Going Deeper

WITH

A Life That Matters

Winning the Battle for a Generation

BY RON HUTCHCRAFT

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"The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."
Luke 19:10

Hundreds of ships have gone down off the coast over the centuries, and it was there a group was born called The United States Life Saving Service who later became The United States Coast Guard. The Life Saving Service set up life-saving stations every seven miles along the coast with a seven man crew. They were heroes who went out for countless hours with no sleep or food, having the sole purpose of bringing back as many lives as they could save. What the young people in your community need is a life-saving hero just like those men.

In all those years of the Life Saving Service, rescuers had to leave their safe place and go out into the storm and the surf to rescue the dying. If we sit in our life-saving stations and wait for the lost young people to come, they will die without hope. It's going to take some people who will take the risks to enter into their world, enter into their culture, leave the safety of the life-saving station, and go get them. You can't share with them unless you seek them; you can't wait for the small chance for them to seek you.

The battle for this generation is fought on two fronts. Satan's first intention is to spiritually neutralize this generation of lost young people as they are young people who know little about Jesus. Satan's second intention is to get to Christian kids who don't live for Jesus. For the most part, they don't live for Him; so many lost people have never seen a Christian their age that would show them what living for Jesus is like.

Before we can reach them, we need to understand them better because they aren't the kids that used to be around. This generation of young people is the most damaged and unreached generation in our history. Half of them are the children of a divorce, leaving them to feel very lonely which makes them so vulnerable. They will go with anybody and do anything for someone who will make them feel accepted and cared about. They're desperately alone. Depression among young people today is happening at younger and younger ages and at greater and greater rates than ever before. They have most of their life ahead of them, but they don't think life is worth sticking around for. They're hopeless.

They're throwing themselves away and you're watching it happen. They're throwing themselves away academically by not trying in school, socially by the friends they hang out with…sexually, musically, alcoholically, or even suicidally. Every young person, however they were conceived and however they have been treated, is too valuable to throw away. They don't know how much they are worth until they meet the One who thought they were worthy and died for them. All the brokenness, all the pain, all the anger, and all the disappointment has made them ready for a Savior just like Jesus.

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You can be a rescuer for the kids in your community. There are six imperatives for rescuing the dying young people around you.

Focus on Jesus

The first imperative for rescuing dying young people is to focus on Jesus. Forget about your denomination and forget about trying to make this about your church. Don't attack their lifestyle. You don't clean fish before you catch them. We have to get these lost young people to the cleaner-upper. You might say, "Oh, they do such awful things!" They're just lost and acting like it. They have to be found first. Focus on Jesus.

The Apostle Paul could have worked with young people today because he understood. He said in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Stick to Jesus and His cross.

Tell them the stories of Jesus. They need to hear the stories of Jesus because they're in them. They're like the woman of Samaria going from one unsatisfied relationship to another trying to figure out what will satisfy the thirst in her soul. They're like Zaccheus who felt little his whole life, so he treated other people like they were small and didn't matter. There are so many young people in your community that feel little inside. Show them what Jesus does for people and what happens when they meet Him.

Jesus gives a two-word invitation to people—"Follow me." Jesus never said, "Follow my followers, follow my leaders, follow my rules, or follow my religion." He said, "Follow me." It's all about Jesus. The only reason not to be a Christian is if you've got a problem with Jesus. Find out what their problem is with Him. Is it because He loved them enough to die for them, because He was powerful enough to walk out of His grave, or maybe because He cared for the people everyone else walked over? What is their problem with Jesus?

Make much of the cross. There is power in the cross of Jesus Christ. When someone who is lost finally understands what Jesus did for them on the cross, it makes them feel the compassion and also a debt. They want to repay Jesus for the enormity of His sacrifice and love Him in return. The cross is a magnet that draws people to Jesus' irresistible love. Just keep talking about the cross. There's something about the name of Jesus.

Start With Their Need

The second imperative for rescuing dying young people is to start with their need. You can't just walk up to them and say, "Oh, speaking of Jesus..." Instead, approach them as Jesus did with the woman at the well. He didn't walk up to her and say, "Hello. I'm the Messiah!" Jesus walked up and talked to her about being thirsty. Pretty soon the woman got the idea that Jesus had something to do with the unquenchable thirst in her soul. He didn't start with the message, but the need.

The important message always has been the power of God for salvation to

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everyone who believes, but where you start is the issue. We need to go looking for the lost young people where they are. Sin is a non-issue to this generation in a world where right and wrong has been banished from the public discussion. Very few people ever go to the doctor and say, "Doctor, I have cancer" but instead they say, "Doctor, I have a lump, I have bleeding, or I have a headache." The thing that makes them interested in going to the doctor is a symptom.

Don't start with the disease, but start with their symptom instead—their need. They know if they're lonely, angry, depressed, or that they feel empty inside. They know there's a hole in their heart that never goes away and that ever since they can remember there's been a little voice inside them telling them that someone's missing. They try to replace the One who is missing with someone or something of this world.

The One they were made by and made for is missing, and the emotions they are feeling are the symptoms. Start by talking about a symptom they care about and let them know you care about what they're going through. Let them know they are missing life's most important relationship—a personal relationship with God, the One who created them.

They will never be able to solve the pain and deal with the pain of their life until they have someone bigger to heal it. Young people hate the stuff they've done. They're scared and they feel like they've made so many mistakes that they feel terrible about it, but they don't know how to be free of their sin. They need to know about the forgiveness and the anchor relationship that's available to them in Jesus Christ. Start with their need.

