



# THREE HABITS FOR EVERYDAY EVANGELISM



PAUL WORCESTER

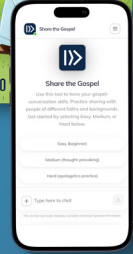
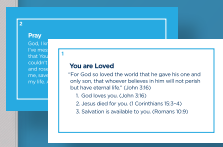
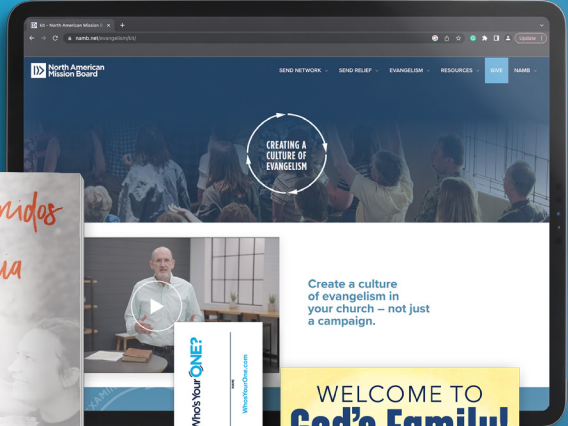
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Published by The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Inc., Alpharetta, Georgia. A Southern Baptist Convention entity supported by the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

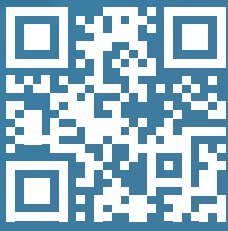
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CHAPTER ONE

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**EVERY DAY  
IS A  
MISSION  
TRIP**

Can you remember your first missions experience? Whether you served on the opposite side of the world or somewhere just across town, I bet you can recall the anticipation you felt and the expectation you held for what God would be able to do through your willingness to serve. You probably remember the zeal, intentionality, and joy that shaped each moment on the field. There is something powerful about setting aside a short season to serve others and share Christ. If you haven't been on a mission trip yet, consider joining one soon.

*This book is not about going on mission trips but living on mission.*

## **A Life on Mission**

What if you approached every day with the same faith and intentionality you bring to a mission trip? Your most strategic ministry context may be where you already live, work, and play. I often tell people to look down at the space between their feet and realize, "That is your mission field." If you see every day as a missions opportunity, God will lead you into the adventure of a lifetime. There is no greater joy than sharing Christ with the lost around you!

Now, think back to the first time you shared the gospel. It's in those moments when many believers sense the Holy Spirit whispering, "This is what you were made for." I remember my first time. I was sitting in my dorm room, reading through a gospel booklet with a friend I'll call Ryan, and literally shaking from nervousness. That day, I witnessed my friend give his life to Christ, and I'll never forget the surge of joy that flooded my heart.

Charles Spurgeon captured the feeling perfectly when he stated, "To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in the world. And with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new heaven here upon earth. I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unravel all the mysteries of the divine Word."<sup>1</sup>

Our hope and prayer for this book is that these three simple habits would empower you to experience this joy regularly as you partner with God to see lives transformed.

<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner: How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1895), 15.

## Laborers Wanted

In Matthew 9:36–38, we catch a clear glimpse of both Christ’s deep compassion for the lost and the urgent need for more laborers to gather the abundant harvest.

When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.”

First, we see the compassion Christ had for the crowds. The Greek word for compassion here is *spilagchnizomai*, which literally means “to have the bowels yearn,” meaning it made Him sick to His stomach.<sup>2</sup> You more than likely know how it feels to have been so upset by something that you felt it in your gut. This is precisely how Christ still feels about the lost people in your community. Why? Because they are “distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.” If nothing changes, they will continue to lead lives of spiritual emptiness and bondage to sin. If they die without a relationship with Christ, they will spend eternity suffering the wrath of God in hell. Ask God to break your heart for what breaks His. May we be as moved with compassion for the lost as Christ Himself.

Those with the greatest grasp of the gospel have the greatest compassion for the lost. The more you grow in your relationship with Christ, the more He shares His compassionate heart with you. After laying out the most robust and logical explanation of the gospel in the first seven chapters of Romans, Paul bursts into celebration in chapter 8, declaring the unstoppable love of Christ to his readers. Then, in Romans 9:1–3, he immediately descends into lament:

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience testifies to me through the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Imagine if someone in your small group started talking like that. You might be tempted to tell them to chill out or to be more “gospel-centered.” Is Paul taking his burden for the lost too far? Obviously not!

*It is impossible to exaggerate the urgency of eternity.*

C.S. Lewis once said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”<sup>3</sup> Do we really believe what we say we believe? If heaven and hell are real, and if Jesus is the only way to God, then our only loving and logical response is to leverage our lives to share the gospel with as many people as possible. The exclusivity of the gospel demands an urgency to expand the gospel.

