

The Two Cookie Ministry

This approach to ministry may not be for everyone, but it works for me. Not everyone shares the same natural talents or Spiritual Gifts so this approach may not appeal to you. I would invite you to borrow whatever elements of this ministry you *can* use and ignore the rest.

Naturally, this study assumes that you are already saved and grounded in the basics of the Christian faith. If not, then I would highly recommend that you review the salvation-related studies below before continuing¹:

- The Gospel (<http://www.workmanmin.com/id9.html>)
- Salvation Quiz (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/SalvationQuiz.pdf>) [11" x 14" L]
- Repentance (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/Repentance.pdf>)
- Romans 10: Is confession required for salvation? (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/Romans10Tract.pdf>) [11" x 14" L]
- Predestination (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/Predestination.pdf>)
- Lordship Salvation (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/LordshipSalvation.pdf>)
- The Galatian Error (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/GalationError.pdf>)
- Works Versus Grace (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/SalvationNitpicking.pdf>)

A. Ministry is not an option

Have you ever wondered if heaven is such a wonderful place and you are one of God's children, then why doesn't God take you home right now instead of allowing you to live in your present condition and beset by sin every day? Wouldn't that be like taking your own children and dropping them off in an area of the city known for its crime and promising to pick them up later? You wouldn't do that unless there was a *very* good reason to do so. The answer is that you aren't supposed to be here on this earth marking time; you're supposed to be ministering to the world through the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

So, how have your ministry efforts gone lately?

B. God intends that you serve

Your involvement in ministry is not a tough decision. Why? Because God has a ministry plan ready that is designed especially for your talents and gifts. He has had it place since the beginning of time². You simply need to determine what God's ministry plans for you are at this time in your Christian life.

¹ Yes, I know—nearly all the studies on this site are salvation-related. Should you be surprised?

² No, God didn't determine ahead of time that you would be saved (see the study on [Predestination](#)), but He did have the foreknowledge to know that you would become saved.

C. Taking stock

To help you determine the nature of that plan, there are a few easy steps to take. Okay, I say easy because they are easy to write down, but they are not easy to answer. It may take days to finish this list.

- **Step 1:** What is your passion? What do I mean by this? Simply, what concern has God placed on your heart that would keep you up all night to satisfy? [Right now, as I'm writing this study, it is 4 a.m.] I don't mean playing Nintendo, I mean when you are in fellowship with God and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to what activities do you find yourself gravitating?
- **Step 2:** Take stock of your natural talents. These are the talents that you had prior to salvation and/or those that you can exercise in or out of fellowship with God. By that I mean, you would demonstrate these talents even if you (perish the thought) were using them while engaged in sin. Remember that those are also God-given and it is logical to assume that God intends that you use those natural talents in your ministry, as well.

[For example, I'm a very logic-oriented person. I was trained in programming and engineering. Your background might be similar. Does that mean that your ministry should be setting up church computer networks? No, not necessarily. It might mean that you have a natural talent for culling doctrines from Scripture texts. Think 'outside the box' on this step.]

- **Step 3:** What is your style? Are you outgoing or reserved? When in a group of others are you (so-to-speak) setting the schedule, driving the train, taking tickets, or riding in the caboose? Careful now, I'm talking about your behavior when you are in fellowship with God and directed by the Holy Spirit.

[I'm a geek. I admit it. I'm perfectly happy to be buried in an office writing program code or studying schematics—alone. Yes, I find solving math problems fun. Yes, I have an engineering manual in my bathroom at home (where I figure I can cover at least a page per day). Yes, I like making new rules for the golf tee game at Cracker Barrel restaurants (like requiring that the on the last jump the last tee must land in a designated hole). You get the picture—loner, not very big on establishing personal relationships, etc. Yet, when I'm in fellowship the first thing I want to do is go out and talk to people—even groups of people. See the difference? What we are after here is your 'in fellowship' style. It may be radically different than your natural tendency.]

- **Step 4:** Review the study on Spiritual Gifts (<http://www.workmanmin.com/Studies/SpiritualGifts.pdf>). God didn't provide these gifts at random. There is a very good reason we have the gift(s) we do and God intends that we use them in our ministry.

You may not yet be aware of which gift(s) God has bestowed on you. If not, I would *not* rely on the Spiritual gift tests found in popular Christian books or on the web that asks you (or your friends) to assess your behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses. Those types of tests are lousy at distinguishing between talents and gifts. Remember when Christ temporarily sent His disciples out into the world and instructed them to take nothing with them? Friends, that's how you learn what gift(s) you have been given. From a position of fellowship just pitch in, rely on God, and start getting your hands dirty. You'll determine your gift(s) in short order.

Example: Once while traveling I was discussing health issues with the person sitting next to me. I admitted to the need for more exercise and wondered how I might fit that into my schedule. The fellow traveler suggested that I, like him, should join a gym (for which he was paying what I considered a princely sum). I told him that for about the same amount of money that he was paying per visit, I could buy enough gas to mow the front lawns of my immediate neighbors. We both paid the same amount of money. We both spent that same amount of time on task. We both got a good workout. The only difference is that I now have happy neighbors.

It's all about how you think. Start thinking this way.

It's also important to note that God probably does not intend that your ministry remain the same all of your mature Christian life. As you mature, your Spiritual gifts may also mature³.

D. Putting it all together

Put it all together and what do you get? The idea here is *not* to go looking for a ministry that matches steps 1-4 because you will likely overlook some opportunities for which you are well suited. Rather, get involved in many ministries (on a short term basis) while using steps 1-4 to stake out areas where you probably *shouldn't* be involved.

