

Evangelism 101

I'm convinced that God's will for you is to talk with other people about Christ.

While witnessing to a guy on the streets of Denver once I explained how he could give his life to Jesus Christ. His response was, "That's too easy." I replied, "Do you want me to make it difficult?"

Now, when I say "easy" I am not talking about what some call "easy believe-ism"—meaning if you simply mumble a quick phrase you will be pronounced "saved." No way!

On the other hand, though, it is quite clear that we Christians in the 21st century have made the sharing of the simple gospel way too complicated. All you have to do is read some evangelism-training materials to know that.

The Great Chase

God wants us to join Him in going after the thing He loves most: People

He is after me and He's after you, from eternity past until this very moment. He is in a passionate pursuit of all we are. *Wow!* What a thought and what a truth. You know the following verse—you've read it countless times and could probably quote it while you're in a coma (well, maybe): "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, NKJV).

If that is not a picture of God holding nothing back in

pursuit of us, then nothing is. Let's consider what it's like to be in God's place for just a few moments:

You fashion a creation, making people in Your likeness. You invest Your life in them, giving them breath so they can share the very essence of life together with You. Then, with the incredible gift of free choice You have given them so they will freely love You, they choose to go their own way and leave You: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way," Isaiah 53:6 says. Then they live life and do the things You never intended them to be or do.

Yet the fact that You are love (1 John 4:8) will not allow them to simply go off to do their *own* thing, which will lead to ultimate eternal destruction often preceded by a lifetime of guilt, shame, sin and misery. So You go after them—every one—in hot pursuit. You have never played hide-and-seek with the world, as You've said in Your Word: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows and proclaims His handiwork. Day after day pours forth speech, and night after night shows forth knowledge" (Ps. 19:1-32, AMP).

Despite what has happened You send Your Son who helped You create the universe. You hope they will listen to Him, but they don't.

The Son makes an unbelievable impact even though He lives on this planet for only a short 33 years. The terms of pursuit are pretty clear—the Son came to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). It is good to know He is after those who are "lost" (we now call them by other names: "unreached" and "unchurched"). Beyond that, He desires that no one would perish but that all come to experience the life He intended for them (see 2 Pet. 3:9 and John 10:10).

The pursuit takes a different turn before Jesus returns to heaven. Along the way He makes this statement: "As the Father

has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21, NKJV).

The pursuit multiplied exponentially when God commissioned all Christ-followers without exception to do the same as He did. After all, Jesus said, "He who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).

God loves us so much and desires us to connect with Him every day and in every way that He not only sent His Son but also allows us to have a part in "the great pursuit" of a lost creation. It really adds a dimension of meaning to our lives that far exceeds our dreams. It's hard to imagine a Spirit-filled walk with Jesus that does not connect somehow with God's pursuit of our world—the people we know, as well as those we have not yet met.

After all, compassion dictates we pursue, or give of ourselves, our time and our talents, and that we reach out of ourselves into the life of somebody else. God's love is not wrapped up just in us but in Him and others.

The amazing gift He makes available called the baptism in the Holy Spirit is used at the maximum peak of power and effectiveness when implemented not in believers gathering for the purpose of experiencing manifestations. It was designed for pursuit. For pursuing our neighbors, friends and strangers with the message that brings radical life change—the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the primary purpose of this amazing gift (see Acts 1:8).

Scripture not only commands us to "pursue" but gives the purposes, principles and practicalities of doing so. The word *go* in any language means just that—*go*! Having a passport, being with foreign people in foreign lands, going overseas on missions trips and so on don't mean as much as simply reaching out from yourself. Sure, you might feel uncomfortable at first, but that's a good thing because in the space between

“feeling comfortable” and “being uncomfortable” the Holy Spirit has plenty of room to work and stretch you to make you more like Him.

A loving God pursuing a lost and dying world through people like you and me is an incredibly creative way to restore a fallen world. It gets us involved in what is dearest to His heart—people.

How about it? Try pursuing someone for the purpose of seeing Jesus touch their life like He has touched yours. Sound a bit too aggressive? It’s not at all. I like to call it being “compassionately aggressive.”

