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### Disciplemaking 2 Being His Witness

## OFFERING THE GOSPEL

*"Now how can they call on one in whom they have never believed? How can they believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how can they hear unless someone proclaims Him?"* Romans 10:14 (Phillips)

**THE IMPORTANCE OF INVITING PEOPLE.** No one can believe a message that they have never heard. We must proclaim the Gospel message of Jesus to non-believers ... and we must invite them to believe in Him. The Gospel message and invitation may only be the tip of the witnessing iceberg ... but without them, no one sees the iceberg. Proclaiming the Gospel and inviting people to believe in Jesus are critically important.

**PAUL INVITED PEOPLE.** Paul invited people to put their faith in Jesus. He begged people to be reconciled to God, 2 Corinthians 5:20. He reasoned with non-believers ... explained the Gospel to them ... gave evidence ... and did all he could to persuade them to believe, Acts 17:2-4.

**JESUS INVITED PEOPLE.** Jesus challenged Nicodemus with the words, *"You must be born again"* John 3:7. Later some non-believers asked Jesus, *"What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"* And He responded, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent"* John 6:28-29. Jesus did more than state the facts ... He asked for commitment. When Jesus called His disciples Peter, Andrew, and Levi (Matthew), He challenged them to make a commitment with the words, *"Follow Me"* Matthew 4:19, Luke 5:27.

**OUR INVITING PEOPLE.** The examples and teaching of the New Testament compel us to proclaim the Gospel ... and compel us to invite non-believers to *believe in* Jesus. We must be prepared to do those two things ... to proclaim and to invite. Be able to explain the Gospel clearly and simply. Know how to invite people to receive Christ as Savior. First ... be sure that you understand the Gospel. Know the facts, the flow, the invitation, and the prayer. Be bold and sensitive ... those two are not mutually exclusive. Apply the communication guidelines explained in the previous chapter as you share the Gospel. In addition, learn to illustrate the Gospel ... adding clarity rather than clutter to your presentation. Be ready and willing to help people come to faith in Jesus.

## KNOW THE GOSPEL

Understanding the Gospel enough to believe in Jesus as your own Savior is easier than understanding it enough to explain it to someone else. Learn the Gospel so thoroughly that you can concentrate on the other person getting it right rather than on you getting it right. Know the facts, the flow, the verses, the prayer, and the invitation. Become comfortable with the *what* and the *how* of sharing the Gospel.

### The facts of the Gospel.

#### In simple form:

There is a *problem* ... the problem is *separation*.

There is a *solution* ... the solution is *substitution*.

#### In expanded form:

The *problem* is that there is a sin-caused *separation* between each person and God. He is perfect and loving ... but our imperfection *separates* us from Him.

The *solution* is that Jesus died on the cross as a *substitution* for us ... that is *God's part* of the solution. And each person needs to personally *believe in* Him as our Savior ... that's *our part* of the solution.

#### In verse form:

*The problem ... separation.*

God is perfect, Matthew 5:48, Leviticus 19:2 ... and He is loving, John 3:16, and Romans 5:8.

Man is imperfect, Romans 3:23, James 2:10 ... and is *separated* from God, Isaiah 59:2, Romans 6:23, and 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.

*The solution ... substitution.*

God's part ... *Jesus died on the cross* as our substitution, 1 Peter 2:24, John 10:11, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, and 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

Man's part ... each person must *believe in* Jesus as Savior, John 1:12, Acts 10:43, and John 11:25-26.

### The prayer.

Learn a prayer that you can suggest as a way that people can receive Christ. Learn it in outline form and in word-for-word form. Memorize the prayer. Be able to explain it. The first letters of the outline form of the prayer given below are easy to remember ... **A - R - B - I.**

#### In outline form:

Tell Him that you ...

**A**dmit your need.

**R**epent ... turn to Him and away from sin.

**B**elieve in Jesus ... that, being God, He died on the cross for you.

**I**nvoke Jesus to be your Savior.

#### In word-for-word form:

Dear God,

I admit that I am a sinner.

I turn to you from my sin.

I believe that Jesus, being God, died on the cross for me.

I invite Him to be my Savior.

Amen

### The invitation.

After explaining the Gospel, and after explaining the prayer of acceptance, you need to invite him or her to personally take the step of believing in Jesus. A simple invitation to do that is:

*Would you like to be sure that Christ is yours? You can settle this right now by praying that simple prayer. Don't pray it unless you really mean it. But if you are ready, I could pray and then you could say that prayer. Would you like to do that right now?*

## HOW TO OFFER THE GOSPEL

Offering the Gospel and the invitation is a goal in witnessing. When the time is right ... just do it. Stopping short would be like quitting a marathon race just a few steps before the finish line. Don't cram the Gospel down anyone's throat. Nevertheless, press on when the time is right. The guidelines below will help you with the process.

