

# Confronting with Care!

## Session 1

Hello, family! I'm so glad that you're here. I know that you love lost souls, or you wouldn't be here ready to go through this thing with me. This is our We Care seminar concerning reaching out to win lost souls to Christ. We have a noble and precious brotherhood. We want to win souls to Christ. But we are frustrated these days, I'm afraid. And that is because, we want to win souls, but we don't know how to do it. We don't know how to confront. We don't know how to bring up the subject. We don't know how to initiate salvation dialogue, in a non-threatening, in a very caring way. And I am here to share with you our We Care approach that we have found to be extremely productive. You ought to have in your hand by now what we have come to call our salvation highway flowchart. Now if you do not have this in your hand, you need to stop the video tape right now, because a copy of this is on the back of the video box that this video came in. And if there are others sitting there with you, you need to take that flowchart to a xerox or copying machine of some kind, and run off some copies, so that everybody can have a copy of this in his own hands. So, find that in your hand. Now, at the top of the flowchart, you're going to find a question. The question is, "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure without a doubt, that you'd go home to heaven, to be with Him to live forever?"

I want to ask you a question as we get into this. Have you ever found yourself frustrated because as you're riding down the highway or you're standing talking with a friend of yours down at the plant; or maybe you are both tellers at the bank, and you've been standing there beside her year after year, and you've talked about everything. Maybe you're sitting at a kitchen table over a cup of coffee, and you're talking with that friend of yours. You know that friend is not saved. But you're talking with that friend of yours and the subject is grandchildren. Or the subject is football. Or the weather. Or a thousand and one other things it seems that we can always get ourselves involved in, in talking about. And you're saying there in your mind, "Boy, I wish I knew how to get off this subject, and onto salvation dialogue. I wish I knew how to smoothly move off the present subject into the gospel presentation." Ever done that? I'd venture to say that you have. Because I have been in that kind of situation many, many times in my life. I want to suggest to you that you start by asking this question. "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure without a doubt that you would go to heaven, to be with the Lord?" Ask that question.

Now listen. There are all kinds of easy ways that you can move into that question. I mean, slide into it, naturally. For example. Say that you and your next door neighbor, Jim, are at the ball game. You've been watching some of your kids play. The game is over. And you are on your way back now to the car. And you're saying, "I wish I knew how to confront Jim, my neighbor, and to get into salvation dialogue." Here's how to do it. "Jim, we've taken our kids to a lot of ball games." And he says, "Yes. And I have a feeling we are going to take them to a lot more, too." And you say, "Jim, we've barbecued together, we've done a lot of things together. We have talked about a lot of things. I wish we could be neighbors forever." And maybe he says, "Yea! Me, too!" Get into this question by saying, "Jim, you know the Bible says that one of these days Jesus is going to come again. What if the Lord were to come right now, Jim, would you know for sure, without a doubt, that you'd go home to be with Him, to live forever?" Ask him that question. I think you'll be surprised just how easy it is to move into it, in a non-threatening way! Now, ask this question. Maybe it's Aunt Susie you're talking to. "Aunt Susie, I been seeing that you are studying your Bible. I see that Bible on your chair next to the television set. It's obvious that you've been studying it, because it's wearing out. I mean, Aunt Susie, you're always at your church, doing things for people. I know you love the Lord. Aunt Susie, we've talked about a lot of other things in our lives together, but we haven't really talked about, God! Not really!" And so ask her the question. "Aunt Susie, tell me how you feel about your relationship with the Lord. What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure, I mean, without a doubt!, that you'd go home to be with Him, to live forever?"

Now, I want to ask you something. By asking Jim, your next door neighbor, that question; by asking Aunt Susie that question, have you offended those people? No! I have asked that question, frankly, I don't know how many hundreds of times; to strangers as I have knocked on doors, to people on the plane as I'm sitting next to them; I have some of my best studies on the plane; you know, sort of a captive audience, they can't get away. I've asked that question of family members of mine, of personal friends, and neighbors, and I have yet to find the first person that has been intimidated or been insulted by asking that question.