If we don’t pursue, who will? Someone else? Could be, but chances are they would not be like you. They might be a believer, but they also might be a cultist or even the devil.

So why not you let it be you? Come on—let’s do it!

Now!

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Most people discover the love of Jesus from a friend. Learn how you can become an effective evangelist at [hinkle..](#)

Reaping the Harvest

Most people learn about the love of Jesus from a friend. Here’s how you can become an effective evangelist.

One of the greatest questions facing every member of the body of Christ today is this: "Can we really reach the world we live in with the message of Jesus Christ?" If your answer is yes, then the follow-up question is equally important: "How can we do it?" The best place to research these questions is the archives of the early church, which we call the book of Acts. Look at the following passage of Scripture:

"And he [Paul] went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:8-10, NKJV).

Whenever I read this passage, my mind shifts into overdrive, trying to process the idea that in a two-year period all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord. Wouldn't it be great if each of us could reach our entire towns or cities in just 24 months?

How did the disciples do this? Judging by all the communication tools we have at our disposal today, the early church was severely handicapped. After all, they had no television, radio, satellites, podcasts, Internet streaming, cell phones, printing press or even sound systems, yet still they accomplished the feat of blanketing an entire section of the known world with the gospel. It may sound almost unbelievable, but it is true!

Well then, what means did they have to minister "back in the day"?

- Large mass meetings—for example, Jesus teaching the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5:1-2)
- Services in synagogues (see Acts 19:8)

- House-to-house visits (see Acts 20:20)
- One-on-one conversations (see Acts 8:4)

How much clearer can the disciples' example be? The easiest and most effective means heaven has to reach the people in your world is the person who is reading this right now—you!

Surveys have shown that most people find faith in Jesus Christ through a friend, relative or acquaintance. Without a doubt, we must use every other means available to us to get the message out, including crusades, TV, witnessing programs, outreaches and so on. Yet it is time we “ramp up” our own individual witness in order to make a communitywide, regional and maybe even worldwide impact.

If you have read this far then I believe you have an interest in making a difference in your world. But before I go any further in teaching you how you can do that, you must make a decision about how you want to live your life.

You can choose for your life to be bland, boring and totally focused on the temporal stuff—situations, obligations, issues, personal needs and so on—even though you are a Christian; or you can choose to live your life as a mission, based on the mandate to bring the gospel to the whole world and make disciples.

If you choose the latter, then there are a few things you must commit to do:

Be available. You must allow the Word to become flesh through you. There is nothing spooky, mystical or weird about doing this. You simply live life with your walk and your talk headed in the same direction.

Be normal. It's more attractive to an unbeliever for someone to become a Christian and remain “normal” than for him or her to morph into something pseudospiritual, religiously goofy and

strangely disconnected from the reality of everyday life.

Be personal. An individual will more readily respond to your witness if he believes you are genuinely interested in him as a person and not simply as an evangelistic target.

Be ready and patient. There are times when we have not spent hours in prayer and study in direct preparation for a particular encounter, but God sends a person across our path, anyway. That is why we must “stay ready” to speak or act at a moment’s notice when the opportunity presents itself.

Yet we must also be patient in working with the person, taking the time to lead him to a full encounter and ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ, even if he does not respond instantaneously.

Be kind. In addition, if we want our lives to be a witness for Christ, then we must be nice, kind, generous and servant-hearted people. Others want to be around a person like that. I know I do. A smile (there are too many frowns in most churches!), an outstretched hand and a breath mint go a long way in connecting with people for the sake of the gospel.

Incidentally, witnessing at work requires that you have a good work ethic and are a hardworking, faithful employee first and that you share a verbal testimony only secondarily, at an appropriate time. Your job performance and attitude may even create a platform for your testimony.

Be yourself. When you do begin to witness, be genuine, be real and be yourself. Pretenders, fakes and phonies will not experience much success.