Atheist magician Penn Jillette received a Bible from a Christ follower and was deeply moved. He recorded a video saying,

I don't respect people who don't proselytize. If you believe there is a heaven and hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward ... How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? If I believed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn't believe it, there's a certain point I tackle you—and this is more important than that.<sup>4</sup>

## **The Harvest is Plentiful**

Why do some atheists grasp this urgency more than many Christians do? Charlie Peace, one of the most notorious criminals in 19th-century England, once listened as a prison chaplain casually read gospel verses to him. He interrupted: “Do you believe that? Do you believe that? If I believed that, I would willingly crawl across England over broken glass to tell men it was true!”<sup>5</sup>

The next part of Matthew 9 is both encouraging and sobering at the same time: “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few” (37). The truth is that there are people

<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> “Atheist Penn Jillette Given a Bible,” YouTube, uploaded by ENGAGE Gospel Outreach, May 6, 2022, 2:15, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF2vi9h9BTY>.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Peace, quoted in Greg Laurie, *New Believer's Guide to How to Share Your Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2002), 10.

in your community right now who would come to Christ if someone would simply love them, pray for them, and share the gospel with them.

*The problem is not with the harvest; the harvest is plentiful. The problem is the lack of laborers.*

In my role equipping collegiate leaders, I have noticed an unprecedented openness to the gospel among young people. A recent Barna study showed that “two-thirds of Gen Z are highly or moderately spiritually open.”<sup>6</sup> The sad and sobering reality is that it seems there are more people willing to hear and respond to the gospel than there are Christians willing to share it with them.

I can't think of a more urgent dilemma! So, will you be part of the solution?

## **Reflect and Discuss**

- 1.** How would your life change if you approached every day with the same intentionality as a mission trip?
- 2.** In what ways can you cultivate a deeper compassion for the lost?
- 3.** How does believing that the harvest is plentiful motivate you to pray for laborers and even become a laborer yourself?

<sup>6</sup> Barna Group, “What Does it Mean to Be Spiritually Open?,” Barna Group, last modified June 21, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/spiritual-openness/>.



CHAPTER TWO

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**EVANGELISM  
AS DISCIPLINE**

When I started to grasp the urgency of our need to share the gospel, I began attempting to share Christ, but I only did so sporadically. I would read a book on evangelism, get all fired up, and go share with a bunch of people for about a week or so at a time. Eventually, my zeal would fizzle out.

I used to think evangelism was primarily something you “go do.” I planned times when I would go out and strike up gospel conversations with strangers, and I even organized group events for the purpose of sharing Jesus with others. But what I discovered is that God wanted me to also share Christ “as I go.” He calls us to take part in a culture of evangelism.<sup>7</sup>

Evangelism is more of a lifestyle than an event. We all have opportunities in our daily lives to present the gospel to those around us, but we must also have the discernment, courage, and discipline to take advantage of those opportunities as the Lord provides them.

## A Lifestyle of Evangelism

A lot of people think spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and Bible reading, should be daily habits you fight for, yet they feel you should simply follow where the Spirit leads when it comes to evangelism. Being guided by the Spirit and being intentional are not at odds with one another! Everything God calls us to do must be done intentionally. Often, the Spirit is the One leading us to be disciplined and to make definite plans. In *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald Whitney has a whole chapter dedicated to evangelism. Within these pages, he writes, “I am convinced the main reason many of us don’t witness for Christ in ways that would be effective and relatively fear-free is simply because we don’t discipline ourselves to do it.”<sup>8</sup>

As I read books on relational evangelism and took time to study the Scriptures, three simple habits emerged. These were inspired by Paul’s writing in Colossians 4:2-6:

Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, so that I may

<sup>7</sup> [Check out the NAMB Evangelism courses for youth leaders and collegiate leaders.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Updated 20th Anniversary ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), eBook.

make it known as I should. Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

This passage shows us that prayer must lie at the heart of any evangelism strategy. As E. M. Bounds put it, “Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men.”<sup>9</sup> Implicit in this passage is the idea that believers are to live close enough to outsiders in order to seize every opportunity to influence them for Christ. We are called to be salt and light to a dark world in need (Matthew 5:13-16)!

These three habits for everyday evangelism will equip you to make evangelism a spiritual discipline in your life as you live on mission for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Three Habits for Everyday Evangelism

In the next three chapters, we will explore how you can practice these three foundational habits for evangelism:

- 1: Pray daily for open doors and boldness.
- 2: Develop your “impact list” for the Prayer-Care-Share method.
- 3: Regularly spend time with friends who need Jesus

If any of these practices seem foreign or unnatural to you right now, keep reading. All three of these everyday habits will provide you with simple, handy tools for sharing Christ with those around you as a natural part of your everyday life.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. How have you historically viewed evangelism? Did you view it as a spiritual discipline? Why or why not? How could seeing it this way empower you to be more intentional about incorporating it into your everyday life?
2. What principles from Colossians 4:2-6 can you apply to your life right now?

