

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.

You'll find 6-week, 12-week, even 24-week courses on how to share your faith; "pre-evangelism activities" that "get you ready" to share your faith; and intercessory exercises that promote laying extensive spiritual groundwork before the first evangelistic words can be uttered.

Don't get me wrong. I believe the power of the Holy Spirit and good planning are essential to effectively reach others. But—I repeat—sharing the gospel is really not that difficult.

Consider the fact that Moses forfeited his inheritance of being able to enter and partake of the Promised Land because he struck the rock twice when the Lord had told him to (simply): "'Speak to the rock ... and it will yield its water'" (Num. 20:8, NKJV). Yes, his sin was disobedience—but his disobedient act was that he added something to the process God never intended. Could it be that because we complicate the process of evangelism by adding too many extra steps we forfeit our inheritance?

Some of us hold back from sharing the gospel or speaking God's truth because in our politically correct social atmosphere we most certainly do not want to offend someone by saying the wrong thing. But, worse than saying the wrong thing is saying nothing—which all too often is what we opt to do.

In Acts 4:18-20, Peter and John were told not to say the wrong thing. They were ordered by civil authorities not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. It was considered politically, socially and religiously incorrect.

Their response was, “‘We cannot keep quiet about what we have seen and heard’” (Acts 4:20). They couldn't contain it within themselves.

How can you start sharing the gospel? You can begin by talking about who you know (Jesus) and what has happened to you (the change He has made in you). Your story (your personal testimony) is always a great tool for opening conversations and connecting with others for the sake of the gospel.

That's the way Jesus' own disciples did it. Compare these words of John's with Peter's in Acts 4:20: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ... We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (1 John 1:1,3, NIV, emphasis added).

They talked about what they personally knew to be true from their own lives. I'm convinced by the Bible that God's will for your life is for you to talk with other people about Christ.

Yes, your life itself—what people see in your character and actions—can be a witness, but as John pointed out, there is a need for the world to hear as well. Actions alone aren't enough.

After all, the apostle Paul said, “How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14, NKJV). By the way, that “preacher” is you!

Can you imagine? If you would just speak a few words or launch into a brief conversation with a person whom God loves as much as you, he or she might pass from death to life. Come on, open up! Say something! It’s not that difficult!

Scott Hinkle is founder of Scott Hinkle Outreach Ministries in Phoenix. A veteran evangelist, he regularly leads street-ministry teams during Mardi Gras and other major events. He also sponsors evangelism training conferences. For more information, visit his Web site at .