



Apocity
the greatest
omission

by George Alvarado

About the
Author

"Since George Alvarado was born again in 2004, he has open air preached in cities like Cheyenne, Ft. Collins, Denver, Colorado Springs, Chicago, and Cambridge, England. He has taught Sunday school for children, preached in Church services, at military and civilian criminal institutions, and has led many evangelistic efforts, as well as mentored aspiring open air preachers."

"In this book, George has not only coined a new word to identify a once nameless sin, but he also examines and boldly exposes the greatest pandemic within western Christianity. Packed with biblical references, lively illustrations, and candid refutations, *Apocity: The Greatest Omission*, is a much needed admonition for the modern church."



Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those that are striving in the fields of God, working for the kingdom, and desire to see the glory of God in the salvation of men. I pray that this book will be your advocate in defending your efforts and provide an eternal avenue by which you can point others to in order to reestablish the mandatory calling of every Christian believer on Earth.

Apocity: The Greatest Omission

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Chapter 1: What is Apocity?

“Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about.”

“Language is not simply a reporting device for experience but a defining framework for it.”
– Benjamin Lee Whorf

1. Introducing Apocity

There are words that seem to describe a lot of things in the world. Promnesia is a scientific term used to describe the phenomenon of “déjà vu.” They even have a word used to describe the concept of visual memory – eidetic. Every word that is used to describe a concept, idea, crime, etc., all started somewhere. But when is the last time you heard a word that describes the sin of not evangelizing? Even better, when was the last time you heard someone say that not evangelizing is a sin? Before you think this is just another book on how to evangelize (and close it), or a presentation on what the biblical understanding of evangelism is and you decide that you have heard this a million times, please (I beg you) continue reading before you make any prejudicial assumptions.

What words can you think of to describe someone who does not evangelize on a regular basis? Can you think of anything that would describe the action of not fulfilling the great commission? Neither could I for nine years of my Christian walk until I sat down and made it my purpose to find something that would not only properly describe what this action is, but also is easy to say and easy to remember. If

you have read the title of my book, then you already know the word, apocity.

The word apocity can be pronounced a (as in the letter “a”, or you can use the much softer sound “uh”), pa (sounds like a child saying to his father pa), and city (like New York City). The word to describe a person who continually commits the act of apocity would be called an apocite. The beginning prefix *apo-* would be pronounced with a longer “o” sound (like the word “pole”) meanwhile the next syllable would sound like the word “sight.” Now that you got the pronunciation, let me tell you how and why I put this word together and why I think it is appropriate to describe this particular sin.

II. Why Use Apocity?

The prefix *apo-* is a Greek loanword that is used to describe “separation” or something that is “apart” from something else. It could also mean to “cease from” or “drift away” from something. Some words that we are used to hearing which use this prefix are *apostrophe* and *apostasy*. Both illustrate the idea of being separated from something, whether grammatically with an apostrophe before an “s,” or in departing from the faith (apostasy). The English and Greek languages are full of words that have this prefix.

The second part of the word is “cite.” College students, professors, and anyone who has to give any reference as to where they got their information in a paper know exactly how this word is used in that context. However, the word *cite* is used in another sense that many do not use it in. The alternate definitions are “to summon, to call to action, to arouse.” The history of the word, which you can find in an etymological dictionary, has other definitions like “to stir up” and “to set in motion” or “to call, invite,” and “command.”

Wow! When I found this word, I thought to myself, “That is it! That is the perfect word to describe anyone with the authority to preach the gospel!” So when you put these two together, you get a word that describes an action (or should I say inaction) that portrays someone not inviting, not calling, not stirring up, not summoning, not calling to action, not arousing, not commanding men and woman everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30)! They have drifted away and separated themselves from the calling that is upon on all Christians. In other words, they are an apocite or are committing apocity.

The last part of the word is the suffix -y. In case you didn’t know, this suffix can be placed in a word which is supposed to mean “inclination toward” or “characterized by” something. So in other words, you are “grouch-y” because you are inclined to or characterized by your grouchiness. Or if you are too “preach-y,” this is descriptive of someone’s character or inclination to preach. Therefore, if you were to wrap up together apo-cit-y, you have someone who is *characterized by their inclination to drift away, separate, or cease from calling, inviting, and commanding* others to repent and put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

III. I Don't Like This Word

When you think about it, there are plenty of other words you can use to describe someone who is not regularly, purposefully, and consistently sharing their faith. One word can be “disobedient” (an idea we will explore later), another could be “unfaithful,” and yet another could be “epaischynomai” (ep-ī-skhü'-no-mī) – if you wish to pronounce this all the time – which is the same Greek word in the Scriptures that means to be ashamed (Mark 8:38; Romans 1:16). Although all these would be true, and indeed would fit the profile, the word apocity tends to sound a lot

like apostasy (so it makes it easy to remember and say), meanwhile managing to capture a single idea that reveals the atrocity of *not* being a regular witness for Jesus Christ. To give you an idea of how effective this word is in describing someone who does not witness on regular basis, let's look at some related words of *cite* that we are used to hearing so that we can gather just how accurate this word is in describing this horrible sin.

The first word we are going to look at is *incite*. Ever heard of someone "inciting" a riot? The word comes from the Latin "incitare" which contains within it the root word for "cite." Truly, I have been in some open air preaching moments when I was doing just that. The next word is *citation*. Ever got one of those? Maybe a parking ticket or a speeding ticket? I bet those "stirred you up" or "set you in motion" didn't they? If you look on the ticket, it is called a citation because usually you either have to pay a fee or appear in court to contest it because you are "summoned" by the citation. What kind of preaching would the gospel be if you neglected to tell someone that they are "summoned" to appear before a Holy Judge on Judgment Day, and for much worse than a speeding ticket – sin? The last word we will look at is *resuscitate*. We normally use this word in the context of bringing someone back to life or back to consciousness. The Latin word "citare" that I mentioned above is found in the middle of this word too, it is just broken down to three letters. When you look at what each component of the word means, it literally means "to bring back again from beneath" (the understanding is to bring back someone from the dead). Can you think of a better work in the entire world as a believer than to be a part of resuscitating dead, sinful men and the reviving of souls to salvation? The word, *cite*, plays a crucial role in these words,

and others, to illustrate the calling or summoning of something. It also is vital in pinpointing exactly what the sin of apocity is; meanwhile the prefix *apo-* reveals the departing from such a work. Even if you don't like this word, everything in the book is dedicated in capturing the reality of apocity, and its detriment to the gospel.

IV. A Crime Without a Name

The main reason why I took the time out to give this particular sin a name is because it is necessary. Certain denominations talk about the need for evangelism, and the widespread disassociation with the great commission, but no one knows what to call it! If you think about it, what crime in any judicial system doesn't have a name? And if there is a crime that does not have a name, if it becomes rampant, you better believe someone will come up with something. One such example of this is through a man called Raphael Lemkin.

Raphael Lemkin was a Polish lawyer, of Jewish descent, who was best known for his work against *genocide*, and actually coining the word. It was in his book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, where Lemkin first defined this word. Then, it quickly took hold throughout the international community, and was also a key term during the *Nuremberg Trials* when Nazi's were tried for their "crimes against humanity." It was "a crime that has no name" said Winston Churchill, but since the United Nations drew up the treaty called, *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, which went into effect January 12, 1951, the sin of mass murdering is now an international crime with a punishment, but most importantly, a name.

Apocity is one such sin that deserves to be named and condemned in this same fashion. It is truly a pandemic that has its foothold in western Christianity. This sin which

has remained nameless for so long now needs to be labeled, and local churches need to stand up and judge this sin as the *ultimate* crime against humanity. Should we continue to bear up this iniquity in our congregations, we are doing much more than committing a little infraction, which we will soon find out.

V. Humorous and Not So Humorous Alternatives

I have included this somewhat humorous section to give you some creative insight to the words that I could have used to describe this idea of apocity, and maybe you will grow to appreciate it more. Even though this portion is written in a somewhat humorous manner, please do not think I am making light of the situation. Apocity is indeed a serious epidemic that has occurred in our local churches, and I only want to give you this list so that maybe you can appreciate the art of word making. So here are the alternatives:

Evang(less)ism/Evange(less)m – these words came about with the idea that the sin describes those that evangelize less than regularly. This, however, this is not what I was attempting to capture.

Ev(un)gelism – This breaks some linguistic rules putting a prefix in the middle of a word, but the idea is that *un-* expresses the “opposite of” something. Although the idea would be true, it just doesn’t sound like a word that is strong enough to depict this sin.

Evangel(mis)m – I used another prefix in the middle of the word, except this time, I used *mis-* to describe “to be astray” or “wrong.” Once again, not strong enough.

(De)vangelism – Same reasons as the previous two, but *de*-brings the idea of undoing something. Although there are plenty that “undo” the call of evangelism in many ways, it sounds too corny. Besides, not evangelizing is not undoing the gospel, it is keeping silent.

Non-evangelism/E(non)gelism – I can’t explain how I came up with this. I am too ashamed. This is what putting your bad ideas on paper looks like.

Akerusso – *kerusso* is used in Mark 16:15 when Jesus said to *preach* the gospel to every creature. I simply added the “a” particle, which in the Greek is a negative or negation. In essence, the word would have captured someone that does *not* preach. This word was my strongest possibility for about a half a day.

Arenomi – Another Biblical word, that I did not modify, which can be found in Matthew 10:33; it is the Greek for our English translation “deny.” A nice word, but I didn’t think it properly caught the idea of apocity, although apocity does lead to and often is akin to this.

Akinesia/Akinesis – This is a medical term used to describe poverty of movement within the muscles. I was trying to “diagnose” the condition of apocity and thought lack of movement would capture it well, but felt that the symbolism would be better placed in a sermon, not to describe a sin.

Apodia – This condition means “absence of feet.” Same reasons listed previously.

Acardia – “Absence of heart.” Once again, same reason, but also see next caption.

Misanthrope – This is indeed a good word to use because it describes someone who has “hatred for mankind.” Indeed you would have to be a man hater to not want to preach the everlasting gospel to them, but hatred would be more of a root cause for apocity, not apocity itself.

Regardless of the word chosen to describe the sin of apocity, let us not draw our attention to what could have been, but what now is. When we look at the culture of Christendom in our western civilization, we see the greatest omission committed, and there seems to be, largely speaking, not a care in the world concerning it. Why? Because professing Christians no longer think that apocity is a sin.

Chapter 2: The Great Omission

James 4:17 “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

– The Apostle James

1. What is the Great Commission?

When asked the question, “Where in the Bible is the great commission?” many who have heard the term will point to Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19, Luke 24:47, and the not so quoted passage of Acts 1:8. But in none of these passages, nor in the whole Bible, is the term “great commission” found. I am not arguing against the idea that Christ commissioned us to go out and preach, but when arguing for a great *omission* of a commandment, I think it is only proper that we grasp the idea of why it is so great in the first place.

When you do a Google search of the words “great commission,” you might find yourself in great submission to the ocean of hits that the search engine comes up with. In all of my searching, I could not find one resource as to how and why this term came about. All I found was some skeptical propositions and maybe a scent of clarity, but nothing solid. Don’t get me wrong though, I like the term. There are other terms that men have conjured up to identify ideas in the Bible like the word “trinity” or “apocrypha” that help Christians to identify a principle or doctrine, or in this case, a sin. My point in saying all this is just because the word isn’t found in the text of Scripture, it doesn’t mean the truth that word conveys cannot be found in the Bible.

So what makes the great commission so *great*? I mean, if apocity is the “great omission” of local Churches today, then there has to be something that we can point to as an indictment upon professing believers that makes this sin so great, right? Along with the reality that the great commission is great because of **who** has commissioned us, I will attempt to reveal to you, using Scripture, why apocity is indeed a sin, and a great one at that – thus making it the “greatest omission.”

II. False Preaching vs. Apocity

Before we dive into scriptural evidences concerning the reality of apocity, allow me to tell you two quick stories. First story:

Mrs. T. Ruth tells her employee, Mr. T. Wister, to immediately notify Mrs. T. Hirsty that she is to go to the nearest warehouse to buy 50 gallons of water so that the orphanage will have enough during the big winter storm that is rapidly approaching. When Mr. T. Wister complies and tells Mrs. T. Hirsty what to do, he twists Mrs. T. Ruth’s words and tells Hirsty not to buy 50, but 15 because he felt that was too much! By the time the storm hits, Mrs. T. Ruth realizes that not enough water was purchased for the orphanage. And since it is no longer possible to go out and buy more, there are mass casualties that winter.

Second Story:

Mrs. T. Ruth calls Mr. A. Posity into her office, and in a very urgent voice says, “Please call all the orphans together and command them to immediately go out and purchase 50 gallons of water before the winter storm arrives. Here is the

money.” Mr. A. Posity acknowledges the order but does not immediately carry out his employer’s request. In fact, Mr. A. Posity not only fails to carry out Mrs. T. Ruth’s urgent request, but he doesn’t really believe it is all that urgent to begin with. So he ends up saying and doing nothing and pockets the money. By the time Mrs. T. Ruth figures out that he did not carry out the request, it is too late. There are mass casualties that winter.

Here are a few questions: Which situation was worse? The first one? The second? Both? If you said both, why? Was it because there were mass casualties? Should the mass casualties make a difference? What if there were no casualties? What if all the orphans and employees survived that winter? Which one is the worst of both situations? Both are equal! Because regardless of the consequence, the fact of the matter is that Mr. T. Wister did not say exactly what his boss told him to say and Mr. A. Posity didn’t say anything at all! Both have done wrong because they both neglected to fulfill their employer’s request by not being obedient to her instructions.

So what is the point? Some within Christendom are very consumed with making sure they are not preaching heresy within their church walls (and they should be, for there are many false teachers in the world). Truly there are many that twist God’s word to their own destruction and their congregations (2 Peter 2:1; 3:16). However, *not* saying something that God commanded you to say is just as evil and great a sin as twisting what He said (in certain circumstances, they are the same sin). As we dive into the Scriptures and look at evidences for apocrypha in the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is my prayer that this will become clear.

III. Old Testament (OT) Evidence in the Prophet Moses

Even though Israel was God's chosen nation to declare His glory among the Gentiles (Psalm 96), evangelism is indeed a directive that is unique to the New Testament. Nowhere in the OT does God command Israel to proselytize in the same way He does in the New Testament. Even though the message of the prophets are similar in content when they go out to preach to Israel, and in some special cases like Jonah to the Gentiles, it was not a requirement for Israel to seek "converts" in the same way Christ has commanded us to make disciples. With that said, I still want us to realize that there are times when God commanded certain men in the OT to speak concerning what He told them, and His reaction gives us clues into understanding how God views apocity. Our first example of two will be Moses when he was called by God out of the burning bush.

When you read Exodus 4, we see a side of Moses that is both skeptical concerning his calling and fearful. God tells him in the previous chapter what he is expected to do, but it seems as though all he has to offer is excuses. As Moses provides excuse after excuse, the graciousness of the LORD condescends to Moses by providing him signs that He will perform for him, and the LORD gives explanations, which He is not obligated to provide.

In verse 10, Moses starts off by saying that he is not "eloquent" in speech, even after God told him what the miraculous signs would be that he would perform. How a man could be well educated in "all of the wisdom of the Egyptians" and say he is not eloquent is beyond me (Acts 7:22). However, I know that this is a possibility because even Paul confessed in 2 Cor. 11:6 about himself being "untrained in speech." Nevertheless, Moses goes on to say that he is also "slow of speech and slow of tongue." Many assume that

Moses might have had a genuine stutter, or some kind of speech impediment. If this is the case, Moses has some cause for his objections. But if not, then we have a serious problem on our hands. By the looks of things, in either case, it doesn't look like Moses is willing to trust the LORD to help him regardless if he does or doesn't have a speech impediment.

In verses 11-12, God gives Moses assurance that all things concerning the infirmities of human nature are within His control. God even goes so far as telling Moses that He will teach Moses what he should say. In other words, 'you leave the eloquence up to me Moses, and I will be your mouth.' Well, Moses still isn't having it, and he basically tells the LORD to send someone else (v13). It is at this moment that we see God's reaction toward those that make excuses concerning why they can't go say what God wants them to say – anger. It is this revelation of Scripture that should help us to realize that even though God is very, very gracious to us in our weaknesses and infirmities, apocity – in this case, a refusal to go out and speak what He has commanded us to speak – is a sin that makes God *angry*.

If apocity were not a sin, why would God be angry with Moses? Some say Moses was telling the truth, so why would God be angry? Others say that it is because Moses was not telling the truth, and that is why God was angry. Well, whether Moses was telling the truth or not the Scripture doesn't seem specific. What seems to be plain is that God was angry with Moses because he was progressively making excuses until the *real* reason why he was making excuses came out. Notice, in verse 1 Moses wonders if the people will believe him at all. Then, after God gives him instructions, he then says in verse 10 that he doesn't know how to speak eloquently. At this point, we are getting warmer. Then finally, after God assures him that He will, in essence, be with him,

what does Moses say: send someone else LORD. Bingo! We found the problem!

I wish I had a quarter for every time I have heard or seen this kind of attitude in action. There are countless individuals who continually make excuses as to why they cannot go into the world and witness, meanwhile the real reason (should I say one of the real reasons) is because they would prefer *someone else* did it. If you notice in this text, it is right after Moses says this that God literally gets angry with him. And even though God is angry, He still, in His righteous anger, accommodates Moses by sending Aaron to go with him. Thank God for His mercy! Yet, the terrible fact remains that anger is what God displays toward such apocity. If it wasn't a sin, why would God get mad? What else in the Bible arouses the anger of God? Nothing else but sin!

IV. The Old Testament Evidence of the Prophet Jonah

When considering Moses and the anger of God, and how God condescended to his fear, I would say Moses had it good compared to Jonah. I mean, let's face it; Jonah was swallowed by a sea creature! I wouldn't want God angry with me, nor would I desire to be in the belly of whale, but most of all, I wouldn't want to commit apocity. Even if there weren't any consequences for this sin, it would still be sin to commit it. This will become more evident as we look at Jonah.

What is your impression of Jonah? Do you think he was selfish? Proudful? Maybe really hateful because he knew God would save the Gentiles if he preached (Jonah 4:2)? If this is your impression of Jonah and his refusal to go out and preach to the Gentile nation of Nineveh (who were indeed enemies of Israel), what impression should God have of you if He were to judge you by your own standard? Some would say, "That is why God's standard is not ours!" And indeed you

are right! However, if you are an apocrite I am not sure if you understand how that works against you. If you believe by some small chance that committing apocity is a small thing, hopefully this analysis on Jonah will change your mind.

It all started in verse 1 of Chapter 1 when God told Jonah to “go” to Nineveh to preach against it. If you know the story, you already know that Jonah did not go, but instead fled on a ship to Tarshish. If you were to get a map and see where Tarshish was and where Nineveh was, it was in the opposite direction! Verse 4 is when the action begins to happen. As I discuss the details, ask yourself if you think God considers apocity a minor issue.

In verse 4, it says that the ocean was being stirred up by the wind, but the men on the ship did not know why this was happening, yet. As the ship began to break up, the men became afraid and started calling out to their gods (v5), but realized Jonah was not doing the same. So they go down where Jonah is sleeping and ask him to call on his God so that perhaps He might have mercy on them. Because they became impatient, they cast lots to find out who or what was the cause of this tempestuous storm. At this point the lot reveals that it was Jonah who is the cause of the problem, and here is where we discover that not only is apocity a sin, but also that we are confronted with a crucial question.

After the men ask Jonah all kinds of questions about him and why this “trouble” has come upon them, in verse 10, somewhere in the conversation Jonah confesses that he fled from the presence of the LORD. Not that he thought God wasn’t omnipresent, but that he was going as far away as possible (in the opposite direction) from where God’s presence among His people was. With this understanding, Jonah for some strange reason thought that going in the

opposite direction was a good way to get out of going to Nineveh.

Although I am using a bit of sarcasm, we must remember that we are all susceptible to this irrationality as well. Whenever human beings have set their mind to something, whether for God or against God, we can get tunnel vision and not think clearly. As we look upon Jonah with all the daggers of Scripture pointing at him as to how and why he did wrong, my challenge to you is to remember to take those same daggers and point them all at your own heart! For it is there that apocity dwells, and no matter how audacious or concealed any justification may be to you, apocity in any form is just as heinous as Jonah's sin.

Since Jonah was the perpetrator of all this drama, the mariners now were faced with casting him into the sea so that the waves would be calm for them. When they do cast Jonah away, the tempest ceases and they become "believers" of Jehovah (v15). So the question is, if what Jonah did wasn't a sin, why the raging waters? What was the point of God causing all that trouble and invoking fear if what Jonah did wasn't that big of a deal? The questions are rhetorical so that you would understand, if you are a skeptic, that God considers apocity a big enough sin that He would change the course of Jonah's voyage, bring him under (literally), and cause him to repent of his sinful ways in order to fulfill His purpose. Could God have killed him? Some say that God actually did. Either way, could He have sent someone else? Yes. But since Scripture has things "written for our learning" (Romans 15:4), it would behoove anyone reading this story to pray that God keeps you from habitually committing the sin of apocity.

Before we conclude our OT evidences of apocity being a sin, allow me to ask you the same question the

mariners asked Jonah when they found out he was an apocite: “Why have you done this?” Every person should always ask this question to themselves whenever they sin to any degree, but if you are currently underneath conviction for your lack of evangelistic effort, are you able to answer this question? Is there a good reason you can come up with as to why you feel like apocity is appropriate in your Christian walk? Later on we will explore the reasons why people make up the excuses that they do, but for now, reason with your conscience through prayer and ask the LORD how you can be faithful evangelistically.

V. New Testament (NT) Evidence from the Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 9:16 is a common verse that preachers often use to exhort their congregations to go preach the gospel. I am truly grateful to those that expound on this portion of Corinthians in the first place, but my gratefulness becomes immediately deflated when it is preached in such a way as if Paul is simply making some kind of poetic suggestion. He says, “*Woe* is me *if* I do *not* preach the gospel” (Emphasis added). If you ever get a chance to look up in the Bible every time the English word “woe” is used, I challenge you to find something good about it. Also, if you were to look at just the Greek word used for “woe” you would find that it is used primarily to address the Pharisees, false teachers, and the Babylon of Revelation against their hypocrisy, false religion, or personal sin. Notice also that Paul makes it clear that the choice not to preach is always before us by saying, “if.” There are a lot of “ifs” in the Bible, and *if* properly exegeted and understood, they should cause us to be convicted as believers to choose the narrow path, should a decision be laid before us. The “ifs” are there (I believe) for us to be confronted by the Holy Spirit regarding our will and

to conform us to the image of Christ. So if this is true, *if* we do *not* preach the gospel, we are not conforming to the image of Christ, we are not being obedient to the Spirit of Christ, thus *woe* unto us for being in this state of apocity.

Another thing Paul mentions about the gospel is that to preach is a “commandment of God.” In Romans 16:26, Paul is delivering his benediction to the NT church in Rome and says that God was going to establish it “according” to three things: The preaching of the gospel by him and Jesus, according to the revelation of the mystery of the gospel in the Old Testament, and finally according to *the commandment of God*. If you read this verse carefully (or should I say backwards), it was by the commandment of God to preach so that the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the mystery of the gospel and Jesus are made manifest by the preaching of Paul and Jesus Christ! In other words, it is by *the commandment of God* that we preach the gospel for this revelation to be made known “for obedience to the faith.” Therefore, if God has made the preaching of the gospel a commandment, we are to regard the gospel proclamation as a great moral obligation, and apocity as a great offence to Him who has ordained us as ambassadors for His kingdom (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

This last passage we will look at from Paul clearly calls apocity “disobedience.” In Acts 26 Paul is addressing King Agrippa concerning the reasons why he is currently standing before him, then afterwards gives his salvation testimony on the road to Damascus. It was on this road that Paul was confronted by Jesus Christ from Heaven and quickly brought to his knees before the Holy One. During this encounter, Paul was given his commission, which I feel is just as significant as the commission given to the disciples before the ascension of Jesus. Starting in verse 16:

“But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you *for this purpose*, to make you a minister and a witness...I will deliver you from...the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, [in order] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins...” (Emphasis added).

It was after this confession that Paul plainly says to King Agrippa that he was “not *disobedient* to the Heavenly vision.” Question: Why would Paul say here that not declaring the gospel, by which he was called to preach, *disobedience* if it were not a sin? I also think this reference to disobedience is linked to Paul saying that “necessity” was laid upon him to preach in 1 Cor. 9:16. If you take notice in Acts 26:20, Paul goes on to explain how he has been fulfilling his commission by “declaring” that the Gentiles should “repent and turn to God.” Let’s look a little further into the word *disobedient* and reveal a crucial lesson.

When you look up this word, you come up with the Greek word *apeithes*. This word, along with “woe,” as I explained earlier, is not a pleasant word. The word can represent someone who is “unpersuaded” or “unbelieving.” *Vines Expository Dictionary* states that it means “unwilling to be persuaded.” *Strong’s Concordance* uses a word I had never heard before – contumacious. This word basically means to be “willfully and obstinately disobedient” and “rebellious” according to *Dictionary.com*. Talk about a gut punch! When you analyze the 5 other Scriptures where this word is used, it’s describing those who are disobedient to parents (Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2), those who profess to know God but deny Him with their works (Titus 1:16), and those who are lost in sin (Luke 1:17; Titus 3:3). Truly, in light of this, to

commit apocry is indeed the fruit of an unpersuaded heart, a disobedience to our Father in Heaven, hypocrisy to our profession, and a mirror image of those who do not know the LORD. If you desire to see how this word is used in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) look up Numbers 20:10, Deuteronomy 21:18, Isaiah 30:9, and Jeremiah 5:23, see if you can spot which word in the verse is the word *apeithes*, and ask yourself if you believe that this word is just another charming word that God came up with to expose a *minor* infraction.

VI. New Testament Evidence from the Apostle Peter

When considering the inward fears, trials, and sins that easily beset us, the best example of restoration and forgiveness is Peter. The world exalts men who are successful, or are heroes, without regard to their imperfections and shortcomings. The Bible reveals man's shortcomings, failures, and sin, but also God's work through them. It is this kind of experience of failure and restoration that Peter knew intimately. If there is anyone qualified who can share with us what it is like to fail to confess Christ before men, it is him.

If you remember, Peter was the apostle who openly confessed that he would follow Christ to the death (Luke 22:33). Then, as Christ was being tried, he was asked three times if he knew Christ, and three times he denied Him, even to the point of cursing (Mark 14:71). It was at the second crow of the rooster (that's right, second not third) that Peter remembered Christ's prediction about him and his denial, and the Scriptures say he "wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62). What do you suppose went through Peter's mind the whole time? I wish I knew. But I have personally dealt with specific sins in my life that caused me to weep bitterly to the LORD, and I

have found so much comfort in Peter's restoration because of what happens to him after Christ's resurrection, ascension, and most importantly, Pentecost.

Before going into Peter's restoration, let me first reveal why Peter is the perfect candidate for revealing why apocity is a great omission. First, he knew the pain of not confessing Christ before men. If I personally want to know what *not* to do in a particular situation, I would ask someone who did it before me, so that I could learn from their mistake. Second, he knew how to make it right. If I was an apocite, Peter would be the subject matter expert to help me find the remedy. Lastly, he discovered the joy of being faithful. In order to know what restoration from apocity looks like on the other end, we need an example of someone who has made it through. Peter is such an example.

When you look in the Book of Acts, you find a Peter zealous for Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit. In other words, he just won't shut up about Christ! This zeal has always been in him, but now he is empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a stone upon which Christ will continue to build His church on earth. This empowerment and fire brought him before a council in Acts 4, and it is at this council that we discover the Apostle Peter's declaration concerning apocity.