<sup>9</sup> E. M. Bounds, *Men of Prayer Needed*, PDF, <https://www.hopefaithprayer.com/books/Men-of-Prayer-Needed-EM-Bounds.pdf>.



## CHAPTER THREE

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**HABIT #1:  
PRAY DAILY  
FOR OPEN  
DOORS AND  
BOLDNESS**

This first habit is embarrassingly simple but truly life-changing when you actually put it into practice. I was first introduced to this concept in a seminary class on personal disciple-making, which featured a variety of guest speakers whom God had used in mighty ways. Each veteran disciple-maker emphasized the importance of praying every morning and asking God for opportunities to share the gospel. One of the speakers, author and evangelist Billie Hanks, Jr., wrote the following excerpt in his book *Operation Multiplication*:

After extended observation, we have concluded that effective, lifestyle evangelism happens when a Christian specifically prays each morning, asking for opportunities to witness. Do you know why Christians aren't leading more people to the Savior? We aren't asking daily for opportunities to share our faith.<sup>10</sup>

## **A helpful way to practice this habit is to pray every day for “B.O.B.”**

**Burden for the lost:** Pray that God will break your heart for the lost all around you.

**Opportunity to witness:** Pray that God will provide divine appointments for you to share Christ.

**Boldness to proclaim Christ:** Pray that God will give you courage to walk through open doors.<sup>11</sup>

Add this practice to the top of your daily prayer list of 5-10 people and watch what God will do! However, let me warn you: This is a dangerous prayer. God might just give you what you ask for! I remember when I started praying this prayer. I had just graduated from college and was working my first full-time job. It didn't take long for people at work to begin initiating spiritual conversations with me! Over time, I had the joy of leading several coworkers to Christ, and I even had the privilege of discipling them on their journeys in the faith.

## **On Mission for the Gospel**

Consider this thought: How would your days change if you stayed alert for opportunities to share your testimony

<sup>10</sup> Billie Hanks Jr., *Operation Multiplication* (Salado, TX: International Evangelism Association, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Mark Cahill, "Pray for B.O.B.," [markcahill.org](http://markcahill.org), June 1, 2005, <https://markcahill.org/pray-for-bob/>.

and hope in the gospel? God might provide a chance to “randomly” share His love with someone you just met. Or He might open the door to a spiritual conversation with a friend. And really, there’s nothing truly random about random evangelism! God is always at work in far more ways than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Each of us has a small part of the brain called the reticular activating system, which naturally tunes itself to notice specific stimuli based on our past experiences and what matters most to us.<sup>12</sup> Think about how, when you get a new car, you suddenly start seeing that same model everywhere! In the same way, praying daily for open doors helps turn on our reticular activating system to notice the open doors God faithfully provides us to share the gospel with others.

The truth is that there are far more open doors to share Jesus each day than you and I notice. Jesus said in John 4:35, “Don’t you say, ‘There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest’? Listen to what I’m telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest.”

God is sovereignly moving in people’s hearts, and we get the joy of discovering the ripe ones! I call it the divine Easter egg hunt. It is not our job to convert people. Our job is simply to love, to pray, and to share. Consider Paul’s words to us in 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” It is God’s job to draw, to convict, and to convert. When we do our part, God tends to do His! (And here’s a little hint for you: He never fails!)

## **Sowing Gospel Seeds**

Let’s pray for open doors but also “jiggle handles” by actively trying to start spiritual conversations with those around us. I am not advocating for a passive approach, but rather intentionally seeking to steer every possible conversation towards Christ. As we go throughout our daily lives, let’s seek to sow the seed of the gospel as far and wide as possible. Ecclesiastes 11:6 gives a valuable principle for harvest: “In the morning sow your seed, and at evening do not let your hand rest, because you don’t know which will succeed, whether one or the other, or if both of them will be equally good.”

<sup>12</sup> Trauma Research UK, “RAS (Reticular Activating System).” Trauma Research UK, 2024, <https://traumaresearchuk.org/ras-reticular-activating-system/>.

You don't know which seed is going to sprout, but you *can* trust in the Lord of the harvest to use your faithfulness to do what only He can do in the lives of those He created. What I have discovered is that there's a direct connection between how many people you share the gospel with and how many people you lead to Christ!

## From Casual to Spiritual

As you go throughout each day, look for opportunities to start casual conversations. It's easier than you might think to turn these casual discussions into spiritual conversations. In chapter 6, we'll explore practical tips for starting these kinds of conversations with those who are in our spheres of influence.

