

Confronting with Care!

Session 2

I don't know if you have recognized it or not. But if you have, then you already see what we are doing with this flowchart. What we are doing here is, that we are simply preparing the soil before we plant the seed; in this case, the gospel seed. Now, with this flowchart, as we ask our prospect these questions, what we are doing is, we are simply trying to find out what he believes. It's called "assessment." We're trying to find out what he already knows, what he already understands. If you are a school teacher you know that one of the best ways to start out that school year, any school year with those kids, is to first of all, on one of those first days of school, is to give them a test. Whether it be an English class, or a Geometry class, whatever class. Give them a test. Not for a grade. But simply to find out what they already know. To find out what they don't know. To find out what they understand. Or what they don't understand. So that you can start where they are, and then take them in that class where you need to take them. That's all we are doing with our prospect with this flowchart in asking these questions. We're simply trying to find out what he already understands. To find out what he doesn't understand about his own relationship with the Lord. That's what we're doing as we use this flowchart.

All right, go ahead and pick up your flowchart and we'll go ahead and get started. Now you remember here at the top of the page we asked the question, "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know without a doubt that you'd go to heaven to be with Him to live forever?" Now ask it casually. Don't make it sound like it's been canned. Ask it casually, but ask the question. "Jim, how are you and the Lord doing? What if He were to come right now? Jim, is there any doubt in your mind, would you know without a doubt that you'd go to heaven to be with the Lord to live forever?" And that gets you into salvation dialogue. Now, I'm going to, a little later on, take you through the whole process. But let's pick up now where we left off last time.

Let's start at the middle of the page. We'll ask our prospect next, "Are you a Christian?" Now, we ask our prospect that question only when the door is open. Any time he gives you a "yes" answer, or at least he doesn't close the door. You see over here we have where he's trying to close the door. Anytime the door is still open, as you continue your conversation, you do want to ask him that question. "Are you a Christian?" Now on the left hand side of the sheet you might find that he will even answer, "No, I'm not." You want to ask him next, "Were you ever a Christian?" Now, I'll tell you in a few moments why you would want to ask that question. But first of all, when you do ask that question, you might find him to say, "No, I've never been a Christian." Now, you know, when you ask your prospect, "Are you a Christian?", and he says no. And then you ask him, "Were you ever a Christian?", and again he says no, that tells you a whole lot about himself. Listen. You want to find out where he is, what he already understands. If he already admits he's not a Christian, and he's never been a Christian, he never became a Christian; he knows he's never become a Christian any time in his life. That tells you a whole lot about him. You next want to find out whether or not he is concerned about that. "Well, do you love the Lord?" Now he might say, "No, I leave God alone; He leaves me alone; we don't have anything to do with one another." You have apathy again, and well, how do you overcome apathy? He needs another trip to hell. I think that if we would take a trip to hell our whole priority system would change. We would be motivated to make some necessary changes in our lives if we could take such a short trip to hell. Don't you think so? I mean, Abraham Lincoln once said about a man, "I think a little hanging would do him some good." But you know, he said, "Once a man be hanged we can't bring him back no matter how sorry we are."

Well, that's the way it is with hell. Once a person goes to hell, he can experience a little bit of hell, once he enters that doomed realm of the unseen dead. We can't bring him back, no matter how sorry he is. And so, how do you handle apathy? Well, leave a friend. Always leave a friend so that you can go back to him and then bring the subject up again. And brethren, when Jesus said to go into all the world and preach the gospel, he really was saying, "As you go." It's supposed to be an ongoing kind of thing. Go back to your prospect and ask him again and again and again. Let's not just ask him once.

Alright. Back to the middle of the page. "Are you a Christian?" If he says, "No, I'm not a Christian." "Were you ever a Christian?" "No, I've never been." Well, ask him, "Do you love the Lord?" If he says, "Yes"; wow! You've got an open door there that you can go ahead and teach him the gospel. Listen brethren, there are a lot of precious prospects out there who readily admit they are not Christians. They readily admit they've never been Christians. They want to go to heaven. They want to be saved. They want to become Christians. But they are frustrated, because they don't know what to do. They don't know who to ask. They don't know how to bring the subject up either. We've got a lot of precious people who live all around us, who watch those television programs, who allow the television set to become their electronic churches. Yet, they're not quite satisfied with what they hear, but it's the best thing they've heard. They're still frustrated, because they don't know if what they're hearing is the truth. Because they don't hear a whole lot of Bible, and what they see being taught they don't agree with. And they're looking; they're searching; they're wanting to become a Christian. But they don't know how to bring up the subject, just like, so often, we don't know how to bring up the subject. But it's amazing. The Lord doesn't tell them to bring up the subject. Who does He tell to bring the subject up? We are the ones to preach the gospel, aren't we? We're the ones He's talking to to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Brethren, we're the ones to confront them. They want to go to heaven. And they'll talk to you about it if ever they're approached. We've got to talk it! Not just live the lifestyle. We've got to talk it. Jesus has given us a message to declare. It's time we declare it!

