



SHARING
JESUS
{without *freaking out*}

Proverbs 11:30

New American Standard Bible

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.

• This chart further describes these “**EVANGELISM ROLES**” in **(1Thess. 4-10)**.

1. GOD CHOOSES (V.5) ELECTION

2. JESUS SAVES (V.10) ATONEMENT

3. PAUL (THE EVANGELIST) BRINGS THE GOSPEL (V.5) EXTERNAL CALL

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT POWER, SUFFERING, JOY (Vv.5-6) INTERNAL CALL

**5. THESSALONIANS (HEARERS) REPENTANCE AND FAITH (Vv. 8-9)
CONVERSION**

6. THE GOSPEL THE STORY OF JESUS (V. 8) INSTRUMENT

Like **PAUL’S** role in **1 Thessalonians**, “Our role is to **communicate** the gospel both in **words** and **actions**. Our role is **not** God’s: we are not sovereignly choosing who gets saved. Our role is **not** Jesus’: we are **not** saving people from their sins. Our role is **not** the Holy Spirit’s: we cannot force people to believe. Instead, **we must stay focused on our role as the evangelist and do it well.**”

THE *RELATIONSHIP* OF **EVANGELISM** TO **MISSIONARY WORK**

- **Missionaries** have understood something important about the work of evangelism that lay leaders have begun to realize in the last several years: **evangelism must connect the gospel to culture**. Here are two ways that might explain the relationship between gospel and culture.

1. THE GOSPEL IS **TRANSCULTURAL** BECAUSE IT IS **TRUE** FOR ALL CULTURES.

In the Old Testament, God is the God of both **Israel** and the **nations**. In the New Testament, salvation is for both the **Jews** and the **gentiles**... The gospel is universal and normative for all peoples at all times and in all places.”

2. THE GOSPEL IS NOT **ACULTURAL**, AS IF IT HOVERS ABOVE CULTURE AND IS **DEVOID OF ANY CULTURE**. Instead, the gospel is deeply **enculturated**, which is **why** we have to explain the Bible’s culture whenever we give a story or talk from the Bible.”

- There's another aspect to the **gospel-culture relationship**: The person we are trying to evangelize is also **enculturated**. They are not a person who hovers above culture and is devoid of any cultural influences. Instead, this person is deeply enculturated. And this can vary widely, even within the same geographical area....Each would have different cultural concerns, gospel interpretation, cultural communication, and cultural application.
- Not only are the evangelized enculturated—**SO ARE EVANGELISTS**. We ourselves as evangelists ... are not free-floating people hovering above the culture, devoid of any culture. We are **NOT acultural**. We each have a cultural accent and a cultural flavor. We are deeply enculturated, and this will affect our understanding and application of the gospel.
- Like missionaries who evangelize tribes in Papua New Guinea or the streets of Mumbai, when we engage in evangelism, we need to understand there is no form for presenting the gospel that hovers above a culture, devoid of culture. We have to pick a particular form that speaks to one culture but may not be able to speak to another culture. This doesn't mean the gospel itself changes, **only the way we communicate it to various kinds of people.**

- Many of us have heard and even sermons preached that rightly focused on the **GREAT COMMISSION'S** theme of **“make disciples”** (Matt. 28:18-20). And we've taught those around us that they should be disciple-makers themselves. But we also need to be clear that **“making disciples”** necessarily involves helping people **who are not yet disciples** to become disciples—that is, **evangelism**. **JESUS** modeled it (Mk. 1:14, 15; Matt. 9:35) and **trained** his apostles to do the same (Mk. 6:7-13; Lk. 10:1-12). Only a few days later Jesus said that they would be his **“witnesses...to the ends of the earth”** (Acts 1:8).
- Part of the **APOSTLES'** teaching that the newly Spirit-filled church devoted themselves to (Acts 2:42) must have been the normal and regular **sharing of the gospel** with family, friends, and strangers. From those very first weeks and months after the Pentecost, people were being saved **EVERY DAY** (Acts 2:47). **Evangelism** was immediately a part of their new life of discipleship to the risen Lord Jesus.

SO, WHAT ARE THE *BENEFITS* TO *EVANGELISM*?

