

# BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

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## Personal Outreach



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

There is simply no truth greater or more impacting than the gospel. Because of the gospel, we have been given eternity in heaven with Jesus. Because of the gospel, we have joy and purpose in our lives today. Once we believe the gospel, and once we make it the center of our lives, everything comes into place.

But all that being true, it's still so hard for us to share the good news of Jesus with the world around us. Many Christians today don't believe it is their personal responsibility to share Christ with others and most have never intentionally shared the gospel with anyone. Is this OK? If not, how do we change?

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## 2 THE PRINCIPLES OF OUTREACH

In personal outreach, both the why and the what are important. So let's start by considering the "why," or the biblical principles that drive our desire to share the gospel.

There is simply no other conclusion to come to when reading the Bible then this: We must reach out with the gospel!

To prove this point, let's consider the life of Jesus.

### **1. JESUS COMMANDS IT.**

When Jesus was here on earth, He taught many things in both word and in the way He lived. He spoke with authority and He lived the example of how we should conduct ourselves.

READ Mark 16:15

☛ What Jesus command His disciples to do?

☛ To whom where they to do this?

READ Acts 1:8

☛ What did Jesus say the disciples would become?

🔪 Where were they to go?

This was the charge given to the church from the beginning, and it still remains the directive from Jesus to us! He wants us to be a people who preach the gospel.

But not only did He say it, He did it!

READ Matthew 4:23

🔪 Where was Jesus going in this verse?

🔪 How is He doing it?

READ Matthew 9:35-38

🔪 What is Jesus doing in this text?

🔪 How did He feel when He saw the crowds?

One key reason we must share the gospel is because Jesus commands it.

But this is true as well...

## **2. THE GOSPEL DEMANDS IT.**

READ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

🔗 According to verse 18, what did God do through Christ?

🔗 What has God given us?

Because of what Jesus did for us, we have been reconciled to God. That means that though we were estranged from God because of our sin, we are not brought close to Him again. That's an amazing truth, and it means that we now have the joy and calling or, as the text puts it, the ministry to share that truth with others.

🔗 According to verse 20, what title do we have?

🔗 What is our plea to others?

🔗 And how are we to make the plea?

The reality is, since we have forgiveness, mercy and grace through the gospel and since we have been reconciled, it is now our calling to bring others to that same forgiveness, mercy, grace, and reconciliation. The gospel demands that we reach out to others with the gospel.

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### **3 THE PRACTICES OF OUTREACH**

We have the command from Jesus, but we also have the example of Jesus. He reached out to others with the gospel when He was here on Earth and there is much to learn from His example.

From His example, we can create a step by step plan to effectively share the gospel in our everyday lives.

#### **STEP 1. PRAY**

READ Matthew 9:35-38

- 🕒 What was the condition of the Harvest, according to Jesus?
  
- 🕒 What did he tell His disciples to do?

If you stop and think about it, this is a bit surprising. Step back for a moment. Jesus says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

If it was you, what would you propose as a solution to this problem? The logical answer would be something like, “So go and work the fields!”

But that’s not what Jesus says to do. The first step that He encourages is to pray.

Let me give you two brief reasons we need to pray, which will guide the specific prayer request we need to offer up to God in this.

- **Prayer request #1 - “God, open my mouth!”**

READ Ephesians 6:18-20

- 🕒 In verse 19, what prayer request did Paul have?
  
- 🕒 In verse 20, what did Paul identify with?

✎ What did the title mandate?

Paul was the greatest missionary at that time and, perhaps, in any time! And yet, he knew that he needed God's help to speak the gospel with boldness! If Paul needed God's help, we do as well.

Speaking the gospel with boldness is scary. Let's start by asking God to send us as workers in the harvest and ask Him to give us a boldness to proclaim the good news!

• **Prayer request #2 - "God open their eyes!"**

READ John 6:44

✎ What does this verse teach us about those who come to Jesus?

If someone's heart is opened to the gospel and they believe it for themselves, then one thing can be sure. God has drawn them. It's a supernatural work and apart from the Father opening people's eyes to see it, it will never happen. So let's pray that God will work in people's hearts and draw them to Himself through the gospel!

### **STEP 2 - LOOK!**

READ Matthew 9:35-38

The text says that Jesus saw the crowds of people. He looked beyond their physical appearances and social status and He saw down to their hearts. And, as a result, His heart was impacted.

✎ When was the last time you were in a crowd of people?

✎ What did you see?

✎ Did the spiritual lives of the people you saw impact your heart?



🗒️ How do you view others around you?

🗒️ Do you tend to just get go about your day with little thought about the eternal destiny of the people you see?

We need to look like Jesus looked. Who did Jesus see? Who did Jesus go to? Who did He share the gospel with?

To get a proper perspective, we need to balance a couple of truths. On the one hand, Jesus clearly said to preach the gospel to everyone.

