

The

Way
of the
Master

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

by

RAY COMFORT

Foreword and Commentary by
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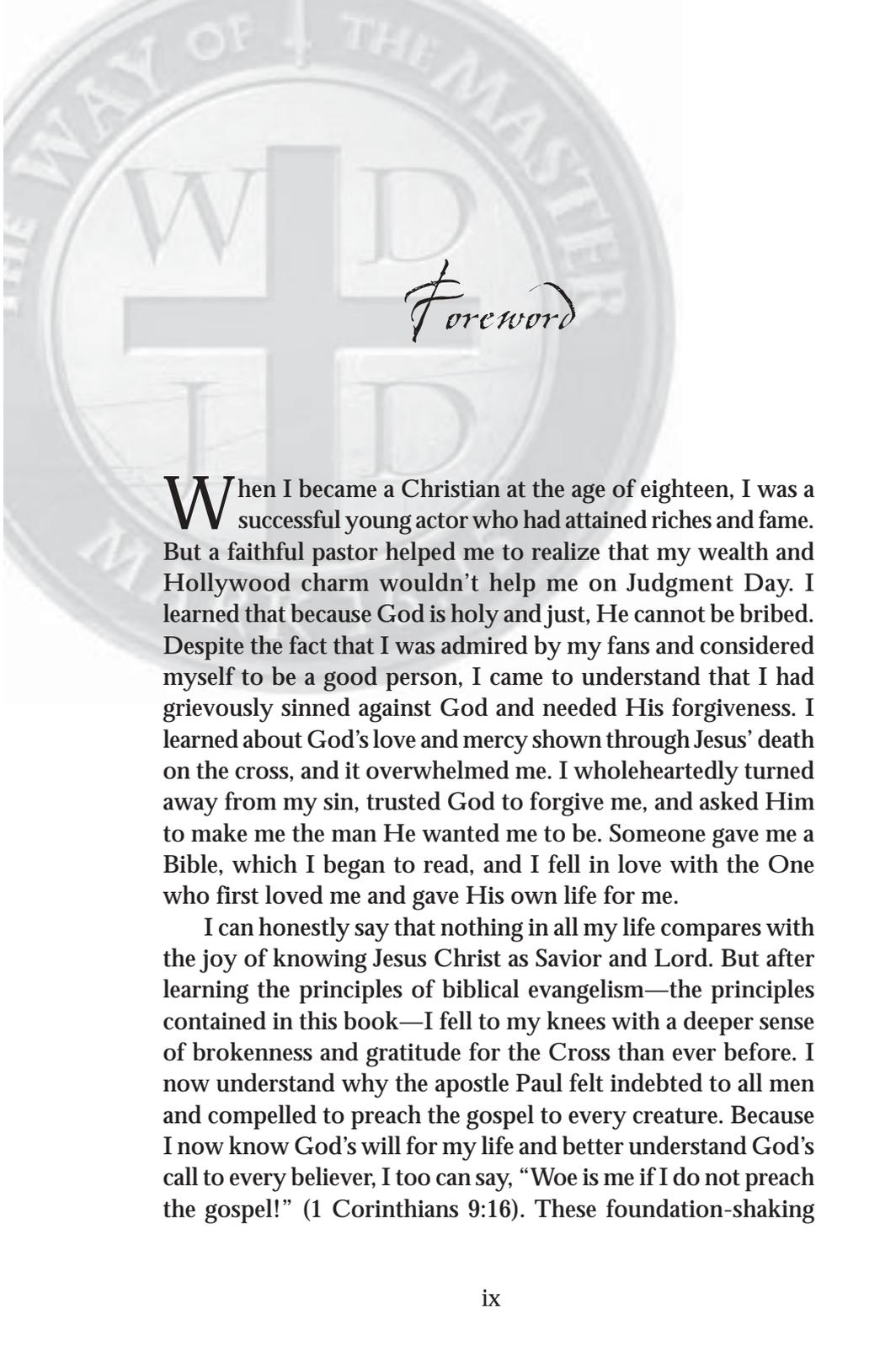
Dedication

To my good friends Larry and Ashley Lee,
and their four beautiful daughters—
Carley, Rebekah, Christie, and Rachel.

