
Developing an Evangelism Program

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(See the “Faith” series before venturing in this Evangelism Program, the two tie together!)

Part 1 Stepping out in Faith!

Understanding and developing the best means to reach people for the Faith Part I

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers; Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him (Matthew 4:18-20, NIV).

Jesus calls us to Himself, and then calls us to reach others for Him! This is very evident in this passage. An uncommonly incredible, insightful, strange, mysterious person approached a small group of young fishermen working in their family fishing business and challenged them to make a life-changing decision. They were in wonder at this Man’s teaching, and the miracle of the fish that was performed for them as recorded by Luke. They knew all about fishing. Their substance and living depended on fishing. They provided a much needed and vital food to their region—fish—which they caught with nets suspended from the back of their boats. The floats and weights that spread out the nets, to catch as many as possible as they rowed in the Sea of Galilee, was done much the same as fishing boats operate today. Then the fish were dried, cured with salt, or pickled to preserve them, and then sold. They were perhaps in a business that provided them with a much higher standard of living than many other people around them. So, why would they desire to leave that good and stable life and venture into the unknown?

Are we willing to *Follow Me*? If not, how will we become *Fishers of Men*?

Jesus gives us a call to step into Him with faith. “Come, follow me” was extended to the disciples, and their response was evident as they left their boats and followed. A call was also given to them to then step out with their faith. “I will make you fishers of men” to others—without irresistible pressure, yet with passion and conviction. That call was unprecedented in their culture and understanding. Normally, a student would seek out a teacher, a Rabbi. A Rabbi would never seek students, as it was a pride issue. Jesus broke the pride and arrogance barrier to model that we are to seek disciples, and not just wait for

them to come to us. This call also tells us that before we can teach others to fish, we have to know the fish and know how to fish. In so doing, we can challenge one another to leave our comfort zone and enter the realm of His faith, worship, service, and outreach.

Jesus went throughout the region of Galilee, and into the synagogues, proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand (Matt. 4:17; 4:23). However, public preaching was not His main goal or reason for doing so! Above any other activity, Jesus' main goal for His interrelations with humanity was "discipling" (Matt. 9:9)! Jesus publicly taught the need for repentance. He further taught and challenged His disciples, both personally and systematically, that Christianity does not end at repentance and conversion; it begins there! His primary goal was to mold disciples, so Jesus went directly and personally to call those whom He wanted to work for Him. He took those who lived "normal" lives. He did not go to the universities or synagogues, but literally to the "man on the street." Afterward, He sent them out (Matthew 10:1-15). Then, Jesus ended His time on earth with an imperative command for them to make more disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), which is also our call!

Jesus said, "Follow Me." (Matt. 4:19; 9:9) Jesus did not mean that they should just physically follow Him on the road, aimlessly. They were set apart, challenged to know and grow in the faith, and taught their call and mission. Just as they had worked at catching fish, now they would be catching men (Luke 6:39-40)! The word "disciple" literally means someone who pledges to be a "learner." Moreover, it is someone who follows another's teaching, and adheres to it. It is a commitment and a process. It involves commitment, time to undertake the learning, and, as a Christian, a yearning to imitate Jesus! *Follow me*, as a call to discipleship, is also reciprocal; that is, when one learns, he or she makes the commitment to train someone else. That is what Jesus meant by, "I will make you fishers of men." It is not just catching them and then either throwing them back or storing them (fish were processed and sold for the betterment and use of the community); rather, we are called to care for and cultivate the fish, which are the people. It is training them and placing them so they, too, can catch, train, and place others—and so on! Discipleship is the primary earthly application of the Church as a whole, and the Christian as an individual. It is our duty, it is our priority, and the one thing Christ directly and imperatively commanded us to do (Matt. 28:19-20). In so doing, we will become like Him in character and share His outlook and concerns (Luke 6:39-40).

A lot of Christians have the false presumption that in discipleship we make people like ourselves, or, have them conform to our specific church or denomination or specific system of belief. But, that is not what discipleship and *follow me* is about. It is helping facilitate the spiritual growth of others. It is being empowered by the Spirit to hook people up to Christ. We are never to make disciples in our image, alike in whom we are, how we think, feel, and act, but like Christ! Christian means to be "Christ like," not "self like" or "Bob like" or "Joan

like.” We are to become His disciples by our faith, by His Work in us! We are then to be discipled by someone! This is not just learning about the faith as a new Christian; it is a life long commitment to grow in Him—through His Word, through our personal devotions, through fellowship, through worship—and by learning all we can and applying what we have learned. This helps form us as the people of God. We are to disciple others so they can, in turn, disciple others. Thus, Christianity is by faith, it is communal, it is continual, and it is shared. It is a community endeavor! A lot of Christians just will not do this. Perhaps, they are too individualistic, self-absorbed in their own lives without a thought of God or others. Perhaps, they think, *once I made that prayer and I am “set free.” I do not need to do anything else.* And, yes, they are if it is real and in Christ. But, what good it is to be a “pew-sitter” and do nothing with what Christ gave and called us to (James 2:14-24)?

The twelve disciples spent three years of their lives following, learning, listening, observing, practicing, and experiencing life directly with Jesus. Then, they carried that learning and experience to the world (Matt. 10:1-15; the Book of Acts). It all comes down to a decision. Will we make our faith real and impacting, relinquishing our pride, allow ourselves to learn and grow, and in turn teach others, or will we plant our rears in the pew, so that our only impact is our butt-print in that pew? Let us make sure our impact comes from a life transformed and carried on to the people around us!

What we need to learn for today

Evangelism and discipleship are not easy because this goes against our pride and will. It cuts into our time and plans; it brings us out of our comfort zone into the scary areas of life. It even has a cost. Following Christ will cost us and will require effort and consistency (Matt. 8:18-22; 10:38; Luke 9:57-58; 14:27). The original disciples left their families and good jobs (Matt. 10:37; 19:27; Luke 9:59-62; 14: 25-26; 33)! If you are thinking, *well, they were just fishermen. I have a “real” job, I have a family, or, I am important.* Consider this; Jesus did not call bums who had nothing better to do! These people, contrary to popular belief, had good jobs and were educated. I have no idea how the theme that the disciples were uneducated men in dead-end jobs came about. In fact, fishing was one of the best and most lucrative jobs you could have in that time and culture. The disciples had the equivalent of a college education, as they attended school and were able to read and write well. They did not have the further formal education that the Scribes and Pharisees had which was equivalent to a Ph.D. today. That is the reason the Pharisees looked down at them—because they did not have “their” education and title, and they were not under the care of another Rabbi—not because they were uneducated (Mark 6:2-3; 11:27-28; John 7:14).

We may not be called to the radical commitment they were. Jesus will never call you to literally leave your family, and, in most cases, He would rather you stay where you are. What Jesus wants is for us to follow Him in our will and

mindsets so we grow in the faith and then become contagious with the faith to others. And, we can do this best in the relationships and connections we already have, even before we set out to make new ones. He may then call you to venture out, but He will also give you the ability and desire to do so!

Jesus expects us to know what we are getting into, and embrace it with vigor and faith. The point is that nothing can come before Him (Matt. 3:8; 6:33; Luke 14:15-24; John 8:31; 14-15)! We must embrace our call and responsibility to be discipled and make disciples! If we are truly willing to learn and apply what Christ taught, if we really respond with gratitude for that which He has given us, we would truly be His disciples! The Church will be on fire by the Spirit and really impacting the world! Heeding our call to bring the message of Christ's love and reconciliation takes the determination to follow through—to follow Him. Does this sound too far-reaching, too scary? Consider this, what we gain will far outweigh any suffering or loss on our part (Mark 10:28-30; 1 Cor. 15:58)! If, and when we hear God's call depends on our ears, our will, and our attitude (Matt. 22:14). God does not force us or plead with us; He merely presents us with the option (Isa. 6:8)! We must say, as Isaiah said, *Here I am, send me!* We must allow our spiritual eyes to be opened and our will to be relinquished to His for real discipleship to take place. Then, our churches will grow in prayer, worship, and maturity, and revival may even take place!

Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. Are you doing that? Most Christians just stand at the shore of life watching the fish. We make little effort to catch them for our Lord. It is amazing at all the excuses I have heard, and have even given myself over the years, for not following Him and why it is not necessary to become fishers of men. We can theologize and rationalize for not doing what He has called us to do (Mark 8:36; Luke 18:29-30). But, I believe it is our fear that takes us over, and not the love we have in Christ (1 John 4:16-21). Yes, it is scary; the waters can be deep, and they can be rough, and we will get wet. But, we have the incredible comfort that Jesus gives us not only the call, but also the ability and resources by which to follow Him (Isa. 55:10-11). He gives us the rod and the reel; He even provides the bait of His Holy Spirit. All we are called to do is cast out the line with our faith, with our love, with our character, with our determination, and with our trust and eyes upon our Lord.

Let us, as the Church triumphant, adhere to His call and follow. Apply your faith! Because, if we just sit around and come up with excuses, we will drift too far away—too far from the fish. We will not be catching anything and the fishing expedition of life will be just a meaningless and wasted trip. Let us allow the power of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes, and break our will, so we can be receptive to our Lord and Savior, and so we can do as He called! It all comes to the decision of whether we will make our faith real and impacting, relinquishing our pride to allow us to learn, grow, tell, and teach others, or else we will plant our rears in the pew, thus making our butt print in that pew our only impact! Let

us make sure our impact comes from a life transformed and carried on to the people around us! Let us follow Him and be His fishers of men!

The Nature of Humanity

Before we can venture into the subject of Evangelism, of making fishers of men, we have to understand the sinful nature and the arrogance of the *fish* in question—our human nature. We will flap our fins and tails as fast as we can to the very last moment to try to flee from God's presence and control, saying we can do better on our own. We will ignore His bait and His truth. We will stay in our stinky stingy waters and not venture into His *living water* (John 4:10-12). Most people, throughout history, would rather take their own chances than surrender themselves to the will of the Lord (Luke 12:16-21; John 3:5; 30; Heb. 10:31). They do not want to be convicted or challenged that their presumptions, pride, or thinking is wrong. There are no words or deeds that can sway a prideful heart; yet we are called to do so (Rom. 3:3; 23; 5:12-19; 6:23; Gal. 3:13; Eph 2:1-3).

Most Christians fear evangelizing and witnessing because of the possibility of rejection, or how friends and peers will perceive them. Therefore, we must realize the role of evangelism, of saving people, is God's—and God's alone. He chooses to use us for His glory, but it is His Spirit that convicts and converts. We are the tools, the rods and reels He uses. Who and what we are and do in Him far outweighs how others see us. Our responsibility is to obey and let Him use us. We are not responsible for whether or not people accept the message; we are only responsible to proclaim it as effectively and as passionately as we can. This takes the "personal responsibility" and "fear of rejection" load off of us. We need not fear rejection because we are not being rejected; God is the One who is rejected. He is the One to whom people do not want to conform; we are merely His servants!

Obeying God's Call

Our lives would be a lot easier, as Christians, if we did not teach these truths; and, this is a big reason why most Christians just sit in their pews and do nothing. This is why many churches no longer teach Truth, but, rather, false doctrine or liberal ideas. It is easier to sit and believe than to walk, and obey what we believe. And, it is much easier to believe what we want, and only look up at Jesus on occasion but never get up to follow. And, if we never follow, we can never make fishermen of others or ourselves!

But, God calls us out of the darkness and into the light. He tells us that, as Christians, we need to know our neighbor and their objections, but not let that detour us from His plan. We cannot just take our beliefs and keep them in a secret huddle. A football team that wants to win does not hold a huddle so the quarterback can get some sleep, so he can say and do nothing; no, the huddle is

to unleash the plan of action that the coach has called them to do. Our Christian faith is based on the cross of Christ, but it does not stop there, as the start of a football game does not stop at the toss of the coin. We are called to do and obey with the gifts and abilities that our Lord has given us (Matt. 5:16).

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

God calls us to respond, and this passage calls us to respond! It must be an action; we are encouraged to respond with passion, boldness, compassion, clarity, truth, and tact. The Roman Empire persecuted the Christians because their faith went against their beliefs, even though their philosophy had an “almost anything goes” attitude (just as American culture does today), but, these same “anything goes” people are very intolerant to Truth! Because, with Christ, “anything” does *not* go, and without Christ, we do not “go.” We will run into people who are offended, but we need to take heed and comfort from the Lord through His Word. Christ says we are sinful, and He is the only way; people say, “No, I am my own way.” So, by obeying, we may cause conflict and strife and even experience rejection and persecution. Accept it as a challenge and as the call that it is (Matt. 5:11-12, 44; Luke 21:12-19; John 15:20-25; Phil. 1:12-18).

Peter says we can do it. “Do this with gentleness and respect.” This is our call. Being ready is a big part of the Christian life, and the defense is to know what you believe and why; thus, our passion will be to lovingly give a response, even out of hostile reactions and the threat of persecution.

“No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62) This may seem like a strange passage for us *city folks*, but what this means is we are to put forth the effort. Putting our *hand to the plow* means we are to take up the necessary means and the determination to accomplish the task He gives. A field does not plow itself, and without plowing, the field will not be ready or usable and thus no harvest will come about. It comes down to removing our “me first” mentally and replacing it with a “Christ first” determination; then the fish and the harvest will come. For the farmer to farm, he must have a symbiotic relationship with God. The farmer cannot make it rain, nor can he create the soil or the seeds. The farmer is given the seeds, the soil, and the ability from God, but it is up to the farmer to prepare the field, plant the crops, and then care for them until the harvest is ready. It is the same with evangelism. He gives us the ability and reason, and He saves; it is His work, but He uses us in the process to deliver His message.

The Desire not to Follow

What I want to do is challenge you to see some of the root causes that people turn you off when you evangelize. By knowing these common objections

(we will look at more of them next month), you will understand why people respond the way they do, so you will not take things so personally. That way, you will not be turned off from doing evangelism yourself. This will give you greater confidence; you will know how people respond, and then be better listeners and evangelists. We first need to ask, what are my objections? What stopped me before? What can still stop me? What did I fear giving up or fear to go?

Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead (Matthew 8:21-22)."

This passage reveals some seemingly strange happenings and words coming from Jesus. Large crowds often followed Jesus, attracted by His teachings (Matt. 7:28-8:1) and His miracles (Matt. 8:16-18). Then, He saw a large crowd coming toward Him so He ditched them. Then, individual people came up to Him and He turned them away, too. He even turned away a Jewish leader. Jesus gave the impression that He was pushing people away who had come to Him, which would have been in direct opposition to His character and mission. So, what is going on here?

This passage stresses the radical demands of Jesus' call. His call is above all else for us as Christians. What God's will is all about, and of what we are to be doing in our personal lives and in our churches is practice our faith so we will grow in Him. This is discipleship! Nothing else is more important. Period. At the same time that He gives us this call, a great cost is placed before us that we need to accept. It is a cost that He paid on the cross, a cost of our will. It is a sacrifice of all that we may think is important in life, except that with eternity in mind, it is not. But, most people do not realize that the things they are chasing in life are really meaningless and worthless in an eternal perspective.

We need to understand that none of these people were really turned away by our Lord. Rather, they, themselves turned away of their own will because they just wanted a show. Those who said they wanted to follow Him refused to pay the cost. Remember, our Lord knows what is in our hearts and what is motivating us. Jesus desires for us to grow in Him, not to merely seek a show (John 2:25; 1 Pet. 2:11). The scribe said, *I will follow you*. He was perhaps requesting an apprenticeship, to go under Him and learn. Most people followed in their family's business or trade. There were many schools for basic education to learn how to read, write, and learn the law, but there were few organized schools or universities for professional learning. People who did not want to follow their family's trade would seek out a good teacher and plead for them to take them in and mentor them. In the process, they would become a servant to the mentor, or do whatever it took to get their attention and their admiration, as well as learning from them. Then, one day they would take over, or franchise what they had learned somewhere else. This could be any professional trade, from a carpenter to a philosopher. Jesus had both roles! Here, several people came to Jesus

seeking His mentoring. Jesus saw their real intentions. Perhaps, these men had ulterior motives, or were not honest in their approach. Maybe, they just wanted to go with Him to see more of His miracles. Maybe, they were seeking to cash in on Jesus' fame, or make a name for themselves, while uninterested in godly pursuits or real discipleship and learning.

Me First!

It was common for Greek teachers and philosophers to make hard demands on their potential students to test their resolve, commitment, and intentions. These hard demands were meant to discourage people who had bad intentions and ulterior motives from taking up their valuable time and resources. The best teachers would only take in a few of the worthiest students, just as most universities do today, with screening processes. Jesus' own profession as a carpenter was considered a very good profession. Many sought to get into it because it was far more lucrative and respected than the other occupations in an agrarian community where farming and trade were the norms. Jesus must have had a lot of people seeking Him as a carpenter too, prior to His public ministry.

The point of this passage is that selfish intentions will block us from knowing Him and growing in Him. We must be aware of selfish intentions both in us and in others. Being "me first" is common, and a part of our sinful nature that Jesus asks us to purge. We have to be honest and introspective as to why we want to serve Him, why we want to grow and be discipled. Because, if it is for egotistical and selfish gain, it will not be real or loving. Pride, spiritual blindness, and vacillation will become our mentors, and we will not have His will and glory in our sights. Jesus will be bearing with us in our unbelief and failures, but He will not be helping us grow (Luke 9:37-62)! The same goes to people coming to the Lord; the selfishness will be one of the biggest barriers.

Jesus calls His disciples, all who follow Him, to a higher standard of commitment beyond poverty and social status into real sacrificial servitude and discipleship lifestyle (Matt. 6:31-33; 10:34-37; 12:46-50; Luke 10:38-42; Acts 14:21-22; 2 Tim. 3: 10-12; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). This is scary, and many will not want to do this, or else will only make a shallow effort (Matt. 13:18-23). Just look at the *scribe* who desired to come to our Lord, wanting to become a disciple. He said he was willing to follow Jesus anywhere, a seemingly commendable offer. But, did he know what it meant? It seems he just wanted to see more of the show. His job was to record the Law and keep records for the nation, a very important leadership position in Jesus' time. Perhaps his intention was to spy or to gather false information; whatever it was, Jesus saw through it. We may not have the insight, and we cannot judge the motives of people. And, even if they do respond, we never know for sure how sincere they are until we see the fruit of their lives (Gal. 5:22-23). That is why when we are called to follow; we must keep our eyes on Christ and not on our situations or how people respond.

To literally follow Jesus at that time—that is, travel and learn and minister with Him—would have meant leaving everything, including your home, as the rest of His disciples did (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 10:28-29). This was not permanently leaving, as the Gospels record them going back to their homes on occasion, but venturing beyond their normal way of life (Matt. 8:14). This scribe was, perhaps, a person focused on his home and material positions. Jesus was, in fact, telling this scribe that he needed to count the cost before becoming a disciple (Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33). We do not have to become homeless to follow Jesus, but we still must love Him more than anything else. That way He is the Lord and Ruler of our life. We must consider the cost before we commit. Otherwise, we will not remain, and will become a bigger hindrance than if we never bothered following at all. A lot of people do consider the cost, and they refuse to pay it. You have to pay it before asking others to do so!

Another man comes and desires to follow, but wants to return home first, to *bury my father*. This may seem sincere, too, as this was one of the most enduring and basic of responsibilities of a son to his family. The father was probably not dead yet (or he would not have been there, or asked the question). Rather, the son's duties were to take care of him and then take over the household, business, and any family matters. One normally did not go into a mentoring position until his family was taken care of first. After death, the body was entered in a ground burial. A year later, it was dug up and put into a family crypt or box, much like the one recently discovered that may have belonged to James, the brother of Jesus. This process can take one to two years. So, this man was seeking something he had no intention of following through with until a much later time. Jesus calls us now, not later! This man can be described as the "reluctant disciple," one who needed to be reminded of what it means to make a real commitment.

Then Jesus responds, *let the dead bury their own dead*. Jesus is telling us the importance of discipleship, and of our growth in Him. He is saying to let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead, as they are both dead. The time we have on earth and of obeying His call is short, so it demands our full attention and commitment. Jesus was not telling the man to disrespect his parents; rather, he is telling him to consider what is important, and to have the right priorities in life. We are to make disciples to revive the spiritually dead, not wait around for someone to die and be buried—especially in our spiritual life, and that of others. Remember that *follow Me*. Jesus is asking us to place Him above all—including occupation, family, personal desires, and aspirations. All we desire and all our work must have Christ as the focus and purpose. A true disciple will not have a pecking order where Jesus is not number one on the list. There is a cost to following Jesus. Most people did not want to pay that cost, whether first hand with Christ himself, or today in the Church.

We are not told if the man followed Jesus into the boat, or if the storm (verses 23-27) or his inclinations distracted him from this ever so important

sojourn. To really follow Christ, we will surrender all to Him (John 3:5, 30; Rom. 12:1-3; Gal. 2:20-21; Phil. 3:10-14). But, what we give up is nothing compared to what we gain! Remember, Christ surrendered Himself so you can have eternal salvation. Should there not be a small piece of gratitude within you to say, "Hey, I will go wherever you call me?" If we respond to *follow Me* with a "but," we will never truly follow. We will never grow in the depths of His precepts or be able to serve Him fully. We will remain in our status quo, saved perhaps, but uninvolved, sitting in a pew, with no impact or reason for being a Christian. If you have reservations, think them through. Do they have more to offer you? Do they have a greater purpose or impact? Will they follow you into eternity? Life is short; make the most of it and just go and follow Him! Be real and be committed! Do not let doubt, the pleasures of this world, or your sin distract you from life's greatest opportunity and adventure...His call to *make fishers of men!* Embrace His call with unmovable trust and be assured that His plan is the best plan!

You may have made the decision to *follow me*, but what have you done with becoming *fishers of men*? Have you counted the cost? Are you willing to pay the price? Do you know that both are required to follow Jesus?

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Part 2 *Why most People Stay away from Christ*

Developing an Evangelism Program PII

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. 2 Timothy 3:1-4

Have you ever wondered why people do not have the willingness to come to faith in Christ? Why will they not listen to a passionate plea from a loving and caring friend or family member who wants to see them saved? Why would they choose not to see their need for such a fantastic gift from God? Why, after all your efforts and hard adoring work, it seems to have been pointless and have gone unheard? After all, we have the God of the universe—full of love and compassion, Who created not only us, but all things—reaching out to us!

Why is that? Why would people not want to be in Christ? Why would they not respond to our outreach programs? The basic reason is that most people will place their trust in anything that is not God, such as their money, their career, and the high standard of living we enjoy in the United States. Overseas, trust is placed in clans, tribes, idols, religion, and various beliefs systems. People do not see the peril that is right in front of them. Just click on the evening news and you will be inundated by the moral erosion of our culture, and the flight from godly values (Rom.1-2; Eph. 2:1-3). The reason is that people are in sin, and they prefer that sin to God's love. It blinds, courts, and misleads! They do not want to be convicted away from their beliefs!

People like to see themselves as gods; their will is as a protected castle, and they will not bow to the siege of anything that comes against it—even that of Christ. Christ has a plan of love that feeds, not a siege that starves (A siege is when an army surrounds a castle before they storm it. It may take days and even months to starve the people into submission if the army cannot get past their defenses such as the rampart, walls, or mote). Yet, too many ignore the call, and refuse to give up their will. The walk of the Christian faith flies in the face of our individualistic culture that says we can do it our way, and we can have it our way. This mindset is not uniquely American; it is that original, sinful nature we all have (Matt. 10:32-33; 1 John 2:15-17).

We do not have to be perfect or even fundamentally good. All we need to do is be who we are. Just watch the biographies of famous people on cable TV, and how they lived their lives. They chased drugs, pleasures, and wealth, only to find despair, and, sometimes, even death. They thought they had everything, only to find they had nothing in their lives. It all comes down to the fact that people do not like to be convicted! They do not like nor want to be challenged; they want to do as they deem fit (Duet. 12:8; Jud. 17:6)!

We have to realize that we got ourselves into this situation through sin. At the same time, we must realize that we are unable to get ourselves out of it! Humanity is powerless to know God without God's intervention (1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil.1:6; 1 Thess. 1:3-6; 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 1-12; 4:18; 2 Pet. 1:10). We are at the mercy of God, and God responds to us with mercy and forgiveness. We got ourselves into trouble; He is willing to get us out of it. The problem is that most people will not respond. They will not reach out a hand to take His, even when they are drowning!

No one wants to admit his or her depravity or helplessness, so we come up with all kinds of ideas and ways that we do not need Christ (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 1:18-19; 3:9; 19; 5:12-17; 21; Gen 3; Acts 17:26; 1 Cor. 15:22). The idea that we do not need Christ is not a new, twenty-first century phenomena, but was stated by Christ Himself as he told the story; A certain ruler asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Why do you call me good? Jesus answered. No one is good—except God alone (Luke 18:18-19). The ruler, who was some

kind of leader, was flattering Jesus, and assumed his good deeds would bring him eternal life. Jesus quickly responded that goodness is found in God alone, and that his flattery was insincere. Even if we are sincere, we will be sincerely wrong. The leader failed to do what was required, and his good deeds amounted to nothing.

The rich man refused to see his sin or to repent. He was only able to see his needs and desires. These desires became the barrier to knowing and growing in Christ. We are never to think too highly of ourselves, lest pride would enter in to ruin us. Pride removes God from our equation of life and relationships. It removes honesty and sincerity. It literally destroys our relationships and takes away our joy! The irony is that pride is used to seek fulfillment of the self and joy, but, it only results in sheer despair (Phil. 2:1-4). Jesus, in the Luke passage, tells us never to allow money to stand in our way of Him. When we do, it blocks us off from the true treasures and blessings He has for us! Money represents anything that takes the place of our Lord! If you fear you will lose out in happiness or lose out in what seems important, the fact is—you won't! Wealth in itself is not wrong, but it can be a very powerful, false god that subjugates us; Christ frees us and blesses us! Allow Jesus Christ to free you from the self-destruction of your pride!

When we think we are a god to ourselves, we have a much exaggerated view of ourselves. Even if you are a model citizen, and live your life to help others, you will not even be close to godhood. Jesus knew the leader lived for his possessions, and would miss the Kingdom of God because of his own efforts. It is the righteousness of Christ alone that gives us the hope of salvation; our only effort is the acceptance and trust of what was done on our behalf. Of course, if you are perfect and born perfect, then you do not need to worry; however, no one has ever been perfect except for Christ. Too many people do think they are perfect, and boy, will they be surprised in the end! We all need help because we are not perfect. Fortunately for us, Christ was perfect on our behalf; He was our substitution; He is perfect; all we need to do is respond in gratitude and be our best for His glory.

The bottom line is that most people do not want to be bothered by religious things or be convicted; yet, the purpose of our existence is to be reconciled to Him. We have to be convicted in order to receive His grace. The Spirit is the One who convicts; it is our will that keeps Him from that mission! The biggest problem is in recognizing that we are indeed in need, and that we must surrender ourselves to God's providence (John 3:5, 30; Gal. 2:20-21; 1 Pet 5). If we dare to despise God and His offer, then we are damned—not a pleasant future—but it will be by our own design and desire, and our blame alone. If we choose ourselves over God, then we will lose everything!

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. Psalm 90:1-2

This Psalm, along with many other Scriptures, tells us that God has always existed, always directed His creation, and has always provided a plan for us. God is eternal, and we are not. He has always been and will always be. There is one God, and we are not Him! This is paramount for us to understand in order to begin our walk with Christ.