After Peter and John healed the lame beggar at Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:10), they immediately preached the gospel to the gathering crowd (v12-26). Then it says that they were grabbed by the priests and the Sadducees because of their preaching of Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 4:2). After they were held overnight, they were questioned concerning the miracle and their preaching. It was at this moment that Peter gave another bold proclamation of the gospel, even going as far as directly accusing his prosecutors of crucifying Christ (v 10). Because the council could not

disprove what Peter and John had done, they conspired together to threaten them that they should no longer speak in the name of Jesus (v18). What Peter says next is going to be our main focus.

Peter looks to the council and says, “Whether it is right in the sight of God *to listen to you more than God*, you judge. For we *cannot but speak* the things which we have seen and heard” (Emphasis added). Amazing! Remember that this is the same man who would curse and swear to deny Christ before a harmless woman (Luke 22:57), and now he is boldly standing up for Christ before a whole council of threatening men! It is this statement that Peter unreservedly defines apocity as listening to men more than God. If we deduce this correctly, the fact that Peter mentions listening to God more, as an objection of the command to keep quiet (in other words don’t preach), that means to submit to such a request would not only mean that you do not fear God, but you are a man pleaser. Peter, knowing all too well the pain of denying Christ and the bitter remedy of repentance, is now representing to us the example of a heart restored from committing apocity. His example reveals that we should *listen to God more* than men if we are to recover from this terrible sin. Also, if we have indeed received the gospel into our hearts, and we are genuine Christians, “we cannot but speak” because the word of God is like a fire shut up in our bones which consumes us (Jeremiah 20:9). To do otherwise would not only be out of character, but it doesn’t line up with our profession of faith.

In a similar situation, Peter ends up again being confronted by the high priest of the same council in Acts 5:28. When confronted, the priest was fuming, and he questioned Peter concerning his actions, referring back to the previous threat to not preach the gospel. It is at this point

that Peter tells the high priest, “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Emphasis added). We have heard this note played before, except this time, Peter uses the word *obey* rather than the word *listen* as he did in the previous chapter. This strongly implies that to not declare the gospel is indeed disobedience, or apocity, toward God. Sure, you can apply this in a general sense to anything concerning God’s will and commandments, but the direct context reveals a stronger argument for the obligation to preach the gospel. Also, the fact that Peter uses the word “ought” to describe the necessity (in other words, moral obligation) to obey God by preaching, this reveals to us that God has imparted to us an “ought” that ought *never* to be disobeyed. Should we neglect this great commission of evangelism that is upon every person who professes faith in Jesus, we bring great discredit to our confession of faith, our ministry, our pastorate, and most of all, Christianity.

VII. New Testament Evidence from our Lord Jesus Christ

I have to say that it saddens me to have to write this book. Even if the Bible were to contain no examples of preaching and apocity, Jesus’ command to “Go, preach the gospel to every creature” should be enough! It is truly lamentable to see many within our local churches today either preaching a false gospel, or having the correct biblical gospel but remaining silent within their respective locations. Evangelism seemingly has to have an entertainment value, be propagated as “easy” to do, or have some sense of self-fulfillment in order to motivate others to preach. The fact that Jesus said “go” should prompt any believer who has been saved by grace and filled with His Spirit to be “stirred up!” The joy I receive from just sharing the gospel with someone, whether it is handing out tracts, one-on-one

witnessing, or open air preaching, is inexpressible! This lack of motivation in our western culture should make us realize that the majority who call themselves believers yet do not witness regularly, consistently, and purposefully are either ignorant of Christ's commission or not genuine believers (an understanding we will explore in Chapter 6). The fact that we do not share the gospel, simply because we are commanded to, exasperates our apocity.

In order for us to see how Jesus confirms that apocity is a sin, we need to build up an example of what would have happened if His apostles did not heed His call. I know we have probably heard many "what if" stories from the pulpit about the disciples never heeding Jesus to go and preach the gospel to all nations, but I hope my spin on it will be much more alarming.

Picture Jesus moving around the Palestinian province, preaching the gospel as He sees fit, according to His grace and electing purposes. And as He goes, He often has with Him 12 men whom, from time to time, He commissions to preach the kingdom of God. As they go around preaching, they see the kingdom of God working by the miracles they have performed and souls that are coming to believe. Then, approximately 3 years later, they have to witness their beloved Savior crucified for the forgiveness of sins, but also they witness His resurrection 3 days later. Before Christ ascends back to Heaven, He gives His disciples this final command, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."(Matthew 28:20).

If the disciples had not listened, if they hadn't waited in Jerusalem for the power of the Spirit to be witnesses, all would *not* have been undone! The only ones that would have been undone would have been those 11 men that did not *go*

as Christ commanded them. God's gospel in Christ would never cease simply because 11 men would have been disobedient. Even though we are merely speculating here, one thing to remember is that the tragedy would not have been that the world would have never heard the gospel, because God could send angels to do it if He wanted to (Revelation 14:6). The tragedy here would have been that despite what these men witnessed concerning Christ, they would have committed apocity in a manner so grave it would have been enough to condemn them to Hell. Their apocity would have been proof of their unbelief, and that they did not love God nor His commandments (John 14:15, 21; John 15:10; 1 John 5:3).

Thankfully we know this did not happen, but imagine this with me for a moment. If doubting Thomas was confronted with the bodily resurrection of Christ, and Christ says to him "Blessed are those that have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29), yet despite his most privileged position, later on chose to not to obey Christ's great commission, would he not be in contempt against Christ? If he who has seen the Resurrection and the Life with his own eyes would have been in sin, how much more we, who Christ says are blessed because we have not seen yet believe, be in just as much in sin, if not more, if we commit apocity against Christ's great commission? The fact that the majority of the visible Church in the western world today willingly choose not to or unbelievably bow out of preaching the gospel consistently, regularly, and purposefully reveals the reality that local churches in America and in Europe are in a state of apocity so great, that if God doesn't send revival by the mouths of the few, local churches will continue to close their doors and men will continue to descend into Hell by the

droves (including those that profess to know Him but in their works, deny Him).

VIII. Why is Apocity So Great a Sin?

The huge problem with the contemporary church is that we no longer regard apocity as a sin like all other sins. When some confess that they do not evangelize on a regular basis as they know they are expected to, they say it in such a way that does not exhibit shame. Surely, if it was some grave sin, they would not confess it so easily or as flippantly as they do, right? If it were pornography, they wouldn't just come out and openly admit it, unless they were talking to a close friend by whom they are seeking counsel and help. All sin is shameful! But, when men or women can confess that they do not evangelize often without any conviction, it is a telltale sign that they either do not think apocity is a great sin, or they have no irritation against sin.

When we look at God's Ten Commandments, we clearly see a moral law that has been broken ten billion times over by mankind, yet those who are unregenerate seem to not care or weep over their sin before God. Why? Because the Bible reveals that they love their sin (John 3:19), and are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). It isn't until God's saving grace breaks their hard hearts and replaces it with a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26-27) that men will begin to weep over their sin and be grieved at the breaking of God's commandments. If this is true concerning our wicked works before God, how about when we understand that apocity is a sin just like all others? Should we not weep and grieve over the fact that we are not fulfilling the most comprehensible commandments of God?

Do you believe lying is wrong? If so, how do you feel about it? Grieved I hope if you profess to be a believer. How

about adultery? Rape? Murder? Of course you would say yes to the latter questions because those sins seem to be the most visibly noticeable. Covetousness, pride, sexual lust of the heart, etc., however, are not visible sins (although they can manifest visibly in various ways), nevertheless they are written as being hidden sins of the heart. Unfortunately, many do not see apocity this way. We do not place apocity on the level of sin as we would other ones because, for whatever reason, we do not believe it should be there. Oh boy, are we wrong!

Despite the fact that I have given some proof from the Scriptures that reveals apocity to be a great sin, there might still be some brain waves going off in your head that believes it might be a sin, but not a great sin as I am insinuating. For that reason, I have included the next portion of this book to plead and reason with you, just in case you happen to think that apocity is not as serious as I make it out to be.

IX. Hell, Penn Jillette, and God

First things first, what does the New Testament teach concerning Hell? The Bible tells us that Hell is a real place where unregenerate sinners go forever to be punished for their sin. It is a place of burning, darkness, and God's wrath (Matthew 8:12; Mark 9:46; 1 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Truly, if I were to capture a millisecond of Hell for you in this lifetime, the vision and pain would be so horrifying, I believe it would kill you. This is the reason why I believe God has to provide those in Hell with "new" bodies that will be "fitted" for everlasting destruction (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Romans 9:22). A destruction that never stops for a death that never dies! Do you believe this to be true? Do you believe in a fire where sinners will be tortured for all of eternity if they die without a Savior? If say you do, and you are in a state of

apocity, you are lying to yourself. If there were no greater reason as to why apocity is so great a sin (and there is one), wouldn't the penalty of eternal torment be enough for you to get out of your comfort zone and preach the gospel? Why doesn't the thought of people being cast into Hell burden your heart? Is it possible you really don't believe that people will actually suffer forever? If you don't, won't you repent right now and ask God to save you from this debilitating sin that has silenced the truth? I am not saying that if you go out, that God will always save some when you preach, but if you don't go, how will you ever know? Apocity is a great sin because men are facing an eternity in a great and terrible place without Christ's mercy, and to not pray for souls and preach to them is to hate your neighbor (misanthrope).

Penn Jillette is a famous illusionist/entertainer who is also an atheist. Early in his career, he was very vocal about his stance on atheism and would make videos mocking the Bible. However, sometime in 2009, Penn posted a video on Youtube.com describing his experience with someone after a show who gave him a New Testament pocket Bible. In the video, he goes on to express how appreciative he was and how sincere the man was who presented him this gift. As he monologues, he mentions how he doesn't respect people who don't proselytize. He goes on to further say:

“If you believe that there is a Heaven and Hell, and people could be going to Hell...and you think that it's not really worth telling this because it would make it socially awkward...how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”

This is an atheist that said this! An atheist! Sure we don't base our theology off the words of someone who is lost, but are not his words true nevertheless? I have seen several videos of Penn talking in this fashion, stating how he thinks someone who really believes something with all their heart should proselytize. If Mr. Jillette understands that our message is important enough that we should share it, and we don't, it would be a gross deviation on our part to say that there is an eternity in Hell or Heaven awaiting us, and yet say nothing.

The last, but certainly not least, and greatest reason why apocity is such a serious sin is because of *who* it is against. Remember this Christian! Sin is not ugly because of the consequences; it is ugly because it opposes the beauty and holiness of God! Any violation of God's commandments by any man is a great sin any time, not merely because of the consequences, but because it stands in defiance to God. For a Christian, the highest reason not to sin is because He is the apple of our eye! He is the One whom we aim to please! He alone is the One who deserves our affections and devotion! He is the One whom we adore and love with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength! Because God is the Great God, any sin against Him is a great sin, including the sin of apocity. My recommendation would be to grab a copy of or listen to *Hell's Best Kept Secret* by Ray Comfort so that this understanding would be made clearer.

X. The Greatest Sin of Omission

James 4:17 reveals to us that knowing to do good and not doing it is sin. This Scripture opens a door to sins that many do not take the time out to think about. For the most part, when you *omit* something you should be doing, it is inevitable that you *commit* something you shouldn't do. In

certain cases, sins of omission and commission can be symbiotic, but nevertheless, they are both a choice. When speaking about the sin of apocity as a sin of omission, we must grasp that this particular sin is an epidemic in our local congregations. Also, because sins of omission seem to carry less obvious consequence in the temporal sense, it is easy to ignore them because we don't see an immediate impact. Not realizing that our actions are indeed a great omission, we side step being a faithful witness and approach the sin of not evangelizing as we do a failed art project or minuscule errand. However, when we read that Scripture requires that we indeed go out and preach the gospel, if we choose not to do this, we not only participate in a sin of omission, but a serious one! For what other sin can cause untold numbers to perish without hearing the gospel sound in their ears by your negligence? Abortion is a sin of commission that causes the slaughter of billions of children; apostasy can put you under severer punishment than if you were never exposed to truth, and the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit can be unforgivable, but woe unto that person that does not preach the gospel! It might not be the greatest sin you can commit, but apocity certainly is the greatest sin of omission there is.

For the most part, the average professing believer doesn't mean to commit apocity. It is not like any of us are making it a point to not witness and share our faith with others, we just aren't. There may be times when we miss our opportunity (if we are even looking), but more than likely, it is just a habit we have slipped into, and a sinful one at that! Just like a sponge that does not get used in a while turns rock hard, so becomes of those who do not go out and get soaking wet in evangelism! After a while, unless God replaces the hardness of our hearts toward lost souls, we remain stiff pew gargoyles. Furthermore, we must know evangelism is a

spiritual desire not a spiritual gift (see Chapter 4), it should not only be second nature to want to witness (See Chapter 6) but we must also discipline ourselves to continue in it and endure.

So how can you know if you have committed this deplorable sin? Before we explore that, allow me to ask you a few questions. 1. Do you think that failing to purposefully witness and share your faith is a direct violation of Christ's commandment to "go and make disciples," and therefore is a great sin? If not, stop here and re-read this chapter because you are not ready to go any further. If you do believe, then continue reading. 2. Do you believe the commission of Christ to the apostles is a commission for the whole of the New Testament church? If you do not, then you will continue to commit this sin no matter how much I try to convince that Christ's commission is for all professing believers. If you do, then you are on the right track. 3. Finally, do you believe there is enough scriptural evidence and examples in the Bible that reveals to you the atrocity of this sin, and that you admit you have more than likely committed apocity, or are currently an apocite (in a state of apocity)? If not, I plead with you to reconsider this thought! If so, that means you are ready to know whether or not you have committed apocity and are ready to receive insight into the excuses our deceitful heart uses to justify the greatest sin of omission.

XI. Have I/We Committed this Sin?

As a recap, remember that the word "apocity" was formulated to describe someone who does not preach the gospel even though they are commanded to (Please re-read Chapter 1 Section II to refresh your memory on how and why this word was formulated, if necessary). This is important because the formulation of the word carries the majority of

the clues for you to know whether or not you have sinned. All we need is a little exposition.

Have you ever been in a moment or situation, for example, when you perceived you could have given a tract or personally witnessed to someone and for some reason you didn't? I have. Anyone who is paying attention and is not an apocite would know what I am talking about. For some reason, however, you decided not to. Maybe you were busy at that moment and it wasn't practical for you to talk to them, and you could have given them a tract, but then fear kicked in and you walked away. Or maybe, you felt it wasn't the "right" timing, or that by speaking up you would probably do more harm than good. If you have made excuses for coping out of witnessing, passing out a tract, or even open air preaching knowing the opportunity was there, you committed the sin of apocity.

In the next chapter we will explore excuses, but right now something may be popping up in that cranium of yours because I am seemingly implying that every lost opportunity is a sin. That is not what I am saying. When I describe apocity, just as I would define prayerlessness or lack of Bible reading or anything else we're expected to do as Christians, I separate the isolated, accidental incident from plain disobedience. I also make a distinction between committing apocity as an occasional occurrence and being in the state of apocity.

When you are a growing Christian (and all of us are always growing), you will experience failure from time to time if you are learning how to share your faith. You will come across rejection, anger from others, internal fears, sorrow, and most of all repentance for lost opportunities when you know you could have utilized them. But occasionally, you will not realize that there was an

opportunity to give a tract, or witness to someone until afterwards. It is kind of like when you get into an argument with someone, and after it is over, you think about all the things you could've said to put them to shame (I know this is a bad example, but bear with me). When this happens in the context of "lost" opportunities, you are really not purposefully sinning because you were not aware of it. Sure, you could have done something, but you just weren't paying attention, and this can be justifiable (although not altogether consistently allowable) if your intention is to be watchful. But, the important part is to learn from these isolated, accidental incidents and pray that God will give you open eyes to see any opportunity and to *equip* and *prepare* you to minimize any lapses, because they will happen. On the other hand, if you simply do not care that you missed an opportunity nor do you seek to improve upon these kinds of incidents, then it is clear that you have committed apocity and are being disobedient. And if you do realize your opportunity to share your faith by means of conversation, giving a tract, etc., but decide not to, this is apocity also.

To commit apocity occasionally is also different from being in a state of apocity – thus being an apocite. In other words, if you are in the consistent practice, lifestyle, or habit of not going out into the world to share your faith with strangers and loved ones using various means, you are an apocite. It is kind of like when you sin against God versus when you apostatize. When you sin (if you are a genuine Christian) you have not abandoned your faith and completely turned your back on God when you do sin. You have not continually indulged in sin and called it good. You just sinned! When you do sin, the Holy Spirit stirs you up to repentance and brings your conscience to its knees so that you can be restored once again. However, when you commit

apostasy, you have utterly rejected the faith and removed yourself from righteous living and any characteristic of righteousness that would prove you as a child of grace. So it is with apocity. You can commit this sin and be grieved about it and minimize your incidents, or you can continue in this state without a care in world and justify your state by making petty excuses, thus never truly be obedient to the call of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to every creature. I have seen men and women in this state. It is truly a sad sight to behold. But as you will read in future chapters, it is also scary state to be in.

Although I have mentioned apocity and how it can be committed personally, whether occasionally or perpetually, apocity is most often seen corporately as a local church. Whenever you step in a church, you will see different programs that the church may have to support various different things. You may have an orphanage, a children's nursery, and even a ministry for the poor. However, how many churches do you know have a consistent, scheduled evangelistic effort **as a church**? They may have something set up, but the local church *as a unit* does not engage in evangelism. They leave it up to the "Evangelist" or don't do it at all. You can call a meeting to talk about finances, you can have a meeting to discuss biblical womanhood/manhood, or you can call a conference for anything you want under the sun, but when evangelism is mentioned, the crickets are the only ones that seem to attend. And whatever attendance you may have, if they are not genuine pursuers of souls, they are usually just curious hypocrites that somehow feel fulfilled by attending such services. When a church as a whole is not going out corporately, or when pastors are not calling/leading the church to constantly, regularly, and

purposefully go out and share their faith *as a congregation*, that local church, as a corporate body, is committing apocity.

XII. Ability + Opportunity Does Not Equal Responsibility

When deciding whether or not someone has the responsibility to do something, it is usual to base their responsibility (R) off of ability (A) and opportunity (O). This equation, $A+O=R$, is something preachers, and motivational speakers, have used to pinpoint acts of omission, and is largely subjective and highly susceptible to pragmatic excuses. For example, many will dodge their responsibility to evangelize simply because they *can't*. They not only excuse themselves because of supposed inability, but they also turn around and apply those same excuses, and maybe more creative ones, to their lack of opportunity. Since responsibility is decided upon the foundation of ability plus opportunity alone, then anyone can take the opportunity to remove their responsibility to preach from the equation by underestimation. In plain English, all they have to do is misjudge their ability and their opportunity, and they are off the hook! However, this is not the proper way to judge a Christian's responsibility toward evangelism. The equation of $A+O=R$ may be a good place to start on how to judge apocity, but it is incomplete and untrustworthy. Therefore, I will show you a much better way.

In order to make us better aware as to whether or not you have sinned through lack of evangelism, I have provided this formula to make it easy to remember: ability plus opportunity does not equal responsibility ($A+O\neq R$). Along with $A+O=R$, this formula is not meant to be an absolute way to know whether or not you have committed any sins of omission (in this specific case, apocity). I am using this formula to reveal to you the futility of excuses not to

evangelize, to heighten your sense of awareness, and to lead your understanding to the promised land of a proper and biblical picture of responsibility.

When I use the word ability, I mean that you are physically able, mentally sound, and possess the means to accomplish your task. For example, just because I don't know how the person will receive a tract that doesn't mean I don't have the ability to go ahead with fulfilling the great commission. Regardless of what the circumstance of my internal fears or anxieties may be, do I have the ability? If you are not bed-ridden, physically handicapped, mentally handicapped, or have some contagious virus that will destroy human kind, then you are physically able to share the gospel! And even then, I have seen men get up from their wheelchairs and proclaim the gospel of peace (See Chapter 3, Section VII)! Ability in no way should be a primary gauge as to whether or not we should be obedient to any of God's commands. There may be real limitations to what we can do at times, and I think the Holy Spirit will dictate that better than I can; but if, for the most part, you are not motivated to evangelize regardless of your (in)ability, then you will never accept biblical responsibility for evangelizing, and apocity is at your door.

The other part of our formula is opportunity. This one is a little trickier to define because opportunity depends heavily upon the awareness and courage of the individual. For the most part, though, if you have been made aware that giving the gospel to someone by whatever means is accomplishable, then you have met face to face with opportunity. However, there is a big difference in *waiting* for an opportunity and *making* an opportunity. If you are going to be a faithful Christian, and be consistent with your evangelism, you must be purposeful in making opportunities

in sharing your faith with others and *not just waiting* for one to happen. Do not misunderstand what I am saying. When God opens the door, you take it! Pray for open doors too! Times like that I praise God for. However, we are all responsible to purposefully go out in the world, meaning I am to *proactively* take a role in making opportunities.

The last part of our equation is responsibility. Responsibility to fulfill the great commission is upon us, not because we have ability and opportunity, but because God has decreed that we should have it in Jesus Christ. Even if we think we lack the ability or opportunity, this does not remove us from our responsibility. God has equipped every professing believer with the ability and He provides plenty of opportunities, we just don't do it! God has commissioned us all as preachers to go out and share the gospel with the world. And if all you have to say is, "I once was blind but now I see" (John 9:25), then share it so as long it is biblical. If you don't know what to say, but all you know is that Jesus saves from sin, proclaim it on housetops (Luke 12:3)! At least you are going out and doing something. I am not advocating that you should be ignorant of how to evangelize biblically, but to do nothing at all is indeed a sin, and to make excuses for it only magnifies the problem. In essence, a better way to understand our responsibility before God would not be $A+O=R$, but $C=R$ (Command=Responsibility). *Note: For more information on how to share your faith biblically, listen to "How to Witness and Preach Effectively" by Ray Comfort, or go to Livingwaters.com.*

Chapter 3: Excuses, Excuses

Proverbs 26:16 “The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can answer sensibly.”

– King Solomon

“For if, when ye have learned the truth, you do not what is just, you will be before God without excuse.”

–Justin Martyr

The word excuse comes from the Latin *excusare*, which literally means, “to get out of legal action or accusation.” And because preaching the gospel is a command of God, many apocites have to make *excuses* for their apocity because the Scriptures legally accuse them of their crime of not going out of their way to preach the gospel. Apocites are treasure troves, gluttonously full of excuses as to why they will not go out and share their faith regularly, especially with strangers. In this chapter, we will reveal the family of apocity, the excuses apocites make, and the commonly accepted substitutions that many within our congregations feel are proper replacements for evangelism. As I will touch on later, not all excuses are bad, just the bad ones are.

1. The Family Tree of Apocity

Some family picnic/reunions can be very interesting. I remember as a kid always eagerly anticipating seeing my family in New Jersey or having family come and visit for the summer. The downfall, however, as you begin to spend time with some of them, unfortunately, sometimes there is something you wish you didn't know. In-laws are usually the target for such ridicule and scrutiny. Because let's face it, you

are marrying into another family that has a different sub-culture. It is a blessing to find a family that is like minded in morals, behavior, political views, etc., but sometimes (okay, maybe most of the time) you find that this is not the case.

In understanding apocity, we must remember that just like every sin, it is not alone. Apocity is made up of a family of sin, satanic in-laws if you will, that seek to make a covenant with you and demand that you keep it. Apocity is a fruit from the family tree of evil that simply receives its juices from the root of sin. In this family, you have apocity as the offspring of Laziness, Pride, Procrastination, Fear, and Incredulity as the Patriarch. Although there might be other family members of this sin, I am only focusing on these because they are the most common and seemingly the root cause of the excuses that people make to justify apocity.

II. Laziness - The Lovely Mother of Apocity

Every offspring needs a mother. The mother's role in the family is to nurture her children and raise them up with care. A mother's love should be tender and gentle. And nothing cares for apocity and nurtures it more than laziness. Laziness in the Bible is a topic that is much talked about. Although laziness is often playfully joked about (I have been guilty of this from time to time), it is not something we should enjoy nor entertain if we call ourselves Christians.

When you search the book of Proverbs there is an abundance of Scriptures that speak about laziness and its different manifestations. Anywhere from refusal to work (Pro. 24:30) to getting out of bed (Pro. 6:9-10; 26:14), the slothful person is one who will not immediately get things done, if at all. The Bible says that a slothful person is grieved to bring his hand to his mouth to serve himself food (Pro. 19:24). Grieved! Talk about genuine laziness! But the part of

laziness I would like to expose is the proteins of apocity's DNA – bad excuses. Notice, I said bad excuses. There are legitimate concerns why people just can't do certain things from time to time, and there are times when going out to evangelize will not be possible (something we will explore later), but any excuse that finds its cause in laziness is plainly a sin.

As the chapter Scripture reveals, a lazy man is wiser in his own mind, than seven men who can give better counsel (this is from the GRV version – George's Revised Version). Basically, if you compare this Scripture with others, you see a person who is expressing reasons or excuses as to why they do not want to do something, or why they think such and such a thing is a bad idea, etc., but the real reason is that they are just plain lazy and don't want to do it. Not only will they make up excuses, but they will *find* excuses.

Case in point: “The lazy man says there is a lion outside, I will be slain in the streets” (Proverbs 22:13). This proverb was given to reveal that a slothful man will look for any excuse as to why he should not make any effort. And if he must do something, like hunting, he doesn't even finish the job by cooking what he caught (Pro 12:27). Sooner or later he might have to plow, but because it is cold during that season, he finds an excuse not to (Pro 20:4). It makes no difference how unreasonable it may sound; the lazy person will make excuses even if it is irrational because he simply wants to get out of doing anything. Since he is wiser in his own eyes, he thinks his reasons are justified!

The majority of those in our congregations are like this. They are slumbering when they should be witnessing, sleeping when they should be plowing the hearts of men with God's word, making excuses when they should consider the command of God to preach! It is truly a sad reality. There will

always be worries and fears that come upon us before, during, and after we witness, but to not go is a sin! I have personally experienced time after time individuals that can give me a thousand and one reasons and fears as to why they can't witness, when in reality their "can't" is really they "won't." It is not that they are not capable; they just do not want to go, period! Apocity has taken hold, but only because they have become so lazy and comfortable in their bubble, they do not want to do anything that will pop or disrupt it.

Words of warning to those that are in this state of laziness. God's word reveals that laziness is indeed worthy of Hell. Matthew 25:26 has the parable of the talents teaching us that one of the servants did not do what was required of him. When we are told that the man gave his servants talents, Jesus *wasn't* talking about natural talents as many twist this to mean. The meaning here is about money representing our God given responsibilities "according to each his own ability" (Matt 25:15). So even though there are some who may have an immense amount of responsibility, those who have little responsibility still have an obligation from God to work for Him as they have ability. And what do you suppose is meant by each servant making more talents for their master? How else would you multiply God's economy? Obedience! Two of the three were obedient in their master's affairs and were deemed "faithful servants" because they continued to work for the master until He came back. Take strong heed to this! The third servant was disobedient because he didn't at least try to do something with what he was given! That is why the man (representing Jesus) railed him in verse 27. In other words, there is always something you can do!

I, personally, think this parable has strong insinuations that are linked with evangelism. If you were to think about it, many of the local churches today are hiding

the talent of evangelism underneath the pews. So while they are in church hearing pretty little sermons, even some that are theologically sound, there is not only this huge gap between their theology and practical application, but laziness lulls the conscience to not be so alarmed at their own failure to go out and preach! Judgment will begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). Therefore, beware of laziness, for it is the mother of apocity.

