

The What and The Why of Personal Evangelism?

by
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I. What is Evangelism?

- A. A Dictionary Definition: “The zealous preaching and dissemination of the Gospel as through missionary work.”ⁱ What is wrong with this definition? It is too narrow (not only through missionary work; not all zealous preaching is evangelistic, nor clear on what is the Gospel).
- B. Etymological Definition: From the Greek through the Latin. The Latin word is *evangelium*, which is derived from the Greek *eu*, (well or good) and *aggelos*, (messenger). A message or messenger of good news.
- C. Various Definitions:
 - 1. According to J.C. Macaulay, “Evangelism is the activity of the church in telling the Gospel to sinners with the intent to bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ.”ⁱⁱ
 - 2. According to J.I. Packer, “Such was evangelism according to Paul: going out in love, as Christ’s agent in the world, to teach sinners the truth of the gospel with a view to converting and saving them.”ⁱⁱⁱ
 - 3. According to Leonard Rascher, “It is the activity of the believers in telling the Gospel to a sinner with the intent to lead him/her to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is dealing with this person on an individual, one to one basis.”^{iv}
- D. There are four essentials to these definitions. They are:
 - 1. The activity of believers as God’s agent(s) or ambassador(s).
 - 2. It has to do with the telling or teaching of the Gospel.
 - 3. It tells you who or to whom the Gospel is directed (sinners).
 - 4. With the intent or with the view of winning them to Christ.

II. What evangelism is not:

- A. NOT the preaching of reform. Why not? What people need is not reformation but regeneration.
- B. NOT a discussion of Christianity as a way of life. Why not? Christianity is a way of life ONLY for born-again, regenerated Christians.
- C. NOT the denouncing of sins. Why not? There is no covering of sin; there needs to be atonement for sin. Anybody can denounce sin and not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. NOT the convincing of others about the truth of the Gospel so that they give intellectual assent. Why not? It is not enough to know ONLY but also to act on it. Note: There are three areas which we need to address when engaging in evangelism: (1.) Intellect (2.) Will (3.) Emotion
- E. NOT the creation of an emotional impression. Why not? People are not saved by making strictly a decision, but by placing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Note: to combat “decisional regeneration” the Gospel must be preached clearly.)

III. What personal evangelism is:

- A. Our Definition: It is the activity of the believers (every believer) in telling the Gospel to a sinner with the intent to lead him/her to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is dealing with this person on an individual, one to one basis.
- B. Types of personal evangelism:
 - 1. Unplanned – as the occasion arises.
 - 2. Planned – a systematic approach.
- C. Basic aspects of personal evangelism:
 - 1. Witnessing for Christ.

- a. Methods:
 - (1.) By our lips.
 - (2.) By our lives.
 - b. Motives:
 - (1.) By our love.
 - (2.) By our loyalty.
2. Winning to Christ.

IV. The Imperative of Evangelism

- A. Christ commands it. Every child of God has been given a mandate to witness (Acts 1:8). Each of us has been commissioned to proclaim the Gospel message to the unsaved of our generation (Mark 16:15). “The Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18-20) is not a challenge; it is Christ’s charge to the church of every generation. In his book, *Grassroots Evangelism*, Don Mallough, the author, says, “The believer in Christ claims this mandate to witness as his own. In the four alls of the declaration, he finds just what he needs to carry on the work of personal evangelism. All power is the source of strength; all nations presents the sphere of his operations; all things covers the scope of the message; and always gives the assurance of continued divine help in the task.”
- B. Love and duty demands it. In John 4 we notice the woman who received Christ went immediately and told others about Him. She was compelled to do it. Packer points out that there are “. . . two motives that should spur us constantly to evangelize. The first is love to God and concern for His glory; the second is love to man and concern for his welfare.”^v Do you care that people go to Hell?

V. The Why (Importance) of Personal Evangelism

- A. Reasons:
 - 1. Because all men are lost and need to be saved and we must be convinced of it.
 - 2. Because God has entrusted to us the responsibility of evangelizing the lost. There is no higher honor, I Thess. 2:4. (I will not stoop to be a king and give up soul winning.)
 - 3. Because of the example of Christ. He was a personal evangelist.
 - 4. Because of the joy and wisdom of witnessing.
- B. Advantages:
 - 1. All can do it. No excuses!
 - 2. Can be done almost everywhere at anytime.
 - 3. Reaches all classes of people. “God is no respecter of persons.” And should not we be either.
 - 4. It focuses on the individual.
 - 5. Produces results. (No loaves to the loafer.)

