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Developing Effective Evangelism

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 1**

by
Duane L. Anderson



Serve and Equip
sveq.org

Developing Effective Evangelism

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Growing Christian Leaders Series

The “Growing Christian Leaders Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Christian Leaders Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Two Important Questions

When Christ stopped Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul asked two of the most important questions that any of us can ask if we want to be effective in ministry. Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?” and “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:5-6) Although Saul asked those questions the day that the Lord stopped him on that road, those same two questions are ones that will change and transform our ministries if we ask ourselves them each day.

When we ask the question, “Who are you, Lord?” we are inviting Christ to help us grow in our understanding of who Christ really is. In 1 John 1:1, John talks about the four ways that the disciples got to know Christ:

- They heard Christ
- They saw Christ
- They really looked upon or studied Christ
- They handled Christ with their hands

Those are the same four ways we get to know Christ. The one difference is the fact that we do not have Christ physically present so that we see the physical body. However, He is with us just as much as He was with the disciples. (Matthew 28:20) Two ways we demonstrate that presence with us is by the way we pray and the way we obey the Word of God. (When we pray, are we talking to someone who is with us or are we talking to someone on a million mile phone line with a bad connection? When we meditate on the Word of God, are we asking Christ what and how He wants us to obey today?)

Do we really hear Christ when He speaks to us as an individual and says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”? (John 13:34) Do we take this as a commandment, as just a suggestion or view it as an impossible ideal? If we believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, then we must take it as a commandment. However, that requires that we see how Christ showed His love for us so that we can show our love to one another in the same ways. Philippians 2:1-8 tells us some of the things that Christ did to show His love for us that we must practice in our relationships with one another if we are going to obey our command to love one another as Christ loved us:

1. In verse 6, Christ humbled Himself and became a man. Are we humbling ourselves so that we view our fellow workers as more important than ourselves? verses 3-4 (How often did we want our own way yesterday?)

2. In verse 7, Christ humbled Himself by becoming a servant. Are we humbling ourselves so that we are asking Christ to show us how He wants us to serve the people that cross our path today? verse 2 and Galatians 5:13 (How much were we in one accord with others yesterday?)

3. In verse 8, Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death. Are we humbling ourselves by dying to self so that the people who cross our path each day see Christ in us? Galatians 2:20 and Romans 6:1-16 (How many times did we act in our own strength yesterday and how many times did we act in the power of the Holy Spirit so that the love of Christ flowed through us?)

We cannot change yesterday. However, we will be cleansed as we confess (1 John 1:9) to the Lord those times we failed to humble ourselves. Then, today, may we each ask ourselves the two questions that we mentioned earlier:

1. Who are You, Lord?
2. Lord, what do you want me to do?

Understanding Barriers to Evangelism

In Acts 1:8 we are told, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” In this verse we see four areas where we are told to be witnesses. However, they also give us four common barriers to evangelism. In future topics I will be giving Biblical principles for crossing these barriers. For right now we would just like to identify those barriers. When we share the Gospel we face these four barriers:

Jerusalem (sharing the Gospel with people we know from our own culture) - the barrier of fear
 Judea (sharing the Gospel with people we do not know from our own culture) - the barrier of making contacts
 Samaria - the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group
 uttermost - the barrier of language

Many people say that they do not share the Gospel because they do not have the gift of evangelism. However, Scripture never mentions the gift of evangelism but rather commands us to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). What Scripture does mention is the fact that Christ gave the church evangelists in Ephesians 4:11-12, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” In these verses, we see that Christ gave evangelists “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry”. Evangelists are to equip the saints for evangelism so that all Christians are prepared to carry out the command of Christ to preach the Gospel.

Christ also demonstrated how evangelists are to carry out their ministry of equipping the saints to preach the Gospel. In Matthew 4:19 Christ said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Christ taught the disciples how to share the Gospel by taking them with Him as He shared the Gospel. In the same way, evangelists are to equip the saints to share the Gospel by taking people with them as they share the Gospel. Paul said in Acts 20:20-21, “how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” In these verses, we see how Paul taught the leaders in the church at Ephesus to do evangelism:

- Paul kept back nothing that was helpful
- Paul proclaimed or showed the leaders how to share the Gospel
- Paul did this publicly
- Paul did this from house to house
- Paul shared the Gospel with both Jews and Greeks
- Paul showed them how to teach repentance toward God
- Paul showed them how to teach faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

The reason many Christians do not know how to share the Gospel is due to the fact that they have never gone along with an evangelist as he shared the Gospel publicly and from house to house to be shown how to become fishers of men. If we do not know how to share the Gospel clearly, we need to begin going along on a regular basis with someone who can show us how to share the Gospel. If we are regularly sharing the Gospel with others, then we need to start taking other Christians with us to show them how to begin sharing the Gospel. All Christians are commanded to share the Gospel. The question we need to ask ourselves is, “Am I an obedient Christian who is either a trainee learning how to share the Gospel or a trainer teaching others how to share the Gospel?” The question is obedience.

Learning to Cross the Barrier of Fear in Evangelism

In our last topic, we talked about four barriers that we cross as we share the Gospel. Those were: the barrier of fear, the barrier of making contacts, the barrier of understanding another culture, religion or ethnic group, and the barrier of language. Today, we will focus on crossing the barrier of fear.

To understand the barrier of fear, we have to go back to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:7-13, we see that original sin made some dramatic changes in Adam and in every person since Adam. When Adam sinned, it changed his relationship with God, with himself and with others. The results of those changes were:

- Relationship with God: separation (Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God)
- Relationship with self: fear, guilt and shame (I was afraid and I hid myself because I was naked)
- Relationship with others: blame (The woman that you gave to be with me)

From the time of Adam, these five things, (separation, fear, guilt, shame, blame), have been what have motivated every person on this earth from the most powerful leader in the world to the least important person. That should help us to understand why some of our leaders do what they do. However, once we become Christians, we have the opportunity to begin to learn to reverse the effects of original sin. Instead of separation from God, salvation brought us back into relationship with God. As we learn to yield to God, we learn to experience fellowship with God (and others). At each moment that we are in fellowship with God, fear is replaced by love (1 John 4:18), guilt is replaced by forgiveness, cleansing and forgiving others (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32), shame is replaced by understanding we are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and blame is replaced by accepting personal responsibility for our choices (James 1:13-15).

This means that there are two basic factors involved in learning to witness without fear. First, we need to be shown how to share the Gospel clearly. (If you do not know how to share the Gospel clearly, find someone who does and go along with that person until you learn how to share the Gospel clearly. - Acts 20:20-21) Second, each time before we try to share the Gospel, we need to yield ourselves to God so that we witness in the power of the Holy Spirit (instead of our own strength - Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8, 4:23-31) and allow the love of Christ to motivate us (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) and flow through our lives.