READ Mark 15:16

No question that Jesus wants us to share the gospel with everyone around us.

But when you consider who Jesus spent the most time with when He was here on earth, an interesting pattern emerges.

He didn't spend the most time with the Pharisees, the most "religious" people of His day. He didn't spend the most time with people whose lives were going just fine with little difficulties. No, Jesus intentionally spent time with broken, sinful needy.

READ Matthew 9:10-13

🗒️ Who was Jesus reclining with in this text?

🗒️ Why did He say He was spending time with them?

### **STEP 3 - ENGAGE**

Jesus said the fields are ripe but when we look around, we see a ton of people who seem to be cold. But He says, "Lift up your eyes!"

But more than just see them!

READ Matthew 9:35

- 🔗 What two activities was Jesus doing in this verse?

READ Matthew 4:23-24

- 🔗 What two activities was Jesus doing in this passage?
  
- 🔗 What was the result, according to the first part of verse 24?

He preached the gospel and He helped people in need. He did both and he did them at the same time.

There are two ditches that churches tend to fall into. They usually do one or the other, but they don't do both well.

In the past, churches were in the forefront of helping people in need. Lutheran, Methodist, and even Baptist churches built hospitals, shelters, relief organizations, and the list could go on.

But to do this well, it took an awful lot of energy and resources to maintain. So it didn't take long for churches to have to focus on running the organizations, and the gospel ministry fell by the wayside. In addition, the gospel message began to be viewed as a barrier. People didn't want to hear and some would turn away instead of getting help. Further, to meet federal and state legal requirements, there were massive restrictions put on what could be said and to whom it could be said. So it didn't take long for these efforts to focus on the one side, meeting the needs of people, but leave the gospel behind.

On the other hand you have churches who could see the error of the “social gospel.” They would proudly say that they preach the gospel and that’s it. “We’re not about healing the sick. We’re not about social reform. We preach the gospel!”

So they go door to door, or stand on a street corner, or some other very aggressive form of preaching Jesus, and find little response at all. Or, as was more often the case, they don’t go out at all.

Let’ again look at the example of Jesus. What is he doing? He’s preaching the gospel. Never backing down, never sugarcoating, never watering it down. Boldly, passionately, and aggressively preaching the gospel.

But he’s doing it while meeting the needs of those around him. Healing the sick. Bringing relief to hurting.

So, here’s the principle:

*“Help people in need while you preach the gospel.”*

Let’s move on, now, to step 4.

#### **STEP 4 - SPEAK**

Francis of Assisi said:

*“Preach the gospel everyday and, if necessary, use words.”*

Though his sentiment is right, what he communicates could not be more wrong. Just living different than the people around will not give them enough information to believe the gospel and be saved. It is always necessary to use words.

To back that up with Scripture, consider this passage.

READ Romans 10:13-14

- 🗒 Summarize this passage in your own words.

In order for them to call, they have to first believe. In order to believe, they have to first hear. What has to happen for them to hear?

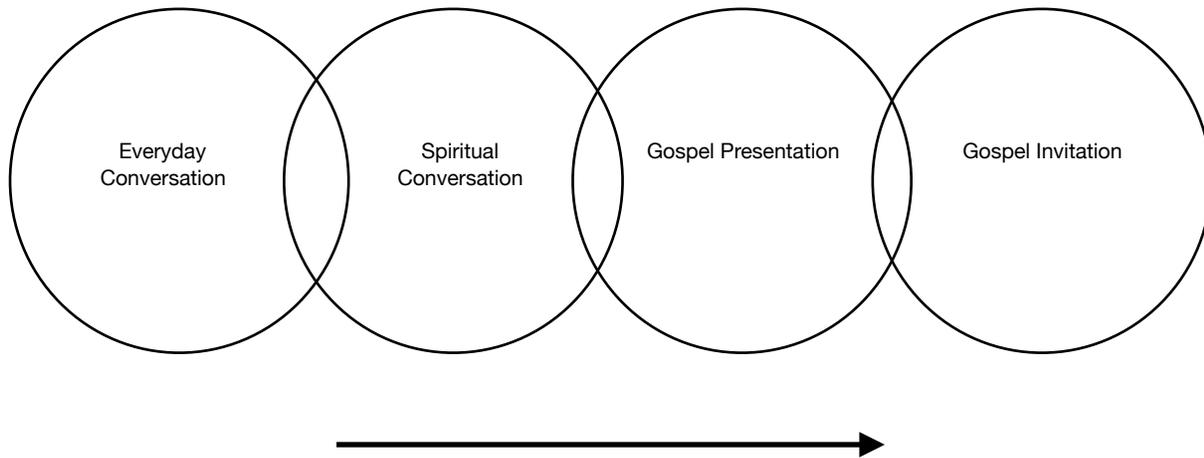
But this is the tricky part. How do you get to the gospel in your conversations with people?

