

# How to Win Friends and Influence People For the Kingdom of God

## 1. A Vision of Eternity



Have you ever sat in a stadium packed with people, examining the variety? Each person has their own story, problems and circumstances. Often I think to myself, how can God know each of these people. How can God keep track of all their thoughts and actions? Even if a stadium seats 100,000 people, it's still only a drop in the bucket of humanity. Today the population of the world approaches 7-billion people, the equivalent of 70,000 stadiums with 100,000 people each. Yet, each person has their own story, thoughts, desires and problems. Can God really keep track of all these people?

When we think of this mass of humanity, and

understand we are only talking about those alive today, what about the souls who lived 100-years ago, or a thousand years ago? Do we even matter; does God even know who we are?

### *What is our Purpose?*

In the midst of a mass of people, it's not hard to get the feeling of insignificance. The need to matter is the driving urge in many lives, the need to be more than just one of the masses. If you ask people, what is the purpose of life; you will get a variety of answers. The secular atheist might say, you have no purpose, you are just an accident. The materialist might say, to enjoy all your life offers, because there is nothing beyond.



God's word, the Bible, also answers the question. The Bible says humanity is made in the image of God, to bring glory to God. God does not need us to exist; we exist because God created us. Sometimes the realization that, "I exist for the glory of God" can be humbling for someone deluded with their own self sufficiency and importance. The next time you draw a picture, imagine the picture declaring its independence from you the artist, saying "how arrogant of you to create me (the picture) for your own glory!". Really there is no difference, when God's creation,

declares itself as independent from its Creator, that is exactly what we do. God created humanity and the universe for His glory, to express Himself.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.  
**Psalm 19:1**

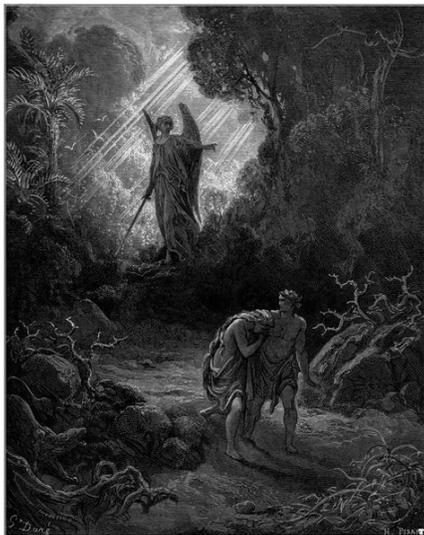
26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;  
27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.  
**Genesis 1:26a,27**

Every single person has a purpose, we all live to bring glory to God, and we are not accidents. God intentionally made us in His image, after His likeness. Look around you, each person you see is a miracle, an image of the creator of the universe.

We are significant, not because of how “great we are” but because of how “great our Creator is”. Many people are lost in the search of their own significance and purpose. We think if we can only build a greater monument to ourselves, we will have purpose. A bigger house, bigger business, more power, bigger friends, all these are vain attempts at significance. Cemeteries are filled with forgotten people, who once mattered. This life is a passing vapor, only when we understand our purpose, can we make our days count.

5 Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah **Psalm 39:5**

14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. **James 4:14**



### ***What's the problem?***

Since we are made in the image of God, for His glory, what's the problem? Why is there so much evil in the world, people hurting people? The Bible helps us understand our predicament, though we are made in the image of God and for His glory we are “Fallen”. Humanity is a fallen creation, when God made us; he created us in His image, which included “Free will”. We are not programmed robots, but beings made in God's image, with ability to choose “Freely”.

According to scripture, Adam and Eve, the first two people created, rejected God's orders and listened to the Serpent, who accused God of lying. Their fall did not only affect them, but all of their offspring, including you and the almost 7-billion people alive today. With humanity's fall came the promise of redemption through the Messiah (Christ) (Genesis 3:14-16) who would “Redeem” or buy back lost humanity.

This was the purpose of Jesus dying on the cross, to restore us from our lost and fallen state (Isaiah 53). Jesus died to bring us back to the purpose of our creation, bringing glory to God. Jesus was our “Kinsman” redeemer (Job 19:25, Leviticus 25:24-25), a descendent of humanity, a “Son of Man”, who was worthy to take our sins. When Jesus died on the cross, He died in our place for our sins.