We see that the disciples, by their first recorded witness about Christ, showed the four groups with which it is the easiest to learn to share the Gospel. Andrew first introduced Christ to a relative (John 1:40-42), Philip to a friend (John 1:43-46), Matthew to co-workers (Luke 5:27-29) and Peter to neighbors and other acquaintances (Mark 1:29-33).

A very helpful idea that I use in helping new Christians (see diagram on final two pages of this manual) learn to share Christ is to suggest that they make four lists: relatives, friends, co-workers and other acquaintances and then to the right of the names have two columns: the first titled when I started praying and the second, when God answered this prayer. (New Christians always get excited when they are able to record the first answer to this prayer.) Then, I encourage them to pray for the salvation of each person on their lists every day. I also offer to go with them to share the Gospel with each person on their list. That way they introduce me to others and I show them how to share the Gospel. In addition, this often speeds up the process of getting into new homes to share the Gospel by about two or three years because the new Christian comes as a relative or friend while I would come as a stranger. May the Lord richly bless you this week as you witness in the power of the Spirit and as you begin to show others how to share the Gospel without fear.

Learning to Make Contacts for Evangelism

In our last topic, we talked about learning to cross the barrier of fear in evangelism. We saw that there are two basic factors in learning to witness without fear. First, we need to be shown how to share the Gospel clearly by someone else sharing the Gospel while we observe enough times until we can explain the Gospel clearly and lead a person to Christ. Second, each time before we try to share the Gospel, we need to yield ourselves to God through prayer so that we witness in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of our own strength.

Today, we would like to focus on the second barrier: the barrier of learning to make contacts for evangelism. We saw from observing what the twelve did that they learned to share the Gospel first with relatives, friends, co-workers and other acquaintances. However, once they had learned to share the Gospel with these four groups, then they had to learn how to make contacts in order to share the Gospel.

The disciples had known Christ and had traveled with Him and observed Him for about 21 months before Christ sent them out two by two to share the Gospel. As we compare the accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke we learn several very important lessons about how to make contacts for the purpose of evangelism. Since this was the first time that Christ sent them out without going along with them, He gave them very specific instructions. He told them:

- Do not go into the way of the Gentiles - Matthew 10:5 (here we see that Christ knew that they would learn to make contacts best if they did not have to cross the language barrier at this point)
- Do not enter into any city of the Samaritans - Matthew 10:5 (here we see that Christ knew that they would learn to make contacts best if they did not have to cross the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group at this point)
- Go, rather, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel - Matthew 10:6 (Christ knew it would be easiest for them to learn to make contacts within their own culture first)
- Christ sent them forth two by two - Mark 6:7 (Christ knew it would be easiest to learn to make contacts with strangers if they did not have to do it alone)
- Christ told them to find out who was worthy (respected) when they first entered a city - Matthew 10:11 (Christ knew that they would find it easier to make contacts in that city if they began with those who were respected because those who are respected would have a network of contacts)
- Christ told them to greet the people when they entered a house - Matthew 10:12 (Christ knew the importance of building relationships before starting to share the Gospel)
- Christ said that if a house was worthy, to let peace come upon it - Matthew 10:13 (Christ knew that most people will let someone pray for them and told them to pray that they would know the peace of God)
- Christ also told them to be prepared for some to reject them - Matthew 10:14 (Christ knew that they would need to expect some rejection so they would not take it personally when that happened)

Before we go out to make contacts, we need to personalize the prayer in Ephesians 6:19, Pray... “for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.” We need to pray that God will give us His strength to speak boldly.

In order to make effective contacts for evangelism, we need to go to people and make contact with them where they live, work and spend their free time. The book of Acts illustrates many of the most common places where we will make contacts with people: in their own homes or the homes of friends - Acts 10:24, 27, in their religious meeting places - Acts 14:1, 16:13, in the jails - Acts 16:24-27, in the marketplace - Acts 17:17, in their public meeting places - Acts 17:19-34, where they worked - Acts 19:1-3, in schools - Acts 19:9, publicly and from house to house - Acts 20:20. May the Lord richly

bless you as you make new contacts for evangelism.

Sharing the Gospel with Another Culture, Religion or Ethnic Group

In our last two topics, we have talked about crossing the barrier of fear and the barrier of learning to make contacts for evangelism. We saw that we learn to cross the barrier of fear by going with another person until we learn to share the Gospel clearly and secondly, by yielding ourselves to God in prayer each time before we share the Gospel so that we will witness in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of in our own strength. We then learned eight principles about learning to make contacts with strangers for the purpose of sharing the gospel from the instructions that Christ gave the twelve before He sent them out.

Today, we would like to focus on the third barrier: Learning to share the Gospel with people of another culture, religion or ethnic group. The book of Acts gives us important principles for learning to cross this barrier. In Acts 8 we learn several principles for cross cultural evangelism. In Acts 8:4 we read, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” Since verse one tells us that the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, we see that those who are preaching the Word in other places at this point were not the apostles. That helps us because we know that the apostles had been shown how to witness in Samaria by Christ (John 4) so they already had some experience and background. As a result, we will see in Acts 8 and 11 that the Christians who are preaching the Word are not those who had the experience of being with Christ. Instead, they are Christians like you and me.

In Acts 8:26 and following, we learn some principles from Philip about how to make contacts and share the Gospel across cultures:

- Philip was obedient to the Lord - Acts 8:26-27 (he went where the Lord led him)
- Philip was looking for possible contacts - Acts 8:27-28 (he saw a man traveling through the desert)
- Philip asked the Holy Spirit to lead him - Acts 8:29 (he was sensitive to the leading of the Spirit)
- Philip obeyed the Holy Spirit immediately - Acts 8:30a (he ran to the man)
- Philip began by asking a question - Acts 8:30b (he saw a searching man and knew he needed understanding)
- Philip made himself available to help - Acts 8:31 (Philip was ready to sit with him and help him to understand - we may have to sit with some people and explain many times before they will fully understand)
- Philip saw that the Holy Spirit had already prepared the man - Acts 8:32-34 (when we ask the Holy Spirit to lead us, He will lead us to people who are seeking to know more about God)
- Philip explained what the man could not understand - Acts 8:35 (people who are searching for God are missing the key, the fact that they must come to God through Christ and His payment on the cross for their sin)
- Philip made certain that he understood the Gospel clearly before baptizing him - Acts 8:36-38 (we can make certain that a person understands the Gospel clearly, whether he is ready to accept Christ at that moment or not, so that he will know how to repent and place his trust in Christ if the Holy Spirit convicts him)

