

“Seventh Mark of Maturity - Evangelistic Activity”

Seventh Mark of Maturity: Evangelistic Activity – *“Equipped to witness and to share the Good News by (1) one’s testimony, (2) a personal presentation of the Gospel, and (3) a prayer-saturated plan of relationship cultivation, so that regular prayer for the lost is offered, weekly witness is given, and people are being disciplined into Christ (Rev. 12:11; Mark 5:19; Acts 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 3:15; Col. 4:6; John 13:34-35).”*

Introduction

Each of our “Seven Marks of Maturity” represents a critical area in which every Christian is required to grow. Therefore by specifically targeting these seven areas we want to teach and instruct and urge every member of Lone Hill to grow toward maturity in Christ. Certainly, these seven areas do not exhaust maturity in Christ, but when by grace we practice, master, and are able to instruct others in their practice, we are well on our way to maturity in Christ. For maturity is not perfection, but rather the ability to stand in Christ and cast the shadow of Christ as we walk down the road of discipleship and salvation. In addition, we must be able to turn and equip and help those who travel the same road behind us, so that they too are able to stand in Christ, cast the shadow of Christ as they walk and turn to help those behind them. Anything less than this is not the true growth of the Church (Eph. 4:11-16).

A. The Real Evangelist

The work of evangelism is the work of One through the means of another. Evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit through the faithful proclamation of the Gospel by the individual members of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is the work of the Holy Spirit through you and me!

The main evangelist is the Holy Spirit. We are not the ones who ultimately persuade others into the kingdom. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts, who regenerates the soul, so that a person can see Christ, their need, and Christ’s provision for his or her need. Further, faith and repentance are the gifts of the Spirit given, so that, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.”*

Thus, it is particularly the Spirit of Christ (Jn. 14:16-19; Rom. 8:9), the Holy Spirit of the Godhead, that converts and calls men to Christ (Jn. 3:5, 6; 16: 7-11). We are His mouthpieces, we are His ambassadors. *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).* This is the Biblical picture of evangelism. Thus,

evangelism is not so much a matter of methods or skills but of our faithfulness in proclamation and the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

When we realize that it, evangelism, is the work of the Holy Spirit and our faithfulness to proclaim the Gospel, we then can relax. Because it will not be the power of a perfect sales pitch, the inescapable logic of our arguments, or the sweetness of our disposition but by the power of the Spirit that people turn to Christ. Thus, Mark Dever writes, “Some of us who are Christians today become Christians through presentations of the Gospel that may have been terrible in a number of ways. The person may have been scared, stuttering, forgetful, intimidating, pushy, even obnoxious. But somehow the truth was there amid all their errors, and God’s Holy Spirit used it to bring us to repentance and faith.”¹ We should not feel that it is unnecessary to learn how to present the Gospel in as clear and loving manner as we possibly can. But, we can be comforted, when we sense our own inadequacy for the task that it does not depend on us. Therefore, we must simply do our best to be faithful and trust God the Holy Spirit for the results!

B. Dealing with Our Fears

Yet, for most of us when we think of sharing the Gospel with friends, neighbors, family members, or strangers it is sometimes a frightening thought. Fear is one of the most inhibiting factors to sharing the Gospel with others. An encouraging insight I find in Scripture is that we are not alone. The Apostles also struggled with fear. By far the greatest number of examples of evangelistic prayers in Scripture is not for those hearing the Gospel but for boldness for those sharing the Gospel. When Peter and John returned to the brethren after being beaten by the Sanhedrin for their preaching, they prayed, “...*Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence...*” (Acts 4:29). Repeatedly through Acts we find that those filled with the Spirit manifested that filling by the boldness of their preaching (2:4ff., esp. vv. 14ff.; 4:8ff.; 13:9ff.). The Apostle Paul asked the Ephesian Church to pray that he might faithfully preach the Gospel with boldness. “...*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, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak*” (6:19, 20; cf. Col. 4:3-4).

There is no single antidote for our individual fears and inhibitions. The **first step** must be to pray for boldness as the Apostles did. **Also**, we must learn to thoroughly understand the Gospel. We need to study to show ourselves approved (2 Tim. 2:15), so that we can rightly handle the Gospel (2 Tim. 3:14-17) and be ready to give an account of the Gospel to whomever asks (1 Pet. 3:15). A **third step** is to add some basic skills and disciplines. For example, we should each know how to share our testimonies. We should develop an understanding of apologetics, so we are able to answer basic inquiring questions; and we should also have a disciplined prayer life. We should consistently ask for boldness (Eph. 6:19-20), for open doors of opportunity (Col.

4:2-4), to see those whom the Father has given to the Son turn to Christ (Jn. 17:9, 20; Acts 4:28), that God might graciously open hearts and draw men to Himself (Acts 16:14; Jn. 6:44, 65), for more laborers (Mt.9:38), and for the Church's obedience to the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20). A **fourth step** with which we need to attend is to deal with personal spiritual issues, which can inhibit or motivate us to share our faith. Here are some of the inhibitors: guilt, being out of fellowship with the Father, disunity or out of fellowship with the Body, disunity in your family, fleshly pursuits, bitterness, looking only at the exterior of people's lives, self-righteousness, thinking you are converted when you are not, no personal walk or daily communion with the Lord, Biblically illiterate and uninformed, spiritually stagnate, lack of assurance, etc. I could easily fill the rest of my space in responding to these issues, but rather than trying to remove these negative inhibitors I think the better track will be to focus on establishing positive motivators in our lives. There are a number of Biblical motives for evangelism and cultivating them will not only focus us on sharing our faith, but it will also enable us to deal with many of the personal inhibitors.

C. Three Motives for Evangelism

1. Obedience

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples...”
(Mt. 28:18, 19)

The first motive for evangelism is obedience. *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples...”* (Mt. 28:18, 19). Obedience is the simplest and most straightforward motive for evangelism. If we belong to Jesus Christ, and we are not regularly sharing our faith, then we are not being obedient. Repentance is a transforming reorientation of one's life to be 100% obedient to Jesus Christ, so we need to repent and begin to share our faith. We need to seek to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Fundamentally, this is why *Evangelistic Activity* is a Mark of Maturity for us. Obedience begins with the willingness to deny yourself and do the will of Christ. It is to accept the mandate of our Lord and Savior and reorient our lives, so it gets done. If we need to be equipped, then we need to get equipped! If we need to begin praying, then we need to begin praying! If we need to abandon our fleshly pursuits, then we must cut them off. They must be amputated! Etc., etc., etc. Obedience is straightforward, and it is easily measured. Either we do it, or we don't. We must be obedient because we are His, and we are accountable to Him. This is the mindset, which we must develop, and repentance, this constant reorienting of our lives to obedience to Jesus, is the means by which we return to obedience when we have fallen into disobedience.