Bill Bright, founder of Cru, said this: "Whenever I am alone with a person for a few minutes, I assume that I am there by divine appointment to share the good news of God's love and forgiveness."<sup>13</sup> Taking advantage of an opportunity doesn't mean sharing the whole gospel every time. It can be as simple as learning someone's name, doing something fun with a non-Christian, letting someone know you believe in Jesus, sharing a bit of your personal testimony, or inviting someone to church with you. You might even take the initiative to [set up a gospel appointment](#) later, where you can fully explain the message of Christ with them.

Just do something! I believe the best kind of evangelism is to simply *actually* do it. Don't overthink it or fall into the paralysis of analysis; just get the conversational ball rolling and trust God to do the work on your behalf.

## Created for Gospel Boldness

Practice stretching yourself a little further than you naturally would when initiating with people. I would rather see you be too bold than to not be bold enough! Every genuine revival has been marked by bold and broad gospel sowing. In Acts 4:12-13, Peter boldly declared Jesus as the only way to salvation, even reminding the council that they were the ones who had killed Him:

"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must

<sup>13</sup> Bill Bright, *Witnessing Without Fear* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1987).

be saved.” When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.

One of the marks of a Spirit-filled follower of Christ is his or her boldness to proclaim the gospel to all creation. Reflect on Christ’s words to us in the Great Commission: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Boldness is a character quality rarely emphasized in churches today, yet Jesus and the early church highly valued it as a marker of His people. Later, in Acts 4, when believers faced threats of prison and death for sharing the gospel, they didn’t pray for protection; instead, they prayed for boldness in Acts 4:29–31:

And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly.

Now, consider this question as we continue our deep dive into everyday habits of evangelism: What if the greatest need in our generation is not new methods, but new boldness?

## **Reflect and Discuss**

1. How could praying daily for open doors, boldness, and a burden for the lost change how you approach opportunities each day?
2. What is a typical gospel opportunity that you might experience on an average day?
3. What step of boldness could you take this week to start a gospel conversation with someone “as you go”?



## CHAPTER FOUR

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# **HABIT #2: DEVELOP YOUR “IMPACT LIST” FOR THE PRAYER-CARE- SHARE METHOD**

Using the “impact list” strategy can help you focus your evangelistic efforts as you seek to live out a culture of evangelism. While we should always be ready and willing to share Christ with anyone, at any time, and in any place, creating a list of people to focus on makes your outreach more intentional and effective. In fact, 75% of Christians came to faith through a friend or relative, which highlights the power of personal relationships when it comes to sharing the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

In Acts 16, we see the Philippian jailer come to Christ and bring his entire household with him. The Greek word for household is *oikos*, a term missiologists use to describe a strategy of equipping believers to intentionally share Christ with those in their closest circles of influence.

J. Oswald Sanders puts it this way:

Everyone has a circle of influence, and we can begin by praying for our unbelieving friends and relatives within that circle. That includes your immediate family, your relatives, your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers, and those closest to you. This is your *oikos*. It is your special realm for prayer, an important part of your mission field. Prayer is God’s mightiest instrument in the salvation of souls, and it is to be doubted if any soul is saved apart from the believing prayer of some saint.<sup>15</sup>

## Your *Oikos* is Your Mission Field

Here are some questions for you to consider as you reflect on the *oikos* that God has placed you in for the sake of the gospel:

- Who in your *oikos* is not a follower of Christ?
- Which of these people do you spend the most time with?
- Which of these people do you see as having the most potential openness to the gospel?

Take time to prayerfully select those God wants you to add to your impact list. To be a consistent witness to your impact list, you can practice a simple process I call the Prayer-Care-Share method. Let’s unpack it together.

<sup>14</sup> Don Morris, “Friends Bring Friends to Jesus,” *Christian Leader*, January 2, 2018, <https://christianleadermag.com/friends-bring-friends-jesus/>.

<sup>15</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *The Divine Art of Soul-Winning* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1937).

## **Prayer**

Add the 5–10 people on your impact list to your daily prayer list, believing that God is already at work within their stories. Seek to pray over these lost friends every day. Remember: Consistency is key! If you miss one day, don't miss two. Ask God to draw these individuals unto Himself, to provide opportunities for you to share His love with them, and to soften their hearts to receive the gospel. Prayer warrior and missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, put it this way: “Learn to move man, through God, by prayer alone.”<sup>16</sup>

I keep my own list on my phone, right alongside reminders to pray for B.O.B., my wife and kids, and the men I disciple, along with my ministry projects and faith goals. To see how I organize my prayer list, take a look at this free resource, [“The Big 5: Foundational Habits for Discipleship.”](#)

Each week in my discipleship group with college-aged young adults, we spend time sharing how things are going with the people on our lists and praying together by name for our lost friends. There is something powerful about joining together to labor in prayer!

