

Personal Evangelism



Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹Go 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,
²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*"

Presented by
Dempsey Collins

Matthew 28 & Acts 2 & 8

Matthew 28

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 2

41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 8

1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

Getting the gospel message to a lost world is the unshiftable responsibility of the saved!

I Peter 3:15

SIX STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL EVANGELISM

- 1) Christ must be sanctified as Lord in our hearts. Note the contrast:
 "Do not fear their intimidation" v. 14
 BUT
 "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" v. 15
 (Do not fear men but fear God and teach men, Mt. 10:28-32)
- 2) We must be "ready" to "defend" or explain the truth. Phil. 1:16
 If we are not prepared then we must **get prepared!** 11 Tim. 2:15
- 3) We must be ready "always." (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whenever, wherever, and to whoever, opportune or inopportune, convenient or inconvenient, when men agree or disagree, are receptive or are in opposition.
- 4) "To **everyone** who ask." All are prospects unless proven otherwise. Prospects not suspects. Mk. 16:15
- 5) Our message should revolve around the **"hope"** within us.
 cp. 1:3, 7-9 We are saved by hope. (Rom. 8:24)
- 6) Our approach should be **with gentleness and reverence.**
 Not arrogance, rudeness or harshness.
 Love is not rude or arrogant. 1 Cor. 13:4,5
 Approach them as you would want to be approached.

What Personal Evangelism Will Help Accomplish

1. You will study more
2. Have greater understanding of the Word
3. Assemble more (go from being indifferent to different)
4. Pray more and more fervently
5. Be more concerned about your influence and questionable habits - Matthew 5:16
6. Gives us purpose
7. Enthrones Christ as Lord as we appreciate His salvation even more
8. Eliminates complaining and bickering. Too busy caring about salvation and needs of others. Eliminates cliques and divisions.
9. Eliminates gossip. We're too busy telling "old old story" to make up a new one.

AT JACOB'S WELL

INTRODUCTION: (John 4)

How do I get started at personal evangelism? What method or procedure should I follow? What Bible lessons should I teach and in what order? Where can I find prospects? How do I initiate a Bible study?

The story that follows is one of the greatest examples of personal evangelism in all the Bible. It is a story rich with practical lessons on this subject. Jesus' conversion of a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well shows us how to get started in this great work.

I. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES IN ORDINARY SITUATIONS (vs. 6)

- A. The master teacher, first of all, shows us that in order to save others we must look for opportunities all around us.
- B. There are some men who believe unless you have a church building, an audience and an invitation you don't have an opportunity to teach.
- C. Jesus had none of these things in John 4, yet He found an opportunity to teach the gospel.
- D. Of all Jesus' teachings - we have recorded only 16 public discourses. Most of Jesus' teaching was outside the synagogue and it was not by invitation. His teaching was delivered to private audiences in common, ordinary settings such as resting beside a well in Samaria.
- E. Story - Acres of diamonds
- F. There may also be acres of diamonds (prospects) in your own back yard. The man or woman who works beside you, the neighbors on your street, your relatives, other parents at a ball game, a trip to the barber shop or hairstylist, a visit to the grocery store, a trip to the cleaners, the mailman, the mechanic. All of these and many more are the equivalent of Jesus sitting beside a well to rest. Opportunities to teach do not have to be planned and structured. They do not have to be in a church building and they don't have to be by invitation. Sometimes they are so common and ordinary we may miss them. God can help you turn these ordinary situations into extraordinary opportunities if you have the faith and courage to try.

II. START THE CONVERSATION WITH A SPIRITUAL GOAL IN MIND (vs. 7)

- A. Jesus asked the woman for a drink but His main objective was to provide her with "living water". His main goal was to give not to receive.
- B. In like manner, there are a number of effective ways for us to initiate a conversation with a spiritual goal in mind.
 - 1. The most effective way I have found is simply asking someone "where do you go to church?" Most people are happy to volunteer the information. From this question you might ask a number of other religious questions: "Do you believe the Bible is the inspired word of God?" "Do you believe Jesus is the son of God?" "What do you believe about baptism?" etc.
 - 2. You may ask them about their physical health but your primary concern is their spiritual well being.
 - 3. You may talk about the weather but your primary objective is to discuss the God who rules all nature.

AT JACOB'S WELL

4. Our Lord and Savior asked her for a drink but His main goal was to provide living water. Try to get your subject to look beyond the horizon into eternity.

