

# GATHER TO SCATTER

## EVANGELISM TRAINING

### WEEK 9: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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**Matthew 4:19** ~ And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

- Christians have a zeal for the lost and a desire that all would come to salvation (Psalm 40:3).
  - Yet many people find it difficult to start talking about the gospel (Acts 4:20).
  - Others don’t know how they will respond to objections or hard questions (Luke 6:3; 1 Pet 3:15).
  - Others just lack confidence (Acts 4:29).
- This monthly mini class will teach the foundation for evangelism and give you greater confidence to put it into practice (Philippians 4:9).
- The nature of the class will provide a Biblical foundation that shapes how and why we evangelize, provide opportunities to discuss real situations, and encourage us to share our faith with others.
- Schedule:
  - Fall 2024: Message, Barriers, Motivation, Methods, Action, Aim, Prayer
  - February 2: Hospitality, Christian Love, and Evangelism
  - March 2: Creating a Culture of Evangelism: The Gospel as Part of the Life of the Church
  - April 6: START: Questions to Begin a Gospel Conversation
  - May 4: Overcoming Challenges

#### EVANGELISM ESSENTIALS

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**Definition:** Essentially evangelism is explaining the gospel so that God would save sinners.

- God the Father has chosen the means: believers communicate His Word so that God the Spirit would convict the hearts of sinners to find their salvation in God the Son.
  - “Evangelism is **teaching the gospel** with the **aim to persuade**.”<sup>1</sup>

**We must pray:** Evangelism is “not only to preach, but also to pray; not only to talk to men about God, but also to talk to God about men.” -J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (page 124)

Ambassador Work

**We are ambassadors:** “We must deliver the message regardless of the discomfort produced, effort required, and shame endured. Ambassadors *exist* to deliver the message.” -J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism* (page 101)

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<sup>1</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 26.

## OPPOSITION FROM YOUR OWN HEART

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The greatest way you can prepare for the external challenges and opposition from others is to first be prepared to boldly overcome your own fears and shortcomings in sharing the gospel.

**Acts 8:3-4** ~ But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

**2 Peter 3: 15-16** ~ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

- I don't know how:
- I don't think anyone will listen to me or respond:
- I don't think they will like what I have to say:
- I tried once but I know I am not an evangelist:
- I am too busy:
- I fully intend to do that later in life:
- I am not a holy enough person to talk to someone about their sin:
- I don't want to:
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Bear the good news of Jesus with believers so that you would grow in confidence in God and His gospel.<sup>2</sup> Paul says in Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”...

But first he says in verse 15, “So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”

- Same gospel. Preached to believers, and unbelievers unto salvation.

## OPPOSITION FROM THE GENUINELY CURIOUS

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We are going to get asked some difficult questions by people who genuinely want to understand more.

We should not be surprised that people will not understand everything we try to tell them.

**1 Corinthians 1:18** ~ For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**1 Corinthians 2:7-8** ~ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

- The crowds and woman at the well asked Jesus questions in John 4 and 6.
- 2 disciples needed clarity of the Scriptures to have their eyes opened by Jesus on the road to Emmaus.
- Jesus needed to answer a few questions of the disciples after his resurrection when they were astounded that he wasn't still dead (Luke 24).
- The Eunuch needed help understanding the Scriptures from Philip in Acts 8.
- The Philippian jailer wanted to know what he needed to do be saved in Acts 16.
- What if I don't know the answer? (2 Timothy 1:8)
- What if I say the wrong things?
- "I've noticed that I often fear evangelism because there are so many ways to go wrong. I can flub the message. I can keep silent when I need to speak. I can say things that later I think were stupid. But it's good to remind yourself that even your mistakes can help you become a better ambassador."<sup>3</sup>

## OPPOSITION FROM THE ADVERSARIAL

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Much of the time the people you meet and talk to about the gospel are not hostile, but there are occasions where they are angry, or their questions are loaded with defensive or offensive ammunition.

- When the conversation starts to escalate, we need to remain calm.
- The person we are talking with is likely **against God and his standard** or was **hurt by a church** or **hurt by a Christian**. Care for the person as a soul that needs saving, regardless of their viewpoint.
- Can you ask a follow up question or two to gain clarity or even show you care? What is their motive?

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<sup>3</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism*, 104.

- Don't excuse sin or pretend they are okay or right, but do tell them you care and that you hope they might be patient with you as you really don't have anything against them and only want to give them (joy, hope, peace, freedom, purpose, etc.).
- Part of explaining the gospel is also to show them the deficiency in the worldview they might be defending. Give them the truth in love (Eph 4:15).
- Part of the gospel is accurately showing them the biblical truth that answers their unbiblical thinking.

### **Common areas of Rejection<sup>4</sup>**

Christian hypocrisy and judgmentalism, abusive power in churches, rejection of God's Word or contradictions, God's goodness and power vs evils in the world, God's authority, love of autonomous living in sin, culpability of sin. Jesus' deity or resurrection, unbelief in an afterlife, other religion, free will vs God's Sovereignty, apostate (John 2:19), Science and theory of evolution, dinosaurs, angels, misunderstood Scripture.

"...in every witnessing context, we need to **firmly and lovingly persevere in a scriptural presentation of the Gospel**. Every "Where did Cain get his wife?" and "What about this or what about that?" needs to be 'tabled' when dealing with crafty-hearted people with an atheistic world-and-life view. This *humanly* impossible task of communicating with them as clearly as possible on a two-dimensional plane without getting in the way of the Gospel should drive us to **unceasing prayer, prayer for ourselves** that the Lord might suppress our pride of performance, and then **prayer for the one who stands in desperate need of rescue from sin's bondage**. We need always to pray that the Spirit would use the words from His Word coming forth faithfully from of our mouths to accomplish His sovereign pleasure in that person's life."<sup>5</sup>

### **MBC OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVANGELISM:**

1. Kids Equipped and Children's Ministries
2. Local Pride events
3. Organize a block party or evangelistic neighborhood bible study
4. Day Camp
5. Haiti ministry event at York Creek that the Schut's arranged Friday and yesterday
6. Volunteer at Pregnancy Resource Center and Alpha Ministries
7. Foster Care and International Exchange Student programs
8. Ask your friends how you might help them with their evangelism
9. Pray for the body to grow by evangelism.
10. An opportunity you create and invite others!

<sup>4</sup> There are many great resources to help you. Start with <https://carm.org/answers-for-seekers/> or read the book in note 5.

<sup>5</sup> George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 120–121.