

Learn About Them and Their Religion (Church)

(Lesson III: Conversational Evangelism – First Type of Conversation)

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- continue series on Conversational Evangelism

➤ Review two previous series

- 1st series: Personal Work and Personal Evangelism

- #1 **Be a Good Neighbor:** paradigm of personal work and evangelism, love, good neighbor
- #2 **Don't Worry, Just Do It:** God equips Christians to work, trust Him and yourself, just go it
- #3 **What Works Today:** in busy urbanized society, make friends and bring them to church

- 2 - **chart:** What's responsible for bring people to Christ and church
- #4 **Good Personal Workers are Good Stewards:** management of personal resources (time, \$, energy, possessions, health)

➤ - 2nd series: Good Neighbor Evangelism

- #1 **A List of Prospects:** make a list of people you may be able to reach, help stay in priorities
 - **this series: cultivating, stimulating, and recognizing those who may be interested**
- #2 **Build Bridges:** build relations to have opportunities to communicate Christ and gospel
- #3 **Let the Traffic Flow, Share the Gospel:** communicate the message of Christ
 - **this series: how to communicate and teach in everyday conversation**
- #4 **A Lesson You Can Share:** the lesson I use to teach Christ

➤ Review this series – Conversational Evangelism

- What is Conversational Evangelism

- sharing God's word with people in everyday conversation, rather than in a formal class
 - normally, conversations lead to home study or attending church, leads to obedience to Christ
 - rarely, lead to obedience without home study and visiting at church
- **illus.: Pam and friend met 2 boys at bowling alley, came to church the next day, continued to come and visit at house, in a few weeks studied, one obeyed gospel that day and other a few weeks later**

➤ - First two lessons:

- #1 **Cultivate, Stimulate, and Recognize Opportunities**
- #2 **Review and Exemplify: Cultivate, Stimulate, and Recognize Opportunities – men helped**
- **review handout: summary of first 2 lesson**

➤ - Next five lessons: – five different types of conversations we need to have with people

- #1 **Learn About Them and Their Religion (Church) – this lesson**
- #2 **Identify Common Ground, Based on God's Word and Authority**
- #3 **Help Them Understand What They (and their church, religion) Believe**
- #4 **Introduce Bible Teaching in Everyday Conversation**
- #5 **Overcome Objections**

➤ **You must get to know someone, before you can help them spiritually**

- getting to know them before trying to teach them shows them you genuinely care about them, rather than just seeing them as a way to get another “star” in the world’s religious conversion game

- **Col. 4:5-6** must be wise to know what works with people today - not try to reach people through archaic methods that no longer work

- **illus.:** 1st century market place preaching and 19th century tent meeting preaching no longer effective

- **illustrations of the wrong way:**

- **illus.:** lady knocked on door the other Saturday morning, said they were going door to door sharing a verse from God’s word, asked if I’d like to hear the message, said “No, but if you’d like to have a Bible class we can schedule one” - didn’t want Bible class, told me the verse after I said no and left

- **illus.:** difference in Jews working to convert someone, and Jesus or the apostles trying to convert someone – **Jews make twice the sons of hell, not care about the person**

- **common mistake:** ask to come to church or have Bible study before get to know the people – need to have a conversation first to let them get to know you and you to know them before ask

- **being overly anxious send wrong signal - not care about the person**

➤ - **allows them to get to know you**, so you have some **credibility**

- **Matt. 5:14-16** gives you an opportunity to shine your light, they glorify God

- **95% of people from the world who are converted, was attracted to the truth by first witnessing a Christian’s moral and religious life** - better when witness several Christians

- **that’s why people often visit several times (20 times on average)**, before they respond to an invitation to study, become a members, obey the gospel – they watch to see if the people live by the Bible, and whether they personally want to be like them

➤ - **allows you an opportunity to learn what they need, rather than assuming** what they need

- **Acts 19:1-5** Paul asked 2 questions to learn what the 12 men needed - to be baptized into Christ

- **illus.:** doctor can’t help a patient he knows nothing about, run tests, get other specialists to help

- if doctor wants to prescribe medicine and treatment for major illness with first learning you problem, run away

