

Are You Holding Back the Gospel From Non-Christians?

Amazingly, anyone who has become a Christian has had Jesus pray for them to have their sins forgiven. In the final hours before His death, Jesus prayed not only for those who had already received Him but also for those who would come to Him in the future. As He headed toward the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, Jesus prayed that we would come to believe in Him for salvation.

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You. May they also be one in Us, that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (John 17:20-21).

When Jesus prayed, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word,” He was praying for you. It is a bit staggering to consider that, with His own complex life to manage and death to endure, we were in His heart and on His mind.

Consider for a moment all the non-Christians you know. How about those you know well, such as family, friends, coworkers or neighbors? What about extended family, former friends and people you run into at school, your kids’ sports league or the store? Various sociologists tell us that the average person interacts with upward of a few thousand people a year. Are you praying for any of them to become Christians?

Not only does Jesus model for us the importance of praying for lost people, but He also prays for us to talk to lost people about Him as they come to “believe in [Him] through [our] word” (John 17:20). Jesus alone saves people, but you and I are sent to speak to people about Him. God oversees not only

the ends of things (who gets saved) but also the means (how they are saved). Paul says something similar,

For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring good news of good things!" (Rom. 10:13-15).

In the ancient world, a king who had an important message to deliver would have a herald run throughout the streets to declare the good news of the king. Today, we are the heralds for King Jesus, declaring that His kingdom is coming.

For this reason, Jesus prayed not only for people to become Christians but also for Christians to speak to non-Christians. Likewise, every Christian should, out of love, have a list of people they know and pray will become Christians. By praying for them, we are asking God the Holy Spirit to prepare them to hear about Jesus and prepare us to speak with them about Jesus.

When we don't pray for people, our hearts can become filled with fear or even cowardice, which prevents us from doing the most loving thing and sharing Jesus' love with people who desperately need Him. Many non-Christians have relationships with Christians, but the subject of Jesus rarely comes up because the Christian is fearful, timid or concerned more about personal rejection than about a person's salvation.

One of the easiest ways to begin warming people up to Jesus is by simply telling them you care and asking them whether there is anyone or anything you can be praying about for them. Most of the time, even a non-Christian appreciates someone regularly praying for their needs, and this opens the door of an ongoing conversation about how they are doing and how you

can lovingly support them.

Eventually, these relationships that start with praying for someone will transition to conversations with them about Jesus. {eo}

*Excerpted from Chapter 9 of Pray Like Jesus by **Mark Driscoll** and **Ashley Chase** (Charisma House, 2020).*