

Sharing Your Faith in Jesus

Kalahikiola Church

Mark Blair

May 2023

Determining Your Personal Outreach Temperature:

1. Apathy or Even Hostility
2. Growing Awareness of People in Need
3. Change of Heart for Others
4. Praying for Others, especially their Salvation
5. Growing Relationships with non-Christians
6. Commitment to Share the Word of Christ
7. Natural opportunities to Share Jesus
8. Intentional Gospel conversations
9. Inviting people to be with other Christians
10. People hearing the Gospel message

How to Have a Conversation: Basic Principles / What Would You Say?

<https://whatwouldyousay.org/how-to-have-a-conversation-basic-principles/>

A generation ago in the USA most people believed in a personal God, an afterlife, moral absolutes, the reality of their sin, and had a basic respect for the Bible.

Christians routinely assumed the existence of these concepts (or “dots”), and evangelism was mainly connecting the dots to show them their personal need for Jesus.

Christianity and religion in general is no longer accepted as a good influence in society or in individual lives. Church for many is unacceptable, even offensive. Media often connects Christianity with conservative politicians, anti-LGBT and abortion, and anti-science. From history Christians are blamed for slavery, religious wars, and the Holocaust.

Studies show that the more people use social media, the less they are able to empathize, or put themselves in another’s shoes, and the more unable they are to talk face to face with anyone who disagrees with them.

Many Christians live on a different planet from main-stream USA. Talking about faith now entails working to establish basic concepts before Jesus’s gift of salvation can have any meaning.

Doing evangelism today will take more patience, courage, and thoughtfulness than was needed a generation ago. And yet there is no substitute. Jesus told his disciples: “You will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8)

Rise of the “nones”—people who check the box for “none” on surveys of religious affiliation.

2007 - 16 % Americans, affiliated w/ no religion

2013 Harris: 23 % No Religious Affiliation

2015 Pew: 35 % millennials (born after 1980)

2020 Pew Forum: “nones” –26 % of Americans

2020 Pew Research: 64% Americans Christians
(1950 the number of Christians was 90%)

Nones = Not anti-religious, anti-church, anti-Christian, anti-spiritual, many very open to faith discussion, and the possibility of conversion > but they see no purpose or connection to organized church: waste of time, don't know people, no need, busy...

Honor Christ as Lord



Make a Defense

Gentleness & Respect

42

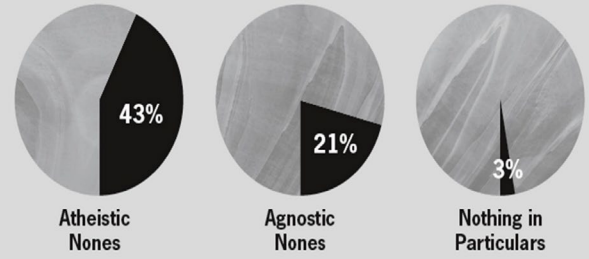
“But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” 1 Peter 3.14-16

Unchurched views toward the Christian faith



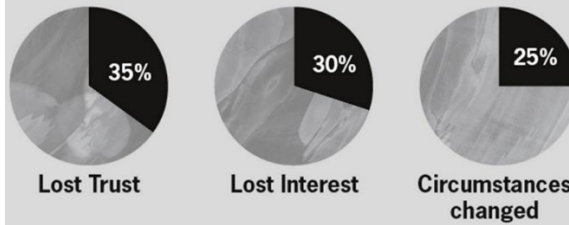
Source: "Unchurched Report," Billy Graham Center Institute and Lifeway Research, April 24, 2019, www.billygrahamcenter.com/youfoundme/research

Nones who think that the Christian faith is harmful to society



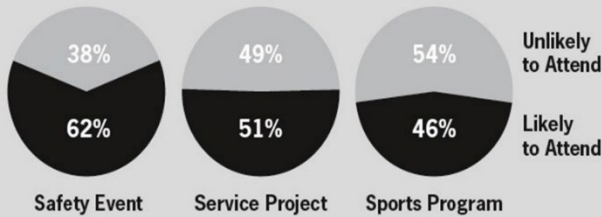
Source: This data comes from additional analysis conducted by the Billy Graham Center Institute on the data from the Unchurched Study

Top three reasons unchurched have stopped attending church



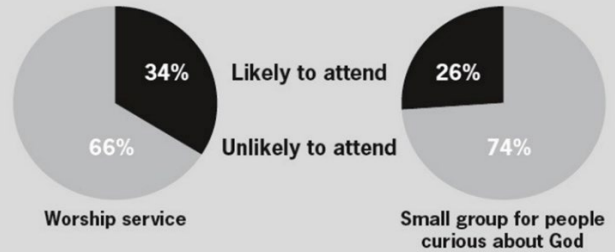
Source: "Unchurched Report," Billy Graham Center Institute and Lifeway Research, April 24, 2019, www.billygrahamcenter.com/youfoundme/research. This percentage was determined from a factor analysis conducted by the Billy Graham Center Institute, which identified these groupings of reasons.

