

# A Study in Christian Apologetics – What We Believe & Why

Lesson Eleven: Evangelism

Cogito, Ergo Credo: I Think, Therefore I Believe!

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*We are often told that we cannot take anything with us to Heaven.*

*But in fact, there is one thing we CAN take with us – what is it?*

### Evangelism and the Christian Life

The very first thing that Christ asked of his newly minted Apostles was to “Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17b). The very last recorded words of Christ are “you shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8b). Clearly, we have a mandate. And we have the Truth on our side, as we’ve studied for the last few weeks. But it’s scary. We’ve learned that the world has their own message, one that is distinctly against ours.

Is there a method to evangelism? Or are we to wait until ‘the Spirit leads’ and everything just falls into place? Can I, in effect, “mess it up” enough so that someone misses eternity with Christ? How can I accomplish this without overly offending anyone, or turning them off? How can I keep from looking stupid?

These and many other questions about evangelism are valid today, and have been of concern for ages. But we must understand that evangelism is not ‘soul winning’. We do not have to convert anyone—only the Holy Spirit can do that. We are here to witness—and we do this with our lifestyle, our actions, and our words.

We can’t evangelize by ‘ambush’, and we can’t just expect the pastor to carry the load. We are responsible, and in a mature Christian life it comes naturally. The mature Christian life is beautiful and desirable to the unbeliever—not because we have all the answers or the best job, but because we have peace. We have what others need and want—it is our job to find a way to express our hope and then clearly describe the message of peace to them.

### But Before We Begin

We must see the second part of the verses above.

- 1) “Follow me...” Mark 1:17a.
- 2) “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...” Acts 1:8a

These are the secrets of an effective evangelism—we are to be faithful followers of Christ, rooted in the power of God via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The task is not accomplished by us alone, we are the ‘hands and feet’ of Christ and the Spirit to accomplish his works here, and to establish His Church and live faithful Christian lives of Christian maturity.

“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”  
**1 Corinthians 2:14**

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## Christian Obedience

In order to be Christ's workmen, we must be prepared to work and to be His messenger.

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation..." (2 Corinthians 5:18).

"And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Christ said "If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15).

Do we have to be perfect? Of course not—we never will be perfect on this earth. But we struggle to obey, to grow in Christ and to pursue His will, out of appreciation and for the good of the message. Christ said "As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

(John 17:18,20,21b,23b)

## The Nature of Evangelism

According to Evangelism Explosion, there are three parts to the nature of the Gospel presentation: 1) Introduction, 2) Gospel message, and 3) Commitment. Let's look at these in some detail, considering Christ's model in His discussion with the woman at the well.

First, He began to speak to her 'where she was at' (the well!) with a conversation about a mutual goal—water. He got her attention by 'breaking a conventional rule' and asking her (a Samaritan) to join with Him. He then piqued her interest with something He knew she would desire, and that they had in common: living water. Next, He opened her eyes to the fact that she was indeed a sinner, even though she apparently was hiding the fact. And finally, He established the message that He is the way, and that the scriptures confirm it. She then had a choice—either to accept or reject Him.

We can learn from this dialogue that there are tactical means to gather attention, to ask questions in order to gain understanding, and finally to close the deal.

## Signs of Spiritual Openness – What to Look For

### **The Human Dilemma in a Nutshell (Romans 1-3)**

- 1) Lack of a fear of God, which results in...
- 2) Sin (not living to our God given purpose)

Christ heals our wounds—all of us have these! Some are spiritual, some are emotional, some are physical, and some are intellectual. These are the wounds and needs that hound us continually, even if we are good at hiding them under the surface.

### **The "Good News"**

"You are suffering from a loss of hope, or of strength."

"The answer to these questions lies in the understanding of the purposes of the Creator."

"We can understand the nature and purpose of the Creator through His Son."

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Some are looking for meaning, some for hope. Some are looking for love, some for physical comfort. All of these have a spiritual dimension to them—and this is what we need to be open to, in the Spirit.

