



“Ready, Set, Go”

1 Peter 3

Small Group Plan

Read to the group the following piece by World Vision President, Stan Mooneyham

I've heard a lot about soul-winning, but not very much about soul-caring. We can always care. We can't always win. It is usually possible, I think, to know when one is loved, when one's soul is being cared for rather than coveted. To care, one must become vulnerable, let someone else matter; surrender in some sense a measure of one's own sovereignty. Caring is an other-directed concept. To win, you have to come in ahead of someone else. You are in competition. When the focus is on being a winner, the soul being won tends to become secondary, almost an afterthought. If there is any "winner" in soul-winning" it is surely the one who hears and acts upon the good news, not the one who transmits it. Soul-winning, as we commonly use the expression, often deals in numbers, fostering the impression that evangelicals are interested primarily in spiritual body counts or in completing a somewhat burdensome assignment with as little inconvenience as possible. Perhaps there are some evangelists who "win" with only superficial caring, but I hope they are in the minority. If we want to "win" without moving close to the lost one, without touching him, without sharing something of his life and hope and hurt, without venturing into his lostness, without trying to make him a friend before making him a convert we're going in the wrong direction.

— From **Souls Are For More Than Winning**

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How do you respond to this editorial on evangelism?
- Why does he contrast “soul winning” with “soul caring”?
- How would you describe “soul-caring?”

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— BE RESOLUTE —

“... eager to do good ...”

1 Peter 3:13-14

¹³Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”

- Where does our Christian determination come from?
- What keeps it going?
- What is most likely to sidetrack a ministry resolution?

— BE READY —

“... always be prepared ...”

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

- What kind of “answer” is Peter talking about?
- Why is reverence for “Christ as Lord” the most powerful fuel for ministry?
- What are some inferior fuels?
- Peter mentions “everyone who asks” — Who in our day to day experience is most likely to ask questions or want to know about our faith?
- How can we best be “be prepared”?

— BE RESPECTFUL —

“... with gentleness and respect ...”

1 Peter 3:15b-18

^{15b}But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

- Why does Peter feel the need to add the “gentleness and respect” clause to his ministry principles (v. 15b)?
- How do we reconcile showing our “good behavior” (v. 16) with Jesus’ caution to not “do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them”? (Matthew 6:1)?
- What is the difference between a person who suffers for “doing good” and one who suffers for “doing evil” (v. 17)?
- What does the suffering of Jesus teach us about life in a difficult, sometimes even hostile world (v. 18)?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- How does fear sometimes close down ministry or blind us to its opportunities?
- What are your reasons “*for the hope*” you have (v. 15)?
- How is malicious slander used against Christianity today (v. 16)?
- How have you felt the effects of malicious slander against your faith?
- How can we become more **Resolute**, more determined to do good, no matter what may come?
- How can we train ourselves to be more **Ready** when opportunities present themselves?
- How can we maintain **Respect** in a culture that is driven by selfishness and sarcasm?
- Close with prayer, asking God for these three — **Resolution, Readiness, and Respect.**