

WHY USE GOSPEL TRACTS?

I am writing this because I hope to convince at least a few of my fellow Christians to begin doing something they have never done - distribute gospel tracts. In fact, I'm amazed at the large percentage of those who never have.

I was saved June 7, 1970 while reading a gospel tract. I doubt that I would have ever understood the gospel if it wasn't for that tract. Since that day, I distributed thousands of them, if not tens of thousands. I've written more than 180 to date.

There are a great many magnificent inventions in this world but none that I appreciate more than the printing press. I love the printed page and the ability to reproduce it.

Where would we be without words and more specifically, God's Word? I shudder to think! The good news (gospel) is something I never tire of hearing or reading.

While it is true that the reading of books is becoming a dying pastime, most people will still read a small pamphlet if they have received it under favorable conditions or if the title grabs their attention.

Giving out tracts, or even leaving them laying around, is like planting seeds. One never knows how productive his planting activity might be but knows it has great possibility of producing something that makes his effort very worthwhile. Let's face it, what is the value of a soul? Many a person besides myself has come to know Jesus as his Savior through a gospel tract.

We are told in Matthew 4:19 that it is one of Jesus' goals to make us "fishers of men." In fact, he said he would do this if we would follow him. This is, of course, consistent with the Great Commission to go and make disciples of people in all the nations. (See Matthew 28:18-20)

Actually, the use of gospel tracts provides many advantages. Here are some of them:

- 1) Tracts bring the subject of one's mortality to the forefront of his mind.
- 2) You don't even need to be present. Tracts can be left laying in places for people to notice them and pick them up, or they can be mailed.
- 3) You don't even need to speak the language the tract is written in for it to be effective. I've often given tracts to those I've met who could only speak and read a language I could not.
- 4) You don't need to be the person who has written the tract. It is good, however, for you to have read it and know that it is one you agree with.
- 5) It only takes a few seconds to distribute a tract. It is often very easy to offer a person a tract after you have just spent some time developing rapport, or you can simply pass them out to those who will accept them while filing through a line.
- 6) Tracts can be read later. I've given tracts to people I knew didn't have the time to read them then but I've encouraged them to save the tract and read it later.
- 7) Tracts can reach people who are even upset that you gave them one. There are many stories of people who tossed a tract only to return and retrieve it to learn what it has to say.
- 8) Tracts can be given to people who are closed to the gospel and say they will never read it.
- 9) The palest ink is more enduring than the strongest memory. The words will be there for years to come whereas some of your words will be forgotten almost as soon as you speak them.
- 10) A gospel tract should contain the printed Word of God and those words are there to verify the truth of the gospel.

11) A single tract can be used to bring numerous people to a saving faith in Jesus.

12) Tracts are a great way to begin a conversation. They can be used to either begin or to transition to conversation about the gospel.

13) Tracts give you a way to reach a large audience with the good news in a short period of time.

14) Tracts allow the recipient to consider the issues without having to defend himself.

15) It is one way to begin sharing the good news if you are either unprepared, too timid, or unable to share it any other way.

16) Tracts can be used to teach other young believers the message of a good gospel presentation.

There are some believers who speak against tracts for one or more reasons. Some of them are:

1) Tracts are too impersonal. It is interesting, however, that many of these people don't share the gospel message any other way. I recall hearing that an evangelist of old, Billy Sunday, once said, "I like the way I preach the gospel better than the way you don't!"

These same people don't have any problem handing out flyers to invite folks to special events or sales.

2) They don't want to be seen as attempting to "push" a religious message on someone.

These need to realize that we should be sharing the gospel to the unbeliever, not to meet some need of our own, but for his needs. It has been said that a dog can tell when a person is afraid of him. In the same way, an unsaved person can tell when you are attempting to share the gospel to meet your own needs instead of his. We share the gospel because others so desperately need to hear and believe it!

How many of these same people would dare walk by a person's house at night that was on fire without trying to awaken the inhabitants when there is a chance that those inside are asleep? Is attempting to alert others of an eternal fire that awaits them any less important?

3) They are afraid of what others might think of them, concerned that others might think them to be "holier than thou."

If you have that attitude, you need to make sure your own attitude is correct. We are not saved due to our own goodness and our message is not one of reformation but one of explaining that eternal life is a gift.

You also might need to reexamine the message of the gospel. Many, after years of attending church services, listening to radio preachers, or reading Christian literature are quite confused. Let us look at what the Scriptures say:

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-5)

The good news, Part 1, is that Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day to prove that his payment was a satisfactory one and that he has power over death. In other words, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for our sins. There is no one for whom Jesus did not die. He tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). Our benefiting from this is based on whether or not we believe.

Our obtaining eternal life is not about what we do but about what we believe. Many teach that we must confess our sins, turn from our sins, give or commit our life to God, and then remain faithful to Him. Some add water baptism and other religious activities. The Bible teaches we must believe in Jesus--that is it!

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. (John 6:47)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

We cannot earn or deserve it.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8 & 9)

Once we believe (trust in Jesus to save us), we can know we have eternal life.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:13)

There is nothing "holier than thou" about letting others know about this tremendous "gift!"

NOTE: All quoted scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers (Scripture Emphases Mine.)

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