**Be prepared.** Pray everyday for your non-believing friends and acquaintances. Pray for opportunities and results. Be willing in your heart to bring someone to Christ. Be mentally prepared to bring someone to Christ. Know the Gospel, prayer, and invitation.

**Know when.** The obvious time to present the Gospel is when you know that someone is ready to believe in Jesus. At that point, you are under obligation to do so. But it can be wise to present the Gospel early in the witnessing process. Although the person may not be ready, it sets the course for further discussion. It is also good to go back to the Gospel if your continuing conversation has lost its focus. Be sensitive to what you see in that person. But more importantly, be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. When He prompts you, just do it.

**Get alone.** The ideal setting is one-on-one, away from other people, and away from distractions. Suggest sitting down at a quiet table ... in the corner of the room ... in another room ... or on the porch or deck. In a restaurant, pick a quiet table or booth in the corner ... and sit with your back to the corner. But setting isn't everything. Don't put off offering the Gospel because of an unchangeable and less than ideal setting ... stay where you are and proceed.

**Get started.** Initial inertia can be a difficult obstacle. The step of getting started can be the most challenging step. Therefore, at the start, verbally commit yourself to presenting the Gospel to that person.

You could say ... *After all of our conversations, there is something I think we should talk about. Could I take just a few minutes to explain something to you?*

Or you could say ... *From our conversations, it seems that you might be at a point of making sure that Christ is yours. Could I take just a few minutes to show you how to do that?*

Or you could say ... *I've got an idea. We have talked about God ... but it seems like we could get a clearer focus. Could I take just a few minutes to show you something? It could make things interesting.* If these not-ready people agree ... present the Gospel, explain the prayer, and make the invitation. Most likely, they will reject the invitation to believe in Jesus. Then say ... *I didn't think you were ready to do that. But I've got a good question. What do you think is standing in your way? Or maybe a better question is ... Why do you think people in general aren't quite ready to do that?* At that point, you are refocused and making progress.

**Present the Gospel.** Explain it to them. Be clear and simple. Make sure that they understand the facts ... but don't give more facts to them than they need to know. Be thorough ... but be as brief as possible. Use a Gospel booklet, 3x5 card, sheet of paper, or napkin. Leave it with them for further consideration if they don't make a decision ... or for re-enforcement if they do. Don't spout memorized verses. Show the verses to them. Sit so that you both can read it ... or sit opposite them with you reading it upside down. Explain the prayer of invitation. Acts One Eight's, *The Gospel ... Our Problem and God's Solution*, is an effective presentation tool. That Gospel presentation is found in *Appendix A*. Learn it thoroughly so that you can comfortably share it with someone. Hold it so that they can read it as you explain each section. Personalize it by adding your own words of explanation and encouragement. When you come to the invitation ... make it!

**Invite that person to pray.** Ask for the decision. Invite them to receive Christ. You could say ... *What do you think? Would you like to be sure that Christ is yours? If you would like to do that, I'd like to be your witness forever. I'll pray a short prayer ... then you could say that prayer. Don't pray it unless you mean it. Would you like me to pray ... and then you pray that prayer?*

If that person's answer is *yes*, then you could say ... *Great. I'll pray and then you pray that prayer.* Then say a short simple prayer like ... *Dear God. Thank you that we have been able to talk about these things. Thank you that Jim is ready to receive Jesus as his Savior. Amen.* Then say ... *Go ahead Jim. Say that prayer if it truly expresses the desire of your heart.* After the prayer, rejoice that he or she has been born again ... that today is his or her spiritual birthday. Sometimes it is good to mention that the angels are rejoicing in Heaven because of what just happened. *"In just the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* Luke 15:10. Tell them that they are now safe forever in God's love. Show them verses on eternal security such as John 5:24, 6:37, 10:28-29, and Romans 8:35-39. Suggest that they begin reading the Gospel of John. Get a good Bible for them if they don't have one (such as a New American Standard Version Ryrie Study Bible). And proceed into some easy follow-up lessons like Acts One Eight's *Bible Basics One*. Make an appointment to meet with them again.

If that person's answer is *no*, then remember that rejection can be one of the early steps to acceptance. Don't take it personally. Show love ... and keep the door open for continuing conversation. You could say ... *I really appreciate your honesty in this. You can't make such an important decision until you are really ready. But let me ask you a question. What do you think might be standing in your way ... or what do you think keeps people in general from taking this step?* At that point, you are refocused on the key issues, responsive to them, and progressing toward their rebirth.