In Acts 8:5 and following we learn some principles about how Philip shared the Gospel with the Samaritans:

- Philip went to their city rather than expecting them to come to him - Acts 8:5 (people of other cultures will be reached most effectively if we go to them in their homes, places of work or where they feel comfortable)
- Philip preached Christ to them - Acts 8:5 (sometimes we wait far too long to begin sharing Christ)
- Philip recognized their fear of evil spirits - Acts 8:6-8 (those cultures where demon possession is common have a great fear of evil spirits and many long to be set free from the power of those evil spirits)

In Acts 11:19 and following, we meet some of the other Christians who were scattered at the persecution mentioned in Acts 8:1-4 and we see how they made contacts cross culturally:

1. Those who were scattered shared with only the Jews at first - Acts 11:19 (they had not yet learned how to cross the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group)
2. Those who were scattered abroad were not all Jews from Jerusalem - Acts 11:20 (some of them were Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene who had grown up in another culture - These are Key People because they have learned to function in more than one culture already. In every city we will find people who have lived among two or more cultures and have at least some understanding of how to bridge the gap to people of other cultures, religions and ethnic groups. This is true both among those who become Christians and also among those we are trying to reach.)
3. Those who had a background of multiple cultures led the way in cross cultural evangelism - Acts 11:20 (those who had lived in cities where the Greek culture was strong knew how to relate to those from Greek backgrounds - many who have been in the military or some similar background have developed a similar understanding of multiple cultures)
4. Those who crossed the cultural and religious barrier shared the Lord Jesus - Acts 11:20 (people of every culture have at least some desire to know how to relate to God)
5. They depended on the Lord to work in the hearts of people - Acts 11:21 (as we yield to the Holy Spirit, we give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to work in the lives of those with whom we share)
6. The existing church shared in following up those who were new Christians - Acts 8:14, 11:22 (many times those who are comparatively new Christians are limited in how much they are able to help brand new Christians and need the help of others who will cross the bridges they have created to help follow-up the new Christians.
7. Barnabas saw the opportunity to help another Christian expand his ministry to other cultures - Acts 9:26-30, 11:25-26 (we should continually be looking for Christians who find it easy to cross cultures and invite them to work with us among other cultures)

As you meditate on these principles and seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, He will give you the wisdom to learn to develop an expanded ministry of sharing the Gospel across cultural, religious and ethnic barriers. May the Lord richly bless you as you follow His leading to expand your witness for Him to those of other cultures, religions and ethnic groups.

Crossing the Language Barrier in Evangelism

In our last three topics, we have talked about crossing the barrier of our own fear, crossing the barrier of making contacts and crossing the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group. Today, we would like to focus on crossing the barrier of language. In order to take the Gospel to every creature, it will of necessity mean learning to cross the barrier of language by at least some Christians.

Paul and the team with him faced the barrier of language a number of times in their ministry. In Acts 14:11 we read, “Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language*, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” This language barrier caused the Lycaonians to make certain assumptions. They thought:

- Paul and Barnabas were gods
- Paul was the god, Mercury and Barnabas was the god, Jupiter
- They should offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas

Paul immediately focused on several things:

- ◆ We are men of like passions with you
- ◆ We are here to help you turn from these vanities
- ◆ We are here to introduce to you the living God
- ◆ We want to tell you that the living God is the Creator of heaven, the earth, the sea and everything in them
- ◆ The living God allowed people to walk in their own ways in the past
- ◆ The living God left Himself the witness of doing good, giving rain, giving fruitful seasons and filling our hearts with food and gladness

Paul gives us three key principles for crossing the language barrier:

1. Use the common trade language - In crossing the language barrier, Paul was using the common trade language, Greek. In most cultures today, at least some of the people are familiar with the common trade language (major language of an area - English in U.S., Spanish in Mexico) and can translate to those of other languages.

2. Build a team that is multilingual - As you list the names of people who traveled with Paul at various times you will find that there were at least 39 people from 16 Roman provinces who would have spoken at least 13 different languages who traveled with Paul at various times. A verse that illustrates this principle is Acts 20:4 where we read, “And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.” This verse shows us that a key principle for crossing the language barrier is to build a team that is multicultural and multilingual. The team in this verse was composed of men from the Roman province of Macedonia, the province of Asia, the province of Galatia as well as Paul from the province of Cilicia.

3. Make initial contacts in the places where you can find people who can help you cross the language barrier. Paul usually began in the synagogue which enabled him to find Jews who knew the language of the area . Acts 13:5, 14-15, 14:1, 17:1, 10, 16-17, 18:4, 19, 19:8

Additional ways to cross the language barrier:

4. In cities like L.A. where the school district must use over 100 languages to communicate with the parents, the children are learning English and can translate to the parents.

5. Bibles or books of the Bible are available in many languages - use those Bibles to have people teach you how to quote verses in their language (if they see you are making an effort to learn something in their language, it will build a bridge and prepare the way for evangelism).
6. Most important of all, depend on the Holy Spirit to help you communicate the Gospel across language barriers (since God created the language barriers - Genesis 11:7-9, He can also show us how to cross them). May the Lord richly bless you as you seek to cross language barriers to share the Gospel.

Four C's for Evangelism

As we study the New Testament, we see that Christ and the disciples used a variety of ways to share the Gospel. However, we also see that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they carefully discerned what type of audience they had so that they would approach each person or group in the most appropriate way. In this topic and the next three, we will be sharing about four different approaches that were used to share the Gospel. These are: confrontation, clarification, compassion and creation. Today, we will be discussing when to use confrontation.

Some of the people that we meet are like the Pharisee Christ described in Luke 18:10-14 where we read, “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” As we can see, this Pharisee thought that he was a very good man. In fact, we could say that he had “I” trouble and not the kind that requires glasses.

Today, because of the strong emphasis by the world on self esteem, there are many people who are just like this Pharisee. They are doing exactly what 2 Corinthians 10:12 warns against, “For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” Such individuals feel that they are a “good person” because they do like the Pharisee and compare themselves with those that they feel are “bad persons”. Of course if you take your good points and compare them with all the bad points of someone else, you will win the comparison in your own mind.

Christ and the disciples always used confrontation when they were talking to someone who thought that he was a “good person”. A few illustrations: Nicodemus - John 3:1-21; the rich young ruler - Mark 10:17-22; the Pharisees in many passages such as Luke 15:1-2, 25-32 or John 8:1-9; the Sadducees - Luke 20:27-38; and the scribes - Luke 20:39-47. Peter used confrontation when he spoke to the Jewish religious leaders in both Acts 4 and Acts 5. Stephen certainly used confrontation when he was facing the Jewish religious leaders in Acts 6:9-7:54.