Unchurched likelihood to attend church-sponsored events



Source: "Unchurched Report," Billy Graham Center Institute and Lifeway Research, April 24, 2019, www.billygrahamcenter.com/youfoundme/research

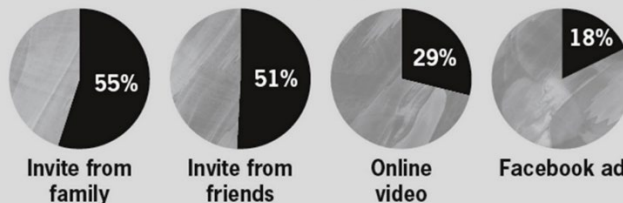
Unchurched likelihood to attend church-sponsored events



Source: "Unchurched Report," Billy Graham Center Institute and Lifeway Research, April 24, 2019, www.billygrahamcenter.com/youfoundme/research

Unchurched response to "How effective would invitations to church be through the following methods?"

Effective and very effective.



Source: "Unchurched Report," Billy Graham Center Institute and Lifeway Research, April 24, 2019, www.billygrahamcenter.com/youfoundme/research

Remember the woman of Samaria who met Jesus:

“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony”
John 4.39

She had no training, but Jesus changed her with mercy, now she didn’t care what people thought. “Come,” she said, “See a man who knows all my junk, yet loves me!”

Lord, change our hearts so that we have a love for our sorrowing, perishing friends that will fuel our bold yet humble witness to the grace that can only be found in Jesus. Amen.

Adapted from “How to Be More Public with Your Faith” by Tim Keller
FEBRUARY 26, 2019 | Gospel Coalition

Week 2

Jesus' Last Words should be our First Priority:

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28.18-20

"...repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" Luke 24.47,48

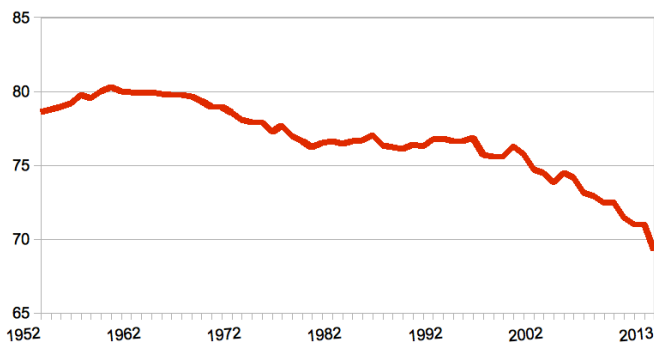
Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." John 20.21

" you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1.8

Old Model – Bringing Home the Wanderers

Back in the day we talked about Jesus to people with the same basic cultural awareness – who had some idea about Bible, fear of God, acknowledgment of judgment, heaven and hell. The focus of evangelism was to bring them back to God & church.

The Great Decline:
Religiosity in the United States (1952-2013)



Graph by Corner of Church & State, an RNS blog
Source: Aggregate Religiosity Index, updated from Grant, *Sociological Spectrum* 2008

Challenge Today – Meaningfully Connecting

Immigration patterns, cultural diversity, secular media and education, Biblical illiteracy, anti-authority

People easily offended – not interested in rules, judgment, cancel culture, 'unfriending'

Ignorant of covenant, sacrifice, temple,

atonement, resurrection, justification, sanctification

Words that mean other things – faith, spiritual, truth, salvation, forgiveness, peace, eternity

Having 'sins' forgiven, heaven, being with God – not relevant or interesting to many

Joe Wong: Do you Know Jesus Christ?

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CrwJNjA2Xr/?igshid=NjZiM2M3MzlxNA%3D%3D>

Two Biggest Fears Unchurched People Have in Conversations with Christians

- Fear of being judged
- Fear of being expected to be something they are not

Evangelism is NOT –

- Filling the pews of the church
- An occasional raid by a visiting celebrity
- Pleading passionately for making a decision
- ‘Downloading’ a message into brains
- Exclusive work of salaried clergy
- Only words or only deeds
- Individualistic, me and Jesus only
- Optional

What is Evangelism?

‘evangel’ = (Greek): Gospel, ‘good news’

‘evangelist’ / person who tells Gospel

‘evangelize’ / To Proclaim Gospel – activity of telling the Good News

‘evangelism’ / what happens when someone tells the Gospel / God saving his people

Essence of evangelism is the message, and the event of communicating the message.

Evangelism is defined by the message > NOT by method (preaching, singing, acting) nor medium (person, book, song, video) , nor occasion (church, camp, coffee) , nor audience (believer, unbeliever)

1. Gospel is the story of Jesus Christ: who He is, what He has done
2. Our access to the gospel is through the Scriptures
3. The gospel demands a response of repentance and faith
4. The gospel is for both believers and unbelievers

“one beggar telling another where to get bread” Charles Spurgeon

“spilling over with joy in Jesus” Michael Green

“taking a good look at Jesus Christ and then telling someone what you sees”
Lorne Sanny

“that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ”
1 John 1.3

“There is no true evangelism if the name, the teaching, the promises, the life, the death, the resurrection, the kingdom, and the mystery of Jesus Christ the Son of God is not proclaimed”
Pope Paul VI

