





*How to*  
**START & LEAD A**  
**ONE-TO-ONE™**  
*Group*

*By*  
**CHARLES SIMPSON**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Charles Simpson has ministered around the world as an effective Bible teacher, pastor, and church planter. At the age of twenty, Charles was ordained as a Southern Baptist Pastor. Years later, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and became a pioneer in what later came to be known as the Charismatic Renewal movement. He has authored numerous books, and served as contributor to *The Spirit-Filled Life Bible*.

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## **ONE-TO-ONE™ BOOKS**

*How to Start and Lead a One-to-One™ Group*

*How to Lead Someone to Christ*

*My Journey Into Faith*

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## **DEDICATION**

To those who have learned the joy of sharing  
their faith in Jesus Christ

## PREFACE

The pastor on the other end of the line was discouraged; another member had just left his small church that was growing smaller still. He saw little hope for the future. I was praying as I tried to encourage him, but I knew that he could not go on simply doing the same things and expect to survive.

Thirty years earlier, he had been very successful in reaching other young people through street ministry, coffee house ministry, and “one-to-one” sharing of the Gospel. But with success came the pressure to organize in the traditional ways. He had gone from being a “Fisher of Men” to becoming a “clergyman.” He was a good fisherman, but not so effective as a clergyman.

As I prayed, I believed that the Holy Spirit was speaking to me, “Do something radical and simple.” That’s the way it had been in the beginning, but the years had obscured and complicated the simple mission to reach people for Christ.

Our conversation resulted in a plan for him to gather three or four men who would commit themselves to the simple purpose of reaching people, one-to-one. As we talked, he and I both began to sense excitement—the Lord was encouraging. When I hung up the phone, I realized that the conversation was not just for his benefit, but mine as well. I knew that many churches suffered from

the same lack of growth. In fact, our own church was not growing as it once had. What was the Lord saying to me?

Soon after that conversation, I preached a sermon directed toward personal evangelism and called for a response from the congregation. The response was smaller than I had hoped for, but those who did respond were serious about the Lord's call to them.

I decided to meet with those who had responded; we discussed the lack of faith-sharing among Christians and what we should do about it. We decided to commit ourselves to the task. We met several times subsequent to the original meeting and each time the mission became more clear and the Lord's favor was evident in our meetings. Excitement grew as each one gave a testimony of sharing their faith with others.

We decided to call ourselves a *One-to-One* Group. Our mission statement was simple: "Extending the kingdom of God...one person at a time." We committed ourselves to stay focused on this mission by sharing our faith in Jesus Christ through personal relationships. This booklet came out of our gathering and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles V. Simpson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Charles V. Simpson



## WAS JESUS A RADICAL?

The Lord had spoken to my heart, “Do something radical and simple.” What does it mean to be radical?

The word radical means “fundamental,” “root,” or “foundational.” Radical does not mean “extreme;” it means to be “basic.” However, to be basic and true to origins can seem radical when we have strayed from Jesus’ own model and then attempted to return to it.

Jesus did not come to start a religion; He came to give overflowing life—God life. To accomplish His task, we must understand more about His eternal purpose, to seek and save. He loved people; He looked for people; He related to and talked to

*Jesus made the issue  
radically simple—  
“Do you believe?”*

people about the real issue—their relationship to God. He used common experiences to illustrate great truths. He put it down where people could understand and respond. He made the issue radically simple: *Do you believe?* Turning from one’s

own way toward a simple faith in Him brings salvation (Romans 10:14-17).

To follow Him, we must not see adversaries, only opportunities...no rules, no formulas, no walls, only bridges. If we can love and relate to people, the issue will be simple: will they believe that He is the Son of God, accept His life, death, and Resurrection?

*Jesus succeeded by  
preaching His Kingdom  
to multitudes, but  
reaching people one  
at a time.*

Will they trust Him to forgive their errors and give them life, peace, and joy? Will they allow Him to lead their lives by His Spirit? These are the questions. The answer is up to them. But we must make it simple and clear.

Jesus came to “seek and save the lost.” If we are going to save, we must first *seek*. He came to give abundant life by reconciling mankind to God. He came to die in our place for our sins to satisfy divine justice. He came to rise again in triumph over death. And He came to take us through death into life...into God’s Spirit and power.

Jesus stayed focused and He succeeded. He

also showed us how to succeed by preaching His Kingdom to multitudes, but reaching people one at a time.

Consider a passage of scripture which reveals the radical *One-to-One* approach which worked in reaching people like Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel.

