

Praying Your Friends to Christ

Session 2

Why Pray for Lost People?

Why should Christians pray for lost people? The **first** reason is most important--*Because of our relationship with our Heavenly Father.* The purpose of prayer is for believers to relate to their heavenly Father not just to get things they want or need. Through prayer a believer communes, communicates and walks with God. The Christian walk is all about relationship. No relationship will ever be healthy without communication, intimacy and fellowship. Fulfilling God's mission as believers is not just about the activities related to prayer and evangelism. It is all about a love relationship with the Father through Jesus. So, as Christians we pray evangelistically not because of what we want God to do in our churches or in the world. We pray because of Who God is and because of the relationship we have with Him through Christ. Our motivation to pray evangelistically thus begins with intimacy and our relationship with Christ.

Second, *we pray evangelistically because it is a biblical mandate.* When a Christian weds prayer with evangelism they are modeling the way Jesus, Paul, and the early church did evangelism. The above section clearly shows that the Bible teaches that prayer should precede, permeate and follow all our soul winning endeavors. Biblically speaking, the Bible mandates that believers are priests in His Kingdom. Thus believers are to fulfill the role of intercessors and mediators on behalf of others as they pray (see **1 Pet. 2:3-10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4**). This mandate involves prayer for the lost, prayer for the Christian witnesses and evangelistic/mission endeavors. Thus, if we want to do biblical evangelism, we will pray evangelistically.

Third, *believers pray evangelistically because it enhances the fruit of their labors* (**John 15:16**). The Lord accomplishes at least six things when Christians pray evangelistically:

1. Motivates others to be involved in sharing Christ with the lost (**Matthew: 35-38**).
2. Prepares the hearts of the lost to receive the truth of God's Word (**Psalm 126:4-6; Acts 10:1-11:5**).
3. Empowers witnesses to boldly and effectively share Christ with the lost (**Acts 4:29-31; Eph. 6:18-20**).
4. Opens up opportunities for Christians to witness (**Col. 4:2-6**).
5. Prepares the heart of the witness through cleansing and forgiveness (**Psalm 51:10-13**).
6. Positions the Christian to be involved in divine encounters with the lost (**Acts 8:26-40**).

The **fourth** reason *believers pray for the lost has to do with our utter dependence on Christ to fulfill His mission to reach the lost* (**Luke 19:10; John 15:5**). This dependence is best understood as believers consider seriously what the Bible has to say about being lost. The Bible gives a vivid and heartbreaking picture of the condition of lost people. Listed below are six ways the Bible describes the condition of the lost.

1. Blind

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (**2 Cor. 4:3-4**, emphasis added).

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (**Romans 3:11**).

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (**1 Cor. 2:14**).

The gospel is hidden from them; they are without understanding; they do not comprehend spiritual things.

2. Bound

"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God per adventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (**2 Tim. 2:25-26**, emphasis added).

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (**Eph. 2:2**, emphasis added).

Those that are lost are held in bondage by Satan. He seeks with all his might to keep them in his grasp, that they might live and die in disobedience to God. In essence, the lost are incarcerated by Satan in his "domain of darkness" (see **Col. 1:13**).

3. Condemned

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (**John 3:18**).

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (**Eph. 2:3**).

4. Hell-Bound

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (**John 3:36**).

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (**Matt. 5:22**).

"Enter ye into the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (**Matt. 7:13**).

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (**Rev. 20:15**).

The Bible clearly teaches that the destiny of the lost will be eternal punishment in hell and damnation. This is a sobering thought considering the millions in North America without Christ.

5. Helpless

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me to draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (**John 6:44**, emphasis added).

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (**Eph. 2:1**, emphasis added).

The lost are helpless to change the course of their eternal destiny. Without the work of God's Spirit and the witness of His Word, they will remain lost. Believers need to join God's redemptive work through prayer and evangelistic witness

for this to be different. As God's people pray for the lost, His Spirit draws them to understand their need for repentance and faith.

6. Hopeless

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (**Eph. 2:12**).

Billions on our planet live in spiritual darkness apart from Christ. If the lost are going to be released from their terrible condition Christ must intervene. This happens as the power of the gospel is unleashed in their lives through heartfelt intercessory prayer on their behalf.

Dialogue Session

After covering the material, spend time in dialogue about the Biblical mandate to pray evangelistically. Ask participants to break up into groups and discuss the following quote: "The purpose of prayer is to get a hold of God not of the answer." Discuss their responses as a large group. Lead in a discussion about the process of evangelism (i.e., sowing, reaping, cultivating, sharing a verbal witness) as it relates to prayer and bearing evangelistic fruit. Ask the group to break up into small groups and share how they felt before they met Christ. Encourage group discussion around the 6 biblical conditions of the lost listed above. Ask participants to identify other biblical conditions or other observed conditions they have noticed of lost persons.

Prayer Prompts

Lead in a group prayer time that focuses on specific prayer for believers and congregations to embrace as never before the Biblical mandate for evangelistic prayer. Pray for believers to become more sensitive to the spiritual condition of lost people.