“To evangelize is to so present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church.”
William Temple

“Successful evangelism is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God”
Dick Kauffman

Office of Evangelist: Held by Few - Ephesians 4.11, Acts 21.8, Romans 1.15

Gift of Evangelism: Given to Some – Acts 3.3-6, 4.13, 24.24,25, 26.27-29

Responsibility to Evangelize: Duty of All – Acts 1.8, Matthew 28.19, 2 Timothy 4.5

**How to Have a Conversation: Engaging Controversial Topics
What Would You Say? - Greg Kokul of “Stand to Reason”**

<https://whatwouldyousay.org/how-to-have-a-conversation-engaging-controversial-topics/>

Three Opportunities to Share the Faith

Public Talk

90-100% talking
0-10% listening
0-10% personal life
logical, linear, orderly
One-off monologue

Stranger on a Plane

50% talking
50% listening
20-30% personal life
back and forth
one-off conversation

Friends & Family

0-10% talking
90-100% listening
90-100% personal
organic, scattered
Many chances

FARMING

Select the field
Prepare the ground
Sow the Seed
Water and cultivate
Harvest the fruit
Conserve

EVANGELISM

Find a person
Pray for the person
Present the Gospel
Friendship and Help
Receive Jesus
Discipleship

“Sharing Jesus can’t just be a dump truck of information...a good conversationalist—a good friend—mostly listens. Of course, we need to speak and make appeals for the gospel. But listening and hearing people out—in a culture where people feel like they have to get their points out before they get cut off—can plow the ground for gospel conversation. Careful listening helps a Christian understand the worldview of their non-Christian friend, allows them to love that person with their time and attention, and lets them press back on weaknesses and inconsistencies...You might not know much about where [a nonbeliever] is coming from. That’s why you start asking questions. Ask about their beliefs, their struggles. Start inside of their view...the gospel drives us to, this others-centered view...it’s incarnational”

Joshua Chatraw, *Apologetics at the Cross*

Before non-Christians convert, they must want to believe. They will often think, *Isn’t this beautiful? Wouldn’t it be great if this were true? I wish this were true.* Then we have the privilege and responsibility to show them from Scripture and life that Jesus is indeed beautiful, great, and true!

“Ask and You Shall Evangelize” | NOVEMBER 14, 2018 | Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra | Gospel Coalition <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/ask-shall-evangelize/>

Chris Pratt: 9 Rules for Life - 2018 MTV Movie & TV Awards

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EihqXHqxri0>

3 Ways to Share the Good News like It's Actually Good

Though we've experienced the power of the gospel and know it to be good news, we often tell it as if it's mediocre... a good story made boring by repetition.

We may also neutralize the power of the story by downplaying its most alarming details. An innocent man who died so we don't have to? A murdered man whose heart started beating again?

When we forget the freshness of the message, what's meant to be vibrant can seem blasé. We shouldn't be surprised when no one says, "Tell me more about that."

Here are 3 ways to communicate the "old story" in high-definition color.

1. Reclaim Personal Wonder

Recounting the gospel story blandly should make us consider whether our hearts have been recently jolted by its impact. When we store mediocre things in our hearts, mediocre words spill out our mouths. Because we have a responsibility to be gospel storytellers, we have a responsibility to cultivate hearts amazed by grace....our excitement will spill out as we talk, and we'll recount the elements with freshness rather than formula...Personal wonder also equips us to tell the story more powerfully, with owned insight rather than borrowed phrases. It will compel us to rehearse the story and its implications in our individual voices, leveraging the minds, personalities, and perspectives God has entrusted to us.

2. Tell a Specific Gospel

We have the opportunity to minister the gospel whenever we encounter a specific sin, a specific shame, or a specific death. When a vivacious young woman from our former student ministry committed suicide, our family and community were devastated. We wrestled profoundly with the darkness of her death. What a comfort it was to be able to say to our fellow mourners, "Jesus came for this severe darkness. When he stepped out of the grave, he conquered even this."

As we consider the love and power exhibited through Jesus's physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, we discover his death and resurrection are undeniably personal. The gospel is the answer to our pain, not just in a general singsongy way, but with italics: "Jesus loves me, this I know."

To the teenager wrestling with the shame of her past, we can say: “Jesus conquered this.” To the coworker burdened by the weight of sin: “Jesus died to redeem this.” To the mourning parents: “Jesus wept because death is this dark, yet he stepped fully into the darkness and demonstrated ultimate victory—over even this.”

3. Invite as a Fellow Guest

The unique beauty of the gospel story is that it places its tellers on level ground with its hearers. In a world eager to fix the broken, we abandon solution-prescription and instead present ourselves as needy, too. We invite others into the same rest and surrender we ourselves need—and have found in Christ. This is a welcome embrace to a world weary from mantras of self-improvement.

When we tell the gospel story, we have the gift of casting both ourselves and also our hearers in the shared role of the sinner. Forever and always, God is the only one who gets to be perfect in the narrative. Our common place makes the gospel different from all other stories. None of us is beyond our need for it.

