

The Spiritual Discipline of Evangelism

Bible study material taken from Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991)

1. Intro:

- a. The present benefit of spiritual discipline is a fulfilled, God-blessed, fruitful, and useful life. If you get involved in spiritual gymnastics, the blessings of godliness will carry on into eternity. Although many people spend far more time exercising their bodies than their souls, the excellent servant of Jesus Christ realizes that spiritual discipline is a priority.¹ John MacArthur, Jr
- b. Think of how rewarding mission trips can be, getting to focus on sharing Jesus for a set amount of time?
 - i. You take vacation
 - ii. You block out your schedule
 - iii. You go to a place where you hope that people will hear of Jesus and respond
- c. And if I ask you here at home to talk to someone about your faith, we sometimes get anxiety and have all sorts of feelings about why we don't do it.
- d. Have you met anyone who says they are as evangelistic as they should be?
- e. Evangelism should be considered a spiritual discipline because it is something we need to discipline ourselves to do and to do more often and get better at.

2. Evangelism is **Expected**

- a. We all might not use the same method, but we all need to evangelize.
- b. What is evangelism?
 - i. J.I. Packer says "If we want to define it thoroughly, we could say that evangelism is to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to sinful people, in order that they may come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church²
 - ii. A simple definition would be communicating the gospel of Jesus for the salvation of people.
 1. It doesn't matter whether it is spoken, written, recorded or presented to a small or large crowd.
- c. What did Jesus say about it?
 - i. **Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)**
 - ii. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - iii. **Mark 16:** And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

¹ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 99

² See J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), pages 37-57.

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- iv. **Luke 24:46-49 (ESV)** ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."
- v. **John 20:21 (ESV)** ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."
- vi. **Acts 1:8 (ESV)** ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- d. What did Paul say about it?
 - i. **2 Timothy 1:8-14 (ESV)** ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.
 - ii. **Colossians 1:28-29 (ESV)** ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.
- e. Don't confuse a gift with a task.
 - i. **Ephesians 4:11-14 (ESV)** ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.
 - ii. **1 Peter 2:9-12 (ESV)** ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

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3. Evangelism is **Empowered**

- a. Many people think they need specialized training.
- b. Many people think they don't know the bible well enough.
- c. Many people think they might not be able to answer questions.
- d. **John 9:1-34**, The man told all of the truth that he knew.
 - i. Jesus healed a man born blind. He made mud and put it on his eyes and told him to go wash.
 - ii. The man's neighbors questioned him and he told them the man named Jesus made mud, annointed my eyes and said to me "go to Siloam and wash, so I went.
 - iii. They didn't believe him so they took him to the pharisees and they asked him to tell his story.
 - iv. He repeated his story and they didn't belive him.
 - v. They called his parents, and asked if he was their son that was born blind and wanted to know how he could see.
 - vi. They answered yes and said "he is of age, you ask him."
 - vii. They called him again and said "give glory to God, We know this man is a sinner."
 - viii. He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know, One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."
 - ix. They asked him again, how did he do this, and the man said " I have told you already and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it, do you want to be his disciple?"
- e. What is **success** in evangelism?
 - i. Is it when the person you witness to makes a profession of faith in Christ?
 - ii. Was Jesus an "evangelistic failure" when people like the rich young ruler turned away from Him and His message?
 - iii. Then neither are we if we present Christ and His message and they turn away in disbelief.
 - iv. If you couldn't save yourself, you are not the one saving them.
 - v. Our job is to carefully and accurately deliver the **message**.
 - vi. **Sharing the gospel is successful evangelism.**
- f. We do it in the power of the **Holy Spirit**, not ours.
 - i. **Romans 1:16** (ESV) 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.
 - ii. **Ephesians 2:8-9** (ESV) ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - iii. **Romans 10:17** (ESV)¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
 - iv. We are sharing "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believe"
 - v. **Our job is not to make them believe, it is to share the message.**
- g. We need to be an **aroma** for Christ in all that we do

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- i. If you never saw a sign for Flashbacks and drove by around noon, you would still know they were there, and you might even get a little hungry.
- ii. **2 Corinthians 2:14-17 (ESV)** ¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. ¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶ to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷ For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

4. Evangelism is a Discipline

- a. We must discipline ourselves to get into a context of evangelism, we must not just wait for witnessing opportunities to happen.
 - i. **Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)** ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- b. Be prepared and do not **FEAR**:
 - i. **1 Peter 3:13-17 (ESV)** ¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.
- c. Clarity not confrontation
 - i. **Colossians 4:2-6 (ESV)** ² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
- d. Hosting, not hostility
 - i. You might evangelize more by being a good neighbor, a good friend, by serving others and pointing out why you do what you do.
 - ii. Being a Christlike servant to people in crisis demonstrates the reality of your faith in a way that piques their interest.