2. The Fear of the Lord

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...” (2 Cor. 5:10, 11)

The second motive for evangelism is *“the fear of the Lord.”* *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...” (2 Cor. 5:10, 11).* The Apostle has in mind here the judgment of Christians by Christ. Philip Hughes in his excellent commentary on 2 Corinthians writes, “Love for the Master because of His matchless love for us should be sufficient incentive for us to follow devotedly in His steps. But there is a further consideration, to which the Apostle draws attention here, namely, that even for the Christian there is to be a day of reckoning.”² Hughes then explains the comprehensiveness of this judgment.

“To be made manifest means not just to appear, but to be laid bare, stripped of every outward facade of respectability, and openly revealed in the full and true reality of one’s character. All our hypocrisies and concealments, all our secret, intimate sins of thought and deed, will be open to the scrutiny of Christ...for it is only the divine gaze which penetrates to the very essence of our personality: ‘man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart’ (I Sam. 16:7).”³

The fact that Christ is going to judge His people is to be a sobering motive and an incentive that we live for Him.

“The incentive is to Christian living that is marked throughout by complete integrity, both in what is apparent and in what is not apparent to one’s fellow-men, so that the outward, instead of concealing the inward person, corresponds to it. It is only in Christ, through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, that this wholeness of being, free from division and dissimulation, can be realized.”⁴

Christ will judge His people by what they have done, but there is an additional insight suggested by the Greek aorist verb tense of *“according to what he has done.”* The aorist tense indicates that the life of the Christian will be seen as a whole rather than as individual acts. “In other words, it is character rather than separate acts that will be rewarded or punished. ...It is habitual action that will be judged. ...it is what he did during his lifetime that is summed up and estimated as a total.”⁵

This judgment is not whether or not we will be saved from the wrath of God. This issue has already been decided by our union to Christ (Acts 13:39; Rom. 8:1). When we were united to Christ the price He paid on the cross became our ransom price once and for all from the wrath of God (Heb. 10:12, 14). The judgment, which Paul refers to here, is one of worth and reward (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

“The declaration of Christ’s judgment-seat is not the ultimate sentence of salvation or damnation; for it is the redeemed alone who stand before it,

and their doing so results either, on the one hand, in their hearing the Lord's 'well done' and the receiving of a reward, or, on the other hand, in their suffering loss, that is, through failing to receive a reward. The rewards themselves vary in proportion to the faithfulness and diligence of each individual (cf. Lk. 19:16ff.)."⁶

Paul makes a personal application at this point. He says, in other words, that knowing he will be so judged he "*persuades men.*" He is not waiting to be found wanting in anyway by our Lord, rather he has already made himself manifest to God and to the Corinthians for they are the fruit of his persuading. By verses 20 and 21 he says, "*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" Thus, we see for Paul that, because of his fear of Christ's coming judgment, he was motivated all the more to be an ambassador of Christ persuading men to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

3. The Constraint of Christ's Love

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15)

A third motive for evangelism is because of the constraint of Christ's love for us. "*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).* This is the most powerful and energizing of all three motives, and it is also foundational to all other motives. Therefore it is important that we see this motive clearly. Note, it is not **love for Christ**, which motivates, i.e. controls or constrains, Paul. It is **Christ's love for him**. Paul is testifying, "I have been captivated by Christ's love for me, so that I can do nothing other than His will. I am His." He prayed for the Ephesian Church,

"For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God" (3:14-19; cf. Rom. 8:35-39).

In other words, Paul prays specifically that the Holy Spirit will enable each to know this vast, incomprehensible love which Christ has for His people. This love is the fullness of Christ and also of God, the Father. Central to the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to communicate this love. Why? Because Christ's love for us will constrain us to love like He loves. So Paul constrained by the love of Christ persuades men to know Christ and His great love for them.

Augustine spoke of a God-shaped vacuum in every person's heart. Paul indicates here that such a vacuum was to be filled up with the utterly incomprehensible love of Christ. Comprehension and experience of such love is only made possible by the work of the Spirit. The Apostle John put it this way, "*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*" (1 Jn. 4:10, 11). John's progression from the fact of God's love for us to the necessity that we love one another was also Paul's experience. He wrote, "*from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh*" (2 Cor. 5:16). He was saying that he quit looking at only the exteriors of people's lives: how they dress, their physical attractiveness, their intelligence, their possessions, their wealth, their family or friends, their social status, etc. He was saying, "I will not judge people by purely surface issues." How then did he view them? He viewed them for their potential of being in Christ. "*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come*" (v. 17). Paul looked at people for what they could be **if** they came to know Christ and His love. As transforming as Christ's love had been for Paul he knew it would be no less so for others. Paul viewed others as people to be transformed by the love of Christ, and who are desperately in the need of Christ's love.

This is the way that Jesus viewed people. "*And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd*" (Mt. 9:36). Jesus did not look at the surface of people's lives but their spiritual reality. They were distressed and shepherdless sheep. Fred Bruner comments,

"When Jesus looks out over the world it is the *helplessness* of people, their depression and suppression, that affects him most deeply. He sees people first as a *massa confusionis* [lump of confusion] before he sees them as a *massa perditionis* [lump of perdition] (though he *does* also see them as perishing, cf. 10:6). They appear to him exactly like sheep who have lost their shepherd and who are limping, matted and beat up, from one desperation to another. They need nothing so much as they need a good shepherd. ...By what are the people oppressed? By the deceitfulness of worldly life and by the excesses of a spiritual leadership that asks for more than it gives.... In such a condition the main need people have is a good shepherd. Thus Christian disciples are to think first of all of the overwhelming need of people for *Jesus himself* in all his gracious helpfulness as he has been presented to us in chapters 5-9 of this Gospel. Here is a shepherd who does not first require his sheep to leap through hoops before they get pasture, but who on the slightest notice of need or danger is there.... People need Jesus. That is principle one of mission."⁷

The constraining love of Christ for us must make us look at people differently. We must see them as desperately in need of this same love which has transformed us and can transform them.

We must always remember that the starting place for our motivation for evangelism is not our love for people or our love for Christ. To start here is to start with ourselves, and it is to start in the wrong place. We must start with Christ's love for us. It is His love for me when I had no love for Him but rather when I had only disregard for Him at best and utter hatred for Him at worst. When I was His self-declared enemy and helpless to be anything other than that (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10) His love claimed me, and He became my shepherd.

George Verwer, the founder of Operation Mobilization, points out that this is the starting place for being motivated for evangelism.