- 1. *EVANGELISM* HELPS KEEP THE GOSPEL *CENTRAL* IN OUR LIVES AND CHURCHES.
- The **Gospel** creates the church (**Col. 1:5, 6**), it's the chief message, and authority (**1 Cor. 15:1-3**), and powers our growth in Christ (**Phil 1:6**). Therefore, we ought to do everything in our power to keep it central. We know that the *world*, *our flesh*, and *the devil* will do everything they can to move it out of view.
- **D. A. CARSON** has said that one way we preserve the gospel is by working hard to pass it on to others. **Evangelism helps us maintain the gospel message as the engine of a growing life in Christ.**

- **2. EVANGELISM DEEPENS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE.**
- Gospel conversations with non-Christians force us to better grasp the central, underpinning truths of God's Word. Issues like God's **character**, his **holiness** and **wrath**, man's **creation** in God's image, **sin**, **grace**, **the cross** of Christ, and **judgment** all come into sharp focus. We have to think through explaining these concepts to different people in different circumstances. And we learn better how these truths lace together all of Scripture from **Genesis to Revelation**.
- One of the clearest verses on the discipleship benefits of evangelism is **(Philemon 1:6,) "and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ."**
- **KNOWING** something and **EXPLAINING** it to someone who doesn't understand it or believe it are two different things. These treasured truths become clearer to us as we explain them to others.

- **3. PROPERLY MOTIVATED EVANGELISM GROWS OUR LOVE FOR GOD AND NEIGHBOR.**

- All people are called to wholeheartedly love God and other people (**Mark 12:28-31**). Sharing our faith because we love God and people stokes the fire of this love all the more. I've never seen properly motivated evangelism do the opposite.
- If you've not led someone to Christ, I can only describe to you the joy of seeing the transforming power of the gospel newly at work in a person. To see their heart broken over their sin breaks my heart more fully for my sin. To see them revel in the freedom of forgiveness makes me want to drink it in all the more myself.
Experiencing the privilege of leading someone to Christ reminds us of how much more powerful, holy, and merciful God is than we often think him to be.
- Likewise, when we share the message of gospel hope with others, Christ promises us that sometimes they will reject it and perhaps reject us as well (**Jn. 15:18-20**). When that happens, my heart is more broken over the imprisonment and blindness that sin brings. I ponder the coming judgment with greater urgency. And I wonder again why God would save me, just as much a sinner as the person who rejected me and the gospel message.

- 4. ***EVANGELISM*** PROMPTS **UNEXPECTED** QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS FROM NON-CHRISTIANS, WHICH CAN DEEPEN OUR FAITH.
- Those who live in the middle east and interact with Muslims and other non-Christians are consistently strengthened in their faith as they turn to God seeking **WISE ANSWERS** to their questions.
- As a football chaplain I have spent many an afternoon befriending and getting to know players who were **Mormons, Jehovah-witnesses** not to mention the down right **ATHIEST**. Often our conversations will naturally turn to issues of faith, and I have had the opportunity to explain what Christians really believe. I cannot always answer their questions immediately but as I turn to God and his Word for answers, my faith is always strengthened. **Sharing my faith puts me in a position to hear objections and find answers to questions that I never would have asked on my own.**

- 5. ***EVANGELISM*** PROTECTS US FROM MISTAKENLY **ASSUMING** THAT THOSE AROUND US ARE SAVED.
- **Unregenerate people** cannot be discipled in any biblical sense. They do not and cannot grow in godliness (Rom. 8:5-8).
- A great danger for the church today is **assuming** the salvation of people who simply claim the label “**Christian**” or are involved in church activities. Not being careful about who we consider to be “**born again**” often has its roots in **unbiblical** views of conversion, or sometimes **fear** of man dissuades us from taking the risk of offending a professing believer by suggesting **they may not be trusting in Christ after all**.
- But making the gospel a part of our everyday conversation will often result in nominal (**in name only**) Christians actually **being born again of the Spirit**.
- The **sower** spread the seed liberally, seemingly without consideration for where it landed (**path, rocks, thorns, soil; Mark 4:2-8**). We too should share the gospel broadly and without discrimination, allowing our sovereign God to use it however he sees fit, to **save the lost** as well as **encourage the saints**.

- 6. ***EVANGELISM*** INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD OF BEING **PERSECUTED FOR THE GOSPEL**, WHICH LEADS TO OUR GROWTH.
- There's a reason I didn't start with this **"benefit"**! But notice (Rom. 5:3-5) ***"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4, and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."***
- While we should not seek suffering for suffering's sake, we should be prepared to embrace suffering for the gospel's sake (**2 Tim. 1:8; Rom. 8:17**). In fact, suffering because of our evangelism should be ***an encouragement*** to us as it was to the early church (**Acts 5:41**). And sharing our faith helps ensure that we will suffer because of the gospel itself rather than because of **unwise decisions** or **giving needless offense**. Suffering for our proclamation of the gospel can deepen our faith as we look to our **SUFFERING SAVIOR**.