

Charles Spurgeon's 4 Irrefutable Keys to Church Growth

Charles Spurgeon has rightly been acclaimed as the “prince of preachers.” Apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists and teachers honor him as probably history’s greatest pastoral leader.

Mr. Spurgeon had a megachurch before the term existed. He ministered weekly to over 10,000 in his Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit without amplification or the benefit of social media.

Ministering over four decades, he’s considered one of Christianity’s most prolific communicators. It’s unprecedented that his 63 volumes of over 4,000 sermons are still utilized by leaders throughout the world to this day.

In my 46 years of ministry, I’ve never encountered anyone like him. His incredible blending of evangelistic and pastoral ministry provides us with many insights into healthy church growth. If he were alive today and we tuned in to his podcast, he’d pass along this time-tested wisdom.

Suggestions From Spurgeon

1. Prioritize the primacy of evangelism. “Soul-winning is the chief business of the Christian minister; indeed it should be the main pursuit of every true believer.”

Intentionally living the adventure of lifestyle evangelism was atop Charles Spurgeon’s shortlist. He didn’t make the mistake of merely delegating evangelism to an evangelist or an “evangelistic ministry team”; he engaged in missional living with passion and built it into the culture of the church by

his example.

Turn up the volume on your computer to hear him through the corridors of time. In his classic book *The Soul Winner*, he said emphatically, "Our main business is to win souls!"

"If you are eager for real joy, such as you may think over and sleep upon, I am persuaded that no joy of growing wealthy, no joy of increasing knowledge, no joy of influence over your fellow-creatures, no joy of any other sort, can ever be compared with the rapture of saving the soul from death, and helping to restore our lost brethren to our great Father's house."

2. Pray for and engage the lost. "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for!"

For decades I've encouraged and equipped Christians to slow down and enjoy the adventure of lifestyle evangelism. Many opportunities for sharing Christ come disguised as unwelcomed interruptions.

Many Christians miss divine appointments because they're simply too hurried in their daily lives. They're so busy looking for the shortest lines, avoiding conversations, always trying to get in and out as fast as possible.

Yesterday at my doctor's appointment I asked the young physician how he got involved in his local church. He said it all started for him and his family of five when he was waiting in a checkout line and a kind man struck up a conversation that eventually led to an invitation to visit his local church. None of it would have happened if the man was simply focused on getting out of Costco as fast as he could!

Heidi Baker, ministering the miraculous in Mozambique since 1980, says her core life principle is, “stop for the one.” I live by an acronym, .-Helping Other People Every day. Walk through the Gospels with Jesus and observe how He consistently took time for individuals.

Do you quickly proceed in and out of your garage, scurrying like a groundhog, using your remote to avoid casual conversations with neighbors that could lead to eventually sharing the gospel?

Recently at the mall where I walk daily, I engaged a lady shuttering her store, only to discover that her child had just died choking on a nugget at the food court. Weeks before, I paused to converse with a cleaning lady who looked sad, only to discover that her husband had died of cancer two weeks prior. In both cases I empathized, gave my personal testimony tract and in the second instance, prayed with the grieving woman to receive Jesus as her Lord and Savior.

3. Cultivate fresh motivation. Developing an evangelistic lifestyle requires inspiration because we’re easily distracted and tend to drift. We all benefit from hearing fresh testimonies and quotes reminding us “there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous men who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7).

Greg Laurie says, “Next to knowing Jesus, the greatest joy I have is leading others to Jesus Christ then watching them grow.”

Billy Graham said, “My one purpose in life is to help people find a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.”

Jesus told us, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Notice He emphasized not just saving but seeking. That requires intentionality—being proactive.

John Wooden, college basketball's greatest coach, said, "Never confuse activity with achievement." Pastors with abundant demands upon their time easily fall short here. Recall John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Movement, telling us from his research: "I found that there are two things pastors don't do. They don't pray and they don't evangelize."

This is why Charles Spurgeon kept the vision before his people and sprinkled sermons with illustrations demonstrating his gospel-sharing activity. When pastors give sermons and don't share current stories of their evangelizing or refer to testimonies from years ago, it's no wonder God's people aren't involved in missional living.

4. Design and distribute testimony tracts. The greatest tool I've used for over 46 years to "plant seeds" for the gospel is my personal testimony tract. Connecting with people relationally, naturally and lovingly, I normally give out about three tracts daily. This translates into over 1,000 people reached with the gospel yearly, and in my lifetime, that's approximately 46,000 people, enough to fill a stadium!

Now I'm not talking about cheesy, junky tracts emphasizing hell but attention-getting stories of people's personal journey to Christ.

Spurgeon said, "When preaching and private talk are not available, you have a tract ready as this is often an effectual method. A gospel tract may often be the seed of eternal life; therefore, do not go out without your tracts!"

I've encouraged and helped people for decades custom-design their own tracts to overcome him (Satan) "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11).

Mao used tracts for his Cultural Revolution. Communists utilized tracts throughout the century. Labor unions use them. Political campaigns employ them. Thomas Paine and our American Revolution were fueled by tracts. Martin Luther and the

Reformers made great use of them. South Koreans have attached them to helium-filled balloons to bring the transformative message of the gospel to North Koreans.

Hudson Taylor was converted by a tract. So was George Whitfield. Moise Rosen, founder of Jews for Jesus, was converted through a tract. Mitsuo Fuchida, air commander of the infamous Pearl Harbor attack, came to Christ through a tract given him by a prisoner of war.

Just like a Fitbit watch keeps one alert to daily activity, carrying tracts reminds us of our sacred responsibility to consistently share our faith. And, by the way, over the decades I believe I've had maybe 10 or 12 people refuse one because I'm always respectful and winsome in engaging people before I ask them if they'd like to be encouraged by something of my spiritual journey. They usually love the family picture on the back as well.

Here's the deal: When Billy Graham died, there were abundant prophetic words resurrected, exciting us regarding the "end-time harvest" and our privilege and responsibility to take the baton. Go to YouTube for the gift of five 24-minute *free* inspiring videos on "Loving Lifestyle Evangelism" (Larry Tomczak playlist) to help you, your family and your church.

And remember, Mr. Spurgeon is part of the "cloud of witnesses" cheering us on from the grandstand with the One who said, "Go ... and remember I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Be sure to check out Larry's 15-minute episodes on the "Here's the Deal" podcast!