

Reveal In Me...

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Forward

But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood...

- Galatians 1:15-16

When God was pleased to reveal Jesus Christ in Saul of Tarsus there began a learning process. From Saul's personal meeting with the Lord on the Damascus road to Ananias, and then to Arabia for three years; Saul went through the process of becoming the apostle to the Gentiles we know as Paul. No young Jewish man in Saul's place could possibly have imagined the places he would go, the people he would meet, and the influence he would exercise once he committed himself to allowing Jesus to be revealed in his life.

The road to Damascus is still full of souls walking along today. They march in step with each other on missions of imagined importance. They walk along life's road in the traditions they were raised in, looking sometimes right and sometimes left to make sure they are keeping up with others, but so often failing to look up and see Jesus. Jesus is not revealed in them because they're just trying to keep in step with others.

This book is about allowing Jesus to work in OUR life. It is not about the abilities and talents of others, although many others are referred to as examples. It is about revealing Jesus in OUR life by what we can do, how we can pray, and how we might reach out in His name. There was only one Paul. There was only one Barnabas. There was only one Apollos. Each was differently gifted and each revealed Jesus in their life in their own way. There is only one YOU. God's fingerprints are all over you and He desires to reveal Jesus in you through the specific talents and gifts that you possess.

May the record of sisters in this workbook who walked out of step with others while looking up to Jesus, encourage you search and find the way(s) God wants to reveal His Son in you also.

Dedication

I dedicate this book to my mother, Mary Frances Varney Wallen. I would not be who I am without her sacrificial love and godly example. Her love, service to the Lord, and her humble appreciation of His sacrifice made her into who she is. I deeply cherish her example and memory. She is with the Lord now, but her influence lives on. I truly thank you, Mom for believing in me and instilling as a priority, the love of God and His truth. I love you and miss you so much.

(December 16, 1925 - September 1, 2002)

I also dedicate this book to Judy Baker who clearly has asked God to reveal to her in which areas she is best suited to serve Him. She is an inspiration - because what many would call extraordinary dedication to the Lord, she calls her "reasonable service," Romans 12:1. That is because her life is hidden in Christ. His love is the motivating force for her service. She and many of the wonderful ladies at the North Boulevard Church of Christ have been true examples of His light and love.

I deeply thank my family for their patience and understanding during the months of effort involved in this undertaking. To my beloved Bill, thank-you for always believing in me and supporting me in all that I attempt. To my sons, Joseph, Jeremy, and Joshua - you continue to give me immeasurable joy because of the fine men that you are and because of your continued walk with the Lord. Erin, my daughter-in-law, I appreciate your love for Joshua and for being a godly wife.

I'd also like to thank Carl and Lorna McMurray for their confidence and trust shown by asking me to write a book on this important subject. I value their examples of service to the Lord as well as their wonderful friendship.

My hope is that this book will be an asset to those who are seeking to improve their service to the Lord.

Contents

1	Responsible for Souls	6
2	Respond to the Need	13
3	Relationships that Matter	18
4	Righteousness Anyone?	24
5	Rich in Ways that Matter	31
6	Rethinking Stewardship	41
7	Rubies for My Slippers	47
8	Recognizing Life's Uncertainties	52
9	Running the Race as Partners	59
10	Realize Your Worth	65
11	Reach for the Top	73
12	Remember Your Creator and Your Children	82
13	Reverence in Approaching His Throne	89
	recipe for communion bread	96

RESPONSIBLE FOR SOULS

(What you can do to share the “Good News”)

Lesson 1

I would like to share some thoughts on a woman’s role in personal evangelism. We have windows of opportunity and contacts that our husbands, preachers, and elders do not have. We form acquaintances and sometimes form close, enduring relationships with people we come in contact with frequently. Some examples include: our children’s friends, fellow parents, teachers, coaches, and neighbors—even clerks in frequently shopped stores. There is a vital need for us to reach out and share the gospel with the people that God has put in our path.