If an evangelist simply stated that Christ was a great moral teacher, he would get no reprisal. If you were to witness to your neighbor boldly that Christ was a great philosopher, he or she would invite you to tea. If a billboard stated that Christ was a great example, the non-Christian would not complain. Christ is all of those, and, yet, He is not. Our Lord is a great Example, Teacher, and Philosopher, but not just a great moral philosopher, teacher, and example. He does not stop there. He is also eternal and Lord over all (John 8:24; 56-58). The world, at large, is greatly offended by the implication that Christ is God, thus, saying He is anything but God is okay. Because, if Christ is God, then our self-directed destiny would be in error, and our will would need to be controlled by Him, and we just do not want to be lorded over.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. John 3:18-21

Not believing in God is not the source for judgment or being condemned, but, rather, from not believing who Christ is or what He has done. The demons believe; they just do not trust or surrender to Him. It is the rebellion that our human nature constitutes against God that gives us over to damnation. Jesus, as the perfect One, comes to us, the condemned, with an offer of hope and salvation. We see that hope, but put it off saying, I do not need it, or, I can do it alone. Jesus goes on to say that our evil nature is the cause of our condemnation, and He is the source of our hope. When we love ourselves and our deeds more than we love our Lord, then we are in trouble. This is not of God's doing, but a result of our own will and choices (Eccl. 11:9; Rom. 3:3; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 6:2).

The Seven Main Objections

We have already examined the two prime, root reasons why people will not come to faith In Christ. Of all the objections we hear when we seek to share our faith, these two root reasons sum up all of the objections. Under these two reasons of no one wants to admit his or her depravity or be convicted of sin, come the countless objections that people give, and many different categories they can go into. But, from my experience in youth, pastoral, and evangelism work, over 90% of these objections fall into seven main categories.

First: Trustworthiness (Galatians 1: 4-10)

People tend to object to the reliability of the Bible, and even of God. This attack and objection is rooted in the nature of the will, as most objections are. People do not want to acknowledge a prime source to which they need to submit. So, they grasp at anything with which to make a blanket to protect them from the truth, and to give them comfort for their reasons. People will attack the faith to give themselves protection for their beliefs. If a seemingly logical reason can be ascertained, then they will use it. They may say the Bible is a myth and full of contradictions, but they probably have never read it, and are only repeating what they have heard from others who also have not read or researched the Scriptures.

Before I was a Christian, I would say almost anything, and argue with anyone, to try to prove the errors and contradictions of the Bible that I got from reading anti-Christian books. However, I rarely went to the prime source. The more I looked at the prime source, the Bible, the more I was convicted of the real Truth! As I came to understand what it means to be a Christian, I learned, over the years, that the reality of God is found in our experience of Him, and being obedient to His will. I know that God exists because I know Him personally. This is a proof from personal testimony and personal reason. But, many use science as a reason to disprove the Bible's reliability. For this, we can see the trustworthiness of Christ just by the reliability of history that proves the historical aspects of the Bible. Even science—the reason why people object to the Bible—can be expounded through apologetics to prove the Bible.

Even though we have the answers to any objection through gifted Bible Apologists, credibility will be at stake for you in witnessing. People may not want to acknowledge a God to whom they must be accountable, so they will say there is no God as a protection from the responsibility and accountability they do not want to take on. Now, we know the truth, and science and history back us up, but most people, even Christians, know little about apologetics. So, do a little research; there are a lot of Christian books, websites, and resources that are of great help. You do not need to know all the answers, but you should know where to find the answers.

Second: Pluralism (2 Timothy 3:6-9)

This is also called Postmodernism. We live in a “politically correct” culture in the West, where offending someone’s belief is a cardinal sin—unless Christianity is the target.

Most people in America today want to believe that all religions are the same, and all roads lead to God. People will respond in a way such as, why does it matter what I believe? They say it is arrogant and narrow minded to believe that Christianity is the only way. This objection usually is expressed in the most passionate, negative responses because people want to believe what they want, and do not want to be dictated to or directed to Truth. The arrogance is in us and our determined will to go our own way; the ultimate pride and condescension is not Christianity, but rather our refusal to surrender our arrogance. Christianity is the true and only way that God provides for us out of His love and grace.

It is our human nature to strive to be on top. Two kids will argue over who gets the bigger piece of cake; so it is with adults who argue their right to themselves. We are always involved in tasks to prove our value and worth. We often hear, what happens to the person who never heard the Gospel, like those tribal people in Africa? The fact is that most people cannot fathom that God is in control and sovereign, because it interferes with their comfort level. If they can rationalize that God is not sovereign, and that there are people not in His control, then they are “off the hook.”

The key to providing evidence for the truth of Christianity is not rooted in the skill of the argument; rather, it is in the love of the person presenting the argument! Your life, and how you live it, is the greatest persuasive power you can have on someone (Eph 4:2; 5:9; Col 3:12-15)!

Third: Need (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

People do not want to admit to a need for something that is outside them, or see the need and urgency of their plight. So, you may hear responses such as, it is okay for you but I do not need it, or, Christianity is just a crutch for weak people. People get so entwined in their own lives that they never look up; all they see is their busyness, their accomplishments, or karma. They may see religion, in general, as a pacifier to the masses, as Communism was. They may believe that people should be in control of their own destinies, and that we are gods unto ourselves.

People get themselves into all kinds of addictions trying to find a substitute for God. They fear loneliness, a deep yearning for companionship that other people cannot provide, so they get involved in perverted activities as a substitute, only to have that yearning still unfulfilled.

People see religion as a barrier to science and rational thought, when, in fact, the opposite is true. Christianity is based on solid, rational, logical, and

consistent reason. The will to reject the truth is like when the people on the Titanic refused to believe they were in danger as their ship sank, then panicked in the last minutes! They may also see religion, in general, as a reaction to a fear complex or that religion is an unenlightened way to view the universe. Yet, science has never given an answer to the basic beginnings and reasons of existence. God is our reason, our meaning, and our purpose in life—not being unto ourselves.

Fourth: Suffering (1 Peter 4:12-18)

As human beings, we are corporal in nature. That means we have a physical body with nerves and fragility. Suffering is a very negative aspect to our nature. After all, who likes to suffer? So, when people take a look around the world, and even in their own lives, and see suffering, the question arises, why would a loving God allow suffering and evil into the world? In other words, when they see suffering, they assume that if there is a God, then He does not care. And, since He does not care, then it does not matter how one lives or what one does.

What the non-Christian may not understand is that suffering is a result of our evil, sinful nature and arrogance against God. Suffering is not from God; it is from us. God is the One who offers an undeserved plan of redemption to bring us out of it. When we accuse God of allowing evil, it is like accusing a bank teller of robbery because they handled the money, while the real robber gets away. Suffering is the result of our choosing to disobey God, not a result of God. He does not have a malicious nature.

The modern person considers suffering as negative, because it does not line up with happiness, peace, and joy. Some Christians have furthered the problem by teaching that suffering is a sign that you are out of God's will and have unredeemed sin. However, this is not Biblical. Yes, sin is the main factor, but, more often than not, the consequences of the sins of others become cumulative and compacting, and affect us. It is a difficult journey, but take heart; our sufferings are very temporary in the scheme of our eternal existence (Matthew 5:10; James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:13; Hebrews 10:24; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 12:9; Philippians 1:19-25; 2:17).

We only see a small, small fragment of life and meaning. God sees the whole picture. Our time here is a mere vapor to what is ahead. We do not see the big picture, but only the here and now. He sees us with eternity in mind, so He can help us to be formed and matured for His purpose. His plan is best. Although it can be a hard and long road for some, it is worth it more than we can possibly imagine! Take this to heart; He is there—guiding, loving, empowering, and even carrying us through it! Check out John 16: 33; Romans 8:18 and 1 Peter 4:19!

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. (Psalm 119:50)

For further help please see our articles on: God Really Does Have a Purpose Behind Your Problems! and, Growing through Difficult Times of Waiting and Confusion .

Fifth: Death (Matthew 10:28-31)

The non-Christian may not want to admit to a death in their past, or their own impending demise, so an objection to Christ comes out of it. They may deny death altogether—the afterlife part, that is. Since there is no afterlife, there is no God, and since there is no God, there are no moral absolutes. Thus, people are in charge and in control of their environment, and, again, have no need for accountability or responsibility. So, the individual can rationalize his or her own fate and values and do what he or she wants without fear of reprisal from a holy God. The other possibility is a denial of death stemming from an earlier loss, or the inability to recognize our immortal nature. Out of this view often comes the reckless endangerment of the self by thrill seekers who take on unrealistic, unsafe challenges.

The great news for the people with this objection is there is no death in Christianity; we are made for eternity and God has a place for us! Share the eternal comfort and position we have in Christ. John 1:1-14 tells us that Jesus is God who came to us both as a human being and as fully God. He experienced life and death. He has risen from the dead, (John 2:19-21; 19:33-37; 20:1-10), He has prepared a place for us, and has covered our sin so we can have eternal life (John 14:1-4; Eph. 2:1). This life is merely a temporary venture until we are called home (Luke 16:22-23, 2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:21-23, Rev. 14:11)!

Sixth: Spiritual Warfare (2 Corinthians 4:4-6)

We need to know that we have an enemy who will do whatever it takes to destroy our relationship with the Lord. He works best by blinding us to the truth and/or getting us to focus on things that take us away from God. Sometimes, these can be “good” things, such as being so busy with our children and their activities that we never go to church. Our enemy will also prevent others from gaining access to God, access lost out of our pride being inflected on others. Our enemy is the Devil. We have an enemy who uses our own ideas and conflicts against us, and tricks our will and desire away from God. Satan’s strategy is that he joins the church and does not fight against it. Satan is at his best, his strongest, and most powerful in the church, because, as Christians, we let him. He causes more distraction by using Christians against each other than any occult practice could ever do. To use a Biblical illustration, Satan spends more time watering and fertilizing the tares/weeds (evil agendas and personal desires) than he does in cutting down the wheat (devotion to God).

Satan is the angel of light who fell from grace by his pride (verses Christ is Light the real Light) (Isa. 14:12; Eze. 29:12-19; Luke 10:18; 1Tim. 3:6); God has

not taken his glory away; he is not a goat-headed monster with a pointy tail and a trident (the pitchfork). Thus, he deceives us with a little of the truth, and a lot of misdirected imitation of the Christian life. Satan accomplishes his task by manipulating us to focus on our desires and to be in conflict with one another. Satan spends little time in what we see in the movies—that is, an outright attack on us. We need not blame all of our problems on the devil, as so many Christians do. They do this to take the responsibility away from themselves, focusing all the blame on Satan. But, we do need to take precautions and actions to avoid Satan's influence on us and our neighbors.

Breaking Satan's influence (see our articles on Satan in the Discipleship channel) means breaking his strongholds of influence. Identify where he is operating, commit as many people to pray there as possible, and continue that prayer. His influence and stronghold will be torn down. (A stronghold is an area where Satan is at work in a concentrated effort. This could be a Hindu shrine in India or a pornographer in the US—or even a dead church.)

The key here is prayer and more prayer, a subject which we will be tackling later!

Seventh: Fear (Job 15:20-25)

Stemming from most of these objections is the underlying fear of the unknown and unexplainable. Most people, Christians included, do not have an accurate view of theology. They base their beliefs on irrational, preconceived ideas that they pick up from a smorgasbord of places. With non-Christians this is even more prominent!

Remember the two root causes for these objections? People do not like being convicted. Now, add to that the fear of being convicted! Even Christians! I had a friend several years ago who refused to ever go and hear a missionary speak. He was a leader in the church and a growing Christian. One day I asked him, why? His response was very honest and to the point; he said he did not want to be convicted, and have to leave for a foreign destination to be a missionary. This, for some reason, really scared him; maybe it had something to do with his parents being missionaries and the problems they dealt with that he did not want to face. I explained to him that God would not call him to anything he was not gifted to do, or had the desire to do, so to quit worrying. I guess he got over it, because he spent a summer in Russia a few years ago.

This grip of fear keeps Christians from growing because they do not want to be convicted. And, this fear is especially rooted in non-Christians! In addition, it is a very powerful motivator to the non-Christian who does not want to give up his or her perceived lifestyle out of fear that the Christian life is boring. They may feel like my friend who was afraid to go overseas. They may think they have to be

some kind of monk, or they may have some perverted view of a Christian they got from TV or from misdirected Christians.

The non-Christian may fear God's vengeance, thinking his or her sins and deeds are not forgivable and, therefore, they would be rejected. It is a basic misunderstanding of the Gospel message; and, since they do not understand it, they reject it. I believe the biggest barrier is the surrender of the will. People just do not want to give themselves up; they think being a Christian is a sign of weakness and they do not want to be known for that (John 3:5; 30; Gal. 2:20-21; Phil. 3:10-14).

First Peter 3:15 is as clear for us today as it was for Paul; too many people rely on themselves to get through life while giving God the raspberry. We, as Christians, need to wake up and see the peril that the world is in—that our own friends, family, and neighbors are in. We are in a ship that is sinking from under our feet, yet we live our lives as if nothing were happening, just "partying on, dudes."

The key to evangelizing people that have fear as their concern—whether they fear God's wrath or the trivialities of life—is sharing the love and forgiveness of our Lord. The life of Paul (Acts 9) is an excellent place to start. They need to be reassured that, yes, God is a God of wrath, but He is also a God of forgiveness! He not only forgave us, He took our punishment in our place. Therefore, we have no need to fear Him—or anything else for that matter (Prov. 1:7; Matt. 10:28; 14:27; 1 Heb. 2:14-18)!

We need to communicate to others the need for Christ, and then realize the objections we may face. People do not see the need, and Christians are too busy in their lifeboats—ignoring the cries, afraid of being swamped. Our call is to be constant and do as we teach, do as we say, and act as we teach others about our Lord. There is no reason ever to make things up, bend the truth, or water down the gospel message to make it more palatable! Integrity, consistency, love, care, respect, and listening without being judgmental are utmost, important, and effective evangelistic tools for the apprehensive Christian sharing the love of God to someone for the first time (1 Thess. 2: 10-12)! Why? Because, hypocrisy gives people a false impression of God! Insincerity gives people a false impression of who we are called to be; it nullifies our witness and character! Because, God is righteous and just; God exercises grace. The willingness to model Christ's character is far more vital for us today than the willingness to preach it. God wants us to be authentic—not pretentious (2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; 3:13-22)!