I want you to look at the nature of the question. First of all, I want you to notice that in asking the question, we are not talking churches. Now that's deliberate. We are not talking churches. What we are doing is, we are talking that personal relationship with people. We are not talking churches. Now I said, not talking churches. That is extremely deliberate. Now I want you to know something. I am not ashamed of the Lord's church. I mean, after all, Jesus Christ died for it, paying for it with His own precious blood. We would have a hard time saying the church is not important. I'm not saying that we ought to be ashamed of the church, by all means, we ought to be grateful to God for the church. I don't minimize any point of God's precious doctrine. The point is, though, that we are addressing a lost person. And we don't bring the church up first. What did Jesus actually say to go into all the world to do? Didn't He say go into all the world and preach the gospel? Now, I want to ask you, who is the church? We are the church! Jesus didn't say, "Go into all the word and tell everybody about yourselves." Jesus didn't say that. Now, the Bible I read always shows the gospel comes first! Then comes the response. Let me tell you something. The response makes no sense outside the gospel. The gospel always comes first. Then comes the response. And, Biblically speaking, all of a sudden then, third, the church comes into the picture. Now, if we will keep that chronological order, we're going to find ourselves not only obeying Jesus Christ, but we're going to find ourselves winning more souls to Christ!

You see, when we bring the church up first, we're bringing the very thing up that is competitive in our own society. "Well, I'm a member of this church, and you're a member of another kind of church. And we do this and you do that." And they're saying, "So?" Listen! Jesus says, "First, to go into all the world and preach the gospel." All we're saying here is that we have to get the cart and the horse in proper sequence. The church does not come first. The gospel comes first. So what we're doing here with this question is, we are bringing a person's attention into focus concerning his own, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Now! What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure, without a doubt, that you'd go home to be with Him, to live forever? Ask that question!

Now you'll notice on the flowchart that right under the question there are three boxes. Now, they are different sizes, but there are three boxes. One says "No", one says "Yes", then one says "I don't know. I think so. I hope so." Do you see it there?

Let's start on the left hand side of the flowchart. There will be those who'll admit, "No, I know that if the Lord were to come right now I would not be ready." Now they admit it, that they know they are not saved. We got a whole lot of folks who believe they're saved, but in reality, they are not. These are three usual answers that we have found that we receive from our prospects. I want you to know real quickly that this is not an exhaustive concordance of all responses that you're going to get. Not long ago, Bob Dankelfsen, one of the other fellows on our We Care staff, was coming back to Louisiana from California. And he approached the lady that was sitting next to him, sitting there on the plane, and he asked her the question, "What if the Lord were to come right now? Do you know without a doubt you'd go to heaven?" And she said, "Well, I believe in reincarnation. I was Benjamin Franklin in my other life." Well, he quietly got up and moved across the aisle. So this is not an exhaustive concordance of all the responses you're going to get. But I do want you to know that this is the majority of the responses that we have found that we have received. On the left hand side of the sheet you'll see that there'll be those who'll say, "I know I'm not ready." Now notice in the next box, here's your response. Ask, "Well, does it bother you?" You want to find out whether or not it even concerns them. Are they apathetic? Are they complacent? Are they satisfied? Or are they concerned about their not having a right relationship with their God? "Does it bother you?" Now, on the left hand side of the sheet you will find there will be those who will say, "Nope! Doesn't bother me. I don't think about

it. I let God alone. He leaves me alone. I just don't have anything to do with God." Now, here's apathy. I'm not really sure how you'd handle apathy. I know what the person needs. He needs a short trip to hell, doesn't he? And the Lord gives us some indication in the Scripture concerning what hell is like. He whets our appetite so that we won't want to go. But when the prospect won't talk to you about it, it's kind of hard to take him on that short trip. But if we could take a short trip to hell, I think our whole perspective, our whole list of priorities, would change. Don't you think so? Well, we have discovered then, if that person says, "No, I leave God alone, He leaves me alone. I don't want to talk about that."; always leave a friend. You see in the next box on the flowchart? The shaking of the hands, in that next box? Always leave a friend. Always leave the door open. Just simply respond by saying, "Well, remember I asked. And I'm ready to talk to you about it anytime you get ready."

Let me pause here just a minute. I travel the country. And I'm constantly talking to people, and a lot of those people are Christians, about this very thing. I have discovered, brethren, that the greatest thing that keeps us from sharing our faith; the greatest thing that keeps us from talking to others about Jesus Christ, is the fear of rejection. We're afraid we're going to be rejected. We're afraid they're going to say no. Oh, I don't want to rock the boat! Oh, I don't want to stir the water! I might cause some friction! Not that I definitely will. I might! I might! I might! And we're scared to death to even confront somebody. Listen! If fear has kept us; now, listen to me. We're afraid, some of us to a greater degree than others; but all of us have to fight that old man of fear. It comes from Satan. God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, love, and a disciplined mind. But if we have fear it came from Satan. And we have it. So now we have to deal with it. How do we deal with it? We've all got that fear. How do we deal with it? Well, I suggest you do this with your neighbor. Tell that neighbor of yours, if you have brought him to this point, and he says, "I don't want to talk about that." And you say, "Remember I asked. I'm ready to talk about it any time." Go ahead and confess to him this very minute. Say, "You know, Jim (if that's your neighbor), I was afraid to ask you such a question as this. But you know, I decided that I cared for you enough to go ahead and take the risk. And to bite the bullet and to go ahead and ask you such a question as this. You're a dear enough friend to me that I was going to go ahead and take such a risk. And I want you to know, Jim, that I've been working on this quite awhile. But I care for you, and I love you, man! I care for you! And so maybe the next time I ask you; I'm going to try to ask you maybe next month. I'm going to ask you again this very question. Maybe between now and then you can think about it; and you'll talk to me about it. But you'll know that the next time I ask you, I'm scared to ask you. But I'm going to do it anyway because I care for you." You know what that is going to do to him? That's going to defuse his response. You might find him saying, "Well, you know, I've been more concerned about it than what I've admitted." And he might go ahead and talk to you about it.