Say It Plainly

The third imperative for rescuing dying young people is to say it plainly. You don't want to tell them the best news in the world in a language they don't understand. It's easy to use all the church words like "born again, saved, believe, sin, repent, become a Christian, and salvation." When we talk to people, a lot of times we don't even think about the words we use. They might not have any idea what we're talking about. You cannot deliver life or death information in words that the dying person doesn't understand. You need to think like a missionary because before missionaries go out to begin their mission work in another country, they go to language school to learn the language of the people they want to reach.

We've got to tell the story of Jesus in non-religious words. For example, sin is hijacking your life from the One who's supposed to run it. A savior is someone who rescues you from a deadly situation you can't get yourself out of. Believe means to grab Jesus like a drowning person would grab their rescuer and saying, "You're my only hope." We need to begin to say it plainly.

Use a non-religious presentation of the Gospel when talking with lost young people. You might say, "There's a relationship you're created to have, that you don't have, but you can have, but that you must choose." Every young person is looking for a relationship they can count on. We must tell them how

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they can have life's most important relationship. It's the relationship we spend our whole life looking for, and some people never find.

Colossians 1:16 is a good scripture verse to refer to that says, "All things were created by Him and for Him." Be sure to explain that "The hole in your heart is so big that only the One who made you can fill it, and that Someone is missing from your life. Instead of living for Him, which is the way you were designed to live, you are living for yourself instead. There's a death penalty for hijacking your life from your Creator. You did the sinning, but Jesus did the dying for the sinning you did. It's a relationship you must choose." Make sure that you say it plainly!

Package It Attractively

The fourth imperative for rescuing dying young people is to package it attractively. The Apostle Paul understood packaging. He never changed his message, but he changed his package all the time. 1 Corinthians 9:22 says, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some."

Why is it that the devil, who has nothing to offer in his product but death and disappointment, gets millions of kids? It's because he's got the brightest packages in the world. Why is it that when we offer Jesus with all the love, caring, belonging, and inner healing that they're looking for, they walk right by us? Could it be that we have some boring packages?

We're going to have to start presenting Jesus in a non-religious package.

Neutral ground is very important. If you want to reach lost kids, you need to go to their places and have your outreaches where they go. It doesn't matter if you like their location; you're going to heaven already.

You also need to have a social reason for them to come. If you advertise that you're going to be studying a book of the Bible, they probably won't come for that. Maybe someday they will, but you need to start with other things. It's been pretty much proven that food will bring together young people and even adults for that matter. If you have food they like, they will probably be there.

Young people also like to see pictures or video of themselves and other kids up on a screen. When you are taking pictures or video of kids it catches their attention and they will want to see what's going on.

They also love sports. Do something using sports to reach them for Christ.

The package must include relevant music. You can't just use any type of music, because the language of this generation is their music. We don't get to pick the language; it's already been decided.

Young people also love to hear each other speak. Young Christians should be trained to tell their personal hope story. Walk them through the process and let them write it down on paper. Put other young people in leadership roles

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telling their hope story, hosting events, and running the sports games.

Take a look at the package you are using to tell young people about Jesus. Does it need to change?

Go to Their World

The fifth imperative for rescuing dying young people is to go to their world. Don't wait for them to come to yours.

There are people in your church who think they could never be a part of ministry. They think they can't teach, preach, or sing, but ministry doesn't only revolve around those things. There are other types of ministry. What they could do is go out and start to be some of the places where the lost kids are in the community. Someone has to go. Let's get some people out there who volunteer at school events, go to the games, help coach, drive, chaperon, substitute teach, help kids with computer stuff, or maybe play basketball with them.

Use whatever methods you know about to meet young people. Someone must know the names of the kids we need to rescue. Let's get out into their world so they can come to Jesus. Find a way to go to their world with something you can do as a way to do it.

Give Them Love

The last imperative for rescuing dying young people is to give them love. That's what they're starving for.

You're never going to have the multimillion dollars that's going to compete with the devil's programs, but you don't need to. The broken, hurting, and lonely children and young people will go where the love is. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 says, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."

Do you have the ability to make one child feel like they're the only person on this planet? Do you have the ability to make one young person, when they're with you, feel like there's nobody else in your world but them? Help make a young person feel important, and then you could be their rescuer!

This generation of young people is the most damaged and unreached generation in our history. If we sit in our life-saving stations and wait for the lost young people to come, they will die without hope.

It's going to take some people who will take the risks to enter into their world, enter into their culture, leave the safety of the life-saving station, and go where they are. Focus on Jesus, start with their need, say it plainly, package it attractively, go to their world, and give them love. It's time for you to help seek and save lost young people. It's time to get together and take back this generation!

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About Ron Hutchcraft

Ron Hutchcraft is committed to communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost in their language and to motivating and equipping believers to communicate Christ to the lost in their world. In all he does, he seeks to reach the lost and the young with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

As President of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, Ron and his team specialize in developing authentic, relevant, and creative tools to reach people with the message of Jesus. A veteran of over 48 years of youth and family work, Ron has presented the Gospel across North America and around the world. Mr. Hutchcraft is also involved in work with Native Americans, and is founder of the On Eagles' Wings® Native leadership program.

For more information about Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, visit www.Hutchcraft.com.

To find out how you can begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, please visit www.ANewStory.com or call 1-888-966-7325.

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