Contents

Foreword	<i>ix</i>
1: Dereliction of Duty	<i>1</i>
2: Phenomenal Growth	<i>11</i>
3: The Way Out of Problems?	<i>19</i>
4: A Lifestyle Without a Life	<i>35</i>
5: The Purpose of the Ten Commandments	<i>47</i>
6: Our Broken Backbone	<i>59</i>
7: Making It Honorable	<i>75</i>
8: What Did Jesus Do?	<i>81</i>
9: Mangled Bodies	<i>95</i>
10: Making Grace Amazing	<i>111</i>
11: Disobedience on His Part	<i>125</i>
12: Well Versed	<i>133</i>
13: The Motive and the Result	<i>147</i>
14: Experience: The True Test	<i>155</i>
15: The Badge of Authority	<i>175</i>
16: Don't Leave Me Like This!	<i>183</i>
17: How to Share Your Faith	<i>189</i>
18: Forget About Jonah	<i>217</i>

19: Take Two Tablets and Call Me When You're Mourning	225
20: An Angry God	237
21: A Burden for the Lost	249
22: The Rich Man	261
23: Whose Cookies?	271
24: Raiders of the Contents of the Lost Ark	281
25: The Finger of God	289
26: Witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses	309
27: Are You Ready for the Lion?	317
Appendix A	327
Appendix B: Testimonies	331



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

The Way of the Master

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

Dereliction of Duty

In 1980, I had been preaching open air each week day for about six years. This was in Christchurch—a city of 350,000, way down-under in New Zealand. When the crowds would mock the things of God, I would encourage myself by saying, “I have the privilege of preaching the everlasting gospel, in the last days, in the uttermost parts of the earth, in the city that bears the name of the Lord.”

However, I was at the same time becoming very frustrated by a massive fallaway rate that I found existed among new converts. I had an itinerant ministry, and heard pastors say things like, “We had a series of meetings last month. There were 80 converts, and I can’t find even one in my church.” My frustration was added to because the Church in general didn’t even seem interested in reaching the lost. It had as much attraction to the word “evangelism” as the world has to the word “righteousness.”

In 1981, a visiting preacher came to my home church (at which I was the assistant pastor), and when he was speaking, he had me come forward so that he could pray for me. As he began to pray, he suddenly stopped and became very joyful. He then said, “I see a huge multitude of people—a massive army of young people preaching the gospel ... and *you* are leading them.” I was a little embarrassed, but at the same time I was excited by such a thought.

The Way of the Master

A year or so later, in August of 1982, I discovered the principle expounded in this book. This eventually became known as a teaching called, “Hell’s Best Kept Secret.”¹

On the 24th of March, 1984, 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. They had obviously removed a newspaper from the pocket, and the small portion had ripped off and remained there. 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’ve yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them (John 16:12, KJV).” I remember being mystified by the words “ye cannot bear them” (also around that time, a Bible verse leapt off the page at me. It was from John 13:7, “What I do thou know not now; but thou shalt know hereafter”).

On the 22nd of June, 1985, I entered into the deepest, darkest, most frightening experience of my life as I began to suffer ongoing episodes of irrational fear. These agoraphobic 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.² It was A. W. Tozer who said, “Before God uses a man, God will break the man.”

I was certainly broken. Through that experience, I learned the meaning of those words from John 16:12. *To bear* means “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.”

“Hell’s Best Kept Secret” was so radically different from what was being taught within the contemporary Church, I felt that it would put an end to my itinerant ministry. I thought

that it would cause me to be seen as a legalist, and that doors would quickly close. But the exact opposite happened. Doors began to open. During the next few years Sue and I were flown to Hawaii five times to share “Hell’s Best Kept Secret.” It was in Hawaii that Pastor Garry Ansdell heard the teaching. He disagreed at first, but after studying Scripture, became convinced that it was biblical.

In 1988, he invited my family and me to live in the United States, because, as he said, “America *must* hear this message!” We responded to what we saw as God’s clear leading by moving to Southern California on January 10th, 1989.

