

Evangelism Training Series

Session 01 - Description Of Evangelism (NIV based)

Definition Of 'Evangelism':

- Evangelism is the activity of bringing, announcing, and communicating to unbelievers the good news of the gospel - of how God has arranged a way for the salvation of sinners, by means of the atoning sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)
- Essential ingredients of evangelism include: 1. the declaration of the gospel events; 2. the describing of God's promise and means by which He offers and provides forgiveness of sins and eternal life; 3. the presenting of an invitation for the listener to personally place his/her faith in Jesus Christ - that Jesus suffered and died on the cross to pay the penalty for the listener's own sins and that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, and 4. the directing and/or facilitating of the new believer in getting plugged in to a good Bible-teaching church or study group that has sound doctrine.
- Because God has designed the gospel message to effect a response of repentance and faith in the life of a nonbeliever, an integral, necessary, and crucial aspect of evangelism is to persuade or win over unbelievers to put their trust in Christ.
- This persuasion seeks to bring about a change of mind by the influence of reason or moral considerations and to provide the necessary understanding for unbelievers to make an informed decision.
- Thus, the persuasion of evangelism must include clarity, integrity, gentleness, and sensitivity in granting every listening unbeliever the right to decide for himself/herself. (1 Peter 3:15-16)
- Evangelism does not incorporate being forceful, contentious, quarrelsome, demanding, pressuring, or overbearing. (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

The Spiritual Gift Of 'Evangelism':

- God endows some believers with the spiritual gift of evangelism: **"It was he who gave... some to be evangelists, ..." - Ephesians 4:11**
- The spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability to present the gospel in a way that is particularly plain, easily understandable, and relevant to unbelievers and helping them to take the step of placing their faith in Christ, for salvation from the eternal punishment for their own sins.
- This believer is: discerning in listening and taking note of the concerns that are important to the listeners; patient in allowing the teaching of God's Word to sink into their hearts; and yielding to the Holy Spirit's control to ensure that what is being communicated in the gospel presentation by the believer is according to God's will, and in His way, and in His timing.
- In order to conduct himself/herself in this manner, therefore, a believer with the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is prepared, available, and committed to living a life of integrity that is consistent and honoring to both the gospel message and the Lord who gave it.
- Obviously, using the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is not passive in nature but rather is an active effort to put oneself in situations where one can take the initiative to share the gospel and the faith.

- - Commonly within the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is a Holy Spirit-given internal compelling drive to seek out unbelievers and speak up - share the gospel message with them, regardless of the danger or one's fears. (1 Corinthians 9:16; cf. Acts 18:9-10)
- - Nevertheless, though, evangelism is not reserved only for those few spiritually-gifted believers, because all believers are instructed to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 4:5)
- - However, the exercising of the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' does require some training
- to ensure that the evangelism is conducted properly, the gospel is presented correctly and sufficiently, and the listener is treated appropriately and respectfully.
- - God has specific criteria that must be accomplished in the heart of the unbeliever in order for God to grant that person eternal life - the goal of the gospel and evangelism.
- - If any of those mandatory criteria are not accomplished, then in actuality God has not yet granted that person eternal life, even though that person has apparently listened to the gospel and has apparently responded agreeably to the invitation, but yet thereby incorrectly believes that he/she has now been given eternal life.
- - This is called 'a false sense of salvation', and it can occur easily if the presentation of the gospel with invitation is defective or deficient in a way that God does not allow to result in the granting of salvation to the unbeliever. (Galatians 1:6-8,11)
- - Therefore, those persons who do evangelism need to be trained to do it properly, otherwise the results will be people erroneously thinking they got saved when in fact technically God has not saved them because their evangelism was not conducted in accordance with what God designates in the Scriptures.

The Necessity For Evangelism In Churches And Ministries:

- - God has designed and intends that evangelism is the primary and healthiest means by which true churches grow in attendance size and in numbers of believer members.
- - A vibrant proper and sustained evangelism program is highly valued by God, which of course means that He wants to and will actively use that evangelism program to maximize the growth of those churches by adding new believers to their congregations. (vv. 19-20 in Matthew 28:16-20)
- - Therefore, churches and ministries are significantly deficient if they do not have an element within them that is actively and frequently engaging in presenting the gospel with an invitation to receive Christ, which God has designed and designated all of His churches and ministries to be doing. (Colossians 1:6)
- - God intends that evangelism is to be conducted on all levels: personally by true believers of the church or ministry; corporately within the preaching, teaching, programs, and events of the church or ministry; locally in the community; nationally in the country; and internationally within other countries. (Colossians 1:6-7; Acts 5:42 - in private and in public)
- - Therefore, minimally, small churches or ministries should have at least one person who is encouraged, supported, and requested to do evangelism throughout the programs and events of the church or ministry. Medium-size churches or ministries should minimally have a group of persons who fulfill these evangelism functions. And large churches or ministries should minimally have an entire ministry or department that is devoted to fulfilling these evangelism functions.
- - If the pastor(s), elders, and leaders in the church or ministry are not inclined to do evangelism, the church or ministry nevertheless should have an endorsed element which or who is actively doing evangelism as suggested herein. (e.g. Romans 15:15-16)

- - If the top leader in your church or ministry is not willing to or fails to lead an evangelism program, then suggest and perhaps request that a suitable and motivated lower-level leader be found and encouraged to pursue establishing and maintaining an evangelism program in your church or ministry. And then pray for that to occur, as directed in **Matthew 9:37, "Then he [Jesus] said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.""**

- - The reality is that in order for evangelism to occur in any environment or situation, someone has to take the initiative to somehow intentionally present the gospel. If no person takes that initiative, then the gospel is not presented therein. Sadly, it is common that there exist ministries of true churches that never present the gospel with and invitation to receive Christ - in any form or manner.

