

How Do We Evangelize? (part 2)

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles and turn to John chapter 4, where we see the Lord Jesus, the greatest witness of all, the greatest evangelist, interacting one-on-one with a poor, needy sinner.

John 4, and I'll read the first 30 verses. The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although, in fact, it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now, he had to go through Samaria, so he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, Will you give me a drink?

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

[1:27] For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

Sir, the woman said, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?

Jesus answered, Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life. The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.

He told her, Go call your husband and come back. I have no husband, she replied. Jesus said to her, You are right when you say you have no husband.

[2:44] The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true. Sir, the woman said, I can see that you are a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus declared, Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know. For salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

For they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

The woman said, I know that Messiah, called Christ, is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us. Then Jesus declared, I who speak to you am he.

[4:04] Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, What do you want? Or why are you talking with her?

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?

They came out of the town and made their way toward him. We've spoken much of evangelism in the last weeks.

Perhaps you say, Okay, I understand the message, the gospel. It's something I've understood for a long time. I know what God has done for me. And I think that I can articulate truth about God in His

way, and man in His way, and how we've gone astray from God, and how Jesus is the way back to God, and the right response to that.

And I think I can do that with Scripture, using God's words. I'll need a Bible in my hand, but I can do that. I can speak the word of the gospel. I know that I can only do it with prayer, and dependence on the Spirit.

[5:15] I even know that I'm supposed to do the work of evangelism. And I believe that I'm supposed to do it. And I know that if I love God, and I love my fellow men, then I will be doing the work of evangelism.

But how in the world do I get to a point to where I can do it? Where I can actually share that message with someone? It seems like it would be forced and unnatural.

Who should I share it with? Is it better to give them something to read, or to speak plainly and clearly with them? How can I start a conversation where I'll even have the opportunity to do what you're talking about?

I've spoken to you a little bit about my friend Rush Witt, who's taught me much about evangelism. And you're going to hear from him several times tonight because he's articulated these things well. But he expresses that difficulty. He says, for many people, the most difficult part of sharing the gospel with someone is starting a conversation. If you're a Christian, you probably know enough about the gospel to lead someone to Christ.

[6:17] Therefore, it's not the gospel that is hard to explain, but it is starting a conversation that gives most Christians trouble. I found that at times to be true in my own life.

And so tonight, I hope to give us something of the nitty gritty of how to share the gospel with someone. How to get to the point where you can actually do that. We've talked about the message, but how do you get to the point where you're ready to actually share that message with someone? Tonight is, in some ways, sometimes you get to the end of a sermon and you say, now, here's how you apply it. This sermon is sort of the application. It's some of the how-to. Not everything tonight is, thus saith the Lord.

Some of these things will be suggestions, ideas of how you can get to this point. It might even be more suited for a Sunday school class, but here we are on a Sunday night. And so, we'll preach the truth of God's Word with His help and make some practical how-to explanations more than exposition tonight.

We've been answering how to do evangelism. The means is the Holy Spirit in prayer. The power of the Spirit. And the message comes in words. It's how God has spoken to us.

[7:31] And so, we're going to have to use words in speaking to others, whether we speak them or give them the written word. It's the message of the Gospel. And we began to talk a little bit about the method last week.

Again, it's words, but it's also the way that we live. Letting our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who's in heaven. And that's where we want to start tonight. If your light is shining, like we spoke about last week from Matthew 5, it should create opportunities for you to open your mouth and speak.

And the question is whether or not you will take advantage of those opportunities. Will you use them? You have some examples of these things. You're on a football team. Or when I was in high school, it was a soccer team.

And my teammates turned the ear blue with their foul language, with their cursing and their swearing. And maybe, likely, it's that way on your team as well.

And somebody asked you one day, why don't you talk that way? Why don't you say the things that we say? And all of a sudden, you've got two options before you.

[8:38] And you say, well, I just don't use those words. Mom and Dad don't like it, and I don't. And if you say that, then you've missed the opportunity that's been presented by living your light in a manner that's visible to all around you.

Or you can say, God says to let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth. And so I try to honor and obey that command. I try to live for God.

Oh, you're one of the Christians better than everyone else. He says, no, I'm worse than most. I've just found a great Savior who's forgiven me for all the times I haven't used my tongue the way I should.

Who gives me a heart that wants to obey Him and control my tongue. It's not me. It's God at work in me. And He can do it for you too.

Ask me sometime after practice as you go back from a water break. It can create an opportunity. Maybe you're at work and you always work hard and somebody says, why do you always work so hard?

[9:41] Why don't you ever slack off? Why aren't you lazy? Why don't you play more games like everybody else instead of working? Oh, I'm just a hard worker. And you see, you've let your light shine so that glory can come to you if you say that.