Back to the middle of the page. "Are you a Christian?" "No." "Were you ever a Christian?" There may be those who would say, "Yes. I used to be a Christian." Some time ago when I flew into Springfield, Missouri, and the preacher picked me up at the airport and on our way out to the church building to conduct one of our We Care week-end seminars where we go through this material as well as other materials, we stopped at the hospital and picked up a recovering alcoholic. And as the preacher had brought this man out and put him in the car and then the preacher was putting the wheel chair back in the hospital, I began my buffer talk with this new gentleman that I had just met. You know, "How're you feeling? Where you from? You lived here long?" I call that buffer talk. At then end of that buffer talk, I asked him the question, "Well, how are you and the Lord doing? What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know without a doubt that you'd go to heaven?" He gave me the shoulder-shrigger response. "Oh, I don't know. I think so. I hope so. I sure want to." By the way, what would be my next question? I asked him, "Well, are you a Christian?" He said, "No, no. I'm not a Christian." What was the next question? "Were you ever a Christian?" He said, "Oh yes. I used to be." "You're not a Christian now, but you used to be?" He said, "Yes. When I was growing up my mamma made sure that I'd go to church. And there was a time in my life when I accepted Christ as my savior, but, well, when I reached those teen age years, I really got away from the Lord. And then later on in life, I got on the bottle and I really ventured away from the Lord and I'm not a Christian any longer. But I used to be."

Brethren, there are a lot of precious people who just simply do not understand Christianity. They think they at one time were a Christian but they are not any longer. So, you want to find out what he believes concerning even his own past. Was there ever a time in his past when he believed he became a Christian? I came across a fella not long ago and he said, "I came back to the Lord two weeks ago." Now, that one statement tells you a whole lot about his past experience. "I came back to the Lord two weeks ago". What's it tell you? First of all, it tells you that there was a time in his life when he believed he came to the Lord and became a Christian. Second, it tells you that there was a time when he, after that, went away from the Lord. But the third thing it tells you is that two weeks ago he came back to the Lord. Now, I want to find out what he experienced that first time when he believed he came to the Lord. You see, there may have been a time when he was baptized for one reason or another way off in his past. Now, I want to find out if he at one time was baptized, and for what reason. Because in our own presentation with my prospect, as we get into the gospel; when we finally get to the response to the gospel and into baptism, then if I haven't found out ahead of time that he had been baptized some time in his past, he will use that against the obedience to the gospel. He'll do sort of a flip-flop against it. "Oh, baptism. Well, now, I was baptized when I was thirteen." And he may be 60 years old when I'm talking to him now. I've got to find out NOW about that experience. Because he'll use it against us later on

in our own conversation. In the case of this gentleman he kept wanting to talk about what happened two weeks ago. I asked him, "Well, tell me what happened when you were first converted; when you believed you first became a Christian." "Oh well, that was when I was thirteen. But two weeks ago I came back to the Lord!" "Alright. But what happened when you were thirteen?" So we went through that experience. I handled it, and then we were better able to help him to understand what it means to obey the gospel. That's the reason that I will ask the question, "Were you ever a Christian?"

Alright, back up to the middle of the page. Here where we ask, "Are you a Christian?" There will be those individuals who will say, "Oh yes. I am a Christian." Now, here's a word of caution. We might find our prospect to even name his church. When we ask the question, "Are you a Christian?" He might say, "Oh yes, I'm a ...". And then he names his denomination. Now, I don't ever want to insult a person. There is never a place to insult another human being. I will understand that he is saying that at the same time while he names his denomination, he also believes he's a Christian. So I will compliment him in that. Listen. In this procedure always find everything that you can compliment him, that other person, for. So I will say, "Well, then, obviously you look upon yourself as being a Christian." You see, I do want the word CHRISTIAN brought into our conversation. "So then, you obviously look upon yourself as being a Christian, don't you?" "Well yes, I do!"