15 “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. **John 3:15-16**

When we accept Jesus as our Lord, we receive forgiveness of sins, through his substitution. Whoever believes on Jesus, will not perish but “have everlasting life”. Through Jesus our relationship with God is restored, God then deposits His, Holy Spirit, in our bodies as down payment of His total redemption in our life. (See also 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5, Romans 8:15-17,23)

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

God, through the Holy Spirit is guaranteeing to finish the redemption process, which began with faith in Jesus Christ. Before someone trusts Christ, they first need to hear the message of redemption. Notice in Ephesians it says, “*after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*”. Someone needs to deliver the message of salvation, the good news, the Gospel.

## Does it matter?

Jesus died on the cross, for our sins, it was a personal death. He died for each of us; therefore we need to personally accept. Even though we are made in the *image of God*, we are still fallen. The message of redemption, the Gospel, requires personal faith and acceptance. Jesus has entrusted the job of the Gospel to those who are redeemed. The saved are to reach the lost with the Gospel; it started with the disciples, after Pentecost (Acts 1:8), Jesus commissioned the church to bring "Fallen humanity" the good news of salvation.

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.  
19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. **Matthew 28:18-20**

Jesus gives the church, that's me and you, the authority to make disciples of the nations, to bring them into a relationship with the Creator, through the teaching of the Gospel, until the end of the age. This is the commission we have; through the salvation of the lost, God receives the Glory.

We are called by God not only to be saved, but to bring the lost into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Understanding the mission and task entrusted to the saved is vital to our effectiveness. Jesus cuts right to the heart of the issue, while instructing the disciples. Salvation is more important than even gaining the whole world.



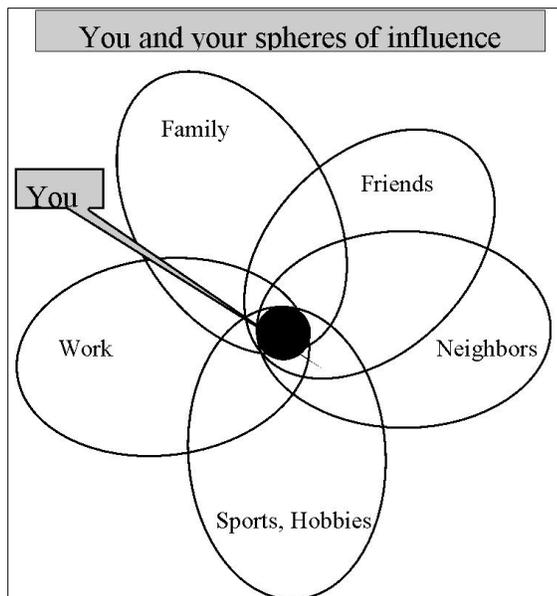
**What does it profit to gain the whole world and loose your soul?**

25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **Matthew 16:25-26**

If you could gain the world, if you could be the most successful person in the whole world to ever live. Even to the point, where you are able gain control of the whole earth, the value is not as great as salvation. The gift of salvation is of greater value than the greatest riches the world could ever offer you. That's amazing! What we have through Christ, is of more value than the entire fortunes of IBM, Microsoft, Apple and the United States combined.

This amazing gift of salvation is what we are able to offer to the lost, a gift more valuable than the whole world. This is an important vision; we need to grasp everyday, as we face the trials in this world. Our salvation and what we have to offer the lost has a value greater than anything, including the world. This is what we offer, we have nothing to be ashamed of, and we should boldly present the Gospel to the lost, not fearing anything the world has to say.



### How can we play a part?

Ask yourself, how did you first come to know Jesus died for your sins? More than likely it was through a person. Even if you read a book, or listened to a radio broadcast, still a person was behind you getting the message. Someone was concerned with the message of the Gospel reaching the lost people, they made a concerted effort, and as a result you found Jesus Christ.