Not to the God who's enabled you to do it. Or you can say, rather, whatever I do, I aim to do it with all my heart working as for the Lord and not unto men. And so whether the boss sees me or not, God sees me.

And I want to honor Him. And somebody may have a comment about that. And it opens an opportunity to discuss further. Perhaps not. But you've sown a seed. Perhaps you're grieving and the loss of a loved one.

And somebody says that you're different than the other people I see grieving. The other people don't seem to have any hope, but you do. And you say, well, I know that he knew Jesus and that He's with Him in glory now.

And I know Jesus too. And one day, I will be with Him and we'll be together for all eternity. So in the meantime, I'm missing desperately and it's painful and it hurts. But I know that I have hope of eternity before me.

[10:48] And there's an opportunity to talk about eternity and how to be ready for it. You're not worried in the midst of a financial crisis. It's pressing in all around everyone and somebody says, how come you're not worried?

Why don't you, why aren't you like the rest of us? Why don't you worry about losing your job and about rising prices? Oh, I've invested well and I have lots of money saved so I think I'll be okay. Well, that may be true. But how about, I know that whatever happens, God is in control and He will provide. He provides food for the birds of the heaven and if He does that, then He'll provide for me, His child.

Oh, you have such well-behaved children. You say, oh, well, thank you. They're just good kids, generally. Or you say, they're not always this way, trust me, which is probably true.

Or you can say, well, God has been very good to us. We're trying to raise them according to His Word. And there's an opportunity that's been created by the way you live.

[11:49] We can multiply examples like this of the way you live being different from people around you and perhaps someone asking you a question about it. And if they ask, you must be ready with an answer.

And the ones that we've illustrated here really just open a door for the Gospel. These answers aren't exactly evangelism. But they open the door so that you can go down the path of a spiritual discussion with someone.

The way you live should create opportunities. Will you take advantage of them? Perhaps it's not just the way you live as a Christian. Perhaps just general circumstances in life are the things that bring about opportunities.

In addition to intentionally living your life as a shining light in the world and using those opportunities, sometimes things happen that aren't related to us being a Christian. Things happen that might happen to anyone.

And you can take those things and use them as an opportunity to open your mouth and speak about God, His Son, our Savior. You can take a conversation, a statement someone makes, a complaint, or an observation and bring a biblical or godly perspective.

[12:52] You know that Max and Alyssa were recently in a car accident and someone said to Max, you were lucky to walk away from that.

And God gave him grace to say it wasn't luck. God protected us. What a beautiful thing that God inspired him to say at that moment. It may or may not create an opportunity to share the Gospel, but a seed has been sown.

A car, it can happen to anybody. But what you do with it should be different. Another person who professes faith in Christ might have an inconsistent testimony.

They might be one of those 83% that we heard about this morning whose lives don't look any different than the rest of the world. And maybe you're given an opportunity to call them on it gently, sweetly, acknowledging your own shortcomings, but saying, you know, if you profess faith in Christ, then Christ should have changed your life.

It should be different. It should look different. And so, and then you've got an opportunity to speak to them about how Christ changes our life, our desires, our priorities, all flipped on their head and how it should be very different.

[13:57] Someone might comment on how beautiful a day it is or how the weather is so nice or maybe more likely they're complaining, oh, it's so hot, it's so humid, it's so cold, it's so snowy, it's so whatever, windy, rainy.

You know you can complain about just about every kind of weather we have. But whether it's somebody commenting on the nice weather or the bad weather, you can say, if it's a comment on the good weather, you can say, God is good to give us such good weather, isn't He? And you can go from there. Or if they're complaining, you can say, you know it's God that sends our weather. And then maybe you think I'm crazy to think God controls the weather or to believe in Him at all, but I'm not.

And then you can tell them why. Someone asks you, and I bet somebody asks you this almost every day, how are you? Fine. How are you? Fine. And we go about our way.

But what's one of the answers we can give? How are you? Fine. Fine. And the things that count. What? Somebody preached about that recently. That's bound to raise a question. What does that mean?

[15:01] What counts? What matters? Wow. Okay, there's tailor-made. They just ask you, what matters? Oh, I have eternal life. My sins have been forgiven. That's what counts.

That's what matters for all of eternity. You can say, as someone here likes to say, no complaints. And that will stand out in a world of people that are full of complainers. And you can tell them why you don't have any complaints.

Better than I deserve. Great answer. Dave Ramsey likes to get. Better than I deserve. And people might wonder, well, what do you deserve?

Or, why don't you deserve better? And you can tell them. Someone else here that I know, when they're asked how they often say, thankful. That's not a typical answer.

Thankful for what? I'm thankful for my Savior, Jesus. And you can tell them about Him. And that question, and don't tell me nobody ever asks you how you are. And so, every time somebody asks you that, you've got an opportunity, by the way you answer, to create it.