The gospel story is not simply black letters on white paper. It is vibrant and neon. It provokes wonder in hearts, can be applied from a thousand angles, and invites hearers into the rest for which they truly long. May we glorify God by embracing our role as storytellers, sharing in full color what he has done.

3 Ways to Share the Good News like It’s Actually Good

JANUARY 25, 2019 | Caroline Saunders

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/three-ways-share-good-news-like-actually-good/>

Week 3

2012 LifeWay Survey: 2,930 American adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more -

80% Believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith

75% Comfortable in their ability to effectively communicate the gospel

12 % Not comfortable telling others about their faith.

61% Not told another person about how to become a Christian in the previous six months.

How many times have you personally invited an unchurched person to attend a church service or some other program at your church?

48 % Church Attendees responded, “zero”

33% 1 or 2 times

19 % 3 or more occasions in the last six months

21% Pray outside of church worship services every day for people they know who are not professing Christians

26% Pray a few times a week.

20 % Rarely or never pray for the spiritual status of others.

http://tdatool.lifeway.com/mpages/page/17?lang=en_US#:~:text=The%20study%20conducted%20by%20LifeWay%20Research%20found%2080,become%20a%20Christian%20in%20the%20previous%20six%20months.

Did I do a Good Job? – Caitlyn (Bruce) Jenner

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/Crik8-gs8wX/?igshid=MmJiY2I4NDBkZg%3D%3D>

What is Legalism?

1. Legalism Promotes unbiblical standards (self-authority)

Legalism believes we can earn or keep God's favor by what we do. It may be what you eat or drink, what you do on Sundays, what you wear, music you listen to, whether you have piercings or tattoos, home school or not, or whatever. Legalism takes things that cannot bring or keep your favor with God and makes them binding on yourself and others. Legalism takes things that might be biblically true, but are not saving, and tries to make them necessary for salvation. A legalist is someone who puts law in the role that Scripture assigns to grace.

2. Legalism Promotes performance (self-righteousness)

Legalism separates the law of God from the person of God. Legalism says, "*I do or do not do.*" It promotes personal performance. Earning and keeping of God's pleasure is based upon what I do or do not do. Legalism is a relentless task master that promotes your personal performance as your continuing personal atonement. When legalistic thinking is prevalent you are always trying to cut a deal with God or your conscience. You may feel guilty about what you have done and instead of running to Christ you run to Moses, the Law, and look for something to do.

3. Legalism Promotes Division

With the absence of the gospel you have the presence of strife. Legalism is a system that thrives on personal performance, personal supremacy, and sadly, the trampling of others. It relentlessly squashes grace, mercy, and humility. Legalism believes the prize is won through personal exertion. Anyone in the way of the prize not as people to be served but obstacles to be removed.

Yes, we ought to be pursuing righteousness. We're called to that. But our pursuit of righteousness isn't the thing that saves us. When we lean toward legalism, we exhaust ourselves into hopelessness because we constantly miss the mark. We end up living life day after day, constantly letting God down, and it becomes unbearable. This is one of the main reasons why Christians lose hope. What happens is you end up living in this cycle—success and failure, success and failure. We see this all the time with issues of addiction, for example, when people experience months and years and decades, often, of success, of broken addictions, and then they fail. When we tie our salvation to our performance, we lose sight of who we are. We're children of God, adopted heirs through Christ.

4. Legalism Demotes Jesus (and his sufficient righteousness)

Legalism thinks that God accepts us because we do this or don't do this. To cling to personal merit through doing things (however good or biblical they may seem) is to demote Jesus from his place of supremacy. To maintain that you can merit God's favor outside of the work of Christ is to say that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus either was not necessary or was not sufficient. This, at its core, is the offense of legalism.

Gospel says, "I can't do, but Jesus did." The Christian is complete in Jesus Christ. To elevate any standard beyond the finished work of Jesus Christ is to promote an unbiblical standard. God

accepts sinners because Jesus lived an obedient life in our place and died the death penalty that we earned! A legalist diminishes the finished work of Christ on the cross, adding something of his own to the empty hands of faith as the way of receiving Christ's finished work. Legalism requires more than the cross, received by mere faith, for peace with God.

What is Legalism and Why is it So Bad? by Erik Raymond

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-legalism-and-why-is-it-so-bad/>

Bob Newhart: "Stop It!" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhQGzeiYS_Q

What is Moralism?

How do you know if you have fallen for the moralistic counterfeit gospel? Here are two easy diagnostics:

First, think about **how you react to suffering and pain**. How do you view God when you pass through a terrible trial?

Moralists immediately think, *What have I done to deserve this? Doesn't God see all the good I've done?* If you see God as a sort of cosmic employer, you have certain expectations of him. When God doesn't meet these expectations, you become angry. Eventually, your disillusionment leads to despair. You think all your efforts at pleasing God must be useless.

The second diagnostic is to **check your heart whenever you see someone else benefiting from God's grace**.

A friend gets a new opportunity or promotion. How did my heart respond to this news? By sinking into jealousy rather than leaping for joy. *Why did God do that for him and not me? Am I not deserving?*) Do we need to repent again and ask God to change our hearts to rejoice in His grace being showered on others.