Look around you; all around you are people who are lost. Your neighbors, your co-workers, clients, friends, family, people on your kids baseball, basketball and soccer teams, all these people are waiting for someone to present them the Gospel. Many of these same people are longing for someone to tell them the meaning of life. The monuments we build to ourselves are vain attempts to be significant and have purpose.

Our only real purpose and meaning comes when we find redemption through Jesus Christ. God works through our relationships with people to bring salvation to the lost.

Jesus set the example for all of us with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). Jesus presents to the woman, who was married 5-times, who he met at the well, her need for salvation. She then returns to the village of Sychar, and retrieves her neighbors and friends and brings them to Jesus. God used her relationships as the road of presenting the Gospel to the lost of Sychar. The meeting at the well outside of Sychar is model for all of us to learn from. The whole city was hungry for "Truth", the situation is no different today. The world is starving for salvation.

As the woman was returning to the well accompanied by the people from the city Jesus draws attention to the descending group of people, who the woman was leading.

35 "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!  
36 "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.  
37 "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'  
38 "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."  
39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."  
40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.  
41 And many more believed because of His own word.  
42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." **John 4:35-42**

If Jesus, the Son of God, was surrounded by lost people, how much more are we surrounded by the lost. Jesus in verse 35, points to a flaw in many peoples approach of presenting salvation. Jesus says, do not say, "*Four months and then comes the harvest*", in other words, there is not a time of delay, the fields are ready now. Now is the day of harvest, not four months from now or four days, everyday is the day of harvest. He says the fields are "*already white for harvest!*" If that was true in Jesus' day, how much more true is it in our own day?

Through the witness of the woman, a whole town heard the Gospel. Did she need to go to Bible college first? No, she merely took the message she heard and told the people in the village. They responded to the message, they came to hear Jesus for themselves. The woman pointed them to Jesus, though she was not an expert, she was faithful.

Is there a better day than today to present the Gospel to the lost? No today is the day of salvation, tomorrow might never come.

### ***What is at stake?***

So what if I don't bother telling people about Jesus and eternity? Won't God send somebody else more qualified? Maybe you are the most qualified to reach that person. Maybe you are that person's last hope for salvation. Think about, every day people are dying all over the world, many have never heard the Gospel. The people who are in your spheres of influence, might only be there, so you can have the chance to present the Gospel.



The woman at the well was there when Jesus was there, what if Jesus ignored her? What if he did not want to be bothered? How would that have changed the eternity of the village of Sychar? The same goes with people in our lives, their eternity is in our hands. If we decide, we don't want to be bothered; it's like letting the lost slip away into eternity.

What is at stake is the eternity of souls? Jesus died for the lost, so they could receive salvation. He has entrusted us with the message of salvation, to bring it to the lost.

If you think of the masses of humanity, as an ocean of people, we were once in the ocean of humanity, lost without hope. Along came the *ship of salvation*, with destination of Heaven. Someone on the ship spotted us in the ocean and threw us the *lifesaver*, the Gospel, we grabbed on. From the

ship we were pulled from the ocean into the boat. Now we on this vessel, we can choose to relax and enjoy the rest of the ride, or we can get involved. We can now look over the sides of the boat, into the ocean of lost humanity. Look for the souls in the ocean, call out to them, throw them the lifesaver, they are where we once were. Urge them to grab on, pull them into the ship, and teach them how to rescue souls in the ocean, like we were taught.

Jesus died for us, the least we can do, is give to others the gift of salvation, which was given to us. We need to understand the extreme consequences of the world around us.

### *Eternity is forever*

How extreme are the consequences of the job we have to do? They are eternal, and with Heaven and Hell waiting at the other end. If we know Christ, and are saved, we are headed to our destination, Heaven. We however can do more than wait for our day in Heaven. We can bring the lost with us. Eternity is real; Jesus spoke of the reality of eternity in every way. Jesus warned about the reality of eternal punishment, more than he spoke about the promise of eternal reward. Why did Jesus warn more than promise? Because he knew the consequences of eternity, he knew why came, to save us from damnation.

