

SAMPLE:
GETTING BIBLICAL ABOUT
EVANGELISM



Getting Biblical about Evangelism, Second Edition

First Edition published under the title
Building a Biblical Philosophy of Evangelism

Developed by Keith Davy and Daniela Byers,
Research & Development

Published by: CruPress
100 Lake Hart Drive, 2500
Orlando, FL 32832-0100

Book & Cover Design: Rich Bostwick

To Order go to: www.Crupress.com or 1-800-827-2788

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CruPress is the publishing division of Campus Crusade
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ICT2004036

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Introduction

What do you think about evangelism? And, equally important, how do you think about evangelism?

If you have been around Christians for very long, you've probably been exposed to multiple views about evangelism. The more you've heard, the more you may have become confused. There are a lot of different views out there, as well as different emphases, strategies and approaches. Many of these, of course, can be helpful. But at times the messages seem a bit conflicting. For instance, some suggest that you have to earn the right to be heard. Others advocate simply taking the initiative and trusting God to use the power of the gospel. Which is it—one or the other or neither or both? Hmm. Good question. And there are a lot more of them.

Our culture's influence hardly helps the cause. Evangelism is not a highly regarded activity by those who don't understand the issues at stake. So caricatures abound ("cramming the Bible down someone's throat"), as do calls for tolerance and pluralism. (You should never offend anyone, should you?) The relativism of today even makes one wonder if it matters at all. (Its okay as long as they sincerely believe something and, of course, don't harm anyone along the way.)

How do you sort it all out? Go back to the beginning. Study the primary documents—the New Testament. See what evangelism meant to Jesus and his early followers. With that foundation, you will be able to align your witness with what God desires and to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of today.

That is what *Getting Biblical About Evangelism* is all about. It is designed to guide you in the process of building a personal (and biblical) philosophy of evangelism. *Getting Biblical About Evangelism* is not an exhaustive study (and hopefully it will not be an exhausting one, either), but it will provide a valuable foundation upon which Christ can build for you a lifetime of fruitfulness.

Together or Alone?

Getting Biblical About Evangelism is designed as a personal study. There are no small group discussion questions built into it. This allows you to proceed at your own rate and draw your own conclusions. However, you may find it valuable to do this study in conjunction with others. After all, they may harvest insights from the passages that you might have missed. If you do it as a group, it is quite easy and profitable to gather each week and compare the discoveries from one or more passages. Simply share your findings to each of the five key questions and reflect on their implications for today.

A Four-Part Process

PART ONE | studying the PASSAGES

Getting Biblical About Evangelism is quite simple. It begins with studying fourteen key passages that either speak about evangelism or provide examples of evangelism. The first three are selected as foundational passages. If you only have a limited time (or interest), study these three and move on to STEP TWO.

Your investigation will be guided by five key questions that can apply to any evangelistic encounter. These questions parallel the five components of the Evangelism Model:



- The Master: God
- The Masses: The Audience
- The Messengers: Believers
- The Message: The Gospel
- The Methods: The Communication

As you study, ask God to speak to you through each passage. Ask him to help you think about evangelism as he thinks about it and to develop a sound and compelling ministry philosophy.

You may move quickly through this study. There are 14 passages. So if you do one passage each day, you can complete Part 1 in two weeks. Or, you may want to move at a slower pace. One a week will take you about a quarter of a year or three months to complete. Spend about 20 – 30 minutes reading and reflecting on each passage and record your insights within this booklet.

PART TWO | assembling the SUMMARIES

In the second stage, you will summarize your finding, comparing your answers to each of the five key questions. Having completed the fourteen passages, review your notes on each question. Write a brief summary of what you have learned about each of the five components in the Evangelism Model. These summaries will help you assemble the wealth of insights you have garnered from the passages into five topical areas.

PART THREE | creating an OUTLINE

You will complete your study by crafting an outline (or paper) to synthesize your findings into a re-usable format. Include your applications to each section.

PART FOUR | using your CONCLUSIONS

Don't view this as a finished project. You will need to integrate into your life and ministry the applications that you have identified. With time you will add new insights from other biblical passages. Seven additional passages are suggested in the back. You will also want to communicate your findings with others. From this study, your thinking and practice in evangelism can continue to mature and bear much fruit.

Study Questions

The study and conclusions of *Getting Biblical About Evangelism* are built around the following five questions. Not every passage will provide an insight for each question. But over the whole of the study, you will find a great deal of material to build your insights for each question.

What do you observe about...

the MASTER | God and His part in evangelism?

the MASSES | The audience in evangelism?

the MESSENGERS | Believers and their role in evangelism?

the MESSAGE | What was communicated?

the METHODS | How was the message communicated? What was the relational context?