What is Ideological Moralism?

*"My life has meaning because of the Cause. You oppose the Cause.
You must submit or be destroyed."*

— Modern/postmodern ideological moralism

Pick a hot subject (gay marriage, environment, healthcare) and scroll through your Facebook feed to find someone updating vociferously on the subject, trumpeting his position and damning the opposition in bold, apocalyptic terms.

It's not just that people are wrong, confused, and perhaps in need of correction; no, they're downright wicked. As younger generations increasingly identify as "nones" (no religious affiliation), it's not that they have no moral or spiritual bearings, just that they find them elsewhere, often in such public moral affirmations.

This is why our political skirmishes aren't just about the issues. They're about a much-deeper justification of the Self. If I'm defined by my healthcare position and corresponding self-image as a moral, caring person, then when I argue with you, I'm defending my identity. You don't simply have a different opinion on a subject; you threaten my very being.

What's more, if supporting this Cause is what makes me righteous and pure, your opposition demonstrates your impurity and wickedness, possibly even your inhumanity. You must be opposed, hopefully only through argument. But if you persist in your perversity, other stronger means of enforcement may need to be employed. This is modern/postmodern ideological moralism.

The Gospel of the Cross and the Grace to Disagree

This observation should prompt Christians to examine where we're getting our sense of self, our purity, and our wholeness. Is it from the righteousness of our moral positions? Or from the righteousness we have in Christ by grace apart from our moral achievements? If the former, we're in the same boat as secularists. If the latter, we're positioned to disagree, even forcefully, without our entire sense of self feeling threatened. Only the gospel of grace can lead us to the true benevolence that moralism fumblingly strives toward.

Ideological Moralism and Gospel Grace by Derek Rishmawy MARCH 9, 2014 | <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/ideological-moralism-and-gospel-grace/>

Ligon Duncan - What Are The Non-Negotiables For The Gospel?

https://youtu.be/Q312Diuf_yM

Here are 2 subtly different versions of the gospel. Which "gospel" do you believe and share?

Gospel 1: God is holy. We have all sinned, separating us from God. But God sent his Son to die on the cross and rise again so that we might be forgiven. Everyone who believes in Jesus can have eternal life. We're not justified by works. We're justified by faith alone. The gospel therefore calls all people to "just believe!" An unconditionally loving God will take you as you are.

Gospel 2: God is holy. We have all sinned, separating us from God. But God sent his Son to die on the cross and rise again so that we might be forgiven and begin to follow the Son as King and Lord. Anyone who repents and believes can have eternal life, a life which begins today and stretches into eternity. We're not justified by works. We're justified by faith alone, but the faith which works is never alone. The gospel therefore calls all people to "repent and believe." A contraconditionally loving God will take you contrary to what you deserve, and then enable you by the power of the Spirit to become holy and obedient like his Son. By reconciling you to himself, God also reconciles you to his family, the church, and enables you as his people to represent together his own holy character and triune glory.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/a-tale-of-two-gospels-which-one-do-you-believe-in-and-share/>

"We need to preach the gospel to ourselves every day." Martin Luther

We need to be reminded that the gospel tells us that God requires of us to live a life for Him. And, we need the reminder of the grace in the gospel - forgiveness in Christ — that God accepts us because of what Jesus has done, not what we do.

We need grace in Christ; we need Jesus Christ himself. "God's grace to us *is* Christ"

Sinclair Ferguson, *The Whole Christ*

Spurgeon was often asked the secret of his success. His reply: "I always answer that I have no other secret but this, that I have preached the gospel—not about the gospel, but the gospel—the full, free, glorious gospel of the living Christ who is the incarnation of the good news."

Charles Spurgeon, *The Soul-Winner*

How to Have a Conversation: When Under Pressure

What Would You Say?: Greg Kokul – Stand to Reason

<https://whatwouldyousay.org/how-to-have-a-conversation-when-under-pressure/>

Why Network Evangelism?

Unbelievers who show up at church are there because someone has befriended and invited them *outside* the walls of a church building. Most outsiders aren't waking up saying, "I wonder if they have good coffee. I'm going to check it out." Or "I bet the music is great there. I should go visit."

Models of Evangelism

In years past, two forms of evangelism have been most common: *event* evangelism and *cold-call* evangelism. Indeed, when people hear "evangelism" today, they often think of either big events/crusades or door-to-door outreach.

I want to highlight another approach that has historic precedent—one that is both culturally appropriate and personally achievable: *network evangelism*. It isn't an event; it's not a program; it's not something you only do on Tuesday nights at 6 p.m. It's a lifestyle. It's about living with gospel intentionality in the everyday rhythms of life. It's done among the people who fall into your current web of relationships.

Network evangelism first recognizes the sovereignty of God. It develops a mindset that every person in our sphere of life matters, and it helps us remember that God has us living in this time and place in history, surrounded by particular image-bearers he has sovereignly put in our path ([Acts 17:26](#)).