Today, most of the approaches to evangelism are based on confrontation. These are very helpful when we are talking to people who need confrontation. From the passages above and from others, we see that we should use confrontation when:

- People think that they are “good” and better than others - Luke 18:10-14
- People are depending on their own religious efforts - John 3:1-21
- People are depending on their own good works - Mark 10:17-22
- People are depending on their religious traditions - Mark 7:1-13, 7:14-23
- People know the Word of God but reject it - Acts 13:44-46, 18:4-6

When we use confrontation:

- We need to confront people with the fact that they are sinful and that their sin has separated them from a holy God - Acts 2:22-36, 5:29-30, 7:1-50, 13:15-37, 44-47, 22:1-21, 26:1-27
- We need to allow the Holy Spirit to do the conviction - Acts 2:37, 5:32, 7:54, 13:44, 22:22-23, 26:28
- We need to call for repentance - Acts 2:38, 5:31, 7:51-53, 13:38, 20:20-21, 26:29
- We need to tell what is required to receive forgiveness of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38b-39, 13:39, 20:21

- We need to clarify any other questions - Acts 2:40, 13:42-43
- We need to give an opportunity to respond - Acts 2:41, 13:40-41
- We need to begin immediate follow-up with those who make decisions - Acts 2:42, 13:48-49

One of the things that you probably noticed, as you looked up the passages that are mentioned, is that confrontation was usually used with people who knew the Old Testament fairly well and in their own thinking had come to the conclusion that they would be right with God because they were trying to follow the Old Testament. Today, we have many people who go to church and are somewhat familiar with the Old Testament who are trying to earn their way to heaven by going to church or trying to keep the law. They may even try to follow the law so completely that they confess their sins to a priest, a rabbi or some other religious leader (instead of Christ). These people, who think that what they are doing in their own strength to make themselves acceptable to God, need to be confronted with their sin and separation from God followed by a call for true repentance. May the Lord give you wisdom to recognize those who need to be approached with confrontation. May the Lord also use you to lovingly confront and present the need for repentance to those who are depending on their own efforts to be accepted by God.

Sharing the Gospel through Clarification

In our last topic, we shared the fact that Christ and the disciples used a variety of approaches to share the Gospel. The last topic focused on sharing the Gospel through confrontation. We saw that confrontation is the key way to approach those who think that they are good and will earn their way to heaven through their own efforts. Today, we will be focusing on how to share the Gospel through clarification.

Clarification is the approach that we see used in Acts 17:11-12 where we read, “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.” In these verses, we see several key principles about sharing the Gospel through clarification.

First, we see that the Bereans were more fair-minded or noble than the Thessalonians. Here, we see that the people of Berea because of their background were willing to consider things carefully before coming to any conclusions. This caused them to want to find out if the things that they were hearing were true. We might say that they had a “learner’s attitude”. As we talk with people, we need to observe carefully if people are open to search and learn new things. They will not make immediate decisions because they want to know that what they are learning is true and accurate. This was the attitude demonstrated by Andrew and John in John 1:37-39. They wanted to spend time with Christ so that they could learn more about what He was teaching.

Second, we see that the Bereans received the Word with all readiness. The word receive means to accept or embrace the thing that is being spoken or taught. Paul and Silas were teaching the Word of God which was accepted by the people that they were teaching in Berea. In fact, the word readiness means with eagerness or readiness of mind. In other words, they were eager to learn more from the Word of God about the things that Paul and Silas were teaching. Paul and Silas were able to do the same thing that Christ did with the two men on the road to Emmaus where we read in Luke 24:27, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Christ on the road to Emmaus and Paul and Silas at Berea were able to go through the Scriptures and explain what the Scriptures taught about Christ.

Third, we see that the Bereans searched the Scriptures. The word translated “search” means “*to examine by questions and investigation to determine the truth*”. Here, we see that the Bereans were examining the Scriptures to determine if the things that Paul and Silas were teaching were true and accurate. They wanted to know that this is what God actually taught and make certain it was not just the ideas of Paul and Silas. They did not want to be deceived but wanted to know that what they accepted was true.

Fourth, we see that the Bereans searched the Scriptures daily. Here, we see that this process of careful examination took a period of time. They did not make instant decisions. However, what we do see is that they continued their investigation day after day. From this we see that Paul and Silas did not rush for immediate decisions because they wanted the response to be the result of the conviction of the Holy Spirit and not the result of human pressure. Paul and Silas were willing to study with the Bereans as long as was necessary in order to see them believe. They wanted to make certain that any questions that the Bereans had were answered from the Word of God.

Fifth, we see that the Bereans wanted to find out whether these things were so. The word translated “so” means “*to hold fast to or to keep*”. As a result, the Bereans wanted to know if the teaching that

they were hearing was something that they should obey in their lives. Here, we see that they wanted to know both whether the teaching was true and also whether it was something that should be obeyed. This is a key in making disciples. We want people to know that what they learn is from the Word of God so that it can be trusted. We also want them to know how to obey what they are learning so that they will become obedient Christians when they become Christians.

Sixth, we see that many of the Bereans believed. Of all the approaches used in the New Testament, this was the approach that proved most effective in reaching people for Christ. It also was the approach that proved most effective in helping them have a foundation for then growing to spiritual maturity. We see that this was what Christ did in Matthew 4:23 when, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Jesus spent much time teaching and preaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee. He knew that if the people would study the Word of God, they would have a true foundation for belief.

Seventh, we see that this is an approach which reached both Jews and Greeks. One of the key things that we need in any evangelistic approach is an approach that is effective in a variety of cultures. This approach reached many Jews and it reached many Greeks. I have had the opportunity to use the evangelistic Bible study with many different tribes and cultures. It has worked effectively with every culture with which I have worked through the years.

Eighth, we see that this is an approach which reaches both women and men. In many cultures today, the churches are composed mostly of women and children. However, we see that this is an approach which will reach many men as well. Men, especially like to get their questions answered and the evangelistic Bible study provides an ideal opportunity for men to ask questions and be led to search the Word of God for answers. As men get their questions answered, the Holy Spirit convicts them (John 16:8-11) and the Father draws them to Christ (John 6:44) because the Word of God brings them to faith (Romans 10:17).

