

The Torchbearer: Christ's Ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The Torchbearer: Technique (1 Thessalonians 2:4-8)

Develop Your Personal Technique!

Develop personal technique and utilize personal talents!

- ◆ Pray for “open doors”—opportunities to love, care for, serve and share the gospel’s message (Colossians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 16:9).
- ◆ Serve others because it is “right” (Luke 17:12-19).
- ◆ Prepare for verbal torch bearing (1 Peter 3:15).
- ◆ Do not force a preset technique or curriculum.
- ◆ Focus all comments upon the Lord and His commands.
- ◆ Ask good, gently probing queries: “Have you actually read the Bible?” “From where did you get that idea?”
- ◆ Do not be afraid to say “I do not know BUT I will study and get back to you.” Realize that you do not have all the answers!
- ◆ Avoid religious jargon—“church talk” that has become wrested by false religions (“take up the cross,” “born again” etc.). When time comes to inject these phrases use Scripture to define and explain.
- ◆ Relax! Sow the Seed of the gospel personally, genuinely and faithfully. Your ONLY TASK is to plant and water! The energy of the gospel seed will do the work!

“Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?’” (Acts 8:30-31).



Lesson Twelve: Communicators of the gospel!

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“So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you” (Romans 1:15).

The Olympic torch relay was not an ancient but a modern addition to the games. It was introduced by Carl Diem at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, Germany. An ancient Greek athletic relay race illustrates evangelism. Ancient Greek torch relay races were usually a foot race, but sometimes it was on horses. The winner was the first team to pass the torch over the finish line. If a torch went out during the race the racer’s team lost.

Inspiration uses the Greek metaphor to stress Christian duty—being actively involved, never quitting, protecting the light of the gospel’s message, and the urgency of unity and personal responsibilities! (1 Corinthians 9:24).

The Message of VICTORY!

“The Battle of Marathon” is well known. The messenger ran from Marathon to Athens with the news that the Athenian army had fought and won the grueling battle. The messenger arrived, raised his right hand and “Shouted Rejoice! We are victorious!”

The Greeks had a special military word for victory— “euangelion.” The military meaning transitioned to translate our English word “gospel” from the Christian perspective. We should not forget the historic etymology of this word as it has a powerful impact upon the Christian’s communication. A great battle had been fought. An amazing defeat with blessings has been secured.

“The Gospel” is a synecdoche condensing the entire message of God to

mankind with two words (“the gospel” includes morality, obedience, submission, repentance, etc.). These commands must be followed precisely and never changed into “another gospel.” The phrase must not be restricted only to the message of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

“The Gospel” includes ALL facets of obedience demanded by God. IF one complies with God’s commands THEN one rejoices in a victory over Satan. The full scope of God’s requirements must be factored into our communication of “the gospel”!

Critical queries that Christians must answer in our communication of the gospel ask:

- ◆ “What is the message we are presenting?”
- ◆ “How comprehensive and consistent are we with the biblical teaching?”
- ◆ “Have we dropped the torch?”
- ◆ “Have we allowed the flame of the torch to be extinguished?”
- ◆ “Have we successfully passed the torch to others?”

The Christian’s Obligation to Communicate

Combining the biblical metaphor with the historical understanding, reveals a message regarding our communication of the gospel. Every Christian is a Torchbearer! Torch bearing obligates EVERY Christian—energy must be expended; dedication must drive action; weariness and fatigue must be disregarded; the mission must remain #1!

Jesus did NOT say, “I encourage each to attempt to impact as salt and light by osmosis.” One’s influence is critical but is NOT the only expectation by God. He DID say “YOU ARE salt and light—do NOT fail to impact; do NOT rationalize silence! Let YOUR light shine!” Christians face devilish discouragements to lessen their torch bearing duties. (2 Timothy 1:7)

The Critical Urgency of the Torchbearer

We live in an epoch when absolute truth is laughable, sarcastically, offensively described. To counter this culture, we need:

- ◆ A character in contrast! (Ephesians 2:13).
- ◆ A transparency that honors God and seeks to save man from his evil choices.
- ◆ A genuine respect (Acts 1:1).
- ◆ A firm trust! (1 John 5:4).

The Torch—The Gospel Message

Be very careful in defining this “gospel message” (Galatians 1:8-9).

Romans 1:1-17 lists critical characteristics of the Gospel message:

- ◆ Origin (Romans 1:1)
- ◆ Continuity (Romans 1:2).
- ◆ Subject (Romans 1:3-4).
- ◆ Purpose (Romans 1:5; John 20:31).
- ◆ Power (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 3:6).

The Torch Bearer—a Witness

Acts 1:8—The term “witness” has been distorted to feed pride rather than to teach God’s truth. Followers of God who are “witnesses” of God’s truth are...

- ◆ A faithful witness never speaks “half” of the truth.
- ◆ A faithful “witness” is bound by his oath to speak only the truth.
- ◆ A faithful witness is the source of information that brings justice.
- ◆ A faithful witness speaks of truth that is a personal part of his life.
- ◆ A faithful witness honors God (Proverbs 12:17).
- ◆ A faithful witness will find joy in salvation (Proverbs 21:18).

Communicators of the Gospel

Paul identifies those who distort approaches to evangelism.

- ◆ The Peddler (2 Corinthians 2:17).
- ◆ The Self-Proclaimer (2 Corinthians 4:5; Galatians 6:14; Psalm 115:1).
- ◆ The Trickster (2 Corinthians 4:2).

Avoiding Manipulation

Some justify any method of evangelism “IF IT WORKS.” The focus is NOT on teaching and true conversion but in “how many baptisms” are recorded. A deceptive means is justified IF the results are good. (2 Corinthians 4:2).

- ◆ “Persuasion” is “fact-based data” that remains consistent.
- ◆ “Manipulation” is controlled by inconsistent emotional stimuli.

Historic manipulations exercised in religion...

Conditional love and friendship. “Love” is used as a manipulative control.

Arbitrary goals and quotas. It fails the biblical pattern (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Fear appeals is a selfish, manipulative tool for behavior control.

The Apostle Paul’s Torchbearing Model

The Torchbearer: The aroma of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14-16; Titus 2:10).

The Torchbearer: Jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7).