



IMMANUEL  
BIBLE CHURCH

# *Essential Foundations for Evangelizing to Relatives*

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Sharing the gospel with relatives is distinctly different from sharing the gospel with anybody else. In some sense, it is easier to share the gospel with relatives because you know them. You have the opportunity to evangelize to them simply because you are a part of their lives and what a blessing that is! You may need to look no further than your living room or a Thanksgiving dinner to share truth and to share what gives your life meaning. That being said, it is also harder to share the gospel with relatives because you know them and they know you. You have seen their sin, their callousness towards Christianity and Christ, and their love for the world and unwillingness to leave it.

On the flipside, your relatives also know your sin, especially the sins you have committed against them. They remember when you were a hypocrite or legalistic or failing them. They remember when you weren't Christ-like or when you just wouldn't stop "pushing that religious stuff" on them. All of this doesn't mean that we cannot evangelize to our relatives. Jesus, who was sinless, shared this difficulty as he remarks that those who proclaim truth are not accepted in their hometown (Luke 4:24). What it does mean is that we need to use different biblical strategies in order to reach our relatives who aren't saved.

## **1. Be Blameless**

First, in order to set a precedent, we need to ensure that we walk blameless when we are sharing the

gospel with our families. There may be glaring sins that we have not asked forgiveness for that are causing relatives to hold a grudge on us. Or, perhaps there are sins that we didn't even realize we committed. We shouldn't expect a smooth ride sharing the gospel if we didn't bother to clean up the rubble on the road. In Proverbs it says: "He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends" Proverbs 17:9. Seeking to blot out sins we have committed against others is synonymous with seeking to love those people. We can complement that verse with another in Proverbs: "Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins." Proverbs 10:12. This is a simple truth but important nonetheless. All of this is to say, there is no harm in asking a relative if they have felt hurt by you in circumstances when you never apologized or asked for forgiveness. Maybe there are things that you really need to apologize for and when you do ask for forgiveness, maybe your relatives will listen to you since you humbled yourself and listened to them. James instructs, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." James 1:19-20.

All of these steps are imperative to being blameless before your relatives and perhaps this precedent will show your relatives that you are worth listening to in light of displaying Christ-like humility.

## ***2. Listen Earnestly***

Secondly, we can ask what our relatives believe. How often have you assumed what someone else believes? I know I have done that plenty of times. I've assumed religions, political beliefs, ideologies, philosophies and probably everything else too. If we don't keep this in mind, how can we ever ensure that we are having productive conversations? I have had my fair share of unproductive conversations with my own wife. We have had many disagreements and arguments where we both assumed what each other thought on a subject and after a time of debating back and forth, we realized that we actually both agreed! We have had good laughs about this phenomenon, but how easily it would have been for us to avoid these conversations that tend to hurt one another. We could have avoided hurtful conversation if we had not assumed what each other believed. This couples brilliantly with something said in Proverbs: "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion." Proverbs 18:2.

I have often put my opinion first and haven't bothered to listen and understand what someone else believes or says. I have at times been the fool, have you? Fortunately, this can be remedied if we simply ask questions and listen earnestly.

### **3. Make Connections**

Lastly, once these two basic foundations are in place, practical steps can now be laid out. One of the most helpful practical tips is asking questions as we just considered. You can ask about their immediate family, their workplace, their hobbies or their future plans. When you begin to see the aspirations and the fears, the desires and the delights, then you can better understand a person in order to wisely share the gospel with them. When you see what pleases others, you can surely tell them who is the greatest pleasure because He is the Creator who made all those pleasures in order to point back to Him. All of life connects back to God in some way since He is the author of it, and so you can begin to train yourself to see those connections. When you are immersed in the Scriptures and interpret life through the lens of Scripture, the insights can be helpful and valuable to your relatives to lead them to Christ. For example, if one of your relatives loves gardening, you

can remember rich passages where Jesus speaks of Himself as the vine, His Father as the vinedresser, humanity beginning and ending in a garden, or how Christians are an aroma of Christ (John 15, Genesis 1, Revelation 22, 2 Corinthians 2:15-16). The connections do not need to seem awkwardly shoved into a conversation, but can begin with, "That's what I love about Jesus..." If Jesus is your delight, it is only natural to bring Him up in conversation and to remember Him when other natural things pique your memory about Him. "That's what I love about Jesus, just like the flower brings a sweet aroma to your nose, so He brings the sweetest aroma to my soul. And do you know why?"

These are just a few essential foundations when seeking to share Christ with those who are closest to you. Though they are simple, in practice they are difficult. This is why we need to continually pray that God would work and give us grace despite our weaknesses, our failings and also our own self-confidence. Prayer is what undergirds these practical steps and causes us to be able to even participate in this wonderful work of proclaiming our Savior. Praise God that He has chosen to save people by using us! The joy of salvation far outweighs the anxiety or fear you may now have in sharing the gospel.

So take these steps forward, maybe even today, and trust God that He is delighted to use you for His good purposes. Enjoy God because your delight in Him will be the love and confidence that drive you to open your mouth for His name. As you seek to walk blamelessly before your relatives, endeavour to understand who they really are and ask questions which may inevitably lead you to tell them why you love Jesus, we pray that God may be gracious in saving their souls as He was towards you.

If you have any questions, please contact us either by text [here](#) or by email [here](#). Further, we would love to hear from you on more topics that you want us to cover.