Additionally, network evangelism has historic precedent. In his book *Cities of God*, sociologist Rodney Stark describes how Christianity became an urban movement that transformed the Roman world: "Social networks are the basic mechanism through which conversion takes place. . . . Most conversions are not produced by professional missionaries conveying a new message, but by rank-and-file members who share their faith with their friends and relatives. . . . The principle that conversions spread through social networks is quite consistent with the fact that the earliest followers of Jesus shared many family ties and long-standing associations. . . . Although the very first Christian converts in the West may have been by full-time missionaries, the conversion process soon became self-sustaining as new converts accepted the obligation to spread their faith and did so by missionizing their immediate circle of intimates."

The movement advanced because new converts accepted the obligation to spread the gospel within their own circles of everyday influence.

Further, network evangelism promotes faithfulness and patience. Evangelistic methods often involve only "on the spot" presentations. They can be impersonal as well. They can

be about generating numbers, not valuing people. They can allow us to simply “check a box” to appease our guilt, and then move on.

But when you’re reaching out to people you see regularly, it demands faithfulness and perseverance. You can do the necessary pre-evangelism, answer questions, slowly and gradually watch defenses go down, and hopefully—by God’s grace—see your friend, family member, co-worker, or neighbor declare, “Jesus is Lord.”

Who’s in Your Networks?

We could organize our web of relationships in a variety of ways, but it has been helpful for our church to think within five categories:

1. **Familial Network**—people in your family.
2. **Geographical Network**—people in your neighborhood.
3. **Vocational Network**—people at your workplace.
4. **Recreational Network**—people you hang out with.
5. **Commercial Network**—people you see at shops.

We encouraged our church members to identify at least five people in each of these networks—or if they’re low in one area, to increase the number of people in the other networks. And we’ve encouraged them to do one of five tasks:

1. **Pray for them**—You’ll be surprised what happens when you begin to pray for the people in your path. You may experience the joy C. S. Lewis expressed: “I have two lists of names in my prayers, those for whose conversions I pray and those for whose conversions I give thanks. The little trickle of transferences from List A to List B is a great comfort.”
2. **Invite them**—Invite them over to eat dinner, to play sports, to go to a movie, to come with you to a church event.
3. **Serve them**—Identify a way that you can bless those in your networks. Babysit for them, pick up groceries for them, cut their grass, and so on.
4. **Give resources to them**—Ask them to read a book or article with you, or to listen to a sermon or podcast. Discuss these resources with them.

5. **Share the gospel with them**—Look for various places where you can talk about your faith. Let your friend know you are part of a church, and see if they ask questions. Listen to their problems with real concern, and then seize the opportunity to address the problems with gospel hope. Share some of your own struggles, and talk about how you deal with them in light of your faith. Simply ask them what they believe, and just let them talk.

Don't Overcomplicate Evangelism by Tony Merida, AUGUST 14, 2018
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/dont-overcomplicate-evangelism/>

3 ways people tend to listen?

1. Listen to rebut.
2. Listen while waiting your turn to speak.
3. Listen in order to hear, understand, and feel.

3 tips for evangelistic conversations?

1. Really listen.
2. Share your faith in a way that points to Jesus.
3. Introduce your non-Christian friends to your Christian friends.

The gospel produces a constellation of traits in us:

1. We are compelled to share the gospel out of *love*.
2. We are *freed from the fear* of being ridiculed or hurt by others, since we already have the favor of God by grace.
3. There is a *humility* in our dealings with others, because we know we are saved only by grace, not because of our superior insight or character.
4. We are *hopeful* about anyone, even the “hard cases,” because we were saved only because of grace ourselves.
5. We are *courteous and careful* with people. We don't have to push or coerce them, for it is God's grace that opens hearts, not our eloquence or persistence or even their openness. / Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything*, p. 201

Week 4

Our Associates Manual for IDEAS, the organization we work with, requires this...

FAITH SHARING: Intentionally seeks opportunities to introduce people to Jesus Christ

- Understands the crucial elements of the gospel and can present them effectively
- Can share their testimony in a time frame appropriate to the context
- Able to witness clearly, with tact and sensitivity
- Will develop language skills to be able to share faith in another language
- Is aware and can use multiple ways to share their faith
- Takes initiative to learn culturally and contextually effective means to share faith

This might be a good prayer list; asking God to make our church, and each of us; more clear and compassionate as we share Jesus.

Are Christians Narrow-minded? - Brett Kunkle

<https://vimeo.com/280024058/7134267aec>

“Describe the God you’ve rejected. Describe the God you don’t believe in. Maybe I don’t believe that God either.”

Tim Keller (1950-2023)

Jesus + _____ = Salvation

_____ : ??? – what MUST be listed in the blank?

Praying the ‘right’ sinner’s prayer / Regular church attendance / Consistent Bible reading

Belief in the Hypostatic Union of Jesus (“The hypostatic union is the mysterious joining of the divine and the human in the one person of Jesus.”)

Correct explanation of the Trinity / Memorizing the Books of the Bible in correct order

STOP Smoking...anything / Stop swearing / Stop watching pornography

Jesus + NOTHING!! = Salvation

“The gospel is that I am so sinful that Jesus had to die for me, yet so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. I can’t feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. If you were a hundred times worse than you are, your sins would be no match for his mercy.”