## BE BOLD WITH THE GOSPEL

**Be bold with the Gospel.** Be fearless, courageous, and daring. Be open and direct with the Gospel. Realize your obligation to witness ... be eager to share your faith ... do not be ashamed of the Gospel. Paul wrote, *"I am under obligation ... I am eager to preach the gospel to you ... I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"* Romans 1:14-16. Be bold ... but be sensitive at the same time. Boldness and sensitivity are not mutually exclusive. Don't sacrifice sensitivity to be bold. Do not sacrifice boldness to be sensitive.

**Boldness is obedience.** Paul asked for prayer for his own boldness ... that he would speak the Gospel boldly as he ought to speak, Ephesians 6:19-20. Every believer ought to speak the Gospel boldly and courageously. *"Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord"* Psalm 31:24. *"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong"* 1 Corinthians 16:13. *"The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion"* Proverbs 28:1.

**Boldness is the example.** Paul spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord in Damascus and in Jerusalem, Acts 9:27-28. In Ephesus, he spoke out boldly in the synagogue for three months ... reasoning with them and persuading them about the kingdom, Acts 19:8. Facing opposition in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly, Acts 14:3. Follow their example. Speak boldly ... speak boldly even in the face of opposition.

**Boldness is an answer to prayer.** Pray for boldness. Believers in the Early Church faced severe opposition. Therefore they prayed, *"And now Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence"* Acts 4:29. They didn't pray for a change in their circumstances ... they prayed for a change in their courage. *"And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness"* Acts 4:31. Pray ... and God will answer. David wrote, *"On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul"* Psalm 138:3.

**Boldness is God's provision.** God is the source of boldness, strength, and courage. *"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him and I am helped"* Psalm 28:7. Paul wrote, *"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline"* 2 Timothy 1:7. Pray and then trust God for boldness. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly *"with reliance on the Lord"* Acts 14:3. Paul wrote, *"We had the boldness in our God to speak to you the Gospel of God amid much opposition"* 1 Thessalonians 2:2. Pray ... trust ... and then say with Paul, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"* Philippians 4:13.

## ILLUSTRATE THE GOSPEL

Jesus taught in parables ... word pictures to add clarity to His teaching. He explained the unknown in terms of the known ... the uncommon in terms of the common ... the eternal in terms of the temporal ... the spiritual in terms of the secular. Parables (illustrations) can help non-believers understand spiritual truth. Follow the example of Jesus ... use illustrations. Keep your parables simple and to the point. Expand the following illustrations ... put them in your own words.

### Sin and imperfection.

**Adding up my sins.** Think about my life ... let's say that I have been accountable before God for my bad thoughts and actions for the past 20 years. And let's say that I have had three bad thoughts or commit three bad deeds every day (actually that would be a good day for me). That's 1,000 bad marks against me in just one year ... 10,000 in ten years. By age 65 I could have more than 50,000 bad marks ... far from perfection. If the quality of my sins doesn't get me, the quantity will.

**A pile of rocks.** Imagine that I throw a small rock into the middle of the room every time I do something wrong. Then the quality of my life could be measured by the size and rate of growth of the pile. Early in my life, I would have had to move the pile out into an open field. Then one day I decide to improve my life ... I cut down on my sins per day. Let's say down to 10/day. And later to 7/day ... 5/day ... and so on until I plateau at one or two per day. All of this was done with great effort and sincerity. However, the only thing that I accomplished was to make the pile get bigger slower. I can do no more than that on my own. What I really need is someone to take the pile of rocks away. No matter how hard I try, I cannot improve my record ... I can only make it get worse slower.

**A picture window.** Imagine that you hired a contractor to install a picture window in your living room ... one that will give you an unobstructed view of the mountains. As he pounds the final nail into the wood trim, the hammer slips from his hand and hits the window. Small cracks spread out from the point of impact covering 5% of the window. He then turns to you ... and hands the bill to you. Would you accept it? No! The imperfect window is not acceptable. He states that it is 95% perfect. You tell him that imperfect is imperfect. Anything less than perfect is imperfect. In the same way, a little amount of sin causes imperfection.

**An unexpected pregnancy.** A variation of the window illustration is that of an unexpected pregnancy. A young couple decided to wait four years to begin their family. However, 12 months after the honeymoon she tells the good news and bad news to her husband. The bad news is that she is pregnant three years ahead of schedule. The good news is that she is only a little pregnant. He responds that pregnant is pregnant.

### The impossibility of making it on our own.

**Swimming across the ocean.** This illustrates the great separation between God and man ... a chasm too great to cross by man. Imagine the separation between God and man is the distance across the Atlantic Ocean from Boston to England. You and I have a personally unsolvable problem if we must swim that distance to reach God. You may swim two times or ten times farther than I do ... but we both fall very short. We will both drown if someone doesn't rescue us. We don't need swimming lessons ... we need to be saved.

