

The Bible Speaks To Me About My Witness

Session 6: Part 2 – To Whom?

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Session 6

To Whom?

Session Overview

Different stages of evangelism
How to communicate the message
Application
Exam
Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

Learner Objectives

At the end of this session, you should:

- be able to discuss the different roles of different people in the evangelism cycle.
- understand ways to communicate the gospel that the hearer will understand.
- start looking at an evangelism web in your own life.

Introduction

Though we are all called to win other people to Christ, evangelism can be a process. Like a plant, it begins with a seed that is watered, nourished, and nurtured along until harvest finally happens. And sometimes we have different roles to play in that process.



To Whom?

Notes

Erma and Dave

Joan was raised in a nominal church but had no evangelical understanding. Now, for several years she had not attended at all. In the apartment above her, Erma came in to keep house for an elderly man. Erma loved Jesus, talked about her joyous relationship with Christ, and told Joan Jesus loved her too. Erma invited Joan to come with her to her church, the Church of the Nazarene. Joan's heart was warmed by the services. Then suddenly Erma died. Upset, Joan quit church for a while.

Sometime later Joan married Mark. They moved to a new home. With new marriage and new home, Joan wanted to make a new beginning spiritually. She remembered her good experience at Erma's church and searched the Saturday newspaper for the nearest Nazarene church. Joan and Mark visited the church.

In a short time, Dave, of the congregation Joan and Mark visited, phoned and talked with Mark and Joan. Dave suggested that he stop by to visit with them, get to know them better, and tell them more about the church. Dave also said he'd like to bring a couple of other folks from the church. Mark and Joan liked the idea.

On March 25, a Thursday night, Dave took Pat and Rod to visit Mark and Joan. Their discussion eventually turned to Jesus. The Holy Spirit was there, and Joan was ready. She invited Christ into her life and was transformed. As a result of the call of Dave and the call of the Lord, Mark renewed a long-broken relationship with Christ.

Who should get the credit—Erma, who sowed the seed, or Dave, who reaped the harvest? Both should rejoice—they were used by God. But God should get the glory (1 Cor. 3:6–7). Later Mark and Joan joined their local church, Dave and Pat became missionaries in Africa, Rod pastored a fast-growing church on the west coast of the United States, and Erma, the housekeeper, is in the presence of the Lord.

Whenever you help one person to come one step closer to Christ, you have pleased God. You may be the witness who leads that prospect to Christ, or



you may be the witness who plants the seed. Any progress up the spiritual decision process model is good and to the glory of God.

Understandable Language

Paul the apostle was deeply concerned about how to identify with the people to whom he witnessed and preached. He wanted them to understand his message. He carefully considered their culture and station in life. Listen to him:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews . . . I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some (1 Cor. 9:19–20, 22).

When you analyze Paul’s synagogue preaching, as in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13–43), he spoke in the language a well-trained Jew would understand. He drew heavily on Old Testament promise. His audience was called to find forgiveness in Jesus and believe in Christ.

However, when the same Paul preached to the philosophers at the Areopagus in idol-filled Athens, his message drew, not on the Old Testament, but on their familiar idols of worship and Greek poets to point them to repentance and Christ (17:22–34).

The New Testament spoke the language of its day. So should we. How will the gospel speak to present-day hopes and human needs?

In his book, *Evangelism Explosion*, James Kennedy urged readers to avoid misunderstood words in our witness. Many terms precious to us are not understood by the world—words and phrases like “saved,” “regenerated,” “sanctified,” “Amen,” and “Praise God!” We need to take the truths of these words and put them in a form understood by the person to whom we speak. Think about your witness. Is it understandable to its hearers?

Every Christmas, our church asks a new Christian to give a witness in church, emphasizing how Christmas has become different with Christ. One year we asked Dan, who prayerfully prepared his testimony. Our congregation was reaching many business professionals, including those who considered themselves “moving up.” Dan used some of the language of the church—words like “saved” and “sanctified”—but he surrounded them with so much of the



language that the aggressive business and professional young adults of our congregation would understand that his message made a powerful impact. When the service was over, people crowded around Dan to talk further. Among them were those who were attending their first service in our church. Let this testimony speak to you at the same time you sense how it would be understood by its hearers.

I was raised in the church.

