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The Way of the Master

**How to share your faith simply, effectively, biblically
. . . the way Jesus did**

KIRK CAMERON
and
RAY COMFORT



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The Way of the Master: How to Share Your Faith Simply, Effectively, Biblically . . . the Way Jesus Did

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**Woe to you
lawyers! For
you have taken
away the key of
knowledge. You
did not enter in
yourselves, and
those who were
entering in you
hindered.** LUKE 11:52

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FOREWORD

When I became a Christian at the age of eighteen, I was a successful young actor who had attained riches and fame. But a faithful pastor helped me to realize that my wealth and Hollywood charm wouldn't help me on Judgment Day. I learned that because God is holy and just, He cannot be bribed. Despite the fact that I was admired by my fans and considered myself to be a good person, I came to understand that I had grievously sinned against God and needed His forgiveness. I learned about God's love and mercy shown through Jesus' death on the cross, and it overwhelmed me. I wholeheartedly turned away from my sin, trusted God to forgive me, and asked Him to make me the man He wanted me to be. Someone gave me a Bible, which I began to read, and I fell in love with the One who first loved me and gave His own life for me.

I can honestly say that nothing in all my life compares with the joy of knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But after learning the principles of biblical evangelism—the principles contained in this book—I fell to my knees with a deeper sense of brokenness and gratitude for the Cross than ever before. I now understand why the apostle Paul felt indebted to all men and compelled to preach the gospel to every creature. Because I now know God's will for my life and better understand God's call to every believer, I too can say, "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). These foundation-shaking principles have opened my eyes to the destiny of

the unsaved, taught me how to share my faith effectively, and shattered my lukewarm concern for my unsaved family members and friends.

Who do you know who isn't saved? Your mother or father? A sibling? A good friend? Your spouse? Your child? Think of their terrible fate if they die without Christ. I'm sure you want to share your faith, but perhaps you're afraid, or maybe you don't feel equipped. This book will help you overcome your fears and give you the tools you need. With Ray Comfort's powerful and biblically sound text, together with my commentaries and real-life stories of sharing my faith, I know this publication will be a great blessing to you. My prayer is that God would do within you what He did within me. May you, too, be given a fresh and deeper understanding of the true gospel, and may it ignite a fire in you to compassionately share your faith with those you know and love. Please don't let anything distract you as you read *The Way of the Master*. May God richly bless you.

Kirk Cameron

PREFACE

The roots of this book go way back to an experience I had in the early 1980s as I waited to take off in an airplane. I noticed that someone had left a small scrap of paper sitting precariously at the top of the seat pocket. As I leaned forward and took hold of the two-inch-square piece of paper, I mumbled in semi-jest, “Could be a word from the Lord.” I turned it over and my eyes widened as I read, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now (John 16:12, KJV).” I remember being mystified by the words “ye cannot bear them now.”

One year later, I entered into the deepest, darkest, most frightening time of my life as I began to suffer ongoing episodes of irrational fear. These panic attacks left me so broken that for more than a year I couldn’t even muster enough courage to eat a meal with my family. It took five long years to recover from these experiences.¹ I now understand what the verb *to bear* means. In its various usages it can mean “to endure,” “to bring forth,” and “to disseminate.” That terrible time left me with a broken spirit, yet it brought me to a point where I could endure the attacks and bring forth and disseminate the many things I had learned. This book is about those “many things.”

In October 2001, when I met Kirk Cameron, one of the first things he said was, “How can we get this teaching out there?”² We decided that one way was for him to lend his name to this book and to add his personal comments

in the places that stirred his heart. (Kirk's comments and additions are marked by an arrow: ➤.)

The purpose of this book is simply to equip you to share the gospel biblically. After you read it, I suspect you will want to learn more, so I have compiled another publication called *The Evidence Bible*, a “munitions resource” for soldiers of Christ that is designed to help you hone your evangelistic skills to hit your target with precision and power. *The Evidence Bible* was a finalist for the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) 2002 Gold Medallion Book Award, and it has been commended by Franklin Graham, Josh McDowell, Dr. D. James Kennedy, and many other Christian leaders.

Other resources to help you share the gospel simply, effectively, and biblically—the way Jesus did—include our online School of Biblical Evangelism and our television series, *The Way of the Master*. You will find more information about these resources on our Web site: www.wayofthemaster.com. While you're there, sign up for the free newsletter, and together let's reach the world for Jesus Christ while there is still time.

1

**DERELICTION
OF DUTY**

Do you enjoy worshiping God? Most people in the Church would say they do. Every Sunday all across the country, auditoriums are filled with hand-raising, God-loving Christians singing their praises to God. That's understandable, because when the Holy Spirit dwells within us, it's not hard to worship our glorious and worthy Creator. It's as natural for Christians to worship the Lord as it is for flowers to open their petals in the warm sunlight.