“Make time each day just to worship the Lord, for I believe that the highest goal for every believer is not evangelism, but worship. See that it becomes your number one priority. You will find that evangelism and every other Christian activity is easier in consequence. Give worship first place, above intercessory prayer, and simply enjoy God because He is God. Worship, Tozer comments, is the missing jewel of the evangelical church. If it is lacking in your life you are probably experiencing a power shortage. ...Our motivation as we march into battle is love...unless we have love, our Christian lives are not only dull and painful, but noisy and worthless.... Yet within ourselves we cannot generate the love we need, for very few of us brim over with charity. This is not a cause for guilt, however, though it may be a sign that we need to repent of the hard feelings we have harbored against [any]. We need rather to turn to Christ and ask him to fill us with his love.”⁸

Yes, the starting place for evangelism is to bask in the warmth and glory of Christ's love. It and it alone will ignite all the other cylinders empowering evangelism.

The spiritual truth is that as we look into Christ's love we are transformed by it (2 Cor. 3:18). We become new. Irresistibly we must look at others differently. We must view evangelism differently. I think this is exactly what happened to Paul. I have often wondered what motivated Paul to be willing to give up his own salvation for his Jewish brethren? Yet, in light of the truth we have just examined it is really self-evident. He was controlled by the love of Christ (Rom. 9:1-3). Is this not exactly what Jesus did? He felt compassion for the multitudes Matthew taught us. Paul taught us that Christ became accursed for us (Gal. 3:13). He became separated from the Father for our sake – “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (Mt. 27:46). Paul looked into the mirror of Christ's love and began to love that way. That is the way of evangelism.

I. Your Personal Testimony

We now turn to the first skill for sharing the Gospel, your personal testimony. The Apostle Paul used his testimony repeatedly as a means for presenting the Gospel (e.g. Acts 22:1ff.; 26:1ff.). After exorcising Legion, the demoniac, Jesus commissioned him to return his people and home and “*report to them what great things the Lord has*

done for you, and how He had mercy on you” (Mk. 5:19). The Church, we are taught, overcomes Satan “because of the blood of the Lamb and because of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death” (Rev. 12:11). Such is the place of one’s testimony.

There are two special advantages, which your testimony can offer. First, in this era of post-modern thinking, your experience of salvation through Jesus Christ cannot be denied. Your testimony is *your* undeniable experience. Second, you will want to make your testimony time-flexible. You should be able to share your testimony in a just a minute or to be able to expand it into a longer and more detailed version. You will be able to do this only by carefully working it out.

A. Long Form: Five-Point Outline

Here is how to work on your testimony. Take a sheet of paper and make a five-point outline. The **first** point is “Before I believed and received Christ I lived and thought this way.” **Second**, “I felt a need for something different in my life.” **Third**, “How I received Christ as my personal Savior and Lord.” **Fourth**, “After I received Christ these positive changes took place.” **Fifth**, “The verses of Scripture which the Lord used to convict and teach me of my need for Christ and how to turn to Him.” Make a summary response to each statement and then list two or three examples to illustrate it. For example, “I believed that I needed enough good deeds in my life to outweigh all my sins. My fear was always that what if I had a bad day and died. I can remember praying a little prayer at night. ‘Now I lay me down to sleep...and I pray if I should die before I wake that my soul You will keep.’ But always thinking what if God doesn’t keep my soul. What if I am not good enough? Deep down, I knew I was not good enough.” Give each statement in the outline some thought and be specific. Usually it is necessary to work it through several drafts. It is very helpful to especially work on the first line of each response and then memorize those lines, so you always know how to start that section.

B. Short Form: Three-Point Outline

For very short versions of your testimony simply remember the outline: **I. Before** you received Christ, **II. How** you received Christ, and **III. After** you received Christ. Keep in mind that your focus needs to be on the Lord and His mercy on you. He is to be the One who is center stage in your testimony. Each part of your testimony should be proportionate. Especially limit dwelling on how sinful your past might have been. If anything should be disproportionate let it be on the latter two points rather than the first point.

An easy way to get started on your testimony is first to verbalize it to someone you know. Give the three sections a little thought and then begin. After you have verbalized it once or twice then write it out. Remember your written one-minute testimony is only approximately a one-half sheet double-spaced. Once you have it on paper then refine it. You will want to make sure the central character of your testimony

is Jesus. You want the Gospel to shine out of your experience. Then, of course, you will want practice it. With this simple investment you will find that your testimony can become a very valuable tool for sharing with others.

C. “How To Prepare Your Personal Testimony” Resource

We have a packet of information on how to prepare your personal testimony – “How To Prepare Your Personal Testimony.” This resource contains an outline, some “do’s and don’ts,” an evaluation sheet, and an informational article. Each year it is our goal to offer a training seminar on preparing your personal testimony. Why? So you can be as effective and equipped as you can to lead others to the Savior! But also because evangelism is usually something we must do on purpose. The longer we are Christians something happens. We know fewer and fewer non-Christians. To share our faith we have to be equipped and become purposed in doing it. In the next segment of our study we will look at the next skill we need to effectively share our faith – How to present the Gospel.

II. The Presentation of the Gospel

A. Presentations Should Varied and Repetitive

If we are to share the Gospel, we must have a clear understanding of it, and we should understand it well enough, so we can share it briefly or very thoroughly. Too often we think in terms of sharing the Gospel only in brief encounters. We would be better prepared if we would think of sharing the Gospel repeatedly and with a variety of different kinds of presentations. For example, you could share your testimony, a brief Gospel tract, a book or video, introduce someone else who would share their testimony, a home evangelistic Bible study, etc.

Normally, a person does not turn to Christ after a single exposure to the Gospel, rather it is the repetitive message of Scripture which the Spirit uses to effectively draw people to Christ. James Engel makes this point in his “Spiritual-Decision Process.” He points out that first comes an awareness of a supreme being, then an initial awareness of the Gospel. This is then followed by an awareness of the fundamentals of the Gospel, then a grasp of the personal implications of the Gospel, then a positive perception of the Gospel. The process continues as one comes under personal conviction, that is, by the work of the Holy Spirit they both recognize their need and experience a resulting constraint that the help for their need is the Gospel. This finally results in their turning to Christ. We need not think that a person cannot move through these stages quickly, but for some their progress will haltingly be step by step over long periods of time.

Many years ago I heard a statistic that the average person who turns to Christ has heard the Gospel 14 times. I have no idea what sampling formed its baseline, but it has caused me to think not in terms of using short presentations of the Gospel but rather using multiple presentations. Our cultural tendency is to try to make everything fast

and short. We are told, time is precious and attention spans are short. Against such modern marketing wisdom, I believe it is necessary for people to understand not simply the benefits of the Gospel but its demands. Our prayers ought not to be for slick presentations but for clear and multiple presentations, which will be used by the Spirit to convict and convert people. The Spirit is the converter not us. We are messengers. It is imperative to maintain this distinction. The Spirit will and does use the briefest of Gospel presentations, as well as, long ones and repetitious hearings. So what do we do? Know the Gospel well enough that if you only have a few minutes to share or an opportunity for a much more thorough presentation you will be able to do either and seize the opportunity.

