

The Greatest Hindrance to Sharing the Gospel to a Millennial World

My husband, Scott, and I were having dinner with a small group of friends on a Friday night recently. These good friends are passionate for Jesus and live purposefully to serve Him. However, two of these friends are doctors with careers that reflect a love of academia and authorship, and they are smart, probably Mensa smart. It is always fun to listen to others as they begin to engage in topics when I know I am going to learn something new. That night was no different.

Our friend from out of town had recently visited the Creation Museum in Kentucky, and soon the conversation turned to differences of opinion between those who believe in a young earth (creationist) versus an old earth (biological evolution). The topics ranged from radiometric dating, isotopes and reproducibility of the science. As we were listening, Scott spoke up and said something which I thought was quite profound.

He simply said, "When I am sharing the gospel, I find that I don't need to defend my position on how old the earth is or how we came to be. I just need to talk about Jesus and who He is to me and what He did for me. Isn't that awesome? If He could do it for me, let's talk about what He can do for you also." Scott loves to "seed plant" and share the gospel as He goes.

Often I refer back to Acts 2 when the same Peter who had denied knowing Jesus just a few weeks before had his first opportunity to preach. Israelites from every nation began to gather around him and wondered, "What is happening?" when Peter stood up to speak to the crowd. He shared the simple but

life-giving gospel that day, and Scripture tells us that “those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

It was successful because the band of brothers and sisters, including Peter, were waiting and praying in the upper room. The Bible states, “*All of them* were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4, author’s emphasis).

The truth is that most of us may never have the opportunity to share the gospel with thousands of people. However, we all have an opportunity to speak one on one about Christ to a tenth of the number saved that day. I know, because as a new believer, I’ve tried. Equipped with my new faith, earmarked Bible to Romans’ road and notebook to record the names of those with whom I shared the gospel, I began what I call my season of “Gestapo gospel sharing.” It’s kind of like sharing the gospel without the benefit of the Holy Spirit’s guidance. I had the Holy Spirit; I just wasn’t tapping into Him.

It was a failure.

I then tried to be equipped with more knowledge. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell and *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel became my study guides. And while I know many have come to know Jesus personally after reading these books or hearing them used in arguments in defense of our faith, they never quite helped me carry someone across the finish line.

Now, I hope you caught that last sentence because I had been living out the greatest hindrance to sharing the gospel. I thought I was doing the carrying!

And this brings me back to our dinner-time conversation. It is so easy for us to focus on proving our point, young earth versus old earth, the historicity of the Bible versus any other ancient text, God’s inspired word versus the words of men and on and on. But, we forget to focus on the fact that

Jesus is the one who carries someone across the line, and the Holy Spirit who resides in us is meant to guide us by saying “Go!” or “Wait, hold up here; they’re not ready!” or my favorite, “Watch Me do everything; you just stand there.”

You should be taking a collective sigh about now because that takes all the pressure off, right?

Know that you can’t mess up sharing the gospel by saying the wrong words or not knowing the science behind dating the earth (which most sixth graders know more about than me). Our part and calling is to “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Pet. 3:15, NIV). Therefore, I can tell my personal testimony and that of my husband’s to describe Jesus’ saving transformation.

Sharing your testimony with the power of the Holy Spirit as you go will allow you to be witness to the greatest miracle since Christ’s resurrection, the miracle of a heart revived by Christ’s saving work. And friends, it is transcending to be in the presence of the Lord as the Holy Spirit indwells a new believer. Then, all those other conversations that are fascinating to have will be filtered through the discernment of the Holy Spirit and their defense might not be so defensive. {eoa}

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