



Lesson 11: Evangelism

One important responsibility that all Christians have is to tell others how to become Christians. This lesson will examine why and how to tell others about Christ.

1. Read Mark 5:18-20. What did Jesus tell the man to do?
2. Read Acts 4:20. Why did the disciples tell others about Jesus?
3. Read Matt 28:19-20. Summarize Jesus' command here.
4. Read Matt 5:16. How important is your lifestyle? Does it say anything about you?
5. Read 1 John 1:3. What should we tell people?

We ought to tell others what has happened to us. Describe how your life has changed since you became a Christian.

Before I got saved:

Since I've been saved:

What are the necessary elements of a Gospel presentation?

- ☐ Who God is: the sovereign, holy creator, who made man for fellowship with himself
- ☐ Who man is: the sinful, rebellious creature, who is under the wrath and condemnation of God
- ☐ Who Jesus Christ is and what He did: God the Son, the Lord and Savior lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death, rose again, ascended to heaven
- ☐ What the appropriate response is: turn from sin; trust in Christ
 - et* repentance: acknowledging sin, sorrow for it, turning from it
 - et* faith: knowledge of, assent to, and trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation
- ☐ What the costs of discipleship are:
 - et* death to self
 - et* submission to Christ as Lord

Sharing the life-giving gospel of Christ with lost people is a great privilege. Believers should be ready at any time to “give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet 3:15). It’s your duty to know the details of the gospel and to be able to express the message in a compelling way. Take the opportunities that God gives you to share the gospel with those around you.

Some Obstacles to Effective Evangelism

- ⊗ Some believe they need a lot of specialized training to witness effectively. Perhaps they are concerned about making a mistake when communicating the gospel—this is a serious matter, and they don't want to mess up. Or perhaps they lack the confidence to answer potential questions. *E.g., How do you know the Bible is true? How do you know Jesus rose from the dead? Why do you think you're right and all the other religions are wrong? Why does God allow so much evil in the world? Such questions are intimidating.*

Answer: 1) Most believers can learn to communicate the gospel very efficiently. If one understood it well enough to be saved himself, he should be able to tell others; 2) Tell what you know and don't worry about what you don't know. Don't be afraid to admit your lack of knowledge. Tell how you got saved. Advanced training is important and valuable, but not necessary for effective evangelism.

- ⊗ Some are afraid that people will think they are strange and will reject them. They don't want to lose friends or popularity. If they tell others about Jesus, they might suffer ridicule or insults. In other words, they are ashamed.

Answer: We should expect some opposition to the message. Jesus was crucified for that message. The disciples were killed for it. Millions of Christians have been persecuted for it. So it shouldn't surprise us if people react negatively to the gospel message. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel" (Rom 1:12). Are you?

- ⊗ Some may be uncomfortable with the methods of evangelism they have been taught. People use various methods to spread the gospel: door-to-door evangelism ("cold calling"), street preaching, passing out tracts on the corner, telemarketing (phones), etc. Some people are uncomfortable with such activities.

Answer: 1) These are not the only methods of evangelism—there are many others that one might find more suitable to them. 2) Lack of comfort should not deter one from evangelizing. Paul, for example, endured an amazing amount of discomfort (beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, imprisonment, threats) as he spread the gospel. We can endure a little discomfort for the cause of Christ.

- ⊗ Some people may be disillusioned because of their lack of success. Since no one responded in the past, they have decided not to try again.

Answer: The goal in evangelism is to glorify God by sharing the gospel with another person. Whether or not that person accepts the gospel is not under the control of the evangelist. All biblical evangelism is successful evangelism, regardless of the results. So don't give up.

- ⊗ Some consider themselves too sinful to tell others. They think of themselves as such poor examples of what a Christian should be that they are hesitant to tell others of their need for Christ.

Answer: 1) It's true that rebellious believers are bad testimonies. If their lives are a mess, or if they display ungodly attitudes and behaviors, they have nothing to offer anyone else. 2) God uses regular, sinful people to evangelize. One does not have to be a "superChristian" to witness. It's OK to admit that you still struggle with sin. The message is more important than the messenger.

- ⊗ Biblical illiteracy, spiritual immaturity, apathy, and wrong doctrine prevent people from witnessing. Many believers have not progressed to the place where they could make a

convincing, or even accurate, presentation of the gospel to an unbeliever. Failure to evangelize boils down to simple disobedience. Christians have received a direct, unmistakable commission: go and tell others. No excuse for not doing so is valid.

There is no effective antidote to disobedience other than repentance and revival. A stubborn refusal to be involved in evangelism indicates a backslidden spiritual state.

Friendship Evangelism

Probably the most effective and natural means of evangelism might be called friendship evangelism. This is not really a particular method at all. Believers simply use the relationships they naturally have to spread the message of the gospel. In other words, one tells his friends and acquaintances during the regular course of life. He takes the opportunities that come his way to tell others directly, invite them to church or special meetings, hand out a tract, or give a word of encouragement. He makes evangelism a normal part of his life, using the contacts that he has.

Note the Quote: “Evangelism is the inalienable responsibility of every Christian community, and every Christian man. We are all under orders to devote ourselves to spreading the good news, and to use all our ingenuity and enterprise to bring it to the notice of the whole world.”¹

Conclusion: Every believer is responsible to tell others how to be saved. Make sure that you know the main points of a Gospel presentation, and tell others when you have an opportunity. Don't let the typical hindrances to evangelism prevent you from being a good witness.

Discussion:

1. Who has the responsibility to tell others about Christ?
2. What are the contents of a proper gospel presentation?
3. List some reasons believers fail to evangelize. See above list.
4. Does the Bible present any certain method of evangelism as the correct one?
5. Describe friendship evangelism.

¹ J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p. 26.