

Our Spiritual Resources

The cultural gap between believers and unbelievers is not the only barrier that challenges us. Even more formidable is the spiritual gap between unbelievers and God. But we're not left to our own abilities. In this session, we will:

- Explore what this spiritual gap is
- Identify the resources God uses to bridge the chasm

According to the video, non-believers are in a spiritual prison.

1. From what you have seen in the video and your own experience, what is it like to live in a spiritual prison? For instance, what happens to a person's

- Sense of right and wrong
- Priorities
- Relationships
- Perception of reality
- Self-esteem

Sense of right and wrong (no sound basis; based on what seems right or wrong); Priorities (self serving; out of order); Relationships (self-serving; failed; painful; let down); Perception of reality? (only what can be seen or touched); Self-esteem (question why am I here?)

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovering of the sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:18-19

Non-believers don't necessarily see that they are in a spiritual prison and often aren't interested about the good news that Jesus came to rescue them from that prison. So because they are blinded by Satan, they can be reached only through spiritual power.

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

2 Corinthians 4:4

2. What spiritual resources has God given us to reach them?

God's Resources for Evangelism

- The Holy Spirit, who works through inner conviction and circumstances (John 16:8)
- The Bible, which testifies to the truth (John 1:1, 14; 14:6)
- The Believer, who prays, lives the truth and witnesses/speaks the truth (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

3. What do you think it means in practical terms to rely on “a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” in reaching non-believers (1 Corinthians 2:4)?

A changed life; not out to get but to give; joy, peace; wisdom; courage; humility.

4. In your experience, how does the Holy Spirit go about convicting someone, as John 16:8 describes?

“When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.” John 16:8

You have seen that the believer’s presence and prayers comprise two of God’s resources for reaching the lost. To start the process, develop a “Ten Most Wanted” Card listing those unbelievers whom you would like to come to Christ. Don’t worry if you can’t think of ten individuals immediately. God will bring the rest to mind over the next coming weeks.

TEN MOST WANTED

CBMC MISSION: To present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to business and professional men and to develop Christian business and professional men to carry out the Great Commission.

Pray for the Lost

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Going Deeper

Telling the Truth



Repeatedly in the book of Acts, a believer stands up in a public place, proclaims the truths of the gospel and up to 5,000 people accept Christ. The same thing happens today in evangelistic crusades. It even happens one-on-one in encounters on airplanes and in college dormitories.

Telling the gospel message is essential, but often it doesn't work the way we just described. Sometimes when we tell our coworkers about Jesus, they stare at us blankly and warn the boss that we're religious fanatics. We get the treatment Paul got in Athens (Acts 11): ridicule and a cold shoulder.

Does that mean we should write our coworkers off as children of darkness? No. There is another aspect of reaching the lost. We can call it *affirming* or *showing* the gospel. It is the process of being living proof of the biblical message. We affirm or demonstrate the truth of Christ by our lives.

Telling the truth works among the prepared. In Acts 2, the Jews and converts to Judaism have been prepared by the whole of Old Testament history: They know about the true God's character, His justice, and His promise of a Deliver. In Acts 8, the eunuch has been involved with Judaism. In Acts 10, Cornelius has believed in the true God for some time. In Acts 15, the Philippian jailer is prepared by a miraculous encounter with God's power. But in Athens, Paul is up against people with no preparation to understand the gospel, so his message falls flat.

Showing the Truth

Showing is how people get prepared for telling. God can prepare a heart through special circumstances or even miracles, as with the Philippian jailer. But most often God chooses to use ordinary relationships and experiences. He uses His people.



God raised Israel to be a light to the nations (Exodus 19:6, Deuteronomy 4:5-8, Joshua 4:24, Isaiah 41:12). The idea was that when the surrounding nations saw how just and pleasant a society Israel was, they would be attracted to the God who set up that society. But Israel failed to be light, lapsing into the immoral ways of their neighbors. After God disciplined them for immorality, they failed again to be light because they turned their liberating laws into harsh, hypocritical legalism. Then the Father sent Jesus to be the true Light, to demonstrate how a person of God would really live. And when Jesus left the earth, He passed His commission onto His team: "You are the light of the

world.... let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14,16).

That’s affirmation. Being living proof that the Father really is who He says He is, that Jesus really is the Son who frees people from slavery to self, that the Holy Spirit really can transform a life. This kind of showing is not a substitute for telling; if we never explain the gospel in words, people will never understand it enough to submit to Christ. But showing is an essential preparation for telling. People will buy our words when our actions back them up.

How can we grow in being living proof? There are no shortcuts. We need to contemplate the great truths of the gospel – how utterly the Father loves us, how secure our hope for our future is – until they begin to alter us at the core. But we don’t have to wait until we are great saints to be light for our friends. People will notice even the small, slow changes in our ability to love, to serve, to forgive others, to forgive ourselves.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 13, 14, 20

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapters 2, 4, 5.