



Encouragement For Sharing Your Faith

The Christian faith is personal, but not private. We are all called to share and should have a desire to help others know the forgiveness and peace that comes from trusting Jesus. When we realize the need to share the Good News, it is often family and close friends we want to start with most.

This thought often brings about anxiety and fear about whether we can really do this well. This is also when the enemy will offer many lies to keep us from sharing. Those lies generate self-doubt and leave so many standing on the sidelines.

We start justifying our fears and thinking that this would be better left to someone else . We add to the excuses by pointing out that this is not our spiritual gift so God would have prepared us differently if He really wanted us to do this.

This simple guide is designed to talk through those false narratives and encourage you to share your faith. It does not have to be complicated. You don't need to know every answer or have special training. Your story is uniquely yours and that is the beginning of sharing the Gospel. We pray this will inspire you to walk forward in faith and share Jesus with others.

The Power of Story

A truly good story makes you forget your surroundings and become entirely immersed. They can wield a particularly strong influence over our attitudes and behavior. A vivid, emotional story can also provide that extra push to make something feel more real or important.

None of this is a surprise to our Creator. He made our brains to listen to stories. Jesus himself was the ultimate storyteller. He often used stories to help people relate and connect to his basic message. Stories are at the heart of evangelism, and this is even more important in today's world.

We live in a time when people are saturated and flooded with information. People are more interested in demonstration rather than debate. They are interested if we can tell them about an experience that actually has made a meaningful difference in our life. The result is many are more likely to say, *"Don't tell me what to believe. Tell me how what you believe changes your life."*

When we share a compelling story about what Jesus Christ has done in our lives, others are not only positively interested but they are more open to hearing and accepting the Good News of the Gospel. This becomes the invitation to find out more about how Jesus can work and make a difference in their lives as well.

Simplifying the Task

We believe in the power of your story but the reason that story is real is because of Jesus Christ in your life. Evangelism is proclaiming the power of Jesus Christ. It is part of the ministry of reconciliation that all believers are called to participate (II Corinthians 5:18-20). We call on you to remember that the source of evangelism is God and not man. It becomes much easier when we realize all our activities in sharing Jesus are gifts from God as He uses us for His glory. It is not done to earn favor with God.

We should share Jesus because we love God. As we grow in Christ, we take on more of the characteristics of Christ. As this occurs, we find our hearts transformed in a way that it becomes *“not our will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9).

As we start to evangelize out of love for Christ, we will also experience the joy that comes from sharing with others. This joy occurs regardless of the outcome as staying faithful and proclaiming the Gospel is what truly pleases God.

We also must not forget that we share because God commanded it. There are multiple verses in scriptures that tell us to preach the good news by sharing the Gospel and making disciples (see Romans 10:15, Matthew 24:14, Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5, and Matthew 28:18-20). And this is how others to come to faith and trust in Jesus as our Lord and King. (Matthew 24:14)

It is not very popular to be “obedient” in the world today with so many people wanting to do what they want when they want. However, obedience is simple with Jesus. *“If you love me you will do what I command”* (John 14:15).

How to Follow Jesus Example

We encourage everyone sharing the good news to follow the example of Jesus. He always validated the lost and loved them before he ever tried to fix them or teach them. That does not mean he condoned sin, but he met them where they were in grace. We also must remember that we save no one. The Holy Spirit is in control, and we encourage you to pray and seek his presence during every conversation.

This is a good time to pause and discuss the role of prayer. Jesus set an example for us as he rose early and got away in the quiet of the day to spend time with God the Father. We should do the same not just to strengthen our relationship with God but to also lift up in prayer those we desire to share with long before the first conversation. In addition to prayer, here are a couple simple reminders that can help you be more effective:

Listening goes a long way – You are not the only one with a story. Everyone has a story and many desperately want to share it. We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Most people like to hear themselves and letting them lay out their journey will often help you determine how to best manage the conversation and earn the right to share the Gospel. Listen for the clues as to what their relationship with Jesus is really like.

Keep things simple - Don't give them more than they need. Stick with the Gospel and how much Jesus loves them. For many that have been running from God, or are coming back to some level of faith, the idea of church is very scary. None of us as new believers could understand all the finer points of theology, exact Bible references, the cultural background of the text, or the Hebrew/Greek meaning of each term during our first exposure to Jesus or His word. Be patient and know that simply sharing the Gospel is success!

We are all sinners. Satan's great lie is that we are alone in our sin and it is beyond God's forgiveness. Knowing others struggle with the same sin is encouraging. If you are able, connect with people by admitting you share the same struggles or have experienced similar pain. The words "me too" are very powerful and create an opening for more honest and transparent conversation.

Emphasize concepts over words - Don't feel like you must memorize an outline. Rather focus on your story and what God has done in your life. Determine what aspects of the Gospel moved you to believe and focus on those. Get the concepts down, the general direction of what you want to say, and the words will come as the Holy Spirit works through you. Know the concepts of Sin, Substitution, and Faith and be able to explain them using different words.

