

Preacher's Pen points

“Operation Global Freedom”



Over the past year we've heard the various code phrases for US military actions—Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Iron Hammer, etc. Those expressions send a message to all the soldiers of the vision of their commanders. God's people in a similar way need a vision of what our commander seeks of us. His code phrase might be “operation global freedom”. Every day our goal should be to liberate someone from the guilt and power of sin and bring them into the salvation of Jesus Christ. Each of us, as soldiers in the Lord's army, has a role in that operation, and our vision is essential to its success.

Look Around

Wherever we are every day, there are people who need the Lord—our fellow-workers, the person behind the counter at a store, our friends and family. “Lift up your eyes” (Jn. 4:35) and see seven people you'd like to reach with the gospel and write down their names.

Look Up

The work of saving souls requires a prayerful spirit. Paul prayed that God would open doors for his teaching and open hearts to his message. Take the names you've written down to God in prayer. Ask Him to help you love and be an example to them. Ask Him to help open the door for teaching and spiritual encouragement. Watch God work in their lives and be ready to respond to His efforts to bring people to Him!

Look Out

An impersonal invitation rarely prompts people to make to become interested in the gospel; but a warm and friendly personal relationship prepares the way for effective evangelism. Look out for opportunities

to talk with those you hope to reach. Invite them into your home to see how you live. Share with them your thoughts about your life. Let them see that you live a happy life while serving the Lord. When you see interest in spiritual things, suggest a Bible study on that subject. Use it as an occasion to help them see the relevance of the Scripture to their lives.

Look Forward

Learn to listen to others. Take note in their conversations of their needs, their problems, their hopes and dreams. Using this information, think about what might be the next step toward their conversion. Anticipate opportunities that might be useful to those you want to reach. Perhaps you could request a lesson that might be useful to a non-Christian friend and then strategically invite them to attend that lesson; or share with them the message by tape or CD. Your efforts to provide helpful information that relates to their lives will be appreciated.

Look After

Keep focused on those who show interest and help them make the incremental steps they need to make in their faith. Do not think so much about the destination (such as baptism); think more about the journey (steps of faith that lead to baptism). Where are the people you want to teach in their spiritual lives? What is the first thing they need to know or believe? Concentrate on that and lead them as they are ready for the next step. Avoid angry confrontations that cause people to turn away and close the door to discussion. Instead keep them moving in the right direction! Using these principles of evangelistic vision will help us all win souls for the Lord, our commander-in-chief!
—Johnny Felker

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15)