



Explore God: Friendships that Make a Difference

November 12, 2023

What keeps us from sharing the good news about Jesus?

- a. Our _____ are all Christian.
 - Acts 2:44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.
- b. Our _____ has waned.
 - Revelation 2:4 ...You have forsaken your first love.
- c. Our _____ keeps us silent.
 - Galatians 2:11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

Philemon 4-6 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

1. Develop relationships with people who _____ know Jesus.

- Luke 5:27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 30 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

- 31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

2. Recall how much you’ve been _____.

- Luke 7:44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

3. The joy of _____ is greater than the fear of _____!

- Luke 7:48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”
49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”
50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”
- Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Relationships to pray about:

Friend: _____

Coworkers: _____

Family: _____

Neighbors: _____

Someone I’d like to get to know: _____

NEXT WEEK: Relationships that Matter...A life worth inquiring about!”

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Also, don’t miss the devotional emails this week to build on today’s message!

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MY PERSONAL NOTES

SERMON REFLECTIONS: Apply to My Life

The thought the Spirit is leading me to focus on is:

The change the Spirit is leading me to work on is:

The action the Spirit is prompting me to take is:

My prayers today are:

Someone I would like to bless with today's message:

REACHING PEOPLE FOR JESUS:

1. **Secure prayer support.** Get some prayer warriors to pray for you what the Apostle Paul wanted others to pray for him: that he would have opportunity to evangelize and that he would speak the gospel clearly and boldly (Col. 4:2-4, Eph. 6:18-20).
2. **Get to know the culture.** We're "aliens and strangers" in this world (1 Pet. 2:11), but we also must think as missionaries wherever we live; that is, we must be willing to understand and cross cultures to reach people. Know the news. Be aware of movies and music. Listen to vocabularies. Talk to young people. Under the protection of the Holy Spirit, you can be in the world without conforming to it.
3. **Choose to live among the unchurched.** You can't reach people you don't know. So, participate in the community, join civic organizations, invite unchurched people into your life, and hang out with people who don't know Jesus. This step might even mean strategically doing *less* in your church to have time to develop these relationships.
4. **Ask questions.** Be interested in people, especially people who live and think differently than you do. Ask about their family, their work, their religious background, their thoughts about Jesus. Listen closely. Respond respectfully. Genuinely and deeply desire to get to know them, not as evangelistic projects but as people created in the image of God.
5. **Watch for trials or transitions.** People are often more open to the gospel when their lives face change or difficulty. Offer a prayer in those times. Talk about how God has helped you through struggles. Without being a "buzzard circling for the kill," lovingly serve others who need a helping hand.
6. **Watch for open doors to speak about God's goodness and grace.** Tell others about how God has answered your prayer, given you peace during a troubled time, granted you joy that even you don't understand, or freed you from some bondage. Show people how the gospel has transformed you.
7. **Get to Jesus.** Eventually you must get to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection if you're doing evangelism. Don't be afraid to ask, "You know, my relationship with Jesus has changed my life. May I take a few minutes to tell you about that?" If you've gained credibility and relationship with a person, you might find somebody ready to listen.
8. **Invite them to church, and be there with them if possible.** Don't leave them alone to navigate a world they don't know. Walk with them. Explain what's happening. Help remove obstacles other than the gospel.
9. **Do something.** We know that doing nothing won't reach anybody. Take at least one step toward the lost world.