**Jumping to the next skyscraper.** This is a variation on the previous illustration. We have a significant problem if reaching God requires jumping from the roof of one 50-story building to the roof of another one across the street. You may leap three times farther than I do ... but that will be of little value as we accelerate toward the sidewalk below. We don't need long jump lessons from an Olympic coach ... we need a bridge. Jesus is the bridge to God.

### Love motivated substitution.

**A firing squad.** Picture yourself condemned to death by firing squad. At the execution wall, you face six guards with rifles. The captain of the guard begins with, *ready ... Aim.* But he stops when a man cries out from the crowd, *Wait ... Wait!* The innocent man volunteers to take your place. You are released as he walks to the wall. And as you pass through the courtyard gate into freedom you hear, *Ready ... Aim ... Fire!* With one last glimpse back you see him in a pool of blood at the base of the wall. He died in your place ... died to give freedom to you.

**Saved from drowning.** This is a variation of the previous illustration. Imagine that you tried to swim across a wide lake. Halfway across, your legs begin to cramp. You are weak and exhausted. With what could be your last breaths, you call to a man in a small passing boat. He circles around to save you. He jumps into the water to help you into the safety of the boat. However, in doing that he slips below the water and drowns. He gave his life to save you.

**Donating a kidney.** This is a variation of the previous two illustrations. Imagine that you are terminally ill because both of your kidneys have failed. Without a compatible transplant, you will die in just a few hours. Your best friend offers to donate a kidney to you. There is organ compatibility. Immediately you are in surgery to receive your friend's life-giving gift. After the surgery, you are anxious to thank your friend. But you find out that your friend only had one kidney ... he voluntarily gave his life for you. He gave life to you through his death.

### Believing *in* Christ rather than *about* Christ.

**Sitting in a chair.** All of us sit in chairs every day. We do so without much thought. We *believe about* chairs ... assuming that they will hold our weight when we sit. But actually sitting in one is more than *believing about* a chair ... it is *believing in* a chair. When you entrust yourself to it, you are *believing in* it. This choice becomes clearer when you are in an antique store inspecting a rickety old wooden chair. It is a beautiful chair ... but will you sit in it?

**Surgery.** There is an interesting moment just before surgery. It is the time when you hear about all of the dangers and risks ... and then are asked to sign a release form granting the surgeon permission to cut into you. It is at that moment when you choose between *believing about* the surgeon and *believing in* the surgeon. You may have looked at the certificates on his office wall ... looked up pending malpractice suits on the Internet ... and even talked to previous patients. Intellectually you *believe about* the surgeon ... but in your will, you must make the decision about *believing in* him. *Believing about* him can be at any level ... 51%, 75%, or 90%. However, the choice about *believing in* him is either 0% or 100%.

**Parachuting.** Imagine that you are in a burning airplane somewhere over the Pacific Ocean. The pilot has announced that parachuting out is your only salvation. You pull the contraption out from under your seat ... and strap it onto your back. You have heard about parachutes ... read about them ... and even seen them in use at air shows. You have always *believed about* parachutes. However, standing at the plane's open door looking down at the clouds is different. It is time to step out in faith ... time to *believe in* your parachute. A question runs through your mind ... is this really a parachute or is it some college student's backpack? Only a true parachute will save you. And stepping out in faith doesn't save you ... it allows you to be saved. The same is true about *believing in* Christ. We are all on a flight that is doomed to crash. *Believing about* Him is not enough. Our only hope is to step out in faith by *believing in* Him. Stepping out doesn't save you ... but it lets Him save you.

**Dating or married?** This is a very good illustration for religious people. There is a difference between dating and marriage. Dating involves *believing about* someone ... marriage involves *believing in* someone. Before marriage, you may love the other person very much ... go to his or her home often ... talk to that person several times a day ... and give gifts to him or her. However, you are only dating. It is at the marriage ceremony that you must choose between *believing about* that person and *believing in* that person. Many people are like that with God. They believe *about Him*. They love Him very much ... go to His house often ... and talk to Him every day. They even give gifts (time, money, and talents) to Him. But they have never said *I do* to God. They need to do more than *believe about* Him ... they need to *believe in* Him.

## A PERSONAL REVIEW WORKSHEET

1. Have you memorized the Gospel verses?
2. In simple form the Gospel is:
3. Add verse references to each section of the Gospel in #2.
4. What four letters represent the Gospel prayer ... and what do they stand for?
5. Write out a word-for-word Gospel prayer.
6. If you did poorly on this worksheet, will you learn the Gospel soon?  
When will you?