III. Pride - The Strong Father of Apocity

As I stated before, no sin is ever alone. One sin brings forth a thousand! Like cockroaches, if the eggs are not destroyed, they will breed exponentially. And just as laziness is the mother of apocity, pride is its father – for they often share the same bed (Ezekiel 16:49). When you consider the work of a father, he is supposed to be a provider, but most importantly a protector. He is supposed to be strong and willing to raise his children in the way they should go. This is what pride does for apocity. It provides apocity the protection it needs to linger by making us think we are not sinning when we are. Pride gives us that false assurance so that we can persist in our state without an ounce of care because no immediate judgment has occurred (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Pride often protects our reputation with man, and always seeks to make sure we stay in men's good graces lest we disrupt our comfort (Luke 16:15; John 12:43). Pride can even protect our laziness by deceiving us into thinking that we are just resting and relaxing. Our pride is indeed a forged diamond, dug out of the breastplate of Satan's armor, and its number one goal is to distract you from doing the will of God. Since apocity is the precious child of pride, and pride will do all within its power to protect its own, the only victory over

pride and its effort to deter us from evangelism is humble prayer and a repentant heart that seeks after God. I wish I could write more about how pride takes us away from our responsibility to be a witness, but this would then turn into a book about pride.

Pride indeed is a very slippery sin because it pops its head up in so many different ways. When you consider the things you are concerned with as a person, your worries and your cares, do those worries and cares really outweigh the biblical mandate to be a faithful witness for Christ? Is there anything you are scared of losing? Is it reputation, good standing in the community, or popularity? Is what you are scared to lose worth more to you than a soul, even your own soul (Matthew 16:26)? Is it worth more to you than obedience to God? I tell you this – pride is the reason for those hesitations, but it probably isn't pride alone. As we discuss more concerning the family of apocity you will see that fear can immobilize you just as much as pride can. But before we get to fear, we are going to look at apocity's most honorable aunt, procrastination.

IV. Procrastination – The Honorable Aunt of Apocity

Why would I deem procrastination to be an honorable aunt? Well, let's look at who she is related to – laziness. Laziness can proceed from procrastination, but procrastination does not need laziness to survive. Someone can be lazy and inevitably procrastinate on many things, but you can procrastinate on something and not be lazy. That is why procrastination is the more honorable-one in the family, because the perception is that she is busy with other things.

When you look up the word in the dictionary, it means to “put off” something or “delay, especially something requiring immediate attention.” This is why procrastination

is the most “honorable” part of apocity. She is not willfully trying to disobey; she just has other things to do. More important things like watch her favorite TV show, clean up the house, go out to dinner with the family, attend a church picnic, prepare for a sermon, help the kids with homework, work extra hours to save money for another vacation, maybe even spend some time listening to a sermon or reading the Bible. If you notice, there is nothing sinful about any of these things, but the problem is that the majority would *rather do anything else* than purposefully, consistently, and regularly go out and share their faith with others. Procrastination provides this misleading idea that you are doing things that are honorable or good, but in reality, you still are **not** doing what God requires of you in the grand scheme of things (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42)! Even though you know you should go out into all the world, because Christ plainly has called you to do so, you *delay it or put it off* for another day. And you keep delaying and keep putting off, meanwhile keeping yourself busy with other things you would *rather* be doing, not realizing you are committing apocity to the third degree! Out of all the relatives of apocity in the local churches today, procrastination is one of the top killers of evangelistic zeal, which is tremendously lacking. Evangelism should require *immediate attention* in our congregations, but procrastination is making sure that doesn’t happen.

V. Fear – The Drama Queen Sister

Just like siblings, they tend to play tricks on you, and sometimes they bully you if they know they can manipulate you. Instead of being encouraging and sympathetic, siblings can be downright nasty sometimes. This is the reason why I call fear the “drama queen” sister, because just like drama

queens, fear has the habit of exaggerating things and playing tricks in your mind.

Fear indeed brings torment at times (1 John 4:18), and is almost always going to make things look worse than they really are, thus causing paralysis. However, don't get me wrong, fear is not exclusively a sinful emotion. It can be used as a good thing as long as it is godly fear, or is tempered with courage or love, which can motivate you to boldness. What I am trying to pinpoint more specifically is the type of fear that we default to when we make excuses as to why we cannot witness. The Bible says that the fear of man brings a snare (Proverbs 26: 25), and usually it is this kind of fear that many succumb to (truly, what else would they be afraid of). Since evangelism is an encounter with your fellow man, by which you confront them concerning their sinful condition so that they might repent and put their faith in Jesus, man is the object of our fear, and apocity tends to be a false asylum.

Instead of trusting God as our refuge, we find more comfort in just asking God to "send someone else." Instead of using things like gospel tracts which help abundantly for those that are more fearful than others, we exaggerate situations in our minds thinking if someone takes one, they will be foaming at the mouth and try to kill us. In some countries this may be a reality, but this hasn't happened in America (yet). And as long we continue to be unreasonably fearful, it will cause us to sin against God and justify ourselves, because fear is never a good excuse for disobedience.

I don't want to be cold or brash talking about fear, because I have been fearful many times in my Christian walk. Some would say "Aha! Hypocrite!" And to that I would say that's fine if you feel that way, but remember what I said about Peter. Just because I witness regularly, consistently,

and purposefully, doesn't mean I have not sinned along with the family of apocity. I still get fearful in a sinful way sometimes, because of pride and/or laziness. There are times when fear works in my favor because it provokes me to seek God who gives me the grace and courage to overcome it. Other times, I think I can do it all on my own and end up repenting in the end. The point I am making is that no matter if it is fear, laziness, pride, or procrastination; you must fight against these enemies! Divorce yourself from these evil relatives of apocity through repentance and press on in your evangelistic quest to be obedient to the command of Christ! Do not let your fears magnify a distorted view of reality! Remember what Christ said, "Do not fear them which kill the body, and afterwards *can do no more*. But I forewarn you whom you shall fear: *fear Him*, which after he has killed the body has power to cast into Hell, I say to you *fear Him*" (Luke 12:4-5) (Emphasis added).

Vl. Mr. Incredulity – Apocity's Patriarch

If we were to trace the pedigree of this family of apocity, just like the human race, we can follow the lineage back to their patriarch; their own Adam in the family of sin – incredulity. This name is defined as an "unwillingness to believe," better known as Lord Unbelief. Indeed, he is almost as old as the human race itself. He was born in Adam the day he and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Just under pride in cosmic seniority, Mr. Incredulity is the oldest sin in the universe. But unlike other sins, he does not stem from any other; all others stem from him!

In John Bunyan's book, *Holy War*, Mr. Incredulity was chief-in-command in the town of Mansoul next to Diabolous, and was responsible for the overthrow and retaking of the town before Prince Emmanuel overcame the town and they

executed him once and for all. However, he has faithful followers everywhere, and his children possess his genetic code which is the reason for widespread rebellion amongst the human race. Because his genes are so prominent in our nature, every part of who he is permeates our whole being. If it were not for the grace of God and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Incredulity would be our ruin.

Plainly stated, unbelief is the root of all sin, apocity included. The main reason for our apocity, regardless of the contributions other sins can make, is in our failure to trust Christ. I can poetically put together a family of apocity to illustrate the reality of why this sin is so prevalent within modern Christendom, but nothing is more important than revealing the ugly truth that unbelief is the root cause. If you stop to think about this for a moment, even if someone seeks to deal with their laziness, procrastination, pride, or fear in relation to their apocity, if unbelief is not cried out against in prayer and repented of, their apocity will eventually return to the town of Mansoul. We must plead with God with all of our might that He might help our unbelief (Mark 9:24), and subdue this ugly giant that is inherent within us.

It is because of unbelief, procrastination can put off evangelism a little longer; laziness can make excuses a little easier, pride can deceive a little better, and fear can continue to be a little more dramatic. Unbelief causes us to continue in the fear of man, to pridefully trust ourselves, to procrastinate in our evangelism, and remain lazily unashamed of our apocity. Apocity is unbelief's best kept secret as far as I am concerned, and primarily because it has remained nameless for so long. But now that it has a name, let every professing Christian hear the name of apocity ringing in their ears! Do not let unbelief provide asylum for this atrocious sin any

longer! Cut off unbelief, embrace Christ with all your heart, and watch the black, thorny rose of apocity wither away!

VII. Objections/Excuses from Apocites

Even though we have looked at some root causes of apocity (though not exhaustively), it is a good idea to read and examine the statements professing Christians make in order to get out of witnessing so that you might recognize the symptoms of an apocite. Remember, most excuses apocites make are just outward confessions of a deeper problem. Also, remember that just because someone makes any excuse as to why they can't evangelize, that doesn't mean they are always making a bad excuse. There are legitimate concerns out there, and Lord willing we will proficiently explore some in detail.

The next portion will be a non-exhaustive list of reasons that people provide either to justify themselves or others. Some I have personally heard, meanwhile others are statements that have been repeated to me. As you read, examine yourself.

"I am Waiting for the Leading of the Spirit"

This is truly a sad statement to hear. Someone who does not witness on a regular basis simply because they are waiting for the Spirit to lead them has the commission of Christ misunderstood. Nowhere in the commission that Christ gave His disciples does it say we have to wait for the Spirit's leading in order for us to get the green light to witness (Acts 1:4 is not an exception). Mark 16:15 says, "every creature," meaning *every* creature. If you feel led of the Spirit to witness to someone, by all means go for it! Do not quench the Spirit when He is guiding you to go and tell

someone of Jesus Christ. But if that is all you are waiting for, and you are not making a purposeful effort to pass out tracts at the very least, until you are “led” to do so, then you are being disobedient to the mandate of Christ.

The irony of this is that the Bible teaches us that the Spirit inside of us was given to remind of us of all things concerning what Christ taught (John 14:26). So if this is true (and it is), and Christ taught us to go make disciples, how is it possible that the Spirit would not lead you to do this regularly, consistently, and purposefully? I understand that the Spirit prohibited the apostles from going to Asia and Bythnia in Acts 16:6-7, but to say that this is proof that we also are forbidden to preach to anyone until the Spirit says so is not a proper application of Scripture. If anything, you should preach everywhere, and wait for the Spirit’s guidance *not to* witness to someone if you really want to mirror the book of Acts. Most people who mutter this excuse are either trying to sound like they are super spiritual (sometimes they actually believe they are genuinely obeying the Spirit), or they are lazy. By further probing those I have personally confronted about this statement, very seldom has laziness been the case. In other words, they think it is more spiritual to wait.

“I Homeschool”

Thank God for homeschoolers! Ever since I was born again, the world of homeschooling has opened up to me a whole new sub-culture within Christianity. I was not homeschooled, but some of the parents I have met that are faithfully teaching their children in the ways of God sure make me wish I was. I believe that if God is going to revive souls in the western world, it will be through homeschooling. More and more people are pulling their kids out of public

schools because of the ungodly things they are teaching and the violence that continues to ensue among our youth. But what I have found is that some parents that are faithfully homeschooling their kids feel as though this faithfulness to homeschooling is a substitute for faithfulness in evangelizing to strangers. Failing to incorporate evangelism in a homeschooling curriculum is to send dull arrows in the world (Psalm 127:4-5).

To get to the point of this concern, I spoke to five homeschool moms, both young and seasoned, that helped me to understand what homeschool moms deal with on a day-to-day basis. For the most part, I can understand why some of them felt they had less opportunity to witness, because they are mostly at home or they are running errands or taking the kids to events, etc. But (you knew this 'but' was coming), none of them said, and I mean *none* of them, that evangelism was impossible. They pointed out the fact that homeschooling was not a good excuse to not evangelize to strangers or family, and that even though it may be easy to lose focus because you are busy, losing focus could happen to anyone, therefore it's not just a problem for homeschool parents. How true this is! One of them, Mrs. Cooley, revealed to me that sharing the gospel within the family actually motivates her to preach the gospel to others. She became more aware of her responsibility to witness to others because she wanted to "lead by example." This, in turn, causes her kids to witness to other children. Another mom, Mrs. Schmidt, told me that even though a homeschool mom's time is precious, in her experience, being a homeschool mom opens the door to *more* opportunities.

Even if you don't get to leave the house much, a mom by the name of Mrs. Bradley let me know that whenever people come over to her doorstep and offer to sell something,

after they are done with their offer, she gives a tract with her “offer” of the gospel. Another thing she does is give tracts to people when she is out and about with her kids. She said she does this because she doesn’t get a lot of interaction with adults so these situations are what she takes advantage of. Another mother told me that even though she doesn’t get to leave the house much, she still reaches out to her neighbors.

Do you know what all these moms have in common? No bad excuses! Sure homeschooling is tough, I would never downplay that, but the evangelistic spirit that these ladies possess is evidence that homeschooling is not a suitable excuse as to why you cannot regularly, consistently, and purposefully witness to others. Depending on the perception of the mom, witnessing opportunities may seem like a lot less or a lot more, but in every situation, if you are trying to train up your child (Proverbs 22:6) to obey God’s commandments (Deuteronomy 6:7), and you are trying to send them out like arrows into the world (Psalm 127), shouldn’t you be setting the example by reaching out to others? If you want your children to avoid this sin of apocity, the best way is by showing them how it’s done. If you are a homeschool mom or dad, my recommendation is to go to AnswersinGenesis.com or Livingwaters.com to learn how to preach biblically and effectively.

“I Am a Pastor/Elder, Deacon, Teacher, Minister”

No leader in the church should ever use this as an excuse to not preach to strangers. Just like homeschool moms, dads that work, and kids that go to school, your primary responsibilities do not negate the biblical mandate to witness on a regular basis. If we were to take the Pastoral Epistles as examples to pastors and elders, we would see Paul admonishing Timothy to do the *work of an evangelist* (2

Timothy 4:5). To be a preacher of the gospel inside the church walls, but be silent outside the church doors is to not be a preacher at all. Charles Spurgeon, in *Lectures to My Students*, said, "...it would need very potent arguments to prove that a man had done his duty who has never preached beyond the walls of his meeting house." I say this with much love and earnestness to all my pastor friends. I understand the offices of the New Testament church very clearly, and understand each of our roles in edifying the body, but evangelism is not the work of only an Evangelist. The office of Pastor is indeed an honorable position, but too many dishonor their position when they will not so much as encourage their congregation to be purposeful witnesses or rebuke them when they are not for fear, pride, or whatever selfish reason. I find, more often than not, pastors do not boldly admonish their congregations to go out and witness regularly and consistently, although they know they should, because they are not doing it themselves. This is one of the reasons why congregations, whether small or great, are not convicted to go out into the world, because the pastors are apocites! And we wonder why churches are closing their doors at a high rate.

If you are a deacon in the church, you are not excused from this good work of evangelizing either. Apocity is on your doorstep if you believe for a second that the office of Deacon is a good reason not to spend and be spent witnessing to the lost. Both Phillip and Stephen were deacons, yet both were faithful in preaching the gospel. As a deacon you are required to be blameless (1 Timothy 3:10). Not that it means you have to be perfect, but that people have nothing evident which they can say of you that is immoral. However, if you are an apocite, this is a violation not just of your blamelessness, but also of your profession as a

Christian. The same goes for Sunday school teachers, ministers, nursery workers, and volunteers in any congregation. Ralph Venning in the Puritan classic, *The Sinfulness of Sin*, said, "Only remember this, that your particular calling must not jostle out nor infringe upon your Heavenly calling..."

"I Don't Have Time"

Do you have time to watch TV, play video games, play sports, attend a special event, a dance, a fellowship dinner, a financial Bible study, go to church, or anything else that you could cut out of your day, week, month, year, so that you might find some time to be a witness? The reason why you *cannot find time* is because you *do not make time*. Some make excuses of time so much it is mysterious to me that they don't have a ball-n-chain with a giant clock attached at the end of it, dragging it around wherever they go. Are we servants of God or servants of time? Sure, time plays a big part in our lives, which is why proper scheduling is paramount! You make time to go to church don't you? You make time to pray I hope? You make time to attend church meetings and fellowships, right? Yet, for some reason, witnessing and preaching the gospel to strangers, even if it is just passing out a few tracts a day, is not on your schedule? You aggravate your apocity and insult the grace of Jesus Christ by vomiting up such a statement. Oh! It turns my stomach to hear professing Christians say this! I become so burdened inside when someone uses time as an excuse. If only I could do something to help you see your hypocrisy! God help you!

"I Have a Full Time Occupation"

I alluded to this earlier when addressing pastors, but a full time job does not free us from the obligation and moral choice to witness. I am currently working a full time job, I volunteer for events, go to church, have a wife, and have other worldly responsibilities that must be kept in order, but I still find/make time to share the gospel. Even if it is only giving one tract that day because that is all I am able to do (By the way, I rarely ever work that hard), I praise God that I am able to do it and still play a part in furthering His kingdom! A lot of people have a full time responsibility or occupation, but our occupation is never a good justification for apocity. Notice, I am not diminishing the importance of a full time occupation, just trying to help you remove your blinders and help you see that even if it is weekly, *write evangelism into your schedule.*

"I Have Witnessed to Everyone I Know Already"

This is a legitimate concern that some have had who actually take the time out to witness to family, friends, co-workers constantly and purposefully. The question that comes up is, "What do I do now?" Well, continue to be faithful to the LORD when you are around those closest to you by practicing what you preach (trust me they are watching). And if another opportunity comes up to speak to them about it, take advantage. Don't annoy them by continually talking about the gospel when they have expressed anger or disgust by what you are saying, nor continue ranting on if they have expressly told you not to talk to them about it again; but be gracious, gentle, and understanding; avoiding unnecessary strife at all times (2 Timothy 2:24-25). In the meantime, while you are waiting for another opportunity with your

friends, co-workers, and family, *go find strangers* to witness to. Evangelism is an outward progression. That is, you start with those you know, but you move outward to those outside of your “circle” (Acts 1:8; Acts 26:20). That means you have to purposefully go out and witness to someone you do not know. Sticking to those you know as the only opportunities to witness is to diminish the calling of evangelism.

"I Don't Have the Gift of Evangelism"

(See Chapter 4)

"I Am Not Called to Evangelism"

This point is like the previous statement, but the assumption is that you have to be “called” to do the work of evangelism. I will deal with this “calling” a little more in Chapter 6 (The Fruit of Evangelism). So instead of dealing with it here, I will just make a pointed statement. Every Christian is called to evangelism!

"It is Better to Establish a Rapport with the Lost (Friendship Evangelism), or Just Let My Light Shine (Lifestyle Evangelism)"

The concepts of Friendship Evangelism and Lifestyle Evangelism have some good to it. Friendship Evangelism basically states that one has to be friends with the individual or establish a rapport with someone before they witness to them. The other side to that coin, Lifestyle Evangelism, states that we are to just live our lives before them with Christian integrity and the lost will sooner or later want to know what is it we have that they do not. The good in Friendship Evangelism is that it encourages us as believers to go out and

care about the individual rather than just making them a number to be won. The other encourages us to use integrity in our walk so that we can reveal to the world the lifestyle of a Christian. However, neither of them are an excuse to not open our mouths and share the gospel.

If you are truly trying to be their friend, you need to share the gospel with them! If you spend time just trying to be their buddy rather than just being faithful to God like you should, they could die sooner than you think. Even so, if they didn't die, I have found out from others that the lost are less likely to appreciate your witness when you take forever to share the gospel with them, because it gives the deceptive idea that this whole time you were trying to be their friend just so you can preach to them. However, if you are trying to be a faithful friend, you will be upfront with them sooner than later about the gospel and try to develop a relationship with them with the gospel as the foundation. If you care more about their friendship than God's command, you will find it harder and harder to witness to them in a way that will be biblically faithful without the temptation to water it down. Also, you will be committing apocrypha because your primary concern is friendship rather than obedience to God.

On the flip side, Lifestyle Evangelism primarily works in an occupational environment where there will be plenty of opportunity to discuss the things of God at your work centers. When the situation arises where you are faced with a moral decision, and you choose not to do something bad because you desire to honor God, this is truly living out your faith. Or if you have to do something proactive like buying someone a gift because they are sick, then you do so because you want to honor God and man. Whatever the situation may be, your works play a huge part in your witness before your peers, and that is something you should not take lightly. Yet,

once again, this is not an excuse not to speak with them. Your faith, practically lived out before your peers, should only *confirm* what you are saying, *not replace* whether or not you should say anything at all! In other words, biblical Lifestyle Evangelism is being able to *speak* with a blameless conscience rather than it being a draw card that replaces true biblical preaching. If you are a genuine believer, Lifestyle Evangelism should always be in progress no matter where you are, or who you are in the presence of, because it is God we walk before to please, not men (Galatians 1:10). But if you don't open your mouth, give a tract, or do something to try and pry open some doors of opportunity, you are not even performing Lifestyle Evangelism because you are failing at the most basic tenant – sharing the gospel (1 Peter 3:15-16).

"It's Better to Love on People"

Some have tattered this word *love* by passing it around as if it is ample replacement of evangelism. Although it is commanded by Christians to love their neighbor, love cannot, and should not, be disconnected from the preaching of the gospel. Because some have seemingly received a good report from lost people concerning their "loving" them and not preaching to them, many have been tricked into thinking that just loving the lost (whatever that entails) is sufficient enough to excuse themselves from delivering the gospel to them, whether audibly or graphically. In other words, they think that by acting on love and not proclamation, they are fulfilling the great commission. Or worse, they feel as though loving them is fulfilled by exhibiting a friendship or a lifestyle that is to be "attractive" to them. This misrepresentation of love and the unbiblical separation between love and evangelism has been the instrument of mass ignorance concerning the true demonstration of the gospel.

"I Am Too Shy and Timid to Speak to People"

If you are talking about open air preaching, then maybe you should veer away from such a task. But if you are talking about being shy and timid about passing out tracts and talking to someone one-on-one, let me tell you about someone who was shy and meek, but was always willing to share the gospel to others.

During my stay in England, I would go to a college town called Cambridge every weekend to preach in the open air. I only had a very small group with me, but they were willing and able bodies. When I met this one woman named Lesia Wager, I tell you that she was so meek and mild she could make a temper tantrum look as peaceful as a sleeping baby. However, she had a fire in her bones to share the gospel with others, and when she knew that I was out there preaching she was among the faithful few that would constantly go out with me. And do you know what she did when she was out there? She passed out tracts and witnessed to sinners when the opportunity arose, or when she mustered the courage.

Some may ask at this point, "So the opportunities she missed, did she sin?" Yes! She knew it! She felt bad about it and wanted to be a faithful witness for Christ. The times that she did summon the courage to say something, she felt like a failure because she thought she had to be as articulate as I was. It was then that I let her know that to be articulate is not what is required, but what is required is that we are found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2). The fact that she was willing and able to improve her witness, even though she was *well aware* of her meekness (not weakness), reveals to me that it is possible to be a consistent, outgoing witness of Christ even though you may feel as though you do not know what to say

or because you are meek. In other words, saying that you're shy or timid or meek is not a legitimate reason to commit apocity.

"I Am Scared"

Welcome to the club! I am terrified when I go out to witness or when I am ready to deliver the gospel to those closest to me. Paul himself declared that he was fearful when speaking to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:3), and many other preachers from the Old and New Testament have been recorded as being fearful as well. But does fear excuse us from sharing the gospel? Are we to fold up and tuck our calling away in the pocket of our own self-pity simply because we are afraid to preach? Don't misunderstand me, fear is a real thing, but as I revealed already, fear is a "drama queen" and should not be obeyed; especially since there is nothing really to fear but mortal, dying men (Isaiah 51:12).

"I Am Physically or Mentally Unable"

Before I deal with this subject, I would first like to say that I am in no way asserting that disability (whatever it may be) is not a legitimate reason why we can't be a witness on the street or in our homes. If you can read and understand this book, I trust that your mind is not so far gone that you can comprehend what I am saying. For some, physical disability is mentally and spiritually stressful and I would like to encourage anyone who has any debilitating condition to persevere in the faith and seek God with all your heart. God can make beauty out of terrible trials. Yet, please consider a man by the name of Richard Story who one day got out of his wheelchair, stood up on a sidewalk with Tony Miano (an open air preacher) during Superbowl Outreach

2013 to preach the gospel despite his disability. Although disabled by a tragic traffic accident in 2006, he did not let that stop him. You can see a video of him preaching on Youtube.com.

Plead with God if you are a professing believer, to reveal to you what you *can* do for Christ while you still have breath in your lungs! You may be surprised that God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly more with you than you previously thought, even with a disability. I have seen blind men preach, heard of autistic gentlemen witnessing, and just recently was introduced to an individual who has a speech impediment who desires to be a faithful witness! However, if you are not disabled in anyway, and you are not witnessing consistently, what a shame this must be to know that there are others out there that are not making “handicaps” an excuse while you stand in this horrible state of apocity.

"Not Everybody Can Be the Mouth"

(See Chapter 4, Section IV)

"I Don't Think Passing Out Tracts is Effective. They Will Just Throw Them Away Anyway"

To be blunt, this is the sorriest excuse ever! There is absolutely no reason why you cannot pass out a tract, ever! Tracts are the best things that I think God has ever given the Christian. They are always faithful, they never let you down, they are never scared, never tired, never fearful of man, and they deliver the gospel on time every time; especially since many are already making excuses as to why they cannot witness, you would think that tracts would be going out of style. Tracts are like the Aaron of our day. Moses gave excuses as to why he was not a good speaker, then he said to

send someone else, but God, (in His anger, mind you) told Moses that Aaron could speak on his behalf. Gospel tracts serve this same purpose! Therefore, we are without excuse.

No matter what you do, you will always face rejection. Sometimes it is because you are Christian, other times not so much. You would be surprised to find out how many people reject a tract from you simply because they just didn't want to receive anything. It has absolutely nothing to do with you! Your pride, however, makes it about you, and that is when you begin to get in trouble, because you are more worried about what people think about you rather than being faithful to the gospel. Whether you are witnessing one to one, open air preaching, or passing out tracts, expect rejection, but never make that an excuse not to witness simply because some will throw away a tract, or reject what you say. That is petty and trite. Isn't a soul worth so much more than a few dollars for a bundle of tracts and a little bit of your time? Will you risk giving yourself over to petty reasoning in exchange for someone else's eternal torment? And if you think tracts are ineffective, then would you say that about the Four Gospels? The New Testament Epistles? They were, in essence, gospel tracts. Please do not justify apocity in this manner.

VIII. Sanctified Substitutions

We live in a world where people use all kinds of substitutes. Instead of real sugar we use NutraSweet; instead, of smoking we use nicotine gum or steamed cigarettes, and instead of real hair we use toupees. No matter what, if we can't find the real deal, or if want to avoid using the real deal because for some reason it is harmful to us, humans naturally look for ways to accommodate their lifestyle with substitutes. Unfortunately, because evangelism by nature

requires confrontation, the local churches have cleverly devised substitute, and in some cases counterfeit, practices for not preaching the gospel. In essence, these are the same as the excuses apocites make to not evangelize, but this section is dealing with accepted culture, not necessarily vocalized excuses. Nevertheless, apocites feel that by doing some of these things, although not wrong or inappropriate, they have fulfilled the requirement of gospel preaching.

Prayer Walks

Prayer walks may be a godly practice, but walking up and down the street/neighborhood and praying over the neighborhood without making some effort to speak to anyone is not what God requires of Christians in the great commission. Jesus did not say go into the all the world praying. He said to preach! It is not a bad practice to go out and pray that God moves in your neighborhood, but this is not a proper substitute in fulfilling the great commission, nor is it sufficient justification for committing apocity.