It is now 2006, and as I look back over the years, I shake my head in disbelief at what has happened in just 17 years. I sometimes imagine if, back in 1981, that minister had said something like:

I not only see a massive army preaching the gospel, but I see that God is going to give your ministry incredible favor with world-renowned and respected men and women of God. He will surround you with gifted and faithful men, and He will bring a famous Hollywood actor to minister alongside you.³ This man will preach “Hell’s Best Kept Secret” on television, and that will cause your Website to get over a million hits in one day. God will then raise up a television program about this teaching, called, “The Way of the Master,” that will be broadcast in 70 countries and on 20 networks. Even though this will be a program about “evangelism,” it will win the People’s Choice Award 2004, 2005, 2006, and NRB 2005, 2006 “Best Program Award.” He will also raise up a radio program of the same name that will be broadcast around the world, and will equip Christians to learn how to biblically reach the lost. He will establish a huge online Bible school with thousands of students from all over the earth that

will also learn biblical evangelism. ⁴ What began with you hand-cranking out a gospel tract you had written will end up with over 60 million gospel tracts being printed. The principles taught by this ministry will spark a world-wide revival that will bring multitudes to Christ and bring glory to His name.

If the minister had said those things, I wouldn't have believed them. But all these things have become a reality. Almost daily we see the hand of God opening doors. Recently top representatives from a major U.S. denomination representing more than 42,000 churches visited our ministry and said, "We have the vehicle; you have the goods. ⁵ What can we do to get this teaching to the Church?" We receive thousands of e-mails from around the world saying that this teaching is setting entire churches on fire.

I am humbled that God would take a little nobody from the uttermost parts of the earth and trust him with this incredible, forgotten teaching—a teaching that was once proclaimed by some of our greatest Christian forefathers. I hope that you will open your heart to it, compare it to Holy Scripture, and if you think that it lines up, that you will also play a part in equipping this massive army for the most sobering of tasks.

The Firefighter

An experienced big-city firefighter was charged recently with grave neglect of duty. Prosecutors maintain that he abandoned his responsibility and betrayed the people of his 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 the massive flames engulfed him. 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? Please make a judgment.

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 Creator. In the light of the Cross, it's as natural to worship God as it is for flowers to open their petals in the warm sunlight.

May I ask you a personal question? When was the last time you shared your faith with an unsaved person? When did you last go out of your way to witness to a stranger? In his book,

The Coming Revival, Dr. Bill Bright notes that only two percent of American churchgoers share their faith with others.⁶ 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 fact that all who die in their sins will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

Did you know that if you allow another human being to die when it's within your ability to save him, you are guilty of something called, "depraved indifference?" They are applicable



*We have been
gazing to the
heavens while
sinners are
sinking into Hell.*

words. "Depraved" means that it's as low as you can get, and "indifference" means that you couldn't care less. Think now of the terrible neglect of that firefighter. What sentence did you give him? Did you throw him in jail for two years? Did you think that such a hard-hearted human being (someone who could be only concerned with himself) should be given the death sentence? Then judge yourself by the same standard,

because if you are not concerned for the lost, then *you* are that firefighter. If you are not seeking to save them with fear, "pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 1:23), you are guilty of the serious crime of "depraved indifference."

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 know that what I am saying is hard to say without sounding harsh and judgmental, but I can't think of any other way to say it. Please, don't be offended. Stay with me. My purpose is not to offend, but to get your attention and present things as they really are, and they are not good. My story of the firefighter was fictitious, but what is happening in the contemporary Church is real. Think of it; only 2 percent doing what we are commanded to do. 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 every 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. We are going to worship God for eternity. But when we look back at the book of Acts, we don't find the Church consumed with worship. Instead, we find it was obsessed with reaching the lost, to the point that they willingly gave their lives to preach the gospel.

So, please, reevaluate your priorities, take off the earphones, unlock the doors, become equipped, and demonstrate the depth of your love for God by rescuing those who are about to perish.

The Rightful Place

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 those who 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 ... T o 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 world-wide 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.”

End Notes

1. Bill Bright, *The Coming Revival* (Orlando, FL: NewLife Publications, 1995), 65.
2. · “After a thousand revivals and area crusades I have used a lot of soul-winning materials. ‘Hell’s Best Kept Secret’ is the greatest single tool I have ever found.” Evangelist Larry Taylor
 - “I began to weep as I saw the importance of this message.” Pastor Ken Armstrong, CA
 - “‘Hell’s Best Kept Secret’ has completely destroyed my theology. What was first anger toward you, caused me to search the scripture, and has now turned to a sincere thank-you.” Pastor Jerod McPherson
3. See *How to Overcome Panic Attacks* by Ray Comfort (Bridge Logos Publishers)
4. See *Out of the Comfort Zone* by Ray Comfort (Bridge Logos Publishers).
5. www.biblicalevangelism.com
6. The Basic Training Course: www.WayOfTheMaster.com