I was a church “brat,” the son of an active Sunday School teacher and person who loved the church. I was friends with the pastor’s kids.

I was mentally saved at age nine because when you are a kid in the church, it was the thing to do. I was baptized (by immersion) at age sixteen.

I left home to attend chef’s school in Connecticut.

Free at last—no one to answer to, except me, of course.

Free to live my way,

Free to make my own decisions—on everything . . . hurrrrray!

If I wanted to go to class, I could (and did).

If I wanted to eat lunch at 11:30—or 2:30—I could.

If I wanted to party all night, and play all day, I could.

If I wanted to smoke, I could.

If I wanted to go to class, I could (and did).

If I wanted to go to church, I could (and didn’t).

I was in control! There was no one I had to answer to.

For the next 24 years, I was (or better stated, Satan was) in control of my life.

All of my life—

my personal life,

my professional life,

my financial life.

I’m sure you understand there was just no time for spiritual life; I was too busy climbing the corporate ladder.

Corporate life—where you are taught that to be powerful, you must be *emotionless. Insensitive.*

You are taught to be *self-sufficient* and *goal-oriented*.

The company first, yourself second, and should you so choose, family third.

God and business just don’t mix; you can just forget about Sundays off.

Get over those religious sensitivities, mister.



We're going to make something out of you.
Don't worry! Be happy—or at least look happy!
Ah, corporate life, where you are taught that you are, and must be, *always* right, even when you are wrong—even at the expense of other people. “It’s them or us!”
Your *only* measure of achievement and success is the size of your paycheck.
Your *only* competition is at the bank teller’s window.
The more you make, the better job you did.
And so for many, many years of my life, I was working on my career.
I became an industry leader.
I had it made.

Then *I* decided to change my life.
After 21 years of smoking three packs of cigarettes a day, I suddenly decided, for no apparent reason, I wanted to stop smoking.
Being self-dependent and self-assured, I stopped smoking cold turkey, without any form of withdrawal, without any further desires. I was tough.
I did the impossible.

Do you really believe *I* was in control of that?

I had achieved the highest food and beverage position in the United States, in control of the largest number of fine dining, white tablecloth and dinner house restaurants in America. Highest in position stature . . . and second highest in salary in the restaurant industry.
Oh, how much California “good-life” life-style money can buy!

Eventually *I* even decided to be benevolent.
I decided to take a \$100,000-a-year *cut* in salary and return to Kansas City to work for, and help, my former boss (one of the men who “made” me) with his recently acquired, but faltering, business enterprise.
Just to show I really did have the capacity to care.
And, as a further display of benevolence, and to appease my wonderful mother, we visited Kansas City First Church, at the recommendation of a lifelong Nazarene friend, a friend of Mother’s from Pittsburgh.
After my politically oriented, meaningless attendances at the likes of California’s Crystal Cathedral and New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral, churches where, for good business reasons, I needed to “be seen,” you



can imagine how very impressed I was with First Church's facility.
But, oh, well, I knew that after the holidays I could return to good, old First
United Mattress for my Sunday morning "rejuvenation."
After all, I was still in control!

Or thought I was in control,
until the Sunday morning service on December 31, when we sang
"Majesty." Something happened. I felt different. I didn't know what it
was. It ran a chill through me. Tears filled my eyes.

Understand, please, these were sensations I had never experienced
before.

This was a new experience.
It made me come back, even after Mother went back home.

It was something that made me curious.
It made me buy a Bible (the King James Version).
It made me buy another Bible (the NIV)
so that I could understand what Pastor Wright was saying to
me—"to me?"

Hey, what's going on here?
Oh, thank God for the powerful workings of the Holy Spirit.
I continued to worship and learn in this church.
I didn't realize it then, but I was under conviction by the Holy Spirit. I didn't
resist . . . I don't know why . . . I just couldn't.
On Sunday, February 18, I was reclaimed by the blood of the Lord Jesus
Christ, my Savior!
And on Saturday, March 3, during the membership class with Pastors
Wright and Shaver, I was sanctified wholly by the Lord God Almighty.

Oh, what glory!
"But whatever was to my profit I now consider *loss* for the sake of *Christ*."