On the other hand, demonstrating our love for God through our obedience to His will (John 14:15) doesn't happen quite as naturally. It takes a concerted effort to obey the Great Commission and follow in Christ's footsteps, seeking to save the lost. Nevertheless, our professed love and worship of God should show itself in a determined devotion to do His will.

May I ask you a personal question? When was the last time you shared your faith with an unsaved person? When did you last meditate on the fact that all who die in their sins will be cast into a lake of fire? In his book *The Coming Revival*, Dr. Bill Bright notes that only 2 percent of American churchgoers share their faith with others.¹ That is tragic. If the love of God dwells in us, how can we not be horrified by the fate of the lost? Yet, many professing Christians today are so locked into worship (with the volume turned high) that they seem to give little or no thought to the fate of the ungodly.

To make a very important point, I would like for you to consider the following scenario:

An experienced big-city firefighter was charged yesterday with grave neglect of duty. Prosecutors maintain that he abandoned his responsibility and betrayed the people of the city when he failed to release rescue equipment during a recent fire, resulting in the needless and tragic deaths of a family of five.

The lead prosecuting attorney said that for more than three minutes after arriving at the scene, the firefighter sat in his vehicle, wearing earphones and listening to a CD, while a family of five screamed to be rescued from the sixth floor of the burning building. Horrified bystanders reported that, as flames licked at the mother's clothing, she cried out in terror and fell to her death, still clutching an infant in her arms.

The distraught onlookers also said that the father held two terrified children as he was engulfed by the massive flames. This terrifying drama took place in full view of the firefighter as he remained seated in the fire truck listening to the CD.

Eyewitnesses were sickened when they discovered that the reason the firefighter had remained in the locked emergency vehicle was simply to test a new high-tech CD player that he had purchased as a gift for the fire chief.

The chief immediately distanced himself from the defendant and dishonorably discharged him from the fire department. In a prepared statement, the chief said that there were no words to describe such a betrayal of those the firefighter was sworn to protect.

At the trial, the defense pleaded "no contest," but added that the defendant had gone to great personal sacrifice to purchase the expensive gift for the chief, and he hoped that the judge would take that into account when passing sentence.

What do you think would be a fitting punishment for this firefighter's serious crime—probation? Two years in jail? Twenty years? Life? Death? What sentence would you give the negligent firefighter?

Perhaps you're saying, "That's ridiculous. A firefighter would never do that." Allow me to apply the parable: If you and I are not seeking to save the

lost “with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (Jude 1:23), are we not, in effect, negligent firefighters? That’s a sobering question, isn’t it?

Am I saying that if we don’t evangelize we’re not saved? Of course not. But if we would expect a firefighter to make saving lives a priority, are we honest enough to judge ourselves by the same standard? Are we doing all we can to rescue the lost, or are we sitting passively in the pews while people perish?

I recognize that these questions are shocking—and perhaps you’re feeling a bit put off at this point. But I urge you to stay with me. My purpose is not to offend, but it is to get your attention and to present things as they really are. After all, what the Bible tells us about the fate of the lost (Revelation 20:15) is pretty shocking.

In Revelation 3:1-3, Jesus says to the church at Sardis, “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

Oswald J. Smith said, “Oh, my friends, we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the real work of the Church, that of evangelizing and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected.” We have been gazing to the heavens while sinners are sinking into hell.

Worship is the highest calling of the Christian, and we can see in the book of Revelation that the Church will one day be consumed in worship before the throne of the Almighty. But when we look back at the book of Acts, we don’t find the Church consumed with worship. Instead, we find that those Christians were devoted to reaching the lost, to the point that they willingly gave their lives to preach the gospel.

Time is short. Let us not sit passively by during these crucial days of opportunity, drowning out the cries of a dying humanity with the sweet sounds of worship. Let us reevaluate our priorities, take off the earphones, unlock the doors, become equipped, and demonstrate the depth of our love for God by rescuing those who are about to perish.

I wonder if you have been praying for revival. Many are, and that's good. But if we make revival sovereign and don't share our faith with the lost, in effect this is what we are saying: "Lord, I know that you have commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. But we will stay here and pray. We know that you have chosen the 'foolishness' of preaching to save them that believe. But we will stay here and pray. And we know that the Bible asks us, 'How will they hear without a preacher?' But we will stay here and pray, because it sure is easier to talk to God about people than it is to talk to people about God."

C. T. Studd said: "We Christians too often substitute prayer for playing the game. Prayer is good; but when used as a substitute for obedience, it is nothing but a blatant hypocrisy, a despicable Pharisaism. . . . To your knees, man! And to your Bible! Decide at once! Don't hedge! Time flies! Cease your insults to God. Quit consulting flesh and blood. Stop your lame, lying, and cowardly excuses."

