

Old School - New Opportunities



Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only that which is useful for building up others according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

I prefer to meet with guys in a public setting, a restaurant, coffee shop etc. for discipleship. Most of the guys I meet with have opted to use the Bible app on their smart phone or some other electronic version of the Bible for reference during our time together. While I certainly use my Bible app frequently, when meeting one-on-one, I prefer to lug my old school “hard copy” of the Bible with me.

Over the years, during discipleship meetings, I have been asked by many others who happened to be in the restaurant or coffee shop, (at another table etc.), if I was a pastor, or if I could pray for them. I have found that God has opened opportunities as I attempted to be a part of the process

of “...building up others according to their needs...”. It seems to me that when I am in a public place, without realizing it, I find there are lots of “...those who listen.”

While the things said are important, it has been my experience that simply having the Bible on the table can open doors. A few years ago, one of my “Timothys” cancelled our meeting. I elected to go to the restaurant on my own to use the additional time to work on my Bible study (on which I was woefully behind). I asked for a table in what looked to be a section that was closed – well away from the other patrons so that I would not be distracted with conversations. As I dug into my study, I was interrupted by the waitress taking my order. She soon returned with my food and drink and asked me if I was a pastor. Somewhat annoyed again at the interruption, I forced a smile and explained that I was in sales, but I have a relationship with God and that studying the Bible gives me the opportunity to know Him more. She nodded and left again. About 2 minutes later, as I just got back into my study, she walked back and dropped a napkin on my open Bible on which she had written 3 questions – and she was gone again.

- 1) How can God forgive me for all the horrible things I have done?
- 2) How can I forgive myself?
- 3) Does God really care?

When she returned, I asked her if it was OK for her to sit and I had the chance to walk her through “Steps to Peace with God”. She broke down and cried and asked Jesus to forgive her and become her Lord and Savior.

As I reflect on that encounter, I am ashamed that I was so self-focused, but also amazed that she approached me to get her questions answered. My only conclusion was that she saw the Bible and somehow identified me with the Author. In Colossians 3:4 we are promised that God will identify us with Him when He returns. I am sure that moment will be

indescribably incredible.

Colossians 3:4 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

But I can't help but think that there is a significant advantage to being identified with Him now.

Mark 14:69

69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!"

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