VI. Some Costs of Soul Winning

- A. It takes time, Eph. 5:16. Make the time! (Someone took the time for you!)
- B. It takes work, Mark 1:17. We need to fish for men as an occupation and not just a sport.
- C. It takes prayer, James 5:16. Prayer for God’s leading to the right people (every one is “fair game”), for the right words, and the courage. We need to pray for the souls individually.

VII. Some Rewards of Soul Winning

- A. Reward of developed character.
- B. Reward of developed gifts and or talents.
- C. Reward of unexcelled joy.
- D. Reward of lasting friendships.
- E. (And Best of All!) Reward of bestowed approval by our Lord – “Well done . . .!”

Evangelistic Counseling

I. The Biblical Mandate

- A. Prov. 11:30 - "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."
- B. Psalm 126:6 - "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."
- C. John 14:26 - "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you."
- D. Phil. 4:13 - "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." (our formula).

II. Preparation For Winning Souls

- A. Know the faith yourself and walk with Christ....be a worthy example (John 1:12).
- B. Be a man or woman of prayer. Have a burden for souls.
- C. Know the Word of God. Have a working knowledge of it.
- D. Learn a plan of salvation. I believe in a "canned" approach!

III. Approaching Individuals

- A. Introduce yourself. Have a good appearance.
 - 1. Be neat and conservative in your dress.
 - 2. Have combed hair, clean hands and clean nails.
 - 3. Don't let your mannerisms detract from Christ and His message.
 - 4. Stand comfortably and erect. Don't slouch or prowl like a tiger.
 - 5. Use gestures sparingly but effectively to help illustrate the point being made.
 - 6. Have godly speech - speak the truth in love.
 - 7. Have godly actions - do all in the name of the Lord.
- B. Start with a good opening sentence.
 - Example: What would be a good opening line?
 - "If you were to die tonight where would you go?"
 - NOT: "How many legs does a cow have...?"
- C. Be friendly, tactful and personable. After you learn the person's name, use it occasionally.
- D. Deal with him/her from the Bible.
- E. Speak clearly and avoid theological or "Church" language.
 - 1. Do not use the language of "Zion." Explain Biblical terms.
 - 2. Never use slang but rather wholesome and gracious words.
 - 3. Do not use any type of language that would detract or bring offense to the Savior or His message, the Gospel.
- F. If possible, deal with a member of the same gender.
- G. Although not always possible on the streets, try to find a quiet and undisturbed place to talk.

IV. Teaching the Particulars of Salvation

- A. The Basic Elements
 - 1. Faith and Repentance. These are inseparable!
 - 2. Cover the Gospel message thoroughly. This precludes that one understands what the Gospel is.
 - a. The death, burial and physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor.15:3,4).
 - b. The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15,17,19; 2:9; John 1:1).
 - c. The person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - d. Why did he come?
 - e. How did he save us?
 - (1) The mechanics
 - (2) The motives

(3) The meaning

- f. Atonement through the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:22).
- g. Who is man?
- h. Why is he in trouble with God?
- i. What can man do?
- j. Salvation is by grace (Eph. 2:8,9; Tit 3:5).
- k. The Bible is God's inspired Word (II Tim. 3:16,17; IIPet. 1:20,21).

B. Some basic plans

- 1. "May I Ask You a Question?" booklet.
- 2. The Romans' Road
 - a. Romans 3:10, 23 - The fact of sin
 - b. Romans 5:12; 6:23 - The consequences of sin
 - c. Romans 5:8 - The payment for sin
 - d. Romans 10:9,10 - Our way out
- 3. Other good, simple and clear Gospel literature.