A. W. Tozer hit the nail on the head: "Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late—and how little revival has resulted? I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work. To pray for revival while ignoring the plain precept laid down in Scripture is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience."

God has given the Church the ability (under His hand) to govern the tides of revival. A. W. Pink writes, "It is true that [many] are praying for worldwide revival. But . . . it would be more timely, and more scriptural, for prayer to be made to the Lord of the Harvest that He would raise up and thrust forth laborers who would fearlessly and faithfully preach those truths which are calculated to bring about a revival."

That is the purpose of this book—to put into your hands "truths which are calculated to bring about a revival."

2

**PHENOMENAL GROWTH . . . BUT
WHERE HAS IT GONE?**

We live in exciting times. All around us we are seeing signs of the end of the age. Nation is rising against nation. There are wars, earthquakes, famines, and violence. The Jews are back in Jerusalem and the city has become a “burdensome stone” to the nations (Zechariah 12:3, KJV). Jesus said that iniquity (or lawlessness) would abound (Matthew 24:12), and it certainly has. At the same time, we have seen the phenomenal rise of megachurches with congregations in the tens of thousands; we have heard of millions in Russia, China, and Africa coming to the Savior; and pockets of revival have sprung up in the United States and other parts of the world. These are indeed exciting times.

Yet, with all the excitement, it seems that many Christians in the United States have overlooked a few statistical inconsistencies. In 1996, for example, a survey conducted by the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York found that “18 percent of abortion patients describe themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians.”¹ That is, of all those who murdered their own children, nearly one in five professed faith in Jesus Christ. That is difficult to reconcile with the fact that Christians are supposed to love God and love others as much as they love themselves.

In 1994, the Barna Research Group found further evidence that all is not well in the contemporary Church. A survey revealed that one in four American adults who said they were born again also believed that Jesus sinned

while He was on the earth. Think for a moment of the implications of such a theology. Here we have millions of “believers” who supposedly confess that Jesus is Lord, and yet they think He sinned. They either don’t know what the Bible teaches about Jesus or they believe it is inaccurate when it says that Jesus “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21), that He was “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15), and that He “committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). Furthermore, if Jesus sinned, it would mean that He wasn’t the spotless Lamb of God the Scriptures say He was (1 Peter 1:19); that His sacrifice wasn’t perfect; and that when God accepted Jesus’ death as an atonement for our sins, He sanctioned a “contaminated payment” and is therefore corrupt by nature. Sadly, the multitudes who profess faith in Jesus yet deny His sinless perfection appear to be strangers to true regeneration.

Some years ago, the Barna Research Group revealed that 62 percent of Americans claim to have “a relationship with Jesus Christ that is meaningful to them.” Yet a Gallup poll taken around the same time found that, of those Americans who say they have a relationship with the Savior, only 10 percent (approximately) were what the Gallup researchers called “a breed apart”: “They are more tolerant of people of diverse backgrounds. They are involved in charitable activities. They are involved in practical Christianity. They are absolutely committed to prayer.”

That sounds like normal, biblical Christianity, but if it applies to only 10 percent of the Church, it means there are great masses of people who say that Jesus Christ is meaningful to them but who are not “a breed apart.” They are not involved in good works, nor are they tolerant of others. Neither are they involved in practical Christianity or committed to prayer. In other words, there are millions of people in America who insinuate that they belong to Jesus Christ, but their lives don’t match their claims. Another Gallup poll found “very little difference in the behavior of the churched and unchurched on a wide range of items including lying, cheating, and stealing.” These surveys were taken during the 1990s, but is there any reason to believe the situation has improved since then?

According to the book *The Day America Told the Truth*, 91 percent of Americans lie regularly at work or at home, 86 percent lie regularly to parents, and 75 percent lie regularly to friends. A staggering 92 percent own a

Bible, but only 11 percent read it daily. Other surveys have found that 90 percent of Americans pray, but 87 percent do not believe in all of the Ten Commandments. To top it off, 61 percent, according to a Roper Center poll, believe that premarital sex is not morally wrong.

A more recent Barna poll, reported in the October 24, 2003, edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, noted that “one out of ten born-again Christians—those who believe entry into heaven is solely based on confession of sins and faith in Jesus Christ—also believe in reincarnation, which violates Christian tenets . . . and half believe a person can earn salvation based on good deeds even without accepting Christ as the way to eternal life” (emphasis added). Read the last part of that quote again.

When I travel, I often channel surf in my hotel room in an effort to find something wholesome to watch on television. This often means crossing the polluted and shark-infested waters of MTV. If anything epitomizes today’s foul-mouthed, sexually perverted, depraved, blasphemous, and rebellious generation, it is MTV. Nevertheless, a surprising number of Christian teenagers watch MTV, according to an article in the December 1995 issue of *Youth Leader* magazine: “More Christian teens watch MTV each week (42 percent) than non-Christians (33 percent), according to a Barna Research Group survey of evangelical teens.”