But God does want to work through you. He intended for your life to count, and He has equipped you to do all that He’s called you to. That’s why the apostle Paul could declare, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

Be prepared for opposition. Remember that Satan is greatly opposed to your being used by the Holy Spirit to spread the life-transforming message of Jesus Christ to others. He will go to great lengths to hinder or stop you, utilizing tactics such as deception (“It’s not my gift or call”), inadequacy (“I don’t know what to say”), and fear (“I’m afraid of being offensive or concerned about what others might think”). Nevertheless, God has promised that “no weapon formed against you shall prosper” (Is. 54:17) and “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as expressed in Acts 1:8 is to empower us to spread the gospel around the world. In fact, this gift is primarily for the fulfillment of the Great Commission, not simply spiritual manifestations.

Reaping the Harvest

Jesus said: “Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35, NIV). Are you able to see the “fields” as ripe and ready for harvest? Difficult—even dark—times, whether on a personal or a national level, are some of the best times to reach out and touch people’s lives with the message that really matters. God’s people, whom Jesus calls the light of the world, should be most effective in dark times and places.

Can you see the possibility of people being reached by Christ? Can you envision the potential they might have in God’s kingdom if they became believers? And can you see yourself as having a very real and practical part in the reaching process?

Are you able to imagine how harvesting might look in your sphere of influence? Can you see everyday encounters, conversations and even the most routine situations developing into divine opportunities to have an eternal impact on someone’s life?

If you can, you're ready to begin reaping the harvest.

Jesus likened us to the natural elements of salt and light, and it's true that we are living and modeling the gospel message every day. But sooner or later something has to be said. A good, quiet life is just that—good and quiet—but it might not lead anyone to Christ.

Paul asked the believers in Rome some important questions: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14, NKJV). In other words, something has to be said.

Otherwise, how will those we speak to know we represent Jesus? They might think we are nice quiet folks who are Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses or something entirely different than what we are—Christians who desire for them to meet and know the same Jesus we do.

Good lives and works (including expressing compassion and engaging in servant-type ministries) only pave the way for what we must do—give a verbal witness about Jesus Christ.

Outreaches that include Adopt-a-Block, Random Acts of Kindness and the like are great ways to build a bridge in a community through practical, helpful means. But after the bridge has been built, be sure to bring the people you are reaching out to across.

Our witness can be confrontational (though not rude and obnoxious), calling for an immediate decision to be made for Christ following a personal conversation or publicly delivered message. Or it can be more of a lifestyle- and relation-based witness that often spans a period of time and includes a number of encounters and conversations.

When you want to engage in a "witnessing conversation," here are a few steps to take:

Fish do not generally jump into the boat of their own accord. You will have to not only initiate a conversation but also turn it toward spiritual matters. Everyday events in our world often create an opportunity to share with others. If you pay a little bit of attention and continually look for the Lord to open a door, He usually will.

I often utter a simple prayer as I go about my day: "Lord, do we have any appointments today?" It is exciting to see what opportunities the Lord opens up in response.

If a person raises the subject of a negative situation, such as a war, disaster, politics, the economy and so on in my hearing, sometimes I'll simply say (in a nonreligious, positive tone), "This is a good time to pray, isn't it?"

If you say something similar to someone and the person is open to more conversation, take the dialogue even further. Allow your encounter to morph from "the natural" to "the spiritual."

You may want to use a bit of your own life story or your testimony. This establishes a personal connection. Speak freely about what God has done for you and make the point that He can do the same for the person you are witnessing to.

It is important to remember that a person cannot be saved apart from Jesus Christ. Therefore, you must introduce Him by name and not refer to Him simply as "God." After all, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

You must also make the point that Jesus is unlike any other person who has ever lived because He is the Son of God. He faced every temptation we will ever face and did not give in. This is why He could pay the price for the sins of all men of all ages—including you and me.

Tell the person that if he will not only acknowledge that Jesus did this for him personally but also ask Jesus to

forgive him for all his sins, He will. The Bible says that “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Encourage him to make the choice to turn away from his old life and allow the Holy Spirit to make him a new creature in Christ.

Never forget that your place in this world is to bring the message that really matters to people during a time when Jesus is so urgently needed. You can do it. Go into your world and begin reaping right now!

