

SIMPLE EVANGELISM

Why does evangelism seem so hard? Is it an inherently difficult task, or have we complicated it under layers and layers of methodologies and approaches?

What's clear is that in the foggy confusion of what to do, evangelism has for many Christians become a chore. What is meant to be an organic and joyful outflow of life in God's Kingdom has become labored, begrudging obligation for not a few followers of Christ. Perhaps evangelism brings to mind pre-packaged sales tactics or reductive techniques that rarely work as advertised. Maybe you think of the awkwardness that halted a relationship with a co-worker or neighbor once you brought up your faith in conversation. Or, maybe like many others, you simply walk around feeling guilty about all that you should be doing but aren't.

Many of us have sought to love our unbelieving neighbors and build up relationships based on trust and genuine care. We have rightly recognized that turning a person into our "project" to meet our evangelism quota betrays the nature of relationships, for one, and of the gospel, for another. Somehow though, while playing the "long-game," we've lost a sense for how to make progress. We need a strategy for speaking the gospel, but instead we keep waiting for the unbelieving person to bring it up first. We feel lost in our effort to save the lost.

LIFTING THE FOG

Somewhere along the way, evangelism became a source of frustration, uncertainty, and insecurity. We often feel afraid to fail, even as we grasp the importance of doing it. What we've forgotten is that evangelism isn't really about us. The battle belongs to the Lord—it's *his* good news and it's *his* redemptive plan and it's *his* power that matters. Sure, we are his instruments and we have a role to play, but before we look at task, target, or tool in leading others to Christ, we would do well to see how Jesus himself led others to the good news of the Kingdom. Of course, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Father's plan of salvation, not merely its messenger, so not all his steps are for us. Nevertheless, Scripture is clear that Jesus' method of ministry was more than incidental. They are the vital pattern Jesus intended for his followers to imitate as they carry out the remainder of his saving work as his Church.

IMITATING CHRIST

Like the other Gospel writers, Luke gives an account of Jesus—the Messiah and long-awaited Savior of the world; the fulfillment of all the Father's design and desire to pursue and redeem mankind now realized in his incarnate Son (1:32-33). The Gospel of Luke is about the radical *singularity* of the person and work of the Christ. Unique among the Gospel writers, however, Luke writes his Gospel with a second narrative in mind; and in Acts, Luke shows the radical *continuity* of Christ's saving work, carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles' work to establish the Church—an institution in which the followers of Jesus could bear witness to him to the ends of the earth to the end of the age.

With that continuity in mind, Luke presents Jesus both to show his unique power and person and to show the life Jesus' followers were to imitate. Paul, Luke's contemporary and co-laborer, wrote, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1), and Luke clearly has something like that in mind. If Christians, faithful to the work and life of Christ and carried on by the same Spirit as the Apostles, want to know how to lead, evangelize, disciple, or do any other sort of ministry, Jesus' example is square one.

The 5-Step Model of Evangelism



ABIDING



CONNECTING



EVANGELIZING



DISCIPLING



WORSHIPPING

ABIDING

Obeying the Father • Trusting in the Word • Walking in the Spirit

Luke helps the disciple by providing a simple 5-step method for the believer to imitate Jesus.

- **Abiding** is the 1st step in Jesus' simple *5-step Model for Evangelism*.
- The core requirement for abiding in the Father is being **filled with the Spirit**, which is only possible through Christ.
- Abiding is fulfilling the Greatest Commandment: "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*" (Luke 10:27)
- Abiding is expressed in three activities that Jesus models according to Luke:
 1. **Obeying the Father**
 2. **Walking in the Spirit**
 3. **Trusting the Word**



ABIDING

Books About Abiding

Robert E. Coleman
The Master Plan of Evangelism.
Revell

J.I. Packer
Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God.
InterVarsity Press

J.I. Packer
Knowing God
InterVarsity Press

Bruce A. Ware
Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance.
Crossway

Donald S. Whitney
Praying the Bible.
Crossway

Donald S. Whitney
Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life.
NavPress

In order to **obey the Father**, according to Luke, evangelism for the believer must be a Trinitarian enterprise. In other words, you need to trust in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit to evangelize. Evangelism stems from obedience to the Father, which for Jesus began as a child in the synagogue (Luke 2:49). After being baptized, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus and the Father speaks from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased (Luke 3:21-22)." Before Jesus does anything, the Holy Spirit "comes upon" him. The Father, Son, and Spirit are unified in their singular purpose of restoring man to God.