Alright, now down here in the bottom right hand box, you will see that there are several questions. With these questions I am going to interview, I'm going to find out the details of that experience. I've got to find out the details of that experience. Now, I'm going to first of all here, give you the typical evangelical response. The fundamentalist response. Those who believe you have to be born again. The problem is they just don't understand what the Scripture means when it says that you have to be born again. As to how to be born again. So I will ask that prospect all these questions. I will ask him things like, "Well, how old were you when you believed you became a Christian?" He might tell you, "Well, I was about 18 years old." "You were eighteen?" "Well, where was it? Was it here in town? Was it somewhere else?" He might say, "It was in Chicago." "Chicago!" Here's a point of interest. Brethren, you'll notice here that this is salvation highway flowchart, and as I've already mentioned, it flows directly down. This is a highway. Now, when you ask these questions, you might find something here that is of great interest to you, and you'll want to get out here and chase a rabbit. Now, if you're going to chase a rabbit, get out here and chase it real good! I mean, "Chicago! Jim, you lived in Chicago! I didn't know you lived in Chicago. Do you know so-and-so in Chicago? How long did you live there? When did you move back here?" Ask him all those questions if you want to. Get out here and chase a rabbit. But here's a word of caution. When you get through chasing that rabbit; and by the way, don't get so wrapped up in chasing that rabbit, that you forget what you're doing. Alright? Come back to the highway exactly to the point where you left it. Always come back to the salvation dialogue highway. Alright? Come back to the exact point where you left it. Okay. "So you lived in Chicago. And you believe you became a Christian in Chicago." Well, tell me what your next question is. "Was it on a Sunday. Or was it during a revival? Maybe it was at home. Where was it, Jim?" I say, "Jim," if that's your prospect's name. "Where was it, Jim?" He might say, "Well, it was during a revival service." "Well, what night was it on? Do you remember?" He might say, "Well, I remember it was on a Tuesday night." "Well, what happened, Jim?" Now, I want to find out the details of that experience. "What happened, Jim? Did you accept Christ as your Savior back there on the pew where you were sitting, or did you come down to the front?" He might say, "Oh! I remember that preacher they invited in there. Oh, he was such a powerful preacher! When he offered his invitation I just felt the Holy Spirit grab me and move me out into the aisle, and I was down there on that front pew before I even knew I was there!" Now you know brethren, when we hear stories like that, what is our usual response? It just makes us nervous like everything, doesn't it? We don't know what to do with stories like that! And that's why we don't have such stories. We don't know what to do with such stories! Listen brethren, by the way; can I say this very cautiously and lovingly? We've got to be very, very careful to understand that a Christian NEVER, EVER has a right to insult another human being. And when we hear stories like that we can insult our prospect unintentionally. But we can insult our prospect even with just a flicker of the eye. Or with our mouth. Or with a snicker. That's an insult. Brethren, you don't tell people they didn't have an experience. You

weren't there. So what do we do? We handle the experience. We walk them through it. And we find everything we can agree with. We find everything that we can compliment them on in that experience. Now, what we do is just pick up where they are. "So you ended up on the front pew?" "Yes." "Well, what happened? Did the preacher meet you down there?" "Oh, yes!" "Well, what did he do?" Now, here I find, they don't quite remember, so I will help them if it's a typical evangelical type response. Because I've talked to so many others whose response was the same thing. I will ask, "Well, did he lead the sinner's prayer?" "Oh yes, absolutely! He led the sinner's prayer." I will ask, "Well, what did he say in the prayer?" Sometimes they don't remember, so I will use typical evangelical terms. Now, if you don't know what those terms are, just turn your television set on Sunday morning and tune in awhile, and you'll find out! I will use typical evangelical terms. I will ask my prospect, "Did he say something like this. 'Lord, Jim is coming to you in our sinner's prayer here, and he's acknowledging that he is lost. He knows that if the Lord were to come right now, he would not be ready; so Lord, he is asking you to come into his heart. He is claiming Jesus as his personal Savior. He is calling upon the name of the Lord. So cleanse him now in the blood of Jesus; make him a Christian right here and now. In Jesus' name, amen.'" And then I will ask my prospect, "Is that something like what he said?" I've had people to say, "That's exactly what he said!" And it wasn't; but because I used so many typical evangelical terms, they understood me to say those very things that they've heard in so many cases when someone has responded. They don't think about these terms as being doctrine. They just think that's what you say, that's what you do, when finally you get ready to accept Christ as your personal savior. So I will help them with these terms. Now, it's not here on the flowchart, so you might want to turn it over and jot down three other questions. I will go ahead and ask at least three other questions at this point. I will ask my prospect, number one, "When you opened your eyes and looked around, was everybody smiling?" And in every case I have found they will say, "Yes." I will ask the second question. I will ask, "Why were they smiling?" And the answer is, "Because I just got saved! I just became a Christian! Everybody was excited. I was excited! Everybody was smiling." My third question is, "On your way home that night, if you had been involved in a car accident and had died, do you believe you would have gone to heaven that night?" "Oh yes. There's not a doubt in my mind." "So, in other words," I will say, "you were saved on that front pew on that front seat right there in that prayer. Is that right?" "Oh yes. There's not a doubt in my mind." I will then ask, as you will now see on your flowchart, "Well, did you join your church that night? When did you join your church?" And usually I find my prospect to say, "Oh. All of those who were saved during the week were baptized the next Sunday." "Oh. You were saved on Tuesday night and then you were baptized the next Sunday?" "Yes."