From these verses we see that an evangelistic Bible study is a key approach used in the New Testament. I usually begin an evangelistic Bible study with the first twelve chapters of Genesis which usually takes about six to eight Bible studies. Genesis 12:1-3 says that one would come from Abram who would bring blessing to all nations. I use that as a point to move to the New Testament to introduce the One who would bring that blessing. Also during the time we are studying the early chapters of Genesis, I try to determine if those in the Bible study have a fear of evil spirit orientation, communicate through stories and parables or if they have somewhat of a Bible background but have never come to a point of belief. What I have learned about the background of the people in the evangelistic Bible study will determine which Gospel I use:

Mark - for those who have a fear of evil spirits

Luke - for those who learn through stories and parables

John - for those who have a Bible background but have never come to repentance and faith

Matthew - this is an especially helpful book for those of Jewish background

Evangelistic Bible studies are very effective whether they are with one individual, a couple or a small group of people. As a result, this is an approach that anyone can use even if they do not know how to get in front of a group. When Christ called Peter and Andrew to follow Him and said He would make them to become fishers of men (Matt. 4:18-19), he gave Peter a big net (Acts 2:14-41) and he gave Andrew a hook and a line so that he could catch one person at a time (John 1:41, 6:8-9, 12:20-22). The question is not whether we have been given a big net or a hook and line, the question is whether we are obedient to our Great Commission to Make Disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). Any of us can learn to teach an evangelistic Bible study with at least one person if we choose to yield to the Holy Spirit. As the servant of Abraham said in Genesis 24:27 when seeking a bride for Isaac, “I being in the way, the Lord led me.” May the Lord richly bless you as you follow His leading and seek to use clarification to lead people to Christ and help them grow.

Sharing the Gospel through Compassion

In our last two topics, we have pointed out that Christ and the disciples shared the Gospel through confrontation with certain groups of people and used clarification with other groups of people. Today, we will be looking at another very common approach that Christ and the disciples used with different individuals and groups. Many times in the New Testament, we see that an approach based on compassion was used in sharing the Gospel.

Christ used confrontation when talking to the religious leaders and those who thought they were “good”. We saw in the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:10-14 that the Pharisee thanked God that he was not one of the “bad” people like the, “extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.” Meanwhile, “the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat on his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner’.” The Jewish religious leaders focused on how “good” they were and how “bad” the rest of the people were.

Many times the tax collectors and sinners felt that they were so “bad” that God would never forgive them until Christ arrived on the scene. As we study the ministry of Christ, He showed great compassion to those who felt that they were “bad”. A few illustrations of this are Matthew 9:9-11, “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’” In Mark 12:37 we see that the common people heard Christ gladly. In Luke 15:1 we read, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.” When Christ talked with the Samaritan woman in John 4 or the woman caught in the act of adultery in John 8 we see that Christ also used compassion as he talked with these women.

First we have to see those needing compassion. In Matthew 9:36 we read, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” In this verse Christ was moved with compassion. There were several things that He observed that caused Him to be moved with compassion. It is only as our lives are yielded to Christ that we will really notice the people that need compassion as Christ noticed them. We will be moved with compassion when:

1. We see the multitudes - the multitudes were the crowds of common people and were often viewed with contempt by the rulers and leading men. To see means to pay attention to and notice so that it causes us to see what needs to be done so that we can take action. (I read recently that in the United States only 5% of those living in multi-unit housing attend any church - multi-unit housing includes: apartment buildings, mobile home parks, government housing projects, senior housing and other types of multiple dwelling units)
2. We see the faint - the faint speaks of the tired, the weary, the fainthearted, the despondent and the weak
3. We see those who are scattered abroad - the scattered abroad speaks of those who are thrown down or rejected by society
4. We see those who are like sheep having no shepherd - the unloved and ignored (Matthew 25:35-40 talks about the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, those in prison)

Second, we choose to accept those needing compassion. Luke 15:20 and 22-24 say, “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him... But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. ‘And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; ‘for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.” Once the father saw the son and had compassion, the father did several things to show the son that he was accepted and forgiven. The father:

- ◆ Ran and fell on his neck and kissed him - Christ accepts people just as they are even when they smell like a pig pen - Ephesians 1:6. We follow Christ’s example by accepting people just as they are.
- ◆ Put the best robe on the son - Christ took our sin and gave us His righteousness - 2 Corinthians 5:21. We follow Christ’s example by forgiving past offences.
- ◆ Put a ring on his hand - Christ accepted us as family members - Romans 8:14-17 (the ring was a sign of belonging to the family). We accept others as Christ accepted us - Romans 15:7
- ◆ Put sandals on his feet - Christ helps us learn to have peace - Ephesians 6:15 (our feet are shod with the gospel of peace). We focus on a ministry of reconciliation - 2 Corinthians 5:18
- ◆ Killed the fatted calf - Christ makes us worthy and honors us - Matthew 9:9-10 (the fatted calf was the animal kept to provide a feast for special guests). We choose to eat with those others reject.
- ◆ Feasted and celebrated with the son - Luke 15:2, 7, 10 - We choose to celebrate with those who respond to compassion.
- ◆ Spoke of the new life of the son - 2 Corinthians 5:17 - We help the person realize he has been recreated in the image of Christ and that everything that Christ does is very good - Genesis 1:26-31

When I am working with a person who feels that he is a “bad” person, I often ask the person if he is a “bad” person or a “sinner”. The normal response is that the person asks, “What is the difference?” I explain that the word bad means something that is “worthless, unacceptable or defective”. As a result, a person who feels that he is “bad” usually feels that he is worthless, unacceptable and defective. In contrast, a person who is a “sinner” will have his sins forgiven by Christ if he comes to Christ with an attitude of repentance - Luke 18:13-14; Acts 2:38, 26:18. Then, I will often share about the prodigal son - Luke 15, Zacchaeus - Luke 19, the Samaritan woman - John 4, the woman caught in the act of adultery - John 8, or the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Once the person becomes a Christian, I then ask him if he is a “bad person”, a “sinner” or a “saint who sins”. Remember that even though there are major problems in every chapter of the book of 1 Corinthians, the Corinthians are still called saints - 1 Corinthians 1:2. Over the following weeks and months, you will probably need to ask the person many times whether he is a “bad person”, a “sinner” or a “saint who sins” because there will be many people used by Satan who will try to make him feel like a “bad person” again.

Christ will use each one of us to transform the lives of people needing compassion if we will see those who need compassion and respond with compassion. May the Lord richly bless you as you recognize people needing compassion and love them to Christ by your acceptance and love.

Sharing the Gospel through Creation

In our last three topics, we have shared the fact that Christ and the disciples used various approaches when sharing the Gospel. We have seen that Christ and the disciples used:

- Confrontation - when sharing the Gospel with those who thought that they were “good” like the religious leaders and the rich young ruler.
- Clarification - when sharing the Gospel with those who have some background of the Bible and are searching for answers in their lives.
- Compassion - when sharing the Gospel with those who feel that they are so “bad” that God would never accept them because people do not accept them.