Don't use every tool for every job - Every conversation is different and you need to use the Bible wisely. You should not think that the same answer and presentation will work the same way for each person. It is also helpful to know that your approach may change depending on whom you're talking to. Carpenters have truckloads of tools. Mechanics have tool chests stuffed with wrench after wrench. They all have tools but they don't use every tool for every job. Each opportunity requires different tools. Customize your approach with each person so it is comfortable, relevant, and sincere.

Evangelism is Not Done Alone

No matter what your story or approach, you can also draw strength and confidence in remembering how God is with us when we share the Good News.

Evangelism comes from the Father

A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. John 3:27

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. John 6:44-45

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created. James 1:17-18

Evangelism comes from Jesus Christ

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Luke 10:1-2

But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. John 12:32,

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:11-12

Evangelism comes from the Holy Spirit

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:46-49

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13

Obstacles to Sharing Your Faith

Very few people jump into sharing without some reflection and concern. There are many reasons why believers do not engage in evangelism, but they typically fall into four general areas:

1. We are fearful
2. We lack faith
3. We lack obedience
4. We lack knowledge

Fear often comes because we don't believe we know what to do. We may be afraid to talk with someone we respect or love. We want to avoid looking foolish or offending someone. We may have even tried it and it ended poorly so we give up for fear of becoming known as "that guy".

You may have heard of the “story” of the car crash that killed four people. Only one of the four was a true believer and the others deep down know she was different. They all show up together at the gates of heaven and are asked if they believe. The first two get sent away and the third one is going through the interview. Before it is about to end unsuccessfully, he turns to the believer and asks why she never told him the truth. That is what we risk by not getting involved.

Another inhibitor to sharing is a lack of faith in our abilities to “close the deal” or actually lead someone to Jesus. We aren’t sure we can get someone to believe, especially if they have a strong personality, so we skip it. This is wrong for numerous reasons. First, and most importantly, God brings about salvation and not us. Secondly, we are not measured on the results, but instead by the faithfulness of our effort. We should think of ourselves as His instrument and not the determining factor.

Yet another reason some do not share their faith is because they do not seriously take the Lord’s command to go and make disciples. Matthew 28:18-20 states: *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

The last common challenge is because we feel like we lack the knowledge to share the Gospel and we don’t know enough about the Bible or God. Those types of excuses create an unwinnable equation where you will never be ready. No one knows God completely or has all the answers. We trust the Holy Spirit to lead the conversation in truth and love.

Your journey and experience are your account of how God worked in you, and no one can argue with that. It likely has hard moments and failures as part of it. When you combine the truth of God’s Word with your own testimony it makes a compelling story that God can use. He redeemed us from brokenness so we can encourage others with similar struggles and stories. The Gospel message is one of grace and undeserved love that offers forgiveness. It need not be intimidating, complicated or overly difficult.

Remembering the Basics

While sharing your story you also always need to be as clear and complete as possible in sharing the Gospel. We must not stray away from what the Gospel is. This is where we can run into a dilemma. Many people say the Gospel is very simple; others, that it is complex.

You will hear that God is the Gospel, or Grace is the Gospel, or that the specific Gospel can be found in a particular text of Scripture. There are also incomplete gospels and even false gospels, which we read about in Scripture itself (1 Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude).

The most basic Gospel message is that sin fractured our relationship with God and that Christ died to pay the penalty for that sin. His resurrection not only defeated death but also offers us the chance to respond in faith by admitting our need for forgiveness and trusting in Jesus alone for our salvation.

Many Christians, especially those trying to evangelize, may define the Gospel as the way that people can get saved and underemphasize the completeness of the story. Others define the Gospel as the overarching narrative of God through creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration and forget the personal response element. The Gospel is certainly the Good News about what Jesus did and also all of who God is according to scripture.

The Gospel is truly the story of God and how we get to be part of it. It is the historical narrative of the triune God orchestrating the reconciliation and redemption of a broken creation to the Father and each other thru the life, death, resurrection, and future return of the Son by the power of the Spirit for God's glory.

The Gospel is something that we are continually experiencing and learning about more deeply. We gain different levels of understanding both before and after we embrace salvation. This means believers and non-believers alike have continual need for hearing the good news of the Gospel to keep growing in faith.

Many that start sharing their faith will use outlines or evangelism methods. There is nothing wrong with those as part of a conversation and not the entire presentation. In fact, many that start sharing will use certain verses to blend their story with scripture to help others understand. There are certainly many verses that serve well in that regard. If you are not sure where to turn in scripture, we encourage you to look at these to ensure you cover the basics:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

You can be part of the Great Commission! Trust Jesus in all things and start a simple conversation on how He has changed your life and you desire others to experience that gift. May God bless you.