Now, if the story takes us to another location, then I will change my questions to fit that location. I had a precious grandfather in Arkansas tell me that he was saved out behind his daddy's barn when he was just a teenager. And so I geared my questions to fit that location. But you'll notice that these questions are designed to pinpoint the time and the place where that prospect BELIEVES he got saved. Where he believes he became a Christian. In that particular case, I asked this grandfather, as he said, "Oh, I felt the presence of the Lord! I grabbed ahold of the mulberry bush. It shook, and I shook and we both fell to the ground; and it was there, you see, that I got saved." So I geared my questions, "You mean to tell me as you walked around your grandfather's barn before that experience, you knew that you were lost?" And he told me, "Oh yes, We were having a revival. One of those brush-arbor revivals, and I was under conviction!" That was his term. "I was under conviction. I knew I was lost. I knew I needed to be saved, and so I was looking for the Lord." And so I will ask him, "Well, after that experience then, as you walked back around that barn, as you were headed back to the house, you knew you were saved?" "Oh yes. There was not a doubt in my mind." I asked him, "If you had fallen and hit your head against a rock and had died, do you believe you would have gone to heaven?" "Oh yes." "So in other words you were saved right there at that mulberry bush." "That's right." "Well, did you join that church?" "Oh yes. All of those of us who were saved during that revival were baptized in a river, in a creek, the next Sunday." "So, you were saved and then you were baptized, that's right?" "That's right." Now, what have I done here as far as my interview is concerned with my prospect? Brethren, I've done several things. Number one. I have complimented my prospect. I've complimented him. Let me ask you something. What is it that most people want to talk

about most? Is it themselves? Is it their own experiences? Well, what have we done with this interview? We have talked about him. We have talked about his experiences. I have shown MUCH interest. I have complimented him. You see, when I go around the neighborhood, and I knock on doors, and I say, "I'm Larry West, and I'm looking for somebody who would like to study the Bible. Would you like to study the Bible?" What they are interpreting that I am saying is, "I want to come into your house. I want you to sit down on your couch. I want you to shut up, and I want to preach to you my church doctrine." And they're not interested. Could we blame them? Should we blame them? We're not interested in somebody doing that to us either. Why do we think we are any different than they are? But with these questions I am interviewing them. I am asking them to do the talking. I'm asking them to talk about their own lives. I'm complimenting them.

Second. I am helping them, probably for the first time in their lives, to get a chronological order of events down that they've never put together before. "Now, let's see, it was on a Tuesday night. I went down to the front. I called upon the name of the Lord. Everybody was smiling. If I had died on the way home, yea, and then, it was the next Sunday I was baptized. Yea, that's the way it happened!" The third thing now that I have done, I've gotten him committed to those events. That way I can help him not do to a flip-flop a little later on. He admits that was his experience and he's going to stay with that experience. And as we get into the gospel presentation he is going to see the difference between what the Bible has said one must do in order to obey the gospel, versus what he had actually experienced years ago. So I've gotten him committed. Now brethren, notice here. You don't win a soul to Christ until, first of all, you talk the talk. You talk the salvation talk. Listen to me. You don't win souls to Christ by talking grandchildren all the time; by talking weather all the time; by talking football all the time. We've got to get into this kind of talk before we're actually going to win his soul to Christ; before we're going to be able to get into the gospel presentation. TALK THE TALK! Don't be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Don't be afraid to talk to people about their own salvation needs. And their own experience. Now, how do we turn this thing around? Obviously, we have a story to tell. He told us his story. We have a story to tell. How do you make that transition? Well, on your flowchart you'll notice in the next box right under. Just simply respond by saying, "Well, I was not saved that way". Now, the big box at the bottom, you'll notice you will ask, "May I share with you my story? May I share with you how I was saved?"