Tim Keller

“If you confess with your mouth that *Jesus is Lord* and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Romans 10.9-10

“make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to *observe all that I have commanded you*”

Matthew 28.19,20

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to *renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives* in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to *redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people* for his own possession who are *zealous for good works*.

Titus 2.11-14

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and *renewal of the Holy Spirit*, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ... so that those who have believed in God may *be careful to devote themselves to good works*.

Titus 3.4-8

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus for good works*, which God prepared beforehand, *that we should walk in them*.

Ephesians 2.8-10

We are NOT saved BY good works – but we ARE saved FOR good works.

Jesus: “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

Luke 6.43-45

“When you come to Christ, you must drop your conditions. You have to give up the right to say, ‘I will obey you *if* . . . I will do this *if* . . .’ As soon as you say, ‘I will obey you *if*,’ that is not obedience at all. You are saying: ‘You are my adviser, not my Lord. I will be happy to take your recommendations. And I might even do some of them.’ No. If you want Jesus *with you*, you have to give up the right to self-determination. Self-denial is an act of rebellion against our late-modern culture of self-assertion. But that is what we are called to. Nothing less.”

Tim Keller

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

2 Corinthians 13.5

“Only if your god can outrage and challenge you will you know that you worship the real God and not a figment of your imagination. . . . If your god never disagrees with you, you might just be worshipping an idealized version of yourself.”

Tim Keller

What is the Gospel? — John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUB4I5vO12o>

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, *that he might bring us to God*, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit 1 Peter 3.18

Why Do we NOT Share our Faith?

1. We think someone’s faith is a private matter, not our business.
2. We are not confident in our faith, might expose our own doubts.
3. Our spiritual fervor is cool.
4. We know “witnesses” (Greek word ‘*marturia*’) pay a price.
5. We are more afraid of people than for people.
6. Our knowledge of faith is limited, we might lose the argument.
7. We are isolated from non-Christians, afraid to leave our holy huddle.
8. We hope someone’s goodness is enough for them to get to Heaven.

“Contemporary people tend to examine the Bible, looking for things they can’t accept; but Christians should reverse that, allowing the Bible to examine us, looking for things God can’t accept.”

Tim Keller

Relationships in Evangelism

1. People we Meet Once – Be Alert for Gospel Opportunities
Be Prepared to Share the Gospel
2. Occasional Acquaintances – Work at Building Relationships
Engage in creative spiritual conversations
3. Friends, Family, Classmates, Colleagues – Walk your Talk
Pray for ‘teachable moments’

What is a Testimony?

1. It is not about yourself – i.e. “I was bad, now I am good”
2. It is not only about the past – what did Jesus do for you today?
3. It is declaring the living Jesus who has saved you and set you free. The focus is on Him and only incidentally on yourself.

What is the Value of a Testimony?

1. It is intriguing: the Samaritan woman – “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” John 4.39
2. It is a natural thing to do – sharing your greatest joy! “It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.” Luke 15.32
3. It is simple – every believer has one!
4. It opens up the conversation: Ask a person, “May I share with you the greatest thing that has ever happened to me?...It is the living Lord Jesus Christ who has turned my life around!”
5. It brings Christ out of the “expected” place, like the church. Paul describes the reaction in Thessalonica: “our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.” 1 Thessalonians 1.5
6. It is unanswerable – you know what has really happened. Blind man healed by Jesus: “...One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” John 9.25

People can ‘cancel’ your doctrinal claims about Jesus, it is harder to deny your vibrant life which has been transformed by the power of those wonderful doctrines!

General Principles for Giving Your Testimony

1. Pray and ask God to prepare you to share.
2. Center on the person of Jesus, not yourself. What were you like before you met Christ? How did you meet Him? What are the main benefits you have discovered?
3. Be selective. Consider your audience, prune relentlessly.
4. Be disciplined. Respect their time, leave them wanting more! Not with glassy eyes.
5. Be warm and natural, smile, relax, no notes!
6. Total honesty is vital, no exaggerations.
7. Be courteous but bold, they're dying for your message!
8. Be intriguing, capture their interest, not boring.

Things to avoid:

- Using Christian jargon or slang, even the word 'sin' needs explaining
- Moralism: say "this happened to me," instead of "you should"
- Too much Scripture, the Bible is not likely their authority.
- Criticizing another church, denomination, person.
- Giving the impression that the Christian life is easy.
- Using notes while speaking / do use them to prepare well!

Specific Problems you May Encounter in Sharing Jesus

1. A person who is really a Christian, but unsure of it. Encourage with Promises....

Jesus: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."
John 6.37

Jesus: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" John 10.27-29

“we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” Hebrews 10.10,14

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.”
1 John 5.13

2. A person who thinks they are a Christian but are not.

“Once saved, always saved!” Is TRUE. The Question: Was the person truly saved?

I know churches where the seemingly dynamic Christian pastor has walked away saying he no longer believes. I know marriages where the seemingly wonderful Christian spouse has walked away from their spouse – and God. In truth there are only two people who know if someone is a genuine believer – you and God.