E. The two cookie ministry

It has been my (limited) experience that in the houses in which I have lived that my neighbors were not particularly skilled at fixing things around their homes. They were very good at some things (bankers, school teachers, CPAs, etc), but many of them didn't have a clue why, for example, their refrigerator icemaker had stopped making ice.

This led to an opportunity. Why not offer my services to my neighbors? The conversation usually goes like this:

[Ring . . .]

[ME] "Hello?"

[THEM] "Hey, it's [Mr./Mrs. X]. My sink is leaking and I can't find the source. You know about that kind 'a stuff, right? I figured you might know what I should check."

[Ministry is all about opportunity. It would be 'helpful' to provide a list of things to check, but it wouldn't really minister to their needs. What do I mean by that? Well, Christ didn't come to explain how you could be saved, *but to actually take on the burden and do the heavy lifting (so-to-speak). Think about it.*]

[ME] "Want me to look at it?"

[THEM] "Would you mind?"

[ME] "Not at all. But I got to warn you up front that it's going to cost."

[Yes, this is a setup. I'm purposely raising the tension for a statement I will shortly attempt to work into the conversation.]

³ Spiritual gifts require varying degrees of spiritual maturity. Some require little maturity to use effectively while others require great maturity. Thus, as you mature as a Christian you may find that your gift(s) change(s). This is to be expected. Just as you place greater responsibility on your more mature children, so does God.

[Pregnant pause . . .]

[THEM] “How much?”

[ME] “My standard rate . . . two cookies an hour with a two cookie minimum.”

[You can almost hear them relax.]

[THEM] “Oh, sure. I think I can accommodate that. I thought you were going to actually charge me!”

[ME] “Nah, it wouldn’t be the Christian thing to do. Actually, you don’t even need to feed me cookies. I just say that to tease people.”

Sure, I used to actually require the cookie payment, but that was before I gained 100 lbs. Now I just use the cookie rule to disarm any apprehension they may have about my visit. More importantly, I have just accomplished the only goal I have for the encounter—to explain that Christianity is about serving. I have done it while they are relaxing from a release of tension and I have couched it in a non-aggressive way. You don’t need to say anything else. Why? It’s because the Holy Spirit is way ahead of you. If that person is seeking the truth, then you have just baited a hook that they can’t help but nibble during your visit. If not, then that’s okay because the REAL purpose of your ministry is ministry—get it?]

F. Preparation and arrival

Before leaving, I collect all the tools and consumable supplies that I’m likely to need in a 5-gallon bucket or heavy duty shopping bag. Depending on the type of job, I may even bring a drop cloth. Bring more than you anticipate needing. Nothing says unprofessional more than asking to borrow their tools or return home to get something.

Before arriving at their house, I pray three things:

- Most importantly, I confess any known sins so that I can return to fellowship (1 Jn. 1:8-9)
- For the sensitivity to recognize a nibble on the bait I offered earlier.
- That if they nibble, I will have the wisdom to say just the right thing.

Just a note about entering a house. You are, by providing this service, putting yourself lower than they are. Arriving at the front door says you expect to be treated as an equal, as a guest. To truly serve others, you must voluntarily place yourself in a humbled position. If they have a garage door entrance or side door entrance then knock on that door—not the front door. You are providing a service, so use the ‘service’ entrance. You’re not too good to use a side door.

Once inside the house the standing rule is that you never initiate a discussion of Christ, religion, or anything remotely connected to your faith. Your conversation from the get-go is about the fault that needs repair. Wait for them to initiate. You won’t have to wait too long if they are actually interested. For some reason people find it very easy to talk to you about personal matters of faith while your head is buried under their sink.

Oh, and clean up when you’re done.

G. Refreshments

The side door approach also sets the tone that you do not expect to be treated as a guest, but as a servant. They may still treat you as a guest and that's fine, but it isn't done out of expectation. Rather, it will be done out of respect for you as an individual.

So, what do you do if they offer milk and cookies? You respond, "That would be wonderful, but only on two conditions. Would it be okay if I wait until I'm finished with this repair—when I can really enjoy it? And, only if you will join me."

There are two reasons for taking this approach. The first is that you are, after all, there to do a job. The second is that by waiting until the job is completed and by requesting that they join in, you will be enjoying an environment that is very conducive to nibbling on the earlier bait.

What if they offer you a beer or something harder? Opt for ice water.

H. And if they *do* raise the topic of religion?

Here are the ground rules:

- Let them drive (or, at least appear to drive). You can steer a discussion by carefully chosen responses, but never initiate a new line of questioning.
- When and if they do raise the issue of religion, remain singularly focused on salvation. My approach to someone who is earnestly seeking the truth, but is off-topic is to tell them, "I'm no expert on that. Instead, my philosophy is to make sure I'm saved and then let God sort out the hard stuff." That effectively shuts down any discussion outside of salvation.
- Do not debate. Rather than debate, simply point them to this website.

I. What if they try to pay you for your efforts?

You should not be paid for your effort. Trust me, you would rather wait to receive your reward in heaven.

The payment principle is found in Matthew 25:40.

Simply tell them, "I appreciate the offer, but it's not necessary. If you pay me, I will simply turn around and use that money to help someone else. But, I'll tell you what I'll agree to do. If you will put that money in an envelope and the next time you run across someone that you can help, do so. You do that and I'll consider the debt paid."

J. And when it's time to leave?

Clean up.

Your response to any accolades for the repair is to say:

- "Glad I could help."
- "It's never an inconvenience when the company is good."

- “Call me if you have any more trouble, or, if there is another world problem we can solve over milk and cookies.”

After you have left, pray and thank God for providing the opportunity to minister, that any seeds will take root, that you will grow from the experience, and that you will be available and sensitive to more opportunities like this one.