[16:08] Not an awkward, not a forced, an opportunity to speak of Christ. It will depend on your situation in life. Occurrences that present opportunities will be different for breadwinners and for moms that stay at home and for students.

If you're working a job, it might come in your colleagues' loss of their job that the opportunity arises. And you can show them that your hope isn't in those things and money and employment.

That's not your security. Yours is in Christ. And there's the opportunity. It comes to you that, in a way, it might not come to someone else. Or your fellow student's failed exam or their tragic breakup with the love of their life creates an opportunity for you to show them how that even if you do fail an exam or lose the game or lose the girl, that it's not the end of the world because that's not who you are.

And you talk about how your identity is in Christ. And if He's the center, then all of these other things, if they go wrong, it's okay because Christ doesn't change. There's an opportunity. Maybe if you're at home often, it's the neighbor's injured child out in the yard or their newborn baby or their broken down car, whatever that provides the opportunity.

All sorts of opportunities. And they will be different for each one of us. But be aware. Be ready for those opportunities when they come. Just this weekend, I was over in Columbus, Ohio.

[17:34] My cousin is now married. She's getting married. The last of the five cousins on my dad's side. So we're there with family and we stayed in a hotel and checking in and there was a man of some sort of Middle Eastern descent, a young man that worked at the hotel.

And just said hello and checked in and then went about our business. And later I came back to the desk and I don't remember why, but I saw that he was reading at the desk something that looked to me like it was written in Arabic.

And I said, hey, and I didn't even think about this really. It just popped out. He said, hey, are you reading the Quran? And he said, well, yes, I am. He said, actually it's an in-depth commentary on the Quran.

It's only four chapters of the Quran and then the rest of this is commentary. And it was actually written in Urdu, which is Pakistani and he's from Pakistan. And we talked for 15, 20 minutes right then about the differences between Islam and Christianity.

And he had studied Christianity. He already knew some of these things. And then later that night, there was another opportunity for 20 or 30 minutes to tell him about Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, and to learn from Him.

[18:40] He belongs to a peaceful branch of Islam. Very different. Radical Muslims think that he's an infidel. But anyway, it was interesting to learn, but also had the opportunity to tell him about Jesus, which he seemed to already know.

But to press on him, the differences between what I believed about what the Bible taught was right or what he believed was right. He believes that Jesus is going to come again.

It's really strange. And he's going to gather all people in. And I said, if you're right, then I'm going to be okay in the end. We're all going to be okay the way he explained it. But I said, if I'm right, then only those who have trusted in Christ and believe that he's the Son of God will be okay.

And just to show the difference. And it all started just because he was reading something that looked like Arabic. It looked really weird to me. And so there's the opportunity. You never know what opportunities, but they will be there.

Seize them. Colossians 4, 5, and 6. Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation always be full of grace.

[19:44] Look for those opportunities. Take advantage of them. I want to talk for a moment tonight about what is often called relationship evangelism. Another life setting in which you should find opportunities for evangelism is within your relationships.

Generally speaking here, I'm talking about outside your family, though certainly one place you should be evangelizing is within your own family. I dare to say that most of us have on a regular basis an opportunity to share the Gospel with people and our families, especially our children.

And so we should. If you're neglecting the evangelizing of your own children, straighten that out first. Then think about other relationships. But tonight I'm focusing on non-family relationships that I'm thinking of.

But relationship evangelism says that you need to have a foundation from which to work in order to share the Gospel with someone. You need to have a rapport with someone. They have to be able to trust you. They have to know you to share that Gospel with them.

And there is much truth in that idea. Just shoving a tract in someone's face or walking up to them on the street and telling them that they're a sinner headed for hell is often more counterproductive than it is effective.

[20:57] And so it's important to, as Packer says, to have earned the right to speak with someone about the Gospel. And Packer and others see this need for relationship or friendship and the danger of being obnoxious and turning people off to the Gospel.

Not with the message. The message is a stumbling block. Telling people their sinners will turn them off and that they need a Savior. Not changing the method but being careful of your method and manner.

And so Packer says, the right to talk intimately to another person about the Lord Jesus Christ has to be earned. And you earn it by convincing Him that you are His friend and really care about Him.

And so you develop this relationship and you love your friends, I hope. And so you want them to know and understand the truth. And so look for opportunities to develop a relationship with someone so that you can have that opportunity to share the truth with them.

Or in relationships that are already existing. And as that relationship develops, I hope your desire to tell them the truth grows because your love for them grows. And you want them more and more to be with Christ, with you for all of eternity.

[22:03] It's a good plan. Someone is more likely to receive the Gospel truth or any other truth from someone they know and trust rather than from a stranger. And isn't that what the woman at the well did after Jesus went to her?

Skip down in John 4 to v. 39. What happens? You know, she went back and she said, come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ? And then down in v. 39.