## **Care**

The next thing to do is care for people. Colossians 4:6 says to “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.” In 1 John 3:18, we are exhorted, “Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.” Take a genuine interest in people and look for opportunities to serve them. This means spending time with people, listening to their stories, and hearing about their lives.

If people sense that you enjoy being with them, God will use that relationship to open up their hearts to His message. Sadly, many of the people you spend time with every day rarely experience the genuine care of another person—let alone a follower of Christ—in their daily lives.

## **Share**

You have prayed for God to open their hearts and to give you an opportunity to speak the truth to them in love. You

<sup>16</sup> Hudson Taylor, quoted in Howard Taylor and Geraldine Taylor, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984).

have drawn close and shown them the heart of Christ. Now, it's time to take (or make) the opportunity to share the gospel with them. Don't be content to stop after the first two steps. Far too often, our attempts at "friendship evangelism" provide plenty of friendship yet very little evangelism.

Many believers live by the misdirected motto, "Share the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words." This idea may sound profound, but unfortunately, it is not biblical. That is like saying, "Feed the hungry; if necessary, use food." People must hear and understand the gospel to be saved (Romans 10:13-15).

Eventually, we may have to risk rejection or an awkward moment in order to share Christ with those on our lists. We have to get to the place in our walk with God where our love for people trumps our fear of them. I admire the attitude the apostle Paul had when it came to evangelism and discipleship. In Acts 20:20, he says, "You know that I did not hesitate to proclaim anything to you that was profitable and to teach you publicly and from house to house." In those moments when Paul recognized the truth would be helpful, he didn't hesitate to share it. His reason for being bold and sharing the truth was love. If love is your motive, people will sense that, and it is unlikely your friendship will suffer.

While inviting people to church, starting spiritual conversations, and sharing your testimony are all helpful, the goal of your impact list is to individually present the gospel to each person and to invite him or her to respond. Ask the Lord for courage and just go for it. I have never once regretted being bold while sharing the gospel.

## **Embrace the Awkward**

Yes, it may be awkward, but awkward conversations change lives! Think about it: Almost all of the best conversations in life start out as awkward conversations. When I asked out my now-wife, Christy, for the first time, it was an incredibly awkward conversation. I cringe at how I made the ask, but I am so glad that I did it in the first place!

I pray that you go out and get into a lot of awkward conversations for the glory of God! While you don't want to

make it awkward on purpose, your friends who don't know Christ might only be one awkward conversation away from coming to Him in faith.

There is nothing more thrilling than taking your friends off of the impact list and onto the disciples list because they have given their lives to Christ! I have found that if I am faithful to pray consistently, lean in relationally, and share boldly, then people don't stay on the impact list for long. I am always on the lookout for new people to add to my impact list, to pray for daily, and to pursue with the love of Christ. The greatest joy in life is to watch God change lives right before your eyes!

So, are you ready to take your next step in implementing the Prayer-Care-Share strategy into your daily habits of evangelism?

## **Reflect and Discuss**

- 1.** Who are 5-10 people in your life who don't know Jesus and whose names you could add to your impact list? Take time right now to write them down on your prayer list.
- 2.** What is one practical way you can show care to someone on your list this week?
- 3.** What would it take for you to share the gospel with at least one person on your list this month?



## CHAPTER FIVE

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# **HABIT #3: REGULARLY SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS WHO NEED JESUS**

I've heard it said that, for the majority of new Christians, it takes about three years to eliminate non-believers from their lives. It seems like the longer that people are Christians, the fewer non-believing friends they have. However, this is not the example Jesus set for us throughout the Gospels; He made a point to spend time with those in need of God's grace. Matthew 9:11-12 says, "When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' Now when he heard this, he said, 'It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick.'"

## **In the World, Not of the World**

Before Jesus departed, He spent time praying to the Father for His disciples. He said in John 17:15, "I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." Jesus made it evident that He wanted His followers to be in the world but not of the world.

Your dining room table could be your most powerful ministry tool. Hosting a meal for new friends might be the single most effective way to deepen friendships and create a bridge to share the gospel. Author David Mathis put it this way:

In a progressively post-Christian society, hospitality is becoming one of the most powerful evangelistic tools we have. Increasingly, the most strategic place to share the good news of Jesus isn't a stadium or a street corner but your own home. How will you engage people about what matters most? Invite them to dinner.<sup>17</sup>

## **From the Physical to the Spiritual**

My friend Brian and I joined a CrossFit gym together and began practicing these habits while praying for God to work within the gym. We even set a faith goal on our prayer lists, asking God to save 20 people! One day, a gym leader who I'll call John approached Brian and said to him, "I've noticed you seem to have a strong relationship with God. I wonder if you could train me spiritually the way I'm training you physically." Brian set up a gospel appointment with him, and John recommitted his life to Christ! They began a discipleship relationship from that point on. It became a classic case of "win the chief, win the tribe," and one by

<sup>17</sup> David Mathis, *The Hospitality Command* (Minneapolis: Desiring God, 2022).

one, other gym members started coming to Christ, too! Eventually, Brian started a Bible study at the gym owner's house for around 20 members and their friends. Long story short, over the course of about a year, the gospel went viral in that gym, and at last count, we had baptized 21 people from that community!

