

Overcoming Roadblocks / Obstacles to Witnessing / Fear Factor (Wil) 8:20-8:45am

In a classroom setting, we are fine but put us in the proverbial headlights of an unbeliever and we too can become temporarily paralyzed.

Discuss at your tables: What are the obstacles that often paralyze us and keep us from witnessing?

Exercise – let people discuss around table their obstacles. Identify what your table believes is the #1 top obstacle. Once you've discussed, have a rep come up and write it on the board up front.

I believe that every obstacle in one way or another points back to fear. Fear is a top obstacle.

Today we're gonna focus on the Fear Factor, which is probably #1 top issue holding people back. Three specific fears I'm gonna talk about.

#1 Fear of Ignorance:

- What if someone asks a question I can't answer? I'll make Jesus look bad.

SOLUTIONS:

o Rely on God's wisdom (Prov 11:30) *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.*

But remember, success = faithfulness, sharing in the power of the Spirit and leaving the results to God.

#2 Fear of Making a Mistake:

- "I don't want to lead someone astray." That's great because you shouldn't.
- The Bible tells us to do what when we get anxious? PRAY... letting God's peace guard our minds (Phil. 4:6-7)

SOLUTIONS:

o Rely on the power & leading of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual conviction vs. Human persuasion: John 16:8-11
 - *And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.*
- The boldness and the words you need can't come from within.
 - Jesus said, in Luke 12:11-12 *When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.*

o Rely on the power of God's word.

- Rom 1:16 Unashamed because of power!
- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable...
- We've got to hide the treasure of His word in our heart because...
 - God's word never returns void.

#3 Fear of Offending

- "What if I upset someone?"
 - 1 Peter 3:15 reminds us *"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;"*
- But at the same time, not everyone responds the same way (2 Cor 2:15-16a) *"For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life."*
- The cross is an offensive stumbling block Paul says to the Galatians (Gal 5:11) and foolishness to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:23).

SOLUTIONS

o Accept people may get offended.

o Trust the sovereignty of God

- Read John 4:35-38 *Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."*

- What are the two seasons implied in the verses? _____ & _____
- What are the two workers mentioned? _____ & _____
- And they both are mentioned doing what when the fruit comes in?
- He prepares every good work in advance for us – Eph 2:10.
 - So, we are praying for divine appointments to walk into.

Give your fears to the Lord

Finally, we must realize fear is not from the Lord. It is from the enemy. We must pray against the Spirit of fear in Jesus' name.

- Pray through 2 Tim. 1:6-7. Not laying hands on each other to impart gifts to one another but symbolically as a reminder of our unity and the spirit's power in each of us.

Learning to Listen & Ask Questions (Wil) (9:10-9:30):

Exercise: *Drawing Twins*

Questions after round 1.

- Why don't many drawings look like the original?
- Artists what were your frustrations with the source of the instruction?

Questions after round 2.

- Did it help knowing what you were drawing beforehand?
- Did it help to be able to ask questions?

Questions after round 3.

- Did it help to be able to watch the person drawing?
- How could this possibly relate to evangelism?

Randy Newman in his book "Questioning Evangelism" suggests evangelism that "will sound less content/persuasion driven and more relationship/understanding driven."

The goal of questioning is to help people know *how* to think not necessarily *what* to think.

Here are some main ideas and basic principles:

- Understand your own basic assumptions about your Christian beliefs.
- You want to help people to understand their own assumptions.
- It'd also be good to help them understand why they believe them.

The importance of asking questions: Jesus often answered questions with questions.

- Mk 10:17-18 *As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*
- Mt 12:9-12 *Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him. And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."*
- Matthew 21:28-32 *"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he*

*answered, 'I will, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They *said, "The first." Jesus *said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him.*

Why did Jesus do this? What do you think? (Table talk about the benefits of asking questions)

The benefit of asking questions:

- Questions make great *conversation* starters.
- Questions are interactive by nature. Allows you to engage in dialogue is often more effective with a non-believer than a lecture.
- Questions shows we respect people enough to listen to them.
- Questions force people to examine their own beliefs and assumptions.
- Questions takes the pressure off you.

Burden of Proof: Who bears the burden of proof?

Read Scenario #1:

- Someone should ask the question, "How did you come to that conclusion?"
- Whoever makes the claim bears the burden.

- Two of the most tactical questions:
 - What do you believe? Why do you believe it?

Examples of responding to a hostile question with a question:

- You don't believe God really sends people to hell, do you?
 - Do you think there should be a consequence for bad things?
 - Do you think anyone deserves to go to hell?
 - Does Hitler deserve to be in hell?
- Jesus was just a good teacher.
 - What do you mean by just?
 - What makes you think that Jesus was a good teacher?
 - What makes him good?
 - What do you know about what Jesus taught?

It's important to try to understand what someone believes:

- Do they believe in the existence of God?
- What do they believe (or know about) the Bible?
- Do they understand the concept of personal accountability?
- Do they know who Jesus is?

We do this by what Gregory Koukl calls “staying in the driver’s seat” when asking questions.

Read Scenario #2

One of the best ways to transition to the gospel is asking the right kind of questions. We ought to do so with tact, grace, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Read Colossians 4:5-6. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Here’s a list of helpful questions:

1. Do you have any interest in spiritual things?
2. Do you have any spiritual beliefs?
3. What is your religious background?
4. What do you think is the purpose of life?
5. Do you ever wonder about life after death?
6. Who is Jesus to you?
7. Have you read much of the Bible?
8. Is there anything I can be praying for you?
9. How do you find strength when you’re going through hard times?
10. What do you think it means to be a Christian?
11. If you could ask God one question, what would it be?
12. How would you determine if a person is good or not?
13. Do you think there is such a thing as right and wrong? How do you know?
14. If you were to die tonight, how sure are you that you’d go to heaven?
15. If God asked you, “Why should I let you into heaven...” what would you say?
16. What is the biggest issue that prevents you from being a Christian?
17. Would you like to know how you can have a personal relationship with God?
18. Has anyone ever explained to you how you can have a personal relationship with Jesus?

Tactical Questions:

19. What do you mean by that?
20. How did you come to that conclusion? Why do you say that? What are your reasons for holding that view?
21. How do you know?

Questions can be great to help you understand what a person believes and why they believe it.

