

EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, and MISSIONS

A Biblical Study in Sharing the Gospel

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INTRODUCTION: A Doctrinal Foundation

- During the first year of my conversion I was discipled and trained to be aggressive in evangelism outreach.
- It is an awesome privilege to be an ambassador of Christ.
- The fear of man and carnal timidity cause many believers to be unfruitful for long periods of time.
- 200,000 people die every day who have never heard the gospel.
- Who will share the gospel with the lost, and pray for the unsaved if Christians remain silent?
- Do you share your faith regularly? Do you have a burden for souls to be saved?

1. THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.”

Mark 16:15: “And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Luke 24:46-49: “Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Matthew 4:19: “Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

2. PERSONAL EVANGELISM

- Personal evangelism is a command, not an option.

Romans 10:14-15: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Romans 10:16-18: “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: “Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

Proverbs 11:30: “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”

Daniel 12:3: “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”

James 5:19-20: “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

- The Apostle Paul’s example.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.”

- The Example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 1:15-17: “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

John 4:33-38: “Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

3. DISCIPLESHIP

Matt.28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”

2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

1 Thessalonians 2:18-20: “Therefore we wanted to come to you — even I, Paul, time and again — but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.”

Philippians 2:16-18: “...holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. 17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.”

1 Corinthians 3:5-15: “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

- Many Christians want to share the gospel but feel awkward in talking with others about Christ, or don't know how to initiate a conversation, or they simply don't know what to do. This causes frustration and discouragement.
- Nevertheless, the bible teaches that it is the responsibility of every Christian to share the gospel with the lost.
- However, there are many hindrances preventing believers from *consistently* sharing the gospel:
 - A lack of knowing the gospel or the plan of salvation.
 - Being distracted by the cares of this world.
 - Spiritual weakness.

- A sense of being defeated (defeatism).
 - A busy schedule.
 - A guilty conscience.
 - Lukewarmness.
- And then among some churches there's the problem of fatalism which distorts the meaning of the great commission by rationalism. Some believers say, "God will save the elect, regardless of what I do or don't do, so why bother sharing the gospel with them."
 - But this is pure rationalism, and it usurps the teaching and commands of God who ordained and commissioned believers to be the instrument of bringing the gospel to the lost.

Rom.10:1: "And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Jn.15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain..."

- *But the atoning death of Christ provides grace to overcome these snares so that we can be faithful and fruitful witnesses of Jesus Christ!*

Heb.10:19-22: "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Heb.9:13-14: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

- What is the gospel?

The gospel is the "good news" of salvation by Jesus Christ alone, who obtained the salvation of sinners by His atoning and substitutionary death on the cross. This salvation is a free gift that is obtained by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ.

1 Cor.15:3-5: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures..."

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM:

1. Be Deliberate in Sharing the Gospel.

- Evangelism doesn't happen by osmosis or coincidence - it's not a backup plan when other methods fail. It says of Jesus that, "he had to go through Samaria" (Jn.4:4). Jews would circumvent the entire area, however, Jesus intentionally went to Samaria and encountered the Samaritan woman, who became a believer (John 4:39-42). Apparently, the reason Jesus traveled through Samaria was to preach the gospel to the Samaritans.
- We must be more than deliberate, we must be proactive (plan, creative, using skills and experience)

2. Be Spirit-Led.

- The Book of Acts might be titled, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." From the very beginning (Acts 1:8) the Holy Spirit enabled the Church to be effective witnesses throughout the world.
- The Holy Spirit called missionaries (Acts 13:1-3).
- The Holy Spirit directed Philip to share the gospel with the Ethiopian Eunuch, and directed Peter to evangelize Cornelius and his household.
- The Holy Spirit provides boldness to share the gospel (Acts 4:31).

3. Be Mindful of the Culture.

- The Apostles knew about the value of culture in communicating of the gospel. For example, in Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill he told the Athenians that they were very religious people (Acts 17:22). He then related to them by quoting from their own poets (Acts 17:28-29). In his defense before Agrippa, Paul made certain to conduct himself appropriately as any proper orator would have before a statesman by stretching out his hand before proceeding to speak (Acts 26:1). Being aware of the culture allowed the apostles to connect with their audiences and gain a hearing.
- California has a different culture than Kentucky or New York in many ways.
- Nigeria is completely different than America and we need to keep this in mind when we share the gospel.

4. Don't Force It.

- Be bold, courageous, and aggressive but not obnoxious.
- Pray for an opportunity.
- Wait for an opportunity.
- Be natural.
- Be led by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit.

5. Be Flexible in Your Methods and Presentation of the Gospel.

- Closely related the value of culture, is that the methods and presentation of the Apostles varied from situation to situation. Jesus didn't speak to Zacchaeus as he did to Nicodemus. Paul didn't present himself in the same way to Agrippa as he did to Lydia (Acts 16). Jesus' encounter with the demon possessed man required a different approach than when He engaged the Samaritan woman.
- Although the gospel message didn't change (Acts 20:21), the contexts required different methods of relating to people and communicating with them.
- Use biblical methods, and reject the notion that "the ends justify the means."

