

How To Give Away Your Faith

HANDOUT #6

64. There are some timeless lessons here that we must consider when sharing Jesus as we discern a person's spiritual condition & openness to the truth.
65. What is especially interesting is that, unlike the shepherd who goes after his lost "sheep" (15:4), and the woman who searches for her lost "coin" (15:8), the father does not go after his "younger son" but waits for him.
- 20 "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.
66. He undoubtedly loves him, longs for him, and watches for his return, but he — does not go out to rescue him — from the far country.
67. And I think the reason is because sometimes a person who is content to be lost must be allowed to experience—the consequences of his rebellion.
68. His "younger son" had to discover what life in the far country was really like—even to the point of eating with the pigs—before he would come to his senses and say, "I will get up and go to my father" (15:18).
69. If you are sharing Christ with a close friend or relative, there is a difficult lesson here — sometimes loving someone means not rescuing them from the consequences that God may be using to bring them — to repentance.
70. On the one hand, we do not want to enable their rebellion by doing too much, but neither do we want to abandon them by doing too little.
71. We love, we pray, we wait, and we leave room for God to do His work.
72. In this long three-part parable, the lost sheep is pursued—the lost coin is searched for —the older brother must be confronted—but the prodigal must sometimes — be allowed to come to — the end of himself.
73. Some might think Jesus was being hard on the religious leaders by telling this 3-part parable against them, but He did so *not because He hated* them, but because He *loved them & wanted them* to admit their need to be saved.
74. The shepherd goes after the lost sheep until he finds it—the woman looked diligently for the lost coin until she finds it — but the father waited and he watched & then he ran to embrace & to welcome home his prodigal son.
75. The emphasis throughout is not simply on the sinner seeking after God, but on God seeking after the sinner.

76. Just like in Genesis 3, the lost do not initiate the search for God, but rather God graciously takes the initiative to seek & to save the lost.
77. We find the same pattern in Luke 19:1-10 where Zacchaeus appears to be seeking Jesus for Luke tells us that “**he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him**” (Luke 19:4).
78. But then we clearly see Jesus take the initiative as recorded in Luke 19:5:

5 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.”

79. And that the initiative belongs to Jesus the record concludes in Luke 19:10 “**For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.**”
80. And so, by nature, “**THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD**” (Romans 3:11).
81. Because of fallen man’s condition, if left to himself, he would never take the initiative to be made right with God.
82. So while on the one hand it looks like Zacchaeus is seeking Jesus, Jesus makes clear that ultimately He is seeking Zacchaeus.
83. With the prodigal son he finally said, “**I will get up and go to my father**” but preceding his return the father is watching, the father sees, the father feels compassion, the father runs, the father embraces, the father kisses.
84. *While* the son’s repentance is real, the father’s love is prior to our seeking, for people always seek God in response to His revelation & to His grace.

**6 Seek the LORD while He may be found;
Call upon Him while He is near (Isaiah 55:6).**

85. Whatever one’s theological conclusions are concerning the precise nature of the drawing power of God—the fundamental point is still unmistakable and it is that God takes the initiative in bringing sinners to Jesus.

44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; (John 6:44a)

86. And 1 John 4:19 summarizes the whole principle we have been studying and it is the simple truth that “**We love, because He first loved us.**”
87. Our love for God is not—the beginning of the story—God’s love for us is.

Our ways are not God's ways.

When a person follows his own inclinations for obtaining salvation, it leads only to ruin. The Bible is clear that the good things we do cannot bridge the separation between God and man. The Bible warns in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Good deeds are not the solution.

Many people think that doing good deeds are the solution for the sins they have committed. But good works cannot remove the stain of sin, which is why God says, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). In addition, good deeds cannot save because they cannot satisfy the just penalty for sin, which is death.

The third principle explains God's initiative in Christ...