*The first thing he (Andrew) did after finding where Jesus lived was find his own brother, Simon, telling him, "We've found the Messiah" (that is, "Christ"). He immediately led him to Jesus...The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. When he got there, he ran across Philip and said, "Come, follow me." (Philip's hometown was Bethsaida, the same as Andrew and Peter.) Philip went and found Nathaniel....<sup>1</sup>*

**The Key to Success** in this effort is staying simple and staying focused on building personal relationships. It is sharing our faith with individuals. This is not about religious discussion and activity; it is about reaching people, one at a time, with the message and life of Christ.

Salvation is a very personal experience.

<sup>1</sup> John 1:40-45 from Eugene Peterson's translation, *The Message*.

## ARE YOU A RADICAL?

In order to succeed, we must recognize and solve problems. And, that means we must work to overcome natural differences that have become barriers: cultural, racial, generational, gender, religious, and any others that we see. Many of these other barriers are in our own minds and approaches to life. And, of course, they are also in the minds of those that we are trying to reach.

Jesus transcended barriers. He was different

*Jesus had a “go to them”  
mentality from the  
moment He left heaven.*

from His religious contemporaries who thought in terms of rules, racial superiority, and complexities that hindered the simple truth: God loves every human being and wants fellowship with them.

That is the message of Jesus.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day had a “Come to us” mentality; Jesus had a “Go to them” mentality from the moment He left heaven. This still remains the major challenge to God's people.

Religious stereotypes, language, pride, adversarial thinking, and cultural habits are also problems that we must recognize and resolve, as Jesus did. If we are to succeed, we must love people enough to learn and speak their language. We must make ourselves understood.

Too many Christians do not care enough to try, nor do they consider the condition of people who are without Christ, their eternal “lostness,” or the benefits that these people are missing. Consequently, too many Christians never share their own faith. It is as though hell and eternity are no longer considerations. Many Christians have accepted the secular view that faith doesn’t really matter. And...many of us have forgotten how it was before we met Jesus Christ ourselves. It is time to remember.

Do you remember when you first committed your life to follow Jesus? Have you thought about what it means to follow Jesus in declaring His Kingdom? It certainly means that we have a concern for nonbelievers; it means that we are willing to go and find them as He came and found us; and it means that we share His passion for His purpose to extend the kingdom of God to all people everywhere.

## WHAT IS A ONE-TO-ONE™ GROUP?

A *One-to-One* Group is not a large group, but it is a focused group of four or five people. That size allows for each one to participate without having long meetings. That size helps to avoid distractions, facilitate scheduling, and it is easier to lead. It is more intimate and confidential when it needs to be.

Each person in the group should be committed to the purpose, philosophy, and methodology of a *One-to-One* Group. In my opinion, it is better to have four members than five, if the fifth one dilutes the unity of purpose just for the sake of having one more person in the group.

*Two or three who are  
gathered together in  
His name will find  
His presence.*

When all the group is *together*, in *one place* and *one accord*, the Holy Spirit shows up in greater power. Two or three who are gathered together in His name will find His presence.

In order to develop a long-term focus and retrain ourselves, I suggest a definite time commitment for a certain number of meetings per month, for a definite number of months. After that time expires, a review will be desirable, and decisions about the future can be made. A good model would be to meet twice a month for one hour, and continue meeting for twelve months. This model would allow for necessary training, relationship building, and harvesting results. Committing to that model would enable members to focus for an extended period of time and learn through experience how to be effective. It would also encourage accountability among the group members to stay focused on the mission of Christ.

Here are some concepts to remember:

## **MISSION**

Extending the kingdom of God...one person at time.

## **FOCUS**

Building relationships with nonbelievers.

## **PERSPECTIVE**

Inclusive and non-adversarial.

## **METHOD**

Building trust through character and consistency.

## **EQUIPPING**

Studying materials on how to share your faith.

## **LISTS**

Asking God to give you five people who need Christ for which you will pray daily.

## **TARGETS**

Anyone who gives evidence of spiritual hunger or seems open to your friendship.

## **QUESTIONS**

Learn to ask questions that allow these people to talk about what matters to them. Learn to recognize the importance of responding when that person begins to ask questions of you. Proper questions can open the human heart and draw life.

## **SHARE**

Give individuals something of yourself and not just spiritual truths. Know when and how to give your own testimony.

*Give individuals  
something of yourself  
and not just  
spiritual truths.*

## **COMMITMENT**

Be accountable to the group to share your faith, and to learn how and when to share it.

## **FOLLOW-UP**

Accept responsibility to assist new believers in personal growth by providing friendship and Biblical materials.

