

Gaining a Hearing

Dream Big, Think Small—part 2

January 13, 2019

DAY 1: Getting the cart before the horse

1. “Getting the cart before the horse” is a clever image. It reminds us that mixing up the order of things can make us look very silly. The same is true for witnessing to our lost friends.

2. Everybody likes to hear good news. That is, everybody like to hear what they perceive to be good news. You have the Good News people want to hear! However, some people perceive what’s “good news” to you isn’t really needed for them.

3. This week, we’ll look at what we can do to close that gap, so that people become curious about what makes you tick and what we share in community.

4. Clearly, every Christian is called to go out into the world and bring people into the Kingdom. We’re supposed to share what we’ve been given. But what exactly are we supposed to share? Here’s your message in two words: Good News.

Mark 16:15 “...preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.”

5. What happened the first few times you tried to share Jesus with people? It’s not unusual to meet some resistance, especially from people who’ve known you a long time, or, people you haven’t known very long.

6. When we think of witnessing, we usually think of words and images like “sales,” pigeon-holing someone, being a Jesus freak, or “that’s all they think about!” What’s funny is I don’t know very many Christians who came to Christ because they were badgered into the kingdom of God by a belligerent believer!

Before people want to *hear* good news, they want to *see* good news in you.

7. Before people buy a product they want to be convinced by happy customers. The same is true with big ideas, like the gospel.

8. The question people are asking about us are these:

a. “Are you a happy customer?”

b. Does this ‘Jesus-thing’ really work for you?”

9. What keeps you from being a better witness for Christ?

DAY 2: What do people sense from you?

1. What do you think helps open people up to want to hear good news from you?

2. Before you became a Christian what opened your heart to hear the gospel? (Of course, the first answer is that God opens the heart, but he often uses people to do that).

3. Let's look at what Paul did with lost people. What did they observe in Paul?

a. His prayerful **concern**.

Col. 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should...

b. His **conduct**. In the space below, jot down what the people saw in Paul.

1 Thess. 2:9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

c. His **character**. In the space below, jot down what the people saw in Paul.

1 Thess. 2:10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

d. His **care**. In the space below, jot down what the people saw in Paul.

1 Thess. 2:7... we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.

4. Which of these four components would help you, and give you more credibility as you relate to your lost friends?

DAY 3: Using words...

1. Paul was not “perfect” in the four components we looked at yesterday.
2. And you don’t have to be “perfect” in these four components either!
3. Sometimes, Satan gets us so focused on even good things, like these four components, that we believe we’ve got to do something better before we start using words in our witness!

4. When we talk to our lost friends, we use words which they hear, and they also pick up our attitudes. Paul picks up on this same pattern:

Col. 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. [6] Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

a. What attitudes would Paul want us to exhibit as we talk with our lost friends?

b. What kinds of words and tone would Paul want us to exhibit with our lost friends?

5. Here’s another example of both Paul’s words and his attitude toward the people:

1 Thess. 2:11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, [12] encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

a. What attitudes would Paul want us to exhibit as we talk with our lost friends?

b. What kinds of words and tone would Paul want us to exhibit with our lost friends?

6. What kinds of words and attitudes do you think lost people pick up from you?

7. What would you like to change? Ask God to give you insight, to see yourself as others do, and to better follow Paul’s example.

DAY 4: The open door of story

1. What gives you a platform in which to share? Let's do a quick review:

Prayerful concern, conduct, character, and care.

2. But how do you actually start talking about the Lord?

We usually make a mistake when we try to take a HUGE leap to Jesus, forgiveness, and eternal life before we've built a trust relationship with our friends.

3. People are naturally resistant to being told something they don't know, especially when it comes from someone they consider a peer.

4. When Jesus sent out His disciples, here was some of His advice:

Matthew 10:16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

5. We are not to relate to lost people naively. We are to be "shrewd as snakes." The idea is that a snake does not just strike at anything. The snake takes into account the creature before him. We are to use **wisdom** as we relate to lost people. (Look back at Colossians 4:5 from yesterday's notes).

6. Instead of getting in the mode of "telling" start with **getting to know** your lost friends. **Ask them questions, listen to their answers, and be curious** about them.

James 1:19 (RSV) Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger,

a. Get to know their background: family life, education, work and spiritual background.

b. As you take the initiative in the friendship, to ask them about their life, most people will reciprocate the same with you!!!

7. The example of Jesus. Jesus used this same approach when He was only twelve years old. And He was talking with the top Jewish religious leaders of His day!

Luke 2:46 (RSV) After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions;

Luke 2:47 ... and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

8. What idea from today's devotional would help you move forward with your lost friends?

DAY 5: The power of your story!!!

1. Paul used this same method with the lost people in Thessalonica. He came alongside them, relating with some as friend, as others as a father, as others as a mother.

Paul's witnessing motif was relational.

1 Thess. 2:8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

2. Jot down what strikes you from Paul's example in this verse:

3. Next week, we'll give you some ideas how to unpack your story with your lost friends.

4. But for now, get busy learning the story of your lost friends.

- a. Take the initiative,
- b. Engage with them,
- c. Ask questions, and
- d. Listen.

4. The task of witnessing involves initiative, even for Jesus!

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

5. Think back about what we've looked at this week. Jot down the most important steps or ideas that would help you be a better witness.