

## Lesson 3 - Seven Principles Of Personal Evangelism (John 4:1-26)

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Most Christians want to share the gospel of Christ with others...
  - 1. Yet many often feel awkward in their attempts to talk with others
  - 2. Or they simply don't know how to establish contacts for a Bible study - Causing many to experience frustration that discourages them from trying again
- B. Perhaps we can learn some things from Jesus, the master teacher...
  - 1. Who often engaged in personal evangelism as well as public preaching
  - 2. For example, His conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well - **Jn 4:1-26**
- C. Observing Jesus in action, it is possible to glean "Seven Principles Of Personal Evangelism" that we would do well to remember in our own efforts to teach others.
  - 1. One such principle is to...

### II. CONTACT PEOPLE SOCIALLY

- A. WE MUST HAVE SOCIAL CONTACT...
  - 1. The import of Jesus passing through Samaria - **Jn 4:1-6**
    - a. Many Jews, because of their disdain for Samaritans, avoided Samaria
    - b. Jesus and His disciples chose to pass through Samaria, assuring contact - here that resulted in the increase in **Acts 8**.
    - c. A similar example of Jesus making social contact - cf. **Lk 5: 29-32**
  - 2. When people aren't coming to Christ, it's because we are not going to the people!
    - a. We can't be fishers of men by fishing in a barrel; if the fish won't come to the barrel, then we must go where the fish are!
    - b. The problem with sowing the seed is not that there is not good ground to be found, but that the seed is still in the barn! - cf. **Hag 2:19**
- B. DO NOT CONFUSE SEPARATION WITH ISOLATION...
  - 1. Yes, we must be separate - **2 Cor 6:14-18**
  - 2. But this does not mean we are to isolate ourselves
    - a. Note the prayer of Christ - **Jn 17:15**
    - b. Note the command of Paul - **1 Cor 5:9-11**
  - 3. Withdrawing ourselves from those who have not heard or obeyed the gospel in contrary to the will of the Lord!
- C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONTACT...
  - 1. At school with fellow students
    - a. Don't think you are too young to be involved in leading others to Christ
    - b. Young Christians often possess the greatest opportunities to teach others
    - c. How you serve now will likely be an indication of how you will serve later in life
  - 2. At work with fellow employees or employers
    - a. We spend much of our life with these people
    - b. We have the greatest potential to influence them, especially by example
  - 3. At home with neighbors, friends, and family
    - a. Do we even know our neighbors?
    - b. Those closest to us can be difficult sometimes, but are reachable - e.g., **Mt 13:54-58; Jn 7:5; Ac 1:14**
- D. Remember, Jesus said "Go into all the world..." (**Mk 16:15**).
  - 1. We must go where the people are!
  - 2. Another principle we can glean from Jesus' - conversation with the woman is...

### III. ESTABLISH A COMMON INTEREST

#### A. COMMON INTERESTS CREATE A BRIDGE...

1. Note Jesus' first words to the woman - **Jn 4:7-8**
  - a. She had come to draw water
  - b. He was thirsty
  - c. His first words centered around their common interest (water)
2. Realize the need to build rapport
  - a. Meaningful dialogue is not easy, especially involving spiritual matters
  - b. A common interest allows opportunity for meaningful dialogue
  - c. Once a bridge for communication has been established, it will be easier to discuss God's word with another person

#### B. COMMON INTERESTS ARE MANY...

1. They include family (such as children, grandchildren)
2. They include activities (such as work, community projects, hobbies)
3. They include shared experiences (such as travel, or even tragedies)

#### C. Don't feel that you must immediately begin talking about spiritual matters.

1. Take time to nurture common interests.
2. Yet at some point we want to reach the next stage, which leads to our third principle...

### IV. AROUSE SPIRITUAL INTEREST

#### A. THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS...

1. The example of Jesus - **Jn 4:9**
  - a. As a man He speaks to her, a woman
  - b. As a rabbi He speaks to her, an immoral woman
  - c. As a Jew He speaks to her, a Samaritan - He aroused interest by simply speaking to her
2. Regarding our actions
  - a. We can arouse spiritual interest by our example
  - b. By showing kindness and compassion to all, even the evil and wicked
  - c. By not harboring racial or social prejudices to those who are different
  - d. By our own example of faith and hope - e.g., **1 Peter 3:1-2,15**

#### B. THROUGH YOUR WORDS...

1. The example of Jesus - **Jn 4:10-14**
  - a. Jesus' statement shifted their conversation to spiritual matters
  - b. He led them into a discussion on a common spiritual interest (living water!)
2. Regarding our words
  - a. We can raise questions or make statements that shift conversations to spiritual matters
    - (1) E.g., "What do you think our world is in such a mess?"
    - (2) E.g., "Would you be interested in what the Bible says about...?"
  - b. The discussion should first involve matters of common agreement
    - (1) Start with things upon which you agree, to build rapport and instill confidence
    - (2) This was the practice of apostolic preaching - e.g., **Acts 13:16-22**

#### C. Once spiritual interest has been aroused, another principle can be gleaned from Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman is ...