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God's Love Moved Him To Rescue Us From Our Sin

God's Love

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

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88. Again, here in Point #3, we are focusing on God's initiating love, the love that moved Him to take the initiative to rescue us from our sin, as clearly spelled as in 1 John 4:10 listed on page ____.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

89. The Apostle John emphasizes — "**not that we loved God, but that He loved us**" giving us the biblical pattern that it is not primarily sinful man searching for God — but a holy God seeking after sinful ____.
90. This is precisely what you are underscoring when you share Christ, that salvation does not begin with man's initiative but with God's, sometimes seen in something as simple as an opportunity to ____ the good news.
91. God brings people to us because He seeks, He calls, He convicts, He draws, and He graciously provides an opportunity for the sinner to hear the good news and to ____ reconciled to Him (Luke 19:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20).
92. While it may ____ that some are seeking after God for the truth, even when a sinner responds to God, that response does not mean that man initiated the process, for God's grace always precedes man's response.
93. The sinner responds because God has ____ acted toward him in grace, as "**the Lord opened**" Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel Paul preached:

13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul (Acts 16:13-14).

94. Paul speaks, Lydia hears, the Lord opens her heart, and she responds, a pattern we find ____ the way through the New Testament (John 16:8).

95. In John 6:44, Jesus plainly places the initiative for people to be saved _____ on our trying to come to God on our own but on His initiative.

44 “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

96. While verses like this and John 6:65—explicitly place God’s action _____ man’s coming to faith in Christ—the Calvinist fails to distinguish between ‘the necessity’ of divine drawing and ‘the extent’ of that divine drawing.

97. John 6:44 is a favorite verse—used by most Calvinists in order to support their doctrine of total inability, reasoning that the initiative for conversion begins & ends with God, based on those whom He has chosen to ____ saved.

44 “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

98. The Calvinist argument from John 6:44 is that the pronoun “him” appears in ____ clauses, and so they argue that since “the Father . . . draws him,” Jesus therefore promises to “raise him up on the last day.”

99. While that is true, that God’s drawing is necessary for anyone to come to Christ, it does not explicitly state that everyone who is “drawn” will inevitably come to faith ____ Christ.

100. The Calvinist assumes that everyone whom God draws will out of absolute necessity believe and will therefore be raised & secured _____ eternity.

101. The problem is that the Calvinist fails to look at the contextual and the grammatical antecedent of the pronoun “_____” in verse 44.

102. The Traditionalist or the non-Calvinist points out that the condition for the resurrection — in the surrounding context is conditioned on the individual (him) believing in Christ, ____ merely being drawn.

103. Jesus makes this clear in this context for He just stated in verse ____:

“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

104. And just a few verses later in John 6:54, Jesus will repeat the ____ truth:

54 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:54).

- 105. John 6:44 must be read in light of the context of these verses such that one may confidently conclude that God’s drawing makes coming possible _____ necessary, but the promise of resurrection is connected to faith in Christ.
- 106. The first clause establishes a necessary condition for coming but it _____ explicitly states that “**Everyone whom the Father draws will come.**”
- 107. This conclusion becomes very problematic because in the broader _____ of John’s Gospel, equating what Calvinists call God’s “effectual” drawing with guaranteed conversion, collides with Jesus’ statement in John 12:32.

32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

- 108. Furthermore, His statement, “**I will draw all men to Myself**” makes plain that divine drawing need not be limited to the elect — unless one falsely concludes that all will be saved—a conclusion Calvinists rightly _____.
- 109. Therefore, John 6:44 clearly teaches the necessity of God’s gracious initiative in reaching lost sinners — without establishing that _____ drawing is restricted to the elect who are guaranteed to believe.
- 110. Now obviously, Jesus is not teaching that by His drawing “**all men**” to Himself, all people will be saved as liberal theologians have sometimes claimed from this verse in order _____ falsely teach universal salvation.
- 111. Remember, He has been speaking of judgment, contrasting those who hate their life in this world to keep it for eternal life with those who love their life and therefore _____ it (John 12:25).
- 112. Jesus is responding to these Greeks who wanted to “**see**” Him (12:21) _____ He is answering them — by reminding them — that God’s saving concern extends to “**all men/all people**,” without distinction—Jew & Gentile alike.
- 113. In some respects the Traditionalist position emphasizes the exact opposite of the Calvinist position—because what we find here is that Jesus does not _____ people to come to Him—but rather He “**draws**” men to Himself.
- 114. Man’s free will is not “bulldozed” over, for each person must still exercise personal _____ in Jesus (John 6:29; 6:35; 6:40; 6:47; 6:54).
- 115. Jesus teaches that His death on the cross, still in the future, made salvation available — to anyone and to everyone — who desires to be _____.

