



EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

OPEN NERVES OF EVANGELISM

NOTES

What are “Open Nerves”?

A few years ago LeRoy Eims, one of the Navigators’ most skilled leaders in evangelism, coined the phrase, “open nerves of evangelism.” This phrase has become accepted and well-used among people who are engaged in evangelism and are teaching others to do it. By “open nerves,” LeRoy was describing **the areas of specific need in an individual’s life.**



Example:

If I have a toothache in one particular tooth, the dentist can probe all the teeth with no response from me. But if his instrument touches the exposed or open nerve of the decayed tooth, you can be sure that there will be a response!

Everyone Has “Open Nerves”

In the life of **every** person there are sensitive areas or needs. Most of the time people do not like to reveal these needs and try to keep them hidden. Perhaps they hide their needs so well that even friends and relatives cannot see them. But they are there; you can be sure of that! The Bible states clearly that those people (the wicked) who do not know God cannot be completely at peace inside.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

(Isaiah 57:20-21)

If, in our evangelism, we become skilled in recognizing and touching open nerves, we will become much more effective.

One man’s personal testimony records this:

...Before my conversion I had a very serious problem with life because I had no purpose or goal. I was like a ship on a stormy sea without a rudder. Several people had tried to witness to me about Christ without my interest being raised at all. However, I was converted the day I heard a man share his testimony of how God could give purpose and direction in life. This man had touched my “open nerve” and I was all ears. If there was an answer to my problem, I certainly wanted to find it.

How to Discover “Open Nerves”



Think for a moment about the problems you faced before you came to Christ. When Christ entered your life, He met that particular need, and the problem doesn’t plague you anymore.

OR

Think about problems you are still having in your struggle with sin, but which are being increasingly conquered through your walk with Christ.

List three areas where Christ has met or is meeting a real need in your life.

- 1. _____
- _____
- 2. _____
- _____
- 3. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Examples of Common “Open Nerves”

NOTES

*Lack of Purpose and Meaning in
Life*

No Joy or Happiness

Loneliness and Emptiness

Low Self-Image

Lack of Peace and Contentment

Guilty Conscience

Fear of Death

Dissatisfaction with Life

Moral Problems

Boredom

Inability to Live Up to One's Own Moral Standards

Marriage Problems

Gripped by Sinful Habits

Bitterness and Resentment Toward God or

Toward Others

Worry and Fears

Problems with Drug Abuse or Alcohol

Failure Complex

How to Use “Open Nerves”

When you share your testimony with others, learn to build it around your “open nerves.” As you do this, you will identify with your audience, and they will identify with you. The problems you faced and are facing are the same problems that everyone faces.

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is
common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer
you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the
temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able
to bear it.*

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

As people hear you honestly admit your own problems, you will seem real and approachable to them and this will encourage them to be transparent enough to share their “open nerves” with you.

It has become an accepted fact that people who have overcome some problem are best qualified to help others who are still in the midst of it. Just seeing someone who has found victory creates hope. This is what has made “Alcoholics Anonymous,” “Weight Watchers,” and other such organizations so effective.

Before you share your testimony with another, try to discern what his “open nerves” are. Then try to relate that part of your testimony in an effort to identify with them and to share how Christ has helped with that problem. You may not be able to completely identify with the person’s specific problem, but you can aim in the general direction.

Example:

Perhaps the person you are sharing with has recently gone through a divorce and is feeling guilty, depressed and lonely. You may never have been divorced, but you can identify with the feelings that are being experienced. You may say something like this:

“Well, John, I have never gone through exactly what you are going through in this situation, but I do remember a time in my life when I faced a life full of problems, loneliness, guilt and depression and had no answers at all...”

From there you can go on to share your testimony.

Jesus was very skilled at identifying the “open nerves” in others:

- **The Woman At The Well** (John 4) became responsive when Jesus put His finger on her moral life.
- **The Rich Young Ruler** (Luke 18) had a real “open nerve” when it came to materialism and possessions.
- **Nicodemus** (John 3) responded when Jesus touched upon his “open nerve” of religiosity and pointed out that this was not enough: “You must be born again.”

If we ask God’s help in making us sensitive and discerning, He will help us to discover people’s needs. Then as we skillfully and prayerfully reach out, God can and will use us in the lives of others.