III. KEEP YOUR MESSAGE PLAIN AND SIMPLE

- A. Jesus was the wisest man that ever lived yet His message was always plain and simple.
Jesus could have taught in a manner in which the greatest earthly scholars would have struggled to decipher its lofty meaning, but instead He chose to use items such as a farmer sowing, the birth process, little children, leaves, pearls, fish, tares, a mustard seed and here in John 4, water.
- B. One of the biggest deterrents to successful evangelism is what I call step 10 mentality. We assume the prospect knows much more than they really do and thus skip basic and vital information they must first learn before presenting other biblical truths.
- C. Where did the apostle Paul begin with the Athenians? (Acts 17) Before he could talk about repentance and the judgment he first had to talk about the true and living God. Before Paul could talk to the Philippian jailer about baptism, he first had to teach him about faith in Jesus. (Acts 16)
- D. In most Bible studies I have held I begin by asking people how much they really know about the Bible. Most are honest enough to admit a general lack of knowledge if such is the case. This admission then provides the opportunity to introduce the Bible and overall purpose.
- E. Just as we sometimes sing "One step at a time dear savior, I cannot take any more", let's keep our teaching plain and simple and be patient, patient, patient. Never assume your prospect knows the same information you do. In most cases, he will not.

IV. JESUS HAD THE EVERY CREATURE CONCEPT OF EVANGELISM (vs. 9)

- A. Jesus taught his disciples to have the every creature concept. (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19)
- B. Once they were convinced that all men can be fellow heirs of the grace of life, they ignored all social, racial and economic barriers. Imagine a Jew teaching a group of Greeks. Paul did. (Acts 17) Imagine a Jew teaching Roman soldiers. Paul did. (Phil. 1:13) Imagine a Jew preaching to a Gentile congregation. Paul did. (Phil. 1:5) The every creature concept also crosses all religious or irreligious barriers. No matter how moral or immoral a person may be, they are still a prospect for the Gospel.
1. How many would consider a sorcerer a prospect for the gospel? Philip did. (Acts 8:9-12)
 2. How many would consider homosexuals, idolaters, drunkards and thieves prospects? Paul did. (1 Cor. 6:9-10)
 3. A governor, officials in Caesar's household, Caesar's special guard? Paul did. (Phil. 1:13; Acts 13:12)
 4. Atheists and agnostics? Paul did. (Acts 17:17-19)
 5. A doctor? Whoever converted Luke did.
 6. A religious leader? Jesus did. (John 3:1-5)
- C. If these kind of people are prospects, then certainly your friends, relatives, neighbors, fellow workers, fellow students and others you meet from day to day are also prospects.
- D. Do we have the every creature concept of evangelism? Certainly as long as someone is a white, middle class, responsible American who is already religious. Are we guilty of prejudging people as being unworthy of the gospel? Are we such an excellent judge of character that we can so easily write them off the prospect list?
- E. In fact, everyone is a prospect unless proven otherwise. Prospects not suspects.

AT JACOB'S WELL

V. JESUS WENT TO THE LOST.

- A. Jesus came to "seek" as well as "save".
- B. The good shepherd "leaves the 99 safe sheep and goes in search of the one which is lost." (Luke 15:4)
- C. Jesus didn't expect the Samaritan woman to even talk to Him, let alone come to Him for salvation. He came to her with the words of eternal life and set the example of "seeking" for lost souls. (Luke 19:10)
- D. Jesus sought out numerous others in order to save them.
 - 1. Zacheus - Luke 19:5
 - 2. A man formerly blind - John 9:35
 - 3. Philip - John 1:43
 - 4. Matthew - Luke 5:27
- E. Simply setting a good example is not enough. Paul told Timothy, "Be thou an example" (1 Tim. 4:13). But he also commanded him to "teach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). These two are not synonymous. One is instruction for general conduct and the other is a specific way of being a good example. One is not a substitute for the other. Setting a good example is essential to faithfulness and can greatly help in setting up a Bible study, but by itself will save no one. We must still go and teach the lost.
- F. Simply attending church and learning methods of evangelism is not enough to save others. Many congregations are interested in learning a method of evangelism but few actually put it into action. Too much time is spent in the huddle making plans and not enough implementing the plans. The teaching of Jesus is "come and learn" (Mt. 11:28-29), "go and teach" (Mark 16:15).
- G. We can't expect the lost to come to us. Experience has shown that less than 2% of our assemblies are comprised of lost souls. A little math will tell you that if spend we 98% of our evangelistic efforts upon 2% of our audience we are not going to save very many souls. We are not going to catch fish casting lines inside the boat. We cannot expect the fish to jump into the net. We are not saving the lost by preaching to empty pews and four walls. We must "go" to the lost just as our savior did.
- H. The apostle Paul taught "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). We need that Acts 20:20 vision. Jesus said to "Go unto all the world". A good beginning point for you and I would be to "go" next door.

CONCLUSION

Our day is one of mixed up values. We know the price of everything but the value of nothing. Jesus said, "There will be more joy over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Lk. 15:7) Sadly, in some places there is more joy on earth over one new church building than over ninety-nine souls that repent. Jesus teaches one soul is worth more than the whole world. (Matt. 16:26)

Turning ordinary situations into soul saving opportunities is one way of imitating our Savior and showing our compassion for the lost.

--Dempsey Collins