V. Leading To The Point Of Decision

A. Ask review questions in order to correct any false ideas or impressions.

Examples:

- 1. Why do you think we need the Lord Jesus?
 - 2. What difference would it make if we left the Lord Jesus out of our lives?
 - 3. If someone were to ask you how they could be saved from their sin, what would you tell them?
 - 4. If you died tonight where would you be?
 - 5. If you died tonight and stood before God and He asked you "Why should I let you enter My Heaven?" what would you say to Him?
- B. Bring the individual to the point of decision. Invite him/her to trust Christ as their own Savior. Don't pressure him, but if he desires to receive Christ, have him pray either in his own words, or have him follow you in a sinner's prayer. Be sure he has a proper understanding of prayer (talking to God).

VI. Post-Decision: Follow Up

A. Once the person has prayed, explain to him that if he truly asked Christ to be his Savior, then this is what has happened to him:

- 1. He has entered God's family (John 1:12).
- 2. God has given him eternal life (John 10:28).
- 3. His sins have been forgiven (I John 2:12).
- 4. God will never leave him (Heb. 13:5).

B. Reassure the person of his decision by asking:

- 1. What did you just pray?
- 2. What has Jesus done for you just now?
- 3. Where is Christ right now?
- 4. Will He ever leave you? Why?
- 5. If you sin, what does God want you to do? (I John 1:9).

Note: Be careful not to give false assurance if the person is not sincere or you sense they do not understand.

C. Fill out a card or just write down the person's name, address, phone number, etc. Remember the conversation you had with them so that you can contact them later. Write legibly!

D. Encourage regular church attendance in a good Bible-believing and preaching church or chapel. If possible, take them to yours!

VII. Suggestions

- A. If you are with a friend and one of you is involved in witnessing to an individual, do not interrupt your friend, but rather be in prayer.
- B. Don't get side-tracked. Stick to the issues and be aware of the individual who is insincere and not really interested in the Gospel.
- C. No matter the outcome, thank the person you have witnessed to for taking time to speak to you about this important matter.

VIII. Bibliography

- A. Macaulay, J. C. and Belton, Robert H. Personal Evangelism. Chicago: Moody Press.
- B. Sission, Richard. Training for Evangelism. Chicago: Moody Press.

Note: The Ezekiel Project is committed to sending Bible correspondence courses to individuals who request them. You may give them The Ezekiel Project follow up postcard and encourage them to send it in. You may also want to do follow up on your own. To attain information regarding follow up Bible courses, the following organizations may be contacted:

The Ezekiel Project, Inc. & The Ezekiel Project School of Evangelism (TEPSE)
PO Box 393
Richmond, MI 48062
586-784-4143
tepse.org

The Mailbox Club
404 Eager Road
Valdosta, Georgia 31602
229-244-6812
info@mailboxclub.org

Emmaus Correspondence School
c/o Emmaus International
PO Box 1028
Dubuque, IA 52004-1028
563-585-2070
888-338-7809, Toll Free
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Counseling Children

Introduction

Reaching children for Christ is a privilege indeed. Affective tools and techniques need to be employed in order to be effective. However, it is of critical importance that the evangelist clearly take the opportunity to counsel children to trust Christ as their Savior and give proper biblical assurance and follow up that will mold these children into right thinking concerning God and the Bible.

I. Preparing Yourself for the Encounter

- A. Be humble. We must remember that we are there to serve the children. Never forget that in God's eyes, we are God's children regardless of our age.
- B. Be sensitive to the needs of the child. In many cases, children in their environments have very negative surroundings. Example: What do they watch on TV? Do you know?
- C. Have tenderness of spirit and demonstrate it. We need to truly love them and allow the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ to flow through us. If we do not, they may fear us.
- D. Work hard to reach these precious souls.

II. Approaching Children in any environment

A. Build rapport

Definition: "Rapport" = "relation characterized by harmony, accord, or affinity."^{vi}

1. Be aggressive but don't let it show outwardly. We must keep two things in balance. Our authority as an adult and our identification with the young at heart.
2. Communicate with them and not at them. We must remember that children can usually detect if you do not really care about them as an individual.
3. Maintain a casual and friendly attitude while remaining the authority in the meeting. Without a doubt it is a delicate balance. We should smile, speak openly, and demonstrate genuine Christian joy. Although we are very serious in our task we must not be somber.
4. Check for understanding. Make sure the children have understood the important points and doctrine of the message (the deity of Jesus, sin, faith, etc.) before moving on.