What is more, I consider *everything* a loss
compared to the *surpassing greatness* of *knowing* Christ Jesus my Lord,
for whose sake I have lost *all things*.
I consider them *rubbish*, that I may gain *Christ*."
(Paul's letter to the Philippians while in prison, 3:7-8, italics added)



This week, let's remember:

Christ was born on Christmas;

He is alive today.

He is not just for children;

He is not just for Christmas.

He is for each and every one of us—not just for the holiday, but for every hour of every day.

This year, join me in putting *Christ* back into Christmas.

This story is more than just a Christmas celebration—more than the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. The gift goes on! Forgiveness of sins, through the blood of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; redemption, salvation, reclamation, and sanctification through God's mighty power and grace; daily guidance, direction, and care from this precious Holy Spirit.

I am so thankful *this* Christmas that I have received these gifts of God.

"For by *grace* are ye saved through *faith*; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8 and 9, KJV, italics added).

The Bible says that Jesus is the Light (John 1:5). What role did John the Baptist play in Christ's ministry? Verse 7 says, "He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe." Consider John 1:35–46:

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he



said to him, "Follow me."

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

John wanted us to know the importance of personal witness in the outreach of the church. So in chapter 1 he gave us the pattern. From the moment when we discover the truth about Jesus, we are constrained to pass it on. This is to be a pattern for all Christians.

Note in John 1:4, Andrew found his brother Peter to tell him about Jesus. It's natural to go to our own kin first, our best prospects, the ones with whom we already have the best understanding. Next Philip responded to Christ. Like Andrew and Peter, he was from Bethsaida. One wonders if Andrew and Peter had prepared him. Philip was excited enough to pass the message to Nathanael.

Under Paul's ministry the jailer came to Christ. The next ones to be converted were—naturally—his own household (Acts 16:31–34). Family evangelism was common in the New Testament, especially in Acts. In 10:24, Cornelius "had called together his relatives and close friends" to hear the gospel. Then, 18:8 tells us Crispus, the synagogue ruler, saw his household come to Christ. And homes become centers of the gospel's spread—Jason in Thessalonica (17:5), Lydia in Philippi (16:15), and Priscilla and Aquila in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus (18:1–2, 19, 26).

Today the above description of the spread of the gospel is called web evangelism. Win and Charles Arn say in *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples*, "Webs of common kinship (the larger family), common friendship (friends and neighbors) and common associates (special interests, work relationship, and recreation) are still the paths most people follow in becoming Christian today." One Philippines pastor said to me, "A grandfather is a times 10." He meant that if you win the grandfather to Christ, that is 10 times greater than winning another member of the family because the grandfather has influence and will evangelize the children and grandchildren. However, we did see the children influencing their parents to come to Christ while we were in the Philippines. Webs were working.



The Institute of American Church Growth surveyed 14,000 laity with this question, “What or who was responsible for your coming to Christ and your church?” Seventy-five to ninety percent said it was because a friend or relative influenced them. The average church member has eight friends and relatives outside Christ and the church. A couple in Grove City, Ohio, found Christ and began to witness to their friends. “The Family Tree” was the result, bringing 35 adults and 32 children to Christ and the church. See the illustration of this on the next page.

Sometimes family members will be resistant. Jesus’ family opposed Him (Matt. 12:46–50). In Mark 3:21 we discover His brothers thought Him mad. Later the New Testament writers give us encouragement. By Acts 12:17 and 21:18 Jesus’ brother James was leader of the Jerusalem church. He authored the Book of James. Take courage!

One summer, my wife and I were invited to hold revival services in Watertown and LaFargeville, N.Y., area. My Aunt Mary had accepted Christ through my mother’s witness and joined the Church of the Nazarene. I had many blood relatives in the area. With Aunt Mary’s help, I wrote letters to 125 blood relatives. I had some significant conversations with loved ones there. Thirty-four of my loved ones came out to revival services. Twelve people came forward for prayer and to seek God.