Never underestimate what God can do through prayer, faith, and obedience on the part of His followers. I'll admit: This is my best story, so don't get discouraged if your efforts yield different results. Even still, we should expect God to use us, even if we don't immediately see the fruit of our efforts. I'm always encouraged by 1 Corinthians 15:58, which says to us, "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

## **All Things for His Glory**

So, what do you like to do for fun? Simply invite non-believers to spend time doing that thing with you. Maybe that is your mission field! Remember: God designed you with all your passions, skillsets, and experiences for a reason! He can use all of these things for His glory. Make yourself available by utilizing all things for the sake of His gospel made known.

When Christy and I graduated from college and got married, we set a goal to spend time with non-Christian friends once a week. From hosting dinners and board game nights in our home to going bowling with the non-believers we met, this simple goal created numerous gospel opportunities for us to take part in!

People are hungry for community and unknowingly starving for the gospel. So, how can you create more gospel opportunities by spending time with those who are far from Christ?

## **Reflect and Discuss**

- 1.** What hinders you from spending time with lost people? Why do you think so few Christians have meaningful friendships with non-Christians?
- 2.** What are some practical ways you could use your home, hobbies, or daily routines as opportunities to build relationships and share the gospel?



## CHAPTER SIX

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# STARTING S.A.L.T.Y. CONVERSATIONS

Let's reflect on the apostle Paul's words to us in Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person."

In my many years of leading evangelism trainings, I've realized that the most challenging part for most people is breaking the ice and starting the spiritual conversation in the first place. I find a strategy called "S.A.L.T.Y.," which was developed by our friend and college minister Gary Stidham, helpful.

"S.A.L.T.Y." stands for:

- **S**tart the conversation.
- **A**sk spiritual questions.
- **L**isten intentionally.
- **T**ell the good news.
- **Y**es or no: Invite them to respond.<sup>18</sup>

In this chapter, we'll discuss the five steps for starting a S.A.L.T.Y. conversation.

## **Start the conversation.**

The first step to engaging in a gospel conversation often begins with a casual conversation. This is an essential life skill that you can intentionally grow in and develop over time. Start by slowing down, taking out your headphones, smiling at people, and practicing open body language. You can stand out in any crowd by simply sending the non-verbal signals that you are approachable and ready to talk.

Try starting conversations about any topic throughout your day, and you'll notice your number of meaningful interactions increasing naturally. Just get the ball rolling! Comment on the weather, mention a local sports team, discuss hobbies, ask about weekend plans, or compliment someone's clothing—just say something!

<sup>18</sup> Gary Stidham, *SALTY: The Art of Personal Evangelism* (PDF e-book), <https://www.garystidham.com/ebook>.

## Ask spiritual questions.

Once you have built rapport through a casual conversation, take a risk and try starting a spiritual conversation by asking a straightforward, open-ended question about faith. You can start with a more general topic and gradually move toward the heart of the gospel.

I have found it helpful for me to identify personally with Christ early in the conversation so that mentioning spiritual matters doesn't come as a surprise. It can be something as simple as, "I just got back from a great men's retreat at my church, where we had a ton of fun camping and growing closer to God. Have you ever been to a retreat like that?"

I often say, "I'd love to pray for you about that," if someone shares a struggle or hope in their life. For example, one guy on my impact list (let's call him Steve) hopes that a script he wrote for a TV show will be accepted by a major film company. I told him I would pray for that and added it to my daily prayer list next to his name. Next time I see Steve, I can ask how it's going. Either way, it will mean a lot to him that I remembered and prayed for this desire on his behalf.

Depending on the setting and the person's interest, you can gauge the pace of the conversation and decide how far to take it. We are praying for open doors, not trying to kick them down! If the person you're speaking to doesn't respond to a spiritual conversation starter, feel free to change the subject and bring it up at another time.

Treat people as people, not as projects. Always be respectful, upfront, and permission-based when starting spiritual conversations. As 1 Peter 3:15-16 says, "but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do this with gentleness and reverence." No one appreciates being talked down to or manipulated with bait-and-switch tactics.

The truth is, some people are open to spiritual conversations, while others aren't—no matter how tactful you may be. The best approach is to be straightforward and to get their permission before entering into the topic. For example, you might say something like, "Hey, I'm curious about your

spiritual beliefs and religious background. Is that something you enjoy talking about? My faith is really important to me, and I love hearing what other people think.” Another one you can try if spiritual things don’t come up naturally is “I have recently been getting really excited about growing in my relationship with God. Can I ask you an interesting question?” At that point, they may say yes or no, and you can proceed accordingly. If they give you permission to keep going, you could consider using a gospel conversation starter.