1 Cor.9:19-23: "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."

6. Relate to people where they are in their spiritual journeys.

- The needs and problems of the people provide evangelistic opportunities. Nicodemus believed that he was entitled to heaven because he was Jewish. But recognizing his need Jesus took the opportunity to explain that he needed to be "born again" (John 3:3). The Samaritan woman was not concerned with her heritage; rather, she was concerned with getting water from a well. Jesus used her need of physical water as an opportunity to address her need of "living water" (John 4:10). Philip didn't speak to the Ethiopian Eunuch about Adam and Eve, but in answer to his questions about Isaiah 53, took the opportunity to present the gospel (Acts 8:35).

7. Speak the truth in love.

- There is the bad example of street preachers who are condemnatory, use sarcasm, name calling and insults to gain attention.
- Don't be legalistic, moralistic, and present a works oriented message.
- Be bold but loving in your tone and demeanor. Use yourself an example rather than pointing out the faults of your hearers.

8. Follow Up.

- Although evangelism is the first step of the Great Commission, it does not end here. The great commission includes the command to make disciples.

Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”

- Follow up is essential to making disciples.
- Too often believer’s neglect to follow up with people after witnessing to them. Many of them would be interested in bible studies and regular meetings to study the word of God and become discipled.

9. Contact people socially.

- Don’t confuse separation with isolation.
- We must be separate, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:17) - but this doesn’t mean we isolate ourselves.

John 17:15: “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.”

- We must have social contact or we will have to go out of the world.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11: “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.”

- Withdrawing ourselves from unsaved people is contrary to the will of the Lord!
- It was important for Jesus to go through Samaria (Jn.4:1-6). Many Jews, because of their disdain for Samaritans, avoided Samaria but Jesus and His disciples chose to pass through Samaria, assuring contact.
- Most people won’t come to us. If people don’t come to us, we must go to the people. The great commission says, “GO”.

10. Opportunities for social contact.

- At school with fellow students. Don't think you're too young to share the gospel.
 - Young Christians often have the greatest opportunities to teach others.
- At work with fellow employees or employers.
 - We spend much of our life with co-workers.
 - We have the greatest potential to influence them, especially by example.

- At home with neighbors, friends, and family
 - Do we even know our neighbors?
 - People who are closest to us can be difficult sometimes, but are reachable.
 - Remember, Jesus **said**:
Mk.16:15: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

11. Establish a common interest.

- A common interest creates a bridge.
- Realize the need to build a rapport.
- Meaningful dialogue is not easy, especially involving spiritual matters, but common interests allows opportunity for meaningful discussion and the introduction of the gospel.
- Once a bridge for communication has been established, it will be easier to share the gospel.
 - There are many common interests:
 1. They include **family** (such as children, grandchildren)
 2. **Activities** (such as work, community projects, hobbies)
 3. **Shared experiences** (such as travel, or even tragedies)
 - Don't feel that you must immediately begin talking about spiritual matters. Take time to nurture common interests. Yet at some point you want to reach the next stage, which leads to:

12. Arouse spiritual interest.

1. Through Your Actions.

- By an example.
- By showing kindness and compassion to all, even to wicked people.
- By not harboring racial or social prejudices against those who are different.

2. Through Your Words.

- We can raise questions or make statements that shift conversations to spiritual matters.
- E.g., "Why do you think our world is in such a mess?"
- E.g., "Would you be interested in what the Bible says about...?"
- The discussion should first involve matters of common agreement.
- Start with things in which you agree, building rapport and instilling confidence.

13. Don't go too far too fast.

- Give a person what they are ready for.
 - Sometimes people don't realize what they need first.
 - They talk about a particular subject, but they really need something else first.
- Some Examples:

- Some want to study Revelation, when they need to study the gospel of John.
- Some want to discuss issues related to church organization, work, worship, etc., when they ought to focus on the first on the gospel.
- It is important that we give people the “milk” of the word and not have them choke on the "meat" of the word.

1 Cor.3:2: “I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able...”

14. Don't condemn.

- The Example of Jesus.

John 8:10-11: “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

- In our evangelistic efforts, though we preach against sin, our primary purpose is to save. – (1Cor. 5:12-13). Use your own example as a sinner and your own conversion as examples.

15. Stick with the main issue.

- Don't get sidetracked into issues that cause disagreement and arguments.
- Don't portray a judgmental and opinionated attitude.
- Don't gossip.

16. Remain steadfast to your objectives.

- If seeking to establish common ground of agreement, avoid jumping ahead.
- As you move from common to uncommon ground:
 - Take one step at a time.
 - Don't go on to the next step until agreement at each step has occurred.
 - If your objective is simply to obtain consent for a home Bible study, avoid getting into a detailed discussion at that time.

Proverbs 15:28: “The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.”

17. Expect opposition and rejection.

1 Cor.4:12-16: “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with

exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter."

Matt.10:34-36: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; ³⁶ and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household."

For more information on evangelism and missions contact us at:

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