Today, we are going to see how the Gospel was shared through “Creation” by the disciples. Creation was used when they were sharing the Gospel with those who had little or no background about the Bible. Paul usually began with creation when he was sharing with the Gentiles who had little or no background of the Old Testament. Illustrations of this can be seen when Paul shared the Gospel with the people of Lystra (Acts 14:14-17) and the people of Athens (Acts 17:16-34).

In Acts 17:16-23, we see that Paul did several things in preparation for sharing the Gospel through creation:

- ◆ Paul observed what the people of Athens worshiped (verse 16) - they were wholly given to idolatry
- ◆ Paul talked with people daily in the marketplace (verse 17) - he built relationships with people where they lived, worked and spent their free time
- ◆ Paul spent time talking and listening to their philosophers (verse 18) - he wanted to understand what they thought and believed
- ◆ Paul spent time listening to their way of thinking (verses 19-21) - he was observing so that he knew where he needed to begin. In their case that was with creation
- ◆ Paul observed and tried to understand their worship (verses 22-23) - he recognized that they were very religious but lacked a personal relationship with God
- ◆ Paul found something in their culture that he could use as a beginning point (verse 23) - the altar to the unknown god

Then, as we come to Acts 17:24-34, we see how Paul used creation as the beginning point to share the Gospel with the people of Athens. We see that Paul did the following things:

1. Paul began with creation (verse 24) - he talked about the God who made the world and everything in it.
2. Paul moved from the creation to the Creator (verse 24b-26) - he:
 - a. focused on the fact that God is Lord of heaven and earth
 - b. focused on the fact that God cannot be worshiped through idols
 - c. focused on the fact that God does not need anything
 - d. focused on the fact that God is the One who gives life and breath
 - e. focused on the fact that God made all men of one blood (created all men equal)
 - f. focused on the fact that God is the one who created all of the nations
 - g. focused on the fact that God determined their predetermined times (He controls the rise and fall of nations)
 - h. focused on the fact that God set the boundaries of their dwellings (He established the nations and their particular identities as nations).
3. Paul moved from the Creator to the need for man to seek the Creator (verse 27) - he pointed out that

man gropes for God (conscience) and seeks to find Him (looks for Him in creation) and that He can be known because He is not very far from each one of us (this answers the question that God is unknowable).

4. Paul used illustrations from their own poets (verse 28) - he took what they did understand to help them begin to understand the unknown about God.

5. Paul focused on the Godhead (verse 29) - he pointed out that we are the offspring (children) of God and that we should not think that the Divine Nature can be created from gold, silver or stone by the works of our own hands.

6. Paul then focused on the need to repent (verse 30) - God overlooked these times of ignorance but now commands all men everywhere to repent (the message of repentance toward God [turning to God from idols] is often neglected today but was central in the New Testament) - 1 Thessalonians 1:9, Matthew 3:2, 8, 11, 4:17, 9:13, 11:20-21, 12:41; Mark 1:15, 6:12; Luke 13:3-5, 15:7, 10, 16:30, 24:47; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 5:31, 8:22, 20:21, 26:20; Romans 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Peter 3:9 and many times in Revelation.

7. Paul focused on the fact that God would judge the world by the Man that He has appointed (verse 31a) and that Man is the One He raised from the dead (verse 31b) - he focused on the fact that the central message of the Gospel is the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-6).

8. Paul gave them time to think recognizing that the message of the resurrection always calls for people to make a choice and that choice usually takes time (verses 32-33) - he knew that there would be those who would listen and talk with him further about the resurrection.

9. Paul spent additional time with those who believed (verse 34) - he knew that those who believed now needed much additional teaching to help them begin their spiritual growth.

When I begin working with a person who has no background of the Bible, I always begin with the first chapters of Genesis to lay a foundation for understanding the Creator and His relationship to His creation and to us as His created beings. This makes it possible to share how sin changed our relationships with God, with ourselves and with others (Genesis 3:7-13):

- with God - separation
- with ourselves - fear, guilt and shame
- with others - blame

That foundation makes it possible to share the need for repentance toward God (Acts 20:21) and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21) as the answer to that separation from God. As we faithfully share this message, there will be some who will talk with us further about the death and resurrection of Christ and we will see the Lord working in their hearts as we continue to pray for them. The day will come when we see the Lord of the harvest draw those people to Christ. The New Testament gives us at least four approaches for sharing the good news of salvation, forgiveness of sins and eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you use:

- Confrontation - to share the Gospel with those who are religious and think that they are “good” enough to be accepted by God.
- Clarification - to share the Gospel with those who have some background of the Bible and are searching for answers in their lives.
- Compassion - to share the Gospel with those who feel that they are so “bad” that God would never forgive them.
- Creation - to share the Gospel with those who have little or no knowledge of the Bible and need to be led from creation to the need for repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Building Relationships for Evangelism Through Spiritual Gifts

In our last several topics, we have talked about crossing barriers to share the Gospel and four different approaches to sharing the Gospel. Today, we are going to begin a series of topics on how to use our spiritual gifts to effectively build relationships with non-Christians so that we can have the opportunity to share the gospel with them. We will look particularly at the seven spiritual gifts in Romans 12:6-8 since those verses tell us that every Christian has one or more of the spiritual gifts listed in those verses, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

In these verses, we see that seven different spiritual gifts are listed:

1. prophecy
2. ministry
3. teaching
4. exhortation
5. giving
6. leading
7. showing mercy

In 1 Peter 4:10-11 we see that spiritual gifts are used primarily to serve other Christians, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Although our gifts are used primarily to serve other Christians, we can also use them effectively in evangelism. In these verses, we also see that we use our spiritual gifts in two different ways:

- Some spiritual gifts are used particularly through serving
- Some spiritual gifts are used particularly through speaking

In building relationships to share the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians, some of us will build those relationships primarily by what we say, while others will build those relationships primarily by what we do. That is why evangelism is most effective when we are working together as a team. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” Since we have been given different gifts, we need to ask ourselves the question, “How do I build relationships with non-Christians most effectively? Do I build those relationships primarily by what I say or primarily by what I do?”

The way we build relationships both with Christians and with non-Christians is often related to our spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all...*” In these verses, we see that:

- The Holy Spirit gives us different gifts to serve one another effectively
- Christ gives us different ways to minister and serve one another effectively
- The Father gives us supernatural energy and power to serve effectively

Since the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father all work together to prepare us to build relationships with others, we will be ineffective if we just depend on ourselves instead of depending on all of the resources that the Trinity provides for us to minister effectively. That is why we need to continually pray about

every part of our ministry so that we do all that we do in the strength that the Trinity provides rather than our own strength.

This is especially true in the use of our spiritual gifts. If we depend on our own strength we will misuse our spiritual gifts rather than using them effectively. That is why Paul had to spend three chapters in 1 Corinthians talking about the proper use of spiritual gifts. The center chapter of those three spends an entire chapter talking about the importance of love in the use of our spiritual gifts. Without love we are nothing and we will accomplish nothing positive.