The practical aspect of this is to have a Gospel tract like “The Roman Road” (see our “Evangelism Corner” for other tracts as well) in your pocket or purse for a brief presentation. Also have a tract which gives a more thorough explanation of the Gospel. It should be thorough enough that when read in private it will clearly explain the Gospel. It can be something you give them to read or that you can use as a formatted evangelistic Bible Study. I have attempted to provide this type of tract, “What Do Christians Believe Which Makes Them Christians?” (It is available in the evangelism Corner.) Another booklet of this nature is “Man’s Way vs. God’s Way.” Familiarize yourself with the tracts in our Evangelism Corner, so that, as those you share with have specialized questions, you might become familiar with different specialized tracts which you can pass on to them.

B. Evangelism is Sharing the Gospel

There is one final point on which we must be unquestionably clear. John Cheesman puts it well,

“Evangelism is not a making of proselytes; it is not persuading people to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making a good case for the truth of Christianity; it is not inviting someone to a meeting; it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying ‘Jesus Saves’! Some of these things are right, are good in their place, but none of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what He has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁹

Ultimately evangelism is not telling others our experience. It is not telling them that God loves you. It is telling them their utter need and God’s remedy for their need – Jesus Christ. This truth appropriated by the Spirit-given gift of faith alone can save from the coming judgment of God. Accordingly, the Apostle Paul wrote, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*” (Rom. 1:16). Ultimately we must present the Gospel to those outside Christ. They must, according to the Gospel, see themselves under the judgment of God for their sin. They must see Jesus Christ as their only hope and cling to Him as Savior and Lord by faith. This is their only hope. In this

next section we want to look at what the Gospel is so that we can present it in all its splendor.

We need to start by defining the word “evangelism,” which comes from the Greek word “evangel,” and it is translated in the New Testament (NT) as “gospel” or “good news.” Martin Luther wonderfully explained the general idea behind the word and how the NT made application of it. “‘Evangel,’ Luther declared in his preface to the New Testament, ‘is a Greek word meaning glad tidings, good news, welcome information, a shout, or something that makes one sing and talk and rejoice.’”¹⁰ In the NT we find this good news is God’s Good News. It is God’s shout about the work of His Son: Jesus’ establishment of the God’s Kingdom on earth, His perfect life, His obedient death, His victorious resurrection, and His exalted ascension and heavenly reign (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-5; Acts 1:21-22). This Good News becomes Good News to mankind only when each personally realizes the state of our desperate need. The path to recognizing this great need takes us first to a correct understanding of who God is and, second, to an understanding of our subsequent duty before God. In light of these facts we are faced with our dreadful predicament, then we see that God’s Good News is really Good News! In fact, it is the best of news!

Do not lose sight of the fact that until someone hears and understands the “bad news,” namely that we are all sinners who cannot survive the judgment of God, then he or she will not be able to appreciate how good the “good news” is. One of the most difficult hurdles for the postmodern mind is the guilt of sin or even the fact of sin. Everyone is viewed as “basically good.” Only the absolutely worst, most heinous people are viewed as sinners. Evangelist Ray Comfort (our Library contains several of his resources) has pointed out, following the pattern of Reformation and Puritan evangelists, that people must be confronted with God’s Law. Taking the Ten Commandments, especially as Jesus expounded them in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:21-42), and asking a person to do a self-evaluation or better question the person asking if they are guilty of any of the commandments. The Westminster Larger Catechism contains an excellent exposition of the Ten Commandments. To enable one to understand sin they must see God’s perfection and that He will not accept anything less than perfect obedience (cf. Jas. 2:10). This is the meaning of Romans 3:23, “*for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*” That, which sin falls short of, is the perfection, the glory, of God. In contrast postmodern mankind looks at the worst human to justify they are not so bad. In fact they find themselves good by contrast. God has one standard of goodness, Himself (Mt. 19:17).

Bringing a conversation to enable an addressing of the Gospel is often a challenge. If you have a road map in your mind of where you are going and the steps you need to take to get there, you will find that you can move forward with greater confidence and effectiveness. The following Gospel Presentation provides a path which will lead the conversation first to spiritual topics, then to a key question, and then into the Gospel. At the conclusion it will ask two questions, which will call the person you

are sharing with to make an evaluation and then a decision about the Gospel. Below you will find it laid out in outline form, so you can view it structurally. It is also written in conversational style. It was originally designed for use in home visitation with visitors to Lone Hill. Though it was written with this perspective it can be easily adapted to most situations. We do have the basic outline and questions in tract form, “The Bible’s Answer,” which can be found in our Evangelism Corner.

C. A Four-Step Presentation of the Gospel

The sequence of this presentation is designed to avoid resentment and defensiveness, and to lead directly into a presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and an invitation to commitment.

Step I: Getting Their Attention

A. Secular Life

1. Keep the conversation general. If it becomes too involved in one topic, change the subject. Many opportunities to present the Gospel have been lost because the conversation became too involved in other topics.
2. Remember there is one specific matter you want to present to them: The Gospel. This is your primary goal.
3. Your secondary goal and the goal at this point of the conversation is to get to know the person and communicate your genuine concern and interest in their life.
4. Here are some suggested questions and observations which can begin the conversation:
 - a. If in general conversation . . .
 - 1) Where do you work?
 - 2) Where do you live?
 - 3) What do you enjoy doing?
 - b. If in their home . . .
 - 1) Comments about the house.
 - 2) Are they new residents in the area?
 - 3) Where are they from?
 - 4) How did they happen to move to this area?
 - 5) Number of children they have.
 - 6) Where do they work?
5. Remember, don’t spend too long (suggested 5-10 minutes, but use your own judgment in every case).

B. Religious Life

1. The purpose for this area of discussion is:
 - a. To find out about their general religious background.
 - b. To move the topic of conversation toward a religious or spiritual topic.
2. Here are some questions which might help move the discussion to the topic of their religious life:
 - a. Do you ever think about spiritual issues?
 - b. Do you believe in God?
 - c. What are those things that have come to mean the most to you about your belief in God?
 - d. What church did you attend in the past?
 - e. How did you happen to attend Lone Hill Church?
 - f. How did you like the services?

Note: At this point even if the people refer to their past church membership or baptism, don't be persuaded from asking the key question that follows.

3. Whatever questions might be used to promote this topic of discussion, attempt to move from their **general religious background** to their personal convictions or our congregation (note the sequence of the questions in 2 above).
4. The reason for this is to prepare for the "transition" which will lead into the key question that follows.

C. Transition

The Transition: "At our church (Lone Hill Church) we firmly believe that in the Bible we find the key to man's (our) relationship to God." This can also be personalized by simply saying "I believe that the Bible is the key to our relationship with God."