Part two of prayer walks is going into the streets and praying for people. I have been running into more and more of these groups lately that seemingly think that walking up to a stranger and praying for them is proper evangelism. I do not think it is evil; I somewhat enjoy the idea. Yet, once again, this is not a biblical substitute for preaching the gospel. If you are part of these kinds of groups, and you pray for someone, take the time out to hand them a gospel-centered tract or witness to them! Don't just leave them where they are, especially if you think you have your foot in the door to talk with them.

Church Invitations

Church invitation is another practice that is not inappropriate for a Christian to do, but it isn't a permissible substitute for regular, consistent, and purposeful evangelism. Although services can be geared toward reaching the lost, this is not, I repeat, this is not biblical evangelism. Along with the crowd that feels that the Pastor is responsible to preach the gospel, apocites typically invite people to church more often than witnessing to them because they feel it is less offensive. I know, because I have done it for this reason. Even though, depending on where we work, it may be a wiser approach to invite someone to church, if one does not take the time out of their "busy" schedule to evangelize, then they are committing apocity if they feel church invitations are enough. *Note: Passing out flyers or pamphlets from your church is not evangelism either unless you print a biblical gospel presentation on it.*

Church Fellowships/Picnics

I love church fellowships! There is nothing better than a bar-b-que in the name of Christ! When saints get together and have a good time of food, fun, and fellowship, I am all in! The problem that is lurking in our modern culture is the idea that inviting lost people to our fellowship is sufficient evangelism. For some reason, some professing Christians think that when lost people see how much "fun" we are having, that we can actually "get along," or that we are not acting like "them," that this is a formidable substitute for evangelism. Even though I have heard stories of men being awakened, and some possibly converted, when they saw the behavior of Christians at some of these events, this does not mean this is a suitable reason to not preach the gospel to

them! Whenever there is a lost person at a picnic or fellowship, have someone else who is not with his/her party talk to them, or at the very least give them a gospel tract! Remember this rule: Just because God can save a man through exceptional means that does not make the exception the rule. In other words, we must be purposefully communicating the gospel!

Easter/Christmas Services

The *best time* of the year to share the gospel with the lost is not the *only time* of the year! Christmas and Easter are probably the most famous holidays that Christians have going for them to preach the gospel, and most of them, outside of Sunday services, don't even use that to their advantage. Even worse, many pastors, year after year, commit gross apocity when they won't even preach the gospel during their services! It is really sickening. Nevertheless, these two holidays are not the only time of the year you should be sharing the gospel, nor should you mix and match these two substitutes thinking you really have outdone yourself. God is not pleased with any apocite, but when an apocite feels as though Christmas and Easter are better than nothing, they have aggravated their apocity. These wonderful holidays may be the best advantage to springboard into the gospel, but that doesn't mean you put the springboard away in your closet until the next holiday. Every day is Easter and Christmas if you are a true Christian! Preach it like you believe it!

Feeding the Poor

Feeding the poor or helping any one “less blessed” than you is always a tough ministry. I have helped numerous homeless/impooverished people in my life and I will tell you, it never gets easier. I wish there was more I could do for them sometimes, but I often am very helpless, especially since most are on drugs and do not really want your help in the first place. Yet, the gospel must still be preached to the poor (Luke 7:22), and God always has the poor in mind (Psalm 72:12;102:17). What a disservice we do to our fellow man when we feed them, clothe them, and Lord willing, even help them back on their feet, but we don’t preach the gospel to them! How destructive are we to their soul when we will give them whatever material possession they need but won’t present the most important gift they could ever receive! Feeding the poor is a great way to reach them, but to feed them meat without declaring to them the everlasting feast God has prepared (Luke 14:16) for those that repent and trust in Jesus is to be a deceiver! You might as well fatten them for the kill, because in the end, if they are not born again, they are going to Hell anyway. If they reject the gospel, that is one thing, but to commit apocity by thinking that you do not have to preach to the poor because you are doing God’s work by feeding them is to bring great reproach upon yourself and the name of Christ! Only feeding the poor is not an acceptable substitute for purposeful evangelism.

Giving Money to Missions/Evangelism Efforts

The term “pass the buck” is a pun all too real in our western churches. When pew warmers feel as though giving money to evangelism or missions is enough to fulfill the great commission, they do not realize that although this kind of

service is appreciated, it is not what is really required of them when it comes to evangelism. I know personally the liberality people have in giving their money, but not their time or efforts to assist in evangelism. It seems that giving money induces some invisible shield that protects the conscience of an apocite from conviction to go out and witness. Giving money, although very good, is not a proper substitute for regularity in your *own* evangelism. What would be more helpful, if you are going to give money for a local effort, is to get up out of your seat and go out with others and share the wonderful experience of preaching the gospel to the lost! The mighty dollar might comfort an apocite from preaching the gospel here on Earth, but dry paper burns faster in the presence of God who is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).

IX. A Question from an Apocite

Even though this section is titled differently, in essence, it is dealing with the same thing as the excuses and substitutions prior, just in the form of a question. Questions have many meanings. You can ask a question to inquire, or make it rhetorical to solicit thought rather than a response; some questions are insinuating, others are just pure sarcasm. But apocites' questions are usually used in a justifying manner to create a dilemma they feel the preacher cannot answer, to find a loophole out of their already disobedient position, or cast shadows of doubt. The lawyer that challenged Jesus did something similar to this in order to justify himself (Luke 10:29), and Satan too is a perfect example of a doubting questioner (Genesis 3:1). I am truly thankful for those that ask me genuine questions concerning evangelism; I pray God will bless the ministry of those that inquire how to be faithful. On the other hand, it is heart

wrenching and frustrating when apocites come up with questions that seem to cast doubt upon the mandate to preach the gospel or look to find out ways to get out of it. So here is the question that is meant to be an objection against preaching deliberately to strangers.

"Are You Saying That Every Person We Meet/Come into Contact with We Should Witness to?"

Yes! At the very least, we should endeavor to. However, how we do it heavily depends on the wisdom we have received, experiences we have had, and the lengths we desire to go to spread the gospel. For example, if I am eating at McDonalds with my wife, and there are many sitting around me, should I stand up and preach open air? Should I pass out tracts to everyone before I leave? Should I only give it to the cashier? Should I only place tracts in the bathroom or on my table before I get up to leave? Believe it or not, there is nothing in Scripture that says we can't do any of the above. Of course many would question the wisdom of someone standing up to preach in a McDonalds, but I have seen a video of someone who did it! Would I do it? No. But that doesn't mean it shouldn't or cannot be done.

The point of this example is this: we are to be ready at all times to preach the gospel in season and out of season to anyone who is human. That's right, anyone who is human! Every human being on Earth, if we can spare two seconds to give out a tract (at the very least) is a qualified individual to hear the gospel. When we ask the question of whether or not we should witness to every one we come in contact with, it is my suspicion that more than likely we are trying to justify ourselves in not fulfilling the great commission rather than genuinely seeking an answer. I understand that if you are late

for work one day, and you are passing 100 people in the street, there is no “possible” way to pass out tracts on your way to work. That is not what I am talking about. I’m sure we could think of a thousand and one possibilities of the “inopportune” times that damper our witnessing prospects. But what I am trying to say is for us to adopt a spirit of evangelistic vigor and peel back the leprous eye of apocity that has kept us from seeing the multiple opportunities that is presented to us daily! And I do mean daily!

William Carey, considered the “Father of Modern Missions” by most, in his sermon, *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (now that is a mouth full), had this to say about those who like to *wait*:

“It has been said that we ought not to force our way, but wait for openings, and leadings of Providence; but it might be equal propriety be answered in this case, neither ought we to neglect embracing those openings in providence which daily present themselves to us.”

So in other words, while we profess to “wait for openings” and neglect to preach, it is equally important that we realize those openings are presented to us *daily*. Also, as Carey alluded to, we should not neglect to “embrace” those openings. And for the most part, he was speaking about overseas missionary work, but the same principle can be applied in local evangelism.

X. An Apocite's Response

An apocite who hears this will get angry because they do not think that preaching the gospel to every person we come into contact with is plausible. To that I ask, when was

the last time you deliberately went out of your way to witness to anyone? Because if you don't do it often, then how do you know what is plausible and what is not? That is like telling a car mechanic that it is not possible to fix every part of a car they come in contact with when I don't work on cars myself. How do I know when I don't even take the time or develop the skills to do it myself? The point is there may be times when preaching the gospel may not be the "best" time, but to ask this question in a justifying manner clearly displays a *reluctance* to do what is mandated of you by Christ.

Another thing an apocrite will do well is cast doubt upon the methods of those who witness consistently. Whether it is the type of tracts they use, or the means to attract the attention of the lost, apocrites love to criticize what you're doing wrong in evangelism. But because they don't witness regularly, they cannot provide you with a better way. I have been approached by many who have told me that the way I reach the lost is too "worldly, confrontational, unloving," etc. No matter what I do, I can't seem to please anyone who doesn't share their faith purposefully and regularly. If I were to ask them when was the last time they witnessed to anyone, they usually cannot give me a very straight answer. Or, if I ask them what they suppose I should do, I usually get the net of Lifestyle Evangelism or Friendship Evangelism thrown at me. So in a nut shell, I do not value the opinion of an apocrite concerning how I should be sharing the gospel, because if they are just trying to get a pass from their responsibility, why should I care about how they feel the gospel should be preached? I shouldn't! And neither should you!

As I stated before, this list of excuses is by no means exhaustive. I am primarily trying to deal with the *nature* of

the excuses more than the actual excuses that are made. There are some that cannot *occasionally* go out and be a witness to strangers or to those close to them, because there will be times when it just isn't possible. I know the Holy Spirit is a better teacher in this area than I am. But if you are looking for a reason to get out of witnessing, or are already in a state of apocity, and your excuses only comfort you in your decision to not deliberately share your faith with others, woe unto you for not preaching the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Chapter 4: The "Gift" of Evangelism

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses..."

– Jesus Christ

Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

– The Apostle Peter

If there is ever any excuse that apocrites recite, more often than not, it is the idea that there is a "gift of evangelism." If you remember the previous chapter on the excuses one makes to not witness regularly, consistently, and purposefully, I mentioned how a lot of people seem to excuse themselves from witnessing (even to strangers) because they do not have "the gifting." The nature of this excuse has been the mortar which has held together the wall of self-justification that many have built up for themselves, meanwhile they retreat to the cold dungeon of self-pity looking for refuge with others who will have pity on their laziness, fear, or lack of desire. This chapter will not only clarify the false assumptions associated with the "gift of evangelism," but also it will reveal the biblical view of what is actually the Gift.

1. Urban Legends

Ever heard of an urban legend? If you are alive long enough you may have heard hundreds of them already and you don't even know it. *Dictionary.com* defines an urban legend this way: "a modern story of obscure origin and *with*

little or no supporting evidence that spreads spontaneously in varying forms and often has elements of humor, moralizing, or horror” (Emphasis added). Do you know what time of the year is filled with the most urban legends? Christmas. Three of my favorite urban legends are found during this time.

The first urban legend that some do not know about is the falsehood that the poinsettia is a poisonous plant. According to *MedicineNet.com*, this urban legend *possibly* came about in a 1919 poisoning of a two year-old child, which was wrongly attributed to being from a poinsettia leaf. Apparently “a child who weighed 50 lbs. would have to eat over 500 poinsettia leaves to reach an even potentially toxic dose of compounds in the poinsettia plant.” Even though there are breeds of this plant that are indeed poisonous, the red leaved plant that we know and love during the holidays can be eaten without any issues, so help yourselves!

The next urban legend that I found wasn’t true, the hard way, was the one about the candy cane. One day when I was at my job, I wanted to do something for my co-workers that was evangelistic and was associated with the holiday of Christmas. I stumbled across the story of a candy cane maker in Indiana who wanted to make candy canes in such a way that would symbolize Jesus Christ. As the story goes, he made the cane in the shape of a “J” for Jesus, and the advantage was that it could be inverted to look like a shepherds crook to symbolize Jesus the “Good Shepard;” and the white stripes stood for the purity of Christ and the red stood for the blood for His death on the cross. Have you heard this before? Long story short, I bought these candy canes, presented them before my whole job as being fact, when in reality it was not. I was called out on it and was very embarrassed about the whole thing. I did some research and found out the only possible origin was a tradition that a 1670 choir master used

to bend the once straight candy into a shepherds crook to give to restless kids in the Cathedral to keep them quiet. Don't make the same mistake I did and tell people this fallacious story!

The last thing I will reveal, and then I will get to my point, is the "x" in "Xmas." Many within Christianity feel when someone uses "Xmas" that they are trying to cross out Christ in Christmas. I used to feel this way as a young Christian, but with some research, once again, I found out that this attitude is based off an urban myth that this "x" was done maliciously. As Dr. R.C. Sproul points out in an article he wrote, the X stood for the first Greek letter of the word *Christos* (Χριστος). In other words, it was the first letter for the name of Christ. Sproul goes on to say that this symbol of using X to denote Christ is a part of our Christian history and in no way was meant to be disrespectful toward Christians. So don't get offended any more when you see Xmas, even if someone tries to use it to disrespect Christ. Just tell them the history and then maybe they will learn something.

II. There is No Such Thing as the Gift of Evangelism

If you haven't figured out my point with using urban legends, here it is: There is no such thing as the "gift of evangelism." This is an urban legend that has spread like a disease among evangelical Christianity and must be put to death. I don't know where this started or why many feel as though Ephesians 4 is valid evidence to support this idea, but it is wrong! And for the most part, for those that just misunderstand certain verses, I can see why they would think Scripture insinuates this. But as I am about to show, this assumption is not valid justification for apocity.

When you turn to the book of Ephesians 4:7-16, the Apostle Paul is laying out the ministerial gifts of Christ as He

ascended back to Heaven. It says in verse 8, that Christ gave “gifts” to men. That should seal the deal right? I mean, a gift is a gift! The fact that Christ gave gifts to men, and Ephesians 4:11 indexes what they are, that should be a wrap, right? Not exactly. You see, when you look at this Scripture, read the context, and even dive into some commentaries, all the evidence points to the fact that God did indeed assign men with spiritual gifts, but that list in verse 11 is pertaining to the *office* of an Evangelist, not the *gift* of evangelism as some suppose.

If you were to read further in verse 12, Paul is pretty explicit about the reasons for these gifts: for the *equipping/perfecting of the saints*, for the *work of the ministry*, and for the *edification of the body of Christ*. This is the ultimate goal of these offices! When Christ ascended on high, and gave these gifts/offices to men, it was for the body that Christ presented these gifts. So even though there are some who are indeed gifted as an Evangelist according to their office, this does not mean everyone else is exempt from preaching the gospel. Put plainly, an Evangelist (capital “e”) not only wins souls to Christ, but equips the saints, edifies them, and goes out *with them* for the work of the ministry. In another sense, the Evangelist is supposed to be the one in the church that rallies the troops, gives them the necessary weapons (with the pastor/teachers), and he leads the troops into battle! If you say that you do not have the gift to be an Evangelist, that is a little different than saying you don’t have the gift of evangelism. As a matter of fact, that would be a more biblically accurate statement. However, just because you are not an Evangelist does not mean you are exempt from evangelism. Having said this, if you ever mention the gospel to anyone, you are essentially, though not officially, an evangelist (lowercase “e”). Dr. John MacArthur in his

exposition of Luke 24:44-49 said this, "There is no escaping this. There is no gift of evangelism. There is no gift of missionary. *We are all responsible for this*" (Emphasis added).

III. What Do You Mean by "Gift?"

For the most part, I can somewhat understand why many think evangelism is a gift. In some circles, they would say that they have an "anointing." I am here to tell you it is neither. The reasons why many call evangelism a gift is because they think that when they see others who are good at it, they inappropriately think this to be a gift from the Holy Spirit. However, I know people who are articulate in speech, dynamic in their presentation of information, and could sell hairpins to a bald guy, but they're not saved! Does this mean that Christ cannot mature someone to attain to this kind of skill, no! He certainly matured me, and that is my point. Evangelism is not a spiritual gift, but a discipline.

What would you say about Michael Jordan's basketball skills? Would you say he had a gift? I'm sure you would. Many have, and I used to say that. However, any true basketball player will tell you, and even Michael Jordan has said it before in interviews, it takes hard work to be the good at something. *Dictionary.com* defines a gift as "a special ability or capacity; natural endowment; talent." Indeed, Michael Jordan seemed to embody this definition when it came to basketball, but just because you may be a "natural" at something does not mean you do not *hone* your skills, *mature* your proficiency, and *discipline* yourself to get better. Any person who was ever good at something will tell you that they have *invested time, money*, and maybe even some *sweat and tears* to get to where they are. Even when someone is not a natural at something, they will still tell you the same thing. The reason why many are not good at evangelism is

because they you don't care to be. And if you have "tried" it and it didn't "work out," how is that a valid excuse to drop out of the school of preaching the gospel? Preaching the gospel is not about being good at it (although it may enhance your effectiveness); it is about being faithful!

The point I am trying to make is that God has commanded Christians to be witnesses of His grace. If we feel as though we are not "gifted" to tell other people about Jesus Christ because we are not natural talkers, or because we feel we need to be "good" at it to do it, we are wrong! To observe someone else as being gifted to evangelize and use this as an excuse to pardon yourself from the table of responsibility is an act of cowardly laziness and/or a belief in the urban legend that the gift of evangelism is indeed a valid spiritual gifting. Nowhere in the Bible does God, Jesus Christ, or His Apostles and Prophets teach that you must be gifted in order to be a regular, consistent, and purposeful witness for Christ.

IV. Not Everyone Can Be the Mouth

The idea that not everyone can be a consistent witness because they are not "the mouth" is also wrongly pulled out of 1 Corinthians 12. I have actually heard men (more often pastors and teachers within the congregation) say "not everyone can be the mouth." In other words, we are not all gifted with the gift of evangelism, and the mouth is the metaphor they use to describe those that do have it. Once again, this is urban legend, and I will clear up this confusion.

When you look at 1 Corinthians 12, right from the get go, in verse 1 Paul clearly says, "now concerning spiritual gifts." This is a good clue that Paul is about to clarify some things for the Corinthian church. This issue with spiritual gifts and the divisions within the church was one of the reasons Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in the first place. In verse 4

he mentions how there are “diversities of the gifts” that come from the same Spirit. Verse 11 reveals how the Spirit passes out gifts as He wills (This challenges those who think that you *have* to speak in tongues as proof that you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. See Chapter 5). Then, in verse 12, Paul begins to emphasize the unity of the body not only because we are all partakers of His Spirit through salvation (v13), but also because of how the diversity of the members affect the unity of that body. In other words, Paul is trying to give us an illustration that even though there are different gifts within the body of Christ, these divisions of gifts do not mean we are divided as a body. We are unified together by the Spirit, who distributes these gifts, and one gift is *not* more important than the other in the grand plan of the Church. Are you following? If not, this next part may be harder for you to grasp.

When you look at the metaphor that Paul uses for the body, he repeatedly gives us clues as to what he is trying to get across to the Corinthian church. In verse 15 he says, “If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ *is it therefore not of the body*” (Emphasis added). He asks the same questions concerning another body part in verse 16. Verse 21 he says, “And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘*I have no need of you;*’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘*I have no need of you.*’” Once again, Paul seems to be hinting at something here, and in verse 22 he gets to his point: “... those members of the body which seem to be weaker *are necessary.*” So basically Paul is trying to say that every member of the body is “necessary” no matter what gift, no matter what background (v13), and no matter how weak one seems to be (v23-24). Paul has said all this so that we realize that everyone within the body should *need* one another and that we should benefit from each other’s gifts, strengths,

weakness, and backgrounds (v25). I might have been very general with my exegesis of this text but my purpose is not to get to the small details (that would be a whole other chapter), but to make some observations that I believe will squash this idea that evangelism is a gift, specifically here, “the mouth.”

If you are one to believe that not everyone can be the mouth (insinuating the mouth being a spiritual gift), or you have heard this from someone and think it is a valid statement; then here are some points to consider. 1) Where in this chapter does it specifically mention evangelism? The urban legend that evangelism is a gift still applies here too, not just Ephesians 4. Also, if you are saying that not everyone can be the mouth, then you have to show me from 1 Corinthians 12 how believing this is in any way a “get out of witnessing free” card, because that is not Paul’s intent in this particular chapter of Corinthians. 2) Paul did not mean for this chapter to be used as a cop out to not preach the gospel. If you remember what I said in the previous paragraph, Paul’s main concern was *unity*. There seemed to be divisions in the church for various reasons, and the insinuation that Paul gives in numerous verses is that some believed that there were others that were not needed, or that they were not a part of the body because they seemed weaker or less honorable. There might be more background to this, but the main point is that Paul was more specifically targeting the need for everyone within the body and for every spiritual gift, rather than just emphasizing certain ones over the other. 3) Where does “not being the mouth” come into this metaphor? If you read this chapter carefully, when Paul used the metaphor of the body it wasn’t for us to figure out which body part we are (or think we are), it was to help us understand the importance of unity within a human body

and relate that to the body of Christ. This was his main point! It is so absurd when I hear people call this person a foot, or that person the hand, or evangelism the mouth. This is not what Paul is saying! 4) When was the last time you did something without all body parts involved? If evangelism is the mouth, does that mean I don't use my hands or my feet to preach? The Bible talks about feet being beautiful for preaching the gospel (Romans 10:15), so does this mean not everyone can be the feet either? Do I need someone who is the arms to carry me to my corner to pass out tracts because I am not gifted in doing it myself? I am being very caustic for a reason. I have become so sorrowfully burdened about these vain attempts to explain away our responsibility to preach that it has caused me great spiritual distress to see professing believers continually making urban legends, like not being a mouth, a popular excuse. The nature of these excuses call into question the salvation of many who call themselves believers (a topic we will explore in the next chapter).

I can understand that there are persons within the body who are skilled in certain areas in which others are not. For instance, there are men and women who fly missionaries to their destination for the glory of God. These saints risk their lives to fly over dangerous areas to do amazing things for God. Here is my question though: Just because they metaphorically can be the arms that carry missionaries where they need to go, does that remove their responsibility to preach to the lost themselves? Just because my primary job is "an arm" (I don't actually believe that, just proving a point) does that mean I *don't* have a mouth? If anything, anyone who is supporting evangelism efforts would see the importance of evangelism and would feel the obligation to preach themselves. This example goes for those who mow

lawns for the church, who do the finances, those who usher, teenagers in youth group, deacons, pastors, and the list goes on! Your primary duty within the local church *includes* evangelism. Evangelism is not a secondary duty; it is the indivisible infrastructure of your calling as a Christian!

At this point, I feel it is necessary to say this. As I previously said in Chapter 2, I understand that the roles that God has given within the local church are for us to be perfected and conform to the image of Christ. I am not blind to the reality of our weakness, nor do I think that each person's gifting is unimportant. I know that pastors have a part, deacons, leaders, congregations, members, etc.; all play an important part in the whole of the universal church of Christ. What the revelation of Scripture seems to imply, however, is that none of that infringes upon our call to be faithful in our witness. None of it! There is no such gift of evangelism and there are no Scriptures that we can use to justify this position. If we refuse to accept this reality, then gross apocrypha among many local churches will continue. And I do not know about how you, reader, may feel about it, but I think God is weary of it.

V. The Real Gift of Evangelism

Although I have spent a bit of effort trying to explain how the Scriptures are void of evidence concerning evangelism being a gift, or a specific "body part" within the community of believers, the irony is that the Bible actually gives us the true understanding of what the gift of evangelism actually is. That's right! I said it! The Bible does teach that there is The Gift (purposefully capitalized) of evangelism. It probably isn't what you think it is, but after this, hopefully you will see that the Holy Spirit is the true gift of evangelism.

As the Scripture in the chapter heading reveals, Peter tells his hearers that the Holy Spirit is a gift (Acts 2:38). Many gifts in the Bible are interrelated, but without the Holy Spirit, we would not know the reality of any of them! So with this understanding, let us move to Acts 1:8, so that we can see one of the reasons why the Holy Spirit was given. It says:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you ***shall be witnesses*** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Emphasis added).

Let us reason through this for a second. If the Bible describes the Holy Spirit as a gift to be received, and it also tells us in Acts 1:8 that He was given so that we might be “witnesses,” then that would mean that the Holy Spirit was given so that we might be preachers of His gospel. In other words, the Holy Spirit is *the gift* of evangelism! That means if you are a professing believer, and you say that you do not possess the gift of evangelism, if you are truly saved, then that is not true. The irony is that if you say that you don’t possess the gift of evangelism, then you are saying you are not saved.

There are other verses that explain the Holy Spirit as the gift of evangelism, but before I go there, I want to mention something very quickly. Remember that the purpose of this book is to reveal how apocity is the greatest sin of omission within our local churches. When viewing this chapter concerning the Holy Spirit being the gift of evangelism, my purpose is slowly developing into the idea that apocity is not just a sin that true believers can commit from time to time, but also a sin that is a mark of one who is not saved. When I get to the next chapter, this idea will be made plainer, but for now, try and think about the

implications of the Holy Spirit being the gift of evangelism. If it is true that the Holy Spirit was given so that we can be witnesses to the world, what is to be said of those who are in a state of apocopy yet do not seem to care?

John 15:26-27 has a portion in which Jesus is speaking to his disciples concerning “the Comforter” that is to come to them after His resurrection. When Jesus tells his disciples that the “Spirit of truth...will testify of me,” our Lord further adds, and “you also will bear witness.” When you study this out, you can clearly see that Jesus is making it plain, once again, that the Holy Spirit is the power from whom we derive our witness. Without Him, we could not truly testify of the truth, nor could we have the power to stand up and witness to a world that hates us (John 15:18). You cannot be a genuine witness for Christ without the Holy Spirit, but also, you cannot have the Holy Spirit and not be a witness for Christ.

When you go to Acts 5:32, Peter was once again questioned by priestly authorities concerning his preaching. We touched on this in Chapter 1, how Peter could not but speak the things that he has seen and heard, and how it was better to obey God rather than men. Peter also provides a bit of insight into the necessary power of the Holy Spirit to be a witness, and proves the point that the Holy Spirit is the gift of evangelism. He says concerning the resurrection of Christ and salvation, “we are *his* witnesses to these things, and *so is also the Holy Ghost...*” (Emphasis added). When you consider Acts 1:8, John 15:26-27, and Acts 5:32 this is the conclusion:

The Holy Spirit was given to us so that we can be witnesses. And because He bears witness of the truth and of Christ, we also will do the same if we say we are *his* witnesses. If we say we have been genuinely saved yet do not bear witness

purposefully and regularly, how can this be? If we possess the gift of the Holy Spirit, evangelism should be a spiritual *desire*, not a spiritual gift. If we confess that not having the gift of evangelism is a legitimate reason why we cannot go out into the world and preach the gospel, we are proving to the world, and ourselves, that we lie and do not the truth (1 John 1:6).

I find it very hard to believe that the Holy Spirit, who can convert a hard hearted sinner and persuade the unbelieving to believe, for some strange reason, cannot persuade the now sanctified believer that evangelism is an intimate part of their salvation (scratch my head). To put it more plainly, I believe that it is impossible for a lost sinner to be changed by the Holy Spirit and by the power of God's grace into a child of grace meanwhile not prompting the new born saint to preach the gospel. If the same Spirit is given to us as a guarantee of our inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22) and has given Christians a holy desire to war against sin, how could that same person dwelling within us not invoke a strong desire to witness if He is also the Gift of evangelism? It is ridiculous to believe that He does not change our hearts concerning whether or not we should be preaching the gospel!