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony. He told me everything I ever did. That woman went back and talked to people that she knew.

People that she knew in the town and they knew her. She had a reputation but she worked off established relationships to share the Gospel with people or to tell other people about this Jesus that she had met.

It's what the Gerasene demoniac did. He went to his family, to all the Decapolis, the region where he lived and told people of what Christ had done for him. Relationship evangelism is a good idea but there are dangers to this popular form of evangelism.

[23:10] Let me read to you from what my friend, again, Rush Witt says. Many people make a mistake by thinking that they have to build an in-depth, long-term relationship with someone before sharing the Gospel.

This is not true. In fact, some people spend so much time building relationships that when the time comes to share the Gospel, they fear damaging the relationship and fail to proclaim the good news. Anybody here guilty of that? I've been guilty of that before. You say, I'm going to have this relationship with this person. I want to share the Gospel with them. But then you get to be such good friends with them, you don't want to ruin the friendship by telling them this crazy message about the Gospel and having them think that you're a weirdo and saying, you know what, I don't know about you anymore.

And so you get afraid that you're going to ruin the relationship. You say, if I try to force the Gospel down their throat, they'll reject it. And me. And I'll lose that relationship and the chance to share the Gospel with them.

It's sort of ridiculous, isn't it? I'm not going to take advantage of the opportunity because I don't want to lose the opportunity. Well, that's silly. And so we go and we share the Gospel with those people.

[24:23] You're going to have many opportunities with a person like that that arise from everyday occurrences with them. More so than you will have with other people.

Use those opportunities. You know, with a friend, someone that you're going to see on a regular basis that we've talked with often, you don't have to give it to them all at once. You know, you can talk about God and His way one day.

And another time you can talk about how we've turned astray. You're talking about how the world is a mess and how everyone hates each other. And you can say, you know what? That's what happens when men go their own way instead of going God's way, which is loving Him and loving our neighbor.

And then another day you can say, you know, we were talking the other day about how men go their own way, but there's a way that all that can be made right. And it's through Jesus the Savior. And maybe right then or maybe another time you press on them.

You need to repent of your going astray, your sin, and believe in the Savior. So you don't have to give, you know, you know that you're going to see that person should God allow your lives to continue.

[25:32] And so you don't have to give it to them all at once. You can stretch it out sometimes, but just don't fall into the trap. Next time I see them, I'll say something about the gospel. Next time I talk to them. Next time we're together.

Next time, next time. It always becomes, it turns into never. And so relationship evangelism can be very effective. Do it. But do the evangelism part too.

Not just the relationship part. Be aware of its dangers. Well, what about cold call witnessing?

Witnessing to strangers, people that you've never met before.

Should we do it? Some people say yes. Some people say no. You remember Packer saying we have to earn the right to speak to someone about Christ.

He goes farther to warn against a certain type of evangelism. And he says, the indiscriminate button-holing, the intrusive barging into the privacy of other people's souls, the thick-skinned insistence on expounding the things of God to reluctant strangers who are longing to get away.

[26:38] These modes of behavior in which strong personalities have sometimes indulged in the name of personal evangelism should be written off as a travesty of personal evangelism.

Impersonal evangelism would be a better name for them. I think Packer is right insofar as the way he describes that sort of evangelism.

But I don't think the only solution is to develop a friendship, an extended relationship with someone. I believe that you can earn that right to speak to someone of the Gospel in a very short period of time.

Jesus didn't shy away from speaking the Gospel to a total stranger, did He? He said, oh, I need to develop a relationship with the woman at the well before I can talk to her about me being the living water.

Did He? He didn't say that. He immediately opened up the truth of the Gospel to her. We're going to talk more about how you can do that in just a moment.

[27 : 38] But these will be the people that you meet in your everyday life. I'm not talking about necessarily going out of your way to find people to nail with your Gospel hammer. No, these are people that you're going to encounter as it is.

Some of them, like fellow students and co-workers and neighbors, you'll have more time to develop a relationship and rapport with, a foundation from which to share the truth. Others, like the person in the waiting room where you're getting the car fixed or at the doctor's office or wherever else it is that we have to wait, or the person checking out our groceries or the person next to you on the plane or the person cutting your hair.

Some of you probably have the same person cut your hair all the time. I'm a guy and I just go to Great Clips and whichever one cuts your hair, that's great. So often it's a different person. But that person, the one next to you at the game, the woman at the well, there will be these people.

The one who is your server when you go out to eat. And choose carefully. And time it carefully. If you're at the game and you're sitting next to someone you need to hear the Gospel and they just happen to be the parent of the star running back on the team, don't try to share the Gospel when he's running for a touchdown.

Okay? Don't do it when he's down on the field with an injury. That's just... That's not the time. You're going to immediately turn them off. Use common sense.