Scott Hinkle is an evangelist based in Red Bank, N.J. He is the co-founder, with his wife, Nancy, of Scott Hinkle Outreach Ministries and Jersey Life Outreach (). They conduct outreaches and e-intensive seminars nationwide.

You Can Be a Rescuer

by Scott Hinkle

Have you ever felt as if you were standing in the middle of a forest watching a rapidly spreading fire consume everything in the vicinity? I feel that way watching the flames of sin seemingly overtake our country. At times it feels nothing less than overwhelming. After leading an evangelism team to Mardi Gras in New Orleans, as well as constantly ministering in towns and cities across the country during the last year, I had opportunities to gaze often into the flames. What “flames” am I talking about?

They
include the fires of murder, same-sex marriage, political
mudslinging,
all kinds of crimes—even terrorism—that are spreading from
coast to
coast.

As a Christian, I have wondered how I can stop the fires
before
they destroy everything. Fortunately, there is an answer. The
Holy
Spirit speaks to this very question.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those
staggering toward slaughter” (Prov. 24:11, NIV).

The other morning as I was thinking about this verse, the
meaning of it hit me like a gale-force wind. It altered my
perspective
about what my primary role as a follower of Jesus should be.

As a Christian, my main purpose is not as much to put out the
flames of hell as to pull people out of those flames.

Make no mistake—as opportunities arise, believers should be
involved in dealing with the social and political issues that
tend to
fan these flame. There is much good to be accomplished by
Christians'
working in these realms of society.

Nonetheless, Proverbs 24:11 tells us that, as Christians, we
should be focusing more on rescuing those being led away to
death than
on quenching the flames that would destroy them.

Throughout the 20-plus years we at Scott Hinkle Outreach
Ministries have gone to New Orleans to tell people about

Jesus, I've
seen the rampant sin, immorality and perversion of Mardi Gras
stun many
a Christian worker. Unfortunately, the character of our nation
as a
whole isn't that much different from the character we witness
at Mardi
Gras. Yet instead of being distracted by the intensity of the
fires of
sin, let's concentrate on what any and every one of us can do
as
Christians to pull others from the flames.

I will never forget the man during Mardi Gras who was on his
way to the Mississippi River to take his life because he had
been
diagnosed with cancer and AIDS. Simply put, he felt hopeless.

By the grace of God, one of our workers intercepted him, led
him to Christ and aborted the man's personal suicide mission.
This man
was pulled from the flames.

Every time you or I pray with someone to receive Christ,
whether it is during a Bible-study class, on a street corner,
or at a
coffee shop or church altar, that person is pulled from hell's
flames
of eternal destruction.

The Bible says all of heaven rejoices when one person repents!
"There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who
repents
than over ninety nine righteous persons who do not need to
repent"
(Luke 15:7). I want to rejoice with heaven, don't you?

Don't give up on trying to make your community a better place

to live, but at the same time don't become frustrated by trying to quench all of America's unholy fires. Remember to snatch people out of the flames one at a time.

Introduce them to the same Jesus who has changed your life. Then you will become a real-life, Holy Ghost “flame-puller”—pulling people out of destruction and into life.

By the way, during the last day or two of our Mardi Gras outreach, New Orleans was drenched with heavy rains. It most definitely had a diminishing effect on the partying crowd.

Since that happened, I have realized that if I do my part of Proverbs 24:11 by pulling people from the flames, then God will do what I cannot do. He will dampen the flames.

The Overlooked Commandment

Imagine this not too far-fetched scenario: Mom and Dad are going out together for a few hours, and before they leave they make a simple request of their young son: “Johnny, we will be back in a few hours. Before we get back, could you please straighten up your bedroom?”

Mom and Dad enjoy their evening out together, but they’re shocked by what they see when they return home.

The lawn is freshly mowed. The living room has been vacuumed. All the dinner dishes have been washed.

Can I Get A Witness?

Just outside your door are countless unbelievers who need to hear the gospel. What's preventing you from reaching them?

One of the most heart-rending stories I've ever read is found in the Bible in Judges 19. It contains a message for every 21st century believer.

The story tells of a young woman who was savagely and mercilessly abused all night long by a group of men. After this tragic experience, she managed to make her way back home, but being in a very feeble state, she collapsed outside.