Part One: Acts 11:19-26 [sample]

The relational context refers to the relationship between the believer and the audience. There are three primary relational contexts or modes in evangelism:

- Natural relationships – when a believer witnesses to someone in a natural relationship, whether intimate or a casual acquaintance.
- Ministry outreach – when a believer witnesses to someone as an intentional ministry outreach.
- Body Witness – the corporate witness of believers to those who become exposed to or involved with a community of believers.

These, of course, can be overlapping connections. But noting the differences in relationship can help in developing your understanding and applying your insights in evangelism.






¹⁹Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, (telling) the message only to Jews. ²⁰Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to (speak) to Greeks also, (telling) them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²²News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he found him, (he brought him to Antioch). So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul (met with the church and taught great numbers of people). The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

As you read, it may be helpful to highlight or mark the text in some way for each component. For example, you may mark everything having to do with the Master in red, the Masses in blue, etc. Or, use lines as in this sample key.

Sample Key:

-  = master (God)
-  = masses (Audience)
-  = messengers (Believers)
-  = message (The Gospel)
-  = methods (Communication)

[sample]

What do you observe about...

Date:

the MASTER | God and His part in evangelism?

- God used the persecution to spread the messengers (and thus the gospel) to more people (19)
- God's hand was on the disciples, causing many to believe & turn to Him (21)
- God's grace is evidenced in the faith of new believers (23)
- God filled Barnabas with the Holy Spirit so he could bring many people to the Lord (24)

the MASSES | The audience of evangelism?

- They were both Jews (same ethnic background) and Greeks (different culture) (19)
- They were the people they encountered in their travels (19, 20)
- Many were responsive, believing and turning to the Lord (21, 24)

the MESSENGERS | Believers and their role in evangelism?

- The first seem to be ordinary Christian believers (19)
- They had been scattered by persecution. Yet they were still sharing despite that opposition. (19, 20)
- They weren't limited by their religious and cultural background (19, 20)
- They had the Lord's hand with them (21)
- They told the message as they went, witnessing as a way of life (19, 20)
- Barnabas, another witness, was a Christian leader, sent by the church (22)
- He was good, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith (22)
- looked for evidence of God's grace in Antioch
- encouraged new believers to remain true
- get help from others in ministry (Barnabas went and got Saul)
- disciples first called Christians at Antioch

the MESSAGE | What is communicated?

- They shared the message (19)
- They shared the good news about the Lord Jesus (20)
- With those who responded, they encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts (23)

the METHODS | How was the message communicated? What was the relational context?

- The scattered believers told the good news as they went (which sounds more natural – with new acquaintances). But they didn't necessarily know the people they shared with, so it might have been more a ministry mode, intentionally meeting people to share with them (19, 20)
- Action verbs – telling (19, 20), speaking (20), bringing (24)
- Barnabas looked for where God was at work and encouraged the people there (23)
- Barnabas met with and taught new believers (23)

Personal Application:

Which truth from this passage is most important to you today?

- God's people tell the gospel wherever they go, with whoever they meet.

What practical way will you apply this truth to your life?

- I will pray about and seek to share with people in each arena of my life, that is, wherever I go and whoever I might meet.



John 1:35-51

³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter). ⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” ⁴⁸“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” ⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” ⁵⁰Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” ⁵¹He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

What do you observe about...

Date:

the MASTER | God and His part in evangelism?

the MESSAGE | What is communicated?

the MASSES | The audience of evangelism?

the METHODS | How was the message communicated? What was the relational context?

the MESSENGERS | Believers and their role in evangelism?

Personal Application:

Which truth from this passage is most important to you today?

What practical way will you apply this truth to your life?



Acts 8:26-40

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

³⁰Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³²The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” ³⁸And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

What do you observe about...

Date:

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the MESSENGERS | Believers and their role in evangelism?

Personal Application:

Which truth from this passage is most important to you today?

What practical way will you apply this truth to your life?

Part Two: Summary Analysis

Review your notes on each passage and summarize what you have observed about each aspect of evangelism.

the MASTER | What have you learned about God and His part in evangelism?

the MASSES | What have you learned about the audience of evangelism?

the MESSENGERS | What have you learned about believers & their role in evangelism?

the MESSAGE | What have you learned about the gospel message?

the METHODS | What have you learned about how to communicate the gospel and the different relational contexts in which to communicate it?



Part Three: Outlining Your Philosophy of Evangelism

Create a final summary of your insights. Either an outline or a summary paper may be helpful. Use the five components of the Evangelism Model for your main points, with insights as subpoints to each. Include applications as a conclusion for each component.