D. Key Question

1. **"Let me ask you a question, suppose that you were to die today and stand before God and He were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into My Heaven?' What do you think you would say?"**
 - a. Their Response:
 - 1) "I don't know." (Encourage them to think a little more deeply though you understand it is a difficult question.)
 - 2) "Well, I believe in God, and I try to live the right kind of life."

- 3) “I keep the Ten Commandments/Golden Rule.”
- 4) “Well, I go to church.”
- b. Regardless of their answer move onto the introduction of Step II.
- c. One exception would be in the case of people whose response would indicate that they are born again, with a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and are Scripturally baptized believers. Invite them to Lone Hill or, if already attending, encourage them to continue to attend and to become a part of our fellowship by the placing of their membership.
- d. If their response is vague, then probe them to clarify it, or move onto the introduction of Step II.

E. Introduction to Step II

1. **“Most people have difficulty answering that question, but it centers on a vital issue which is important to everyone’s life – our relationship to God. Remember, I mentioned earlier that at the Lone Hill Church we firmly believe that the Bible is the key to understanding our relationship to God.”**
2. **“If it would be alright with you, I’d like to show you a few verses from the Bible which will both point out what a right relationship with God is and show the Bible’s answer to the question I asked you.”**
3. If it is convenient to show them these verses in the Bible, this is the most preferable way. It allows them to see for themselves that this is what Scripture states, and it is not a “special interpretation” but the self-evident statement which is plain to anyone who would read it. If it is inconvenient to use the Bible, the verses are printed in the tract or they can be quoted from memory. Also note that all the main verses are from the book of Romans, except John 3:16, and the summary verses are from 1 John 5. There are additional verses in parentheses that can be used. **“Do you have a New Testament or a Bible we could read from?”** Allow them to find it, etc. It usually works best if you carry a small pocket size New Testament that you have used and are familiar with. When they have their Bible, get yours out and begin Step II. If they don’t have one, either share yours or if your silent partner has one, suggest they use his or hers. (It is usually best to use a standard translation like NKJV, NASV, or NIV.)

Step II: Good News Presentation

A. We Have a Need. (This is the bad news)

1. All Have Sinned: Romans 3:23.
 - a. Turn to Romans 3:23. (Allow them time to find the passage, then ask them to read it.)
 - b. *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)
 - c. **“When the Bible uses the word ‘sin’ it means – ‘doing what we want to do in contrast to what God wants us to do.’ The ‘glory of God’ means ‘God’s perfection.’”** At this point calling attention to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17) and asking, have you ever stolen anything, lied, lusted after something belonging to someone else (coveting), treated something with the devotion that only God deserves (idolatry), commit adultery, use God’s name in vain, etc.?
 - d. **“God is simply telling us that everyone on earth has sinned. That means I am a sinner, and John here is a sinner. The pastor at the church is a sinner.**
 - e. **“Just as it takes only one lie to make a liar, it would minimally take only one sin to make a sinner.**
 - f. **“Now let’s look at the results of our sin.”**

2. The Wages of Sin: Romans 6:23a
 - a. Turn to Romans 6:23. **“Would you read this verse for us?”**
 - b. *“For the wages of sin is death . . .”* (Romans 6:23a). If you read this, then just read the first part. You will go back to the second part later. (Note: If the person is a poor reader, then it might be best if you read the verses. You can determine this after they read Romans 3:23.)
 - c. *“(Their name), what wage does sin earn?”*
 - d. **“That death is a spiritual death. (‘Death’ usually needs to be explained.) Death refers to physical death, but also more. The Bible teaches that it is given to man to live, die, and then face judgment (Heb. 9:27). We must each stand before the judgment seat of God and we will be judged not on a curve or according to the lives of other people but according to God’s perfection or glory. No one can pass this judgment because we have sinned. God will then cast us from His presence, from God. This is ultimately what the Bible means by ‘death’ (Rev. 20:11-15).**
 - e. **“Just as when someone dies physically they are separated from their loved ones and friends, so when you die spiritually you are in a state of eternal separation from God.**
 - f. **“The tragedy of this separation is that no matter what we do whether going to church, or living a good life, or having membership in a church, whatever we might try to do to overcome this separation, it’s useless. By ourselves we cannot do anything to be united with God again (Mt. 16:25-26).**

g. **“But the Bible has some Good News for us.”**

B. God Has Acted.

1. God's Love: Romans 5:8
 - a. Turn to Romans 5:8. **“Would you read it aloud?”**
 - b. *“But God demonstrates His own toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).*
 - c. **“God loves us so much He did not want us to be separated from Him. He sent Jesus to die on the cross and pay the penalty for our sin. Through Jesus' perfect life (1 Pet. 2:21-25; 2 Cor. 5:21) and His death it is possible for us to be saved from eternal separation from God.**
 - d. **“Jesus' death for us is like the story of the judge who threw the book at the convicted young man who stood before him. But after he gave him a just but the harshest penalty for his crime, he came down from his bench, removed his robe, and said he would take the punishment that the young man so rightly deserved. The young man was his son. Out of love God allowed His Son to die in our place, so that we might be placed in a right relationship with Him (Eph. 2:4-5).**
 - e. **“(Their name), when Christ died on the cross, He died for me, and John, and for you. When Jesus went to the cross, He went to the cross because of our sin (Heb. 10:12).**
 - f. **“(Their name), Jesus died for you so that you might be saved, but just because Christ died for you that doesn't automatically save you from eternal separation from God.”**

2. God's Free Gift: Romans 6:23a
 - a. **“Turn to Romans 6:23a again, and read the last part of the verse.”**
 - b. *“. . . but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23b).*
 - c. **“Salvation is like a free gift. It is a gift from God, the gift of eternal life and forgiveness. It is a right relationship with God.**
 - d. **“So many people think eternal life is earned by going to church, by being a good neighbor, by keeping the Ten Commandments, or by loving one another.**
 - e. **“Rather eternal life is offered to you as a gift. If you work for something, it isn't a gift. You earn it. It's the same way with salvation. It is a free gift, which you can either accept or reject.**
 - f. **“If I hand you this Bible, you must either put out your hand and take it, or ignore it. It's the same with salvation. You must move to accept it.**

g. “You must receive Christ as your Lord and Savior.”