When her husband discovered her lifeless body, she was lying in the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold.

It's a dreadful story, I know. But wrapped up in it is a great truth, as well as a challenge and a word of encouragement for you and me.

Note that the young woman in Judges was beaten to the point of fatal collapse at what could have been the doorway to safety. It's not hard to picture the American Pentecostal-charismatic church in somewhat the same situation.

When it comes to reaching the unchurched, we've taken a great beating and lost some ground in this generation. But the results of a recent Charisma survey, coupled with what I believe is a growing hunger in Christians, seem to indicate a shift is on the horizon. We might well be on the threshold of

a great harvest. What is the individual believer's responsibility for helping to gather in this harvest, and how do we fulfill it? Romans 8:19 exhorts us to maintain an aggressive perspective regarding our role in the earth today. This verse reminds us that "the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (NIV).

The church is not only Christ's body and a family but also a force that must be unleashed in today's world. In all actuality, the world is waiting for people who have Jesus in their lives and are not afraid to show it! Buildings, programs, high-tech equipment and personalities are never quite enough to see lives transformed.

Heaven fully understands the necessity of the gospel to be spread through every individual believer and has provided the necessary enablement to make evangelism effective, even in our contemporary society. What is the divine enablement designated by God to empower evangelism? It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' words to His disciples still ring true today: "'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth'" (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is by no means a mark of superior spirituality. Its primary purpose, according to Scripture, is to empower us to reach our world. One pastor said the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in his church is "people talking with other people" about Christ. Does the baptism of the Holy Spirit really make a difference in helping us to evangelize?

Of those who responded to our survey, 96 percent have shared their faith with an unsaved person and 75 percent have prayed with someone to receive Christ. So the answer according to our findings is yes! The baptism of the Holy Spirit does do what God intended.

Yet according to other surveys and studies conducted in the recent past, we are still facing a growing non-Christian culture. In fact, such studies show that America is rapidly becoming an “unchurched people.”

Our survey indicates that the overwhelming majority of Spirit-filled believers have at one time or another shared their faith with an unsaved person. Then why the negative trend? Because almost two-thirds of believers witness no more than once a month at the most.

Why might that be?

- Have we taken our separation from the world too far?
- Have we neglected to incorporate sharing our faith into the normal lifestyle and righteous routine that we’ve established for our walk with Jesus?
- Are we more concerned with our own situation than we are with that of others?
- Are we avoiding the “one thing” Jesus asked us to do? Incidentally, this one thing is also known as the Great Commission. Often it seems more convenient to pursue other spiritual matters so that our ongoing involvement in witnessing gets postponed.

There are many more reasons believers don’t venture to share their faith, but one of the greatest hindrances, I believe, is fear. You determine you’re going to talk to someone about spiritual matters, and suddenly a tidal wave of rejection rushes through your mind.

This fear is straight from the pit of hell—a clear-cut attack from the enemy that leaves you beaten up and nearly lifeless, lying at the threshold of reaching others with the gospel. The antidote is faith in God and reliance on the Holy Spirit to help you in your weakness.

Remember these verses: "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4, KJV); "You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you" (Phil. 4:13, NKJV).

Thresholds were meant to be crossed, not places of death and burial. Here are three steps you can take to help you move beyond the threshold and cross over to the harvest waiting right outside your door:

See past the threshold. Jesus told His followers, "'Lift up your eyes and look at the fields'" (John 4:35). The idea is to begin to notice the people around you who need Jesus.

In the New Testament, the term "harvest" often refers to people who are ready and waiting to hear the gospel. It is a call to see beyond people's appearances and temporal situations and zero in on their need for God.

Do you acknowledge the immeasurable value God has placed on every human being? God said, "'Let Us make man in Our image'" (Gen. 1:26). This means each person has potential in God's sight.

Do you consider the possibility of reaching others very real? After all, nothing is impossible with God (see Luke 1:37).

What do you see when you look at your neighbor, your community or your country? See beyond the point of beginning. Even negative situations in another's life can be a touch point for the gospel.

