

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Soulwinning

Lesson One

NOTE: The textbook God's Law of Sowing and Reaping, by Rev. S. R. Hanby, should be downloaded from the website. It is in three parts. Certain Apostolic ministers are mentioned in the textbook, using only their initials. Some of these we have tentatively identified: M.W. is Bro. Morris Wolfe, N.P. may be Bro. Nathaniel Pugh, D.B. may be Bro. Doug Blanck, and J.W. is Bro. John Williams. (Bro. Wolfe and Bro. Williams were the author's sons-in-law.) We were not able to identify D.C.

READ: God's Law of Sowing and Reaping, Part 1

THINK: Ignorance of the Law of Sowing and Reaping has hindered the work of God in many places. Understanding this Law, though, can make a tremendous difference in how successful our work is.

The author of the textbook, Bro. Hanby, was pastoring a United Pentecostal Church in Schenectady when he wrote this book in the 1970's. Unknown to him as he wrote, God was about to do a mighty work in that city, and at the same time, clearly demonstrate how His Law of Sowing and Reaping works.

It was approximately 1978 when the assistant pastor, Brother James R. Smith, and his wife Sarah, invited their neighbor, Wanda D., to church. Now, Wanda was a strict Catholic, and at first refused to visit the church. After repeated invitations, she and her four children came to a worship service. That same day, she and her two oldest children were filled with the Holy Ghost and baptized in Jesus' Name.

A few weeks later, Sister Wanda asked Brother Hanby if she might speak with him. In the privacy of his office, she said, "God told me to take over the youth group." Brother Hanby was certain she was mistaken for two very important reasons: First, it was unlikely that God would speak directly to someone so new to the faith. (Not impossible, by any means, just highly unlikely.) Second, and perhaps even more significantly, the Schenectady church had no youth group! There was a very small handful of teenagers in the church. A few of these would "pray through" once a year at youth camp, but by and large, these kids were not living for God. Some seemed hopelessly backslidden.

Very gently, Brother Hanby tried to explain these things to Sister Wanda. Her response surprised him: "No," she said, dismissing his facts as inconsequential. "God showed me sixty teenagers living for God. He told me to take the youth group." Unable to dissuade her, Brother Hanby relented. He gave Sister Wanda charge of the backslidden young people.

Six months later, the Schenectady church had the largest and most spiritually powerful UPC youth group in New York State: Sixty teenagers who gave every spare moment of their time for the sake of the Gospel. Then Sister Wanda instituted an outreach program. It began on a Saturday morning. The youth

group met at 10:00 at the church, and prayed for one hour for the lost. Then Sister Wanda and some of the young adults drove them to a rural area of Schenectady County, and Sister Wanda divided the teens into thirty groups of two. She sent these pairs out to evangelize the area.

The kids went door to door and witnessed. One would pray silently, while the other would ask for a moment of time to share what the Lord had done in his/her life. The residents of those areas were dumbfounded. They were used to the occasional Mormon or Jehovah's Witness, but those were usually adults. Here were kids ranging in age from 12 to 18, telling the goodness of God!

The results of this outreach were immediate and they clearly demonstrated the Law of Sowing and Reaping: At church service the next morning, there were approximately twelve unexpected visitors. BUT . . . not one of them was from the area where the youth group had evangelized! All of these visitors were people who had been witnessed to months or even years earlier. One was a city cab driver who had been handed a tract two years earlier!

What happened? Why were the visitors not the ones the youth group spoke with? Brother Hanby explained: Seeds don't grow overnight. It would be almost impossible for any of the seeds planted by the youth group to produce a harvest in one day. Nevertheless, their act of sowing the seed caused a harvest . . . of seeds planted earlier by others. As long as they continued to sow, they would continue to reap, for seeds had been sown in the Schenectady area since 1958.

When seed is sown in a new area, where no one has sown before, it may be weeks, months, or even years, before any appreciable harvest is realized. But, and this is important, if the people will continue to sow, even when no harvest seems possible, eventually harvest will come. And if the sowing over that time was constant and consistent, and continues even after the harvest begins, then the harvest will be steady and large. (Ecclesiastes 11:6)

WRITE: Seed always grows best if it is watered. How should we water the seed of the Word of God when we plant it in people's hearts?

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Soulwinning

Lesson Two

READ: God's Law of Sowing and Reaping, Part 2; Is. 55:11; Heb. 4:12 (Note: Heb. 4:12, in the KJV, contains the word quick. In the old form of English, this word means *alive*, not *fast*.)

THINK: The seed is the Word of God. It is flawless. It is powerful. It is alive. Given even the slightest chance, it will sprout and grow. The better the ground, the better the chance of a harvest.

Suppose you had your heart set on growing tomatoes in your backyard. Your yard is small, but there is enough room for a few plants. Excited about your plans, you rush out to buy tomato seeds. Upon your return, you realize that the ground in your yard is hard and rocky. You are unable to plant your seeds.

What do you do? Do you throw the seeds away? Or do you sell your house, hoping that your new house will have a better yard? Or do you take a shovel and a hoe and a rake and go to work in your yard? Do you break up that hard ground and rake out the rocks? Do you dig down deep to loosen the soil so your tomato plants can put down roots?

Of course, if you're serious about your tomatoes, you'll work the ground until it is usable. Now, the Word of God isn't planted in actual dirt, but in the hearts of men and women. But those hearts, originally formed from the dust of the earth, are much like our backyards. The "ground" may be too hard and rocky for planting. Other than loving people unconditionally, there is little we can do to change their hearts. But God can do more. God can turn a heart of stone into a heart of flesh. He can break up the rocky ground.

WRITE: Read Matthew 13:1-23, and explain the parable of the Sower and the Seed. What does each type of ground represent?

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Soulwinning Lesson Three

READ: God's Law of Sowing and Reaping, Part 3

THINK: Evangelism is the lifeblood of the church. If we don't evangelize, then we are not the church. The word evangelize comes from two Greek words meaning Good News. That's what the Gospel is: Good News! (The word Gospel is from the old English God Spel . . . again, Good News!)

Do we really believe it's Good News?

Do we talk like we believe it?

Do we look like we believe it?

Do we live like we believe it?

What message are we giving the world?

There was a character in a church play, Sister Hatemore. She was a Pentecostal lady, in the church for many, many years. When asked by a long-haired young man what he needed to do to be saved, Sister Hatemore scowled at him and shouted, "You've got to come to our church and get baptized in Jesus' Name and get the Holy Ghost, or you're going straight to hell! And don't come to our church wearing any of your hippie clothes! We only let holy people in our church!"

She lost him. She lost any chance she had to reach that young man. She didn't have any good news. She had only hatred, judgment and condemnation. Those things the young man could have found anywhere. He was looking for something different. Sister Hatemore didn't have it.

When Sister Wanda took the Schenectady youth group out, they shared with people the good things God had done in their own lives, and what He was willing to do for the listeners. It was all good news, shared by kids whose eyes were full of the Holy Ghost, whose faces shone like the sun, and whose hearts were aflame with the fire that fell at Pentecost. They had Good News to share, and they knew it! Do we?

WRITE: Briefly explain how the Law of Sowing and Reaping works.

NOTE: There are no exams in this class.