C. We Must Receive God’s gift.

1. We receive God’s gift by believing in Jesus: John 3:16
 - a. “Turn to John 3:16, and read it aloud for us.”
 - b. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*
 - c. **“(Their name), you can go to church, believe in God, even believe in Jesus Christ, that He once lived here on earth, and still not be saved. You can live an exemplary life. You can even realize that you have sinned and need a Savior and still not be saved.**
 - d. **“God has given us a free gift, but for it to become our own we must receive it. We do that by believing in Jesus Christ.**
 - e. **“But ‘believing’ in Him means more than just agreeing that He once lived and died. Rather, true faith is the total commitment of your whole self to Jesus Christ (cf. Jas. 2:19; Mt. 7:21). To believe means you give yourself to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 12:1, 2; Rev. 5:9, 10).**
 - f. **“Let me illustrate it by this little story. There was a famous acrobat during the last century who walked across Niagara Falls on a tightrope. On one occasion he had astounded a group of people by walking over the rope and back, first with a balancing rod, and then blindfolded. He even trundled a wheelbarrow over it. For his climactic act he needed a boy to help him. So, on returning to safety he singled out a little fellow and said: ‘Boy, you think I am wonderful, don’t you?’ ‘Yes!’ said the boy in admiration.’ ‘Do you believe,’ the acrobat persisted, ‘that I can put a human being in that wheelbarrow and trundle him over the rope?’ ‘Yes, sir, I certainly do,’ said the boy. ‘All right,’ said the acrobat, ‘you hop in the wheelbarrow and I’ll take you over.’ But the little boy took one look at that awful chasm and disappeared into the crowd. He believed in the acrobat with his mind, he agreed with him, but he did not truly believe in the Biblical sense because he was unwilling to entrust his life to him. He believed only enough to say it, not enough to get in the wheelbarrow.**
 - g. **“In the Bible to ‘believe’ means that based upon the facts of Jesus’ perfect life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne of Heaven that you make a total commitment of your life to Him as your Lord and the One whose death was payment for you sins and the One who saves you from the penalty of your sins.”**

2. **“To receive God’s gift there is both an initial expression of belief and a continuing expression of belief.**
 - a. **“Initially we express our belief in 3 ways: Repentance, Confession, and Baptism.”**
 - 1) Repentance: Romans 2:4b
 - a) *“Do you not know that God’s kindness (His love) is meant to lead you to repentance?”*
 - b) **“Repentance literally means ‘turn around’ or ‘a change of mind.’ Going in one direction we turn around and start in another direction, or we begin thinking a different way.**
 - c) **“Repentance is a conscious decision which we make to stop doing what we are want to do and turning around to do what God wants us to do (cf. Acts 2:37, 38; 3:19; 20:21; Luke 24:47).**
 - d) **“It is a conscious decision we make with our minds and wills. We recognize that we have broken God’s Law and are sinners, and now we must commit ourselves to obey Him. We also recognize we can do this only with His help (Jn. 15:7; Phil. 2:12, 13).”**
 - 2) Confession: Romans 10:9
 - a) *“. . . if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*
 - b) **“To confess Christ we verbally express who we believe Jesus Christ is. This statement is not a simple agreement but an acknowledged commitment of faith that our lives will be lived out under Christ as Savior and Lord (cf. Mt. 10:32, 33; 16:16; Jn. 4:14, 15).**
 - c) **“I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and I accept Him as my Savior and Lord.”**
 - d) **“First, we express our belief by a conscious decision of our mind: repentance; then we express our belief verbally: confession; and then we express our belief by a physical action: baptism.”**
 - 3) Baptism: Romans 6:3, 4
 - a) **“Turn to Romans 6:1-4, and read that for us.”**
 - b) *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead*

through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

- c) **“The Bible makes it plain that when we believe in the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord, we are to be baptized in His Name becoming His disciple (Mt. 28:18-20).**
- d) **“Baptism is a symbolic burial. It is an outward sign of the inward work of the Holy Spirit. It is the sign of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is the symbolic burial of your old self, which was dedicated to self, into the cleansing blood or sacrifice of Christ, and it is your symbolic resurrection into a new life of being united to Jesus Christ and living under His Lordship.**
- e) **“When you are baptized, you are pledging allegiance to Christ as your Master and the Lord of your life with your whole body.”**
- f) Optional:
 - (1) **“I’d like to show you an example in the Bible of how one person made this total commitment of his life.**
 - (2) **“Turn to Acts 8:26-39. Let me read this to you.”** (Read v. 37, which usually appears in the margin.)
 - (3) *“But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, ‘Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ (This is a desert road.) And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and join this chariot.’ And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?’ And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: ‘He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgement was taken away; who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.’ And the eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?’ And Philip opened his*

mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?' And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing."

b. Continuing: Colossians 2:6, 7

- 1) **"The continuing expression of our belief is to follow Jesus Christ as Lord."**
- 2) *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude" (Col. 2:6, 7).*
- 3) **"The continuing expression of our belief is to allow Jesus to walk with us through our lives, and allow Him to change us into the people He wants us to be (cf. Col. 1:4-6, 9-12; Heb. 12:28b; Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Mt. 7:21-23)."**

Step III: Invitation to Commitment

A. Review:

1. **We Have a Need** **"(Their name) it is important to recognize our need. When we realize that we have each individually sinned, and because of that sin we are eternally separated from God our need is evident."**
2. **God Has Acted on Our Behalf** **"God's love has reached out to us. God loved us so much that He didn't want us separated from Him, so He allowed Christ to pay the penalty for our sin on the cross. Thus, forgiveness and eternal life with God are extended to us as a gift from God."**
3. **We Must Receive God's Gift** **"We must receive the gift of forgiveness and eternal life by believing in Jesus. This means that we must repent, turning from our sin to becoming a disciple"**

of Jesus, to obey all that He commanded. It also means that we must totally commit ourselves to follow Him.”

B. Return to the Question

1. The Answer
 - a. **“Remember the question I asked you? If you died tonight and found yourself standing before God, and He would ask you, ‘Why should I let you in My heaven?’ What would you say?”**
 - b. **“Well, the Bible gives us a very simple answer to that question, and the only one acceptable to God . . . ‘I have received your gift by expressing my belief in Jesus Christ.’”**
2. A Summary: 1 John 5:11-13
 - a. **“I’d like to read one last Scripture to you, 1 John 5:11-13.”**
 - b. *“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.”*
 - c. **“That brings us to two very important questions.”**
3. Two Commitment Questions
 - a. First Question
 - 1) Review: **“God asks us to make a life-changing commitment to Him by believing in Jesus Christ and expressing that belief initially by repentance, confession, and baptism. We are to continue to express our belief by obeying Christ as our Lord, so that we become the person He wants us to be.”** (Note: Here is the moment of real decision. The emotional pressure is on. You may be tempted to avoid this pressure.)
 - 2) The Question: **“(Their name), have you ever made this kind of a commitment to Jesus Christ?”**
 - b. Second Question: **“Would you like to make this kind of commitment?”**
 - 1) If they express a desire to make this kind of commitment then move to the fourth step, “Making a Commitment.”
 - 2) If their response is negative, then express that if sometime they realize their need for Christ, that He will be waiting for them; and encourage them to think seriously about making this decision.
 - a) If they seem to be open, then suggest it is often helpful to meet together and study the Bible. (You might suggest a

- study on a topic. Suggest to meet one, two, or three times over that many weeks to study with them.)
- b) Express your availability to be of any help you can be to them: answering any questions they might have, etc.
 - c) Encourage their attendance at church and worship.
 - d) If possible, have a short word of prayer before leaving.