[29 : 05] Be wise about when you speak to people in this way. And unlike your friends where you're going to have multiple opportunities to share the truth with them.

In these situations, you'll need to get it all in at once. Be ready to give a brief, condensed version of the Gospel. Be ready with a tract, especially in situations where there's not time to share all of the truth with them.

Maybe if there is time, you use your testimony as a springboard. But don't just stop with, this is what God has done for me. And they can say, well, good for you. Show them that this is what God can do for them.

And that if He doesn't, they'll be lost. If you're going to engage in this sort of evangelism with people that you don't know well, I'm going to give you, I hope, two helps tonight.

The first, how to have an evangelistic conversation. And secondly, how to use tracts. And again, these are just practical outworkings.

[30 : 06] Some of them we see modeled here in our Savior's conversation with this woman at the well. But again, my friend Rush has given me these, what he calls, five stages of an evangelistic conversation.

I found them very helpful. And the first stage is positive contact. It all starts with the initial impression. And that positive contact can simply be a sympathetic smile towards a frazzled clerk who's had it with impatient customers.

Rough day today. And showing the greatest of patience with them, which will be so different than everything else that they've seen that day.

A cheerful person will stand out in a world of minimal contact. And if there is any contact, it's negative. It's complaining. A friendly person versus a cold disposition.

You're not like all the angry, hurried customers that have come before your patience, your kind. And that kindness, that patience, that lack of hurry and rush on your part, if it is that checkout clerk or whoever, immediately gives you capital within that you can spend.

[31 : 14] It gives you the right to say something more. They will be more willing to hear something from you because you've been kind to them than from the person that went through in a huff, mad because the person in front of them wrote a check and it wouldn't go through the machine or because they swiped their card and it didn't go through and they had to try this card and every card

in their wallets and the person just fuming that they've had to wait so long.

You will be very different. Just a kind word. How's your day been? Has it been a rough day? With Jesus, the positive contact and the Samaritan woman was simply talking to her.

Jews didn't talk to Samaritans. And especially a Jewish man to a Samaritan woman. And so the positive contact was made just in the fact that he spoke to her. What a remarkable thing.

And she expresses that. You're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan. And she's amazed. And immediately he's established positive contact. Second stage of an evangelistic conversation is common ground. Find common ground with that person. It can be done by asking a couple of questions, showing an interest in their life. It can be the same hometown or high school or college or work experience.

[32 : 23] Hey, I used to be a waitress too. Instead of getting all over the waitress when she's slow to get to your table, you say, you know what? I understand. I've been there. I mean, I haven't, but my wife has anyway.

But if you've been a server before, you can empathize and sympathize. And there's common grounds. It can be the slow economy. It can be your kids. Do you have kids?

I've got three kids at home because they're crawling all over you. I've got three kids right here with me. And you can tell they're about to drive me nuts, but maybe you know how that is. You can say, go Irish.

Notre Dame won today because they got a hat on or whatever your team is. Somebody's back there shaking their head. If that's not the common ground, that's not a great way to make positive contact.

But if they're wearing, you know, something that says, Notre Dame, hey, good win for the Irish today. I've got some work to do, but you establish some common ground. And with Jesus, the common ground was that he needed a drink. They're both at a well.

[33 : 20] The water is the common ground. So can you get me a drink? There's immediate common ground. They both need a drink and there's a well. So positive contact and then common ground.

And then the third stage is the shift. Turning from the natural to the spiritual. It can be done in some of the ways that we've mentioned earlier. Taking advantage of certain situations and speaking of God and those things.

If they ask you how you are, well, finding the things that count and that's your shift and the things that count are the things of the cross. But again, Rushton says, he says, without the shift, you're nothing more than a friendly person.

And that's right. You'd be friendly all day long and you haven't shared the gospel with someone. So you've got to take that conversation and turn it. And he gives several suggestions. There's others here.

Some people wear a cross for jewelry or might have one visibly tattooed on them. And you can ask them what it means to them and explain what it means to you. Very simple way to shift the conversation.

[34 : 22] You can talk about current events, about the hurricanes that are bearing down on us and the protection that you find in the God who sends those hurricanes. You can talk about the war and the sad loss of life from that war or from those hurricanes.

You can say, what a sad thing that every day people are dying and entering eternity. I wonder how many of them are ready. What does that mean? Ready for eternity.

And there you've got an opportunity. Someone thanks you for your help and you say, you know, you're welcome. I'm glad to help people but there was a time in my life when I didn't. All I thought about was myself until God came and changed my heart.

You've shifted. You can ask someone what their job is assuming you're not at their workplace and they're serving you dinner and obviously their work is a way to... But you're somewhere else. Hey, what do you do?

And they answer. And when they ask you the same question in return instead of just saying what your job is, I'm a nurse. I'm a pastor. And boom, that's it. Describe for them what you do.