*Assist new believers in  
personal growth by  
providing friendship  
and Biblical materials.*

## **REPLICATION**

Be committed to teach new believers how to share their faith and lead others to Christ.

## WHAT ABOUT GROUP LEADERSHIP?

The leader is very important to overall success of the group. He or she may be the person who formed the group or someone else that all agree to support. His or her tasks are as follows:

- Moderate the gatherings.
- Be familiar with the purpose, philosophy, and methodology of a *One-to-One* Group.
- Contact the members to remind them of gatherings. Each member should keep a calendar.
- Keep the meetings focused.
- Involve everyone and draw out testimonies and suggestions. Be a facilitator, not a dominator. Allow others to lead who demonstrate the ability.
- Suggest helpful information and materials to the group, as well as soliciting materials from the members.
- Start the meetings on time and follow a

focused procedure. And, if possible, close the meeting in one hour or less.

CSM Publishing will provide assistance to leaders who have questions, or need materials.

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## DO WE NEED TRAINING?

Equipping is necessary to success. Motivation will get us started, but “know how” will keep us going toward the goal. I suggest that each member read at least one book on how to lead people to Christ. *Evangelism As a Lifestyle*, by Jim Peterson, *How to be a Contagious Christian*, by Bill Hybels, and *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, by Robert Coleman, are all good books. We will provide a recommended list if you desire.

Each member should have a “chain” of Bible references that are helpful in pointing out one’s need for Christ, what sin does to us, and how to turn away from it, God’s grace and forgiveness, how to trust Christ, and how to know we have been born of His Spirit.

It will also be helpful to have additional verses on receiving the Holy Spirit into our lives, and studying the Bible in order to grow spiritually. A “chain” is simply knowing the first text and writing the next one beside that verse. This pattern will lead us through verses that point the way to life and peace and joy. For example: Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; John 3:16-17; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:8-13; 1 John 5:1,13; John 7:37,38; Romans 8:1-6,35-39.

The members can practice the process with one another.

## WHAT IS THE POWER TOOL?

The most powerful tool, next to the Word of God, is our own experience with Jesus Christ. Giving our testimony is sharing our life. It is not “preachy” or prideful; it is humbly telling how we were in need, how someone shared life with us, and how we found life in Christ.

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with Jesus Christ.*

A testimony answers questions. Where was I before Christ? Who came to me? What was it about them that related to me? What did they do and say that reached me? What did I do to find the goodness and mercy of God? What did I do after I met Christ?

Our testimony should be brief and to the point; it is about the mercy of God and what He has done. We must avoid religious terminology where possible, and avoid giving any impression that we are “better” than others.

It is also essential that we wait on the Holy Spirit to show us when giving our story will be appropriate. When the other person begins to ask questions, that is a good sign. Writing out our testimony—our own story—on a page or two will

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our story will be  
appropriate.*

help us be ready. Read and reread it and ask yourself, “How will this sound to someone who does not know Jesus Christ?” Give your story to another member of the group and ask them for suggestions. But keep your story truthful and natural. Sincerity is vital.

## WHAT DOES A ONE-TO-ONE™ GROUP LOOK LIKE?

The leader should ask the group to schedule several meetings in advance. It can be a fixed day or a meeting at different times. The important thing is for all to attend. A meeting could go as follows:

“Well friends, it is time to begin. George, will you lead us in prayer?” (George prays for God’s leading and gives thanks for the salvation that has been extended to us. He may ask the Lord to work in the hearts of those for whom each member is praying. He may pray that God will show each one how to relate and share faith. The prayer should stay focused on the purpose of the meeting.)

*“Do you have a list of  
at least five people  
whom you believe have  
never received Jesus  
Christ as Lord?”*

The leader may then ask, *“Has everyone reviewed the booklet, Starting and Leading a One-*

*to-One Group? Good, we need to do that often.”*

*“Has everyone finished a book on personal evangelism?”* The leader wants to be sure each member is equipped. *“What about cassettes or other materials? Does anyone have materials to suggest?”* (Usually new materials will be suggested.)

*“Does everyone have a list of at least five people whom you believe have never accepted Jesus Christ as Lord?”* (We recommend five because it will force us to look for new people and keep us from getting “hung-up” on one who is not yet ready. And we encourage daily prayer for this list.)

*“Now comes the fun part. Who is ready to tell us about any progress you have made with a person on your list or any occasion that you had to share your faith, since our last meeting?”* (This will usually take the most time and will be the most encouraging part of the meeting.)