Remember: Darkness creates a stage for light. Wounds are candidates for healing. Tragedy can open the door for miracles.

Think beyond the threshold. What is it you believe about

being personally involved in the Great Commission? Do you allow your mind-set to motivate you, or to stop you at the threshold?

- Do you believe sharing the gospel is a mandate from God?
- Do you believe that what you “see” on the other side of the threshold can come to pass-with God’s help?
- Do you believe that the power for being a witness was given you when you were baptized in the Holy Spirit?
- Do you believe Jesus saves?
- Do you believe Jesus can save anybody-even the most unlikely person?
- Do you believe Jesus can save anyone using you?

What you believe will determine how successful you are at reaping the harvest by helping others come to know Christ.

When people tell me negative things about a city before I minister there, I get excited. Why? Because I anticipate an even greater breakthrough for harvest. I have learned that God can do amazing things through any man or woman who will let Him do things His way.

If we want to keep from dying on the threshold, our thoughts and belief systems as well as our sight must go beyond the doorway. When they do, it will be simple for us to follow the final step.

Move beyond the threshold. Reach it and then cross over to the harvest. You can’t let anything stop you at this point, not even lack of experience. Learning how to witness is the easiest obstacle to overcome: Just start talking about what has happened in your own life and the Person to whom you give all the credit.

Ignore the cultural voice that warns you to make certain everything you say is politically correct and that you

should not flaunt your faith in the marketplace. It is possible for the righteous to be as bold as a lion without being obnoxious.

Let your Christianity be defined by the action you take to reach others, for the words of Jesus are as true today as in His time: “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37-38).

Do you want to be one of the laborers? Sure you do. Don't die on the threshold; cross over now and give witness to the One who has made a difference in your life. Your testimony will make a difference in someone else's.

Scott Hinkle is founder of Scott Hinkle Outreach Ministries in Phoenix. He regularly leads street ministry teams during Mardi Gras and other major events. He also sponsors evangelism-training conferences. To learn more about his ministry, visit [www.scotthinkle.org](#).

Go Ahead, Break the Ice

Statistics reveal that few Christians actually share their faith actively. Here's how you can start the conversation.

Last year Charisma polled readers to discover how active they were in personal evangelism. We learned that even though all participants believe God wants them to tell others about Jesus, more than half said they share their faith only a few times a year.

One question was particularly revealing: If you don't share your faith regularly, why don't you?

36%: "I'm scared to."

14%: "I don't know how to."

29%: "I don't believe I should push my faith on anyone."

21%: "I believe there are better ways to evangelize."

We also asked what factors might prompt them to be more active in evangelism. They listed three:

1. If I had a friend encouraging me to do it more often (47%).

2. If I had someone more experienced with me (29%).

3. If I had taken an evangelism class and felt trained (24%).

Many people who battle timidity say the most difficult challenge in witnessing is starting a conversation about God with a non-Christian. But Wendell Smith, pastor of The City Church in Seattle and author of *From Zero to Eternity in 60 Seconds Flat*, says he discovered that beginning a spiritual discussion can be fun.

Writes Smith: "The Bible tells us to be prepared to give an answer to those who ask about the hope that is in us. [See 1 Pet. 3:15.] We should be ready to make a statement. People around us wear weird clothes, nose rings and tattoos in their attempt to make a statement. Why shouldn't we make our simple statements of faith in turn?"

"Other people curse, swear or tell dirty stories in public places. Why shouldn't we talk about the salvation and blessings we have received from our amazing relationship with the Lord Jesus?"

Smith polled a number of prominent Christian leaders to learn how they begin conversations with unbelievers. Here are some of their "one-liners":

- Bill Bright, the late founder of Campus Crusade for Christ: “Who do you think was the greatest person who ever lived? Who has had the most influence on history of any person who has ever lived?”
 - Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty: “Are you ready for heaven?”
 - Evangelist Luis Palau: “Do you have a relationship with God, or are you still searching?”
 - Bible teacher Marilyn Hickey: “When I prayed this one prayer it changed my life.”
 - Author Cindy Jacobs: “I have a philosophy that everyone was born for a reason. Do you know what you were born for? When you are dying, will you know why you lived?”
- Do you believe that a few words can lead a person to Christ? It can happen!