Step IV: Making a Commitment

A. Initial Steps

1. Confession Question
 - a. Express your joy in their decision (Luke 15:7, 10).
 - b. Then have them confess, repeating after you: **“I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and I accept Him as my personal Lord and Savior.”**
2. Prayer of Repentance and Acceptance
 - a. **“Prayer is talking with God just like you would sit and talk with a close friend. Prayer is speaking humbly and reverently to our Heavenly Father.**
 - b. **“I would like to encourage you to talk with God right now and express your acceptance of His gift of forgiveness and eternal life and your decision of repentance.**
 - c. **“If you would like I can say the prayer and you can pray it after me, or you can speak to God in your own words.**
 - d. **“Here is a prayer: *‘Father, thank You for loving me by sending Your Son, Jesus the Christ, to die so that I do not have to die eternally. Thank You for Your gift of forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus. I fully realize that I have broken Your law and that I am a sinner. I want to change with Your help and the presence of Jesus in my life. I want to commit myself to being obedient to all that Jesus has commanded of His disciples. Father, I want to live for Your honor and to do Your will. Thank You for saving me. In Jesus’ name, amen.’*”**
3. Arrangement for Baptism
4. The Test of True Faith: Fruitfulness and Perseverance
 - a. **“By doing these three things you have already begun to follow Jesus, but now it is essential that you continue to follow Him. There are four necessary steps.**

- b. **“But before we look at these four steps we need to look at a parable which Jesus taught. This parable will help you see the importance of continuing to follow Jesus.”**
- c. Parable of the soils (Read Mt. 13:3-9, 18-33).
- d. Parable Summary:
- 1) **“The soils are those who hear the Good News about Jesus. Jesus notes four types of people who hear the Good News and what happens to them.**
 - 2) **“There was the road soil. The seed never sprouts. Satan blinds the eyes of their minds so that the Good News does not penetrate their lives. They made no expression of faith. God’s gift was rejected (Mt. 13:19).**
 - 3) **“There was the rocky soil. The seed sprouted, but it was never allowed time to develop its roots system. Stressful times come after they first expressed their belief in Christ, but they did not continue in faith. They rejected their initial faith because their expectations were not met. They refused to allow God to strengthen them through tough times (Mt. 13:20-21).**
 - 4) **“There was the thorny soil. The seed sprouted and began to grow, but other things in life began to grab their attention. They gave more and more attention to these distractions (e.g. worries of the world and deceitfulness of riches) until they gave no attention to God and Christ. They was consumed with their own cares and activities. They failed to continue in their faith and be fruitful (Mt. 13:22).**
 - 5) **“There was the fruitful soil. The seed sprouted. The root system developed, and the plant grew and grew. This soil became fruitful. This is God’s plan for you and every Christian (Mt. 13:23; cf. Gal. 5:22-23).**
 - 6) **“Ephesians 2:8-10 says: *‘For by grace (God’s gift) you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.’*”**
- e. **“God’s plan for every Christian is that he or she should be fruitful for God by being obedient to Jesus Christ as Lord. Now let’s look at those four necessary steps for accomplishing this.”**

B. Continuing Steps

1. Step One: Gift of the Spirit

- a. “. . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
 - b. **“When we trust in Christ God gives us His Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the presence of Jesus Christ in your life. The Spirit’s job is to mold us into the likeness of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18).**
 - c. **“He is our guide (Rom. 8:14), companion (John 15:26), and the power we need to live for Christ (Acts 1:8).**
 - d. **“We are to study God’s word, the Bible, so that we might understand better the ministry of the Spirit in our lives and then to be obedient to His leading through the Bible (1 John 3:24).”**
2. Step Two: Fellowship and Ministry of the Church
- a. “. . . Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - b. The Fellowship of the Church
 - 1) **“The Church is all the believers in Jesus Christ. We are the people and family of God and the Body of Jesus Christ. In becoming a Christian we were made part of a people. The Christian life was not meant to be lived independently but corporately.**
 - 2) **“Several logs burn brightly together. Put one aside on the cold hearth, and the fire goes out. This is a picture of our relationship to other Christians. To grow in Christ we need one another. We cannot grow in Christ apart from on another.”**
 - c. The Ministry of the Church
 - 1) **“The church is to be busy doing the commandments of Jesus and the will of God, the Father. We are to demonstrate God’s love in our own lives by caring for others, build others up in their faith, worship together, and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others who are outside of Christ (1 John 3:18).**
 - 2) **“In fact, share your new relationship with someone today (Mt. 28:18-20).”**
3. Step Three: Bible Study
- a. *“Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).*
 - b. **“We need to read and study the Bible, so we can learn both what and how God wants us to live for Him.**

- c. **“It is important to begin right away. A good place to begin reading is in the first four books of the New Testament. An especially good place is the Gospel of Mark, the second book. Mark writes of the Life and Ministry of Jesus.”** (Help orient the person to the Bible by showing them its table of contents, and make sure they have a Bible.)
4. Step Four: Prayer
- a. **“Prayer is talking to God, and this needs to be a regular habit in our lives.”**
 - b. *“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).*
 - c. **“Like every relationship if we don’t talk soon the relationship falls into disrepair.**
 - d. **“Learn to praise God for who He is, to thank Him for His goodness, to talk with Him about the matters of daily concern in your life, to pray for others, and to pray for what God wants you to be.”**
5. Set up an appointment for a follow-up visit. Close in prayer—you praying.

Some Suggestions

This outline is a road map. It keeps the conversation on target, headed toward the destination of sharing the Gospel with someone. When you have it clearly in mind, even if the conversation begins to take a different direction, you will be able to direct it back on course again. To utilize this presentation you must memorize the outline’s major points, that is, the Roman numerals (I., II., etc.), the capital letters (A., B., etc.), and the numbers (1., 2., etc.). This will give you the overall structure and direction. Once you memorize the outline, then read over the sections until you can begin to fill in each section. Ask a Christian friend to practice with you as you lead them through the presentation. Continue to practice until you have it in hand. Then you will have made a powerful tool for sharing the Gospel.

