

Reviewing the Results of Witnessing and Evangelism¹



SABBATH—JUNE 16

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Corinthians 13:5, 6; Hebrews 10:24, 25; Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Matthew 23:15; Revelation 14:6, 7.

MEMORY VERSE: “A wise person’s warning to a listening ear is like a gold earring or jewelry made of fine gold” (Proverbs 25:12, NIV).

KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT: It is a mistake to become involved in God’s great task of evangelism without testing the results.

TOO OFTEN WE ARE SATISFIED WITH LIMITED RESULTS IN EVANGELISM. Too often we could have had greater results and better success if we had reviewed past witnessing and evangelistic work. Then we could have let our findings help us to make improvements to future planning.

Sometimes large sums of money are spent on witnessing and evangelistic ministries (work done for God) that give limited results. This has led to suggested changes in budget planning. If asked with a noncritical spirit, these questions can be a part of a good review. We must remember that we really do not know the full results of any program. For example, we can focus only upon the results we can see (such as the numbers of people being baptized). And we do not know how many gospel seeds have been planted. No matter what, there is still the need to review in a way that makes judgments without being judgmental or critical.

This week we will study evaluation² as a Bible principle (important rule). And we will review its importance as part of local church life today.

1. evangelism—the act of spreading the good news about Jesus to the world.

2. evaluation—testing the results to see what works in the evangelistic program and what does not work.

SUNDAY—JUNE 17

**WHY EVALUATE (REVIEW)?
(1 Timothy 3:1–13)**

Evaluation will happen whether we are aware of it or not. Evaluation is being done every Sabbath and at every public meeting. People evaluate (judge) sermons. People who attend public meetings expect lectures to be professional and of high quality. Wherever people are, there will be evaluation. And while we cannot point to a verse where formal evaluation occurred, it is clear that evaluation was a serious part of early church life.

What do 1 Timothy 3:1–13; 1 Corinthians 11:28; and 2 Corinthians 13:5, 6 tell us about the importance of evaluation? And what kind of evaluation do these verses suggest?

When God’s Word sets up a rule, starts an action, or gives a command, our first step is to evaluate ourselves. Such evaluation asks very important questions. “How are we doing in this ministry (work done for God)?” “How can we be better?”

Paul gave certain requirements for deacons (church officers) and elders. This shows that some kind of evaluation was to take place. This would be an evaluation to see whether the men were fit for their positions or work.

Read through the gospel command of Matthew 28:19, 20. What testing questions would you ask when you study your church’s answer to this command?



Evaluation asks a very important question: “How are we doing in our ministry?”

As God’s servants we are entrusted with the very important truth of the gospel. And we understand that this gospel message is to go to all the world. So, it should not surprise us that God also has a method for evaluating the work. God is interested in the progress of the work that is entrusted to those who have accepted His call to be co-workers for souls.

Read again 2 Corinthians 13:5. What does this verse say to you personally? How can you apply it to yourself? What proof do you have that “Jesus Christ is in you”?

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We must preach the gospel to all the world.

MONDAY—JUNE 18

EVALUATE KINDLY (Acts 16:1, 2)

There are many good points about evaluation. But there are some dangers that we must avoid. If we are overactive in evaluation and focus on the negatives, we may discourage and lose volunteers. To avoid evaluation being seen as criticism, it must be positive and supportive. Very often we forget to encourage and support our workers who have served in their chosen ministry for some time. They are always there and always do the job. And we come to expect that they always will be there and will always do the job. Evaluation will give you the opportunity to show them your support.

What support do you see in Acts 16:1, 2; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 11:2; and Philippians 4:14? In what ways could such support be given today to workers or teams?

Many times the apostle (teacher and leader) Paul had to scold the church or persons on matters of attitude (thoughts or feelings), behavior, or doctrine (Bible beliefs). This shows that some evaluation had taken place. But, whenever he could, Paul also gave people credit for their support of God personally or for their faithful work.

To be fair in evaluation, we must evaluate both the results and the methods. Evaluation for results asks if a program reaches its goals. Evaluation for methods reviews project management.

Carefully read Hebrews 10:24, 25. What does it mean to “consider one another”? What principles of evaluation are suggested?

These verses are more than a suggestion. They strongly warn us to take the spiritual growth and development of one another seriously. We are to consider what God requires in our Christian lives. It also follows that proper evaluation will be done as we “consider one another.”

Think about how encouraging it is when someone supports you for who you are or for your ministry. It is amazing how just a few positive words can do so much! What is your general attitude toward others? Do you tend toward criticism or toward encouraging others? If you are critical, how can you change this destructive habit?

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TUESDAY—JUNE 19

WHAT THE LORD ASKS (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13)

If you were to summarize the important meaning of Deuteronomy 10:12, 13, what would you say?

Of what New Testament verse does this remind you? And why does this reminder show us the great importance of the warning of these verses in Deuteronomy?

The verses say that God “requires” (or “asks”) these things of us. How are we to understand the meaning of this while keeping in mind salvation by faith alone?

The verses themselves deal greatly with our heart and our soul, with love and with fear. These are the things that are often hard to judge about people from how they look to us on the outside. What outer (outside) things show what is really on the inside? How does the connection (relationship) between the inside and outside fit in with Revelation 14:6–12?