We are also launching our new Evangelism Channel this month! After over 20 years of research and practice we have developed several curriculums and

articles on how you can start, run and build a successful evangelism program for yourself and for your church! All you need to know and for you to use for free!

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Part 3: How to Share your Faith

Developing an Evangelism Program PIII

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. John 1:40-42, NIV

Before we can venture into the “how,” we need to ask one key and essential question: who and what do people see in you? When you share about the Lord to someone, what is that person seeing in you? Your character? Your Fruit? Your personality? Your friendliness? Your love? Your care? Or?

A principle fact we must know before we venture out into evangelizing is this—when you ask someone, “would you like to be a Christian?” you are, in fact, saying, “would you like to be like me?” Are you a good “me”? Are you a person others should strive to be like? Be honest!

No, this is not really theologically correct; the reality is we are helping people come to Christ. But, they do not know Christ yet; all they know is you and other Christians! So, the question that is so imperative is, *Are love, character, care, friendliness, and a personality that lifts up people coming from you?* Because, the non-Christian will only know Christ through us (Christians) until the Holy Spirit intervenes; thus, we must be careful how we plant His seed in our daily actions, words, and deeds, and how we tell someone about the Lord. Remember, in Matthew, chapter 23, Jesus warns us about misleading people. People will look to you for a model of the Christian life; if you are not modeling it or you are modeling it wrong, then do not tell people about Him, because you will do more damage than good. Make sure that your life is focused on Christ before you tell others to do so!

How do I become a good “me?” The main thing is that our personal prayer and devotional life must be growing and active. We cannot do the work of God unless we are the people of God! We must be in prayer, and we must present Christ in the clearest, truest way possible. Then, we must add love, care, and sincerity while sharing. Remember, Jesus Christ is the Holy, Eternal God of the

Universe; He loves you and He loves others, too! We present and represent Him by knowing the Scriptures and proclaiming Him with **passion** from our spiritual growth, with **conviction**, because we know He is true, with **clarity**, so we make sense, and we are to have **compassion** and **love** for the people with whom we are sharing. In addition, we are to proclaim Christ in **truth**. That is, we never make up testimonies, or skew the truth of His Word to fit our agenda or ideas.

We will not be perfect, (I know I am not) and God will still use us and our frailties. However, don't we want to be a better "me," a better caring and loving Christian who is grounded in the faith?

The Word (John 1:1-14) is cross-cultural and cuts through all languages, people groups, and time. It does not need us to make things up or bend it out of shape. Nor, do we help by our insincerities. God's Word does not need to be diluted or watered down to make it palatable. Witnessing is basically simple; all one has to do is explain Jesus, in love, with the above precepts of passion, conviction, compassion, clarity, and truth. It also helps greatly to show our love and care! The Spirit does the rest! The Word is the peg that goes into both the round and the square holes! You do not need to reshape the peg of His truth. You are to know the culture of others and be relevant, but love that is real, along with the Gospel, needs no modifying. Essential doctrine is crucial because we are proclaiming God, and God is a God of truth! We are His ambassadors; we are never to misrepresent Him (2 Corinthians 5:20)! The Spirit is the real True Witness. We do not save people; we only present Christ to people! All we do is allow His work in us and in others (John 3:3-6; Acts 1:8; Romans 5:4-5; 8:14, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Galatians 4:6; 5:22-23; Hebrews 13:5-6).

To learn how to be an effective witness we are going to search the Scriptures for various ways we can communicate the faith. There are many different approaches, and I have used just about all of them at one time or another. Some work for some people very well, while the same approach for another does not. But, we can distill key precepts to help shape the best way for us, as individuals, to match our method with our personality and available time. We are going to look at a simple plan from Andrew, more insights from Philip, and a few thoughts from my learning and experiences, too. Not all methods work for every situation and person, but there are key essentials that must be working for any approach to be successful. What is the best approach to witnessing? The one you pick up with honesty and sincerity! The best one is one you are comfortable with and the one that you use!

Andrew's Primer on Witnessing

Look at Andrew in the John 1:40-42 passage. Notice what Andrew does and how he goes about reaching his brother and his friends. Andrew has an encounter with Jesus and his life is radically **transformed**. He becomes **excited**,

and seeks whom he can tell first. Jesus impacts Him greatly and he **wants to share that impact with others**. God then uses him to transform the lives of others. God can, and will use you, too! As a Christian, your life has been transformed; now, consider to whom you can tell your story.

The key precepts are to be **transformed**, be **excited**, and then **share** with others His impact on you!

Step I - Pray: Andrew knew Jesus, so we can consider this a prayer, and we can pray for people to know and to tell (Proverbs 11:30).

Step II - Be Excited: We need to experience the veracity and excitement of our faith so we will desire to tell it to another person. We need to realize that the Spirit is with us, powerful and ready! Christianity is not a spectator sport or something we do vicariously through our pastors and leaders; it is something we are and we do ourselves (John 4:35)!

Step III - Look for whom to tell: Whom can we tell? Who would like to know about how Jesus transformed me? Who needs to know? (And, the answer is: everyone who does not know!) Now, look around you; whom do you know who does not know the Lord in a personal way? Your mission field is wherever you are! Your friends, family, school, work, neighbors...observe the entire scope of relationships around you. First, go to immediate family, then relatives, then close friends, then co-workers, then neighbors, then business associates, then acquaintances, and finally, any person whom God places in your path! You need not venture to the far-off reaches of foreign countries unless called to do so. Rather, see who is in front of you now, and write those names down on a list or in a journal (Proverbs 29:18)!

Step IV - Pray More: Make your list, and keep those people in prayer on a regular basis! Get others to pray for them, too! Your list of perspective people will comprise your primary opportunities; thus, prayer is the quintessential thing you do and what the Spirit uses to open people's hearts.

Step V - Look for Opportunities: Pray for open opportunities to tell others in love and with care. Pray for the bravery to tell them! Remember, never argue or confront; allow the Spirit to work! Get together with others and pray for people on their lists, too (Matthew 18:19)!

Step VI - Cultivate Relationships: Relationships are valuable. Do not befriend people just to witness to them; be real and sincere; be open and care! Look for opportunities to invite them to crusades, church socials, and such. Let them see Christ in you before you open your mouth about Him! But, do not just invite them to church stuff; find interests to share in, too! The more they know you and see character and fruit in you, the more their hearts and minds will be willing to hear

from you! The saying, “people do not care what you have to say until they know you care,” is pivotal and true!

Step VII Talk: Saint Francis said, *But as for me, I desire this privilege from the Lord, that never may I have any privilege from man, except to do reverence to all, and to convert the world by obedience to the Holy Rule rather by example than by word.* In other words, *preach Christ with passion and conviction, and, if necessary, use words!* There will come a time when you will have the privilege to answer questions and even lead them in a salvation prayer!

Step VIII - Commitment: Whether they make a commitment to Christ or not, be a friend, be open, and be reliable. If/when they do accept Christ, make sure they are getting encouragement from you and others, are in a good teaching and loving church, are being disciplined in a Bible study, and have the tools and resources they need.

Step IX - Pray: Continue to pray for them.

Step X - Pray: Really continue to pray for them (Jeremiah 33:3)!

Can't remember these steps? Then, remember this, **prayer, care, and share!** These three words will transform your witnessing ventures greatly when followed and practiced!

Philip teaches us How to Witness Effectively

So, how else can you go about it? Another good model for us to follow would be how Philip, in the book of Acts, witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:12, 26-40; 1 Corinthians 3:6).

Philip knew and trusted in God!

Philip knew who he was in Christ! His responsibility was to obey by faith and be a person who was usable to God. He knew God would work out the details, as He is sovereign and in control. God is the One who can do extraordinary things! So, no matter what happened, his reliance was on Christ. God's timing is perfect and our efforts are never a waste, whether we lead one person, hundreds of people, or no people, as long as we are striving and are obedient. The question you need to ask yourself and God is, *do I really trust Him? And, if so, am I usable?* Faith has to be rooted in you before you can be effective in your witness (Proverbs 21:3; Matthew 12:33; Mark 1:35; Philipians 2:12; 1 Peter 1:2, 14; 1 Timothy 6. 14-16)!

Philip was a man who had good character!

Philip was a person in whom others could see the Lord! Philip's persona, as well as his life, words, and deeds bore witness to Christ. For that reason, he was chosen to reach the eunuch (Acts 6:3-5). He was a man whose passion was to glorify Christ as Lord. He was not self seeking; he did not seek power, glory, or personal desires; he only sought Christ! Our lives must demonstrate that we know Him and that His fruit is working in us—and not rotten fruit! Do you have good character (Galatians 5: 16-26; Colossians 3:12-15; 1 John 2:26-29)?

Philip was infused with the Holy Spirit!

We must realize that any effort is fruitless without fruit—His fruit! We do not do the work of changing or converting someone. That is solely the work of the Spirit. We are the instruments whose call it is to go and do. Philip obeyed, took the opportunity, and went. We may not get direct orders from Jesus or an angel like he did, but we can pay attention to the opportunities around us and make the most of them! It is the Spirit working in us that makes us contagious and uses us to influence those He seeks out. Do you allow the work of the Spirit within you? This is not a charismatic idea; it is a Biblical point and truth (Psalm 1:2-3; Matthew 7:16-18; 12:35; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Peter 3:8; 2 Peter 1:5-8)!

Philip was prepared in his heart and knowledge!

Philip knew the Lord and he also knew the Scriptures. He realized that God is the Teacher and Guide, and he followed Him. He is the One who gives us the opportunities, the willingness, and the ability to carry out His directives. He gives us the boldness and casts out our fears so we will have the courage to witness. We need to realize that witnessing cannot be looked at lightly, or as something we do when it is convenient or when we feel like it. Witnessing comes from our devotion and love for our Lord, and from being on the lookout for His opportunities. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we are excited and want to share that “info” with others. To do this, we must be prepared, starting with our hearts. You do not need to know all of the answers, but you should know where or how to find them. How is your devotional life (John 15:4-8; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-25; 1 John 4:7-21)?

Philip was using the Scriptures!

He was able and willing to sit down with the eunuch and explain the passage in Isaiah. For us to be effective, we must know the Scriptures; or, if one is new at it, be on the road to discovery. We do not need to know all about the Bible—all of its ins and outs—but we need to have mentors and resources where we can find answers and then get back to the person asking the questions. We need to be engaging in the Word and in the process of learning. As we learn, the Spirit will give more opportunities to share that information with someone, just as He did with Philip. Never neglect your study of our Lord! Are you willing to learn and use His Word (Mark 6:2; John 3:10; Colossians 3:15-17; 2 Timothy 3:16)?

Philip was greatly used and is our example because he trusted in God. He had good character; he was infused with the Holy Spirit; he was prepared, and he used the Scriptures. This is not rocket science. In fact, sharing the Good News about our Lord is simple and easy. We are to know Him, and then we are to make Him known! This is our responsibility. If we do not know Him, we will be unable to make Him known. This may sound like, *well, I am a Christian, and I grew up in the church so I know Him*. Maybe; maybe not. But, are you growing in Him? That is the key!

Philip was usable!

To witness, we need to be usable. We need to tune ourselves before we go out, just as a musician tunes his instrument before the performance and not afterward. We can only do this with an intimate, growing faith, maturing in His Truth and our spiritual formation. We need to see the plight of those around us, and not be so involved with our own lives that we are condescending or neglectful of others. With our faith in line, we can see our mandate to care for others. We are to share with others with truth and compassion. We are never to be condescending, be overbearing, stalk, or be a bad witness in any way. Our faith is essential; with His Word and Spirit empowering and infusing us, we can step out into the world boldly and powerfully. So, allow God to gift and empower you to be His ambassador! He gives us the opportunities; we respond with our faith and obedience. So, get in step with Him by your faith, and then step out with your proclamation of the faith!

What else can I do?

- Ask for the heart, strength, perseverance, patience, gifts, and the willingness of your church to obey. Ask for more prayer warriors!
- Effective witnessing comes out of our devotional life and gratitude toward Christ, not out of obligation!
- Ask God what the needs are, and for Him to reveal those as well as opportunities to meet them.
- Make sure you care, and have an attitude of love and concern for the people or person to whom you are witnessing; *if not, do not!* Care is absolutely essential; remember, *people will not care what you have to say unless they know you care!*
- Ask God to send His Spirit to soften the hearts of people so when they hear His message, they will respond.

- Make a list of all the people you need to pray for, the concerns of the town in which you live, and other concerns God gives you.
- Know that God can and will use you, no matter how little or how much you know. God uses the regular folks over the pastors, leaders, and the superstars (1 Corinthians 1:27)!
- According to surveys from The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and others, over 80% of people who come to the Lord are led by friends—not events or crusades! In addition, 80% of people who do come to know the Lord at crusades were brought there by....friends....people like you and me!
- Depend on the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)!

Develop Real, Authentic Relationships! (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

What are the keys to Andrew's, Philip's, or anyone's good, effective witness? It is prayer and the ability to develop relationships! It boggles my mind how many Christians I know who have no relationships, friends, or even acquaintances outside of the church. They only know other Christians, and only shop in other Christian's businesses to the point they are in a sub culture of a "Christian only mindset." It becomes monasticism without the piety! This is a travesty! Yes, we are to have fellowship, and our principle relationships should be with people who are in Christ. But, how can we be *salt* and *light* if we never go where the salt and light is needed? God does not call us to separate from others; in fact it is the opposite. We are to go to them without being contaminated by them. Scripture warns us that we are to be the influencers, not the ones being influenced (Proverbs 15:30; Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:5-17; 1 Peter 3:2-3).

Are you a maker and builder of friends? How so? Why not? This is not about being an extrovert or having the "personality" to do so. Yes, some are better at it than others, but we are all called to make friends. To be honest, I am not good in this area. I score high as an extrovert on those personality inventories, but that is because of my profession as a pastor. I tend to go out of my way to meet and greet people, but really, I am a natural introvert! I have to work at this! I had to learn to be a "go getter" of people, to make friends and befriend people. Perhaps, you need to do so, too!