[35 : 22] Describe it in terms of God's calling. God is... You're a nurse and you say, God has called me to help people who are sick. Or God has called me to help keep the country moving by working in a factory that produces this, that our country couldn't survive without.

It keeps the economy going. Describe it in terms of your calling. And just the introduction of God's name can create an opportunity. Remember, way back at the beginning we talked about D.L. Moody from Chicago and how he made a resolution to not let 24 hours pass without sharing the gospel with someone.

And the account is written, one night he got home and had gone to bed before it occurred to him that he had not spoken to a soul that day about accepting Christ. Well, he said to himself, it's no good getting up now.

There'll be no one out on the street at this hour. But he got up, dressed, and went to the front door. It was pouring rain. Oh, he said there will be no one out in this pouring rain. Just then he heard the patter of a man's feet as he came down the street holding an umbrella over his head.

Then Mr. Moody darted out, rushed up to the man and said, Mary, I share the shelter of your umbrella. There's the common ground. It's raining and they both need shelter. Certainly, the man replied.

[36:32] Then Mr. Moody said, have you any shelter in the time of storm? And there's the shift. And he preached Jesus to him. These are just a few ideas of how you can turn a conversation.

You can think of others. Pay attention in the conversation. Look for any opening. You say, you know what? I'm not that quick on my feet. I don't see those things. An hour later, I think, oh, I could have said this, but I missed it.

Oh well. And the opportunity goes by. That's fine. We're not always quick on our feet. I'm certainly not. And I've missed opportunities before. But you can go prepared into any conversation with a question that will work in almost any situation.

You've got a little common ground with someone. This isn't any situation. It's a little more particular. But perhaps with people that are new to the area. Someone's just moved to town. A new neighbor. You find out someone has not been in the area long.

And the question is, do you have a church family? Anywhere that you go to church and you can invite them to come to church. I've been able to use this with people on their lunch breaks park out in our shade here on the front of the street.

[37:40] And they've had opportunity to ask people, well, they're parked at a church. Okay. Do you have a church family that you call your own? You'd be welcome to come visit us anytime. That can open an opportunity or just leave it at an invitation to come.

And then my friend is very bold. And I confess that I've never done this, but he does it all the time. And one day I will be bold and courageous and I will do it.

And I hope that you will as well, by God's grace. He talks about a question. If you were to die today, are you 100% certain you would have eternal life in heaven?

You say, that's crazy. That's a conversation killer. People are going to think you're nuts if you say that. Okay. You're right. Disarm them first and say, I know this is going to sound crazy to you.

And then you've taken away their ammunition. You know, I know this is going to sound crazy. But if you were to die today, are you 100% certain that you would have eternal life in heaven?

[38:46] And my friend says, by showing the person that you know such a question is rarely asked, it doesn't seem crazy at all. And so you can go ready with a question like that into any conversation that doesn't require you to find a hole or a turning point.

You can create your own. Anyway, that's the third stage, the shift. The fourth is the gospel presentation, the truths we've talked about, God and His way, man and His way, how we've gone astray, Jesus, who is the way back to God and the response.

And sometimes all there will be time for us to put a tract in your sin and say, this explains this message of how you can have that eternal life. I'd love for you to read it and then get back to me and always have your information on the back of it.

We'll talk more about how to use a tract in a moment. Or you can use that tract and you open it up and you can explain it to them. You can show them what it's talking about. A combination of both or just explain to them from your own words.

But that fourth stage is the gospel presentation. And then in the fifth stage, He says questions and answers that may or may not be. It might prompt questions. They might just look at you like you're an idiot and walk away.

[39:53] But there may be opportunity for questions and answers. Be ready for questions. Always be ready to give an answer for the hope you have within you. And if you don't know the answer to the question, don't bluff your way through it.

Say, you know what? I don't know. But I can find out. And be willing to communicate further if they are. In the midst of all this, learn to ask good questions.

Questions that require more than a yes or no answer. You don't necessarily have to be a great conversationalist. Just learn to ask those questions and listen to their response and offer your response to what they say.

Someone tells you, you've said something, and they're like, oh yeah, I believe in God too. And you can tell they're sort of hedging or dodging. You say, well, what do you mean by that? Well, there's a good question that requires something more than just a yes or no answer.

How do you know that to be true? Where do you get your information? You're looking for their basis for truth. Your source, of course, is the Bible. But what is theirs? What happens if you're wrong?

Questions that they'll have to think about and answer.

[41:01] And so there's a few ideas on having an evangelistic conversation. And I forgot to talk about Jesus. He made the shift right away, didn't he? Established the positive contact by talking to her.

The common ground. The water. And then the shift comes, boy, right away. He doesn't waste any time. Verse 10. If you knew the gift of God who had asked you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.