Praying the sinner’s prayer, raising a hand, or crying a puddle of tears does not save you.

Being a missionary does not save you. Judas Iscariot got high marks for his ‘service.’

Only Jesus’ cleansing from sin merits God’s pardon, and the Jesus who cleanses is Lord.

Salvation includes two gifts – cleansing by the Savior and changing by the Spirit – Jesus is Savior AND Lord. Daily we must pray, ‘forgive my sins and fill me with your Spirit!’

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”
1 John 2.19

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”
Romans 8.5-8

“And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”
1 John 2.3-6

3. Someone from a sketchy church background - without a strong Bible foundation.

Utilize whatever framework or background that church affords to help them understand. Paul used the background of the Old Covenant to lead Jews to their ‘Messiah.’

Our job is to bring their fuzzy understandings to a clearer biblical focus on Jesus who saves.

Once they are born-again and Spirit-filled God will help them sort out their church affiliation.

“The glory of God is available to you in the church in a way it’s not available to you anywhere else. . . . There is no more important means of discipleship than deep involvement in the life of the church.”
Tim Keller

4. Spiritual Warfare

Truly we are at war! – “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”
Ephesians 6.12

Not every problem is a demon, but it may be. You are ‘armed’ with greater power in Jesus!

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” 1 Peter 5.8-10

“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”
1 John 4.4

5. Questions about the Holy Spirit and his Gifts

Some churches insist on ‘gifts’ / some deny them altogether

Amidst the different opinions, one thing is clear, the Holy Spirit was not given for us to hate one another, fight over secondary issues, and get our eyes off the mission field.

Step around the debate and focus on the One the Spirit exalts!

Jesus: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14.26

Jesus: “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. John 15.26

Jesus: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”
John 16.13,14

6. A Person Very Critical about their Church

Do not add fuel to their fire – focus on the Head of the Church – Jesus our Apostle and Savior.

An important part of discipleship is “making things right” – pray and hope, be patient.

If they say your church is full of hypocrites, invite them! There is always room for one more.

7. Their Responses are Illogical

Person is overly emotional - deep hurts are surfacing. Their ‘god’ may be a product of falsehood and imagination.

Share God’s powerful truth and pray it will enlighten and transform

“To say ‘I know God forgives me, but I can’t forgive myself’ means you’ve failed an idol whose approval is more important than God’s.”
Tim Keller

We are not Mr. or Mrs. “I Have All the Answers!” That is not our responsibility. Our task is to tell them about Jesus – with our lives and lips! And PRAY!

8. Marital / Family Problems

Don’t take sides – listen but don’t over sympathize

There is rarely a quick solution – don’t create false hopes

The main issue: Is the person willing for God to change them and others?

“Sex apart from marriage becomes a product we consume if we find someone attractive enough in quality and low enough in price. If the quality goes down or the cost goes up, we can walk away, because there is no covenant. But if sex comes only with the radical self-giving and whole-life commitment of marriage, that takes sex off the market, as it were, and makes it priceless.”
Tim Keller

How Can I Have Confidence in My Faith? By J. Warner Wallace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV3FO9PtM9Y>

PODCAST

What Happened to Historian Molly Worthen?

MAY 9, 2023 **COLLIN HANSEN • MOLLY WORTHEN**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/gospelbound/happened-molly-worthen/>

This is over an hour. Wonderful, insightful, encouraging. God reached deep into secular academia and brought this lost daughter to Himself!

Here is some home work to help you reflect and sharpen your grasp of the Gospel...

What is our Message?

1. The Gospel is Good News about God – who He is, His character, standards, and requirements.

Acts 17.24-28

1 Timothy 1.17

John 4.24

1 John 1.5

1 John 4.8

2. The Gospel is needed because of sin – our offense against God needs to be made right.

Evidences of Conviction of Sin:

a) Wrong Relationship with God – Psalm 51.4

b) Conviction of Specific Sins – Isaiah 6.5, Luke 19.8

c) Realization of General Sinfulness – Ezekiel 36.26,27

3. The Gospel is a message about Jesus Christ – from Eternity to Eternity

Alpha > Eternal God – Incarnation – Sinless Life – Cross – Resurrection – Ascended Lord – Sovereign King – Coming Judge < Omega

Too many verses about Jesus from Genesis to Revelation! Read and enjoy them!!

4. The Gospel is a call to faith and repentance – a decision must be made.

a) It is an Announcement which includes an Invitation

b) God ACCEPTS us in Christ when we RECEIVE Him. (very proud and foolish to brag, “I ACCEPTED Christ!” ... *oh, did you??!*)

John 1.12,13

1 John 3.23

Luke 9.23

Revelation 22.17

5. Believing the Gospel begins eternal life with Jesus our Savior and Lord.

John 5.24

2 Timothy 1.8-10

Revelation 5.9-14

A life of falling down and getting picked up --- again and again ---like any infant learning to walk. A life of learning that without the grace of God we are desperately lost. Even though at many points we think we are great and doing amazing things by our strength....*yeah! right!* A life summarized by the old John Newton who said: *“I am sure of two things, I am a great sinner, but Jesus is a great Savior!”*