- Be purposeful! To whom are you going? We need to have a target before we can aim the Gospel (Acts 18:18; 2 Corinthians 13:1)!
- Be real! Caution! Be genuine! Guard against only getting to know people so you can witness to them. Yes, that is a primary aspect. But, we are called to be in relationships. If people find out you are only interested in proselytizing,

your witness will be compromised to nothing (Mark 4:21-23; Romans 12:9; 1 Peter 1:22)!

- Be excellent! Do not be a nuisance, especially at work. A good Christian always does his or her work with excellence and fortitude, and does not use company time for Gospel time (1 Corinthians 7:23; Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3: 22-25, 28).
- Be willing to take the time! We have to be willing to go where the people are, and spend time with them. It may take years for a missionary on the field to learn the language, the culture, and build connections before he or she can be used effectively.
- Be a friend winner! The purpose of our witnessing is to offer people a relationship with Christ. This is best done when we have a relationship with them. We must first win them as friends before we can win them to our Lord!
- Be a smile maker! Smile at people! It takes seventy-two muscles to frown, but only fourteen to smile. People love a smile! Think about how you feel when someone smiles at you, and realize how important it is to do so to others, too.
- Be a person who uses people's names! Call people by name! Take the time to remember someone's name, and use it. The sweetest music to anyone's ear is the sound of one's own name!
- Be engaging! Speak to people! Take the chance! Step up to the plate! Venture beyond your fears, and engage someone in dialog. Be willing to keep your friends close, but also go outside of your *clique* and comfort zone to talk to others. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word, or an honest, friendly greeting! You know it when you get a nice greeting; so, why not give one to others?
- Be friendly and helpful! Most people I have known and observed, who have few or no friends, do not make the effort to be a friend. If you would like to have friends, then, be friendly!
- Be caring! Be genuinely interested in people! Take the time to listen and show you care. Plan your schedule so you have time for people. If you are always in a rush, your relationships will suffer greatly. People whom God has brought to you will be ignored, thereby wasting the help, ministry, and influence you could have given. Christian empathy means involvement, and showing that you care!
- Be pleasant and cordial! Be a person who is nice and engaging to others. Speak and act as if they are the most important persons in the room, and do so as if it is a genuine pleasure, as it should be!

- Be considerate with the feelings of others! It will be appreciated. Each person is unique, created and loved by God. Acknowledge this, and make your responses to others in this light.
- Be thoughtful of the opinions of others. There are three sides to every controversy or disagreement, yours, that of the other person, and that of God—which is the right one! We must not rely on our own presumptions and assumptions, because, we do not have all of the facts. Seek to know and understand the other person’s perspective, and start your dialog with those agreements.
- Be an encourager! Be generous with praise! Seek to find something that a person has done that is good—a personality trait, what they are wearing, or a smile that you noticed—and let them know. Be the person who takes the time to encourage others, but, do so honestly; no one likes a pretentious pretender. Most people go through their day, some even surrounded by Christians, and they are never encouraged!
- Be cautious with criticism! No one likes to be patronized or put down! There are times we are to correct others or motivate them in a better direction, but we must do so with an attitude of love and care, showing patience, respect, and tact, even while being firm.
- Be ready to give your witness! What counts most in life is who we are in Christ, and then our response of gratitude for what He has done for us by doing for others!

Personal Lifestyle Evangelism

The above principles about building relationships are keys to your witness. They translate into what many call “lifestyle evangelism.” That is, instead of a direct approach to witnessing, your life is modeled as a “show case” of God’s work in you. In this way, you show others by your actions and character how the Lord works; your life becomes contagious and attractive so that people will want to know more about you and thus will get to know more about Him through you! Thus, they will ask you about the Lord or what is different about you even before you ask them if they would like to know more about Jesus! How do we do this? Just know Him and grow in Him, and allow the Lord’s transforming power to work in you! It is all about the Fruit of the Spirit, and His work in you coming out through you (Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1: 3-14; 2:6-7; 1 John 4: 7-16)!

There is, perhaps, no better way to introduce the Lordship of Christ to others than to model His character to others. When we are distinctive and interesting, living a life above reproach with love and care for others, we are a beacon of hope to the lost, even if they will not admit it publicly. When you earn their attention and respect, which takes an investment of time, then you can

invite friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. to your house for dinner—something personal. Then you can invite them to a church program. Getting to know people is essential, as we are called to be salt and light. Salt and light are penetrating, not elusive. So, let us meet the call and snub the elusiveness; let us break out of our fears and resentment and follow our Lord! Then, we can be effective witnesses without even opening our mouths! And, the witness will be even louder when you do tell others about Jesus, because, they have already seen Him at work in you!

What about witnessing at work?

Your workplace is perhaps your most effective arena for outreach. You may not be able to verbally share the Gospel, nor should you on work time, but you can be a Christ-like example so others will seek you out and ask you what makes you different. Your character will help make you stand out, and then you can take opportunities to share seriously, but not on work time! Build the relationships, take co-workers to lunch, meet them after work, go to a social, a church, a community or work event, and talk there. The key is the attitude we are to have, and that is looking to Christ as our employer so we do our work for Him. Therefore, we are to be our best for His glory, regardless of our circumstances, and we can respond with a good work ethic (1 Corinthians 7:23).

We must adjust our mindset to see work as an opportunity to please Him. In so doing, we can be a blessing to those around us. We are not hired to witness (unless you are a paid Christian worker). Allow your good and caring attitude to become contagious, making you stand out, and inviting opportunities. Be aware that this will also lead to persecution from those with less than “nice” mindsets. The main thing to remember is that people will see Christ through you in the workplace—either as modeling a God to come to, or, one from whom to be repelled. How do people at work see Christ through you? Remember, Christ-like attitude and the Fruits of the Spirit are paramount, as well as sensibleness, self-control, and cooperation. (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Peter 1:4) Seek to emulate His character and you will excel (Proverbs 12:24; 13:4; 19:15; 24:30-32; Romans 8:17; Galatians 6:9; Colossians 3:23; Philippians 2:1-11; Ephesians 6:5-8; Titus 2: 9-20; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; James 1: 8). Seek yourself and proselytize on work time and you will repel the people you were called to reach!

Make relationships that are real and authentic outside of your Christian subculture; be the salt and the light, and you will be an effective witness (Matthew 5:13-16)!

Some passages to consider: Proverbs 15:30; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 18:19; John 1:1-14; 1:40-42; Acts 8:12, 26-40; 1 Corinthians 1:27; 2:4-5; 3:6; 7:23; 9:19-23; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3: 22-25, 28

Questions to Ponder:

1. Who and what do people see in you? When you share about the Lord to someone, what is that person seeing in you? Your character? your Fruit?
2. How do passion, conviction, clarity, compassion, love, and truth come from you when you proclaim Christ? How should it?
3. How do you feel about what comes across the minds of others when you are witnessing, and that you are in fact saying, *would you like to be like me?* Are you a good “me”? Are you a person others should strive to be like? Be honest!
4. Does knowing that the Word (John 1:1-14) is cross-cultural and cuts through all languages, people groups, and time give you greater assurance and faith to be a witness?
5. Go over the various witnessing plans from Andrew, Philip, and the others; then, come up with your own plan. Practice it, refine it, and commit to it!
6. What is in the way of your becoming an effective witness? How can and how will you deal with or remove the obstacles?
7. Make a list of people and be an Andrew to others. When and where will you do this first?
8. What are the tools, accountability, resources and encouragement you may need to make this happen? Now go get them, so you can help get others for Him!

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Evangelism Insights and Encouragements

Proverbs 12:25; Mark 4; 16:15; Acts 1:8; Revelation 14:6; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 4:1-6; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 3:15

This article is a collection of insights I have learned and collected from over 20 years of evangelism in church and Para church ministry. I hope you can find these insights useful to encourage you to serve Him more powerfully and effectively! We all need encouragement. Billy Graham told me a few years ago that he needs it, and he said I need it, and I believe you may need it, too. So, here are some encouragements for you!

Witnessing can be scary. Many Christians will cower away from their call, seeking other things to fulfill the void of that unused call. It is important to seek our Lord's precepts on who we are in Him, how He can use us, and how He is our love and empowerment for living and for sharing. If not, those distractions we pack into our lives to hide His call will become our god and lord over us, preventing us from taking advantage of the precious opportunities He has for us. These distractions can also prevent our growth and faith development. In the faith, we are called to walk in Him. We are not forced to proclaim Him; rather, we are encouraged to live a life of distinction and of service. We have a choice to either impact others for the Lord or cower from our call and live a self-fulfilled life. Saved? Perhaps; but, as the book of James tells us, for what good would it be? We can choose to walk away from, walk around, or walk to the person in need. We can embrace His call to share His love, or we can fill that call with trivial, meaningless, expectations that block our hope in Him. We need to realize the importance and relevance of His call to proclaim His name. When we do so, we are encouraged to stretch out and share that love we received from Christ! What is stopping us? Well, most Christians just do not know how, and/or they are fearful.

It has been my experience and observation that people who are good witnesses are confident in their faith. They know they have the Good News! They know Jesus, not just as a Savior, but as LORD (Luke 6:46)! He is all things to them. Is He Lord of your life, too? This realization impacts and fuels them to proclaim Jesus to others. Because they know His power and impact, they show it to others. I know that in my life, my effectiveness is directly correlated to my walk and my prayer life. How much I trust and obey becomes the power that helps sway. We need to know that telling someone about Christ is not like selling toasters; it is telling others the promise of life everlasting. This is the real and imperative stuff of the Christian life. If He is your Lord and Love, and the most important entity in your life, are you showing it to others? If you get a new car, do you not show it off to your friends? Is not Christ so much more powerful and valuable than the greatest car you could ever wish for? Then, what is stopping your life from being His showroom (Mark 16:15)?

Points on Being Effective in the Faith and As a Witness:

One of the main factors to our effectiveness is the need to be excited about our faith! We need to see the Christian life as a wondrous adventure; we

need to see the positive and let that positive shine through in our attitude and approach. If you are not a person who is excited about your faith (and I do not mean overly emotional), how can you be contagious with the faith? Think this through! People respond to the temperament and attitude of others; how is yours? Most people come to the faith through people who are, themselves, new to the faith! Why? Because, they are excited! Even though they may be ignorant of theology and procedures on how to lead a person to Christ, their enthusiasm becomes contagious. Their lives have been transformed; they know this, and it shows to others! How does your enthusiasm show (Mark 12: 29-31; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)?

- Be a person who is grounded in God's Word and who encourages others to do so, too. It is those who are growing in maturity and are excited whom God uses the most. Do you want to be used? Then, be obedient and allow Him to grow you (2 Peter 1:5-7; Heb. 6:1-12)!
- Over the years, some misguided Christians have pronounced that evangelizing is not the role of the church or the Christian. It is purely the work of the Spirit. Thus, we do not have to witness. This is true and, yet, it is very not true. Yes, we do not have to witness. Even though Jesus used an "imperative" (Greek Grammar device) as a command to do so, it does not affect our salvation. And, yes, salvation is the work of our Lord Jesus Christ through the role of the Spirit; however, we are still called to proclaim Him powerfully and boldly, but with care and love. These misguided people are not stopped because of theology; it is their refusal to obey. So, they rationalize their faulty views (Matt. 28:29; Acts 2:38; 8:4; 13:15; 18:4, 11; 2 Cor. 5:16-21)!
- We are partners with God in evangelism; He saves, and uses us as the means. Remember, He is the witness! We cannot convert anyone; however, He may use us to convict and to be an example. We are only able to witness by His power working in and through us (Matt. 11:28; 2 Cor. 3:4-6; Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 22:17)!
- Your witness is more rooted in your attitude than in your words (Acts 8:4-8)!
- Your passion and conviction will show through to others. If you are not passionate for our Lord, get right with Him before you tell others about Him. The key is to realize what Christ has done for you, and share it with excitement (2 Cor. 1:3-7)!
- Joy is indispensable for sharing love! It is not just what you know; it is Who you know. He is Christ. Your love of Jesus is the picture people need to see so they can better see Him (Joshua 1:8-9; 2 Cor. 1:24)!
- Being judgmental or hypercritical is the worst thing a Christian could ever do. It is so repulsing to non Christians, and is the direct opposite of our call! This

will have far more negative influence on a non-Christian than the greatest evangelism plan with the greatest evangelists who ever lived (Matt. 7:1-5; Rom. 2:1-4; 14:1-15; James 4:11-12)!

- The Gospel is the power! Our main encouragement is that He is here with us. We are not doing this alone; we have the God and Creator of the universe at hand! What more could we need (Heb. 4:16; 2 Pet. 1:10-11)?
- A lot of Christian leaders are obsessed with the size of their ministry and the numbers of souls saved. This is sad, because God's call is the size of our heart and our obedience—not the numbers (John 14:15; Heb. 10:8-10)!
- Your self image is also a major factor. For some, this instigates fear and trepidation in sharing the word of Christ with others. Your self image is who you are in Christ, not how people respond to or treat you (John 3:30; 2 Cor. 2:9-10)!
- Relationships are the ideal way to make Christ known to others. You are far more effective if you build a sincere relationship with others before you preach to them. That way, you get to know them and pray for them; they get to know you, and realize that you care. You then will have more opportunities for listening and sharing (Rom. 16:3).
- When I went through the training at the *Billy Graham School of Evangelism* and the "Crusade Training," they made the point that over 90% of the people who come to a Crusade are brought there by others, such as friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc (Col. 3:12-17).
- The apostle, Andrew, was the first Christian evangelist; he is also a great example of one having faith, then sharing that faith with others (John 1:39-45)!
- If you are in a leadership position, it is essential that you do as you teach! That is, you cannot expect others to do something that you are not willing to do. To be encouraging to others, you need to set an example; be constant, and be encouraging (1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; Heb 13:7)!
- A good witness realizes not only the love they have received from Christ, but also the need to share with others care and prayer before they share their witness (John 21:16; Phil. 4:6)!
- It is essential that your church have a good vision and purpose. If you do not know where you are going in life and in ministry, you will not be able to lead others in a good way. (Prov. 29:18).