VI. Quench not the Spirit

By now, you are probably thinking about 1 Thessalonians 5:19, and how it can apply to the previous section. If it is true that genuine believers have the witness of the Spirit inside of them to testify and preach the gospel, what about this verse? It says that we should not "quench" the Spirit. This insinuates that it is possible for believers to snuff (for a lack of better words) the fire of the Spirit of God,

and to commit apocity, meanwhile maintaining their salvation. If this is so, how can we reconcile this?

This Scripture of quenching the Spirit in no way negates the purpose of the Holy Spirit in a true believer. Everything I wrote concerning the purpose of the Spirit and His role as the Gift of evangelism still stands without the slightest contradiction. You have to remember that the Spirit does a multitude of things for a believer in order to assure that we conform to the image of Christ. He, the Spirit, is the one who guides, lead, sanctifies, disciplines, and so much more, which is a benefit of the believer. The ability to quench does not dethrone the Spirit's work and our call to evangelism.

So if we were to think about this, "quench not" the Spirit does no harm to what I have been saying, because if a person is a true believer, one, they will be disciplined by God (Hebrews 12:8). Remember what happened to Jonah when he disobeyed? If a son or daughter is sinning against God, circumstance, conscience, and the Spirit will be God's instruments of chastening. If a professing believer does not receive discipline from God or does not repent when prompted by the Spirit, I assure you they are not children of God, but children of wrath. Two, If they are true believers, they would not use quenching the Spirit as an excuse as to why they can continue in the sin of apocity. If anything, since the Spirit is still working in them, He would once again convict them of this sin. If they continue to commit apocity despite His prompting, then the motions of discipline will begin as stated in my first point, if they are genuine believers. If not, then it will be made plain by their persistence in sin that they are not. Also, anyone who preaches that quenching the Spirit is a legitimate excuse as to how a true believer can continue in a state of apocity, they not only teach false

doctrine, but they have approved the sin by providing a way of escape for the convicted conscience. Lastly, if they are a professing believer, and the thought of quenching the Spirit does not alarm them once confronted with the possibility that they are doing it, if they continue as an apocrite, the quenching is no longer a quenching, but a *resisting* (Acts 7:51).

Chapter 5: Deceptive Doctrines of Apocity

*Mark 7:9 “He said to them, All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.”
– Jesus Christ*

Throughout this book, I have tried to stay clear of specific doctrines as much as possible by only focusing on evangelism so that I am able to keep from rabbit trails and to diagnose a problem that any local church can relate to. However, because of my personal experience with apocites or apocitic churches, there are some doctrinal and philosophical stances that I believe poison the well of the local church and provide a bed for apocites to lay their consciences on. In essence, the doctrines that I am about to reveal to you not only encourage apocity, but affect evangelism and the gospel.

1. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Whenever you have a doctrine that makes the gospel of no effect because of its implications, it in essence will have an effect on those who hear and think these doctrines are genuine. When speaking of the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as it is popularly understood within certain churches, this doctrine in a nutshell states that after salvation, there is *another* baptism of God’s Spirit that you can experience other than the one at salvation. Another term for it is called a “second blessing” by which a believer can experience greater power in the Christian walk. However, the

effect on those that hear this is very detrimental to the gospel. For example, if I told you that Jesus Christ died for your sin, and that He died to make you born again so that you no longer have to live in sin, and that you will receive the Holy Spirit as a power over sin, *but then* tell you that there are a class of Christians out there that are more spiritual because they have received a greater experience of the Holy Spirit, what does that say about the salvation of Christ? It says that it isn't enough! You need something more! Even though Carnal Christianity and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit can go hand in hand in some circles, for now we will just look at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (BoHS) and its damage against evangelism and the gospel.

First, I would like to say that I grew up as a young believer exposed to this doctrine. I also have many friends who believe in the BoHS with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I am in no way trying to demean my brothers and sisters who believe in this doctrine, but I have studied the fundamental teachings and the inconsistencies within it. I have not only gone through the process as it is popularly prescribed, and found it to be a false experience, but I also understand the detriment it does to the gospel and evangelism. This may come as a shock to some of you who believe this particular version of the BoHS, which I am about to expound on, but I pray that you will consider the whole argument of why I believe this doctrine ruins evangelism and the gospel. Because when you say to a professing Christian that unless you experience this you will not walk in a more intimate way with Christ, you will not have as much power, or that your Christian walk will be sub-par or have minimal effect on the world, that creates a new classification of "believers" that the Bible does not have.

In the Bible, there are those that are saved, and those that are lost, period! There is no third class! Although I would not classify every teaching concerning the BoHS as downright heretical, it is still nevertheless a gateway doctrine to Carnal Christianity, which is absolutely damning! Yet, along with Carnal Christianity, the BoHS gives the “carnal” followers the impression that you can be saved, yet not have to be as dedicated as the “spirit-filled” believers. It is these kinds of followers (the “carnal” as opposed to the “spirit filled”) that create the most confusion in our local churches today. In some churches, they would go so far as to say that you can still remain a “carnal” believer even after you have received this baptism, which is even more confusing! The chances of these kinds of members not being truly saved are extremely great, and the fact that they do not worry themselves about evangelism because that is for the “anointed” ones aggravates the problem even further. Even so, at the same time, there are those that say they have received the BoHS and yet still commit the sin of apocity to the third degree along with the rest of evangelical apocites! So what good does it do to receive the BoHS as it is supposedly mirrored in Acts if you will not do the first work of evangelism as Acts reveals the Spirit was given for us to do? How does this experience bring us into a deeper walk with God, yet for some reason God leaves out the stronger desire to evangelize for most who receive it? Since the Holy Spirit is the gift of evangelism, if we receive more of Him, shouldn't we also receive more of a passion to preach? This is not exclusive to just churches that believe in the BoHS, but any church that does not consider the implications of the kinds of doctrines they teach whether good or bad (a thought we will explain later).

I am in no way saying that God cannot give us more of His power or Spirit. I have been in the midst of preaching, prayer, or even studying my Bible, and have experienced a greater blessing from God to do whatever I was doing for Him more powerfully or efficaciously. However, these are repeated experiences, not just one or two. If anything, these experiences, which I and many others believers have had, are more in line with Ephesians 5:18 where we are to be constantly filled with God's Spirit. When and how God decides to do this is really up to God to decide, not us! When we look in the book of Acts, we can clearly see men who were endowed by God's Spirit, not simply for performing miracles, but to preach the gospel and confirm the promises of it. And it is in this exercise of going out into the world and being a witness that I can testify is the best way to be filled with God's Spirit. If you want to have a deeper walk with God, you don't need to have a "second blessing" in order to obtain such an intimacy. Go out and share your faith and you will know for sure how close you are with God. If you find out you are not as close as you thought, you will either study to show yourself approved (2 Timothy 2:15), fall away because you're persecuted for the word's sake (Mark 4:17), and/or you will commit apocity and remain in your sin.

If you are among those that believe in any version of the BoHS, my questions to you are this: If BoHS is truly a work that God gives believers after salvation, then why do the vast majority who receive it today still live in a perpetual state of apocity or even outright immorality? Are they Carnal or Spirit filled? Which one? I am not talking about perfection, but direction. If we are to wait for the Spirit or ask God to baptize us with fire after we are saved, even though we possess the Holy Spirit already because of our salvation, why did God fill at least two of the apostles more than twice; the

third time was for preaching the gospel with boldness (Compare Acts 4:31 with John 20:22 and Acts 2 and note how many times Peter and John received the Holy Ghost)? In other words, if it is only a second blessing, why is a third one recorded? Why did God baptize Gentiles with the Holy Spirit one time, *without waiting* for the power on high, if we are supposed to be seeking this “second” experience (Acts 10:44-48)? And how come Peter and the church in Jerusalem refer to the Gentiles as being saved when they *first* received the Spirit if the BoHS is supposed to be a “second” work of the Spirit (Acts 11:15-18)? If Luke’s intention in the book of Acts was to reveal the importance of the BoHS as some proclaim, and the formula of how to receive this second blessing, how come Apollos was not recorded as receiving the BoHS experience (Acts 18:24-28); and Lydia (Acts 16:14-15); and The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:30-34); and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:34-40)? Does the popular way by which the many receive this second blessing line up with Scripture? Remember, I am not saying that God cannot give us more of his Spirit at any time He chooses, but the fact that the *mainstream* idea of the BoHS does not accurately mirror Scripture should be a concern.

Of course these questions may or may not convince the average believer of the BoHS because of their *experience* (and experience can be a very powerful thing), but as I figured out early in my walk with Christ, experience does not trump genuine, biblical doctrine. I am only asking these questions to help us understand and diagnose the problem within our local churches today. Some may have a solid grasp of the gospel, but for some reason they have a blind spot in their preaching. This happens too; I understand this completely. But if any continue to ignore the problem of apocry in their church, or justify it by thinking it is

something other than the cold, hard reality that the doctrine of the BoHS (and other doctrines) allows for it, and also wake up and understand that most apocites in their congregations are more than likely lost, they will continue as they are and will not see any change. God help us all!

Of course, there is one more thing that needs to be clarified here. There is such a thing as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Scripture clearly teaches that it is by baptism of the Spirit that we are imparted salvation since Pentecost (1 Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:5). Also, the Old Testament contains glimpses and shadows of what it is to be baptized (or as some would rather say, filled) by God's Spirit (Judges 3:10; 2 Kings 3:15), but that is not what we are talking about here. I am simply trying to reveal that what is *popularly* known as the BoHS today, and how it is to be rightly understood through the lens of Scripture, is largely in error. I am not saying such and such a spiritual gift is false, or that you cannot experience more of God's grace and power through His Spirit. What I am trying to make clear, primarily, is that this teaching, as it is *popularly* understood, clouds the waters of the gospel by stirring up untheological mud so that many are blinded to the necessity and obligation of evangelism. Once again, it is also a gateway doctrine to the false idea that we can remain "carnal" and yet still be a Christian. If the BoHS were to be properly understood within the context of God's saving grace and His effect upon the believer for the gospel in evangelism, then the waters of practical theology would be clear and sweet enough to drink from.

II. Carnal Christianity

Along with decisionism-based salvation, Carnal Christianity is one of the Goliaths of false doctrine that stand

up against the chosen of God and defy the LORD and His army. I have been in two churches that believed this deceptive doctrine and I can tell you that it does tremendous damage to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The funny thing is that there are those who teach this doctrine yet expect their church to be fervent for evangelism. And if they do possess a desire for evangelism as a congregation, it is not because of this teaching. If anyone really understood the implications of the true biblical gospel, they would see that Carnal Christianity not only stands opposed to it, but also strips away the need for evangelism and genuine salvation.

The Carnal Christian doctrine also teaches that there is another class of “believer” within the body of Christ that is saved, they just act or live worldly. Like certain versions of the BoHS, it creates a classification that is simply unbiblical. In essence, if you are living carnally, you can still be saved, but you just won’t look like a Christian is supposed to look. I stated it this way because that is what it comes down to. You can paint the doctrine with all the pretty colors you want, but underneath that fresh coat of paint is a moldy wall that poisons the doctrinal air of the local church.

1 Corinthians 3 is where the idea comes from that one can be carnal while yet maintain the status of a true believer. In order for me to combat this doctrine, I would have to devote another chapter to this, which is not my intention. However, I will ask key questions that I want you as the reader to ponder. If you think that Carnal Christianity is a valid doctrine, ask yourself how these points that I am about to make can possibly fit within the harmony of Scripture and the gospel.

1 Corinthians 2:14 states, “But the *natural man* does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness to him*; nor can he know them, because they are

spiritually discerned” (Emphasis added). Another word that is synonymous to the word “natural” here in this text is the word “carnal.” So if the natural man and the carnal man are both the same description, how can a person be a genuine Christian, who is supposed to be saved from the power of the flesh, continue in carnality when the Scripture says that they do not receive the things of God? Does a Christian “not receive” the things of God? How does a Christian, who is supposed to be a child saved by grace and in a relationship with God, call the things of God “foolishness?” How can Christians “not know” the things of the Spirit of God if it was the Spirit of God who was supposed to have taken them from darkness to light in the first place? Indeed it is possible for a Christian to act in a carnal fashion from time to time, but to classify a believer who acts like an unregenerate person as a carnal Christian is to preach false doctrine!

Jude 1:9 speaks about false teachers and ungodly men walking after the flesh. He says, “These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, *not having the Spirit*” (Emphasis added). The word “sensual” here is the same word found in 1 Corinthians 2:14. Jude says that the reasons why these men are walking sensually is because of their own ungodly lusts (v18). He says in verse 9 that these kinds of people *do not* have the Spirit. Wow! How can a genuine believer, or a carnal Christian, not have the Spirit of God? If they don’t have the Spirit, wouldn’t that make them an unbeliever? Notice, it says that these kinds of people are the ones that are usually causing divisions in the church! Sound familiar? Paul was rebuking the professing believers in Corinth for this very reason (notice I said professing believers because not everyone who the Epistles were addressed to was saved). I will explore this in just a second, but for now, just one more portion of Scripture.

Romans Chapter 8 is about the triumph of the Christian walk over sin. Paul lays out man's greatest problem in Chapter 7 – sin under the law. He describes the powerless efforts that we possess in trying to gain salvation by moral goodness and even reveals the struggle a true believer has when confronted with his own sin (Romans 7:13-25). *Side note: Paul was **not** saying he was “carnal” in Romans 7:14 in the same sense that preachers of Carnal Christianity like to teach it. His confession of his carnality is simply an admission of his humanity and its entrapment by the effects sin. This would be no different than me saying that I am a believer in Jesus Christ, but because of Adam's sin, there are still remnants of sin dwelling in me, and the effect of sin and death are still in my body as I grow old and experience the process of death.*

Paul also reveals what a true believer is. He/she is the one who walks in the Spirit, not the flesh (basically carnality) in verse 1. He goes on to say that they that are in the flesh do *mind* the things of the flesh (remember 1 Cor. 2:14?). Moreover he says that the carnal mind is “enmity,” or as the Greek puts it, “hatred” against God. How can a Christian hate God (1 John 4:9)? Finally, in verse 9, he says, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, *if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you*” (Emphasis added). In other words, you are genuinely saved if you are walking in the Spirit! If you walk in the Spirit, it is *because* the Spirit dwells within you. If you don't, it is made manifest that you are not a Christian. So here is the question: If all of this is true, how can one be perpetually carnal – that is, live sensually according to the flesh – and still be a Christian? How can the Bible approve of a classification of “believers” that walk carnally and yet are saved if these three Scriptures above (and many, many others) seem to condemn any who are “carnal” in their

lifestyle? The answer is easy, because there is no such thing as a carnal Christian!

When you read 1 Corinthians 3, after you read all the other Scriptures that condemn carnality, it is easier to come to the conclusion that Paul was rebuking the church for their carnality, not making another classification of believers. Not only that, he is not exactly giving a compliment when he says in verse 3 that they walk as lost men when there are divisions and envy among them. James 3:15 calls this kind of envy and strife “sensual” and “demonic.” Another thing we have to consider when reading the epistles, and the rest of the New Testament, is the fact that not everyone within a specific congregation or assembly of people being addressed, whether it is by Christ or any of the apostles, is a believer. In shorter terms, just because Paul addressed the church in his letter, doesn’t mean *everyone* in the church was saved. Too many take this portion of Scripture and think that just because Paul was addressing Christians, that Carnal Christianity, or any other doctrine, only applies to those that are genuine Christians. Because of this, there are always a few things we have to remember.

One, Paul’s letters always addresses the churches as a whole. This would include true and false believers alike. Two, Paul is dealing with issues within the local church, never hinting at the idea that a true believer can walk in a state of carnality and still be truly saved. Finally, his statements are indeed addressed to professing believers, but only if they are genuine was it written for their sanctification. In other words, if a true believer heard or read the words of Paul, and found out that he was committing the things that Paul was trying to condemn, because of what the Scriptures reveal concerning the Spirit’s work through His word, it is my firm conviction that the true believer would repent or at least

become burdened concerning his wrong doing. And here in 1 Cor. 3, Paul was doing just that. He was condemning the actions of the Corinthians, not providing insight into another class of believers.

Now that I went through that whole rigmarole, how does this relate to apocity? Simply stated, it provides no reason for your congregational members, should they fall underneath this false classification, to be a witness. You can tell them till you are blue in the face that they should be obedient and go preach the gospel, but why should they? They have no obligation to. They are carnal, remember? Or did we already forget that part? I am being sarcastically brash for a very good reason, because this doctrine is nothing but heresy within our local churches! What motivation are you supposed to give to a carnal person to evangelize other than cheap moralism? Other than you should because you should? How are you going to convince a carnal Christian (ehem, I mean lost person) that they should not commit apocity? The Carnal Christian doctrine not only steals the seed of the gospel within the heart and provides justification for an immoral life, but it transforms the true gospel into a false one, making it impotent to save individuals from their sin. It makes the salvation through the cross of Christ a mockery and does not provoke a true, glorious, sanctified lifestyle by the implications of the gospel. If you are a believer and/or teacher of this doctrine, and you are an apocite, you are indeed in danger of Hell fire. God save you!

If you desire to hear a message that I preached Sunday morning in a church that believed this doctrine, go to [Google.com](https://www.google.com) and type in the search bar: George Alvarado – Refuting Carnal Christianity. It will be found on [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

III. Decision-Based Salvation (Decisionism)

During my time as a member of the Armed Forces, I have seen firsthand how people can be coerced to do something they may not want to do. Some people volunteer to do things of their own will; others are what many call “volun-told.” Because there wasn’t enough “buy-in” for a specific task, voluntelling someone to do something was the standard method of coercion. Without buy-in, the person may participate, but their heart is not in it, and when their heart is not in it, it shows! Decisionism-based salvation (DBS) within Christianity is no different, and is a sanctified version of voluntelling. As a whole, this doctrine has done enormous damage to western Christianity! When I say DBS I am talking about the man-made methods that many have used to pressure or manipulate someone to make a *decision* to follow Jesus. I am not denying the reality of the will, which receives salvation and is persuaded to follow Christ, but the manner in which DBS is applied in order to get someone “saved” is unbiblical.

The act of the will versus the sovereignty of God is a paradox that many theologians have wrestled with for centuries. I am not the first nor will I be the last to develop a case as to which side of the fence I stand on. However, my intention is neither to shoot down nor approve of the good and bad concerning a decision being made to follow Christ. Indeed the Bible says salvation is of the LORD (Jonah 2:9), and that man is born again not of his own will, but of God’s (John 1:13). Yet, on the other hand, the Word always admonishes us to believe and have faith (John 3:36; Romans 5:1). My point is not to defend either stance here, but to display the consequence that mere DBS has, not only on a seeker (one who desires salvation), but how it also produces a league of apocites.

The error of DBS can be mostly demonstrated by what we understand today as the “altar call.” Although not all altar calls are like this, the majority of advocates push for a decision to be made during this time of the service by asking people to raise their hands, or squeezing the person next to you, or repeating a prayer in order to confirm to the seeker that they now made a decision to follow Christ. Depending on what was preached and why the person is coming forward to be saved in the first place, a person can still be genuinely saved, but only by God’s grace, despite this manipulative method. However, what ministers do when someone makes a decision is indeed disgustingly breathtaking.

When a “convert” notifies the ministers that a decision has been made, the pastor or leader tells that person that they are now saved. They popishly declare a person saved either out of ignorance to the Scriptures or willful deception. Either way, they have no business declaring any person to be saved no matter what the denomination is because it is the Holy Spirit that should confirm the believer (Romans 8:16), not us! Other times, leaders in a church will announce to the seekers who raised their hands, or “secretly” asked Jesus to come into their heart, in front of the whole congregation, that they are saved. So instead of dealing with our seekers one to one, salvation has become an assembly line by which men follow a few easy steps to become a Christian, and in the end, the CEO of the company puts *their* stamp of approval on the product in a mass setting, without warning them to make their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10).

Altar calls aside, DBS only calls men to do just that – make a decision. There is no counting the cost (Luke 14:25-33); there is no exhortation to repent (Acts 11:18; 17:30; 20:21), and no warning of the promises of temptation,

tribulation, and persecution (Mark 4:17; Matthew 13:21; Luke 8:13). In essence, this unbiblical goal to get men to make a decision has been the reason why so many in our churches today are falsely converted, and in turn why so many apocites exist! As we will find out later on, apocites and the unregenerate usually go hand in hand. And the fact that we are producing a multitude of people within our churches that profess to be believers, yet are in a state of apocity, has not only desensitized many to think this is acceptable, but also has led many elders in our churches to believe/teach that purposeful, consistent, and regular evangelism is something you have to be “called” to do! We have bought into a culture that allows for this kind of behavior, and for the most part, damning doctrines like Decisionism have carried the modern church into the dunghill of corporate apocity! Unless we return to our biblical roots and preach the true gospel, and leave salvation to the LORD and not merely a decision, we will continue to see the widespread disease of apocity continue, because we have people within our churches who profess to know God, but deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5), and are carriers of this malicious virus of apocity.

Whether you have Arminian or Calvinist theology, whether or not you prefer to use an altar call, one thing I will stress to you, reader, is this. As long as you base your conversions in your church on the decisions made rather than the biblical experience of regeneration and God’s approval process of perseverance through discipleship and tribulation, then do not, I repeat, do not expect to your followers to be consistent, regular, and purposeful witnesses of Jesus Christ. Because, for the most part, it is like expecting goats to act like sheep. It will not happen! The only ones that will be faithful will be the ones that were truly converted

despite the lifeless method that DBS has provided preachers. But, if by chance you have a church that is growing exponentially because of the decisions that are made, whether because of teachings inside the church or evangelistic efforts, make sure the growth is not because of manipulative efforts or man-made methods. Though the church may prosper for a season, advocates of Decisionism will have a coliseum of false converts greeting them at the gates of Hell. For more preaching on the dangers of DBS, listen to Paul Washer's message online called *Regeneration vs. Decisionism* preached at the Deeper Conference in 2008.

IV. Practical Hyper-Calvinism

Like many other doctrinal extremes, Hyper Calvinism (HC) has many degrees. Phil Johnson wrote *A Primer on Hyper Calvinism*, and in this primer he explains the five-fold definition of HC this way:

1. Denies that the gospel call applies to all who hear
2. Denies that faith is the duty of every sinner
3. Denies that the gospel makes any "offer" of Christ, salvation, or mercy to the non-elect
4. Denies that there is such a thing as "common grace"
5. Denies that God has any sort of love for the non-elect

The primary focus of this section will be points 1 and 3, and the trend within Reformed circles that have fallen into these errors.

As a young Christian, I did not know what Reformation theology was. Even though I didn't name it as such, I found myself understanding it more and more and applying its theological implications. This was the primary reason why I was getting in trouble with the churches I was

attending, because they were accusing me of being “divisive.” All I was doing was trying to preach a biblical understanding of salvation and the gospel. If you desire the same thing, then get ready; it is going to be a bumpy ride! Anyway, as I left these churches because of their false doctrines (like the Prosperity Gospel and Carnal Christianity) I began to long for a church that had a biblical understanding of the gospel and would go out together to preach. Well, I did find a church that had a right understanding of the gospel. As a matter of fact, I found more than one, but I was shocked and discouraged to find apocity’s ugly face still in all of those churches.

As I began to attend these churches that held to a very Reformed view of the gospel, I saw the lack of evangelistic zeal and I began to ask myself: “Why, God? Why do we still have apocites in churches that teach the glorious gospel in a way that honors You and gives You all the glory? How is it possible to teach a God-centered view of conversion, yet still have so many committing apocity?” Then I realized something. There was not only a huge chasm between the understanding of the gospel and its strong implication to preach, but, for the most part, the congregants became Hyper Calvinist in practice though not in doctrine. Also, as I have stated earlier, not everyone in the church is saved, even if good theology is actually being taught.

As point one of the *Primer* states, HC denies that the gospel call applies to all who hear. In other words, if you are not the elect, the gospel call doesn’t apply to you. The Reformed churches that I have attended would never say that, but that is how they *act* when it comes to preaching to the lost. If they believed the gospel call applied to all, they would go out and preach like they believe that. Point 3 is like point one, just a little more specific. It denies that the gospel is to be offered to anyone who is not the elect. As I said

before, the Reformed churches I have attended would never say that, but that is how they *behave*. Whether or not you believe in the doctrine of election is not the point here, but if you *really* believe that the gospel is to be preached to all, then wouldn't you go out and preach?

Let me give you an example of how this works. The Bible says that the fool says his heart, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). When you study these verses out, the first thing you have to notice is that the words "there is" are not found in the original translations. So the proper way to say this would be, "The fool says in his heart, no God." With this understanding, we can grasp that this is a declaration of the heart, not the mouth. That means that this is what the fool really believes, not necessarily what he says. How do we know he believes this? Psalm 14 goes into detail concerning the *behavior* of the wicked who have declared in their heart, "no God!" This Scripture reveals that true atheism is not merely a declaration of a belief, but the sinful defiance against the true God by choosing sin over Him. In layman's terms, anyone can be a practical atheist without actually saying it! That is what true atheism is, living as though God does not exist! There millions out there who say they believe in Christ, but they live like God doesn't exist, and it is the same with those who profess a right understanding of the gospel yet do not behave like they believe it. My point: *there are many within our churches today who possess the biblical understanding of the gospel, but are practical Hyper-Calvinists!*

Jesus made it clear to the Pharisee's of the day that they are which who honor Him with their lips, but whose heart is far from Him (Mark 7:6). In Luke 6:46, Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do the things which I say?" When it comes to being faithful to preach the

gospel, whether corporately or individually, many professing Christians should consider these two verses in reference to their apocity. For some reason, however, other than the possibility that they are not saved, those who know the catechisms and confessions, who can recite doctrines and theology, and are saying that the gospel is to be preached to all the heathen, do not do it. They proclaim that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes and that we should hail this gospel to the world, but they are not moving anywhere. The term “frozen chosen” is definitely applicable here. This of course does not apply to all Reformed churches, but the epidemic of this great omission is just as prevalent here as it is anywhere else! For any within these Reformed circles to fall into apocity and continue in it as if it is okay because they feel as though they are trusting in God’s sovereignty, it is sin!

The idea that God’s sovereignty is the overarching reality in the world plays a huge part in Reformation theology. However, many fall into a very hyper-Calvinistic mindset when they assume that because God is sovereign they do not have to be as diligent to witness, as fervent to go out into the world, or as urgent to preach to a lost person, because God is in control! I do not deny the fact that God is in control. As a matter of fact, this reality has preserved my Christian walk through many trials and temptations. But, I would never use Heavenly sovereignty as an excuse for a lackadaisical attitude toward evangelism! God’s sovereignty not only means that He is in control of all things, including man’s salvation, but also, in His sovereignty, He has placed some things underneath my influence. In other words, the King has given me responsibilities that I am to tend to because it was in His sovereign right to do so. Rightly understood, the sovereignty of God in salvation should light a

fire in our bones to go out in the world and become an evangelical success by preaching the everlasting gospel!

It seems that many who understand the sovereignty of God have allowed themselves to think that they do not have to worry about evangelism because they are eternally secure, or because God will send someone else to do the labor. Because many have misunderstood the doctrine of election, it has drifted them to the waters of practical Hyper-Calvinism, and they somehow do not see a problem with it. I say this without an ounce of remorse, if you are in the state of apocity, and you are fine with not having to be a regular and purposeful witness for Christ because you feel as though you are trusting in God's sovereignty, you have turned the grace of God, and His sovereignty, into a license for sin. Although you may not be committing any obvious moral sins, you are still *omitting* one of the greatest commandments entrusted to us as Christians, and that is no small thing. If this idea of apocity is of no concern to you, refer back to Chapter 3 section II and ask yourself if you truly believe you are a child of grace by being lazy, because laziness not only casts you into a deep sleep (Proverbs 19:15), but it is enough to cast you into Hell.