- **While getting to know them, learn how to effectively communicate with them.**
 - **illus.: Paul used conversational evangelism**
 - **Acts 17:16-17, 22-23, 28** Paul, Athens, conversational evangelism (reasoning with them), understood their religious culture, spoke in ways they understood by quoting their own poets
 - **ask questions and discuss religious beliefs in general**, not to share your faith or teach, but to simply learn more about them and their beliefs
 - **ask questions about them and what they think**, understand what they are saying, understand the terminology they use in religion so that you can effectively communicate
- - **must be a good listener, or will fail**
 - **Ja.. 1:19-20** be a good listener – **quick to hear, slow to speak**
 - **try to discover the inconsistencies in their beliefs and logic**, so that we can help them later understand flaws in their thinking
- - **Acts 18:24-26** Priscilla and Aquila listened to Apollos' teaching to learn what may be lacking
- - **try to understand any error they've been taught** and religious prejudices
 - **Gal. 1:13-14** Paul not making excuses but explaining where he was in life, and what he had to overcome to become a Christian - in sin, doing what he had been taught by ancestors – **rf Apollos**
 - **do research to learn more** about their background, ask questions to make sure both of you truly understand the religious beliefs they espouse
 - **illus.: I've wasted a lot of time**, energies, and opportunities by wrongly assuming what someone believed and what they thought
- - **seek to understand the difference between the religious beliefs they espouse and their actions**
 - **Gal. 2:14-16** Paul correcting Peter – **he was acting contrary to his beliefs** – **rf. Acts 10-11**
- - **learn their language (words, phrases) that is meaningful to them**
 - **Acts 21:39-22:2** Paul spoke to Jews in the people's native language (Hebrew) - captured their attention
 - **when we use the same words and phrases a person personally uses**, whom we are communicating with, we are much more effective
 - **if you use language you understand but they do not**, wasting time and the opportunity
 - **illus.: gospel meeting, services**
 - **analogies that are meaningful**
 - **illus.: analogy of slopping a hog** not meaningful to a city slicker - it's repulsive, distracting, retracts
- - **learn what religious teaching they been exposed to, so can relate New Testament truth to it**
 - **Acts 26:27** Paul knew Agrippa believed the prophets – **Paul could appeal to him on that level**
 - **gives you an idea of the teaching that is lacking** in their lives
 - **illus.: use Bible stories they're familiar with** to teach lessons, rather than ones they unfamiliar with – more effective – **Jesus, mater teacher, used 1st century Asian analogies, not 21st century American analogies**
- - **learn the prejudices and stumbling blocks** they have to overcome
 - **Gal. 2:11-13** James, Barnabas, other Jews prejudice against Gentiles – **Paul had to teach them**
 - **Matt. 16:24-26** what cross will they have to bear, what will they have to deny themselves of
 - **illus.: 1 Cor. 1:18ff; 1 Jn. 2:15-17** worldly wisdom, false religious beliefs, worldly lusts

- - **learn what (if anything) has kept them from studying God's word and obeying the gospel**
 - way parents brought them up – **Paul**
 - never had the personal interest to study the Bible
 - been turned off by religion or a particular church because of what others have done
 - illness or learning disabilities, that makes it difficult for them to learn
 - enjoyment of the passing pleasures of sin – not want to be a hypocrite

Summary / Inv.

- **paradigm: To get to know people, just be a good neighbor – care about them, and pay attention.**
 - **Matt. 22:39** (Jesus asked, greatest commandment) "The second is like it, 'You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**' – **first lesson in the first evangelism series**
 - **illus.: - Lk. 10:30-37** parable of the good Samaritan – **difference: mercy and compassion**

- if we love people and their souls enough to be good neighbors, we will prayerfully work to bring them to Christ, and we'll succeed

- **What do we want to do?**
 - **be a good listener, or will fail**
 - **try to understand error they've been taught** and religious prejudices
 - **seek to understand the difference between** the religious beliefs they espouse and their actions
 - **learn the language (words, phrases)** that is meaningful to them
 - **learn what Bible teaching they been exposed to, so can relate New Testament truth** to it
 - **learn the prejudices** they have to overcome
 - **learn what stumbling blocks** they have to overcome – things that give them trouble, will make it hard for them to obey
 - **learn what (if anything) has kept them from studying God's word and obeying the gospel**

- - **inv.: can't help other people be saved if you are not saved yourself**