In Luke 3, Jesus' evangelism begins with what Paul describes in Galatians, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also **walk by the Spirit** (Luke 5:25)." Man's condition apart from God requires the Spirit (2 Cor 5:7). Jesus is "full of the Holy Spirit" as Luke 4 opens (4:1). Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1-2). After forty-days, Luke tells the reader that Jesus came out of the desert in the "power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14)." Jesus is not living according to his own strength in dealing with the trials set before him in the desert, but he is demonstrating the power of the Spirit to overcome. Likewise for us, it is the Spirit that is effective in evangelism. The believer following Jesus' pattern trusts and cooperates.

Having responded to the temptations presented him in the desert by walking in the Spirit, Jesus begins his ministry (Luke 4:14). He returns to his hometown of Nazareth where the people have knowledge of him prior to the Spirit coming upon him and his desert trials (Luke 4:21). Teaching in the synagogue, Jesus reads from Isaiah 61:12 to identify himself as the . In the desert, Jesus did not look to his circumstance to define his identity. Now, in his hometown, Jesus does not allow the people to define him. Rather than being affected by circumstance, and the people surrounding him, Jesus **trusts the Word** for his true identity. Jesus knew, spoke, and did the word (and in fact, *was* the Word, (John 1:14)) such that he completely obeyed the Father to overcome the world (1 John 5:3-5). Jesus recognizes the reality of the identity assigned by the Father in evangelism is in being the Word (John 7:16-18). Jesus provides the example that all men and women need to abide.

CONNECTING

Meeting Needs • Building Trust • Diagnosing Hearts

Luke helps the disciple by providing a simple 5-step method for the believer to imitate Jesus.

- **Connecting** is the 2nd step in Jesus' simple *5-step Model for Evangelism*.
- The core requirement for connecting in the world is being **filled with the Spirit**, which is only possible through Christ.
- Connecting is fulfilling the Second Greatest Commandment: "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Luke 10:27)
- Connecting is expressed in three activities Jesus models according to Luke:
 1. **Meeting Needs**
 2. **Building Trust**
 3. **Diagnosing Hearts**



CONNECTING

Meeting needs involves two stated behaviors that Jesus reads in Isaiah—“proclaiming” and “healing” (Luke 4:18-19). We are to both speak the Word and do good deeds. Both are required of the believer, even if the results can be mixed. Sometimes, Jesus must avert those who are hostile to the gospel (Luke 4:30), and Luke’s story teaches us that we should anticipate opposition from those who identify Jesus in a way that does not match the way his Father identifies him. Some people will connect with Jesus and other people will reject Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus demonstrates that one purpose of being Spirit-filled is to meet needs in order to connect with the world around him. By doing this consistently, the surrounding culture begins to know Jesus as one who meets needs (Luke 4:37).

Trusting Jesus, Simon Peter hosts Jesus in his home, which then serves as a base of ministry for Jesus in the town. Jesus’ reputation as one who meets needs (healer) results in Simon Peter inviting Jesus into his home to heal his wife’s mother because Jesus had **built trust** (Luke 4:38). As a result of repeated success, Jesus builds trust so that the sick people of the town come to Simon Peter’s home to be healed (Luke 4:38-40). Luke understands that it is in the two-fold tactics Jesus employs in meeting needs (speaking truth and doing good) that builds trust to follow him.

Diagnosing hearts enables us to know people’s needs. While Jesus is praying, people are looking for him because of his reputation as a man who meets needs. He tells them, “I must preach the good news of the Father’s Kingdom to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose (Luke 4:43).” We can understand what motivates others by asking them questions, listening to their answers, and contrasting their desires with the desires of the Father. Our mission to meet needs is not dictated by cultural boundaries, desires, or expectations, or by the motives of man (Luke 14:1-6). Asking questions, rather than making statements, gets the other person talking give us information to diagnose their motives (heart desires). Asking questions is the key tactic for diagnosis rather than asserting our judgments of others (Luke 6:37).

OUR KEY TACTIC

Books About Connecting

Timothy Beougher
Overcoming Walls to Witnessing
BGEA

Kevin DeYoung & Greg Gilbert
*What is the Mission of the Church?:
Making Sense of Social Justice,
Shalom, and the Great Commission.*
Crossway

Greg Koukl
*Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing
Your Christian Convictions*
Zondervan

Will Metzger
*Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel
Wholly by Grace Communicated
Truthfully & Lovingly (4th Ed.)*
InterVarsityPress

How do you diagnose
what a person believes?
what a person wants?
what is in their heart?

**BY ASKING
QUESTIONS**