You get into conversations everyday. And, if you think and work at those conversations, they can turn into gospel opportunities!

Let’s take this apart.

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## 4 CONVERSATION FLOW



Let's take this apart.

### 1. EVERYDAY CONVERSATION

We can pretty easily get engaged in an everyday conversation with topics like the weather, sports, news, etc. Now, what you want to do if you are trying to get this to a gospel presentation is get more and more personal, as the person feels comfortable.

Another level might be job, hobbies and activities, immediate family, kids, etc. Then even more personal with questions like:

- *Where did you grow up?*
- *How many siblings?*
- *Did you have a close family?*

Then you can get to the point you want to go with questions like:

- *What is your church background?*
- *What is your religious background?*

And that will lead you from a everyday conversation into a spiritual conversation.

## **2. SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION**

Now that you are in the arena of spirituality, you need to discover a few key things.

Here are some good questions to ask:

- *What's your understanding of the Bible?*
- *What's your understanding of heaven and hell?*
- *Who is Jesus to you?*
- *What did Jesus DO for you?*

Don't be satisfied with Christian cliches and standard "churchy" phrases. "I love Jesus." "I've always been a believer." You need to know what this person actual believes about his or her salvation.

And we are trying to get down to one key question:

- *If you were to die today, do you know where you are going? Why do you believe that?*

If the answer is anything other than, "I'm going to heaven because I believe Jesus died for my sin and rose again." Then they need help.

We should then ask:

- *Has anyone ever showed you from the Bible how we get to heaven?"*

then...

- *"May I show you?"*

That brings us to the next circle.

## **3. GOSPEL PRESENTATION**

Using mostly the book of Romans, you can easily share with someone what they need to know in order to be saved.

Here's what we suggest as a process. Open your Bible to each of the following passages, have the person read the verse, then ask, "What does that mean to you?"

Then go on to explain it to them.

- Romans 3:23

Here, we want people to see they are sinners. Repentance comes before salvation and in order to repent, they need to believe they need to! So they need to know they are sinners without hope.

Taking them through several of the ten commandments might help. We are all guilty of breaking them!

Once they understand the fact the they are sinners, bring them to the next verse.

- Romans 6:23a

Have them read up to the word “death.” Again ask, “*What does that mean?*”

Because of our sin, we deserve a “payment” (wages). The payment we deserve is spiritual death. Revelation 21:8 clearly defines this as the “second death” or eternal separation from God. It’s talking about hell.

Because of our sin, we deserve hell.

If someone says, “Why would a loving God send anyone to hell?” you can use the “Good Judge” illustration.

*“If there was a man before a judge who was clearly guilty of murder, would the judge be a good judge if he just let him go unpunished? No. He might be loving, but he’s not good. A good judge ensures the law is upheld!”*

God is good, so He must punish sin! And since we are all sinners, we all deserve punishment.

That’s the bad news. Here comes the good!

- Romans 6:23b

God has a gift for us and that gift is not eternal death, but eternal life! And He’s giving that to us through Jesus Christ!

- Romans 5:8

Since sin required a death, Jesus died for us. I am the guilty one and I deserved to die. But Jesus was put on the cross in my place to die for me! When He did, He paid for my gift.

Now I have to take it!

- John 3:16

The way I take the gift of eternal life from God is I believe. Believe means to trust. We must trust that the only way we will get to heaven is through Jesus dying on the cross for us and raising again. Only when I trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus as payment for my sin can I be saved.

The idea of trust is putting your full weight on something.

An illustration that may help is to tell them about a frozen pond. If it was winter and we went out to a pond, I could ask you, “Is that pond frozen?” A person could say, “I’m sure it is! It’s been cold for a long time and I can see all the ice!” I could then say to that person, “If you really believe, step out on the pond!”

It’s one thing to know, it’s another thing to trust.

- Romans 10:13

The way we put our weight in the gospel is by calling on the name of Jesus to save us! It's saying a prayer admitting our sin, acknowledging that Jesus died and rose again for us, then calling on Him to save us!

Which brings us to our last circle, and our last step.

### **STEP 5 - INVITE**

#### **Gospel Invitation**

When sharing Christ this way, it's a good idea to have the person repeat back to you what you have taught them.

1. We are sinners and cannot save ourselves.
2. Because of our sin, we deserve hell.
3. Jesus died for our sin and rose again
4. When we believe in that truth and call on Him, He will save us

Once they fully understand, we should invite them to pray.

It's a good idea to have the person pray out loud so you can be sure they really understood and ask God to save them.

This method of conversation flow has been used many, many times to great effectiveness. And when used with the other steps as we follow the example of Jesus, God will do great things for His glory as He opens people's eyes to hear and believe the gospel! And we get to be a part of that! There is simply nothing more enjoyable than leading someone to Christ!