### *Hell<sup>1</sup> is forever*

Today its popular to dismiss the belief in Hell or Hades. Its not fun to believe that one day we might have answer for our lives. This is even the case in many churches, people don't like to be upset, they might not come back the next week, so teaching about Hell is put on the side. This is not the way Jesus felt. Jesus clearly taught about life after death. One of the clearest is the stories of Lazarus and the rich man, though some like to call this scripture a parable, no where in scripture is this called a parable. Jesus says "There was a certain rich man", meaning he actually lived and existed. Jesus is telling us the reality of life, what really happens after death.

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

20 "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,

21 "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.'

26 "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

28 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" **Luke 16:19-31**

When we read this scripture, there is quite a bit that stands out, more than we cover here. Some points to consider, Lazarus and the rich man were completely conscious after they died. The rich man remembered who he was, he was able to recognize Lazarus, he knew he had 5 brothers who were not yet dead. Even after death he was concerned about them; he did not want them to be where he was. The rich man was in torment, he was in agony.

After death, he wants someone to warn his brothers, but he is told they have Moses and the prophets (The Old Testament). Further Abraham says, if they will not be convinced by scripture, there is no greater convincing agent.

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<sup>1</sup> Hell is one of the terms used in English translation. The Hebrew word is *Sheol* and the Greek word is *Hades*, in some places *Geenna* is used (Matthew 23:33). The point is there is life beyond death, for the saved and the lost.

Jesus wants us to know how serious life is for those who are lost. He also wants us to be concerned for their eternity, He was concerned for our eternity, He did not want us to die lost. Hell is a real place prepared for the Satan and his angels. At the judgment seat of Christ, the lost are cast into their eternal habitation with the Satan and the fallen angels.

40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: Matthew 25:40-41

There is no hope once someone dies; there are no second chances. The book of Hebrews, says *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27)*. In the book of Revelation we see the final dwellings of the lost and the saved. The saved enter Heaven, to be with Jesus and the angels; the lost enter the lake of fire to dwell with Satan and his angels.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

**Revelation 20:11-15**

### *Heaven is forever*

When someone comes to Christ, they have a gift of greater value (Profit) than the whole world. The person who dies in Christ enters Heaven, to be in the presence of Christ. The last two chapters of Revelation 21 and 22, give us a glimpse of our eternity in the presence of God. Paul while he was alive looked forward to being in the presence of Christ after death.

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

**Philippians 1:22-23**

Scripture clearly teaches when the "Saved" die, they enter Heaven; this was not unique for Paul. Jesus teaches, that where "He is" we may also be.

8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:1-3

Our promise is Heaven, we will dwell in the very presence of God, there will be no more death, crying or pain. The promise of eternity for the saved is beyond our understanding, only through the Spirit can we even comprehend what is in store. When someone finds the Lord, they are not only saved from Hell, but they receive the promise of Heaven.

9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

There is no greater calling in our life, than to pursue souls for eternity, through prayer and action.

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." **Revelation 21:1-5**

# After Death What?

## Before Christ

## After Christ

**1.** 19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day."  
**Luke 16:19**

**2.** 20 "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,  
21 "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores."  
**Luke 16:20-21**

**3.** 22a "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom."  
**Luke 16:22**

**5.** 25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.  
26 'And besides all this, there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'  
**Luke 16:25-26**

**8.** And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."  
**Luke 23:43**

**10.** 8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."  
9 (Now this, "He ascended"-what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?  
10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)  
**Ephesians 4:8-10**

**9.** Jesus saith unto her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, 'I ascend unto my Father, and unto your Father, and to my God, and your God.'  
**John 20:17**

**11.** 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. **2 Corinthians 5:8**  
23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. **Philippians 1:23**  
3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." **John 14:3**

### Land of the Living

### Abraham's Bosom

### Separation between Paradise and Hell (Chasm)

### Hell

**4.** 22b The rich man also died and was burned.  
23 "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.  
24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'  
**Luke 16:22-24**

**6.** 27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house  
28 'for I have five brothers; that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'  
**Luke 16:27-28**

**7.** 29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'  
30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'  
31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'  
**Luke 16:29-31**

**12.** 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'  
41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'  
**Matthew 25:40-41**

### Great White Throne

### Heaven

**13.** 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.  
13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.  
14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.  
15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.  
**Revelation 20:12-15**

### Lake of Fire



## You and your spheres of influence