Some are quite adept at hiding their need, some have broken down and surrendered, and are just waiting for help. But the message of Christ's love and Grace and the resulting hope brings healing for all.

“Those who suffer He delivers in their suffering; He speaks to them in their affliction.”  
**Job 36:15**

## **But How Do I Do This?**

Our circles of influence are actually quite large. We touch the lives of people everyday in our workplace, at home, or at the store. The witnessing situation may come about as an occasional introduction—sitting next to a person on the bus or standing in line at the movies. It may come as a need for prayer about a life changing event, such as a birth, marriage, divorce, or death. It may occur at a holiday season, or an opening moment of silence at a football game.

“Evangelism isn't something you DO, it is a WAY OF LIFE”

Be prepared to describe your personal journey toward Christianity. The Spirit may lead people to you in similar situations as yours.

Always stay mindful of the people, the situations, and the cultural events around you. People are influenced most by the folks they have a relationship with. So clearly, a Christian must have non-believing friends with whom they can have relationships with. Then, one can accomplish 'bar-b-que' witnessing (etc!) with their new 'friends'.

Above all, remember that it is 'loving and caring people' who make disciples, not programs or materials.

## **The Importance of Training**

One certainly does not need a Th.D. (a doctorate in Theology) in order to witness of the love and grace of Christ. But, one should be prepared with a certain minimal amount of spiritual knowledge to assist them in discussion about things of Truth. To this end one should actively participate in a healthy evangelical Church that assists the Christian in this education, and provides knowledgeable people with various gifts to address specific questions and needs that may arise (the 'specialists').

This training never stops—it becomes part of our spiritual growth and maturity via spiritual discipline, and becomes a source of service for you and your specific gifts (you may in fact be one of the 'specialists' that someone needs to talk to about a given subject.

### **Some Openers:**

- “Where are you on your spiritual journey?”
- “Do you KNOW if you will go to Heaven if you died today?”
- “If God asked you why He should let you into His Heaven, what would your answer be?”

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## **Memory Verse Time**

A solid base of Biblical memory verses is essential portraying the Word of God to others. Here is a good start:

“I write these things to you...so that you may KNOW that you can have eternal life.”

**1 John 5:13**

“ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” **Romans 3:23**

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ...”

**Romans 6:23**

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law, rather , through the law we become conscious of sin.” **Romans 3:20**

“...righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

**Romans 3:22**

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” **Romans 12:1**

## **Thinking Points**

Two Minute Drill: What was it that finally convinced you to believe?

Two Minute Drill Part 2: What were the events leading up to this decision? (Be prepared to discuss these with someone in a like situation)

Should Christians be happy people?

What are your Spiritual Gifts? How can you mature them so that you can be a ‘specialist’?

Do the people at work know that you are a Christian? How?

What should be done after a person makes a commitment for Christ?

Remember that someone in your sphere of influence is considering Christianity today!

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## **Lesson Summary**

One of the Christian's jobs is to carry the message of Christ to a hurting and needy world

A key aspect of our evangelism is our commitment and our spiritual maturity

All men are seeking for the answers

Evangelism is only carried out via relationships

The Holy Spirit of God leads and converts; we are His 'hands and feet'

Evangelism is not 'something to do', it is one aspect of a mature Christian life

Our sphere of influence is wide—someone we know is seeking for answers today

**Next Lesson:** Humble Apologetics Everyone believes something

## **Resources For Further Study:**

[How To Give Away Your Faith](#); Paul Little; Intersity Press; 1988. A classic summary of what we believe and how to share it.

[Evangelism Explosion](#); D. James Kennedy; Tyndale Press; 1996. Handbook of the popular Evangelism Explosion Church ministry.

[How To Reach Secular People](#); George G. Hunter; Abingdon Press; 1992. Discusses how to discuss Christian concepts with a post-Christian world.

[Becoming A Contagious Christian](#); Bill Hybels; Zondervan Press; 1994.

[Life-Style Evangelism](#); Joseph Aldrich; Multnomah Press; 1981

Hard to find, but full of great advice about living for Christ so that others see Him in you