

In those early years as a believer I had no idea Christians could be coy about their faith. No one had told me I was meant to feel awkward about spreading the good news. That was something I learned only after mixing with Christians for a while. ... When I first became a Christian, promoting Christ was a perfectly natural orientation of my whole faith. It was similar to the way I felt about football (or what Australians and Americans call "soccer"). I loved football. I played it almost every day. I watched every televised English Premier League match. I talked about it and asked friends to come up to the local oval for a kick-around. I never dreamt that football-lovers might be self-conscious about mentioning it or coy about inviting others to play it.

But after attending this evangelism course, that is exactly how I felt about my faith. Suddenly, mentioning God and inviting people to church had become a specialized compartment of the faith. It had its own name—evangelism—its own propositions and jargon, and even its own multiweek courses. Whereas I once talked about God as freely as I talked about my favorite TV show, now I found myself switching into "evangelism mode"—where the heart beats faster, the palms get sweaty and you feel the pressure to steer the conversation into a most unconversational manner. ...

Thankfully my own evangelistic self-consciousness soon passed. After months of trying to "perform" as I had been taught, I decided to relax. I forgot about getting it "right", getting it "in order" and getting my conversation partner "over the line". Instead, I decided to approach my gospel opportunities as if they were friendly conversations about my favorite topic. It was not long before I realized again that this is exactly what sharing the faith is.

(John Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission*)

There was a time in my life when I was absolutely certain that the only way to gain God's favor was to perform, achieve, and strive. But then I met the Son of God in a powerful way and learned that the only way to gain his favor is to accept his gift of grace. Almost immediately, it brought an overwhelming peace to my soul, and an end to my useless striving, and a revolutionary change to my entire world.

(Bill Hybels, *Just Walk Across the Room*)

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (Colossians 4:5–6)

All passages, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version of the Bible. You can download the free YouVersion Bible app that includes the NIV translation at your favorite app store.

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Rooted

Sharing The Story

The Process

Rooted

The Rhythm Of Relationship

Rooted*Sharing The Story*

Matthew 28:18-20

Sharing The Story*The Process*

1) _____ ...

Is A _____.

I've had to learn the hard way that on some occasions, the Spirit asks me to be an opener. I have a hoe, and I'm supposed to break up some really hard soil in someone's heart so that the next person to come along might have some influence in planting a seed or two along those rows.

On other occasions, the Spirit asks me to play the middle guy, carrying around a watering can and helping quench a few thirsty souls. Still other times, I'm supposed to pick really ripe fruit off the vine. I might describe it this way: I believe many people begin their spiritual quest at a negative ten and that my role is to facilitate their movement to a negative eight. That's it. Two points on the spectrum, and a result that is still in negative territory! It used to discourage me, but at some point I began to accept the fact that the role I am supposed to play is ... well, the role I'm supposed to play.

I realize that some of you believe that unless the plan of salvation gets explained, it's been an unsuccessful conversation, spiritually speaking. ... But here's the reality: the Holy Spirit will bust your nice, neat evangelism formulas every time.

(Bill Hybels, *Just Walk Across the Room*)

2) _____ ...

Is A _____.

John 1:35-51

Do you care about those who are without Christ? Before you give me the programmed Sunday School answer most ministers give, let me help you answer this question honestly.

- When is the last time you've had a lost person in your home? (The plumber who repaired your sink doesn't count.)
- How many meaningful conversations did you have with non-Christians this week?
- Who are the nonbelievers you prayed for today?

If you can't answer those questions with several names, chances are you're on the road to not caring. Or perhaps you've already arrived and settled in that dangerous destination. To be fair, most Christians don't wake up one morning and declare, "I've decided not to care about the lost anymore." The attitude creeps in over time. After being a Christian for a few years, we don't have a ton in common with non-Christians, so we don't typically develop quality relationships. Over time, many Christ-followers realize they have almost no relationships with unbelievers.

If that's you, ask God to increase your heart for those without Christ. He will. Before long, God will send you someone—maybe a bunch of someones—whom you'll care about. Your love for them will increase. When that happens, you get *it*, and *it's* almost impossible to turn off. Your prayer life increases. You're looking for opportunities to shift conversations toward spiritual things. You're ever aware that you're representing Christ. When you have *it*, people tend to want *it*. Your passion for Christ is contagious.

(Craig Groeshel, *It, How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It*)

3) _____ ...

Is A _____.