V. Pragmatism

There seems to be ubiquitous pink elephant within our modern churches today, and because it derives its support from universities, TV psychologists, and certain mega-church pastors, no one seems to take notice. Pragmatism is one of those "whack-a-mole" philosophies that seems to pop up no matter how many times you hit its ugly head. Unlike all the other theologies above, pragmatism is not something that church leaders can derive from Scripture. Heresies and misunderstandings can arise whenever

someone reads the Bible and preaches error, but pragmatism is an outside philosophy that is not only foreign to the proper application of doctrine, but it has infiltrated how professing believers judge evangelism.

Pragmatism comes from a Greek stem that means, “that which has to be done.” The *Oxford Dictionary* defines pragmatism as “an approach that assesses the truth of meaning of theories or beliefs in terms of the *success* of their *practical application*” (Emphasis added). Carm.org, a very useful apologetics website, nails the idea of pragmatism within our churches this way, “Pragmatism is the philosophical position that *what works is best*. In other words, *the value* of something is established by its practicality, functionality, and usefulness” (Emphasis added). In my own words, pragmatism can be understood when someone thinks something is “ineffective” or “unsuccessful” based off the “results.”

Imagine being at work, and you are trying to fix something. You are given a manual that explicitly tells you what you should do, and how you should do it. Then, someone comes along side of you and says, “Oh, that book doesn’t know what it’s talking about. It was written by men who don’t work on this piece of equipment, and do not understand the most effective way on how to handle it.” After this person shows you how to fix it “the most effective way,” you are blown away at the results and soon take on the practice because it is more comfortable than the book’s way of doing it, it suits your personal preference, and allows you to get the job done.

The above scenario is something that many of us in our jobs tend to connect with. All of us, at one time or another, have run into a situation where the instructions provided *seem* to be “ineffective” in getting the job done. Yet,

the problem usually lies not with the instructions half the time, but with the interpreter of the information. Also, the situation becomes little more complex when someone is just trying to help you by showing you a “better” way, knowing that it is not what the instructions require. And if, by chance, there is a rule or regulation that prohibits the use of alternate means by which the work is to be done, watch out! Because depending on how serious it is, you could lose your job, get someone else in trouble, or worse, injure or kill someone.

I have said all that to say this, apocity is rampant because of widespread pragmatism. The majority of local churches choose alternate means to preach the gospel (i.e. lifestyle evangelism or sanctified substitutions) because they feel it is more “effective” or “successful” in “reaching” the lost. They not only refocus their understanding of what biblical success is, but they substitute preaching with unbiblical means, and zero in on “results.” Just as the definition above states, “whatever works best.” This kind of thinking is not only in complete defiance to the command of God to evangelize in a biblical fashion, but it removes the necessity to go out into the world in the first place since there are “alternate ways” to be more “effective.”

Unlike the fluidity of our work areas, God has given **perfect** instructions that do not need to be rewritten or doubted concerning evangelism. He has not only provided the instructions of *how* to do it, but He has told us how **effective** and **successful** it is, as well as **who** is in charge of the **results**. We are to be careful to follow those instructions because preaching the gospel heretically, or not at all, can do more than cause injury, it can send someone to Hell! Isaiah 55:11 states, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper [in the thing] for which I

sent it.” What this verse explains to us is that our preaching is the work of God. When it goes out, it will accomplish all that God wants it to accomplish, whether judgment or salvation. Not only that, it is *always* successful because it will prosper. If we are to be true believers in “what works best” along with biblically understanding who defines what that “best” is; if we are Christians, the Holy Spirit will testify to us that what God says is best, how God defines *effective* and *successful* is better, and that we can trust Him with the *results*.

Because of pragmatism, many have chosen the more comfortable path of apocity by not going out and sharing their faith. If I had a quarter for every time I was asked if my open air preaching was effective, if I get a “good” response from those I pass out tracts to, or if I was “successful” in witnessing to so-and-so, I would not need a full time job, no joke. Too many within our congregations judge the biblical and mandated methods of public proclamation simply because the unregenerate are visibly “turned off” by it, or express hatred toward the message and methods that are being used to spread the message of salvation. Don’t get me wrong. I believe that there are some very terrible ways to present the message of Jesus Christ, but I gauge those methods from Scripture, not personal preference. Pragmatism fans the flames of personal preference, because what one person may find effective may not be what another finds effective. In our culture of relativism and tolerance, pragmatism only feeds the pink elephant until she is fat with apocity. And it isn’t until local churches realize that the gospel is *always* successful and effective (as long as the message is biblical) whenever it is publicly declared – whether through tracts, personal witnessing engagements, or open air preaching – that we will be able to place our selfish, prideful, and cowardly motives aside and be bold for Christ

in a world that needs His salvation.

VI. The True Gospel and its Implications

Every idea has consequences. From DBS to BoHS, or from Carnal Christianity to various other heresies, when someone adopts certain ideas, beliefs, or doctrines to be true, it is natural for the logical consequence of that behavior to follow. It is also possible for someone to misunderstand something, and then adopt that misunderstanding as truth as well. But the fact of the matter is, the person will always exhibit or produce behaviors which they have already affirmed to be a reality, even if that reality is wrong.

When considering some of the realities of conversion, the Bible, in various ways, reveals to the readers that there are some usual signs that a person has received the gospel. Some of them are a desire for the Word of God (2 Peter 2:2-3), a love for Christian fellowship (1 John 3:14; 4:20), an obedience to God (1 John 2:3; 5:3), a hatred for sin (Romans 7:15; Proverbs 8:13), a spirit of prayer (Romans 8:15), and finally a holy lifestyle via the Holy Ghost (Galatians 5:22-23). But there is one thing I did not include on purpose, and that is the spiritual fruit of evangelism (which we will deal with in the next chapter). The reality of conversion and the implications of the gospel are one in the same thing. If you have received the true gospel, then the implications of the gospel come with it. If one tries to separate the implications of the gospel from the reception of the gospel, you will get what you see today – widespread apocity and apostasy.

To understand a little better what I mean about the implications of the gospel, allow me to give you a little

* By implication, I mean the logical end that is inevitably and unquestionably interwoven in the message of the gospel.

illustration. When someone hands you a pen, and doesn't tell you why, the natural questions should be, "What's this for?" or, "Why did you hand me this?" The reason why is that as a logical human being, I can deduct the implication of receiving the pen, I just lack direction. Other things that we often receive or gain possession of in life are naturally implied in the same way. Some things have instructions built into the implications; others need a little more explanation. So if someone hands me a piece of gum, I am apt to ask, "What are you implying by giving me this piece of gum?" Although humorous, and quite often a misunderstanding, the act of offering someone a piece of gum has a logical implication built into it.

When we understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that we are sinful and in danger of God's wrath, when we hear this, it implies that we are in trouble with God. That is, primarily, why sinful souls hate the preaching of the law of God, because it exposes them for what they are – criminals at enmity with God. It doesn't stop there. When I also preach that unless someone repents of their sins and places their trust in Jesus Christ, they will die in their sins and face God guilty, the logical conclusion is that one is bound for Hell. When I am done preaching about man's condition before God, the holiness of His nature, and the righteousness of His requirements, and then point to the cross of Jesus Christ as a payment for sin, and a substitute in our place for the punishment of our transgressions, the implication is that He is *the* cure for my problem of sin. Meanwhile, as I continue to discuss how He alone is sufficient to save and that only through Him does one gain, not only salvation, but life eternal and a right relationship with God, that implies there is nowhere else I can go in order to receive righteousness and salvation. Sinners hate this too! But it doesn't end there

either. Once I have received the blessing of the gospel, and have experienced regeneration, and have been transformed by the Holy Spirit, and given a new heart with new desires (as the gospel promises to all those that repent and believe), what do you think the conclusion is now? Think about this carefully, because for some reason, this is where the mainstream evangelical churches are invariably getting this wrong.

Once I have received eternal life, truly, by the preaching of the gospel and faith in God's Son, if the Holy Spirit has been deposited within me, and is now the gift of evangelism who will empower me to go out into the world to preach the gospel, the inevitable result of all this is that I will now go out into the world and preach the gospel! It's not rocket science! To put this more plainly, to say that we have received salvation by the gospel, yet not preach to others about the gospel, is not only to deny the implications of the gospel, but is also a contradiction of the gospel. The gospel is not only something to be received, but something to be given! If someone has truly been saved, the fruit is automatically built in by the Spirit of Christ, and by the sheer implication of the message! How can someone say that they are saved by the gospel, and then turn around and keep it to themselves? How does someone profess to have this eternal treasure of God, shaped and decreed by the work of His infinite wisdom, packed tight into this mortal frame of ours, and yet keep it inside? Can a city on a hill hide its light once lit? Can a candle receive fire from an outside source and yet not exude light from its wick? Then how can a receiver of the gospel not be a proclaimer of the gospel? The answer is simple, it doesn't happen! True receivers are inevitable deliverers.

A bit of clarification is needed here. I am not saying

that a true believer cannot commit apocity. If you remember in Chapter 1 Section X, I revealed the difference between occasional apocity, and the perpetual state of apocity. So when I say that a receiver of the gospel cannot be a non-proclaimer of the gospel, I am talking about the ones that are in an apocitic state. These are the true apocites who say they have been saved, but have the sinful habit of not preaching the gospel regularly, consistently, and purposefully. It is they who seemingly are too busy (or really too lazy) to be faithful witnesses. It is this breed that I am mostly dealing with when considering the demands of the gospel, because aside from the Holy Spirit given as the gift of evangelism, the gospel message alone carries enough weight to imply that we must be preachers after we have received salvation, period!

VII. Doctrinal Proof for the Implications of the Gospel

There are many portions of Scripture that teach that the gospel message includes not only receiving it, but being preachers of it. I will only use three as I feel these are all that is needed without writing another book on the subject. After we explore this, we will move on to possibly the most controversial chapter I will ever write, revealing how evangelism and salvation are inextricably connected.

The first portion of Scripture we'll dive into is Luke 9:59-60. In this Scripture you have examples from three different individuals being called or volunteering to follow Christ. One is ignorant of the reality of his decision (v57-58), and another was double minded or irresolute (v61-62). The one we will focus on is often called the "procrastinator" or "reluctant" one.

When Christ called the reluctant one to follow, he responds with how he wants time to go bury his father. I will try not to waste time by exegeting this fully, but to make a

long story short, it has been widely accepted that this man used his father as an excuse not to follow Christ immediately as the call of Christ demands of every sinner. What I want to you to notice, however, is how Christ makes the connection between following Him, and preaching the kingdom. After this man makes an excuse, Christ immediately corrects him by saying “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God” (Emphasis added). This sounds “strangely” similar to the great commission in Mark 16:15. This reminds me of when Christ called the disciples and told them how in following Him He would make them fishers of men (Mark 4:19). So if following Christ, who is the initiator of the New Covenant, means that we are to be fishers of men, and that we are to let all excuses be set aside so that we can go and preach the kingdom of God, what does that imply for those who are apocites? They are not following Christ!

The next passage of Scripture that we will look at concerning the doctrinal implications of the gospel is Luke 6:40 where Jesus says, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” When Jesus said this, he was saying this in reference to those who were following the Pharisees as their spiritual guides. Since they were the dominant teachers of the day, Jesus was warning His hearers that essentially *you are what you follow*. If you follow the Pharisees you will be a two-fold son of Hell, a blind person led by the blind (v 39), a hypocrite (v42), a bearer of bad fruit (v44-45), and finally a foolish person who builds their house on sand (v48-49). This is true not just for the pupil, but also for any who are false teachers, pastors, or leaders who are apocites. However, if you follow Christ, you will be like Him in that He is a son of Heaven, He can see, He is not prone to hypocrisy, He is the vine that supplies our good fruit, and finally, He is our rock

by which we are established. But, how do we know if we are like Him? Luke 6:47 tell us it is they who hear the teachings of Christ and “do them,” meanwhile in verse 49 the foolish person is the one who does what? *Nothing!* The question we need to pose to ourselves is this: How are we to call ourselves Christians, followers of Christ, and yet fail to do the things that He says (Luke 6:46)? How are we to confirm that we are enrolled in the Heavenly school to be like Him, *THE PREACHER* of the gospel, and yet we do not preach ourselves? How do we know if Christ is training us through the person of the Holy Spirit, when we are smug with our state of apocity? This truly is against the nature of the Christian calling, and in turn, against the nature of Christ. He is no apocite, so why are we?

The final text we will look at makes it so painfully obvious that the walk of a Christian and evangelism are so perfectly interrelated through the message of the gospel, it is simply amazing to me how many so called Christians can ignore it. In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Paul continues to make an explicit association between our salvation and the ministry of reconciliation imparted to us. First, in verse 15, Paul says that Christ died so that we do not live to ourselves. Apocity is a very selfish sin in contrast. Then in verse 17, he says, “Therefore, if any be in Christ, he is a new creature...” This new creature is in reference to the new heart that God promised to give those underneath the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Astoundingly, in verse 18, Paul makes mention of the relationship of salvation with the *ministry of reconciliation!* He says that it was “given to us” and also it was “committed to us” (v19). He talks about how we are now *ambassadors for Christ*, and that we are now the ones calling out to the world to be reconciled to Christ as though God is pleading with the world through us! Paul then puts Christ’s

bloody signature at the bottom of this great commission upon us by stating in verse 21, “*For* he made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God” (Emphasis added). The “for” is another way of giving a mission statement or the reason why one is doing something. So in essence, since Christ gave His life for us, it is consistent to give ourselves over to the ministry of reconciliation, that has been *given* and *committed* to us, and go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature because we have been made new creatures by this same gospel! This is so plain, that it is sickening to hear of so many within our local churches today who believe that they can still be Christians and not be consistent, regular, and purposeful witnesses for Christ. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Hopefully, the next chapter will convince you that it is impossible to separate willful evangelistic efforts from the genuine conversion of a Christian.

Chapter 6: The Fruit "of" Evangelism

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain..."

– Jesus Christ

"Do you want to go to Heaven alone? I fear you will never go there. Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that."

– Charles H. Spurgeon

"Those that do not evangelize on regular basis, if they have the ability to, either do not believe in Hell, or are on their way there."

– George Alvarado

We have now reached the most controversial portion of this book (at least I think so). I say that because my purpose is to specifically prove that Scripture validates how evangelism is not only every Christian's responsibility and calling, but it is actually one of the proofs as to whether or not you are a Christian. And to assist with my validation I will use more commentaries than normal because of the slight chance that naysayers of this position may accuse me of preaching something new or heretical. Until now, I have purposefully avoided excessive quotations and making it too technical so I don't flood your brain with other people's words rather than Scripture. However, the floodgates are now open! And I pray that you will not only understand that apocrypha is completely contrary to the Christian walk, but also

that evangelism is an evidential fruit of salvation.

1. A Little Clarification, Again.

Once again, I think it is necessary to clarify some things before I continue, because I repeatedly receive feedback that not only misrepresents what I say, but also assumes things I did not say or mean. When I say things concerning apocity being contrary to the Christian walk, or talk about proof of salvation, I am not saying that Christians don't sin. Sanctification can be painful at times, and if you are truly a child of grace, time and experience will make this truth plain. However, what I am saying is that any known sin of a professing Christian cannot be left undealt with before the Holy Spirit presses the conscience. Not only that, a true believer cannot continue in a lifestyle of sin no matter what it may be; and if they do, they have no *assurance* that they are really Christian (1 John 3:7-8). Again, I have to repeat myself. If you persist in any *known* sin, including apocity, and your conscience via the Holy Spirit does not lead you to repentance, and you continue in any of it, unless you repent, you have no *assurance* that you are saved. Reading the book of 1 John will validate this as well as many other Scriptures. *This does not mean you cannot sin.* I must make this clear. It just means you cannot call yourself a true believer while you are abiding in it. Is it possible to be led astray for a season? Yes. However, if there are no continual signs of repentance and restoration in your life and a real striving against sin, nor is there a plan of action that is biblically based so that you might fiercely fight against the war that is going on in your members (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; 1 Peter 2:11), you can be sure that you are none of His.

One more thing: language in general can be a bit ambiguous at times. For instance, when I title this chapter,

“The Fruit of Evangelism,” many automatically associate the “of” with evangelism. So when you hear it, it sounds like I am talking about the product/results of evangelism. But, that is not what I am talking about. When I use the “of” in this instance, I mean to show how evangelism *is* a fruit, particularly within the subject of salvation. So from here on, remember that the “fruit of evangelism” is talking about evangelism as a fruit or proof of salvation.

II. All Kinds of Fruit

It is difficult to validate that evangelism is indeed a fruit of salvation without first describing the importance of the metaphorical uses of fruit in the Bible. To be brief, fruit can be a multiplicity of things. It can be personal character (Galatians 5:22-23), it can be in relationship to holy living (Romans 6:22), it can be your children (Psalm 127:3), your works or preaching (Matthew 7:15-20), your words or the product of what comes out of your mouth (Hebrews 13:15; Proverbs 18:27), repentance (Matthew 3:8), or finally, it can be talking about the literal, natural fruit itself (Genesis 1:11). However, I will maintain my focus on how the Bible uses fruit to speak about the salvation of souls and the strong connection it has with preaching the gospel. The main Scriptures that will be used are John 15:16 and Mark 4:20 with cross references to prove my point.

III. Bearing Fruit that Remains

For nine years of my salvation I wondered if there was ever a Bible verse(s) that revealed evangelism to be an evident sign of one’s salvation. Other than the verses on being obedient, I was never able to see in the Bible anything that proves that evangelism and Christian fruit were intimately connected. I was evangelically frustrated because

there were (and still are today) so many in church who said they loved Christ, but yet seemingly had no love for evangelism. This is not only an oxymoron to the character of Christ, but it also contrary to the gospel call. Then, one day as I was studying, I was captivated by John 15:16. Even though I have read this verse before and attributed it to bearing fruit as it was described in Galatians 5:22, I was missing something within the chapter that I had never noticed before. As I looked further, cross-referenced some verses, and read some commentaries, I realized that personal fruit is indeed here, but one of the personal fruits that we ought to bear is the fruit of evangelism.

John Chapter 15 is indeed a chapter rich in theology. As a quick summary, we can see Jesus teach about false conversion (v6), true conversion (v4-5), bearing fruit and sanctification (v2), bearing more fruit (v8), glorifying God in bearing fruit and love for one another (v12), love for God (v10), obedience to God and friendship with Jesus (v14), ordination and being chosen to go out into the world and bear evangelistic fruit (v16), hatred and persecution by the world (v18-25), and finally the comfort of the Holy Spirit (v26-27). There may be more, but these themes definitely make up the majority of the chapter. As I mentioned earlier, it is my resolution to reveal to you, reader, that John 15:16 is not only talking about personal fruit (which many assume is only within the realm of inner character), but also the fruit of evangelism.

One thing we must establish is that Christians in and of themselves *are* fruit. We embody what it is to be the fruit of Christ and the gospel. As we will see later in the parable of the sower, fruit contains within it seeds. Indeed, this is why fruit is defined as fruit both botanically and biblically – because they bear seeds within themselves (Genesis 1:29).

Paul mentions in Romans 1:13 his desire to come to Rome and see the fruit that was coming from the preaching and was multiplying there among the Gentiles. Here he is speaking about converts. Jesus calls the world's elect a "white harvest" ready to be reaped in John 4:35-36. He goes on to say that there will be some who evangelize, and some will reap where others have sown. What is Jesus talking about? Converts of course! He says explicitly that to reap is to gather *fruit*. The fruit of what? Converts saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ! Another portion of Scripture in Colossians 1:6 talks about how the gospel not only reached the church there, but also is now going into all the world *bearing fruit*. Finally, in John 12:24, Jesus gives a parable concerning a grain of wheat dying, and that unless this grain of wheat dies, it cannot bear fruit. This is dealing with how Christ has to die in order for the kingdom of God to multiply and bring forth fruit through his gospel. I propose there is another lesson here that I must deal with, because Jesus seems to have a double meaning.

When you look at John 12:24 more closely, you see not only a parallel drawn here for the crucifixion, but also for the convert. When Jesus speaks in verse 25, he mentions something familiar that anyone who studies the Bible would recognize – The daily dying of the Christian walk! Christ is not only referring to Himself dying as a grain of wheat, but others also who wish to follow Him. Christ said that if a grain of wheat does not fall to the ground and *die* it remains *alone*. In other words, it will not bear any fruit because the germination process cannot begin while the grain, which contains seed, does not fall to the ground. This is an important lesson for those who say they are disciples of Christ, but feel as though they do not have to die to self in the Christian walk. Paul confirmed this idea of seed needing to die when he uses this same teaching to illustrate the

resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:36). However, the next portion of Jesus' saying is the most important part. Jesus points out that *when* it does die, it *will* produce fruit. However, not just fruit, but *much fruit*. Once again, the important lesson to glean from this is that when a person dies in the person of Christ, they are crucified with Him and become a new creature! And if God promised we will bear fruit individually, how can this be true if we are not bearing fruit evangelistically? I am not saying we have to see the converts saved right in front of us (a thought we will explore later). What I am saying is that if we are truly in Christ, and we are losing our lives and dying to self in order to live in Him, and indeed we have been crucified with Christ and have died to the old man Adam, how is it possible that we can profess to be Christians when we won't even go out into the world and preach the gospel? If it is true that in Christ, we are to be as a grain of wheat, as Christ was, don't you think a follower would do as Christ did and multiply the gospel even if it cost them their life, materially and physically? In order to make sense of this, the only conclusion that we can draw is that when someone professes to be a Christian, yet is comfortable in a state of apocity, it will be evident in the fact that they metaphorically stand alone. In other words, they are not dying to self by going out into the world to preach the gospel! Therefore, they are not producing fruit that the gospel requires of them.

Moving forward to John 15:16, having seen that fruit can refer to converts, we see Jesus, before dying, giving His words of warning and encouragement to His disciples. As I summarized earlier, Jesus seems to be moving through a variety of things He wants His disciples to know before He goes to the cross. In verse 16, Jesus made it plain that not only did *He* choose His disciples, but that also He *ordained*

them, but for what purpose? That they should *go* and bear fruit, and that their fruit should *remain*. The “go” here signifies the disciples leaving or withdrawing from Christ and going where? Out into the world preaching the gospel of Jesus! If Jesus was talking about personal fruit – that is, the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in us (Galatians 5) – why would Jesus go into a dissertation concerning the world hating them? Why is this verse sandwiched between an exhortation to love one another meanwhile knowing that the world will hate us? Why would Christ have to mention true love being in obedience to Him? The connection here is too great to be severed. When you look at Jesus telling His disciples that He saved them, chose them, ordained them so that they might go and bear fruit, he wasn’t just saying that after He dies, they are going to bear fruit in their personal character that the Holy Spirit will make possible, but that also they will go into the world and preach the gospel!

When was the last time you heard someone being hated because they were a Christian, but no one heard them profess their faith in some way? Do people just pick someone and say, “Yea, he looks like a Christian, kill’em!” This may be the case for someone who just wants to kill for fun, but for the most part, Christians are persecuted, mocked, reviled, and killed because they *open their mouths* for Christ! Not because they “live their best life now,” or because they want to win others with their good deeds. When you are persecuted or reviled for Christ, not only do you run to God for comfort, but you seek the fellowship of the brethren. This is why Jesus mentions love for one another, and why Christians loving each other is so important! I cannot tell you how many times I have come back alone from preaching the gospel to tell others about it and get that look of “that’s nice” or even worse, a look of condemnation. It hurts! The other

thing John mentions here is that the fruit the disciples will produce, when they go out, *will* remain.

Let's take a moment to think about something. Since Christ has died, how many people have been added to the kingdom of God? Many! Did you know that every convert ever won to Christ is a permanent fruit of God? If someone is truly converted, that person won to Jesus Christ is a fruit that remains! But the one thing you need to keep in mind is that, since the dawn of the New Covenant, Christ has built a kingdom that started off as a mustard seed and has grown into a tree! That tree remains today! With Christ's death, it started off as a spark, then into a fire that the disciples spread into all the world. That fire remains today! It started as a little leaven that sooner or later permeated the world, and that leaven remains today! Christ, the chief fruit of eternal life, died and laid His seed in the world, commissioned His disciples, and they in turn carried the gospel to the world so that Christ can receive the reward for His suffering - we who are born again! Isn't that great! If you are saved, you are a walking reward of Christ's suffering! A fruit that is among millions that will remain as Christ's church since the foundation of the world for all eternity! That church remains today! When Christ chose and ordained His disciples to go out and bear fruit, the fruit they produced, you are living proof of if you're a believer. And today, though there are few, the few that remain are a remnant reminder of the gospel's power that has gone into all the world and has saved millions. What a venomous thing apocity is to strike against such a valiant calling!

IV. Treasure in Earthen Vessels

In case you think I am crazy to assume such things on my own, I have included some commentary from prominent

men of God that have said some things about this Scripture that would confirm my position. John Piper said concerning John 15:16 that this Scripture refers to the “fruitfulness of *winning others to Christ* who are then guarded by God's power for salvation” (Emphasis added). John Gill, a pastor/commentator, said this concerning what Christ meant about the disciples bringing forth fruit:

“Go first into Judea, and then into all the world; and brings forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness in themselves, and be the happy *means of the conversion*, and so of *bringing in a large harvest of souls* to Jesus Christ” (Emphasis added).

Isn't it a blessing to be the “means of conversion” and “bringing in a large harvest of souls” to Christ? Gill goes on to say that the persons who were converted by the preaching of the gospel are what is meant by “your fruit shall remain.” Although he further mentions the Christian's personal preservation, as I said before, the gospel and its salvation cannot be disconnected from the inevitable product of winning others to Christ.

Dr. John MacArthur, a very well-known theologian of our time, had this to say about John 15:16:

“You say, what is fruit? Remember what it is? It's Christ-likeness. It's confession of praise. It's a contribution of love. It's communication also that blesses others. It's conduct in general good works, *and it's also converts led to Jesus Christ*” (Emphasis added).

Dr. MacArthur goes on to say in his sermon that even though this doesn't mean you will always personally see converts

won to Christ, nevertheless the truth of your testimony contributes to planting seeds. And in another sermon, MacArthur echoes Christians bearing fruit in the form of converts in his exegesis on John 15:5-8, 11. He says, "People won to Jesus Christ through *witnessing* are also the fruit of abiding" (Emphasis added).

John Wesley, a well-known and faithful evangelist in his time, had this to say about the Scripture at hand in his commentary notes:

"My apostles, have not chosen me, but I have chosen you - As clearly appears from the sacred history: and appointed you, that ye may go and bear fruit - I have chosen and appointed you for this end, *that ye may go and convert sinners*: and that your fruit may remain - That the fruit of your labours may remain to the end of the world; yea, to eternity" (Emphasis added).

If you couldn't understand what Wesley meant because your old English is rusty, he believes that Christ chose the disciples and ordained them so that they "may go and convert sinners." If I am truly insane to believe that the fruit of evangelism is also a part of our salvation, I think I may need to get my head checked (although many would already agree).

Albert Barnes, in his commentary concerning Romans 1:13, uses John 15:16 as his confirmation verse to reveal that the fruit that we should bear as Christians are also the souls saved by preaching. He says about Romans 1:13:

"To have fruit means to obtain success in bringing men to the knowledge of Christ. Thus the Saviour said, (Joh 15:16) 'I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should

bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

He also said concerning John 15:16 about bearing fruit:

“That you should be rich in good works; *faithful and successful in spreading my gospel*. This was the great business to which they were set apart, and this they faithfully accomplished. *It may be added that this is the great end for which Christians are chosen.* It is not to be idle, or useless, or simply to seek enjoyment. It is to do good, and *to spread as far as possible* the rich temporal and spiritual blessings which the gospel is fitted to confer on mankind” (Emphasis added).