B. Counseling: one to one

1. Try to get alone with the individual child. This effect will eliminate constant interruptions and will allow us to become acquainted with the child.
2. Have the child facing you. Make sure that there are no distracting activities behind you or near you that would capture the attention of the child.
3. Be extremely careful about holding or touching the child. This looks very suspicious and may cause unnecessary problems for you. In some cases it may cause emotional confusion in the child's mind. They need love but we must point them to Christ's love primarily. We are, in a very real sense, strangers and will most likely never see them again. But remember, Christ will never leave them.

C. Counseling: one to a small group (2-5 children).

1. Review the basics of the Gospel.
2. Proceed by asking questions of each child in the group. Attempt to get group participation. While doing this, weed out those who are obviously not sincere or ready to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Say something like, "If you don't want to receive this good news, you can leave if you want."
3. Encourage them to trust Christ and consider praying with them. Though this is not as preferable as one on one counseling, keep in mind that at any moment you may lose the whole group. Remember time is precious! In spite of the likely fact that they may have already heard the Gospel and even prayed previously, still go through the message of the Gospel and urge them to pray with you.

D. Counseling: one to a large group (6 or more children).

1. Review the basics of the Gospel.

2. Deal with the group despite the fact that after several minutes, some will start to leave. The most sincere children will remain. Thus, your large group could become a small group.
3. Enlist the help of other team members. If other team members are available, enlist their help by breaking the large group into smaller groups and if possible, one on one counseling situations.

III. Presenting the Gospel - What to Teach?

- A. The two basic elements of salvation - faith and repentance. They are inseparable.
- B. Foundational truths that need to be explained.
 1. The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Col. 1:15, 17, 19; 2:9; Jn. 1:1, 14.
 2. The substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 15:3.
 3. The physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Lk. 24:39.
 4. The justification by faith of the sinner, Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9.
 5. The Bible is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible Word, II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21.
- C. A plan of salvation (a way in which to present the Gospel in a counseling situation - pick one).
 1. The Gospel hand.
 - a. The baby finger - God loves me, Jn. 3:16; Jer. 31:3.
 - b. The ring finger - I have sinned, Rom. 3:23; 6:23.
 - c. The middle finger - Jesus died for me, I Pet 2:24; Rom. 5:8.
 - d. The index finger - I accept Him as my personal savior, Rev. 3:20; Jn. 1:12.
 - e. The thumb - I am saved, Jn. 3:36; Acts 16:34.
 2. The Wordless book. Each color represents a basic truth of the Gospel.
 - a. Dark = sin, Rom. 3:10-12; Isa. 53:6.
 - b. Light = righteousness, II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 10:10.
 - c. Red = the blood of Christ that cleanses from sin, Heb. 9:22; I Jn. 1:7.
 - d. Green = growing in Christ and in the knowledge of Christ, II Pet. 3:18; I Pet 2:2.
 - e. Gold = heaven, Jn. 14:2; I Pet. 1:4.
 3. Other plans
 - a. "May I Ask You A Question?" booklet
 - b. Four Spiritual Laws
 - c. Other various plans that can be adapted in counseling children.
- D. Explain the concepts of salvation. Use appropriate words and ideas when defining and describing the basics of salvation. Example: "*accepting Jesus into your heart...*" Instead "*make me a part of God's family.*"
- E. Review by asking key questions to affirm the understanding of the basics of the Gospel. Be sure that you ask questions that demand more than a yes or no answer. Do not in any way lead a child into a non-thinking, forced, or false decision. Get them to respond to your questions with an explanation themselves.
Examples of critical key questions:
 1. "What do you understand about the Lord Jesus Christ?"
 2. "Tell me how a person goes to heaven?"
 3. "Where will you go when you die?"

IV. Inviting the Decision:

Remember to design questions that lead up to the point of salvation if the child is ready. If the child is not ready, give as much of the Gospel as you can but be careful not to force the child into a premature decision. We want to bring the child to a non-manipulative decision.

- A. Use much repetition.
- B. Use the Word of God and make sure that they understand that they are responding to God.
Recommended verses to use: Rev. 3:20; Matt. 18:3; John 1:12
Note: Be sure to simplify each phrase for them when using verses from the Bible.
- C. Explain how simple the Bible makes salvation.
- D. Be firm yet compassionate as you seek a response.