**Here is a list of gospel conversation starters:**

(Usually, you will only need two or three of these before transitioning to a gospel presentation or setting up a gospel appointment.)

- What’s your spiritual background? Did you grow up going to church or anything like that?
- What do you believe is the world’s greatest problem? What do you think is the solution?
- Where do you think most people find hope when life gets hard? Can I share something that’s really helped me during hard times?
- Do you ever think about God or spiritual things? Do you feel like you’re close to God, far from God, or somewhere in-between?
- Have you ever had a spiritual experience? What was that like?
- Who is Jesus? What do you think His main message was?
- If you could ask God one question and knew you’d get an answer, what would you ask?
- What do you think happens after we die?
- If you could know God personally, would you want to? Would you be open to hearing how you can know God personally?
- Have you ever committed your life to Christ, or are you still in the process? What if we set up another time this week for lunch or coffee to talk more about this?

**Listen intentionally.**

Good listening may be the most neglected yet most important part of personal evangelism. You’ve probably

heard the quote that says, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” When others sense that you genuinely value what they have to say, their hearts will open up to you.

I will admit that I often struggle when it comes to listening well. Far too often, when someone else is talking, my mind races a million miles an hour. I start crafting my next question or planning my own response instead of giving the other person my full, undivided attention.

Make sure to maintain appropriate eye contact, smile, nod, and even offer verbal encouragement like, “Tell me more.” Ask follow-up questions to dig deeper into what they’re sharing, but avoid making it feel like an interrogation.

You can also share information and relevant personal experiences where appropriate. For example, you could say, “I struggle with anxiety, too, and this is how God has been helping me manage it.” Think of this conversation like a game of ping-pong: Keep it moving back and forth with good questions and active listening. The more you listen well, the more meaningful the conversation will be.

## **Tell the good news.**

When you sense the time is right, ask permission to share a brief testimony or explanation of the gospel. I highly recommend using a simple gospel illustration, such as the 3 Circles, the Bridge Illustration, the Romans Road, or a gospel booklet or app like Life On Mission to make the message as clear as possible. A number of other gospel-sharing tools are available on the [NAMB evangelism resource page](#).

I encourage you to become proficient in one or two tools and to use them consistently with everyone you share the gospel with. The more you practice, the more confident you will become. Depending on the questions you asked earlier and the direction you took the conversation, you can introduce the gospel illustration in different ways. The exact wording is less important than first getting permission from them to share.

**Here are some examples of how you could introduce a gospel tool in conversation:**

- “This has been a great conversation! I appreciate you letting me hear your perspective. I learned [this short illustration](#) that summarizes how to have a personal relationship with God. It only takes a couple of minutes. Can I share that with you?”
- “Can I share what God did in my life that helped me connect with Him in an authentic way? **[Share your testimony.]** This booklet **[or app]** uses Scripture to explain what God did in my life. Can I show that to you?”
- “What percent chance would you give yourself of going to heaven if you died today? I believe that you can be 100% confident in your relationship with God and about going to heaven when you die. Can I show you a couple of verses that have been very meaningful to me?”

If you don't have time to share a gospel presentation at that moment, try to set up a [gospel appointment](#). Say something like, “I have been learning a lot and growing in my relationship with God lately. Maybe we could get together sometime for lunch or coffee and talk more about all of this?”

Once you have permission to share, guide them through the gospel presentation with a low-pressure, relational tone. Don't rush, but also avoid lingering too long on any single point. Resist the urge to add extra commentary or explain every detail of doctrine. Whatever tool you use, be sure to incorporate Scripture and allow God's Word to work in their heart.

If they have questions, answer them briefly. For more complex questions, you might ask if it's okay to discuss them after you have shared the full illustration, as some questions may be naturally answered along the way.

As you wrap up, check in by asking if what you have shared makes sense to them and if they have any questions. If you don't know the answer, be honest and ask if you can get back to them. If you are able to answer, it's time to move to the final step.

## **Yes or no: Invite them to respond.**

What is the most important question you could ever ask someone? The answer is the one that could impact their life now and for eternity. We call this “the golden question,” and it takes courage to explain the gospel, answer someone’s questions, and then ask something like, “Would you like to commit your life to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord right now?” This is the moment to keep your eyes on theirs, “zip your lips,” and resist the urge to rephrase.

There may be a few seconds of awkward silence, and that’s okay. This is not meant to be abrupt or confrontational; instead, offer this invitation to respond in a low-pressure, relational way.

Many people have never received Christ simply because no one has ever shared the gospel with them, asked them to respond, and had the love and courage to wait for an answer.