In Matthew 23:15, Jesus gave the scribes (writers) and the Pharisees (religious leaders) a stern evaluation (warning) of their witnessing and evangelism work among the Gentiles (non-Jews). So, in our search to obey the gospel command, we must always remember the deep truths shown in Deuteronomy 10:12 and 13. After all,

with all our outreach work, the last thing we want to do is create more “son[s] of hell.”

WEDNESDAY—JUNE 20

EVALUATING FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (1 Samuel 16:7)

In our past study, we have noted that any goals set by persons or churches must be able to be evaluated. It is easy to test and evaluate growth in numbers. But it is true that there is more to church than numbers.

It is clear that we do not want to just fill the church with people. We want to fill it with people who are growing in their relationship with Jesus, who love the Lord, and who show that love by obeying God’s commandments. The last thing we want to do is what Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees did: to “‘travel everywhere’ ” (that is, be involved in missionary work) and make him (them) “‘twice as much a son of hell as you are’ ” (Matthew 23:15, NIV). This strong warning about such “missionary work” shows us how important it is for us to give attention to the evaluation of spiritual growth. It is not only for those whom we bring into the church but, even more so, for ourselves.

Read Matthew 26:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 8:6; Ephesians 6:17, 18; 2 Timothy 2:15, 16; and Psalm 1:2. What spiritual lessons do these verses suggest are important? In what ways are all of these things very important for our spiritual growth?

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As sinners in need of God's grace,³ how do we evaluate something as "unseeable" as the spirituality⁴ of others? There is no recorded (written) method for us to use to test personal spirituality. So, it is more proper to consider whether or not each believer is on a spiritual journey, rather than to decide where he or she are on that journey. An example of a person who is on a spiritual journey is an example of one who shows how he or she follows the Bible principles (important rules) for Christian living. The things listed in the verses above certainly are good examples. But we always need to be careful about how we judge the experience of others. At the same time, if we are dealing with new members, we should—in a kind and loving way—help them to understand how important prayer, Bible study, and obedience are to their spiritual growth.



Each believer is on a spiritual journey.

THURSDAY—JUNE 21

EVALUATING (REVIEWING) FOR CHURCH GROWTH (Revelation 14:6, 7)

The reason why our church continues to be here on earth is the very reason why we evaluate. We believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been raised up at this special time in earth's history. It is a part of God's plan to take the gospel to the world. In other words, we are here to win souls for the kingdom.

Read Revelation 14:6, 7. How do we understand these verses in relationship to our being Seventh-day Adventists?

Evaluating how we are doing is a method of keeping true to doing God's work in the best way possible. Any evaluation of what the church does should be a test on, and judgment on, how evangelism and witnessing are helping church growth. How are we doing in helping the church to reach the goal?

Read Matthew 6:33; Matthew 10:7; Matthew 24:14; and Luke 4:43. What are these verses talking about? How should their meaning influence both us as a church and our work of witnessing and evangelism?

The record of Jesus' ministry on earth shows many examples of preaching as a way of winning souls to the kingdom of God. Jesus preached that the kingdom of God was very near. He scolded the religious leaders for shutting up the kingdom of God and making it

3. grace—God's gift of mercy that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

4. spirituality—a person's spiritual condition.

difficult for people to enter. He sent His disciples out to preach the kingdom of God. Clearly, the most important goal of Jesus, the apostles, and the church was the winning of people for the kingdom.

There were many reports of many people who were added to the church at different times. And there were many reports of many churches being established among the Gentiles. These reports show that evaluation was being carried out to see how the church was reaching the goal of kingdom growth.

Jesus gave a very powerful warning that if you are not with Him, you are against Him (Matthew 12:30). He also warned that if you did not gather with Him you were scattering. Are you gathering or scattering? How do you defend your answer?



We are here to win souls for the kingdom of God.

FRIDAY—JUNE 22**ADDITIONAL STUDY: Inviting Others to Join Your Ministry**

Have you ever heard of a one-man, or one-person band? This is a band in which one person plays all the instruments. The drum is strapped to his back and operated by a foot pedal. Then cymbals (musical brass plates) are strapped between the knees and so on. A one-person band is one in which one person plays all parts.

But one-person bands have the danger of burning out because they have no physical or emotional team support. One-person bands sometimes complain about the lack of church support. But the church groups have probably not been asked to be involved in any way other than with donations of money.

Whether you are just beginning a ministry, or evaluating a continuing one, here are some suggestions on how to make your ministry grow by getting others involved:

1. Review what is involved in every part of your ministry. See how many people could take part.
2. Decide on the areas where important help is needed. Look for key people to fill these important roles. Think about some possible team leaders.
3. Prepare a detailed, written outline of all parts of the ministry. This will be useful when talking to possible team members. They will be

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able to understand exactly what they are expected to do.

4. Report regularly to the whole church. This will let everyone see that your ministry is a part of the local church's witnessing and evangelism program. And they will be more likely to get involved.

5. Have regular team meetings. Support team members and review progress. Ask the questions, How have we done? How are we doing? and Where do we go from here?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ When and how do you cross the line between evaluation and the kind of judgment that the Bible warns us

to avoid?

❷ Think more deeply about the words of Jesus in Matthew 23:15. How can we, as a church, prevent this from happening? This is especially true when new believers are so excited about becoming involved. How can we make sure that this excitement is focused in the right direction so that we do not create more " 'son[s] of hell' " within our group? If we wanted to create some, what would be the best ways to do it?

❸ Consider a ministry in your church and suggest a good evaluation report of the program, the methods, and the leaders.