

One topic still gets me every time. When I hear a sermon on Personal Evangelism, I still shrink in my seat just a little bit. Simply because it is an area where I know I can do better, almost every day of life.

And you know what I mean by Personal Evangelism, right? Take the time, using your voice, extending a hand, seizing the opportunity to introduce Truth into the lives of people who need it so desperately.

While excuses have been made and will be made to explain lost opportunities, I'm convinced each and every Christian will have to answer for "The Big 6" New Testament passages demanding evangelism:

- **Matthew 5:14-16** – By word and deed, who we are and how we present faith to the world should naturally draw people to glorify the God of heaven.
- **Matthew 10:32-33** – Jesus makes a deal with His disciples: if we will say His name, He will say ours. But the opposite is also true here. To remain silent is to deny Him.
- **Matthew 28:18-20** – This is "the Great Commission" to the Apostles, but also set up the standard for church growth: teaching about Jesus' authority and baptizing folks!
- **Acts 8:4-5** – This is true "preaching." Not a man behind a pulpit, but men and women, no matter their circumstances, announcing Jesus wherever they go, as our new converts do!
- **I Thessalonians 1:6-8** – This church had adapted a "culture of evangelism." This whole group was announcing their change of life and the Christ whom they now serve.
- **II Timothy 2:2** – This is the most powerful passage for me. Coming to service, listening to preaching, is about becoming equipped to ... go teach others the same Truth!

Okay, with these verses in tow, the logical question is: *why am I not doing this every single day of my life?* Well, it may come down to setting and candidates. When the setting is a church building, and the candidates are people sitting voluntarily in the auditorium, staring at me with open Bibles, asking to be taught: evangelism is easy. But the lost are outside these doors, unsaved candidates in less than ideal places, and they need us. Let's take a closer look at some of the obstacles that often hold us back.

1. **Uncomfortable Settings** (Walmart checkout line, bank teller window, hair salon, the movie theater, a restaurant) - We can easily deem these "less than ideal" and not try.
2. **Socio-Economic Mismatch** – Maybe the person is very poor and you worry about them taking advantage of you. Or they are very rich and you're sure they won't be interested.
3. **Poor Home Life** – (godless parents, unsupportive spouse, unlawful marriage) – We suspect they have little support at home and likely won't be able to make a spiritual change.
4. **Immorality** – Perhaps we know this person is living immorally: (fornication, pornography, dirty language, adultery, unlawful marriage). They have too far to come to get to Christ.
5. **Worship Issues** – This candidate is religious-minded, but attends a denomination and we expect they will never give up instrumental music or the casual church atmosphere.

The truth is, I have let any one of these obstacles keep me from talking to folks about Jesus. Can you imagine if you came across someone who had all 5? Wow. What a lost cause and waste of time that would be. Well, how many of you remember that Jesus once came upon a woman who was burdened with every obstacle in our list? Most would have let the moment pass. Jesus did not. **John Chapter 4.**

1. **V4** – He was a Jewish man at a well near a Samaritan woman. This is socially awkward.
2. **V7-8** – Samaritans were socially inferior to Jews. And this woman was likely very poor.
3. **V16-18** – We don't know about her parents, but her home life seemed very unstable.
4. **V16-18** – While not stated, her relationship with 6 men likely wasn't morally upstanding.
5. **V20** – The Samaritans worshipped in a different place and in a different way than the Jews.

Because Jesus took the initiative and considered every soul to be of value, we discover several interesting and ultimately wonderful things about this Samaritan woman. She was...

- **Interactive** – v7-9 – She could have ignored Him. But instead she chose to speak to Him.
- **Inquisitive** – v10-12, 15 – As Jesus progressed, this woman asked to know more.

- **Perceptive – v19** – She was able to put the information together and understand Truth.
- **Intelligent – v25** – She actually knew things about God, but just simply needed some help.
- **Responsive! – v28-30** – She acted on the knowledge and brought a crowd to Jesus.

Look at all of that potential hidden behind the obstacles that would have stopped many Christians. And because Jesus started this conversation, **v39**, many souls were saved!

One thing is certain, “*You can never count the apples in a seed*” (Anne Stevens).

If we concluded our lesson now, I hope we would feel encouraged and hopeful to speak up about our faith tomorrow. But the larger question might be: HOW? How do I become an effective evangelism? Especially if that is not something that comes naturally and is easily suppressed by obstacles.

7 Steps for Effective Evangelism – (John 4)

1. See Opportunities Everywhere (v.4-6)

- a. The first step is a mental one. It says that no matter where I am or what I am doing, if there is a lost person there, I will begin to look for an opportunity to evangelize.

2. Establish Common Interest (v.7)

- a. Jesus didn’t jump right to baptism, but started the conversation casually, with a common issue between them. We could talk about the weather, kids, grandkids, even politics.

3. Bait and Switch (v.10)

- a. This is a critical step. He went from well water to living water. This was the intention all along. We can go from weather to God; children to Bible class; politics to the King.

4. Build Rapport Patiently (v.15-19)

- a. He didn’t jump to baptism or discipleship. She wasn’t ready. He instead turned attention to getting to know her. We can build a relationship here before proceeding.

5. Suspend Just Condemnation (v.17-18)

- a. Okay, this woman has issues. Immorality may even be an issue here. He could condemn her, but doesn’t. He’s teaching. We will find issues in their lives. That’s why we teach!

6. Stick to the Issue (v.20-24)

- a. She brings up their differences. He holds focus on the point: pleasing the Father. We can get sidetracked, but need to keep the focus on the Bible, Salvation, Jesus.

7. Accomplish Something Definite (v.25-26)

- a. He didn’t walk off and say, “hope to see you again sometime.” He made her make a choice. Don’t say what He said, but end a conversation with something that demands their commitment: “can we study tomorrow night?” “will you be there Wednesday?”

The Master Teacher has shown us the way. Now it just takes the courage and conviction to do it. I want to issue a challenge to this congregation that can help reach more souls than ever. The church business card is an excellent tool. It gives conversations a tangible direction and accomplishment. It puts vital information in their hands. And it has been the starting point for dozens of conversions. Each month, the elders and preachers are accountable to hand out 5. That’s 50 monthly invites. If our 25 deacons hop on board, that number goes up to 200. If the 300 people here are willing to do the same, following this pattern, cultivating relationships with souls in view, 1,500 people per month will be engaged in a spiritual conversation and given a great opportunity to hear the Truth. Amen?

The truth is: many of us have been that lost Samaritan. Someone, some friend, some family member, some co-worker saw us as we were and extended the Truth. We had a pliable heart and God molded us to His will and to His glory. If the effort of another meant everything to you, extend her invitation to others: “Come and See!” (Story: “Neuromarketing” book - \$960/hr from a homeless man – “what if you were hungry?”) Knowing what you know now, you’d hope and pray someone would offer you living water and the bread of life. Now it is your turn. But you can’t give what you don’t have. If you need to drink that water and eat that bread: tonight you dine, tomorrow you offer to others.