Now that we recognize the unique opportunities we have, do we truly feel our effort is necessary? Do we truly feel little Janie’s Girl Scout leader’s soul may be in jeopardy if she is not in the body of Christ? It **does** make a difference what we believe. Matthew 15:14 tells us that if our beliefs don’t come from the teachings of God, then we who believe them will be destroyed. The argument is often given that if you are a good person and you are sincere, it doesn’t really matter if you follow God’s Word. It does matter to God what we believe! Matthew 7:21-23 tells us that, “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Those who will be saved are those who do His will. Much more could be said on the need for sharing the gospel, but it is a terrifying truth that souls will be lost if we do not do our part in the corner of the world where we live.

This understanding is vital for us to overcome other excuses that might come to our minds: “I don’t feel like I know enough,” “I don’t have the time,” “I can’t be effective when I’m stepping out of my comfort zone,” etc.....

Discussion Thoughts:

- 1) How can we battle inner complacency when it comes to sharing the gospel?

Discovering our talents

- 2) What are your individual strengths with personal work?

- 3) What are your weaknesses that you need to strengthen in order to be an effective soul winner?

- 4) Do I truly believe that my friend or my neighbor will be lost for eternity if they don't come to the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ?

The solutions are varied; however, if we truly appreciate our salvation, sharing God's love will become our priority. **There are many approaches, but remember to make what you do your own. We each have a personality style, so find an approach that best suites you.**

Approaches:

- 1) **Use everyday examples like Christ did.** An example is found in John 4 where Christ used water to start a spiritual conversation with the Samaritan woman.

- 2) **Daily living - be an example of Christ's teachings.** Does your life (and mine), your marriage, and your parenting exemplify God's biblical standard of excellence? For example, if you are following biblical teaching as a pattern for parenting, then Janie's mom may ask you questions about the source of your wisdom. What an opportunity this presents to let her know that the Bible is your source for parenting, as well as all of life's questions!

- 3) **Find the approach that fits you and your personality, as well as the situation.** In the excellent book, **Becoming A Contagious Christian* by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, there is a chapter titled, "Finding the Approach that Fits You." There is no one "right way" to spread the gospel message, but it is important for you to be yourself to have the maximum spiritual effect. Some of their examples:
 - a. **Peter's confrontational approach:** right man for the sermon in Acts 2 - held people's feet to the fire" (page 124).
 - b. **Paul's intellectual approach:** right man to send to philosophers in Athens. 'The account is in Acts 17 where you'll find Paul presenting

Reveal In Me...

an ingenious argument starting from the Athenian idol to an unknown god and moving all the way to the only true God and His resurrected Messiah. His approach was so effective that some of his listeners became believers. It's interesting to note that the wisdom God displays in His choice of spokesmen. These philosophers would not have related to Peter's "turn-or-burn" approach. They needed logic that conclusively proved its point" (page 125).

- c. "The blind man's testimonial approach": John 9 tells of a man healed of blindness by Jesus. He avoided an intellectual debate with the Jews (9:25) and refused to be drawn into a confrontation. "These responses didn't fit who he was." He simply declared what Jesus had done for him, *One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see!* (NIV) "That is a difficult declaration to argue with, isn't it?" Has your relationship with Jesus changed your life and are you willing to share your story with another? (page 126).
- d. "Matthew's interpersonal approach": Luke 5:29 tells of Matthew putting on a banquet for all of his tax-collector friends in an effort to expose them to Jesus and the new life He offered. Matthew had built relationships with these people, and he cared for their souls. Jesus did too, pointing out to the Pharisees that the ones in need are the sinners (page 128).
- e. "The Samaritan woman's invitational approach": Jesus certainly defied political correctness by even talking to an immoral Samaritan woman. However, she quickly realized she was speaking with the Messiah. Could she keep news that wonderful to herself? She immediately went to town and brought as many as would come to the well to hear Jesus for themselves. The interest that was generated by her care, sharing an invitation to others resulted in Jesus staying in their town for 2 days and many declaring their belief that He was the Savior of the world. "A recent poll by George Barna showed that 25% of the adults in the U.S. would come to church if a friend would just invite them." Perhaps you have a friend who for the rest of eternity would thank you for enthusiastically inviting her to church where she would be exposed to the gospel message (page 129).
- f. "Dorcas' service approach": *She was always doing good and helping the poor.* She performed loving acts of service in the Lord's name. "It would have been hard for people to observe her activity and not

Discovering our talents

get a glimpse of the love of Christ that inspired her.” You may not fit into the earlier categories with in-depth Bible knowledge or have a bold, direct style, but you can make wonderful meals and see to other’s needs. These things done in love point people to God and His truth (page 131).