- E. Allow enough time, depending on the content of a story. Some stories cover it all, others you need to get more teaching into the invitation.
- F. Use a variety of techniques if appropriate.
- G. Invite the child to accept Christ as Savior.

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I've been bad, that I have sinned against you. I know that I cannot wash away the bad things (my sins) by anything I can do. I believe that you died on the cross and shed your blood to wash away my bad things, my sins. I believe that three days later, you rose again from the dead, physically, and conquered death for me personally. I ask you to wash away all my sins, all the bad things I have done. Come into my heart and life and be my personal Savior. Help me to be the person you want me to be according to your Word, the Bible. Jesus, thank you. I mean this with all my heart. I'm not fooling around because I know that you know if I am or not. I really mean this.

V. Giving Assurance

- A. Explain the results of trusting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Once you feel certain that the child has made a definite decision, from the Bible explain the following, which happened to them:
 - 1. They are God's child, Jn. 1:12.
 - 2. They have eternal life, Jn. 6:23.
 - 3. Their sins are washed away, I Jn. 2:12.
 - 4. Jesus will never leave them, Heb. 13:5.
- B. Give the child assurance of their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ by:
 - 1. Asking the following questions.
 - a. "What did you just pray?"
 - b. "What has Jesus done for you just know?"
 - c. "Where is Jesus right now?"
 - 2. Affirming their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ by saying, "If you have really asked Jesus to be your Savior, He dwells within you, and He will protect you and never leave you."
 - 3. Teaching them that:
 - a. You are in God's hands, Jn. 10:27-30. Ask these questions:
 - (1.) "Can a strong man take you out of God's grip?" Their answer should be no.
 - (2.) "Can the devil himself take you out of God's grip?" Again, their answer should be no.
 - b. Jesus forgives all of our sins, even the ones we commit in the future, I Jn. 1:9. If a child sins, tell them that Jesus will forgive them if they tell Jesus about it and are sorry.
- C. Encourage church attendance at a good and sound Bible believing church.
 - 1. If they already attend, encourage their continued faithful attendance.
 - 2. If they attend a false church or liberal church, do not condemn that church but teach appropriate truths to counter the heresy and urge them to attend a good Bible believing church. Remember you do not want to hinder future contacts with the child and the child's family. Urge them to keep the Word of God as top priority in their life. Ask them a question such as this, "If someone told you something that was opposite of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ, who would you believe? That person or the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible?"
 - 3. If the child does not attend a church or chapel regularly, again encourage regular attendance to a good Bible believing church. Encourage them in the benefits of Sunday school and regular attendance.
- D. Explain the Mailbox Club Bible correspondence courses and how to enroll. Thoroughly give the details for the Mailbox Club card. Explain to the child that they should clearly print their name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number, age, sex, grade, and any other pertinent information. If they cannot write, have their parents or guardians help them. Have the children send the card in for themselves. The reason for this is that if the child sends it in for themselves, they will be serious in doing the Mailbox Club lessons and it will not be a waste of materials and time in the future follow up process.

VI. Practical Suggestions

- A. Never interrupt another worker who is dealing with a child unless it is life threatening, you have been instructed by the team leader to do so, or another reason of that magnitude or unless you are invited by the worker to join in.
- B. Do not waste time with insincere or smart aleck children. There are plenty of children who are sincere.
- C. When a child has trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, introduce them to another team member. This helps them to feel a part of God's family. The other team member can also check for the sincerity of the decision or offer further assurance.

ⁱ William Morris, editor; *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, (American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc. and Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston/New York/Atlanta/Geneva, Illinois/Dallas/Palo Alto, 1973), p. 453.

ⁱⁱ J.C. Macaulay and Robert H. Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, (Moody Press, Chicago, Sixteenth Printing, 1975), p. 12.

ⁱⁱⁱ J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, (Inter-Varsity Press, Chicago, First American Printing December, 1967), p. 53.

^{iv} Dr. Leonard P. Rascher, Personal Evangelism Course Notes take at the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL, Fall semester, 1978, from which these notes are derived from by verbal permission.

^v J. I. Packer, *Ibid.*, p. 73.

^{vi} Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition, pg. 698.