- The Church is called to teach and nurture trust, obedience, and prayer in her members, then invite and share this with others around them. And, when people become Christians, they are to continue equipping, training, and caring for others so they, too, can be deployed and carry on their faith to others, and so forth. If the church does not train, they cannot deploy, and they will not be honoring God favorably (Hab. 2:2; Rom. 10:13; 1 Thess. 2:7)!
- It is also essential for an effective, witnessing church to be people-centered and not just program-centered. Programs are to help train and develop relationships, not become a substitute for them (1 Cor. 3:5-11; 11:1)!
- Try to be as clear as possible in what you say and how you say it. Why? Because, we represent Him—not just our church and not just ourselves (Prov. 12:12; 2 Cor, 5:20; Col. 4:5-6)!
- You need to see the plight of others; try to see how their life is from their perspective. Have compassion! Listen! And, have a heart for the lost! If you are not hurt and sorrowful for those who are not saved, your heart needs a check up! We have to see the lost, as best we can, the way God sees them—with compassion, patience, and understanding (Matt. 28:19).
- Jesus is with you! We are empowered by Christ for whatever endeavor He gives us; whether we dig a ditch or witness to a stranger, He is there. We need to see Christ as the Equipper, so our focus is on Him and not on how people respond to us or on our circumstances (Matt. 28:20)!
- Your successes and failures mostly reside in how you live and model the faith. Are you authentic and real, living and caring? If not, watch out, as others will find you out. Authentic living is your witness; allowing Christ to live and work in you will be the real show that others see. Being a person who allows the Spirit to grow and form your fruit will make all of the difference in your efforts and willingness. This Fruit can be faked for a while, and we can fabricate it; but, soon the farce will be found out. Your authenticity is the key to being able to touch others for the Lord. To touch others, we, too, must have been touched; our fruit is the proof text of our authenticity and touch! (Gal. 5:18-22)!
- Christ's love and grace are realities in history and in life. They are not just ideas; they are events. He will empower you with the fire of the Spirit (Luke 3:15; Rom. 1:16)!
- We need to be able to see the reality of sin and hell. It is not that others *might* go to hell without Christ; they *will* go to hell! People are in sin and they are going into eternity forever separated from God—separated in the depravity of darkness. You just may be the only person who can reach them, or to whom they will respond. Yes, God is sovereign, and He will not send anyone to hell

who willfully does not want to go there, but we also need to see our responsibility to be the ones He uses to reach others (1 Cor. 9:22; Heb. 12:1-2)!

- Training is essential for effective witnessing! Do not expect people to naturally evangelize. Some may do so; however, the vast majority does not know how, and is fearful. Training and encouragement reduces fear and motivates your people (1 Cor. 3:6)!
- For people to come to your ministry or church, you have to be welcoming to them. Watch your attitudes and how you come across to others! If you are not sincerely inviting and welcoming people into your midst, then you are repelling people away. There is no in-between ground. You are the front door of your church, and you are also the back door! Will you welcome people in, or just show them the back door with your attitude or carelessness (Rev. 3:20)?
- What are the main obstacles to evangelism? Fear and busyness! Being too busy and never budgeting your time wisely will cut you off from God's most precious opportunities—even if all those things are good! Fear is also a big factor, but remember what casts out fear; **love** (Duet. 5:14-15; John 11:9; 1 John 4:18)!
- Being patient, honest, hospitable, friendly, gentle, kind, and respectful of others is not only essential to being a good witness—we are called upon to do so when we witness (Mark 12:28-31).
- Do not force people! It amazes me how many misguided Christians share the “love of the Lord” out of hostility and not out of love, or use deception and scare tactics, then wonder why they have no results. Furthermore, they think they are right in doing so. We must not be the Christian fool; rather, the Christian witness of love and respect (2 Cor. 4:1-6; Phil. 1:3-6)!
- Being willing to listen and being vulnerable and open will be very attractive to others. But, be aware! You will be hurt by others, both intentionally and unintentionally. So, be susceptible to others; but, at the same time, guard your heart. Be both open and cautious. Be open to others with a good attitude, sharing in love; know that they can hurt you, but still be open. How do you do this? By keeping your focus on Him and not on how people respond to you (Prov. 4:23; Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; James 1:19-25).
- Never rush, coerce, manipulate, or lie to people. It is never acceptable to lie about a God of Truth! Consider how you would have wanted to be treated. Remember, people will be friendly with us when we are friendly with them (1 Pet. 3:15)!

- Most people will reject your advances even though yours is the truth and theirs is a lie. We cannot force people; we can only influence them for Christ. If they want to remain in their sin, there is nothing we can do except pray. It is the Spirit, and only the Spirit, who can interdict upon them. And, be patient; the Spirit may still use you down the road (Eph. 5:15-18).
- It is OK to fail! It is *not* OK not to share just because you are afraid to fail. There were numerous occasions when Paul and the apostles did not succeed. Missionaries in tough countries will spend their entire careers in faithful service and only lead a handful of people to Christ. God is in charge; He knows what He is doing; be confident in Him. Witnessing is not about numbers, it is about obedience (Acts 19:23-41; 22:17)!
- We cannot fix people; only the Holy Spirit can do that. He will use us, and give us insights and resources, but the prime issue is the matter of their heart and will conforming to His (Jude 1:22-23).
- Sometimes, experiences of life and disappointments in other Christians will leave a person cold and turned off. Do not be offended, even though they may take it out on you. It is all about Christ, not our feelings! Be patient, be affirming, and be constant in your character. Never give up praying for them (Matt. 5:11-12; Phil. 1:27-30)!
- We need to believe in people, even when they let us down—because everyone will. Only God will not! Thus, have patience and consistency! Sometimes, it can take years to lead a person to the Lord. If you are in haste, you will waste your connection and opportunity, and God may not use you until perhaps sometime in the future (Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9).
- Do I have to leave my job to be effective for Christ? Usually not. God normally uses you best where you are in life with people in your age and gender, people in your line of work, people in your socioeconomic class, and people of your culture and language. And, of course, He can use you cross-culturally and cross-class, too! But, your best witness is to the people around you whom you know and who know you (Acts 8:26-40).
- *Got testimony?* We all do, but can you share it in a few minutes? Write out your testimony as a story! Keep it short, simple, and true. People love stories; allow your life to touch others through your personal story. How has God helped you? How has your life changed for the better? How can you tell this to others (Acts 5:21)?
- When you witness, be relaxed and caring. Do not be uptight or stern. Humor that is not condescending is very helpful as is your good attitude and smile (Matt. 5:16)!

- Do not know what to say or where to begin? Just share the Word of God, then, what He has done for you (Eph. 2:8-9)!
- The better you get at it, the more the *evil one* will come against you! Do not fear; Christ is with you. But, you still have to prepare yourself (Eph. 6:10-20; 8:4)!
- We have to realize the fact and veracity of Spiritual warfare! Satan is scheming, as we speak, to thwart your efforts; however, always remember, “He that is in you is greater than He that is in the world (2 Cor. 2:9-10; 1 John 4:4-6)!”
- Your witness is not dependent on your answers; it is dependent on your character and commitment. Learn all you can; but, if you cannot answer a question—that is OK! Just say, *I will check on that and get back to you*. Ask someone else, such as a pastor, or, do a little research, and then get back to them with the answer (1 Cor. 1:10).
- Evangelism, no matter how much you fail or how successful you are, is all about glorifying our Lord. It is not about who gets to lead more people to Christ. Numbers are great, but God is more interested in your faith and your obedience (2 John 1:4-6)!
- The more organized you are in your evangelism campaigns, the more successful you will be (Duet. 31:12)! Who are the prospects? Who will witness to them? How will you do it? What are the people’s needs? How can you meet those needs, such as digging a well or building a youth center? How will you follow up and disciple them? Have a map of your city and target area. Divide it among people, with a supervisor for each region. Have committed prayer warriors for each region and mark your progress (Luke 10:1).
- For American and Western Churches, clear, open, and effective parking is essential. People love their cars; if you do not have room for their cars, you do not have room for them!
- Having a “follow up” program to disciple people is essential. Without it, all of your witnessing efforts may be in vain! Most people who accept Jesus as Savior go back to their normal lives after a few weeks! The main reason is that they did not fit in! The church did not welcome them, did not treat them well, or did not mentor, place, encourage them (John 8:31-32; Acts 6:7; 11:25-26)!

What is the key to remembering all of this? It is not just about believing and knowing; it is about doing! We may forget points, but if we never forget to be faithful in Him, we will always be used by Him! Being faithful in prayer is the

essential mechanism to reaching others for the faith. Be faithful in your personal spiritual growth. The other key is not to isolate yourselves in the Christian subculture; get out and get involved, and remember to love and care before you share. Remember, the Christian life is not about you; it is about glorifying Christ. So, is He Lord of your life? Are you following Him? If not, what is in the way (Mark 8:34; 2 Cor. 2:14; 1 John 4:8)?

Do you realize there has never been a time in Church history where we have more books and resources for training, evangelism, and discipleship? Yet, it seems the Church is doing less training, evangelism, and discipleship than ever before!

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Understand the Importance of Prayer for Evangelism!

Matthew 9:35-38; John 14:12-14; Colossians 4:2-6;

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: `Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation (Luke 11:1-4, NIV).

Real Prayer is Saturation Prayer

This passage is not a prayer, but rather a model for us to follow of how to pray. The closer we follow this passage, the closer we come to our Lord. The closer we come to attaining the fullness of our spiritual potential, the better we pray. As members of the body of Christ, it is our responsibility to be always teaching one another how to pray; the best teacher is the one who models it in his or her life. We are to model this in all of our activities and pursuits in the church! We are to be specific, simple, and follow the above aspects, so that our prayers are relevant and not too general or crude. We must be honest and open with our Lord and our will is opened because of what He has done for us, who He is, what we wish to do, and who we are to Him; then, we can share our burdens and intimacy.

Prayer is pivotal and essential. Nothing of value can accrue in you or though you without prayer! The above Scriptures testify to us that we need to be praying for workers, for ourselves, for opportunities, and for those who do not know Him!

Prayer is our key to God's door. It is our foundation to the exercising of and growth in the faith, and essential in our witnessing. It is the work of Christ through the work of the Spirit that saves. Prayer lines us up to His will and grows us in maturity and understanding. It is the power behind, in the mist of, and in front of the faith (Ezek. 36:24-32; John 3:5; 30; 20:21-23). To be effective in your growth in Christ, you have to be a person who prays—and prays regularly. To witness, you must be praying for that person's soul and conversion. Pray as specifically as you can, and as often as you can. It may take a few minutes; it may take many years. Whatever the cost and time, prayer is the foundation to any work of evangelism. Without effective prayer, you cannot be effective in your evangelism—period! Do not even try it without prayer! Sharing your faith without praying for the person is like training a pig to fly; all you will do is waste your time and annoy the pig! All you will accomplish in trying to do evangelism without prayer is stay away from God, waste your time, and annoy the person!

- Know this important point: No amount of corporate prayer will make up for a lack of personal prayer! That is, you can and should pray as a group, but because you pray as a group does not mean you can cut back on your personal prayer time! Your personal prayer time is the key to your growth in Christ.
- There is no better use of your personal and ministry time than prayer!
- There is a phrase that says, "Familiarity breeds contempt." Sometimes, the people we are close to have hurt us; perhaps we just do not trust them, perhaps we fear their response, or perhaps we just do not care. We have to have a heart for someone before we can be an effective witness. Continue in your character development and spiritual growth, be consistent, and allow your changed life to show without words—even when others do not respond well to you! Start to pray for them! Then, when you have a heart for them, start to be in prayer; pray more, and then use your words to witness. Do not witness to people you have contempt for, as your attitude will show; all you will do is give the Lord a bad reputation and make it harder for the next person.
- It is essential that all those on staff and leadership of your church be people of continual prayer! If they are not persons of prayer, then they should not be in leadership (Col. 4:2-6; 1 Tim. 2:8)!
- When I went through the training at the *Billy Graham School of Evangelism* and "Crusade Training," the point was made that over 90% of the people who come to a Crusade, and 95+% of those who go onto the field and pray to accept Jesus, have been regularly prayed for by others—for a significant period of time!

Practical Strategies for Praying for Evangelism

Before each activity, meeting, or event at your church or potential church, pray! Prayer is the platform that plans begin on, end on, and rest on. There should never be anything that goes on at a church that does not have prayer at its central core! Remember confidentiality! Prayer requests are not ammunition for gossip! If your church is not a church of prayer, your church is not in God's will, nor is it focused on Christ! Your church is a mere club for the prideful (Habakkuk. 2:5, 9; Romans 16:17; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

1. Begin each meeting in prayer, and spend at least four-fifths to one-third or more of that meeting in prayer! You say you do not have the time? Well, most meetings are taken up by poor preparation, not following the agenda, and trivial discussions that go in circles. Have the agenda given out a day before and require all to read it before the meeting. Then, by putting the focus on prayer, meetings actually go faster because people are in one mind and direction! (Well, mostly.)
2. Spend significant time in prayer between meeting sessions about the decisions that need to be made. Do not just fret over them. This will move the focus away from our perceived agenda and into His agenda. We then can surrender selfish ambitions to what is best for His church.
3. Have a specific core of people pray before each worship service and event at the church. So, if the Junior High group is having a "lock in," have a small group come before it starts and just pray. Before the event, for safety, get specific requests from the leaders of the event. Have teams pray before and during ministry programs, such as ones for children and youth. While the youth meeting is going on, have a prayer team in another room praying. Do this for all ministries and activities of the church.
4. Sunday service prayer group is a small group of people who are there early to pray (the longer the better), and pray in authority for satanic removal. This type of prayer is in the authority and the name of Christ. The group can literally go through the church and cast away demons and any evil curses, incantations, hexes, spells, etc. One would be surprised at the number of satanic and witch groups in our towns and cities, trying with all their little hearts to distort and destroy you in the name of Satan!
5. Continue to have prayer walks through your neighborhood.
 - a. Have assigned people to pray for each church planter, pastor, and missionary of the church on a constant basis. Do this for both individual prayer warriors and, collectively, for a prayer group.