### V. DON'T GO TOO FAR, TOO FAST

#### A. GIVE A PERSON WHAT THEY ARE READY FOR...

1. Note Jesus' discussion with the woman - **Jn 4:15-16**
  - a. She wanted the "living water", but did she really understand?

- b. Jesus saw the need to slow her down and provide the proper ground work
  - (1) She needed faith in Him as the Messiah
  - (2) He needed to provide evidence that He was the Messiah
- c. So instead of giving her the "living water"...
  - (1) He tells her to get her husband
  - (2) Which will result in her conviction of Him as a prophet
- 2. Sometimes people don't realize what they need first
  - a. They'll want to talk about a particular subject
  - b. But they really need something else first
- B. SOME EXAMPLES...
  - 1. Some want to study Revelation, when they need to be grounded on the rest of the Bible first
  - 2. Some want to discuss issues related to church organization, work, worship, etc., when they ought to focus on the "first principles" of the gospel
  - 3. It is important that a person not choke on the "meat" of the Word - cf. **1 Cor 3:1-2**
- C. There is another principle of evangelism that takes into consideration the need of the prospect...

## VI. **DON'T CONDEMN UNNECESSARILY**

### A. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS...

- 1. He could have dwelt on her being an adulteress - **Jn 4:17-18**
- 2. As stated elsewhere, He came to save the world, not to condemn it - cf. **Jn 3:17**
- 3. Not to say He will not one day judge the world, but that the primary purpose of His first coming was to offer salvation - cf. **Jn 12:46-48**

### B. IN OUR EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS...

- 1. Though we preach against sin, our primary purpose is to save, not judge - **1 Cor 5:12-13**
- 2. Our focus should be to inform others of the forgiveness God offers - cf. **2 Cor. 5:18-20**
  - a. God seeks reconciliation with sinners
  - b. Ours is a ministry of reconciliation

### C. Another important principle in evangelism to remember is...

## VII. **STICK WITH THE MAIN ISSUE**

### A. IN THE CASE OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN...

- 1. She turned the subject away from herself to where one should worship - **Jn 4:19-20**
- 2. Jesus answered her question, while effectively turning the conversation back to the original subject: Who He is and what He offers - **Jn 4:21-25** (cf. **Jn 4:10**)

### B. REMAIN STEADFAST TO YOUR OBJECTIVES...

- 1. If seeking to establish a common ground of agreement, avoid jumping ahead
- 2. As you move from common to uncommon ground...
  - a. Take one step at a time
  - b. Do not go on until agreement at each step has occurred
- 3. If your objective is simply to obtain consent for a home Bible study, avoid getting into a detailed discussion at that time - cf. **Prov. 15:28**

### C. One last principle in evangelism gleaned from Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well...

## VIII. **CONFRONT DIRECTLY**

### A. JESUS' EXAMPLE THEN...

- 1. Finally, Jesus confronted the woman with His identity - **Jn 4:26**
- 2. This came after He had laid the groundwork

### B. EXAMPLES FOR TODAY...

1. In trying to set up a home Bible study
  - a. Take advantage of social contacts
  - b. Develop common interests
  - c. Be open to comments that indicate a spiritual interest, while demonstrating your own faith through actions and words
  - d. Avoid fruitless arguments, emphasize instead common beliefs
  - e. Praise their good points and encourage them in the right direction
  - f. Have one primary objective: to encourage them to study the Bible even more
    - (1) Ask if they would like to learn more about Jesus, the Bible, His church
    - (2) Note the example of Aquila and Priscilla with Apollos - **Acts 18:24-26**
  - g. Confront them directly with the opportunity to study the Bible
2. During the course of a home Bible study
  - a. Continue to develop the social contact
  - b. Continue to establish common interests
  - c. Take time to accentuate common ground you share in your spiritual interests
  - d. Go from common ground to uncommon ground carefully
  - e. Stress the gospel message; don't obsess on their individual shortcomings
  - f. Have one primary objective: to help them understand their need and gospel plan of salvation - **Mk 16:15-16; Col. 1:5-6**
  - g. Confront them directly with the invitation to obey the gospel of Christ; for example, by asking...
    - (1) "Does this make sense?"
    - (2) "Is there anything I have said that you do not understand?"
    - (3) "Have I been teaching you anything other than what the Bible teaches?"
    - (4) "Would you like to obey Christ now and be baptized for the remission of your sins?"

## IX. **CONCLUSION**

- A. The result of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman was the conversion of many people in the city of Sychar - **Jn 4:39-42**
- B. This demonstrates the potential of personal evangelism...
  1. Who knows whether the one person you teach may in turn bring many to Christ?
  2. That one person may be like a seed from which more seeds may come forth
- C. Realizing this potential, we can better appreciate the words of Jesus:
  1. "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (**Jn 4:35**)
  2. Perhaps by following the example of our Lord, we can be more useful in His service...