

83 % of evangelical Protestants in America agreed that good people of other religions can go to heaven. More than half—54% - of evangelical Protestants said yes, people of religions other than Christianity can go to heaven.

-via American Grace, How Religion Divides and Unites Us. By David Campbell

John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

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“Be All You Can Be” Jim Stauffer

For some twenty years the U.S. Army had this as an advertising slogan. Along with the phrase they would show a video of highly trained individuals performing military tasks the viewers could only dream of.

What most of us rarely thought was those young men were once sitting on the couch watching that video dreaming of performing those tasks.

How did they ever learn to do the things we saw in that film? That question could be asked of everyone who has honed his skills and learned to perform his tasks efficiently regardless of his profession.

Let me offer all of us some basic ideas that can lead to greater proficiency at anything we choose. Then let me encourage you to use these ideas in the greatest vocation you will ever have; being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

FOCUS:

There are so many things that serve as a distraction in the life of a servant of God. We truly need to learn to, “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” We absolutely must be willing to rid our lives of those things that work against our goal. If we allow life’s pleasures to take precedence we become thorny soil and our focus is destroyed by things of the world.

Accurately prioritizing is another thing that clears up the focus. How many times do we become consumed with things of less importance and ignore or leave undone items of greater urgency? Visiting those who are sick, either spiritually or physically is more important than household tasks. Look after spiritual needs of you, your family

Lenexa church of Christ 7845 Cottonwood Lenexa KS 66216 913-631-6519. Send a Copy to a Friend. Evangelist: Jim Stauffer. MEETING TIMES: Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM, Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM, Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM. Map showing location near Mill Creek Elementary School and highways 435 and 35.

and your brethren. “Set your mind on the things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth.” Paul tells the Colossians this is evidence we have been raised with Christ. (Col. 3:1,2) There will always be time later for those household tasks or things of lesser importance.

#### **SEEK INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTION:**

A person who is planning on becoming proficient at anything needs accurate information and proper instruction on the use of it. It does not make sense to undertake training and disregard the experts in that field.

Spiritual information and instruction is gathered by reading the manual God has provided. The Bible. If we plan to communicate His spiritual message to others we must first take it in ourselves. Regular Bible study is imperative for us to be a successful disciple of Christ. We must hear the message He sent while on earth and authorized through the Holy Spirit after He returned to heaven. If we incline our ear unto wisdom and apply our heart to understanding we will understand the fear of the Lord. (Pro. 2:1-5) We will then recognize “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” (Pro. 1:7)

#### **ADAPTATION:**

Using our natural skills to the fullest will be the most enjoyment and the most success we will experience. For this reason football coaches have large powerful players on the line of scrimmage and smaller faster players carrying the ball. No real genius here. But sometimes we lose sight of how to be most effective.

Each of us possess some skills to a greater extent than others. We must find a way to use those most effectively when carrying out our responsibilities as disciples.

Both Paul and Peter came from a strong Jewish background. And even though Peter first taught the Gentiles (Cornelius’ household) it was Paul who was chosen to spend his life’s work preaching to them. Apparently there were reasons God had for making that choice that led to the success Paul experienced.

You too, have strengths that can be beneficial to the cause of Christ. It is disingenuous for so many to say, “I cannot teach.” We can each use what talents we have to lead people to Christ. One talent each person should have is a love for God and Christ and for the souls of lost men. That alone will allow you to encourage people to study His word with those who can teach.

We must avoid becoming the one talent man in Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25. He was content to bury his talent. We can almost hear him say, “I cannot teach.” (He actually said he was afraid.) This response is choosing to sit on the sidelines and not be a participant. We know this incurred the wrath of God.

#### **GAIN EXPERIENCE**

All the learning and instruction we can gather from manuals and expert trainers only puts us in position to get on the job training. Our understanding from text books is necessary and yet it is incomplete without the ultimate classroom; the world. Once we begin to practice the fundamentals we gain experience and learn what is effective and what is not.

You have now prepared yourself to “make disciples.” Go to those you know who are in need of the Savior and provide them encouragement to seek Him. If you can teach them, do so. If not, introduce them to those who can. Each time you try these things you will gain valuable experience. You can use the lessons learned in “the school of hard knocks” to become more proficient as a seeker of the lost. You will not be perfect in the sense of flawless but you will become perfect in the sense of completeness. You will receive greater enjoyment from performing the tasks of a disciple of Jesus than from any efforts you will put forth in any other field of endeavor. God bless you as you go forth for His cause.

### ***Preparing The Soil***

Pioneer preacher “Raccoon” John Smith was once asked, “If the gospel is so plain, as you say it is, why do you have to labor so hard to get people to understand it?” Smith replied, “I have often prepared ground in the wilderness for a turnip patch, and though I had the kindest soil and the best seed, and the sowing was easy, I never got top nor root until I first took my ax and hoe and briar knife and went in and hacked and grubbed and cleared the ground. The Lord knows I do not esteem it hard to preach the simple gospel to those who are prepared to receive it, but it is labor indeed to root out prejudice, and cut down the systems, and clear away the sectarian trash that cumbers the minds and hearts of the people.”

*- Adapted from “The Life of Elder John Smith”*

#### **Some quotes worth pondering:**

“Don’t wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles, and less than perfect conditions. So what! Get started now!”

“In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity.”

**Think about this logic.**