

HOW TO SUCCEED AS A TELEVISION EVANGELIST

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[Assignment: An effective way to comment on some person or group you find silly or offensive is to exaggerate the way they do things. Pick some person or people in the news and ridicule their activities.]

(1) Are you broke? Is the threat of bankruptcy continually hanging over your head? Is the job of making enough money for one day causing you to age years before your time? If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, then what you need is religion. That's right, pull yourself out of the mound of manure you've somehow gotten into and find out how rewarding the love of God can be for you. Just by following my easy-to-read instructions, even you can find yourself among the great people who have found the Lord and are making that discovery work for them: people like the Bakkers, Jimmy Swaggart, and Jerry Falwell. Yes, that's right, I'm talking about being a TV evangelist. This is one job where you can serve the Lord and at the same time help yourself. Read on and receive four tips on how you can join the hundreds who have already enjoyed the glory, as well as the monetary advantages, of being a television evangelist.

(2) The first step on your way to salvation through the grace of your supporters is the development of a heavy southern accent. Turn on the TV to your local religious station and just listen. You never hear, "Thanks be to God," but rather, "Thankkssaa be to Gaawwd." I don't know why this has become a very important aspect of a TV evangelist's character, but if it works, then go with it.

(3) While on the subject of language I must mention briefly another important quality of speech necessary for any employee starting in God's service. Every male you talk with must be addressed only as "brother," and every female is now your "sister." This rule holds true at all times whether you are addressing one individual or the whole television congregation, at which time you may choose to employ the all-embracing word "brethren." Once you have mastered this and your Andy Griffith accent is impeccable, you are ready for the next step on your way up Jacob's ladder: "Praise the Lawd, brother."

(4) The second step on the road to money, I mean glory, is to develop a photogenic face. For women, this involves pasting your face with so many different layers of makeup that you gain approximately 12 pounds. The reason for this practice is so that under the hot lights of a television studio the several pounds of makeup will cake on your face and form a solid, unchanging mask of reverence for the Lord. For guys, the best way to look good on television is to slick back your hair with about one and a half gallons of mousse. By doing this for an

extended period of time you not only look admirable but you save money in the long run. If you follow my instructions on hair care for about a month, you will find that the mousse is no longer needed because your hair is now permanently plastered back and you won't have to change your hairstyle for about a year. Now that I have you women looking simply statuesque and you guys looking very at ease and "set" for life, or at least a year, you are ready to make another move on your way to Hollywood, I mean heaven.

(5) The third tip is an extremely important one and also one which involves some thinking on your part. To be a good television evangelist, you have to have the ability to lie. I realize that we are all human and do make the occasional mistake. A TV celebrity can't let his or her little mistakes ruin his or her career, especially not one of God's messengers on earth. The ability to lie will keep you on the air even if the media catches wind that you raped your sister three years ago. If this act of denial doesn't work, then find a better solution to regain face and to keep that steady income. Here are two of the most popular methods used today by television evangelists to get out of sticky situations.

(6) The first method has worked very well for many television evangelists. Of course, I'm talking about that God-given act of crying. Sit in front of a mirror four times a day and concentrate as hard as you can on bringing tears to your eyes. You may have to grunt and groan a little at first to make that initial drop of moisture appear, but with some practice the act of crying will be almost second nature. Perhaps some day, you may even become as fluent a crier as Tammy Bakker, who can produce tears at the drop of a hat.

(7) The second method of deceiving your avid followers will involve a considerable amount of creativity on your part. You need to develop the ability to come up with, on the spur-of-the-moment, "the devil made me do it" stories. Now for heaven's sake be original! Don't go on the air and say that you were merely "tempted by the devil," unless of course you want your viewers to change the dial to something more interesting such as Wall Street Week. Be exciting, creative, and, most of all, provocative: "Satan grabbed my heart and squeezed it in his icy clutches. Brothers and sisters, I have been led astray. I was plucked from the path of righteousness and placed on the road to sin. But now through the grace of the Lord Almighty I have been forgiven for having an illicit sexual relationship with my pet canary. Praise Gawd for having mercy on my soul! Hallelujah friends and AAIIIMEN!"

(8) You've made it to the fourth and final stepping stone on your way to receiving the keys to the kingdom of heaven, or at least the keys to your new Rolls Royce.

This step is undoubtedly the most important one, but some will find it very difficult because it involves being humble. Now we both know that your main source of income will be the donations of your many followers. Therefore, to receive as much money as possible, you are going to have to ask for it. Maybe "ask" isn't the right word. How about "beg," "plead," or "coerce"? For begging to be successful, a certain air of dignity has to be maintained. Can you imagine what would happen if some clown came on the screen and started his sermon by saying, "I need money and I need it fast!?" A more gentle approach has to be taken: "Brothers and sisters in Christ, a grave calamity has befallen this television program. The number of South African converts is down 1 percentile from last year and the difference has to be made up by you, the faithful and good-hearted. Only you can bring this program back to its feet financially. God bless you and your money. Thank you." See how effective that approach is compared to the more frank one? If you use this method of asking for donations, I guarantee that your income will triple, if not quadruple, in size.

(9) I hope these four bits of advice have been helpful in informing you of what is necessary for the easy life of a television evangelist. I must stress, though, that this career isn't for just anyone; it takes a special breed to tackle this kind of life. I'm not talking about how holy a person is but rather how badly a person wants money. If you are ready to follow the lead of Bakker, Swaggart, and Falwell, then leave your conscience at home, get an agent, and prepare yourself for the most satisfying adventure of your life. God bless you and may the Lord free you from sin and the IRS.