

Who's Your One?

Praying

January 13, 2019 a.m.

HDBC

Last Sunday I introduced a new initiative for 2019 called ***Who's Your One?***

The goal is to refocus on our personal responsibility to make disciples. From the very beginning Jesus made it clear that disciples have a responsibility to make other disciples. Christ-followers are to help others become Christ-followers.

That's the plan! It worked beautifully in the early months when the number of disciples grew from 120 to 3000 to 5000 and then it spread through the known world. That was the plan then, and that is the plan now!

To make disciples, we have to be intentional, purposeful and strategic. If not, it will not happen. With that in mind, we are entering into a year-long strategic focus called ***Who's Your One?***

Here is the plan. Every member and attender of HDBC to be intentional about doing three things on a regular basis. One daily, one weekly and one monthly.

First, pray for at least one lost person every day, by name.

Second, invite at least one person to church every week.

Third, have at least one gospel conversation every month.

You can do this! Jesus told those first disciples that He would make them become fishers of men. He would enable. He would empower. However, we have to be willing, intentional and involved in the process.

We want to be able to track our progress throughout the year. We've come up with an easy way to do this. It will require your cooperation and participation.

Each week (starting today) we ask you to go to one of our *Who's Your One?* stations and report in. This will be anonymous. Five stations: Two in back of worship center, Aquarium, Café Mac and Hub. You will see a glass container. Next to it you will find three colors of tokens. Each one represents one of the

three things we are doing this year. You will place the number in the glass container for each color depending on how you did this week.

Gray – Prayers for Lost. Place one for each day your prayed for lost.

Red – Invites. Place one for each person you invited to church.

Blue – Gospel conversations. Place one for each witness experience.

So, start reporting today! Go all the way back to January 1. Do it after the service and each Sunday. When you miss a Sunday, catch it up the next time.

One of the things we will be focusing on this year is praying for the lost. Sounds simple, but do we really know **why and how** to pray for the lost? I want to answer both of those this morning. We will look at many scriptures and I will move quickly. My goal is to help you to pray effectively and strategically.

1. **Why do we pray for the Lost?** (5 reasons)

1) **Because Christ gave his life for the lost.**

God loves everyone in the world, including those who do not know Him and even those who have rejected Him. God's love has motivated Him to do some amazing things all for the purpose of reaching the lost.

The most amazing thing is sending His Son, Jesus, to die for us. Jesus came for the lost. That was His mission. Luke 19:10 says, He came to seek and to save those who are lost. Peter reminds us that God does not want any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

2) **Because of the example of others.**

Several examples of people in the Bible praying for the lost.

Moses prayed for the people of Israel when they were engaged in idolatry and God was preparing to destroy them.

Jesus prayed for the lost men who were crucifying Him. Luke 23:34
Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Paul prayed for the lost on a regular basis. Romans 10:1 . . .

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

Stephen prayed for the men who were stoning him to death. Acts 7:60

Falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them!

3) Because they are held captive by Satan.

I have appointed you a minister and a witness . . . rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God. (Acts 26:18)

There is more going on in an unbeliever's mind and heart than simply a decision not to believe in Christ. There is an enemy who has captured their minds and hearts and wants to keep them captive to his will.

4) Because salvation involves a spiritual transformation. 2 Cor. 2:14

A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

More than a mental decision. There are elements of salvation that are impossible for them to understand. Like trying to understand another language you do not know. Salvation involves an act of God in which they are transformed in a way that can only be done by God.

5) Because we are commanded to pray for the lost. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

First of all, then, I urge that prayers and entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We are called to pray for **all men**. That would include those who are not Christ-followers. We pray for them because God wants them to be saved. Therefore, it is clear that our prayers are instrumental in people coming to faith in Christ.

2. **How do we pray for the lost?**

When we pray for the lost we are praying in a strategic way. We need to move beyond praying vague, generic prayers. We need to be specific and strategic. Let me give you some examples of what to pray. (5)

1) **Pray for a receptive heart.**

Proverbs 21:1 tells us *the kings heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.*

The heart of the worst sinner is still in the hand of the Lord, who can turn it, direct it and cause it to be receptive. We should pray that God will change the heart of the person we are praying for, away from sin and toward God.

2) **Pray for an open mind.** (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel.

Satan wants to keep unbelievers in spiritual darkness. He has blinded their eyes and minds to the truth. That is why so many have no desire to be saved. They don't even realize their lost condition & the danger they are in. They need their spiritual eyes and minds opened. Many are simply not open even to the possibility that the gospel is true.

3) **Pray for a guilty conscience.**

John 16:8 tells us that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin. He is the one who gives us an awareness of just how sinful we really are. Before a person can be saved, he or she must come a realization of personal sinfulness.

Pray for an attitude toward sin that matches God's attitude toward sin. Pray for a sense of sinfulness and the guilt that comes with it. Confession and repentance are essential for salvation.

4) Pray for a sense of God's call. (John 6:44)

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me, draws him.

The bible makes it clear that no one desires to come to God until God first draws that person to Himself. In other words. God makes the first move. We know that God is already making that move. We need to pray that the unbeliever will become aware of God's desire for them.

5) Pray for a transforming faith.

As you pray for unbelievers, pray that they will come to full, saving faith in Christ. The Bible speaks of a total transformation when a person is truly born again. Pray that the person will not simply have some faith, but will have saving faith.

James speaks of a couple of kinds of faith. Some have an element of faith, but it does not change their lives. But, he wrote that saving faith in life-changing. Pray that for the unbeliever.

We must talk to people about God. First, we must talk to God about people!

Takeaways:

1. Make a list.

Write down names. Think creatively about who you might add to your list.

2. Make a plan.

Determine when you are going to pray. How will you make sure to remember?

3. Consider an accountability partner

Someone to check with each week. We all need this.

4. Be Persistent.

Don't give up unless the Lord clearly releases you from praying for a particular person.

Charles Spurgeon: *If sinners be condemned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled with the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.*

There was a woman named Monica who was raised by Christian parents in North Africa over 1600 years ago. When she was old enough, her parents arranged a marriage to a pagan man. Monica and her husband had three children. Two of them followed Christ but one son left the faith of his childhood. By his own admission, he chose the path of worldly pleasure.

Monica prayed for 17 years that her son would come to Christ. Looking back, her son said that she watered the earth with her tears for him, praying more for his spiritual life than most mothers pray over the physical life of a child. She fasted and prayed and asked God to save her son.

One day she went to see the bishop and with tears asked why her son was still living in sin. The bishop replied with bold, convincing words. "It is not possible that the son of so many tears should perish. Your son will be saved."

He was right. It took several more years of fervent praying but eventually Monica's son came to Christ. His name is Augustine. We know him today as St. Augustine. He is universally regarded as one of the greatest thinkers in Christian history. Even today his books and writings are still in print. He makes it clear in his Confessions that his mother prayed him to Jesus. She would not give up and eventually God answered her prayers.