That is why Paul prayed daily for the Ephesians that they would be rooted and grounded in love - Ephesians 3:17-19. Then Paul explained how we walk in Christ in Colossians 2:6-7 where we see that, "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." These verses teach us that:

- We have received Christ
- We are to walk in Christ
- We are to be rooted in Christ
- We are to be built up in Christ
- We are to be established in the faith through Christ
- We are to abound with thanksgiving through Christ

This is a contagious attitude that will draw others to Christ regardless of what spiritual gifts we have.

If we do not take root in Christ and His love, the New Testament mentioned two other roots that may develop in our lives. Those two roots will drive people away from Christ, instead of drawing them to Him. The two negative roots mentioned in the New Testament are:

- ◆ A root of the love of money which can cause us to err from the faith and pierce ourselves with many sorrows - 1 Timothy 6:10
- ◆ A root of bitterness which will trouble us and will cause many others to be defiled - Hebrews 12:15

In our next seven topics, we will be looking at the seven spiritual gifts in Romans 12:6-8 and how the Lord wants to use your particular gifts to build relationships with non-Christians for the purpose of evangelism. May the Lord richly bless you as you continue to take deeper root in Christ and His love since that will determine how effectively you are able to use your spiritual gifts for evangelism and for ministry to other Christians.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Prophecy

In our last topic, we introduced the idea of “Building Relationships for Evangelism Through Spiritual Gifts.” In our next seven topics, we will be taking the gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8, list the gift, define the gift and then show how each gift can be used to build relationships with non-Christians for the purpose of evangelism. Since Romans 12:3-8 tells us that each Christian has one or more of the gifts listed in that passage, one or more of the seven gifts listed in that chapter will be a gift that you have and that the Lord wants to use to help you minister both to other Christians and to reach out to those who have not yet placed their trust in Christ. As we explain the gifts that you do not have, it will help you to understand why other Christians do not evangelize in the same way that you feel most comfortable.

Today, we will be talking about the gift of prophecy. Romans 12:6 says, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith;” The first thing to notice is that we have two words that have only one difference. One is spelled with a “c” and the other is spelled with an “s”. Although there is only one letter that is different in these two words, it is very important to understand that they are two different words and that it is important to understand their meanings.

The word “prophesy” when telling us how to use our spiritual gifts means to speak forth what has already been written down. That is why 1 Corinthians 14:31 tells us, “For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.” This verse is talking about the context of a public worship service and points out the fact that many can read different portions of Scripture during a public service of the church. Since the early church services were patterned after the services of the synagogues, you might find it interesting to know that in a synagogue service there would be seven to nine readings from the Old Testament. That meant that from seven to nine people had the opportunity to read the Scripture in each service.

The word “prophecy” is used in the New Testament of the utterance of the Old Testament prophets. As a result, we could give the following definition: “To quote the Word of God to edify, to exhort and to comfort, to announce the grace which is provided by salvation and to warn of judgment for ungodly deeds” - 1 Corinthians 14:3; 1 Peter 1:10; Jude 14-15. Since the prophets gave us the completed written Word of God, the gift of prophecy does not speak about giving new revelation since that is clearly forbidden in Revelation 22:18-19. Instead, the one with the gift of prophecy is to prophesy what has already been written down in the Word of God. The person with the gift of prophecy will often quote Scripture without explaining it as Peter did in his sermon in Acts 2.

Since the person with the gift of prophecy emphasizes the grace provided in salvation and warns of judgment for ungodly deeds, 1 Corinthians 13:2 gives a particular warning about this gift, “And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” In warning both the Christian and the non-Christian about ungodly deeds, it is very easy to sound condemning and harsh rather than communicating the love and concern that we have for a person. As a result, it is especially important that we ask the Lord to give us His strength and wisdom to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15) whenever we warn about ungodly deeds both when speaking to the Christian and to the non-Christian.

The person who has the gift of prophecy will be most effective in sharing the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians if he or she will show great love and compassion when building relationships with non-Christians. Some key principles for one with the gift of prophecy to assist them as they build relationships and show love to non-Christians include:

1. Seek them where they are - Luke 19:10. Christ illustrated this by finding Zacchaeus where he was (up in a tree) and going with him to his house for dinner. We show that we care for people by going to them where they are instead of expecting them to come to us.

2. Spend time with them - Luke 5:27-32. Christ illustrated this by going to Levi (Matthew) where he was, by going to his house with him and by spending time with Matthew and his friends in the home of Matthew where they felt comfortable. We need to spend time with people where they live, work and spend their free time.

3. Show compassion to them - Matthew 9:36-38. Christ illustrated this by having such a compassion that it caused Him to see that the people were faint and were scattered like sheep having no shepherd. Since sheep tend to scatter rather than stay together in a group, this means that Christ saw them as individuals having individual needs. The way we show compassion is to see people as individuals, not just groups, with individual needs and reach out to minister to the needs of those individuals in love.

4. Share with them about repentance - Luke 5:31-32. Christ called people to repent and turn from their sins. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 help us to understand what it means to repent. In those two verses, we see that repentance includes three key thoughts:

- a. turning to God from idols
- b. serving the living and true God
- c. waiting for His Son from heaven

5. Share with them about forgiveness - John 8:1-11; Acts 26:18. Christ told those who recognized Him as Lord that He did not condemn them. Instead, He would give them the strength to go and sin no more (live a changed life). As we share the message of forgiveness and model it in our own lives by forgiving others, we offer hope to those who have no hope.

6. Share the answer to fear - Jude 20-23; Hebrews 2:14-15. Ever since Adam and Eve, people have been controlled by fear. Jude tells us that we use compassion to save some and we use fear to bring others to Christ. We need to pray that the Lord will cause us to be sensitive to each person so that we know when to use compassion and when to use fear. Hebrews helps us to understand that the real fear that people have is the fear of death and Satan uses that fear to hold them in bondage. That is why it is so important to share the grace provided by salvation at the same time that we warn of judgment for sin.

Since those of you who have the gift of prophecy may sometimes be viewed as being judgmental, because you do focus on judgment for ungodly deeds, it is especially important that you continually pray that the Lord will give you a real heart of love so that you reflect the love of Christ even as you warn of the consequences of sin. May the Lord greatly use those of you who have the gift of prophecy as you help people to see the choices that they make (either good or bad) will produce consequences that are eternal. May the Lord also give you His strength to share those warnings in love.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Serving

In our last topic, we shared how those who have the first gift mentioned in Romans 12:6-8, the gift of prophecy, use that gift to build relationships for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. Today, we will be sharing how to use the second gift, the gift of serving, to build relationships for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. Those of you who have this particular gift will see some ways that God can use your gift in evangelism. Those of you who do not have this particular gift will recognize why other Christians do not build relationships for evangelism in the same way that you build them.