*“Does anyone have a question or need help in making progress toward the goal?”*

*“Did anyone make a mistake that we should all try to avoid?”*

*“Are you ready to pray for those who are on the list?”* This time should be focused on releasing the captives (see Luke 4:17-19). *“Now I would like to remind us about the next meeting (place and time). If you have a new believer who wants to come and share his experience with Christ, bring them with you. Remember to pray for one another daily.”*

Adjourn.

## HOW DO WE MEASURE GROUP EFFECTIVENESS?

Bear this in mind; we are not fishing for sport, but for eternal results. My cousin was a commercial fisherman. One day, he and I were out on his boat. As we moved along at a steady pace, a sport fisherman passed us rapidly, leaving a large wave that rocked our boat. My cousin said, “There goes

*Results really matter.  
The results we look for  
will be moving people  
toward Christ, or  
actually leading them  
to Christ.*

a sportsman.” His tone told me that there was a real difference between people who merely fish for sport, and those whose lives depend on it. We are serious about fishing; it is a way of life for us. Results really matter.

The results that we look for will be moving people toward Christ, or actually leading them to Christ. And, as we harvest those results, we will not only be leading someone to Christ, but we will also be encouraging the entire group.

It might help to keep a journal for future reference. Sharing a story or experience that you have kept will bless you and the group. Recording that story will serve as a reminder and blessing for years to come.

I suggest that when someone is led to Christ, they might want to share their experience with this group. It is a small and intimate setting. And they may want to meet with those who prayed for them. It will also bless the new Christian with an immediate support group and will bless the group to see and hear the results of their efforts.

The new believer should immediately receive materials that will help in spiritual growth and establishment. We suggest our booklet, *My Journey Into Faith*.

## WHEN SHOULD THE GROUP BE DIVIDED?

We expect to reach new people for Christ. The group will soon grow in size and become larger. The group dynamics will change, and this is good. However, as the group grows, either with new believers or other Christians who share the call, it is time to consider dividing.

*The goal is reaching out to people, not building a large group.*

Who else is ready to lead a group? This is an important issue. Who has mastered the plan? Who has been fruitful? Who understands how to facilitate and draw others in? This person or persons should be ready to begin a new group with the consent of the others.

When the group reaches eight or nine, the group should be divided into two. Such a step prevents the group from becoming too large or introverted.

We must keep our goal in mind; it is reaching out to people, not building a large group. New

believers will be among the most effective evangelists if they stay focused outwardly, rather than on the group. Group multiplication follows the pattern of life itself, in cell division and growth.

Group division may happen rapidly as others "catch the vision." The more people that see the

*New believers will be among the most effective evangelists if they stay focused outwardly, rather than on the group.*

vision and get involved, the more new people will come to Christ. Before dividing, be sure that the new leadership understands the issues: the purpose, philosophy, and methodology.

Later, as several groups function successfully, groups can come together and celebrate the results. This will not be a typical meeting, but a sharing of results and giving glory to God. Such a meeting can be a great joy and inspiration to everyone.

## HOW DO ONE-TO-ONE™ GROUPS RELATE TO LOCAL CHURCHES?

*One-to-One* Groups are not churches, though they can serve many purposes like the church. They do not constitute an established body of believers practicing ordered church life. They do not baptize, serve communion, focus on doctrine, train children, and develop spiritual gifts. All of those are important functions of the church, and the church is vital to developing Christian life.

*A simple focus—sharing  
faith, one-to-one.*

*One-to-One* Groups function outside the walls of the church, and are simply focused on sharing faith, one-to-one. I suggest that where possible, *One-to-One* Groups function with the blessing and advice of evangelistically-minded pastors. As people come to Christ, I suggest they be encouraged to be baptized and to become part of a healthy, growing Christian church. If you lead people to Christ and they become part of a lively church, you can bless the entire church, and probably pass the vision on to the local church.

## ARE YOU READY TO START?

This is a living document, not a legalistic formula or method. We expect it to grow and be refined. But we have tried to keep it simple and brief so that it can be read, understood, and acted upon. It is for action, not mere information.

In order to help us to better understand this mission and how to succeed in it, we ask you to stay in touch with us. Let us know that you have started such a group, and let us know results as they come in. We will try to provide information to you and others and build a network of support.

We will also feature testimonies in *One-to-One* Magazine as they come in. And please offer suggestions that you have found helpful. We will pass them on.

If you would like your group listed in our magazine, we will do so. It may enable someone who has a lost friend or relative in your area to contact you on their behalf. Please fill out the action response (on the facing page) and send it to me. Let us work together to extend Christ's Kingdom...one person at a time. God bless you. Angels will rejoice in your success.



# ONE-TO-ONE™ ACTION RESPONSE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER IN GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

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