And here I thought I was alone in assuming that the fruit a Christian should bear should also be in the realm of evangelism. As far as Barnes is concerned, as well as I, Christians were chosen for evangelism! In other words, one of the “great ends” by which souls are saved is to preach the gospel!

One final commentator/theologian I would like to call to the stand is Matthew Henry. Concerning bringing forth fruit he says:

“The treasure of the gospel was committed to them, First, *That it might be propagated*: that *you should go*... from place to place all the world over, and *bring forth fruit*. They were ordained, *not to sit still*, but to go about, to be diligent in their work, and to lay out themselves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordained, not to beat the air, but to be instrumental in God’s hand for the *bringing of nations into obedience to Christ*, Rom. 1:13. Note, Those whom Christ ordains *should and shall be fruitful*; should labour, and shall not labour in vain” (Emphasis added).

In case you didn't catch my emphasis, Matthew Henry is telling us that we were ordained to preach the gospel, and to not commit apocity. Also, bringing forth fruit is something we were ordained to do, and if we are in Christ we *shall be fruitful*. Our fruitfulness is not just moral behavior; it is also everything that comes with becoming a new creature. Regular, purposeful, and consistent evangelism is an evidential fruit of our salvation. But not only is it evidential, it is *inevitable* if you are a true believer! Unless we are preaching the gospel to others we are not fulfilling our ordination to bear much fruit, thus we are not being true Christians. I have said this before: to be in an apocitic state is not just an indictment upon us as professing Christians, but apocity is an injunction by Satan that tramples underfoot the ordination of God to bear fruit in the world.

One more thought concerning this Scripture in John. Verse 16 is not only a verse that reveals that a Christian is to bear the fruit of evangelism, but it also emphasizes that we will have a permanent effect in the world. Whenever we preach the gospel, it is never without an effect. When you spread the gospel, whatever God has purposed to do with His word, as you are preaching, He will use it for His purpose! There is no such thing as "unsuccessful" or "ineffective" preaching as long as it's biblical! Jesus' words not only assure us in our calling to evangelism, but He guarantees that the fruit produced in the world by believers, *will* remain. What a glorious promise to know that those who evangelize will not labor in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Finally, I felt it necessary to close this section with a jewel from William Carey in his sermon *An Obligation of Christians* (Refer to Chapter 3, Section IX for full title). Before I came across this portion of his sermon, I was already

finished writing this book. I was not inspired in any way by William Carey, but nevertheless found a bottled message floating in the vast sea of time and cyber space echoing its way into an open heart. If I were to summarize this chapter using this man's words, it would be this:

“As our blessed Lord has required us to pray that His kingdom may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, it becomes us not only to express our desires of that event by the word, but to ***use every lawful method to spread*** the knowledge of His name. In order to do this, it is necessary that we should become in some measure acquainted with the religious state of the world. As this is the object we should be ***prompted*** to pursue, not only by the gospel of our Redeemer, but even by the feelings of humanity, so ***an inclination to conscientious activity*** therein would form one of the ***strongest proofs*** that we are the subject of grace and partakers of that spirit of universal benevolence...which appear so eminent in the character of God Himself” (Emphasis added).

Allow me to wrap this up in modern English. Our desire as Christians should be to *spread the word* because of our *desire* to see Christ's kingdom fulfilled on earth. We should use *every lawful method to preach* the gospel and should be *prompted to pursue* this work, not only because the gospel *requires* it, but also because it is the most *loving* thing you can do for your fellow man. *Conscientious activity* in it (in other words regular, consistent, and purposeful work) serves as the ***strongest proof*** that you are a *recipient of grace* and a have *partaken of the benevolence* that is so prominent in the character of God Himself. William Carey not only captures the truth taken from this chapter, but eerily seems to

summarize what I have been trying to say in this whole book thus far.

V. Fruit that Multiplies

In the sermon “True and False Conversions,” Ray Comfort makes a very biblical assertion that the parable of the sower is a key parable in understanding all parables. Jesus said it himself in Mark 4:13, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?” I would like to say that John 15:16 is another key in understanding all other parables. Since we understand that Christ has ordained Christians to produce the fruit of evangelism, it only makes sense now to look at all the verses in the Bible that talk about not only fruit, but any kind of spiritual increase. Mark 4 is not just a chapter that gives us an insight into the heart of man when the gospel is preached, but it also reveals to us the results after the preaching has made its impact on the heart. We will now explore the parable of the sower to reveal that bearing fruit, that is, the multiplication of converts through evangelism, is an inevitable product of the Christian walk.

When you read Mark 4, Matthew 13, and Luke 8, you see that the parable of the sower contains within it the revelation of what happens in the heart of man when the word of God is sown. I will try to refrain from getting too exegetical in this portion of the book because I can write another book if I am not careful. But, the main themes you can see in all of the gospels concerning this parable are the seed sown, the reaction or heart of the hearer, and the impact the seed has on the individual hearer. In a nut shell, all other hearers that are not “good ground” hearers are either those that reject the gospel immediately (Mark 4:15), are false converts that profess to be Christians for a little

while and then fall away (Luke 8:13), or are unfruitful because of worldly lusts (Matthew 13:22). It is the good ground hearer that I will intentionally focus on to reveal what happens when someone is saved by the preaching of the gospel.

Mark 4:20 says that the good ground hearer hears the word, receives it, then brings forth fruit. Verse 8 of this chapter says that the seed brought forth fruit and increased, and both Matthew and Luke confirm this. Now, there is one thing we need to understand about this concept of farming before I make my points. To increase thirtyfold, which is the least of the numbers given by Jesus, is an absolute miracle. That kind of increase happened very rarely. The only other time in Scripture we see one hundredfold increase is in Genesis 26:12. I am not saying that it cannot ever happen, but when you study this parable, Christ is making a point for the seemingly impossible. Christ ends this parable with a miraculous increase which all who were listening would say cannot happen, but that is the point! This is the power of God and the increase of His kingdom, not mere natural fruit. So now when you read this parable, and read of the increase that a hearer can produce, we know it must be talking about spiritual increase.

When you think about men like Charles Spurgeon, indeed we would say that God blessed his ministry one-hundred fold. I mean, it is pretty evident! There are others in history who have seemingly made “little” impact, but unless someone tells us about them, or we accidentally run into their name in our reading of some devotional, we don’t hear much about them. Nevertheless, when you read about these unsung heroes, you realize that they brought forth an increase that only God can accomplish.

When we see numbers like thirty, sixty, and one

hundredfold, we can rightly assume that God is helping us to see that some will be more fruitful than others. When we read this parable, we must understand that Jesus is using the natural to illustrate the spiritual. So when we hear of seed being sown, and seed germinating, what can we assume will happen with what you have sown once it grows up and is ready for harvest? That is contains more seed! And that seed will be used to produce fruit for the next rotation of planting, and so on and so forth. So my point here is that when a good soil hearer, that is, someone who has been converted by the preaching of the gospel, hears the word and has it growing in their hearts, the fruit of that plant will produce a harvest that is either 30, 60, or 100 fold! In other words, when a person is saved, their evangelistic success will be on three different levels.

As I have alluded to before, this does not mean that you will always see converts from those you have witnessed to. I have preached hundreds of times and I can count the professions of faith known to me with both my hands. However, if there were any who professed faith in Christ through the preaching of the gospel by my mouth, that is an increase that only God has the right to know about. I am not sure if I am a 30 or 60 fold producer of the gospel, but I will find out in Heaven. In the meantime, I will keep going out into the world and preaching the gospel.

This Scripture is not here for me to examine myself by to find out how much fruit (converts) I am producing when I preach. It is there to let me know that when I preach, there will not only be several reactions to the gospel, but that I will also produce fruit, whether I see it or not! And even if I am the least of the all the numbers in this Scripture, I still know that is a miracle by earthly standards of production. So I rejoice in the fact that I have been committed and ordained

to preach this marvelous gospel, which I was saved to preach. If I do not evangelize, I not only approve of the apocity that is so prevalent in our western culture today, I am also contradicting the nature of a true believer.

Of course, there are some objections I have heard from others that bring up men of God, like Noah, who never saw a single convert. To that I say, amen! I see Noah as an excellent example of faithfulness despite no *recorded* success. However, that in no way contradicts what I am saying. Noah preached, as we ought to, because he feared God. This should be our motivation and aim when we preach, but not only because we fear Him, but because we love Him. However, when Christians preach, if we never *see* a single convert ever come forward because of our preaching, that doesn't mean converts are not being saved and you are not contributing to it!

You have to remember that Christ has *promised* evangelistic success to Christians and has indeed ordained that we will bear fruit; whether it is the success of faithfully sowing seeds or of reaping converts coming forward to be saved. The problem lies with those who are becoming frustrated because they don't *see* professions of faith underneath their preaching, and they begin to resort to man centered means of bringing people to faith (ex: altar calls, sinners prayer, and decisionism). So when we bring up the fact that Noah never *saw* (that we know of) a single convert, this should serve as an encouragement for preachers to be faithful despite what we see with our eyes. However, any preacher of the gospel must realize that according to Mark 4, John 15:16, and all others that talk about bearing fruit, God will save whom He will underneath our preaching, and that sometimes He does so out of our line of sight. Remember, some plant, some water, but who gives the increase? God! (1

Corinthians 3:7-8) And if both he that sows and he that reaps rejoices together (John 4:36-38), why does it matter if you never reap? You are still adding to the increase of the kingdom, right? You are still being a faithful fruit bearer by contributing to the salvation of souls aren't you? Yes and yes!

Vl. Parable of the Talents

As I mentioned earlier, John 15:16 gives us insight that the fruit that Christians bear is also evangelistic. We are not only committing apocry when we do not fulfill the great commission given to us by Christ, but we also walk contrary to the true nature of a Christian by not going out into the world and bearing evangelistic fruit. The idea here is that Christians spread the seed of God through the preaching of the gospel and God receives a harvest from His faithful laborers. The problem is that we have taken many of the parables of God, and have made them so man-centered and so selfishly personal, we seem to have lost the understanding that most of Christ's parables not only spoke of evangelism, but reveals that those who don't witness regularly are fruitless, lazy, and wicked; the complete opposite of what a Christian is to be. Let's explore one of them now.

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 is one parable that has been twisted beyond comprehension. This Scripture is definitely not dealing with "talents" like we mean it today. It is not talking about natural or spiritual ability, as some would make it, but it is talking about money and profit in spiritual terms! To each servant, 1-5 talents were given each according to his ability (v15). Then, when the master left, he expected them to multiply the responsibility given to them. If this were not true, why then in verse 19 was he coming back to settle accounts with them? This text seems to insinuate that when the master gave these talents, there was

a strong *implication* that they were to do something with them. Sound familiar? (Chapter 5, sections VI & VII) When the master returned he found that those that increased his talents were faithful, meanwhile, the servant that did not gain profit was called lazy and wicked (v26)! Not only that, the servant was cast into outer darkness (v30). In other words, he was thrown into Hell!

When you study this a little more, you can see that the excuse the wicked servant gives is not just a bad one, but also an insight to how the talents were supposed to be multiplied. First, the servant accuses the master of being too hard, or in some translations, “austere.” This is a servant who really doesn’t know Christ (the master in this equation), for if he did, austerity would not be the word he would use to describe my benevolent Lord. Nevertheless, he goes on to say that the master “reaps where he has not sown and gathers where he did not scatter seed.” Interesting. Even though we can say that God may not now, in the physical body of Christ, come down and scatter seed, He is still entitled to any gain because it is His seed! It is His field! They are His servants (well, some are true and others are not)! And talents given or talents gained are all His! So in order to grasp what this servant was lazy at doing, we must look to his excuse. What was it? Scattering seed! He was lazy in not multiplying the talent because he did not use it to increase crops, thus not making any profit from the crops so that he might make more talents for his master! This is why the master says that at least he could have deposited the money in the bank to increase interest since he was not going to use the talent to increase the harvest. “If you are going to be lazy,” he says, “you should have at least put it somewhere where I still could have profited from it! You wicked and lazy servant!” The money was supposed to be used to buy the seeds, to

work the field, to plant the seed, to receive the harvest, and to make profit from the harvest!

So many within our congregations today are like this wicked servant. They have been given immense responsibility by having the gospel committed to them, but the problem is that most of them are not truly saved to begin with. So when they are given this Heavenly responsibility (metaphorically, the talent) to go out and preach the gospel, so that they make a profit for God, what do they do? They put it in the ground and forget about it (v18). They do nothing with it! Then, when Jesus returns to receive an account of what was given, that person who did not honor God even with the "little" he has been given, will be judged as wicked and lazy and will be cast into Hell because he was not only apocitic, but proven to be a fraud. Remember, that judgment begins at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17).

Still, some do not see this Scripture this way. Some would say that this Scripture is dealing with Israel and how God committed to them the oracles of God and his law, yet they did nothing with it. I don't have any problem with this assertion, but how is that any different than when God commands us to preach the gospel? Sure, the Jews could be the focus of this parable, but if God were to judge a Jew for being lazy and wicked by not bearing fruit or increasing his talents, how much more a Gentile? Are we separated from keeping God's commandments? Do only the Jews receive judgment for their rejection of the gospel and failure to increase God's kingdom? Of course not! Any who have been saved by Christ have also been committed to the work of God's kingdom. Also we, who are not Jews by nature, still receive the blessing of God's promises because we are grafted into the tree (Romans 11)! As a matter of fact, Jesus warned the Pharisees, concerning the Jews rejecting Him,

how He will give his vineyard to another husbandman that will give the vineyard owner (God) the fruit that is owed to Him when the season comes (Matt 21:41-43). That means the Gentiles would have their season to yield fruit to God that He is looking for from His gospel! Oh, how I wish this would sink deep into your ears! If God spared not the unbelieving Jews for rejecting the gospel and bearing no fruit, how much more Gentiles if we also do not bear fruit unto God? If any of us are professing to love Christ, let us take heed lest we fall!

We cannot just share the apocitic response of the lazy servant and call it quits. We need to see a key factor in the faithfulness of the *obedient* servants and behold how they were faithful. When you look in verses 15 -16, you see a picture of the great commission when the “the man” (or should I say Jesus) handed out the responsibilities to each recipient. Depending on the version you use, you will see a word in verse 15 or 16 that says “immediately.” I have only seen two versions of the Bible place the word immediately at the beginning of verse 16; the New American Standard Bible® and American Standard Version. All others placed the word *immediately* in verse 15 to depict how the master of the servants went out right away after divvying up the talents. Nevertheless, I do find it extremely interesting that the faithful servants in these versions *immediately* went out after receiving their respective talents and got to work. If these versions are correct in placing this word in verse 16 rather than 15, then that brings to light that the servants were successful in their obedience because they *immediately* got to work! Dr. John MacArthur calls this word a “key word” to reveal the *fruit* of “inward salvation.” I could not agree more! True Christians, when they are born again, immediately getting to work for the kingdom of God is sufficient evidence that they are saved. Sure, some will be revealed as false

converts and eventually fall away, but one cannot be truly saved and not get to work immediately.

Ever wondered why some are excited about evangelism and increasing God's kingdom while others are not? There can be a multitude of reasons, and many I have covered in this book. Yet, the one thing we must remember is that this parable of the talents reveals to us that God's faithful servants are those who get to work after they have received the commission. Inevitably, we will be disobedient at times, but that does not deny the fact that, more often than not, we will be faithful with the talent that God has bestowed upon us!

I am afraid that the one of the reasons why we are not adamant about preaching this kind of hard truth is because it is so offensive to the ears. So instead of preaching it, we accept the illusion that not everybody is on the same "level" of sanctification as others, when levels has nothing to do with it. I have seen men and women (both in secular occupations and within Christendom) do things immediately because they were motivated and convinced. And when you see them work, you clearly know they need some guidance. However, they are still taking the initiative and doing it! Even if they are not yet properly trained or equipped, they still take action! Being on a "different level" has nothing to do with *immediately* going out into the world and sharing the gospel with strangers or loved ones! Even so, this parable explicitly says that the Master gives you responsibility as you have *ability*. Therefore, you are totally without excuse because God did not give you this responsibility just so you can make up excuses why you could not do it. If this parable does not convince you that you are to be faithful by going out into God's field, and increase His profits by being busy until He comes and requires an account, then I guess you will

continue in apocity and be found a lazy and wicked servant in the end.

VII. Evidential Fruit from False Prophets

The Bible repeatedly warns Christians that false teachers and prophets are wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15), and that they are hidden among us making us unclean when we are not aware (Luke 11:44; Numbers 19:16). They pose themselves as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15), meanwhile they make men slaves of corruption (2 Peter 2:19). Yet, the Bible has also revealed that we can know who they are by their *fruit* (Matthew 7:16). What is that fruit? *Character, creed, and converts.*

When we speak about a person's character, the number one thing that is often pointed out is their *moral* character. Even in Scripture, there are a variety of examples, good and bad, that theologians for centuries have dissected. The immoral character of one who is a false teacher is one that Scripture reveals as one of their fruits. When the Scriptures speak of false teachers it points them out as hypocritical, sensual, covetous, and deceitful, to name a few (2 Peter 2). And if these fruits are evidence that they are not true preachers, let alone truly regenerate believers, how much more should the fruit of the Spirit be an evidential sign that someone is a true believer and a preacher of the gospel of God? There is more.

When we identify a false teacher, his *creed* is just as important. He/she can have a "moral" lifestyle yet teach theology that is heretical (for example, some the deceptive doctrines of apocity described previously). This fruit of a false teacher is a little harder to identify because often times they mix truth with lies, which can take a while for a new convert to discern. However, the Bible assures us, if we are

truly saved, we will not continue to follow false teachers (John 10:5). Yet, there are theologies that false teachers will continue to teach that are damnable heresies, and they will be known by their doctrinal fruit, which the Bible says are from demonic sources (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 11:15). If this is true concerning false teachers and their creed/theology, how much more genuine believers and their creed? If one is truly a Christian, they will teach gospel-centered theology and will declare the words of God in accordance with the Scriptures (1 John 4:6; Isaiah 8:20), not their own. This, of course, does not mean that every professing Christian is infallible in all their current theological stances, but it does mean that they will possess the Spirit to understand truth from error in accordance with *the gospel*. Anything that minimizes or infringes upon the gospel of Christ, a true believer will not take heed to (John 10:5). As a false teacher is known by the fruit of their creed, so a true believer will be known by their creed.

Lastly, the fruit of converts is a way false teachers are known. As nature teaches, everything produces after its own kind. Humans produce humans, birds produce birds, and so false teaching produces false converts. I used to believe that it was possible to maintain a profession as a Christian and remain a follower of these teachers, but I soon found out that the Bible does not support that. It is only when the followers of false teaching have a revelation of truth concerning what the Scriptures truly teach that they get saved, or begin the process of separation. Many may disagree with this point, but they will be hard pressed to find a Scripture that supports the false ideology that a true believer will *continually* follow a false teacher if their character, creed, and converts are not godly (See John 10).

In any case, it still stands to reason that false teachers

will produce fruit in the form of converts. The kinds of converts they produce will usually be like them if God doesn't intervene. Truly, the Scriptures teach that false teachers are only popular because of their followers (2 Timothy 4:3). It is only because of them that false teachers prosper! And if this is true, that false teachers can produce converts, how much more those who are sincerely in the faith? If false teachers can bear fruit, and bad fruit at that, in the form of converts, isn't it reasonable to assume that true believers will do the same? How is it possible that Satan can aggressively plant bad seed, but those who are considered saints do not (Matthew 13:24-30)? This is a contradiction! If every tree is known by its fruit (converts included), if we bear no fruit – by this I really mean the evangelism which contributes to it – what does that say about us?

Metaphorically speaking, all men are a certain type of tree, and what you produce should be a product of the biblical gospel. If you are of Christ, and preach His gospel regularly, consistently, and purposefully, then you will bear fruit just as Christ promised and your fruit will remain. If you are disobedient, and are in a state of apocity, you will not only bear no fruit, but bad fruit will continue to abound and your damnation will be just.

VIII. Experience, Feelings, and Sanctification

Even though this section could find itself in good company with Chapter three's "Excuses, Excuses," the objections I receive concerning evangelism being a fruit of a true believer is often followed with, "Well, when I was saved...", or, "I feel as though...", and the ultimate, "We are all at different levels of sanctification."

You can fill in the blank with a multitude of experiences when dealing with one's own salvation. You can

also be sure someone will use their own experience to try and trump any argument made as to why every true Christian will evangelize. However, the simplest way to refute anyone's experience as a justification for apocity is to ask, "Does that match the Scripture?" This is difficult for many to receive who want to get away with not preaching the gospel through any medium. But, as I mentioned concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Chapter 5, experience does not trump Scripture. Just because you may have been "saved" with no incentive or motivation to go out and preach the gospel, does that mean your experience is indeed the biblical reality? Does your lack of evangelistic motivation in the past or present override scriptural truth? If a professing believer tells me that when they first received salvation they did not have a desire to preach, or they did not have a desire for a long time, my response would be, "But what does the Scripture teach?"; especially since we looked at John 15:16 and how Scripture alone validates that true believers are *ordained* and *chosen* for evangelism. Does their experience matter in light of God's Word? Nope! Does that mean they were never saved? Maybe. Does it mean they were, and possibly still are, committing an atrocious sin if they try to justify their apocity? Absolutely! No matter what your experience may be, if your experience is not blessed by the truth of Scripture, then your experience needs to be reevaluated and modified with God's word or thrown in the trash!

The second reaction I get is the matter of a person's feelings. Because they *feel* they are not gifted, or because they *feel* they are not required to witness, or they *feel* as though God understands their weaknesses, they do not think John 15:16, or any other Scripture dealing with witnessing, applies to them. Case in point, there was an article I read in

an online blog that I think rings true to many out there marching underneath this tattered banner of feelings. A young woman was explaining to her subscribers that she *felt* that evangelism just didn't fit her personality/temperament, and that she would cringe when someone would preach that we all are mandated to evangelize. She explained further how she *felt* like she wasn't a genuine Christian because she didn't *feel* as though she had the courage and temperament to do so. Finally, she concludes her dilemma by declaring what a relief it is to know that you don't have to go out and evangelize regularly as a Christian because God has given everyone in the body different gifts (she needs to read Chapter 4 of this book).

If you notice a few things about her micro-blog, she revealed some things about her feelings that really condemn her. One, she made temperament her moral compass, not Scripture. Two, she would get convicted about not preaching the gospel by "cringing" underneath the exhortation to do so, but found comfort in the erroneous theology that not everyone is gifted for evangelism. And finally, she allowed her feelings to justify her disobedience before God, not actual truth. Just as I stated with experiences, feelings must also be kept in check underneath the inspiration of Scripture. How this young lady responds to the sin of apocrypha is how many respond within western Christianity today. However, if I were to say that I *feel* as though this young woman was sinning, and that if she continues to do so in this manner she would be manifesting her unregenerate nature, I would be labeled unkind and unloving. On the other hand, because her justifications are founded on man-centered feelings, even without scriptural support, she will be heralded as a true evangelical and an example for all Christendom! Hypocrisy!

The last thing I will deal with is the response of

sanctification. Many (and I do mean many) come at me with the rebuttal that everyone is at a different level of sanctification, and that I am wrong to assume that other professing believers are possibly lost because they do not evangelize. The problem with this argument is twofold. One, they are using sanctification as an excuse for sinful behavior. If someone commits murder and calls themselves a Christian, would you say they are at a different level of sanctification too? I use this as a hyperbole because, as I stated in Chapter 1, for some reason we think apocity is not a big deal or, at the very least, a sin. So when we use the sanctification excuse, are we implying it is okay to allow this kind of behavior? Shouldn't we rebuke or correct others if they are unrepentant or disobedient? While it is true that everyone who is a Christian is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, are we to place our necessary and loving rebukes for heinous sins on the backburner simply because we think someone is at a different level? This leads me to the second problem with this argument. Since when do different levels excuse any sin? If your brother or sister in Christ is sinning in any fashion, you should try and find a way to approach them with love and concern about it. Whether they are a new-born recruit, or a seasoned soldier, we need to approach all believers with this problem of apocity and provoke one another to this good work while it is called today (Hebrews 3:13; 10:24). The doctrine of sanctification *should not* be used to justify apocity. To stay true to the spirit of sanctification, it would be more faithful to confront than cower. Allowing someone to continue in apocity simply because they might be at a different level of sanctification is not only a wrong understanding of a Christian's role in sanctification, but it is unfaithful. Inappropriately using sanctification as a cover up for what the Scripture says concerning evangelism being a

legitimate fruit of salvation is to take a black permanent marker over John 15:16, and other Scriptures, and pretend that sanctification does not also include the Holy Spirit's work in provoking His people to preach the gospel (John 14:26; Acts 1:8).

IX. The Conclusion of the Whole Matter

As we approach the dawn of this section and reach the morning of our final chapter, it is important for us all to remember everything written concerning apocity. When we look at the state of affairs in our local churches, our neighborhoods, our city, our nation, and the majority of western civilization, I can confidently say that one of the reasons why lawlessness is abounding is because the local churches have silenced themselves from *within*. The goats that we have birthed forth over the past few decades because of the false gospel we have preached have not only caused immense sin to be accepted in our churches, but they have also worked hard at silencing the true believers of God in evangelism by discouraging them, reviling them, ostracizing them, and even worse, persecuting them. This of course should be of no surprise when you consider that 2 Timothy 3 is talking about the visible church in the last days, and how the persecution mentioned in v12 is also speaking about professors of the faith persecuting true believers (v5). Nevertheless, those of us who are reading this should consider that the problems we are facing today are largely due to the culture of apocitic silence that prefers to live comfortably than to confront a godless generation that is dying in their sin.

When you consider the abundance of sin that apocity has brought forth, we must also look at the reality of why our churches are closing, why local church-planting in America is

failing, why the world seems to no longer take the church seriously, and why false preaching continues to abound; because we are not opening our mouths! Churches end up with a cluster of old people together that eventually die off and close their doors because they were duped into apocity. If God closes a church for any reason, let it not be because they were *negligent* in preaching the gospel. Furthermore, church plants in America are complete failures because they forget that the first works of establishing God's kingdom on Earth is to go out into the world and make disciples.

Church planting is not inviting church members from other locations to start a church in a different location (although helpful only if they go out as a congregation to preach). A church plant is when a man (and if God allows, a woman) steps out in faith, goes out with a Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit, witnesses to strangers, and does as their master Christ does and seeks and saves that which was lost! Then, when a convert is won, they not only continue to teach them everything Christ taught, but both the neophyte(s)* and the teacher will go out *together* and continue to preach and bear fruit for the gospel.

Furthermore, the world no longer takes local churches seriously because those within the pews don't take the gospel seriously. We seem to think that we can be saved and not have to open our mouths for Christ. And that is one of the reasons why there is no longer a wide spread sense of urgency to share the gospel in our current culture because many professors do not think it requires urgency. Therefore, the world does not sense the urgency to repent because the local churches are not urgent to present the message, thus

* Neophyte – new convert. Used in 1 Timothy 3:6 when Paul exhorts Timothy to pick pastors/elders that are not new in the faith. Some translations have the word “novice.”

we are not taken seriously! I know that sinners think the gospel is already foolishness, and those that are perishing consider us fools, but to think that our message is not urgent enough to share not only exacerbates our apocity, but it affirms to the world that the church has nothing important to say.