Go ahead and admit it. Brethren, it is time that we be real. It's time we be open. It's time we be bold and courageous. If we're going to rescue the perishing, if we're going to win souls to Jesus Christ, we're going to have to go ahead and bite the bullet! It's time we stopped this pussy-footing around, and in a loving and kind and caring way, get down to brass tax! It's time we start confronting our neighbors, if we're concerned about their going to heaven with us.

Alright, back up to the top of the flowchart. What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure, without a doubt, that you'd go to heaven? If that prospect says, "No, I know I'm not ready." And you ask him, you see, as we progress down the flowchart, "Does it bother you?" You might hear him say, "Well, when I think about it." Or, "I don't think about it." Some form of that. Well, now notice in the next box. What are you doing? Ask him, "Can we talk about it? Can we think about it?" Brethren, do you notice what we're trying to do here? We are trying to get into salvation dialogue with this person, right here on the spot! We have, I'm afraid, evolved into an attitude in the last two, three, four decades? I don't know how long. Brethren, we have convinced ourselves that if we confront people at all, well, we're going to run'em off! And so we have adopted as our scripture the old human idea that, "All you have to do is just live your life in such a way so that when people watch you long enough, why, they'll eventually ask you what you believe in the church of Christ!" And as a result we have stopped confronting people. After we have talked grandchildren, after we have talked the weather, after we have talked, oh, football, and baseball, and

politics, and that thousand and one other things that it seems we constantly go over and over and over again with in talking to our neighbors; as a parting shot, you know, as we're about to leave the scene, we'll look back as though it were a second thought, and we might say, not definite, but we might say, "Come to church with me sometime, alright?" And then we leave! Sometimes. Yea, because it's our idea that if we can get them into church, why, they'll see our smiling and happy faces! They'll feel our warm and family atmosphere. They'll like our singing. They'll be impressed. And then they'll want to come back! And my goodness! If they come back a second time, we're on a roll! They're going to want to come back all the time. And then, as they come, week after week, or month after month, and year after year, finally, sometime down the line, they'll eventually, one day far in the future, walk the aisle. And as a result, with this kind of thinking, we have lost something vital, brethren! We have lost the urgency of lostness. We have forgotten that hell is real! We have forgotten hell is hot! We have forgotten people really are lost. We have forgotten we're the ones that have been sent to go tell them about Jesus Christ. That we're the ones sent to go rescue the perishing. We have lost the urgency of lostness. Why put off to tomorrow what you can talk to them about today? Goodness, the Lord may come before tomorrow. The Lord may come before Sunday. It's time we talked to them about Jesus Christ right now! Right now! So that's what we're trying to do, you see, with this question. "Can we talk about it? Can we think about it?" Now, he might say, as you see on the flowchart, "No, I'm not ready to talk about it right now." Well, keep on going down your flowchart. You see in the very next box what you are to say in response. Always keep the door open. You see the shaking of the hands there? "Remember I asked, and I'm ready to talk to you about it anytime you get ready." Tell him, "I'll come over at three o'clock in the morning! I'll drop everything and come over to talk to you." Now, if you've been afraid, go ahead and tell him. "I was afraid to ask you that question. But I decided that I cared for you enough that I was going to bite the bullet and take the risk, and ask you such a question. I love you, man. I care for you. I want to talk to you about it."

