



THE COMPASS

A TOOL FOR DISCIPLERS

Sharing the Gospel

Conversation On the Journey

What's Evangelism?

A good place to begin your time is in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John. Here Jesus has a conversation with a woman by a well. It may be instructive to point out to your disciple the way in which Jesus is able to introduce spiritual issues into the conversation (perhaps some lessons could be gleaned). However, it is really what takes place after the conversation that you want to note. Following the conversation, the woman goes back to her village and then returns with the people of the town, stating, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

They came out of the town and made their way toward Him.

This verse really summarizes the essence of evangelism: telling others what Jesus has done for us. The word evangelism simply means "to proclaim the good news." Another word used in the New Testament for evangelism is "testimony." What happens in a courtroom when someone gives their testimony? They give their perspective of what they saw and heard. If you can simplify the idea of evangelism for your disciple, nothing should seem more natural than wanting to share with others the greatest news they have ever heard.

You might ask your disciple to put themselves in the place of the "woman at the well." What would they report, or give testimony that Jesus has done in their life? Then underscore this is evangelism.

However, for many people, and probably your disciple, evangelism does not come naturally. We sense the social awkwardness of talking about spiritual things. (You might ask her if she has ever sensed this awkwardness.) That's why it's important to demonstrate, from Scripture, why we should engage in sharing our faith. This will bring about a conviction to do evangelism in the absence of feeling like it. What follows are four biblical reasons. You may simply want to pick a couple.

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This Week's Excursion

In this lesson you want to accomplish three things. First, you want to explain the basic concept of evangelism. Then, you want to look at some Scriptural reasons for doing evangelism, and last, you want your disciple to become familiar with the core components of the Gospel message.

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God's Fame

The reason for doing evangelism is the very same reason for our existence. Why do we exist? In order to bring glory to God. What is glory? Perhaps the best way to think of glory is our word "fame." We live to declare the wonders of God, or to make Him famous. When we love others with God's love, or give Him thanks in all things, we are singing His praises—making Him famous. When we choose not to sin, we declare to the world that God is more satisfying than sin. We are declaring His greatness. You might ask your disciple how doing evangelism brings God glory or makes Him famous.

People are Lost

2 Cor. 4:4 states that, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

This is the tragic, but accurate, depiction of the state of people apart from Christ. Satan is holding them hostage, keeping them in prison, and blinding them to the Gospel. As Paul states in Ephesians, they are "without hope and without God in the world." You might ask your disciple in what ways they have witnessed this blindness, or how does Satan keep people blinded?

For your disciple to grow in his understanding of evangelism, it is important that he or she believes the Scripture in its description of people as lost and separated from the love of God.

Here it would be easy to get into a discussion about what happens to those who haven't heard the Gospel. Such cases must be left to God's brilliance and sovereignty. He's not scratching His head about such issues. The truth is that the Scriptures don't describe a Plan B; only Plan A, which is for Christians to go tell those who are lost about Christ. You might suggest to your disciple that a good place to start is to make a list of friends and family who are lost, and to begin praying for them: that they would come to know Christ.

Ambassadors

2 Cor. 5:18-20 touches on the motivation of stewardship. God has entrusted us with the responsibility of being His ambassadors:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

This is an idea worthy of some exploration. You might ask your disciple what it means to be an ambassador. Or, "What difference would it make if he or she went out each day seeing themselves as God's ambassador? Have they seen God use them in this way?" Or, "Why do you think God chooses to make His appeal through us?" You want to ask some questions to help this truth, and responsibility, penetrate their hearts.

Next Steps

Encourage your disciple to begin praying for friends and family members to come to Christ. Encourage him to look for an opportunity to share how Christ has changed his life. You also might suggest that he begin to carry a copy of The Four Spiritual Laws with him in case an opportunity arises to either share it or give it to someone.

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Increasing Our Joy

The apostle John in the beginning of his first epistle states, “We write this to make our joy complete.” To better understand this, let me ask you a question: Is it possible to sit down and eat your favorite meal with a group of friends and not make some grunt (mmm!) or explicative of approval? Of course not! Why? We instinctively want to complete our joy. When we truly delight in something, the way in which we complete our joy is to tell others, or say (mmm!). This is the physics of joy and it must complete its circuit in order to be fully enjoyed.

Why do we share Christ with others? It completes our joy. If we are enjoying our walk with Christ, our Christian experience is still incomplete until we can share it with another.

Perhaps the greatest thing we can do to excel our own walk and joy in the Lord is to be engaged in sharing this joy with others.

What’s the Gospel?

As we have seen, evangelism is sharing our story and testimony with others. It is also critical that we communicate the essential truths of the Gospel message. Ask your disciple, as best as he or she can, to explain the message of the Gospel. You might ask, “If you were to explain the Gospel message to a friend, what would you say?”

The basic components of the Gospel could be summarized as: problem, penalty, provision, and decision. You might use The Four Spiritual Laws and bring their attention to these four components.

The Problem is sin. It is universal, and at some level, almost everyone acknowledges that they fall short of either God’s standards or their own: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (rom. 3:23).

The Penalty is death. romans 6:23 states that “the wages of sin is death.” This is not physical death, but spiritual. The result of sin is eternal spiritual separation from God.

The Provision is Christ’s death for our sin; He pays the penalty for us.

The Decision one needs to make is to place their faith in Christ to pay the penalty for their sin (to be their Savior).

Having explained this you might ask your disciple what the four components of the Gospel are, or even ask them to take another shot at explaining the Gospel. You also might suggest that it might be helpful to simply read through or give a person a copy of The Four Spiritual Laws if the opportunity presents itself.

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Side Trails

Witnessing Without Fear. Bill Bright. New Life Publications.

Transferable Concept: How You Can Introduce Others to Christ. Bill Bright. New Life Publications.

Order at crustore.org

Becoming a Contagious Christian. Bill Hybels. Zondervan.

Order at christianbook.com



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