Finally, because we are not so eager to open our mouths in public, false preaching continues to abound. How are lost sinners supposed to know what is the true gospel of God in comparison to the message of the many false gospels and cults that are out there if we continue to behave apocitically concerning evangelism? How is the populace supposed to be confronted with truth when we play with it in our local churches like a stuffed animal, but do not proclaim it in our streets? It is no surprise that false preaching abounds, because the majority of congregations have taken themselves out of the fight! Thus proving themselves unworthy of even calling themselves a Christian denomination, let alone having a Bible, seeing many saints before us have bled and died in order for us to have access to the gospel! I am not sure if G. Campbell Morgan really said this, but the statement is true nevertheless, "To call a man evangelical who is not evangelistic is an utter contradiction."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the prince of preachers, was one of the most prestigious examples of a man pastoring a church that was highly evangelistic. Most love C.H. Spurgeon because he is popular, until they come across quotes like this one concerning evangelism, then they disdain him. He said in his March of 1837 *Sword and the Trowl* article:

"If Jesus is precious to you, *you will not be able to keep your good news to yourself*; you will be whispering it into your child's ear; you will be telling it to your husband; you

will be earnestly imparting it to your friend; without the charms of eloquence you will be more than eloquent; your heart will speak, and your eyes will flash as you talk of his sweet love. *Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostor.* Recollect that. You either try to spread abroad the kingdom of Christ, or else you do not love him at all. *It cannot be that there is a high appreciation of Jesus and a totally silent tongue about him.* Of course I do not mean by that, that those who use the pen are silent: they are not. And those who help others to use the tongue, or spread that which others have written, are doing their part well: but that man who says, "I believe in Jesus," *but does not think enough of Jesus ever to tell another about him, by mouth, or pen, or tract, is an impostor*" (Emphasis added).

If I were to translate what Spurgeon is implying here, it would be that he seems to understand that being a professing Christian, yet being an apocrite provides evidence that someone is not a Christian. Even down to the very act of putting pen to paper or giving a tract would be sufficient proof that someone loves Jesus as much as they say they do, and holds him in "high appreciation." So what would the opposite imply for someone that does not do any of these? As he said, they are an imposter!

When we get to the conclusion of this whole matter, what is the last thing Christ taught before he ascended back to the Father in the great commission? Preach the gospel! Not only are we to preach, but we are to teach new disciples everything Christ taught, right? But do we? Not really. For some reason we leave out the last thing that Christ taught, and that is *go!* When we do teach that we should go, it is sounds like, "You should because Christ said so, and if you don't you're just being disobedient, but that's okay because

the majority of people don't evangelize anyway."

When was the last time you saw evangelism being a mandatory discipline within a discipleship course? If you did see it, how much time was spent on it? When was the last time you participated in a study on holiness that included evangelism? When was the last time you heard a sermon deal with evangelism being a fruit that a Christian should produce? Better yet, when was the last time you heard evangelism be more than just inviting people to church? As I asked in the beginning of this book, when was the last time you heard not evangelizing was a sin? When it comes to teaching our local churches everything Christ taught, the modern churches have become failures! Failures! If we are going to be faithful Christians, we are to go out into the world, make disciples (if the Lord blesses us with some), and teach them *everything* Christ taught, and that includes going out into the world and sharing the gospel with every creature. This is not only the pastor's job, but every professing believer! If a new convert professes to love Christ, and is not bearing witness, or better yet, if they do not desire to bear witness to the truth of the gospel, you can confidently mark that person as still dead in their trespasses and sins, because only dead people keep their mouths shut concerning the living gospel.

Chapter 7: Passion Fruit

Jeremiah 20:9 “Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.’ But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not.”

– The Prophet Jeremiah

In this final chapter, it is my desire that you, reader, would find encouragement and edification on how to cultivate a desire to preach the gospel and kill this ugly sin of apocity. If you have read all the way to this point, and you aren't just critiquing this book, then you are probably on your way to a healthy desire to preach the gospel of Christ more consistently than you already are, or you want to repent of your apocity. I pray that you will be blessed in the instruction you are about to read concerning how to cultivate passionate fruit in your life for the gospel.

He Will Dig Around It and Fertilize It

There is a parable in the New Testament that Christ gives concerning a barren fig tree that bears no fruit (Luke 13:6-9). It is incredibly short, but it is meant to depict Israel's fruitlessness at the time of Christ's arrival. In this parable, you have a picture of the owner of the vineyard wanting to cut down this barren fig tree because it is not bearing any fruit, so he feels it is just wasting space that he could use for something else that will bear fruit (v7). When he consults his gardener with his plans to cut it down, the keeper *pleads* with the owner of the vineyard to give it more time. The keeper also says that he will cultivate the tree by working the

soil and then fertilizing it. If after that, there is no fruit, then he says the owner can cut it down, but his goal is to get it to bear fruit.

The picture here is Christ's faithfulness to intercede on behalf of His people; not only Jews, but Gentiles also. God is well known for His long-suffering (2 Peter 3:9), and Jesus is depicted as being one of the persons of the trinity who makes intercession for us (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). The point is that God is gracious, and He will forgive your sin of apocity. The fact that you are reading this book is affirmation that Jesus Christ is cultivating the ground of your heart so that you might go out and bear fruit. If you are saved, Jesus promised that you would bear fruit and that He would be the Husbandman who would make more fruit in your life possible (John 15:2). If you have realized that you are not saved, the parable applies to you too. If your heart breaks, not just for the apocity, but perhaps other sins that so easily surround you and take you for a ride, you too can be a fruitful fig tree if you repent and trust Christ to save you. Jesus in this parable is declaring His faithfulness to spare fruitless men or nations by presenting the gospel and convicting hearts. However, the B clause to this is that if you continue to bear no fruit, God will cut you down and cast you into the fire (Matthew 3:10). I pray that the death of Christ would be enough for you to not only desire salvation, but also that His resurrection would strike you with a fiery burden for others who do not know Him as Lord.

II. The Hardest Part

Solomon was a wise king endowed by God to be the wisest man that ever lived. One day, he was faced with a judgment brought to him by two harlots concerning which

child belonged to whom. Just like in Judge Judy, each side presented their case about why the living child was theirs. However, this was a hard case to prove because of the simple fact that each testimony could not be proven, one way or the other. They didn't have DNA testing in those days, so they came to the king for judgment. It was at this time that Solomon was able to successfully point out the true mother from the imposter by charging the court to divide the child in half in an effort to reveal who the true mother was. The real mother had *compassion* (1 Kings 3:26) on the child because it was her own, so she would rather let the imposter have it so that the precious life could be spared. On the other hand, the mother who stole the child exhibited *apathy*, and for some reason didn't care as long as neither of them could have the child.

Despite the numerous ways you can apply this passage, one thing is for sure, the real mother was revealed because of her emotional attachment to the child. Only an affectionate mother (whether biological or not) should have rightful place to raise a child. It was this open expression of care and concern that allowed all to see who this child belonged to. And I believe with all my heart that the one thing we must do to repent of our apocity, which is also the hardest part, is to realize our apathy concerning the mandate of the great commission. If we are to start moving forward in the direction of evangelism, we must first examine ourselves in light of Scripture, repent of the sin of apocity, and pray that God not only gives us a heart for the lost, but also a yearning to preach the gospel at all costs, even if it costs us everything! There are many within our church walls seemingly content to sit through boring sermons, group bible studies that have no meat, and shallow fellowship talking largely about temporal things, meanwhile, there are others

who are truly Spirit-filled who are not satisfied with the current state of affairs and go out, without an ounce of apathy, and share the glorious gospel of our Savior!

It seems that the ones who have been brought forth from the gospel are impregnated by the gospel, and cannot not help but speak the joys found in Christ. And just like the harlot's reaction toward her child, those who love the gospel would rather see the gospel live by being boldly preached in this world than to see it silenced by the sword of apocity. As I said in previous chapters, God could send the gospel by the mouth of angels if He chose to do so, but what a *privilege* it is to be a herald of the gospel of peace in Christ Jesus! If we are to express apathy toward preaching the gospel, we are just like the lying harlot and are proving to the world that we are not carriers of the Heavenly message! Let this not be named among you if you are a follower of Jesus Christ! Do the first and hardest thing and repent of your apathy! Reach out to God in Heaven and ask Him to spark a fire in you to preach like you never have before. And if you are not truly born again, plead with the LORD to save you from your sin and teach you how to minister to others underneath the banner of the gospel. If you can do this first thing, the domino effect will passionately affect all other portions of your life, and the instruction you will receive to combat apocity will come easy (as long as you keep yourself from sin).

III. Regular, Consistent, Purposeful (RCP Principle)

Throughout this book, I have said multiple times that you must preach the gospel “regularly, consistently, and purposefully” in order for you to be faithful in preaching the gospel. This RCP principle will not only cultivate the seed of evangelism that is already inside of you if you are a genuine believer, but it will keep your fire for the gospel burning,

even if at times it feels like you are just running off fumes. In order to explain why I think this principle will keep you on fire, I must define each word and expound on why I believe this principle is necessary to be obedient, not just to be a faithful witness, but also in all aspects of our Christian walk.

When you hear the word *regular*, a lot of things come to mind. Some things can be shared with others; meanwhile other things should not be shared with others. In any case, this word depicts a general measurement of practice that occurs *frequently* or *rhythmically*. In my own words, regularity captures the idea of *predictability*. If you are to be a faithful witness, you must establish times and practices that will cause you to be regular in preaching the gospel. Along with the other two words in our principle, being regular in your witness gives you a general understanding of active, not passive, evangelism that you should be *disciplining* yourself to do. However, unlike the other words, being regular in your witness is unique in that it involves developing an evangelistic *habit* over a period of time.

We are regular in many matters in our life. We wake up at certain times, we schedule certain events a certain way, we think about situations with a certain pattern of logic, and the list goes on! Regularity in our witness is simply finding out how to make evangelism a habit. For instance, I am regular in my witness by bringing tracts with me everywhere I go. I think every Christian should always take tracts with them everywhere! They are great to have around whenever you run into those daily situations where you don't have enough time to speak to someone about the gospel. Another helpful practice is finding where I can go to regularly share my faith with strangers. I want to make it a habit to go somewhere I know people will be so that I can pass out tracts, one-on-one witness, or open-air preach. Lastly, though

certainly not exhaustively, I regularly *search* for opportunities to share my faith at work. I do this with cards, gifts, good deeds, and many other means so that I might find an open door to share the good news of Christ. I am regular in these things because I have *purposefully* made it my goal to be so. After a while, you will do certain things so habitually, it becomes second nature (although at times apocity will still have its moments).

To be *consistent* is a quality that is very similar to regularity, but I chose this word to illustrate a firm, unchanging conviction to *continue* in evangelism. The word consistent is from the Latin which means to “stand firm.” By way of example, if I were to throw a stone into a river, even though, over time, the water may erode the rock because of its constant beating upon it, the rock will remain consistent until the very last mineral. In this world, as you go out to preach, you will eventually erode, get old, and die. But, if you can remain evangelistically consistent until the very end, that is a true picture of a faithful witness for Christ. The Bible calls this perseverance, the military calls it resilience, but whatever you want to call it, make it your purpose to remain *unchanged* in your regularity. There will be times when you will be tempted, and even yield to the temptation to not be as consistent as you used to be. However, to combat the tides that will flow your way, you must pray that God gives you the consistency you need to *persevere* in preaching the gospel despite what may occur in your life.

To give you an example of how consistency should be practiced, we must travel through a memory of mine only known to a limited number of individuals in my life about an incident that occurred to me when I was in England. I and my wife decided to adopt my sister-in-law and take her under our wing because of the trouble she was facing in Chicago. To

keep a long story short, over the course of a couple of years, things went downhill with her attitude, fast. We used various modes of discipline to restore her, but she soon rebelled to a sad degree. She eventually filed a legal complaint against me to my supervisors that led to an investigation of child abuse. I was heart-broken. All I could think about, which gave me comfort at the time, was that God was sovereign and that I was glad He saved me from my sin. I did not know that the next 7 months were going to be the most painful yet blessed months of my life! One of the reasons I was blessed was because I still *remained consistent* in my evangelism despite what was occurring in my life. In the end, all charges were unfounded. Furthermore, even though I could have fallen into many moments of despair, sin, or apocity, preaching the gospel consistently was one of the many things God used to reveal His power in my life and to keep me faithful to Him. By focusing on others going to Hell and my desire to glorify God, my situation became very small by comparison. This is what I mean by remaining consistent after you have established some regularity, by persevering in your preaching despite *anything* that goes on in your life.

The last part of the RCP principle is being *purposeful* in sharing your faith. Nothing punches apocity in the face harder than resolving to share your faith purposefully, not accidentally. Without deciding to witness with a willful purpose, regularity and consistency lose their meaning. Did you catch that? I will say it again. Without deciding to evangelize willfully, being regular and consistent doesn't happen! To be purposeful is an act of the will. It is a *determination* to be a hunter for opportunities and cultivate an everlasting hunger to preach. It is pry open the doors of cowardice with the crow bar of *tenacity*. To be purposeful in your witness is to not allow any excuse to get in your way of

sharing your faith. Without being purposeful in sharing the gospel, you are not only more prone to apocity, but you will be hard pressed to know what it truly means to be obedient to any command that God gives you. Once you see how the interwoven cord of the RCP principle relates to the prevention of apocity, the last thing we must do is reveal why you really can't be obedient without it.

IV. The Law of Obedience

The RCP principle is a something that I developed in order to understand a sociological law that I think I may have discovered. I call it, the law of obedience. This law is built upon the foundation of the RCP principle to reveal that human beings are required to exhibit certain behaviors in order for us to display the act of obedience. There seems to be certain expectations that are hard wired within our nature that we look for in others in order to affirm obedience.

When you raise your children, you expect to be obeyed immediately and without grumbling. As parents, it should be our desire to see our kids be obedient with joy! One problem I find is that, often times, the expectations of parents are often not placed upon their own conscience. Nevertheless, the illustration of wanting our kids to be obedient fits perfectly into the RCP principle, thus the law of obedience. If you want your kids to do something you told them to, if it requires them to do it more than once (for example, house chores), would you want them to be regular in doing so? If they are not, would they be disobedient? Would you want them to be consistent? How about purposeful in achieving your expectations? Yes, yes, and yes! Even as a supervisor, a teacher, or anywhere you are given authority to carry out commands, you expect regularity, consistency, and purposefulness from the individual to

whom you have assigned a task. Anything outside of that would render you or them untrustworthy or undependable. The Bible compares anyone untrustworthy of delivering a message as foolish (Proverbs 26:6), lazy (Proverbs 10:26), and wicked (Proverbs 13:17). However, a faithful messenger is refreshing to those that send him (Proverbs 25:13). So let's understand that in order to fulfill the great commission and be faithful messengers, meanwhile avoid apocity, we must discipline ourselves to share our faith regularly, consistently, and purposefully.

A bonus word that can be used to augment the law of obedience was mentioned back in Chapter 6 concerning the parable of the talents – *immediacy*. Many have heard the cliché, “Delayed obedience is disobedience.” Although procrastination in doing what someone asks of you is essentially better than not doing it, it is even better when you do it immediately! When there is a delay, a slow shuffle of the feet, and even an audible whimper of reluctance, there tends to be a natural feeling of being disrespected. As a supervisor, I cannot recite the countless times I have had to deal with the lack of urgency when delegating tasks to subordinates. Sometimes there is something going on in their life that would not necessarily be counted as a disrespectful lack of urgency, just distraction. However, more often than not, it is because they are lazy, untrustworthy, and lack the desire to do immediately what you ask of them. After all, it is about them; and they will do it when they want, on their time, etc. This kind of attitude is projected more and more among our youth because of the individualistic culture we live in, and unfortunately there are professing Christians that carry this same attitude when it comes to evangelism. Therefore, in order for believers to fulfill the law of obedience toward God, and the great commission, we must build our evangelistic

efforts upon the foundation of the RCP principle and crown our obedience with immediacy.

V. Immerse Yourself in the Culture

Ever tried to learn a new language? Depending on who you are, it can be really rough and often demotivating when you don't see progress, and when you don't get to practice very often. Linguists will tell you that the best way to learn any language is *immersion*. That is diving right into a culture by which you are forced to learn the language and speak it all the time. Even though getting your feet wet by learning the basics is helpful, you must jump in and get fully submerged! Evangelism is just like this! The best way to learn is by doing. The only way you can see the Bible come alive before your eyes is not by merely hearing sermons weekly, but by walking what the Word of God teaches. If you want to know the truths of the gospel more intimately, the only way to do so is to go out and share the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, biblically, the way Jesus did! If you want to discover more doctrinal truths, preach the gospel! If you want a more intimate prayer life, evangelize! If you want sweeter fellowship with the saints, go out *together* and seek the lost!

Another thing you want to do is to link up with someone who already has some experience underneath their belt, and understands how to present the gospel biblically. Iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17), and going out with others will not only introduce you to a fellowship sweeter than any sermon can produce, but it will also reveal how one saint can provoke another to do things they never thought possible (Hebrews 10:24). In other words, if at all possible, immerse yourself with someone else! Share the experiences with each other, develop a spiritual bond that only the gospel

can create, and watch the evangelistic fire burn brighter and hotter!

The final thing you need to do when it comes to the concept of immersion is to watch lots and lots of witnessing videos to get familiar with the different kinds of people you will encounter. *The Way of the Master* has hundreds of videos, DVD's, and study material that will help you to be well on your way to being immersed. When you watch the videos, picture yourself talking to the person they are interviewing and focus on the answers given by the interviewer. This will help you develop your personal understanding and will make you more courageous in witnessing encounters. But don't stop here! Listen to sermons that are gospel-centered and God-centered! This will help you to trust God more and to see that salvation is of the LORD, and not of us. Finally, like Nike, just do it! Don't fall into the trap of listening to sermons, watching videos, and preparing yourself, and then end it there. There is nothing worse than for a fireman to sit through tutorials on how to pull someone out of the fire yet fails to go out and do it. And so, there is nothing more distressing than a professing Christian to hear the gospel, train for evangelism, then fall into a state of apocity. Immerse yourself today!

VI. Always Carry Tracts

Always having gospel tracts on your person is one of the best ways to keep you from being apocitic. Put gospel tracts in your regular budget for necessities if possible, and always remember to have them with you before you leave the house. Whenever you are out and about, you will always have a gospel presentation right at your fingertips for a passerby, a cashier, or spots you can lay them down where you know others will find them. By having gospel tracts on

you at all times, you will be always ready to capitalize on an opportunity wherever it may be found. Be sure to get some good ones that have a biblical presentation of the gospel, and try to think of them as little missionaries sent out into the world to preach the gospel. Some really good gospel tract sites are Livingwaters.com, Tractplanet.com, and Onemilliontracts.com.

VII. Redeem the Time

Write evangelism into your schedule! The Bible says in Colossians 4:5 to “walk in wisdom toward those that are outside, redeeming the time.” Notice, we redeem the time by using wisdom *toward* those that are outside (that is, those that are not saved). We do this because the days are evil (Ephesians 4:5). By redeeming the time, we not only should grab hold of any opportunity that comes our way when it comes to preaching the gospel, but we need to go out and redeem it ourselves *proactively*. How? By writing individual or congregational evangelism into your calendar regularly, consistently, and purposefully! If our redemption from sin was purchased proactively by God, our redeeming the time should also be proactive. A quick illustration should help drive this point deeper.

A man was stranded on a lifeboat one day because his ship went out to sea and was sunk by an iceberg. As he lies in the middle of the boat, he realized his only precious possession, other than his life, was a strand of pearls that his wife owned. As the days went by, he passed the time by toying with the pearls until his rescue ship arrived. Then, one day while he was tossing the pearls in the air, the cord that held them together snapped causing most of the pearls to fall into the ocean. As he looked overboard and saw his precious

pearls sink into the abyss of the ocean never to return, he mourned and loathed the day that he began to toy with his most sentimental possession. Now, he holds on to whatever pearls he has left with jealous zeal over them.

The pearls in this story are illustrative of time. If we are saved, then we are saved from the sinking ship of this world and are awaiting our coming King to rescue us. Until then, God has given each one of us the precious pearls of time to be stewards over. Yet there are some who have already toyed with time and lost most of it into the abyss of apocity. If we are going to be serious about evangelism, we must take hold of whatever pearls we have left with jealous zeal for Christ! It may be too late for all the other precious pearls you have wasted through apocity, **but now**, resolve to play with time no more! Make it your discipline to share your faith regularly!

VIII. Meditate on Scripture

Since all Scripture is God breathed (2 Tim. 3:16), we must grab hold of God's word to stir us up against apocity and develop a passion for the lost. Psalm 119:11 states, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." If we take the time to treasure God's word in our heart by meditating on it prayerfully, not just casually reading it, God's word will have an effect on your affections. Look at all the verses that speak about our great commission to go out and preach and ask for God to give you the power to fulfill those things for as long as you breathe. If you desire God to do a work in your soul, He will light it up through His word.

IX. Weep for Souls

Nothing supplies fuel for the fire of evangelism like weeping for souls. Pray that God opens your eyes to the fate

of the unregenerate. Do not try and force a weeping as if the work of making yourself cry will manufacture a genuine desire. That is Pharisaical. Just sincerely call out to God and request the heart that Jesus has to seek and save that which is lost. Plead with God for a passionate desire to reach the unregenerate. And if you never exhibit the physical tears when you pray, don't fret. As long as you are diligently seeking God for the salvation of souls in your life, and express a holy fervency to be faithful in your evangelistic efforts, God will bless your prayer. See these references for this holy exercise: Psalm 119:136; Jer. 13:17; Luke 19:41; Acts 20:31; Romans 9:2; 2 Cor. 2:4.

X. Pray for Laborers

Praying for laborers is something that will increase your passion for the lost. In any occupation, those that want to get the job done and understand the manpower necessary to accomplish the task naturally desire help. Only those that desire the glory in the Heavenly task of evangelism for themselves have no problem taking on the work alone. However, those that truly grasp the magnitude of this much needed work, the necessity for more laborers, and desire to see an increase of those laborers, will fervently ask God for more! Moreover, Jesus has commanded us as believers to pray for more laborers (Luke 10:2). He even goes as far to say that we should petition God to "send out" laborers, or as the Greek captures it, *thrust forth* laborers. The word *ekballo* captures a sense of urgency that we are asking of God to fulfill our prayer. In essence, we are begging God to call more men, hire them for the work, and like an arrow, swiftly shoot them out into the field to assist with this great harvest He has entrusted us with. Praying for laborers involves labor in prayer. And if you have yet to pray to God for more laborers,

now would be a good time to start.

To grasp the fundamental idea of what we are actually praying for when we pray for laborers, we must turn our attention to Matt. 9:37-38. When Jesus commanded us to pray for laborers because the “harvest was plenty,” He wasn’t saying that the amount of souls waiting to be saved was plenty, but that those awaiting judgment are plenty. The “harvest” is used here in this context to describe the widespread ignorance and sin that the majority of people have concerning the good news. This is why Jesus had *compassion* on the multitude in verse 36. The field is the world, and the harvest is a reference to the judgment to come. In this field, there will always be wheat and tares, true and false, good and bad (Matt. 13:30). One day the unregenerate, whether professing Christian or not, will be gathered together, and those that are not truly born again will be cast out into the fire. Therefore, we are to pray that God thrusts forth laborers with urgency because the work is an urgent work!

If you haven’t figured it out by now, when you are praying for laborers, you are actually praying for genuine converts. You’re asking God to save sinners so that they can go out and labor in His field. This is the reason why the laborers are so few, because the few that are actually saved are interested in the work. This doesn’t mean that everyone that is instrumental in the salvation of others is always genuinely saved themselves. There are preachers of the gospel who do not know the LORD. The general idea is that the demand for laborers is great, and God has commanded that we pray for more laborers, i.e. converts, because it His will that we should, and because His wrath is coming (2 Cor. 5:11; Col. 1:28).

One final thought concerning praying for laborers.

There is a supernatural effect that occurs in our conscience and hearts when we pray this prayer. I have heard testimonies of those becoming more evangelistically inclined when they pray this. Why? I think it is because during your time of prayer, the Holy Spirit reveals to you that you are to go! To sit back and ask God for laborers, knowing you are capable of helping, I believe, is the primary reason why conviction sets in. For instance, if you behold someone in need of help to do a task, and you understand the necessity of it, if you are lazy, you will just kick your feet up and desire that someone else do it, even if you are capable. But if you have any compassion toward those that need help, even if you thought you were incapable, necessity would drive you to try and do something, right? This is the case with this prayer. It pushes you dangerously close to the edge of responsibility and some don't seem to like that. So instead of praying for laborers, and going out themselves, they neglect the command Christ to pray, thus committing two sins. Don't act in this way! Continue to pray for laborers, and watch Christ dynamically transform your mind.

XI. Get Your Church/Pastor Involved

If your church is in a state of apocity, and you know it, the first thing you want to do is pray for your church. There could be a multitude of reasons why the church as a whole is in the state that it is in, and this book addresses many of those things. The one thing you do not want to do is lose evangelistic zeal simply because others are disobedient. Pray that God will work a revival in your church, and plead with Him to open the eyes of those who are apocites. This will bring you to humility and help you see that you need God not only for the salvation of sinners, but also for the awakening

of the local church. Then, pray for your pastor also. Pastors have an immense amount of pressure on them already because many within their church believe that he is responsible to do their job, including evangelism. Talk with him and find out where his understanding is concerning evangelism and express your concern over the apocity within the church. If he is interested in reading this book, then give it to him, but do not badger him about reading it.

Telling others within your church your evangelism experiences is another thing you should do, and do it *constantly*. I have a friend by the name of Kenneth Anderson, who is a fellow laborer of the gospel with me, and he told me something that he does, which I have done in the past, but for some reason it did not sit well with me when he revealed it to me. He said that he used to invite people out to preach and tell members of the church what he does, and he would often get looks of confusion, surprise, and sometimes shame that he would go out and do such a thing. I know exactly what he is talking about! The goats within the church find evangelism so foreign, because it is indeed foreign to their nature, that the mere sound that someone is going out to preach, when they know it is a commandment of God, makes them scatter. However, I would like to remind you, reader, that this is not your fault if you have experienced this. Ken told me it got to the point that he no longer talks about it anymore unless it is brought up. He jokingly mentioned how it is kind of like the movie *Fight Club* with Brad Pitt. One of the movie lines is, "First rule about fight club, you don't talk about fight club." Unfortunately, this rule has carried over into the minds of others that are on fire to preach God's gospel, and I think this should not be so.

I personally know the pain of being ostracized simply because I evangelize on a regular basis. However, I am also

guilty of separating myself from others as well. So instead of detaching myself from the congregation, I have discovered that by reminding others of planned evangelistic events, frequently telling them my experiences, and asking them personally to go out and share their faith is the only way to reach them. Just like going out into the world and preaching the gospel is the only way to reach sinners, so going into our churches and telling them of the evangelistic prospects is the only way to reach them! Sure you may get some dirty looks, and you may even make others feel guilty, but that is good! You are going to hear excuses why they can't go, and some of them may make you cringe, but tell them nevertheless! Trust me, the word "evangelism" strikes more conviction in the heart of an apocrite than ten thousand lame excuses can do to drown it out. And if you are tired of hearing reasons why people can't go out, and you are frustrated because you are in need of laborers to go out into the harvest, then take a break sometimes, but don't give up! Continue to tell others of the wonderful *privilege* it is to preach and, when necessary, reveal to them about the sin of apocity. By communicating this word to them, it may cause them to wonder what you are talking about. Give them a copy of this book so that maybe they can see their sin and repent. If they don't, then continue to stay faithful and never surrender telling the world and your church of the glorious things God has done because you are being faithful to preach His salvation. You will never know what God *will* do with your faithfulness unless you open your mouth.