- b. Have a team of prayer warriors to pray for government offices. Invite city and government officials over for social events in the church, and see if you can pray for them in person. Be cautious, tactful, and never force yourself on others. See if you can make appointments with them at their offices, and ask their permission to keep them in prayer. Pray for them on the spot if they desire. You will be surprised at the response; most elected officials will not turn you down. If they do, then do as Matthew 10 tells us. If you are in a country where Christianity is outlawed, this approach may put you in danger, so it may be best just to pray at home.
- c. This may sound on the edge, but it is not, and is totally Biblical. Have a trained team of people to engage in spiritual warfare. Simply put—pray against the strongholds. Keep it simple, and focused upon Christ and the work of the Spirit.
- d. Have a trained team of people to pray for people after each Bible study and church service. That way, a sufficient number of people are there partaking so no one is being rushed.
- e. Fasting is for today! It is not a tool to force God to comply, but for us to comply with His will.
- f. Have 24 hour prayer vigils on a regular basis, where two or more people are at the church, potentially praying all the time in short sessions so they do not burn out.
- g. Have “Concerts of Prayer,” on a monthly basis and, eventually, on a weekly basis. That is, have a prayer service with directed prayer and silent prayer. Pray for revival, for individuals, for government, for...
- h. Pray where the people are. Public school teachers, you can come to your class early, sit in your student’s seats, and pray for each of them, so each student gets prayed for at least once a week. Pastors and church leaders should do this for those who just attend the worship services as well as for those in the Sunday school classes. This also works for your work and your family; just make sure you do not intrude or violate their privacy!

Pray Specifically! (1 Thessalonians 5:16-25)

The best prayers tend to be targeted to specifics. God is a God of details, He knows them, and He wants you to know them too. Prayer is not when it is convenient or for short periods of time when we can remember; prayer is to be continual and persistent, it is the occupation of your soul. It may start small, but as you pray, it will grow. Your persistence is key (Luke 18:1-7; Acts 9:11; Ephesians 6:18)!

- Keep your relationships in prayer! For individuals, find out (without gossip) their needs and concerns, and then pray. While in prayer, look for opportunities to share (Psalm 17:1-6).

Identify any demonic influences there. These are called “strongholds” and include cults, temples, sin-based businesses such as adult bookstores and sleazy bars, and pray against them (Matthew 12:29; John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 4:27; 6:11-17; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8).

- Satanic strongholds are the devil’s campground to war against the work of God. Satan cannot take any ground that Christ will not allow!
- Find out the problems and needs of your city such as adult bookstores, false religions, poverty, fatherless families, jobs, and corruption. Pray as you walk, pray at home, and pray at your church.
- You can take the strongholds down simply by focused prayer Pray as you walk by them, pray at home, and pray at your church. Strongholds is not a fringed charismatic thing, it is a Biblical precept (Mark 9:28-29; John 8:47; 10:10; Eph 4:27; Revelation 12:10)!!
- Make sure you have confessed your sins and repented before you dare do this! Repentance is essential; after you repent, you can resist the devil. So, be prepared for a backlash to your efforts. Keep up the prayer with your eyes and resolve focused upon Him!

Prayer is the essential key to evangelism; if you are not praying, you are not evangelizing or being used by God very much!

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20 QUESTIONS

Basic discussion starter questions to help you open doors in sharing your faith to others!

Transitions you can use to turn a conversation to spiritual things.

1. People invest time and energy into developing their career, their bodies and relationships, but often neglect the spiritual dimension of their lives. How do you actively pursue spiritual growth?
2. Do you think much about spiritual things? (This usually leads to conversation about what "spiritual" means--i.e. religion vs. relationship.)
3. How has this experience affected the way you look at God?
4. We've never had a chance to talk about your religious background. Where would you say you are in your spiritual pilgrimage?
5. I'd like to tell you how I established a personal relationship with God. (Tell your personal testimony of how you became a Christian. Keep it to three minutes, using the following outline: Before--What characterized my life before I trusted Christ. During--How I came to trust Christ. After--How I am different now.)
6. What is your concept of God? Do you view Him positively or negatively?
7. Have you ever come to a point in your life where you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, or do you think that is something you're still moving toward? May I share with you how I came to that point?
8. Do you find that faith and spiritual values play a role in your (work) (day) (marriage) (perspective on life)?
9. If you could be sure there is a God, would you want to know Him? Or if you could know God personally, would you want to?
10. Bring a friend to your church or a Christian event, then ask:
 - *What did you think of it?*
 - *Did it make sense to you?*
 - *Have you made the wonderful discovery of knowing God personally?*
 - *You'd like to, wouldn't you?*
11. Do you go to church? Why or why not?
12. I'd hate for you to come to my church and not understand what it's all about. Would you want to get together and discuss our basic beliefs?
13. We've been friends for quite some time now, and I've never really talked to you about the most important thing in my life. May I take a few moments and do so?
14. Is church something that has had an influence in your life? Are you at a point now that you want church know if that fits in with what you're looking for?
15. How do you think someone becomes a Christian?

16. Can I share the thing I've found most important to me as a (dad), (mom), (boss)?
17. What do you think about when you go to sleep at night? (If anxiety or guilt rob them of sleep, introduce the peace found in a relationship with Christ).
18. Most people in America say they believe in God. What does believing in God mean to you?
19. Before I came to know Christ personally, God was a vague concept that I could not relate to or grasp. How would you describe your view of God? Jesus? Is He a reality to you or more of a vague concept?
20. If you were to die tonight are you sure you'd go to heaven? Has anyone ever explained how you can know for sure?

From Campus Crusade for Christ © Campus Crusade (These can be modified to tailored to your culture, for help go to link below)

For ideas as to how to actually explain the gospel, see "Tools for the Trade."

<http://www.evangelismtoolbox.com/index.php>

How to lead a person to Christ

Billy Graham / Bill Bright four-step process © Campus Crusade:

Step one: God's purpose, peace, and love. God wants you to experience peace and life abundantly and eternally (Romans 5:1, John 3:16, 10:10).

Step Two: Our problem: Separation. God created us in His own image to have abundant life. He did not make us robots to automatically love and obey Him but gave us the gift of free choice. Hence, we chose to disobey God on our own will, which resulted in our separation (Romans 3:23, 6:23). Our attempts through the ages have failed to bridge the gap (Isaiah 59:2, Proverbs 14:12).

Step Three: God's remedy: The cross. Jesus Christ is the only answer to this problem. He died on the cross, rose from the grave, and paid our penalty (I Timothy 2:5, I Peter 3:18, Romans 5:8).

Step Four: Our Response. To receive Christ, we must trust in Him by personal invitation (Revelation 3:20, John 1:12, Romans 10:9). Then pray with the individual and make sure they receive discipling. And focus on the basics, which include prayer, scripture, devotional life, accountability, and discipleship.

Priorities: We should see a church that is growing in Jesus Christ in three priorities:

First, worship, praise and study (Philippians 3:10).

Second, growing in a relationship with other believers and discipleship (Matthew 5:23, Proverbs 17:17).

Third, reaching our friends, neighbors, and the world (Matthew 28, Genesis 12:1-3).

The Romans Road

The Romans Road is a group of Bible verses from the book of Romans that are used to help people to better understand Salvation, and to lead people to Christ. (Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-10, 10:13)

- **The First thing you have to realize is that YOU ARE a sinner.** - Romans 3:23 states, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."
- **We are ALL sinners.** But, God loves us and He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins.
- **Next realize that God Loves YOU.** Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* There is no greater love than that someone would lay down their life for a friend. That's what Christ did for us.
- **Without Him, you're literally doomed.** Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." Yes, the wages of sin is death, but God has given us the privilege of Eternal life in Christ. It's a gift, you don't have to work for it, just ASK! What a gift!!!
- **Confess your sins....** Romans 10:9-10, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and

are saved" Romans 10:13, "For Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved."

That's all you have to do! (Call on the name of Jesus and ask him into your heart, and you will be saved from the eternal pits of Hell!

THE PRAYER.... If you honestly, in your heart, believe everything that was said here, pray this prayer:

Dear Jesus, I KNOW I am a sinner. I know that you were sent by God to die on the cross, to save me from my sins. I ask you now to forgive me of the sins I have committed, and come into my heart. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. From this day forward, I will follow your will and serve you. AMEN.

If you prayed that Prayer, and believe, welcome to the kingdom of God! We wish you would share this with a friend or family member, and we would love to hear from you.

What Next?

Help and Make sure that person will:

- **Find a Church.** Now you will need to find a church, so you can join the family of God. They will be there to lead you down the path of Christian living. They are not only spiritual guides, but also can be very close friends. They will always be there when you need them.
- **Get a Bible.** A Bible is one of the most important tools for a Christian. I would recommend an NLT (New Living Translation) or the NIV (New International Version). A study Bible is the best. If you would rather read a more literal translation of the Bible, you should get a NASB (New American Standard) or KJV (King James Version).
- **Pray daily.** Praying is another important factor. Pick a time that everyday; you have quiet time to pray everyday. Such as before you go to bed, or when you get up in the morning. See our "Article Drawing Near to the Heart of God" and others on our Discipleship Channel for more information and helps!

Whatever approach you use, never argue or condemn the other person's beliefs. Focus on God's love for the person, Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, His resurrection, and the person's need to make a

commitment to follow Christ. Invite the person to actually pray with you and commit his or her life to Christ.

To order copies of the Four Spiritual Laws booklet, call Campus Crusade Direct at 1-800-729-4351 1-800-873-5222. ChurchLife <http://www.worldchangers.net>.

The Theological Meaning of Saving Faith

Acts 13:38-39; Romans 1:17; 3:31- 5:21; 2 Corinthians 5:13-21; Galatians 2:15- 5:1; Philippians 3:4-14; 1 John 1:9

"Repent and be saved!" This is a phrase we hear so often, but, have you considered its origins? Is this in the Bible? Surprise...NO, it is not! We may say it with genuine good intentions as both ends of this phrase are very Biblical and essential. We need to repent, and we need to be saved. But, this phrase is actually backwards! It should read, "Be saved and then repent!"

Why is that? Repentance is the *result* of the acknowledgment of what Christ has done for us, and not the *cause* of Christ giving grace to us. That is, we do not have anything to do with our salvation other than to accept it and live it by faith. We do not initiate or cause it, or just perchance receive it in some way (Eph. 2:8-9). That would mean that we had worked for our salvation; and, if that were possible, the cross of Christ would have been unnecessary (Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16; 15:1-8)! Something else happened to cause it, and that is what Christ did on our behalf on the cross. His righteousness transfers to us, and then we receive His salvation—we are "saved;" The proof of that receiving is our repentance; we "repent." Our receipt for His purchase of our souls is in our repentance. Repentance does not save us; it is the proof that we have been saved and reconciled. Only Christ saves us (Romans 10:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:16-6:2).

Repentance, in Scripture (Psalm 51; Jer. 23:22; 25:4-5; Zech. 1:3-6; Mark 6:12; Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:1-8; 3:8; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 26:20; Rev. 2: 5-22), means to undergo a complete and great change—a 180 degree turn—that changes our hearts and minds. We turn from sin to Christ. Grace is the gift He gives by His choosing (Election), because God is pure and His decisions are just, far beyond our understanding. Most Christians misunderstand this and say, *because I have repented and prayed a special prayer, I am saved.* Maybe they are, maybe not; it is God who judges. However, this quick prayer is "cheap grace" and is not found in Scripture. (This was actually started by an evangelist named Finney in the late 19th century, who had good intentions but very bad theology.) Yes, repentance is necessary for salvation, and will entail full

confession, restitution, and the will to turn and not burn! But, again, repentance does not cause our salvation! If it did, you would have worked and earned it, nullifying Christ's work on the cross and His grace! Understand that people do respond to evangelism with prayer and with repentance which is genuine. But, remember, it is not of our doing, or our repentance, or even of prayer; it is of Him! Christ alone by faith alone!

In Protestant, Reformed, and Evangelical Theology, faith comes to a person by what is called "Justification by Faith Alone." This was the rallying cry of the Reformation. This was the main point that caused Luther and Calvin to challenge the Catholic Church and its teachings. This is also the cornerstone of protestant theology that Christ, through His work, gave us a "pardon." This pardon is from the penalty of death because of sin, and there is nothing we could ever do to earn this pardon. It is purely by His acceptance of us that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9). There is nothing that we can add to it, such as good works or clean living. Justification means that, much like a blanket, God's righteousness is covering us from His wrath and punishment! It is like getting a speeding ticket, going to court, and having the judge declare you innocent, even though you were speeding. To God, you are clean, covered by "Atonement," which is Christ's righteous covering over our sinful being; this is what Christ has done for you. This creates our reconciliation to God; as we were in perfect relationship to Him before the Fall, we now are, again, in harmony.

God has a righteous basis for our justification, through the sacrifice of His Son for our sins. Grace was not cheap for God. Christ paid a great debt by pleasing God's wrath, both in metaphysical pain and the human pain of the crucifixion (Lev. 16; Psalm 103:12). Our independence is a slap in His face, and He can do nothing in us until it is removed (John 3:5)! Let us pray to be cleansed by the atoning death of our Savior, who bore our punishment and lived out the Law on our behalf.

Some Jews take issue with this, saying it is unbiblical—that God cannot overrule His own Law, sighting Deuteronomy 25:1 and Prov. 17:15. However, they do not realize that Jesus Himself is the righteous One and He lived a perfect life in our place, as a designated hitter in baseball.

The Catholic Church taught that justification was a process, achieved through the Sacraments and church, and that faith, as well as works, contributed to it. The Reformers said this act was done at once at our acceptance of His gift of Grace. The Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation was even "selling indulgences," granting people a spot in Heaven for money, regardless of faith or even the Church. They did this to pay for the cathedrals they were building—and you thought bingo was bad! Although Catholic apologists say this was never an "official act" of the church, nevertheless, history clearly states this was a wide problem.