The article went on to quote Barna surveys showing that of these same teens, 65 percent said they prayed daily. An amazing 72 percent believed the Bible. However, 66 percent confessed that they had lied to a parent or teacher in the last three months, 55 percent had had sex, 55 percent had cheated on an exam, and 20 percent had either gotten drunk or used illegal drugs.

In an interview on a popular national radio program, a Christian youth leader spoke with great concern about how young people were “leaving the Church in droves.” He had taken a survey to find out why these teenagers were turning their backs on God, and he cited the number one reason as “a lack of opportunity in the Church,” implying that the Church should get its act together and give young people more opportunities.

Ask any pastor if there are opportunities to serve within his church and he will no doubt tell you of the lack of people willing to teach Sunday school, visit the sick and the elderly, go out with the evangelism team, clean the church building, etc.

Perhaps there is another reason why young people are leaving the Church in droves. Today there are many who name the name of Christ but who never “depart from iniquity” (2 Timothy 2:19). They are false converts who “ask Jesus into their heart” but are actually unconverted because they have never truly repented. The truth is that if someone’s heart is still in the world—if he is a “Judas” at heart—he will find *any* excuse to stay there. It is important that we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Those who allow sin in their lives are actually opening themselves up to demonic influence, just as Judas did.

If Judas had been given a survey form to fill out, he would likely have had many justifications for his betrayal of the Savior and his falling away:

- He was publicly humiliated by Jesus when he suggested giving funds to the poor.
- He felt a deep sense of rejection because he was not part of the “inner circle.”
- He needed the money.
- The chief priests made him do it.
- The devil made him do it.
- The responsibility of looking after the finances became too much for him.
- He was abused as a child.
- He had a betrayal syndrome.
- He lacked a father figure.
- He didn’t think his actions would have the grisly repercussions they had.

There are some who believe that Judas had never even been a believer. There is a good reason for this, because Jesus said of him, “One of you is a devil” (John 6:70). That’s not something Jesus would likely say about one of His true followers.

The Parabolic Key

In Mark 4:3-8, Jesus taught the crowd the well-known parable of the sower:

Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when

the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

When Jesus told His disciples the parable of the sower, they did not understand what it meant. When they asked Him about it later, He said, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?" (Mark 4:13). In other words, if they could understand the parable of the sower, they would hold the key to unlocking the mysteries of all the other parables.

If there is one message that comes from the parable about the stony ground, the thorny ground, and the good ground, it is this: *When the gospel is preached, there will be true and false conversions.*

Judas, for example, was a false convert. He was a hypocrite—a *pretender*—whose desire (it seems) for riches and power choked out his affection for Christ. In terms of the parable, we would say that he was a thorny-ground hearer, in whom "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Mark 4:19).

Judas had no idea who Jesus really was. When a woman anointed Jesus with an expensive ointment in an act of sacrificial worship, Judas complained that the ointment should have been sold and the money given to the poor (John 12:3-6). In his estimation, Jesus of Nazareth wasn't worth such extravagance—He was only worth about thirty pieces of silver. Moreover, the Bible tells us that Judas was lying when he said that he cared for the poor. He was actually a thief who so lacked a healthy fear of God that he was stealing money from the collection bag (John 12:6). Nevertheless, to all outward appearances, Judas was a follower and disciple of Christ.

Once the premise has been established that there will be true and false conversions when the gospel is preached, then the light of revelation begins to dawn on the rest of what Jesus taught in parables about the kingdom of God. If one grasps the principle that true and false converts will be *alongside each other* in the Church, then the other parabolic teachings also make

sense: the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30), the wise virgins and the foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), and the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46). Take, for example, the parable of the dragnet:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” (Matthew 13:47-51)

Notice that the good fish and the bad fish were in the net *together*. Notice also that *unbelievers* are not caught in the dragnet of the kingdom of heaven; they remain in the world. The “fish” that are caught are those who hear and respond to the gospel—the evangelistic “catch.” They remain together, the true and the false, until the Day of Judgment.

False converts *do* have a measure of spirituality. Judas certainly did. He had apparently convinced the other disciples that he truly cared for the poor. And he *seemed* so trustworthy that he was the one who looked after the finances. When Jesus said, “One of you will betray me,” the disciples didn’t point the finger at Judas; instead, they suspected themselves, saying, “Is it I, Lord?” That’s why it’s not surprising that so few within the body of Christ today would suspect that we are surrounded by those who fall into the “Judas” category. However, alarms should go off when we look at statistics such as those cited in this chapter. A warning should sound when the Church, which ought to have tremendous clout in society, sadly lacks influence. Despite the millions of professed believers in the United States, we can’t even outlaw the killing of the unborn. Something is *radically* wrong. However, before we look at the remedy, we must consider the cause.