

What's the Deal with Evangelism?

An Overview

God is at work in the lives of people around us, but it seems so often that our fears keep us from even getting into conversations with them to find out. Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade says “Successful witnessing is taking initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to Him.” And really that is all we can do. God is the one that changes hearts, but He has called us to be part of the adventure of telling them His story.

For ten years I did not share my faith. I would invite my friends to church and youth group hoping someone else would share the actual gospel with them. Ten years is a long time to not be obedient to what God calls us to do. And like Romans 1 talks about, when we disobey God, our hearts become hardened. This is what happened to me.

I went to college wanting to be involved in ministry. I liked the idea of girls coming to know Jesus and I wanted to be the one that would help them grow into strong disciples after they had given their lives to Him. Whenever the topic of evangelism would come up, I had a very arrogant attitude and would get angry at anyone who disagreed with me. I distorted the verse Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have (1 Pet. 3:15) and made that to mean that you don't go to people, you let them come to you. As a result I would get very angry at people who were taking initiative to share the gospel. I honestly thought, “They are just making my job harder. Cause now the non-believer is offended and I have to win them back.” When I think about this, I am embarrassed of my self-centeredness and sad about all the opportunities wasted because of my arrogance. But praise God that He is able to soften even the hardest of hearts.

I hope you are wondering what happened. How did God change my hard heart? Well, God blessed me with Austin. We met after I had returned from a missions trip and we hit it off. (It's an incredible story of God orchestrating divine appointment after divine appointment). Austin and I were both student leaders for Master Plan Ministries in Durango. (The ministry we now lead in Denver) Austin and our friend John were constantly sharing their faith. At first it bothered me, but I couldn't argue with the fruit they were seeing, people were giving their lives to Christ. I couldn't believe it! When I looked back on my Christian life, not one person had ever come up to me and asked me to share the gospel with them. Who knew? Sure, there were people that came to Christ because I invited them somewhere, but it was not because I took the initiative to start the conversation with them. So one day I said to Austin, “Ok, walk through with me what you say to people when you

are sharing the gospel." I was going to see if it would be something I would get offended at if I were a non-believer. God used that conversation to change my heart and attitude for life. Austin used the Four Spiritual Laws developed by Bill Bright in a conversational way. He was not cramming anything, it wasn't a canned presentation, just a simple conversation. I thought, "I can do this." So I tried it out. It felt totally normal (once I could get enough guts up to get into the conversation) and God blessed me with being able to see eternal fruit born for His kingdom by girls surrendering their life to Christ because of our conversation.

I am not sure where your heart attitude is with sharing your faith, but I am pretty sure that you are probably not as hard hearted about it as I was. And even if you are, will you be willing to let God shape your opinions about it today?

To help us talk about many of the different aspects of evangelism, lets us a MAP. M.A.P. stands for Methods, Avenues, and Point

The Method

There are numerous means available to communicate the unchanging gospel message. Some tools are better fit for different situations. So we need to have a well-supplied toolbox so we can pull out what is needed in the time we need it. I recommend working with one tool until you are completely confident with it and then move on to another. Shoot for mastery.

Some methods of sharing the gospel:

Biblical presentations

* Romans Road (Walking through Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-10)

* The Four Spiritual Laws/Would You Like to Know God Personally? Booklet. (Ordered at <http://www.campuscrusade.com>)

* The Bridge illustration (Training to draw it at <http://www.evangelismcoach.org/2008/how-to-use-the-bridge-illustration> or order booklet at <http://www.navpress.com>)

Testimonial presentations

* The story of how you came to surrender your life to Christ.

* Stories of how God came through for you and how you better saw His character (with the gospel (the why you needed Jesus to forgive you and the how you surrendered to Him put in the story)

Philosophical arguments

* Apologetics

* Who is Jesus bible study

* Trilema (Explanation found at <http://www.greatcom.org/resources/areadydefense/ch21/default.htm>)

But in order to use these tools, you have to break **four Sound Barriers** which were developed by Campus Crusade.

1. Getting into a simple conversation. What's your name, how are you etc..
2. Swinging the conversation to spiritual things.
3. Sharing the Gospel.
4. Asking them to respond to the Gospel/asking for a decision.

Questions are a great tool to help you break through each sound barrier. Here are a couple of examples.

- Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs?
- If you died right now and were standing before God and He said, "Why should I let you into heaven" What would you say?
- If what you were believing is not true, would you want to know

The Avenues

As God works through believers in seeking to save the lost, there are three different types of relational avenues which give us opportunity to use our tools. These avenues are determined by the nature of the relationship between the believer and the unbeliever.

1.Organic: Getting into conversations with others in the normal course of life.

Read the examples below and write down a few key words or a sentence reminding you what it says.

John 1:40-51

John 4:1-42

Colossians 4:5-6

1 Peter 3:15

* Describe a modern day example.

* What are some pro's and con's of this avenue?

2. Communal: Inviting non-believers to be part of your believing community. Letting them see how believers interact and using this to get into a spiritual conversation with them.

Read the examples below and write down a few key words or a sentence reminding you what it says.

John 17:21-23

John 13:34-35

Acts 2:42-47

* Describe a modern day example.

* What are some pro's and con's of this avenue?

3. Missional: Intentionally taking the gospel to an individual you have not met.

Read the examples below and write down a few key words or a sentence reminding you what it says.

2 Timothy 4:2

Mark 1:38-39

Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-17

Acts 8

Acts 11:19-24

* Describe a modern day example.

* What are some pro's and con's of this avenue?

*Through which of these avenues did you come to Christ?

* Which of these does your community emphasize?

* Which one of these avenues is the most challenging for you personally? Why?

* Are all three of these avenues necessary to saturate our culture? Why?

The Point

The way of Salvation.

* This might seem elementary, but if we get this wrong, we totally miss it. So, what is the gospel message? What things does someone have to understand to be transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light?

* What does Colossians 1:21-23 say the gospel is? What key points does someone need to understand the full gospel?

* What would be the result if someone trying to understand the gospel did not understand each of the following truths?

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8

Romans 10:9-10,13

“Each time I am with someone for five minutes or more, I consider it a God-given opportunity to testify of God’s mercy and grace in my life. You may be thinking: Bill Bright is the president of a worldwide organization dedicated to introducing people to Christ. Surely, proclaiming the gospel is easier for him than for me. I could never witness like that. I am naturally a shy and reserved person, so sharing my faith is sometimes difficult for me. I must continually rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to be a fruitful witness.” (Bill Bright Discover God pg 58)

You are in the most strategic time in your entire life for setting yourself up for courageously living for God’s kingdom. The decisions you are making right now are becoming the foundation stones your life is going to be built on. The habits you are making now are the very things that will make you who you are, and the people you are allowing to influence you (whether real or fictional) are the very people you will become like, and what you are neglecting now is being set up in your life as a life long habit. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. (Philemon 6) When we share our faith we get to experience God and see His mighty hand working in peoples lives and “What’s done in this life echoes for eternity.” Russell Crowe, Gladiator.

Taken from Beholding Him Becoming Missional; Awakening to the Mission Through the Study of First Samuel