- g. “Jesus took time and focused on the needs of one person”: Luke 19:1-10 tells of Jesus stopping the crowd following Him, turning His attention to a man who had climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Him and said He would stay with him. This led to his spiritual birth. Zaccheus was a lot like people that you and I know—he was receptive and interested in spiritual matters. Yet someone had to help him get past the curiosity phase. Jesus invested sacrificial time, focused on his unique needs, and shared the good news with him. The crowd grumbled that Jesus was with a sinner. Jesus told them and speaks to us today that, *for the Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost*. Can you think of one person in your life that is interested in spiritual matters and needs you to share the gospel with him? (page 84).

We need to have the mindset that all people matter to God and are worthy of our love and concern. That will wipe away prejudice, ego, and the false idea that the church is for the perfect, and those that don’t fit someone’s mold are not welcome in His Body. This is an affront to Christ’s blood which will forgive any repentant sinner.

Hopefully, these are ideas on approaches that we can think about and will give us opportunity to meditate on what style best suits each of us.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23. “...I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it.” Paul spoke with such humility and love, considering himself no more important than another. Praise God for his example.

*In section 3) a. - g. all quotations are from the book *Becoming a Contagious Christian*.

Reveal In Me...

Discussion Thoughts:

- 1) Think about and discuss the approach that best fits your personality.
- 2) What can you do to enhance your abilities and style?
- 3) Do you think by doing this you will feel more comfortable with personal evangelism?
- 4) Think of things you can do to prioritize your time, giving you more opportunity for sharing Christ.
- 5) What “windows of opportunity” are unique to you? Make a list of those you come in contact with that you can positively influence by sharing the gospel.
- 6) Think of 4 of your friends, realizing that if you invite each of them to church, one will accept the invitation. Which friends do you love and value enough to share the “good news” with?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
- 7) John 15:5 tells us that “If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.” Discuss in what ways we bear fruit.
- 8) If we develop the fruits of the Spirit spoken of in Galatians 5:22-23, will that draw people to Christ?

Discovering our talents

- 9) Read Luke 11:10. Discuss if that would apply to those who are seeking to know Christ in their lives as well as those who are seeking opportunities to share Christ.

- 10) Read Matthew 5:13-16. How important is it to our effectiveness as a Christian to retain our savor (salt) and potency? Does salt have to be poured out of the shaker in order to have the desired effect of being a preservative, adding flavor and increasing thirst? Does knowing you or me increase our neighbor's thirst to know more about our Lord?

- 11) How does our light reflect the "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"(2 Corinthians 4:5-6)? Do you believe this could also include sharing His message of love, forgiveness, and hope?

We've talked about our unique opportunity, the need, overcoming excuses, and different approaches. The last mindset we'll explore is conviction. Many Christians are afraid that if they share what they really believe, they will alienate those outside the faith. That is almost never the case. People are impressed by and respect those with conviction, knowledge, and the willingness to stand up for one's belief. When a believer speaks up for what is right, defends Christianity intelligently, and lives an authentic God-centered life, those that are seeking will be affected. Hopefully, the effect will change their eternal destiny. I believe the Bible says we should live infectious Christian lives, living in such a way that makes our faith irresistible to those outside of the family of God. Philippians 2:15 says our lives should "shine like stars in the universe."

We truly are the world's Bible. We are commanded to "sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15).

Reveal In Me...

Discussion Thoughts:

- 1) What is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16)?
Do we affect this power in any way?

- 2) Does knowing the power of God's Word give you confidence to share it?

- 3) Make a list of 5 ways to share the gospel to those around us.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

- 4) Explain how God needs each of us (1 Corinthians 3:5-8) and how He is involved in the process?

The Great Commission is not a suggestion but a command (Matthew 28:19-20). When we so deeply appreciate and reverence the precious gift of salvation, we cannot help but want to share it. May God bless us and give us opportunity to share His precious love.