Evangelism – God’s Shout of Good News

One of the great joys of sharing the Gospel is seeing the Holy Spirit give birth, regenerate, the person with whom you are sharing. As you share the Gospel they are able to see the Kingdom of light, and when invited to enter they say, yes! Remember Luther’s explanation of “evangel.” The Gospel is God’s shout of Good News that in Jesus Christ those “enchained by sin, threatened by death, and overpowered by the devil’ become His heirs and thus gain forgiveness and justification and life and salvation and peace. ‘No poor fellow chained in sin, dead, and bound for hell can ever hear anything more comforting and encouraging than this precious and lovely message about Christ,’ Luther concluded. So ‘the sinner cannot help exulting from the bottom of his heart and rejoicing over it when he accepts its truth.’”¹¹ To the sin-sick soul, this

shout of God is the best news he or she could hear. When they hear it ,and it becomes his or her own, then God’s Good News becomes “your” Good News. The response then is your own shout of Good News to all who will hear. That is Evangelism. Evangelism is the ever-widening circle – “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17). The Gospel, God’s Good News, passes from one to another bearing the fruit of eternity.

III. Your Personal Prayer Plan

There is still another skill that we need to have in our arsenal. We now turn to the third and last skill for presenting the Gospel – Your Personal Prayer Plan.

A. Evangelism and Prayer – Hand in Hand

Prayer is critical in evangelism! Why? Because it is the Holy Spirit who draws individuals to Christ. Bound to the task of sharing the Good News with others is the task of asking the Holy Spirit to give them ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to know. Paul wrote the Colossian Church commanding, “*Devote yourselves to prayer praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ . . . that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak*” (Col. 4:1-4). The ministry of prayer and the preaching of Christ always goes hand in hand (Acts 6:4).

Besides praying for an open door into the prepared hearts of those hearing the Gospel, we also are taught to pray for the messenger, the preacher, those sharing the Gospel with others. We find this expressed in two ways. Jesus taught us to pray that the “*Lord of the Harvest*” will “*send out workers into His harvest*” (Matt. 9:38), and secondly, we are to pray for boldness and clarity for the presentation of the Gospel. Paul wrote the Ephesians, “. . . *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 . . . that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak*” (Eph. 6:19, 20). Praying for a receptive audience, for workers, and for boldness and clarity of the message are some specific ways we can pray evangelistically. Let’s look at how we can put together a personal prayer plan.

B. Steps for Making Your Prayer List

First, our plan needs to be built upon our daily time with the Lord (see the First Mark of Maturity). Prayer is a natural overflow of our worship of God. The recognition of who He is comes out in praise. The goodness with which He blesses us comes out in thanksgiving. Petitions for our needs is the natural progression of worship and prayer. It is from this intimacy and practice that evangelistic praying is a part.

Second, pray that **you** will be a fruitful “worker” in the Lord’s harvest. Specifically that the Lord will lead you to people He has prepared with whom you can

share the Gospel. Pray that the love of the Lord will be exhibited in you and overflow from your life (Phil. 1:9-11). Pray that you will speak boldly, clearly, perceptively, and sensitively to those He brings in contact with you. Pray to be used to share the Gospel.

Third have a specific list of people for whom you are praying. Here's an easy way to draw up your list. Who at work have you ever desired to share the Gospel? Who in your neighborhood have you ever desired to share the Gospel? Who in your family and extended family have you ever desired to share the Gospel? What friends or acquaintances have you ever desired to share the Gospel? (Two to five people are a manageable number. Longer lists sometimes become discouraging.) Your list should be written and carried in your Bible or some place where you will see it daily. Pray daily that the Lord will draw these people to Himself, that He will open their eyes that they might see, open their ears that they might hear, and open their hearts that they might know. Pray that the Lord will open a door so that you might share your testimony or the Gospel with them or that you might be able to extend His love to them in kindness, help, or in personal concern or support.

Fourth, pray for the Body of Christ, specifically Lone Hill, but also for the Church at large to be faithful, loving, and fruitful in sharing the Gospel. You can make a list of those who specifically come to mind—brothers and sisters in Christ, pastors, leaders, missionaries, etc. Pray that the love of Christ will be manifest through the witness of His Church. Presenting the Gospel to the world or even just to your list of people is not solely your task, so pray that the Lord will raise up other witnesses who will be used in these people's lives.

Fifth, pray through your list daily. If you have a long list divide the names so you can pray for several names each day and complete your list in a week. Also pray for ideas for expressing Christ's love to them—an invitation, a gift, a kind word, hospitality, help with projects, etc.

A "prayer plan" is simple. There is nothing complicated about it. I have found that there is a spiritual rule in this regard. When you fervently, consistently, systematically pray to be a harvest worker our Lord makes you one. When I pray for the Lord to bring someone into my life so that I might be a witness to him or her He faithfully does. When I don't pray I find I don't share the Gospel much.

One last word, a personal prayer plan is a dangerous and adventurous way to pray. When we are quiet, we are safe because no one cares what we believe, but when we become bold to speak for Jesus Christ people are bothered. The exploits of the Apostle Paul's preaching of the Gospel could be charted by the scars on his body (Gal. 6:17; 2 Cor. 11:23-32). Yet, he probably could not count the number of those who rejoiced in their salvation in Jesus Christ because of his faithfulness and boldness! Paul put the danger and the adventure this way.

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? ..And such confidence we have through Christ toward God” (2 Cor. 2:14-16; 3:4).

Conclusion

Evangelism is one of those ministries which does not usually happen on a broad scale in churches until the leaders and the congregation make a decision and commit themselves to the task. This truly does not happen until the Holy Spirit stirs and excites them to growth and outreach. Often times that movement begins with personal convictions – “I must get involved,” “I must pray,” “I must get involved,” “I must pray,” “I must share the Gospel with the people I know who are hell-bound.” Yet, maturity in Christ is not possible until we are consistently active evangelistically. This undoubtedly was one of the reasons why the Apostle Paul asked the Ephesians to pray that he might speak with boldness for Christ. Being mature, he knew that we are only able to do what our Lord commands by His strength and help. So it is with evangelism.

The first step is to always pray and have others pray for us, but then we must decide and commit ourselves to the obedience of trusting the Spirit to bless and use our obedience. Thus, we find for example Paul planning, then disciplining himself to work his plan, and trusting the Lord to meet and strengthen him in it or change it. There is a statement by Goethe, which I read many, many years ago, but when I come to a junction where ideas and plans must be translated into action I recall his words again and again.

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth – the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves, too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.”

May we all so decide and be used to the glory of God and for the evangelization of the world.

¹ Nine Marks of a Healthy Church (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000), 122.

² Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1962), 179, 180.

³ Ibid., 180.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 181, n. 58.

⁶ Ibid., 182.

⁷ The Christbook: Matthew 1-12 (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 363.

⁸ No Turning Back, 89.

⁹ In Mark Dever, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church, 123.

¹⁰ In Mark Talbot, The Signs of True Conversion (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000), 22.

¹¹ Ibid.