And boy, that's going to raise some questions. Say things that will make Him go. What do you mean living water? What do you mean finding the things that count? What is that? And He's made the shift.

And then He explains how He is the living water. He is the Messiah, the Christ. And so there's positive contact, common ground to shift to the Gospel presentation, questions, answers.

I want to talk for a moment now about tracts. If and how to use them. I think we can and we should. And there's a right and a wrong way to leave them.

[41:57] Many tracts you'll find are gimmicky. And I don't like those. Don't leave a tract just with a tip without having said anything about it at your table.

That could be effective, but it's much better to come with some personal contact. Tell them what it is and why you're giving it to them.

Put your information on the back. This one has a place in the back and many will. This booklet was given to you by. Put your name and an email address if you don't want to indiscriminately give out your phone number.

And always if you give one away, pray for the person to whom you've given it. That they would read it. That God would use it to impact and change their lives. But give tracts with personal contact.

Not impersonal without any point of reference for it. You can give tracts to all sorts of people. To a waitress.

[42:59] A server. And this is again from my friend Rush. He writes, After the meal is over and the other people at your table are on their way out. Take a moment to locate your server. You can say something like, Hey, thanks for the great service.

You really did a good job. I'd like to give you something to read when you get a break. This booklet explains everything you need to know about eternal life. My name, email address, are on the back. I'd love for you to read it.

Shoot me an email. Tell me what you think. By approaching someone this way, you leave a lasting impression. You pique the person's interest. Give a reason to consider what your tract has to say. The more personal you are, the more interested someone will be to hear your message of eternal life through Jesus. And give them to a server. You can give them to that person in the checkout lane where you obviously don't have time because you're going to hold up the person behind you.

And you've established that positive contact and you can give it saying something very similar to what we've just read. To other miscellaneous people that you meet throughout your day. You can give it to a friend that you've had an opportunity to speak with somewhat about the Gospel, but it hasn't seemed clear and they haven't responded.

[44:05] You say, you know what? Here's something that explains some of the things we've talked about. Give it a read and tell me what you think. You can give it to someone like that. And I want to give you tonight a few examples of some good tracts.

There isn't a perfect one. They all, that I've found, have some flaws, some hindrances, but that doesn't mean that they're not good on the whole and can't be used with great benefit and effect.

And so let me give you a few examples tonight. One is this one. It's called Two Ways to Live. The choice that we all face. It's an excellent, very simple, very clear summary. And it can be used in a variety of situations. Someone asks you why you are the way you are. Why don't you slack off at work? Why don't you talk the way the rest of us do? And you say, you know what? There's two ways to live. And one is to live for God and His Son Christ and the other is to live for ourselves. And this tells you the difference between the two. Two ways to live.

[45:05] And it's clear. It's attractive. It's colorful. It's step by step. Six or seven things. And even talks with the response and then the place to put your name.

There's a very helpful tract that you can use. Many of you are familiar with the book Don't Waste Your Life by John Piper. Or here's a tract that's excerpted from that book. Don't Waste Your Life. Great thing to give to people who are wasting their lives. Great thing to give to people who think that they're okay because they're religious in general. He talks about the specificity of Christ. The importance of believing in Christ as the Son of God. Excellent little piece of writing taken from his book that you can give to someone.

This one is called God's Message for You. One of our Arbca churches used to publish it with permission. I've taken it and redone it, tweaked it, added, subtracted, but this one's not as exciting or colorful, but just very simple seven points in each one with Scripture.

[46:10] And on the back, the Ten Commandments which are referred to inside. And at the bottom, if you have more questions or questions about what you've read or want more information, please contact Aaron Hoke and an email address.

Very simple, concise summary of the Gospel. Quest for Joy. This one also comes from John Piper. You can give this to people that are always not joyful, sad, complaining people, bitter people, or people that are looking for happiness.

They're all about it, but they're looking in all the wrong places. You can put something like this in their hands and say, here's how you can find true joy. This one is just six very simple points that explain the Gospel of Christ.

Helpful tool. I'm sure you're all familiar with ultimate questions. I think this is the best thing I've ever come across that summarizes the truth of the Gospel.

It's longer. It's deeper. It's more in depth. Don't give it away indiscriminately. Give it to somebody that you've had some discussions with that seems to genuinely be seeking, that has some good questions.

[47:21] Here's some good answers. These ones, just very practically, are more expensive. And so, you know, this one is a few cents. This one's a couple bucks. And so, you be wise in the way that you distribute.

But, this is just, this is, it's gold. Excellent. A summary of the Gospel for those that want more information that are searching. Another valuable thing to have some of, in your possession is this little folder that has information about our church.

Grace Fellowship Church. What is Grace Fellowship Church? Well, it answers that question, talks about what we believe, it gives an invitation on the back, it does all the work for you. We welcome you to come and worship with us.