Be open! Be real! Be concerned! Defuse his defense. He'll be ready to talk to you about it, more than likely. Now I want to stop right here for just a moment and kind of chase a rabbit, if I may. I asked you at the very beginning have you ever found yourself frustrated because you didn't know how to get into salvation dialogue. Let me ask you another question. Have you ever found yourself talking about generic religion? I mean, you're sitting there having a cup of coffee, you know, with that neighbor of yours, and you're talking about why we don't speak in tongues, or you're talking about why we take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week, you're talking about who-knows-what-all, even concerning religion. And you're saying, "Boy, I wish I knew how to get off these particular subjects and onto the gospel. Onto particular salvation dialogue." And you find yourself chasing one rabbit after another, and you even find yourself on one subject, and even before you could answer that subject, they change subjects on you, saying, "Well, why don't you all speak in tongues?" Or, "You believe you're the only ones going to heaven?" I mean, you're jumping, chasing one rabbit after another. Here's what's happened. You have allowed that prospect of yours to be in control of the conversation. Let me give you a little trick as to how to control a conversation, alright? Here it is. The one who asks the questions is the one who controls the conversation. I don't know why it happens that way but it does. Let me ask you this. Do you know someone who just talks ninety miles an hour? I mean, you can't get a word in edgewise. Every time you try to speak up, "Bla-bla-bla." They keep talking, and you just can't slip in there no matter what. Do this experiment. While that person is talking; now don't wait for a pause because there is none. While that person is talking, ask a question and watch what happens. I mean, here's this person talking, "Bla-bla-bla," you know, and you're waiting for a pause but there is no pause. Ask a question. Ask, "Do you want to go to town with me this afternoon?" Watch what happens. That person will say, "Bla-bla; yea, what time you goin'?" He heard you! And he answered your question. I don't know why it happens that way. It just does. Somehow, for some reason, we as human beings, we feel compelled, we feel responsible, to answer questions. I don't know why. But we just do. So use that to your advantage. The one who asks the questions is the one who controls the conversation. So, as you will notice here on this flowchart, your part is wherever there is a question. You can know what your part is here.

All right. Ask the question. Don't let him, don't let her be the question asker. You be the question asker! That's why we get in trouble, quite frankly. For example. You've invited your neighbor to church. Fine. That neighbor shows up. You're so excited, you hop over there Sunday afternoon. What do you say? "I'm so glad that you came out to worship with us. Now you see what we're like in the Church of Christ. Do you have any questions?"

"Yea! Do you all speak in tongues in your church? Yea, you all take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week? Yea, you all don't have a piano in your church? Is it you can't afford one?" What happened? All of a sudden you find yourself chasing rabbits! Answering questions. And you're getting into those very subjects that you don't want to talk about right now. You'll get into those subjects, but not right now! Jesus said, "Don't go into all the world and preach church business." He said, first of all, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." Church business is for church people! That prospect you're talking to is not even a member of the church. Preach the gospel to that lost person first.

Alright, let's go back to the flowchart. At the top of the page. "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure without a doubt you'd go to heaven?" Now, going toward the right you'll find those who will say, "Oh, yes! Praise the Lord! I know I'm going to heaven." Your next question is, "Are you a Christian?" Now, we'll get to the lower part of the flowchart here in just a little bit. But going over to the far right hand side, we have a category of what are called the shoulder-shruggers. When you ask the prospect, "What if the Lord were to come right now? You know without a doubt that you'd go to heaven?" We have those who will say, "Oh, I don't know. I think so. I hope so." We call those the shoulder-shruggers. Here's what happens, I'm afraid. We'll ask our prospect, "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know without a doubt that you'd go to heaven?" And we'll find him so positive and excited, he'll say, "Oh yes, praise the Lord! I know I'm going to heaven!" And then he'll turn it on us, "Aren't you?" And then we become the shoulder-shruggers. "Da. Well, I hope so. I think so. I don't know." Brethren, we've got to know who we are, if we're going to do God's work, God's will. The Bible says, in 1st John, chapter 5, verse 13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know - not that you may think so! hope so! He says that you may know that you have eternal life!" Goodness, Paul says I know Him in Whom I have believed, and I - he didn't say I think I've got it - he says, I am persuaded. That's what he said. That He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day. The Bible says we who are of God's faithful children can know we are saved. And brethren, it's time that we not only know it, but it's time that we get excited about it. It's time we get excited about it. In Psalm 51 when David knew that he had blown it with his relationship with God in his sin with Bathsheba, he says in verse 12 to God in that famous prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of your salvation." Notice he didn't say, "Restore unto me the confidence of your salvation." He took it one step further. What he said was, "Restore unto me the joy of your salvation. Uphold me with Your generous Spirit." The next verse says, "Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will be converted to You." You see, when we not only have the confidence of our salvation, but when we have the joy of our salvation, you can't keep us from telling others about what we've got in Jesus Christ. The joy of our own salvation, frankly, is the sparkplug behind our taking the risks in asking, in confronting with care those who are lost around us. I'm saved. There's not a doubt in my mind. And I'm excited about my salvation. That's why I do what I do. Why don't you get excited about your own salvation, if you're not already? Because once you really get excited about it there's nothing that can stop you from telling others what you know you've got.