

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry Light Unit 3
Practical Issues
Week 1 – Evangelism

Evangelism and discipleship are central to the purpose of the church:

(Matt. 28:18-20) And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Great Commission: Jesus commands the church to both evangelize and train people in all the nations (every cultural group in the world).

(Acts 1:8) "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

(2 Cor. 5:18-20) Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Other things, often *good* things, can easily usurp an outreach focus:

What happens when the church loses an evangelism focus?

1. Vitality and excitement wane.
2. No new people means no home group plants.
3. We get more self-focused.
4. Relational conflict increases.
5. The church gets involved in "brass-polishing" or "gingerbread."

6. An "ivory tower" Bible-club mentality.

7. A "ghetto" mentality develops.

8. The church becomes calloused to the plight of the lost (apathy).

(Matt. 9:36) “And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.”

(Eph. 2: 12) “Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

Why we share the Gospel

All Christians need to have convictions, rooted in what the Bible teaches, about the importance of evangelism. Here are two:

- (Mt. 24:14; Mk. 1:15; Acts 15:7)

(Romans 1:16) “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

- (Rom. 6:23; 2Thes. 1:6-9;
Heb 9:27; Rev. 20)

(2 Thess. 1:6-9) “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.”

How are you doing in this area?

(1 Tim. 2:4) "Who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

God's role:

- The Holy Spirit convicts.

(John 16: 8-10) “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; (10) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

(John 12: 32) “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

- God creates opportunities.

(Col. 4:2-6)** “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; (3) praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; (4) in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. (5) Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. (6) Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.”

Open doors:

- God empowers those who share their faith.

(Eph. 6:19) “...and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, (20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

(1 Cor. 2: 2-4) For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

The hearer's role:

(Mt. 23:37) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, *and you were unwilling.*”

Luke 8:5-15 The Parable of the Soils

(John 7:17) "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself."

Our role:

(Rom. 10:14) “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

(2 Cor. 5: 18-20) “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, (19) namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Five practical ways to enhance our role in evangelism:

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(Titus 2:9,10) “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”

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Responding to the prompting of the Spirit

(Acts 1:8) “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

The Spirit gives us opportunities to witness.

- Philip in Acts 8:

- Cornelius in Acts 10:

When we have an opportunity, we need to speak up.

Bill Hybels: Walk Across the Room

What can you do to build and maintain an outreach ethos in your home group?

1.

2.

3.

(Bill Bright) “Success in evangelism is sharing your faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving the results to God. Failure in evangelism is failure to witness.”¹

4.

5.

6.

¹ Bill Bright, *Witnessing Without Fear* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993) p. 68,69.
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Memory Verses

2 Cor. 5:18-20* – We are ambassadors for Christ.

Col. 4:3-6** – Pray for open doors.

Matt. 28:18-20* – The Great Commission, in which Jesus commands the church to both evangelize and train people from every people group.

Assignment

- Complete the *Ministry to the Poor Assignment*.
- Begin working on the *Church Visitation Assignment*.

Tools for evangelism & discipleship available at the Study Center

Handouts:

- *Starting Spiritual Conversations*.
- *Responding to Common Objections*.

Evangelism:

- *Common Objections to Christianity* teaching series: We have excellent central teachings on objections that people typically raise to Christianity. Topics include:
 - *How Can There be Only One Way to God?*
 - *Does Evolution Discredit the Bible?*
 - *How Can a Loving God Allow So Much Suffering?*
 - *How Is the Bible Different From Other Scriptures?*
 - *How Can Anyone be Certain of the Bible's Meaning?*
 - *Can't You Interpret the Bible Any Way You Want?*
 - *What Do Christians Believe About the Afterlife?*
 - *Is the Bible Historically Accurate?*
- Bill Hybels, *Just Walk Across the Room* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2006). Watch this very practical, four-session workshop with your cell group.
- Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleburg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1996). This is the book used in the Sharing Your Faith class – a five week course that helps students share the gospel confidently and effectively.
- William Fay with Linda Shepherd, *Sharing Jesus Without Fear* (Nashville, Tennessee, B&H Publishing Group, 1999).

Discipleship:

- *Organic Disciplemaking*, by Jessica Lowery and Dennis McCallum.
- *Organic Disciplemaking* class, taught each fall by Jessica Lowery.