



SOUL

Retention

SOUL RETENTION



WELCOME TO THIS READING CLASS!

We are confident that an insightful learning experience awaits you. We encourage you to be armed with adequate materials to make your own notes and chronicle the inspirations that will come to you as the Spirit of God ministers to you uniquely.

Now let's get started.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you would have an understanding of the following

1. The meaning of soul retention.
2. How soul retention relates to soul winning.
3. Vital steps to be taken in achieving soul retention.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMINOLOGIES

Soul: *referring to a human person.*

Retention: *the action of absorbing and continuing to hold a substance, the act of keeping or storing something.*

INTRODUCTION

Just before we delve right into soul retention, let us lay some foundation. When we talk about soul winning, what readily comes to your mind? If you immediately think of leading someone to Christ, you are not far from being correct. Leading someone to Christ is part of soulwinning but in reality, it's just the beginning.



Soulwinning is a process. When you lead someone to Christ, he or she is convicted, believes in the Lord Jesus, confesses Him as Lord and Savior, and is born again of the life and nature of God. When that same individual further undergoes a level of discipleship to the point that his life choices are now controlled by the new life he has received, it can be said that such a soul has been won.

So you see, leading a soul to Christ is the beginning, ***but retaining the soul that was saved is what completes the soul winning process.***

WHY RETAIN SOULS?

1. We are ordained to have Productivity and Progress: John 15:16 says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

A church with halted growth is clearly not an expression of God's will and desire. There are churches that do not grow significantly because the members are not evangelical but there are also those that are not growing because new members coming in are not being properly retained.

2. The Lord holds you accountable: As a Minister of God, your work is to feed and nurture God's flock and like a true shepherd, He holds you accountable for their state and requires that you do the work as one that will give account. Acts 20:28 declares; "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*"

In John 17:12, we see the kind of mentality the Lord expects us to have with regard to soul retention. He prayed, "*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*" This was the Master Soul Winner Himself praying to the Father – He gave an excellent report. It is your responsibility to **keep** the souls the Lord brings to you in His Name. When it comes to your membership, you ought to have the right attitude toward growth and zero tolerance for loss. Let your testimony at the end of every phase be that '*none was lost*'.

In the ensuing paragraph, we will be explaining some vital steps to soul retention.

STEPS IN RETAINING SOULS

1. **Lead the Souls to Christ:** We previously explained the role soul retention plays in the process of soul winning. Without the preaching of the gospel in the first place, people would not hear or believe it, and therefore would not be saved.



Preaching the gospel is what the Lord Himself instructed every Christian to do.² Therefore as a minister of the gospel, you ought to continually stir your members towards carrying out evangelical activities in their spheres of contact. Communicate to them the importance of preaching the gospel and leading people to Christ. It is a mandate every true child of God has. In each service, be sure to make a call for salvation and personally lead those who respond, in the prayer of salvation.

Don't think everybody has heard just because the gospel is being preached on television and radio; or even through tracts and newspapers. Many unconverted have heard the wrong things

–Rev. (Dr.) Chris Oyakhilome DSc. DSc. D.D



2. Minister the Holy Spirit to Them: Once the souls have been led to Christ and are gloriously saved, the next vital step is to get them filled with the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs when a person is born again.

1 Corinthians 12:13 reveals that it is the Holy Spirit that baptizes us into the Body of Christ. A Christian is then required to receive the Holy Spirit to live in him, which is a separate experience from the above, but can occur at the same moment. This is referred to as the infilling of the Holy Spirit and is the greatest experience anyone could have. As the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in them, their bodies become His living tabernacle 24 hours a day, and they begin to enjoy His glorious manifestations in their lives.

The Lord Jesus said in Acts 1:8 "*But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" From the words of the Lord Jesus, you can immediately see that the ability to live the Christian life comes from the Holy Spirit; He is the one who empowers every Christian to become an effective witness of the gospel to the world. Therefore, when people have been led to Christ, you ought to do what the apostles did: "*Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost*"³. When this is done, you can be sure that you have deposited in them the most important personality they need to be retained in the way of the Lord and in the church of Christ.^{4,5,6} Also teach your members to do the same when they lead people to Christ – it's not the work of the pastor only. The Holy Spirit is the One Jesus said would teach them all things⁷ and also guide them into all truth⁸. This gives the assurance that they won't be deceived as long as they pay attention to Him. Ensure new converts receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit as soon as possible.

After your salvation, the greatest experience you could ever have in your life is the experience with the unseen Person of the Holy Spirit.

