry! Soul-winning and outreach programs should not be put on the back burner, but ministry will give more results.

ILLUS.: Soul-winning survey: 1% - walk-ins; 5% - outreach; 8% - Programs 10% - Pastoral Staff; 76% - Family & Friends. Moral: We will win more people in personal ministry, than is programs, etc. combined. **"LET'S GET PERSONAL!"** Your family and friends need to see you become personally involved in their lives, not just constantly pushing them to get saved.

1 Peter 3:1 *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives...*

I. MAKE YOUR MINISTRY PERSONAL: ("Own Your Ministry" – Pastor Phil Erickson- Jersey Shore Baptist Church)

A. Sunday School Workers:

1. Do you visit your students?
2. Do you contact them when they are missing?
3. Do you send birthday cards? (Birthday Sunday)
4. Do you know if they come from single-parent homes?
5. Do you know if they have psychological, emotional or mental problems?
6. Do you know their **names!?**

B. Bus Workers:

1. Do you follow up on decisions?
2. Do you try to get into the homes to win their loved ones?
3. Do you know why they missed this Sunday?
4. Do you know about their personal needs? Shoes? Clothes? Food?

NOTE: The church should have a clothing and food ministry. If there is no room at church, maybe someone's basement or garage could be used. What is said here about S.S. & Bus Workers goes for all other workers; Those in the nursery, toddlers, Jr. Church, Nursing Home, Prison, etc., etc.

5. Do you know their names!?

II. TYPICAL RESPONSES TO AVOID PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT:

A. The Moses Syndrome: (Excuses) **"Who me?!"**

1. Moses argued with God and said he couldn't speak well enough.
2. Often people avoid others because they they think they won't know what to say.

ILLUS.: If we quit thinking about zeroing in on people just to win them for Christ and start out by just being nice and helpful, talking becomes easier. Example: compliment them, help them, pass the time of day with them, etc. **Then**, give them an invitation to church (a brochure with a bible message inside).

B. The Jonah Syndrome: (Prejudice) **"Not me!"**

1. Jonah didn't like the Ninevites and thought that God didn't either (because of the way they had treated Israelites in the past.)
2. Racial prejudice is irrational; Christ died for all!

ILLUS.: Is there a certain class of people you avoid? Because of race? Because of age? Because of class? Because of neighborhood? Because of disability?

C. The Habakkuk Syndrome: (The sins of the people and the silence of God) **"Why me?"**

1. Habakkuk saw the nation's sins and thought God should punish the people, not save them.
2. Habakkuk prayed and God didn't seem to be doing anything; he was impatient for God's judgment.

ILLUS.: Maybe you don't want to minister in the nursing home because these "old people" have had their chance to get saved and blew it! Maybe you don't want to minister to AIDS victims because you see their disease as a judgment from God and assume that God has given up on them. Maybe you have grown weary in waiting for the Rapture – but you had better remember the Judgment Seat of Christ is for YOU!

D. The Isaiah Syndrome: (Vision) **"Send me!"**

1. Perhaps we should quit making excuses or looking for ways to avoid ministry and just get personal.
2. Maybe the reason your loved ones don't get saved is because you are too abrasive, impatient, or even obnoxious; LET'S GET PERSONAL!

E. The Believer's Syndrome: (Faith) **"Why not me?!"**

CONCL.: If you are already involved in a ministry make it more than just soul-winning and maybe it will produce souls!!!! **"LET'S GET PERSONAL!" Own Your Ministry!** Take the responsibility that goes with it. **Don't assume it is the pastor's job or the church's job. IT'S YOUR JOB!**