People will forget thousands of conversations in their lifetime, but I promise you that they will not forget this one! Even if they aren’t ready to respond to Christ immediately, God will use it to plant a seed in their hearts and minds.

### ***The Faithfulness of God***

You don’t need to be an extrovert or a natural evangelist to lead others to Christ. Sometimes, quiet authenticity is even more effective. Mariana, a shy college student in my ministry, learned to set up gospel appointments and to ask “the golden question.” She welcomed new girls, listened to their stories, shared her own, and invited them to respond. Throughout her college years, she has led more than 20 young women to Christ and personally disciplined many, with her disciples then going on to lead others to Christ as well!

God specializes in using weak, imperfect people to accomplish His purposes. We should be greatly encouraged by the words of 2 Corinthians 4:7: “Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us.” God is faithful to use anyone—including you. It’s not about your abilities; it’s about your

availability! That's what engaging in S.A.L.T.Y. conversations is all about.

Now that we've unpacked the S.A.L.T.Y. conversations strategy, let's take some time to pause, reflect, and apply what we've learned.

## **Reflect and Discuss**

- 1.** What can you do to increase the daily frequency and quality of your casual conversations? How can you grow in listening well and keeping the conversational ball going back and forth?
- 2.** Which of these gospel conversation starters do you want to try?
- 3.** Why is asking "the golden question" so important?
- 4.** Do you have a gospel tool or illustration that you feel confident using? If not, which one can you commit to learning?
- 5.** How often do your spiritual conversations result in you sharing a gospel presentation with another person? What ideas mentioned in the last two chapters could help you share the gospel more often?



**CONCLUSION:**

# **THE ONE MONTH CHALLENGE**

Let me challenge you to try out these three habits for a month and see if God will lead you toward more open doors for sharing your faith. Find a friend or two, take time each week to present a few accountability questions around these habits, and watch God work! These habits are simple, but that doesn't mean they are easy. Having conversations about how you are practicing them each week will be essential to staying consistent in practicing them.

So, who will you lock arms with to be intentional about living on everyday evangelistic mission?

### **Suggested Weekly Accountability Questions:**

- 1.** Have you been praying daily for opportunities to share your faith? What opportunities did you see? What opportunities did you take? What opportunities did you miss?
- 2.** Have you been praying every day for the people on your impact list? What steps have you taken to get to know them better or to share the gospel with them?
- 3.** Have you spent any time hanging out with non-Christians? What is your plan of action when it comes to spending intentional time with those who have not yet experienced God's love for themselves?

### **Obey and Pass It On**

Let's consider Christ's words to us in John 14:21:

The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I also will love him and will reveal myself to him.

I want to leave you with one final challenge! Obey whatever the Lord may be calling you to do in the area of evangelism. Jesus promises to manifest Himself to those who walk in obedience to Him. As you step out in faith, you will experience God in ways you have never experienced Him before. Jesus promises His presence, power, and authority to all who obey His final command to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

You may or may not see large numbers of people come to Christ right away, but if you are faithful, God will honor your obedience, and seeds will be planted. Bill Bright put it this way: “Success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. The only failure in witnessing is a failure to witness.”<sup>19</sup>

Do you sense God prompting you to apply these three habits to your life? If so, it is essential that you make an intentional plan to incorporate them and find someone to hold you accountable. Legendary disciple-maker Dawson Trotman held to the mantra, “You don’t get what you expect; you get what you inspect.” That’s why incorporating accountability questions into a weekly small group is a game-changer if you truly want to make progress.

One impactful way to implement this accountability practice is to encourage those in your existing small group to read *Three Habits for Everyday Evangelism* and commit to practicing these habits together. Then, you can begin intentionally weaving these accountability questions into your regular weekly meetings.

Imagine what could happen if everyone in your small group—or even your church as a whole—began practicing these three habits together. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul challenges his disciple Timothy to pursue spiritual multiplication, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

The only thing better than practicing these habits yourself is equipping others to practice them as well. *That’s* the difference between addition and multiplication. Share this eBook with those faithful men and women in your circle, meet with them to discuss the reflection questions, and then build these questions into your ongoing accountability rhythms.

Let’s not be satisfied with anything less than every Christ-follower passionately playing their part in making disciples of their neighbors and the nations. May God use you to multiply a movement of disciples making disciples, making it hard to go to hell in your community and beyond!

<sup>19</sup> Bill Bright, *Successful Witnessing*, Cru, <https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/01/successfulwitnessing.pdf>.

Who's Your **ONE?**

# Can you imagine the impact if one million believers each had just one person they prayed for and shared the gospel with? **Everything would change!**

**Who's Your One** gives you a starting point for leading others to Christ:

- Identify one person who doesn't know Jesus.
- Pray for their salvation consistently.
- Look for opportunities to share the gospel with them.



Find all the free resources you need to launch *Who's Your One* in your church at **WhosYourOne.com**.