- - Perhaps this is because in the church, if someone in the top leadership does not intentionally and regularly promote to the congregation the conducting of evangelism along with any measurable results produced by it, then very little, if any, evangelism will be occurring in or by means of that church.

- - In Matthew 28:19, the authorized assignment by Jesus is to "go and make disciples". Many and perhaps most churches and ministries readily pursue only the latter part - "make disciples", which by their actions equates to only making better or spiritually-mature disciples, which totally ignores the necessity of "going" to unbelievers and initially "making" them into a true believer by means of presenting the gospel to those unbelievers.

- - Even though the responsibility to be fulfilling this assignment rests on every individual believer contributing in some manner, the reality is that most believers need guidance, encouraging, and prompting to contribute to the ongoing task of presenting the gospel to more and more unbelievers.

- - Therefore, leadership would be wise to ongoing-ly identify and match up believers to plug in and perform some aspect of events that present the gospel, such as they can be: extending personal invitations to their unsaved family members / relatives / friends / neighbors / co-workers / classmates; setting up chairs / tables; being a greeter; preparing and serving food / refreshments; monitoring and crowd control of children / pre-teens; completing clean up activities; and etcetera.

- - As a point of issue to emphasize here, getting believers (of any age) to invite unsaved people in their own personal life or network is by far the most effective way of drawing in unsaved persons to an environment or event in which the gospel is presented to them. Sometimes and super-amazingly, this phenomenon spontaneously happens on its own, for example, wherein newly-saved children and teenagers come back with their friends so that their friends can hear the gospel and get saved too!! Praise the Lord!!

- - So clearly, the easiest and most fruitful approach to evangelism is to develop and draw on friendships (called 'Friendship Evangelism'), with accompanying extensive usage of extending invitations to friends, to come to the events or church where there will be the presentation of the gospel.

- - An important note here is that in addition to 'Friendship Evangelism', God does indeed successfully use other kinds of evangelism with strangers (called 'Cold Evangelism'), although many of which require quickly building and establishing some rapport, friendliness, connection, and credibility with the strangers. A good example of

this dynamic of 'quickly building some rapport' is the situation of Jesus encountering a woman at the well, in John 4:1-42.

-- Cold evangelism can be initiated, for example, with the following sequence of opening questions to the person being approached:

- - - - "Can I ask you a religious question?" If his/her reply is negative, then accept that response, extend a verbal blessing to him/her, and leave nicely.

- - - - On the other hand, if his/her reply is allowance to being asked a religious question, then the next question is "If you were to die today, do you think you would go to heaven?"

- - - - Then, regardless of whether his/her answer is 'Yes', or 'No', or 'Maybe', or 'I don't know' to that question, then the next question is "Why do you think that?" or "On what basis do you think that?"

- - - - Listen carefully to what he/she says in response to that question, and then, if advantageous, incorporate key elements of that response into the framing of your gospel presentation to that person.

An Activity Of God:

- - Whatever the kind of evangelism being used, we true believers can rest in, rely upon, and be confident in the reality that technically the proper presenting of the gospel is an activity of God - Him using His divine power to speak through the presenting believer while simultaneously using His divine power to inform, enlighten, and persuade the unbeliever to place his/her faith in Jesus for salvation. (Romans 1:16, 2 Corinthians 6:2)

- - Therefore, our evangelism task of presenting the gospel involves: planting the seed of the gospel in the spiritual hearts of unbelievers; watering or nurturing that planted seed of the gospel (called 'Gentle Persuasion'); praying for those unbelievers to change their mind and respond agreeably to the gospel; offering an opportunity for the unbelievers to pray to receive Christ for salvation; and then waiting upon God to cause that planted gospel to sprout and grow in the heart and life of those persons. (1 Corinthians 3:1-9)

- - Thereby, 'Gentle Persuasion' is the manner of speaking that we are to use when presenting the gospel to unbelievers. And harsh, or demanding, or pressuring tactics or manners of speaking are not acceptable in presenting the gospel.

- - The crucial dynamic to aim for, during our involvement in God's activity of us verbally presenting the gospel to unbelievers, is for us believers to be speaking by means of the maximum amount of influence of the Holy Spirit upon our mind.

- - During this gospel presentation to unbelievers, we need to say the words, and in the manner, and in the timing that the Holy Spirit wants, in order to achieve the maximum effect upon the unbelievers' thinking, which God can then use to effectively move them towards believing in Jesus for salvation.

- - Obviously therefore, just prior to verbally presenting the gospel to unbelievers, we believers need to maximize our spiritual preparedness, by in prayer confessing our sins (1 John 1:9) and deliberately yielding to the Holy Spirit the control of our thinking, words, and mannerisms (Romans 12:1-2). (For more information on 'yielding control', see on this website, www.BelieverAssist.com, the 'Home Page - Ministry' web-page, on which find the 'Elder Training Series', in which is located the document 'Session 10', that contains the second section about acquiring 'Empowering', by means of yielding control.)

- - Upon presenting the gospel to a person who thereupon declines to properly place his/her faith in Jesus for salvation, then as applicable, distinct efforts should be made to

nevertheless draw that unbeliever into a good Bible-teaching church or study group that has sound doctrine.

- - Establishing a personalized connection with that unbeliever in this manner facilitates future opportunities for friendship evangelism and spiritual teaching of that unbeliever, as well as implementing a practical way of fulfilling the mandate to "go, and make disciples".

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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File name: evangelismtraining-session01.____ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

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