

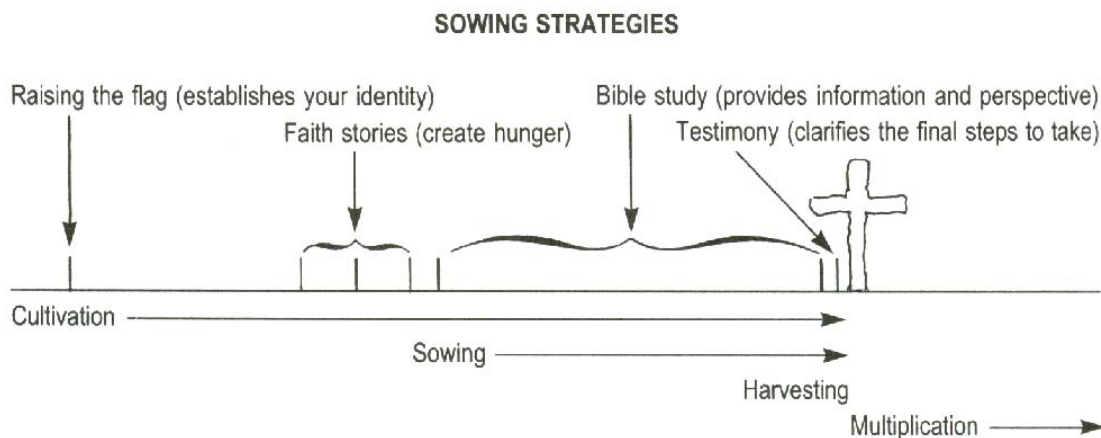
## Session 7

# Strategies for Sowing the Word

Thus far, we've been cultivating a friendship with an unbeliever. That's crucial, but if we never draw him or her to consider the Bible and what it says about Jesus Christ, we haven't done our job in freeing that person from prison. Yet we can stop a friendship cold by suddenly preaching a sermon and calling for a decision. Our friend may have a lot more mini-decisions to go through. So how do we start sowing the Word in a way that someone at -10, -9, or -8 can handle? In this session we'll look at three sowing strategies:

1. Raising the flag,
2. The faith story,
3. Suggesting a Bible study.

As you watch, ask yourself this question: How does each sowing strategy work?



Four principles of Raising the Flag:

- It should happen as a natural part of the conversation.
- It may create an opportunity (to tell your testimony and ask your friend for a decision) that you should not take advantage of unless the non-Christian clearly asks you to do so.
- If it takes more than 30 seconds, you're probably saying too much.
- Its purpose is to establish your identify as a member of God's family, not as a member of some religious denomination.

1. Bill told a faith story about how he discovered business principles in the Bible. How did that story affect Gerry? What mini-decisions did he make?

Gerry began to have a positive attitude toward the Bible so he moved from a -8 to a -7 on the spiritual awareness chart.

2. What made the story work? What principles for telling faith stories can we draw from Bill's example?

Gerry could relate to Bill's overworking causing family and health problems.

The faith story is a bit longer than raising the flag; but it still fits naturally into a conversation. Bill's faith story about discovering business principles in the Bible gives a glimpse of what it is like to be a believer. Gerry was ready to hear more about the Bible, even though God was still a scary idea to him.



3. Bill didn't invite Gerry to investigate what the Bible says about business right away. Instead, he said, "One of these days, if you want, I'll show you some stuff Tom showed me." It was only later that he asked if Gerry wanted to set a time to do it. What do you suppose dropping the vague suggestion "one of these days" accomplished?

It was safe because it was indeterminate. It gave Gerry a chance to get used to the idea.

4. Why do you think Gerry failed to show up?

Gerry still needed some space. He apparently was trying to find the information himself; but the relationship was intact. He will eventually get over his fears and face the Bible with Bill. This process is a very low pressure, God-in-control approach.

5. Why might a study on business be a better start for Gerry than heading straight for a study on Jesus?

Bill started with a study on business, because Gerry's interest was there. But if Bill is smart, he'll include what Jesus said about business principles. He'll move the focus to Jesus as an authority. That will prepare Gerry to consider Jesus as a person. Right now, Gerry could care less about Jesus.

6. What aspects of sowing strategies strike you as easiest to do? (Raising the Flag, Faith Stories, Bible Study). Which do you feel you can handle?

### Going Deeper

**Write a faith story.** A faith story is a direct way to talk about the presence of God in your life. While less than a full testimony, it's instead an anecdote about God's love and grace in one specific instance in your life – how He got you through a difficult time, how His blessing came at just the right time. Think of a time in your life when a biblical truth made an impact on you. Write the story out or just jot some notes, but make sure it is in the language an unbeliever will understand. No King James English, no Christian jargon (sin, righteousness, salvation, works, grace, Holy Spirit, etc.). The whole story should take less than 2 minutes.

Many people find it very hard to think of something God has done or taught them. Planning a faith story is a great chance to remember that you really have made some progress down the road with God, even if you are a beginner in faith.

### For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 18.

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapters 10.

Rebecca Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, chapters 9-11.