The story is told of an unbeliever who wanted to see 18th century evangelist George Whitefield preach but did not want to listen to his message. Deliberately putting fingers in both his ears, he watched the great preacher without listening to a word he said.

But a stubborn fly landed on his nose, and no matter what he did, he could not shake him off. He unplugged his ears long enough to shoo the fly away, and in those brief seconds, Whitefield proclaimed loudly, “Him who has ears to hear, let him hear!” The amazing timing of it so intrigued the man that he listened to the rest of Whitefield’s sermon and was saved.

A small window of time is given to all of us to touch the lives of even those who we think may not be listening, but who may open their ears long enough for us to penetrate their souls and enlighten their eyes—just for that one brief, shining moment.

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You Have What It Takes

God has built into the life of every believer the ability to share the gospel

Life Comes at You Fast

Jesus made spreading the gospel an utmost priority. Let's make it ours.

Why Does the Church Settle for Partial Revival?

Pursue God for more than personal satisfaction, need or individual purpose.

There was a time when the United States was known for having the very best of everything. Remember when products and automobiles were the very best, the U.S. economy was the strongest, and the American work ethic was a benchmark standard? It seems like a long time ago, but really it's not.

It's sad to say a lot of that has changed.

When one past U.S. president was elected, a national newspaper said the American people were willing to settle for competence as opposed to character. Which raises the question: Why can't we have both? It seems we have become satisfied with the status quo.

The prophet Ezra writes: "And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a peg in His holy place that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage" (Ezra 9:8, NKJV).

Once again God's people were in trouble because of their sins, and we see the indescribable grace of God at work. (Thank God for His mercy and grace, right?)

But even in the midst of their self-inflicted difficulty God blessed them with something totally undeserved: "a measure of revival" in their bondage.

Sound strange? If we read all of Ezra 9 and 10 as well as the whole Bible we clearly see how great and good our God is when He often gives His people less than they deserve.

But I can't help but think, Why not get out of bondage and receive more, maybe even all the Lord has for us? Why settle for second best?

Paul uses phrases such as, "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" and "blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 4:13, 1:3; NIV; emphasis added).

The words "whole," "fullness" and "every" sound much better than the needy "a little dab'll do ya." Thankfully God does give us a little revival and relief while we're in bondage, but let's pursue more than that.

Jesus made an interesting statement listed in three of the Gospels: "With the measure you use it will be measured back to you" (Matt. 7:2; Mark 4:24; Luke 6:38).

This principle is illustrated in 2 Kings 13:14-20. The prophet Elisha advised a corrupt king leading a nation in bondage. The king followed through with the prophet's instructions by taking the arrows, shooting them in the air and then striking the ground.

He did all he was told to do yet still incurred the prophet's anger. Why? He did them less than wholeheartedly. The mediocrity of his heart was exposed because if he had simply struck the arrows on the ground a few more times he would have had an even greater measure of victory over his enemies on behalf of his nation.

He was willing to settle for second best.

Can we get too close to Jesus? Can we reach out too much? Why not pursue God for more than just our own personal satisfaction, need or individual purpose?

Consider when you get a raise at work but you still have a poverty-driven mind-set. That is like receiving a little revival while still in bondage. (The problem isn't handled with simply more income but by properly managing what we have.)

When we stop using drugs but still smoke and drink, some consider it progress, but we need to press all the way through to full victory and freedom.

When a married couple is separated and comes back under one roof but still lives in a world of hurt and bitterness—be thankful for improvement. But know that greater victory can come if you pray and work together for a healthy home.

Remember, with the measure you use it will be measured back to

you. As a man thinks in his heart so is he. And our measures are often formed by attitude, background, family, friends, culture and past.

Let's ask God to help us change and redefine the measures we use in life. Let's pursue God to ignite in us and impart to us something we can use to reach the world and our neighbors right now.

God's Word renews our minds and transforms our measure.

Let's change our measure so that we may change our world.

Missing Weapons

We need more Christians who are "weapons" fit for the Master's use.