The Word is cross-cultural and cuts through all languages, people groups and time; it does not need us to make things up or bend it out of shape. It does not need to be diluted or watered down to make it palatable. All you have to do is explain it, in love, with the above precepts of passion, conviction, compassion, clarity, and Truth. The Word is the peg that goes into both the round and the square hole! You do not need to reshape the peg of His Truth. You are to know the culture of others and be relevant, but love that is real, along with the Gospel, needs no modifying. Essential doctrine is crucial because we are proclaiming God, and God is a God of Truth! We are His ambassadors; we are never to misrepresent Him!

We are to do our best to witness, pray, evangelize, do missions, and put forth every effort we can to expedite His Word. And, as a Christian saved by His grace, we have to remember that we still need to repent, even though He paid it all, because we love Him and want to obey His decree.

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For more insights visit our [Evangelism](#) Channel on our website!

Biblical Studies on the How and the Why of Evangelism

We are going to look at two principle passages in Scripture that tell us why we are too and how we should evangelize: One is Romans 10 that tells us why evangelism is important and Matthew 10 that tells how to do evangelism.

Why we should do it: We are to Evangelize because God calls us to!

Romans 10:5-21

This is a great passage for all those who do evangelism! (Actually we all are called to do it, yet so few do because so few respond!!!) Paul with all of his passion, love, and zeal bats a near zero with witnessing to the Jews. So when you are discouraged and find so few people responding to your efforts to witness,

remember Paul himself did not do so well at times, especially with his own people. So be encouraged and continue in obedience, keep your feet beautiful!

Jews over the years have not only turned their back on the gospel, but on their own faith as well. They have become agnostic, antagonistic, and bitter, holding onto their culture while rejecting truth and faith. They hide behind their ancestor's faith and persecution as an excuse to "pew-sit" and do nothing.

- As people who are called to make Christ known, we must identify with God and what He had to do with His Son. We must also be aware of our witness and how we are characterized by others. Our integrity and character is the most important thing we offer to a non-Christian!
- The true believer is the one who bases all their life, "IT ALL", upon Christ, with full trust and assurance by faith and obedience. There is a big difference between "self-imposed" righteousness and obedience to righteousness (Ex. 20:1-17; Duet. 30:1-6; Lev. 18:2).
- God desires us to have "Beautiful Feet" to bring the Good News (Isa. 52:7). This is why (vs. 14-15) we send our missionaries and evangelists from our churches. These are the further marching orders from Matthew 28: 19-20, to evangelize and disciple, yet so few Christians ever do it, so few churches do it! What an extreme insult we must be to ignore His call!
- "General Revelation" (Psalm 19:1-4; Rom. 1) means that God reveals Himself through creation, thus people have no excuse not to know Him. His moral character and duty is in all human kind, even without knowing Scripture. ("Special Revelation" is the Word of God.) Thus, we are truly blessed to have such an abundance of both revelations!
- Remember it is not our efforts that save, but it is our responsibility to preach and witness, regardless of results. Christ Himself is the true preacher and witness (John 10:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 2:15-7).
- This point is so important to understand, when we do not, we get depressed and give up: We are not responsible for results; we are only responsible for obedience. That is we are called to tell others about Christ but we are not responsible how they respond or reject us. Because they are rejecting Christ. We are only called to preach and disciple. We cannot convert anyone, that is the role of the Holy Spirit. He uses our voices and words, but only He can change a person's soul. We must obey by being His voice and words! If you ever feel discouraged in praying and witnessing with no results, remember Paul and Jesus. Keep it up, keep your feet beautiful!
- People reject God because of misunderstandings about righteousness (Rom. 6:14; 8:4; Gal. 3:24; Col.2:14), as did Israel. They did not understand what

God really required (Joel 2:32; Mica 6:8; Acts 2:21). Be aware we have no excuse (Duet. 32:21; Isa. 65:1) not to know Him or to make Him known and evangelize. We will be judged regardless of understanding or beliefs.

- Remember your efforts are never a waist of time. It may take years for the message God uses you to covey to hit someone so they respond. Real evangelism takes consistency and time.
- Misunderstandings are mostly the fault of the hearer; the one who receives has the responsibility to receive the message. We still must make every effort to make our words and deeds clear and contagious.
- Never just rest your faith in a simple sinner's prayer and nothing else. Christ's grace gets us the admission to the club of eternity, but what good is the club if we never use it. That is why discipleship is essential! Our faith and practice must be real, so use the club, but do not just rely on its privileges!

Questions

1. Have you ever purchased a gift for yourself? If so, what is more exciting to you; to give your own gift to yourself, or receive it from another person? Did you know the greatest gift you could ever give someone is the knowledge of who Jesus is and what He can do for them!
2. Tell us a story of one of your witnessing efforts?
3. Have you felt discouraged by telling others about Jesus and received little response?
4. Has your passion and zeal for witnessing grown or diminished over the years? What were the reasons?
5. What can you do to re-ignite your passion for the lost?
6. Why would someone who is a Christian refuse to share their gift of salvation by telling others?
7. What causes bitterness in people? How does bitterness come into play when you witness?
8. When some one is antagonistic to you because of your faith, how do you: Feel? React and respond? How should you?
9. Let say you live in a country that is non-Christian, and even against the law to be a Christian, how would you hold onto your faith and reliance upon the Lord? How would you witness? What would you do if you are persecuted?

10. What are the distinctions, character and personality of a Christian who bases all their life, "IT ALL," upon Christ, with full trust and assurance by faith and obedience? What will this do to your evangelism efforts?
11. How would you define "self-imposed" righteousness? How would you define obedience to righteousness?
12. How do we get to be righteous? What is the key ingredient?
13. Some Jews, as well as people in general, do not feel they have the need for Christ so what can you do to show them the Light?
14. If you and your family have been a Jew all of your lives for many generations, how do you think you would respond to Christ?
15. If you were able to change, and Paul the "chief sinner" was able to change, how can this give you hope for others and perseverance to be a good witness?
16. Christians receive the gift of grace, but do not give the gift to ourselves. How does this make you feel that you cannot earn or buy God's most precious gift?
17. What has your church done or could do to cause our Lord to weep?
18. God desires us to have "Beautiful Feet" to bring the good news! What can you do to keep your feet beautiful?
19. Evangelizing and discipleing are the main goals (Matt. 28:19-20) of the church and what Christ has called us to do and be. In what ways do you and your church do this? How can you do it better?
20. From your experience what are some of the misunderstandings about Christ that causes people reject Christ?
21. Despite Paul's passion, and the willingness of God to gather His chicks, Israel rejected God anyway. Why did Paul keep it up?
22. Given the fact we are not responsible for the results of evangelism, how can this keep the fire lit under you with perseverance and zeal?
23. How can you keep yourself and others from being discouraged from witnessing or obeying Christ when it is hard to do?

24. Take a close look at verses 9-13, what can you do with them? That is who in your life, at work, school, at the shoe store or wherever has not confessed these words; how can you bring these most precious words to them?

25. Make a commitment to memorize verses 9 – 10!

How we should do it: The Greatest Evangelistic Plan is the one Christ Gave!

Matthew 10: 5-15:

This passage gives us the blueprint for missions and evangelism. This mission was in preparation for "The Great Commission" to come, in which His apostles were called to make disciples of all the peoples of the world. The pattern was to present Christ to their own people (Matt. 10:5-15), then to others, and, finally, to the entire world, including rulers and kings (Matt. 10:18; 28:18-20).

Jesus called His twelve Disciples to venture out and put into practice all that He had taught them. This was their first great mission, and the testing ground for learning, growth, and the practicing of their faith. They were going from the classroom to the field, taking a chance by being without the usual necessities one would normally take on such a journey. Jesus gave them the empowerment, along with key instructions to stay away from certain people groups (This was before the call to go to all peoples in Matt. 28!), to shake the dust off their feet if the people did not listen, and not to pay for anything. All were contrary to what is normally done during a journey and sojourn. They were sent out as commissioned representatives of Christ, just as their title, *Apostle*, means. They had to learn first-hand what it meant to be an Apostle, and what it meant to follow Christ. However, the way they learned to follow Him did not mean just picking up and following. They had to put into practice what they had learned, and then do it. Follow? Yes. But, also do as He instructed.

- Jesus calls us to the *Lost sheep* the people who have lost their way, as in sheep that are lost from their master. God is their Master, and they have strayed from Him. Jesus comes, as the Good Shepherd, to rescue His lost sheep. This was a common OT theme, and referred to people as dumb sheep that go astray very easily, as a lot of real sheep and people do (Isa. 53:6; Jer. 50:6; Ezek. 34:5).
- *Go first to the lost sheep of Israel:* This meant the message of God's redemption was to go first to Israel. Israel's responsibility then was to proclaim it to the Gentiles, which they did not do very well (Gen. 12:1-3; Amos 3:2). Jesus is not discounting the Gentiles, as He already responds to them (Matt. 8:10). Rather, He means that the "heirs to the Kingdom" are to be first.

Later, in this passage, Jesus calls His disciples--and us--to reach the Gentiles.

- *As you go:* The Apostles, (meaning *sent ones*), were modeling what Jesus had done Himself, and was instructing them to do. This mission was from practical, hands-on learning, to tactical seeing it done, being told all the “ins and outs,” and then being commissioned to do it on their own. Evangelism takes time and practice. You will not always win, especially when you first start out. Have patience and try to see people as Christ sees them!
- This mission was in the parameters of what the Master had instructed. It was not, “See if it works, and let me know.” Rather, it was putting faith to practice, regardless of response, or how one was treated. Our reverence is to be to God, regardless of what others think of us (Phil. 2:12).
- We, as Christians, are responsible to proclaim Christ as Lord with whatever means are at our disposal, using our gifts and abilities. But, we are not responsible for how or why people respond to us. It is not our responsibility that they convert, believe, or act in a certain way. We are only responsible for acting in His character and proclaiming His name (Gal. 1:10).
- Many times, when Christians see that people do not respond as expected, they quit almost as soon as they start. Too many give up too soon, thinking no one is listening or even cares. Truly, most will not listen or care, but that is not our problem. We must break away from the feelings of personal rejection. This will be difficult, but we must do so in order to be effective for the Kingdom.
- The instructions were that they were to travel light, and be totally committed to the mission, as Elijah and John the Baptist had been. *Preach, heal, cleanse, and raise:* The Disciples were empowered by Christ to perform miracles, as we read in chapters eight through nine.
- The Disciples were empowered to freely give the message of the Gospel without any compensation. To *peddle the Gospel*, as to charge money for people to hear it, is a grave insult to God. God will sustain those in His service.
- *Having one cloak* meant to not show off wealth or to put off the peasants to whom they were preaching. Also, they were to trust in God to provide, and not to take comfort in personal possessions. If we become tied down with possessions and worldly concerns, we will miss His call for our participation in His mission. Wealth is not wrong in and of itself; when it distracts you from His call, it becomes a hindrance, and sometimes, even evil.

- God is our provider. We have to realize that when we walk in Him and follow His mission, we need not fear or worry.
- *Shake off the dust* was a symbol of contempt and piety. A righteous Jew would not allow himself to be contaminated by pagan dust and dirt. Jesus uses this phrase to demonstrate that one should treat unresponsive and unsupportive people as pagans, and as unworthy (Matt. 7:6; Acts 13:42-46). This is an indication that the Gospel is real, and if you do not receive it you will be shaken off in contempt and judgment (Acts 13:51).

This passage has some valuable insights for us today. God will not call us where He will not equip us. Therefore, we can go without fear. If He provides, we are doing right. If not, we need to inquire as to why. This passage also prepares us to not be in shock when strangers and even family friends no longer accept us, because of Christ. We must be prepared as Jesus prepared His Disciples. We are to go first to the people we know. Then, as we get better, we go to others; and finally to those with whom we may be uncomfortable (Matt. 16:15). If they show no interest, we are to leave them alone while we keep them in prayer for a better time, and for the Spirit to open their hearts. We are not to be nuisances or obtuse to others--even those who are "unworthy."

Questions:

1. If you were to go on a short-term mission's trip, what fears would you have? If you have been on one what fears did you have? How do you feel about those fears now?
2. What have you done in your life that required you to venture out and put into practice all that you have been taught in school, church, or work?
3. How do you think the Disciples felt as they ventured out for the first time to practice their faith?
4. What comes into your mind when you see the phrase, *follow Me* (Christ)?
5. Did Jesus put limits in this mission? If so, what were they, and why?
6. In the practice of your faith, did you ever feel you had to avoid someone or something?
7. Jesus comes as the good Shepherd to rescue His lost sheep. How are you, or could you, be comforted with this truth?
8. What are you are focused on? Is it money, job, family, hobbies, food? How is your focus related to God's focus?

9. Why did Jesus tell His Disciples to go to the Jews first?
10. When you are putting your faith into practice, how do you feel when people reject you or treat you badly?
11. Paul was viciously and personally attacked, and for what? For spreading the true Gospel. Read how he responds in Gal. 1:10. How can you be further empowered to serve and witness, knowing that you are not responsible for how and why people respond to you?
12. What holds you back from embracing God's call to you?
13. How much does fear affect your motivation to be involved in a ministry?
14. If we become tied down with possessions and worldly concerns, we will miss His call to participate in the mission He has for us. What are your thoughts on this?
15. How can a Christian balance wealth with their call? When do wealth, possessions, jobs, or money (if you think you are not wealthy, think again-- especially if you live in the US, where the poorest of the poor live five percent above the rest of the world) become hindrances, and even evil to what Christ calls us to do?
16. When you do outreach, most people will not listen or care; but that is not your problem. What can you do to break away from feeling rejection, knowing that it will be difficult not take it personally, in order to be effective for the Kingdom?
17. How can this passage prepare you not to be in shock when strangers and family friends no longer accept you, because of Christ?
18. If people show no interest towards the Gospel, you are to keep prying. How can you do this without being a nuisance or obtuse to others?
19. What is your church doing now about evangelism?
20. What should your church be doing now about evangelism? What are you going to do about it?

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