It works beautifully. You see, in this interview I have shown so much interest. I've complimented him by being so absolutely interested in his life, that as we have finished his story, and I ask him, "May I tell you my story?"; he feels obligated, actually, to listen to me. And obligated not just to listen, but to be as interested in my story as I had been in his story! Oh, isn't turnabout fair courtesy? Turnabout fair courtesy? So now, I have a story to tell. Brethren, listen. If you've been a Christian a week, a year; if you've been a Christian five years, ten years, twenty years, thirty years, and you don't have a story to tell, something's wrong. Something's wrong. Brethren, we got to learn to declare the gospel of Christ if we're going to obey the command of Jesus Christ. We have a story to tell! It's the gospel story. As we go to the Bible, it's the gospel story. Can't you tell when you learned it? Can't you tell where it was you learned it? Who taught it to you? When you obeyed? What you did to obey that gospel? You have a story to tell!

Alright. Now, before we leave this session I want you to notice that this is, again, the salvation highway. There will be individuals who, when they hear you ask this question, they will want to jump track. They hear it just generically. "You brought us generic religion." They didn't hear the specific question. When I ask the question, "How are you and the Lord doing? What if the Lord were to come right now; would you know for sure without a doubt that you'd go to heaven?" They just hear it generically. "Larry, you're a member of the Church of Christ, aren't you?" And then they'll ask some questions. "Why don't you all speak in tongues? Why don't you meet on Saturday instead of Sunday?" Or a thousand and one other kinds of questions. You know what I'm talking about.

Not long ago, I baptized my next door neighbor, Rena, when she was in high school. And so I asked Rena, "Rena, when are we going to get that boyfriend of yours?" And she said, "I'll set it up." She called me a couple of weeks later and she said, "Okay, I set it up. Dale wants to talk to you. But he wants to go in your back yard, and he wants to talk to you back there in your swings." So we went to the back yard and we sat down. I asked him the question, "Dale, how are you and the Lord doing? What if the Lord were to come right now? Do you know without a doubt, Dale, that you'd go home to be with Him to live forever?" Dale heard it generically. He said, "Mr. West, I have been going to another congregation of the Church of Christ out here just on the edge of town with Rena. And I heard the preacher say that if I wasn't baptized in the Church of Christ, I was going to go to hell. Why would he say that, Mr. West?" Now what just happened? Think about it. What just happened? He took control of the conversation, didn't he? How did he take control of the conversation? Now I've already told you how we control the conversation. The one who asks the questions is the one who controls the conversation, right? How did he take control of the conversation? Did he ask a question? "Why would he say that, Mr. West?" Now what does he want to talk about? Baptism. Specifically, that's what bothers him. He wants to talk about baptism. What is our tendency to do? Talk about baptism. Is that what Jesus said to do? "Go into all the world and tell them first about baptism." Is that what He said to do? Not quite. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." Brethren, baptism makes no sense AT ALL outside the gospel of Jesus Christ. Preach the gospel first. I said, "Well, Dale, it bothers me that the preacher that you heard said it that way. I think I know what he's trying to say. The Bible uses another term." Brethren, if we would use Bible terminology we'll be right. Let's use Bible terminology always, alright? I said, "Dale, for me to be able to answer your question, I need you to first of all answer mine." Now let me ask you something. Do you suppose I'll ever answer Dale's question? Yes! But for me to be able to answer his question, he needs first of all to hear the gospel. So he said, "Well, okay." Then he asked, "What was your question?" I said, "Dale, I need to find out how you feel about it. What if the Lord were to come right now? What do you say about it?" I found out he believed he was already a Christian. He believed he was already prepared to meet his God. And then he heard this thing on baptism. I found how he had one of those front row experiences in his church in town. And so after I found out his story, after I learned his experience, I simply said, "Well, Dale, I wasn't saved that way, myself. May I now tell you how I was saved?" He said, "Sure." I got into the gospel presentation, showed him what baptism really means; I baptized him into Christ that afternoon. Dale didn't marry Rena, but Dale did marry an elder's daughter. And now Dale is preaching the gospel himself.

This flowchart looks a little confusing until you see how it flows. Ask the question. Ask the question. Learn the details of this individual's response so that you then, can tell your own story, which is the gospel presentation. Now, what is the gospel we must declare? Brethren, the gospel of Jesus Christ is what is first on our list. It must be first, as we get the cart and the horse in proper sequence. Let's do what Jesus said, and we'll win, and we'll keep, more precious souls for the kingdom, for our Master, for our Savior.

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(Sinner's Prayer)

Ask prospect, "Did he say something like this?"

Lord, Jim is coming to you in our sinner's prayer here, and he's acknowledging that he is lost. He knows that if the Lord were to come right now, he would not be ready; so Lord, he is asking you to come into his heart. He is claiming Jesus as his personal Savior. He is calling upon the name of the Lord. So cleanse him now in the blood of Jesus; make him a Christian right here and now. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ask prospect, "Is that something like what he said?"