Better that you say that to them when you hand it to them. But, it has such, you know, you invite somebody to church and they say, oh, okay, I'll think about that. And they don't know where, they don't know when, anything, and it's easy for them to get out of that.

You invite them to church and you put this in their hands and they know where and they know when you're going to meet. Very helpful thing to always have some of with you. Take some tracts, put them in whatever you carry with you every day.

[48:30] Your purse or your backpack or your briefcase or your coat pocket. Whatever it is that you take with you so that you've always got it. And so you don't meet someone and you go, oh, I don't have a tract so I can't say anything.

Make sure you've got one with you. You say, well, where can I get them? Okay. The track track.

Just down the hall. You know that we've got that rack and we don't see it as often now because we meet down here but it's still there.

And the left end of that rack is books. The right end of it is a tracked rack. And it's been slightly reorganized now. Sorry, Ed. I didn't ask his permission.

The right side of it, pretty much right down the middle now, the right side of it is evangelistic material. The left side of it is things that are more directed towards Christians, for believers. And so go have a look at that right side of it and you'll find all of these things there. There's several stacks of all of these things as well as others. There's some helpful brochures by Peter Jeffries, I think.

[49:34] Some other things down there that you can use. But all of these things that I've just shown you are there and available. Also, all of these with the exception of the information about our church and God's message to you, all of these are available in Spanish.

And if you're interested, you know some Spanish speakers, I can get those for you. The Spanish versions are not down there. But take a look at that. Collect some together. And don't just take them and shove them somewhere where you'll never see them again.

Put them again somewhere where you're going to take them with you every day. Don't take just a few to make me feel better because there's less than there were when I put them out. Don't, again, take them and never use them.

Take them. And then read them yourself. Familiarize yourself with them so you know what you're giving away. So that if somebody asks you a question and you go, I don't know, I haven't really read it. That's not terribly convincing or persuasive.

Like, oh, well, that message must mean a lot to him. Familiarize yourself. If you're going to use one of them, read the thing. And familiarize yourself with it so that you know what it says. And so with some of these, they sort of lend themselves.

[50:42] You can just go through it with someone and talk through it with them. And then use them. Give them away. And then when you've given a couple away, don't stop and be satisfied that you've done your duty.

Come back and get some more. And let me know if you use them. Which ones you find most helpful? Let me know if you find any more. I'm saying they're not perfect, but if you find any really glaring problems with some of them that I've overlooked as I've read through them.

Tell me which ones get the best response. Which ones have been most useful to you? Talk to one another about it. Take advantage of these resources and use them wisely. Talk to each other about evangelism.

Whether it's the tracks, opportunities that you've had. And you don't have to do it in a way that's bragging, oh, I evangelized to three people this week. Not like that at all, but explain opportunities that you've had.

Ask one another, have you had a chance recently? Talking like that with someone I found out once that somebody in our church, and I thought this was a fabulous idea. When they've gone out to eat before, when their server comes, they'll say, we're going to pray before we eat.

[51:50] And we'd like to know if there's anything you'd like us to pray for. How can we pray for you? And immediately, mark yourself out as at least a religious person.

They might not necessarily know you're a Christian, but you've opened the door there so that when you hand them this on your way out the door, it's not out of the blue. And they understand something like that's coming. And I wouldn't have known that if this person hadn't shared it with me. And so talk to each other about opportunities you've had, avenues that have been opened for sharing the Gospel. And then take advantage of those things and use them wisely. I will have to save some of this for next time.

I want to talk some about the manner, the way in which we do this, not being obnoxious, not being offensive, having appropriate timing, appealing to the emotions and the will secondarily to the mind. Some of these things we'll get into next time because we've gone long enough. But may God make us a people not that just understand that evangelism is something that we should do.

[52:56] I hope tonight you can put feet to some of these things. And I know that I've just given a few suggestions. You take them and multiply them and apply them in your life. Your situation will be different than the ones that I face.

But may we be a people that love to tell other people the good news. And let's use the tools that we have at our resource. And let's pray for boldness and a willingness to take advantages of the opportunities.

The opportunities are there. May God give us grace to use them. Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank You that You've brought the Gospel message to us. We who are so undeserving have

been recipients of that glorious truth.

And we pray that You would make us agents that would proclaim that truth to others that they might hear it and receive it and so be saved. Give us boldness.

Give us courage. Give us wisdom to see the opportunity to understand how to turn the conversation, to take advantage of those opportunities that are set before us each day.

[54 : 00] Strengthen us to know how and embolden us to actually do it. Give us help in these things. as we admit our weakness, our frailty, our hesitation, we pray that You would make us then to not be weak or hesitant, but bold and courageous to proclaim the truth of Your Word to a lost and dying world that needs so desperately that truth.

Give us Your Spirit. We can only do it in His power. Give us help to proclaim the message of Your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen. Amen.