Application

From your prospect list of the last lesson, invite at least one of your prospects to come to church with you next Sunday. You might include an invitation to a meal as part of your church invitation. Think through ahead of time how you’ll express yourself. To a close friend or neighbor you might say,

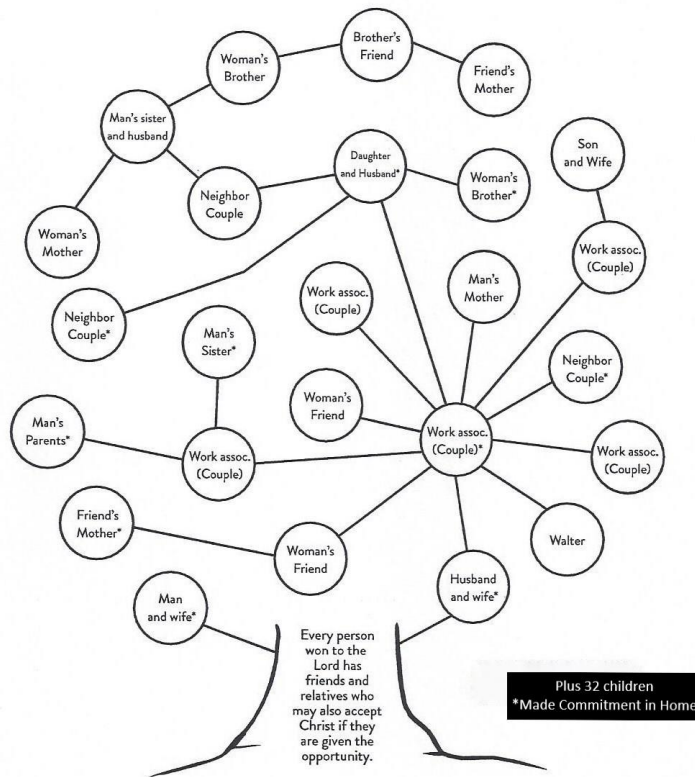
Jack and Jeanne, you’ve been our good neighbors and are among our best friends. We want you to know what it means to us to have friends like you. We’d like you to be our guests at our church this Sunday. Afterward we’d like to take you out to dinner. We are proud of you as our friends, and we are proud of our pastor and church friends. We’d be so glad if you could meet each other.

If they already have a commitment this Sunday, you might follow with, “What about doing this your first available Sunday?”



Share the result of your invitation with a trusted Christian friend. Or if you are part of a class studying this book, share with the class. Endeavor to share what might be most encouraging to them.

THE EVANGELISM FAMILY TREE



In Grove City, Ohio, a pastor won a young couple to Christ, and as a result, 35 other people (plus 32 children) came to know Christ and are active in the church.

FROM ONE SEED OF FAITH HAS GROWN A GREAT TREE OF BELIEVERS.

An aggressive program of personal evangelism can produce a forest of faith in churches everywhere.



EXAM – Session 6

1. Erma talked to Joan about Jesus. She invited Joan to church, and Joan accepted. Dave shared Christ with Joan and husband Mark. The following is a true statement: _____

- a) There was nothing new that prepared Joan and Mark for accepting Christ, only the grace of God.
- b) Only Mark, Joan, and Dave were present in the home the night of Mark and Joan's conversions.
- c) Erma, who sowed the seed, and Dave, who reaped the harvest, should both get credit for the victories, and God should get the glory.
- d) All of the above are true.

2. To share the Gospel in language understandable to the hearers is vastly important. Because this is true, _____

- a) Paul preached in idol-filled Athens drawing heavily on Old Testament Scripture.
- b) we may need to avoid words like "saved," "regenerated," "amen," and "praise God" with people of unchurched background.
- c) it is best to avoid testimony of laity, and allow the highly trained pastor to do the speaking.
- d) Dan Durick had to avoid the language of his business and professional career to be understood.

3. List three things about Dan Durick's testimony that most impacted you.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____



4. Web evangelism is the spread of the Gospel among our relatives, our friends, our associates (work, recreation, special interests). An example of this is: _____
- a) Philip, Andrew, and Peter all respond to Christ though they are from different parts of the country.
 - b) In the Philippines, a grandfather has little influence.
 - c) The Grove City Family Tree was because a new Christian couple witnessed to friends who witnessed to friends....
 - d) One survey revealed that over 75% of people who came to Christ or the church came because a pastor invited them.



Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

1. Do you consider yourself more of a sower or reaper? Why do you say that? What does your local church need more of?
2. Discuss your reaction to the Dan Durick testimony.
3. Work together to decide how you will invite your prospect to church. Then, role play. Student, you be the inviter. Mentor, you be the prospect.