116. Both Traditionalist/Provisionist/non-Calvinist & Calvinist/Reformed alike agree that we respond because God has _____ acted toward us in grace.
117. Where Christians before Augustine differ from John Calvin is that (*as we have defended from the Bible*) God's gracious initiative is _____ restricted to a select few, but is extended to all starting with God initiative with Adam.
118. It is not by accident that immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, they did not go looking for God—but rather they hid from _____.
119. Sin did not cause them to seek Him—it caused them to _____ from Him.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8).

120. It was not Adam who sought after God — but God who came seeking _____ him, calling out to Adam in the garden & asking him a series of questions.

9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”
10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” 11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”
13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Genesis 3:9–13).

121. This should give us confidence as we share the gospel because just as God came looking for them calling out “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9), God is searching through _____ for fallen men as we share Christ.
122. There are dozens of example of this truth — like a golden thread throughout the Bible & probably—most famously Luke _____.
123. The beauty of the timing of Jesus telling this parable is the occasion when “the Pharisees and the scribes grumble” — as they object to the _____ that Jesus “receives sinners and eats with them” (15:2).
124. The principle of God initiation is seen in the parable of the lost sheep (15:1–7), the shepherd goes looking for the sheep & with the lost coin (15:8–10) as the woman searches diligently for what was _____.
125. And in the picture of the lost son (15:11–32), where we see the Father's heart longing for His rebellious son to return because He _____ Him.

126. We must not forget that Jesus is responding to their criticism of His seeking sinners & so He gives _____ illustrations of God's pursuit.
127. The shepherd like the God the _____ goes after the lost sheep.
128. The woman like God the _____ searches for the lost coin.
129. The father like God the _____ longs for the return of his lost son.
130. The question is not whether Calvinists believe God takes the initiative with sinful man — for they certainly ____.
131. The question is whether the Bible teaches that God's saving initiative is extended _____ to those whom He has unconditionally chosen.
132. The Calvinist would object to the Traditionalist's characterization of _____ view as making God's call & saving initiative disingenuous & not genuine.
133. They would reason that God — can sincerely _____ those whom He has not elected to salvation while genuinely saving those whom He has elected, for they say Jesus Himself said, "**For many are called, but few are chosen.**"
134. They would further argue that no one would ever accuse Jesus, _____ is "**the truth**" (John 14:6) of being less than truthful.
135. Therefore, if He could sincerely make such a statement, they maintain that they can affirm the _____ distinction without making God's call insincere.
136. But does Jesus' statement _____ Matthew 22:14, "**many are called, but few are chosen**" necessarily establish their teaching of unconditional election?
137. We have seen that unconditional election is the Calvinist position that God, before the foundation of the world, sovereignly chose certain individuals to be saved without basing that choice on any future act of _____ in Christ.
138. So, the Calvinist argument is essentially that while God calls many people, only the elect receive His irresistible call; therefore, "**many are called, but few are chosen,**" with those _____ being unconditionally chosen by God.
139. However, I think that if the passage is studied carefully it does not _____ that God initiates with all & that all have *an equal opportunity* to respond.
140. As we consider Matthew 22:14 — the context of the statement _____ critical, so let's briefly step through the parable to determine this verses' context.