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³Acts 8:17, ⁴2 Corinthians 1:22, ⁵Ephesians 1:13, ⁶Ephesians 4:30

3. **Baptize them in Water:** In the Bible, the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, “Look, here is water. *What can stand in the way of my being baptized?*⁹” Water baptism is a very significant sacrament for the Christian. It is a public



declaration and identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word ‘baptize’ was translated from the Greek ‘baptizo’ which means to ‘deep into’. So, when we say someone is baptized in water, it means the person is immersed completely into water.

Let's consider the spiritual significance of water baptism. Paul writing to the Corinthian church said “*Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*”¹⁰

What Paul described in the above scripture with the children of Israel was only a shadow of the reality of what happened with the new creation: the spiritual first before the physical. We were baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ first and then baptized into water which is a physical representation and public declaration of what happened in the Spirit realm.

What does this mean to souls who have just come to Christ? Their baptism in water is a physical and public display of their union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. All demons are now aware of their oneness with the Lord. Therefore, as the children of Israel were totally separated from the Egyptians at the red sea, these new believers are totally separated from the world when they are baptized in water. Do you want to retain the souls you have led to Christ? Of course YES! Then, you ought to baptize them in water.

⁷John 14:26, ⁸John 16:13, ⁹Acts 8:36, ¹⁰1 Corinthians 10:1-2

4. **Follow them up:** Much attention must now be given to these new believers through follow up. One very important way to do this is by visiting them and also training your members to do the same in an organized way.¹¹ At this babyhood



stage of their lives in Christ, new converts should not be left alone. Certainly, you would not leave your newly born baby in the hospital to be raised and nurtured by others. There is the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit to them and there is the ministry of the Pastor to them. Ephesians 5:12 states that you were called “*For the perfecting of the saints...*” So, your ministry to them is to perfect them. In a bid to fulfill this ministry, it is necessary that you, as a minister, care about their state especially when they have come to church; visit them, either by yourself or through a team of personnel whom you have trained specifically for this purpose. This is one sure way that new believers would know that they are accepted and loved.

Through visitation, you get to know the true state of their wellbeing because you really may not be able to tell the condition of their personal lives by their outward appearance. Through visitation for example, you might discover that some of them live among thorns – those who could easily choke the Word of God out of them- you are then able to give the right counsel and deal with them uniquely. Phone calls, text messages, emails etc are useful ways of following up people but ideally, none of them can replace visitation.

***Every Christian should pay serious attention to ‘follow up’.
Every fruit you bear should matter to you so much that you want it to remain.***

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5. Introduce them to the Mentorship Program of the Church:



Establishing your care for your new members through visitation would have already gotten them to become more comfortable with the church and spur their commitment to Christ and to your church activities. Now is the time for you

to move to the next step with them, by introducing them to the mentorship program of the church. The Bible says Acts 2:42 "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers*". If you currently do not run such a program in your church or ministry, we urge you to diligently and prayerfully set one up because it is very essential. The mentorship program of the church should essentially contain a series of classes or discussions where foundational things about the new life in Christ are taught them. It also allows them to have their questions answered and their doubts dissolved.

However your mentorship program is structured, ensure that it has a well-tailored curriculum that is taught over a while (a suggestion is 6-8 weeks) so that they can gradually absorb and understand all that they should. At this point, one of the first things they ought to learn is how to win others to Christ just like they were won. They can also gradually be introduced to the other activity groups in the church to further engage them.

As more souls are added to you, structure your church in such a way that no one is left unattended to or just hanging amidst the multitude – insist that everyone belongs to and functions in smaller groups (cells groups or fellowships) which are a microcosm of the church. This will foster their spiritual growth and development.

To gather a crowd is not difficult, but raising a congregation is by the Spirit.

–Rev. (Dr.) Chris Oyakhilome DSc. DSc. D.D

ACTION NOTES

01

**Lead the Souls
to Christ**

02

**The infilling of
the Holy Spirit**

03

Water baptism

04

Follow up

05

Mentorship



A FINAL WORD

The process of soul winning is not complete until a soul is retained and begins to influence others with the same message that has influenced his own life. The above-expounded steps will surely guide you in the right direction and facilitate greater retention of those that are won to your church.

The Lord Jesus said in John 15:16 “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*” The souls we win to the kingdom of God are some of the fruits we are expected to bear and we ought to retain them.

We trust you have been immensely blessed by this Reading Course and invite you to avail yourself of other insightful courses on our school website, all tailor made to enhance your spiritual growth and equip you with the requisite knowledge, such that your results in ministry are pleasing to the Lord and evident for all to see.

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