We might use the following definition for the gift of serving: “To serve the saints by helping, by serving, by sharing and by devoting our time to the ministry of the saints” - Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:15; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4. This gift will often involve manual projects and short term goals. The Christian who has the gift of serving will usually emphasize practical ways to help others. This will involve many different kinds of ministry but the purpose will be to serve others.

In this definition, we are reminded that all spiritual gifts are primarily given to us to minister to other Christians. However, we can also use our gifts to minister to those who are not yet Christians to build relationships with them for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with them. As Galatians 6:10 tells us, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Here, we see that we are not to limit our ministry just to the saints. Instead, God has given us the gifts and abilities that we have to do good to all. We will find that the gift of serving is very helpful in building relationships with non-Christians for the purpose of evangelism.

We will look at several ways that the person with the gift of serving will often build relationships with those who are not yet Christians. Some key principles for one with the gift of serving as they build relationships and show love to non-Christians include:

1. Helping others - 1 Corinthians 16:15. In this verse, we see that Stephanus and his entire household had devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints. They were continually looking for ways to help others. The person with the gift of serving will notice many ways to help both Christians and those who are not yet Christians. As we help those who are not yet Christians, we pray that the Lord will open a door for us to share the Gospel with them - 1 Peter 3:15. As we serve, we are to serve with the ability that God has given us - 1 Peter. 4:11.

2. Providing meals - Acts 6:1-6. In these verses, we see that certain of the disciples were chosen to distribute food to the needy widows. They knew who the needy widows were and they looked for ways to be of help to them. Part of that help involved bringing food to them. Sometimes the widows and the elderly need help doing their shopping or running other errands because of physical problems. People who have the gift of serving will often notice these needs and make themselves available to help meet such needs. This service will cause many non-Christians to become open to the Gospel.

3. Meeting needs - Acts 9:36-39. In these verses, we see that Dorcas was a Christian who was known for her good works for others and for sharing with the needy especially the widows and their children. She saw opportunities to make coats and other articles of clothing for the needy. A person with the gift of serving is quick to notice ways to help others. As a result, the person with the gift of serving will often be doing things for others when other people have not even noticed a need. Meeting needs can be a key way to build relationships with those who are not Christians for the purpose of evangelism.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Teaching

In our last two topics, we looked at ways to use the spiritual gifts of prophecy and serving to build relationships for the purpose of evangelism. Today, we will be looking at the gift of teaching and some effective ways to build relationships with non-Christians if we have this gift. Those of you who have this gift will see some ways that God can use your gift to share the Gospel effectively. Those of you who do not have this gift will have a better understanding of why people with this gift build relationships in a different way than you do.

We might use the following definition for the gift of teaching (doctrine): “To spend much time in study so that there will be purity of doctrine in all teaching. This teaching will include both teaching those who want to learn and refuting those who contradict” - 1 Timothy 4:16; Titus 2:7-8, 1:9. The person with the gift of teaching (doctrine) will tend to emphasize purity of doctrine and will emphasize the importance of much study in order to make certain that there is purity of doctrine. The concern of one who has this gift is for sound doctrine in all teaching and the application of that teaching so that it produces obedience and godly living. With this gift we must make certain that we do not substitute study for building relationships with people.

We will look at several ways the person with the gift of teaching will often build relationships and show love to non-Christians. A person who has the gift of teaching focuses on purity of doctrine in his ministry to other Christians. When we understand that this will be his concern in every situation, it will help us to see how and why the person who has the gift of teaching will do the things that he does to build relationships with those who are not yet Christians. The following are some of the common ways that the person with this gift will build relationships with non-Christians:

1. In 1 Timothy 4:12-16, we see that the person with the gift of teaching will often use his own example to build relationships and share the Gospel with others. In verse 12, we see six ways that all Christians are to be examples:

- in word
- in conduct
- in love
- in spirit
- in faith
- in purity

The person with the gift of teaching will find it easy to focus on the first - in word - because he enjoys discussing doctrine. However, he needs to keep in mind that he is to be an example in each of the other areas as well. Verses 13-15 focus on the fact that in addition to being an example, a person needs to read, encourage and teach doctrine, not neglect his spiritual gift and meditate on these things so that his progress may be clearly see by all including both Christians and non-Christians. Verse 16 points out two things that are especially important for the person who has the gift of doctrine. He is to pay attention to himself and to the doctrine by continuing in his personal growth and in his study of the doctrine. This is important both for his own development and so that he will be able to share the doctrine clearly and accurately both with Christians and with non-Christians.

2. In John 3:1-21, we see that Christ gives us an example of how the one with the gift of teaching will minister effectively to non-Christians. That includes taking time with a non-Christian to discuss his or her questions. Most people who are not Christians have a lot of questions about Christianity that they need to get answered before they will believe. Many of these questions are about various words that are in the Bible and their meanings. The one with the gift of teaching (doctrine) is often one of the most qualified to explain the meaning of doctrinal words because he enjoys spending much time studying the meaning of those words.

3. Spending time working together as Paul did with Aquila and Priscilla in Acts 18:1-3 is a way that those with the gift of teaching often find a very helpful way to share the Gospel with non-Christians because it provides plenty of time to discuss questions that a person has about Christianity. This provides an ideal way to build relationships while sharing the Gospel. The one thing that the person with the gift of teaching needs to be careful about is that he does not give so much detail about the meaning of a word that he loses the interest of the non-Christian. Remember that you will be able to explain the meaning of those words more fully after the person becomes a Christian.

4. Teaching the truth is a key concern of the person with the gift of teaching. As a result, Titus 2:7-8 gives some very helpful instruction. In teaching doctrine, these verses give us four key things that we are to show by example as we teach doctrine:

- * integrity
- * reverence
- * incorruptibility
- * sound speech that cannot be condemned

Those qualities of character are especially important when sharing the Gospel because the verse concludes by telling us that even an opponent will be ashamed and have nothing evil to say of us.

5. Explaining the truth is also a key part of our ministry if we have this gift. Acts 18:26 shows us that the Lord used Aquila and Priscilla to explain the truth more clearly to Apollos which was necessary for him to come to a clear understanding of salvation since he knew nothing of the death and resurrection of Christ. In Acts 19:8-10, Paul spent two years discussing and explaining the things concerning the kingdom of God. In Titus 1:9, we see that there is a need both to explain sound doctrine and to refute those who oppose. This also explains why the person with the gift of teaching enjoys spending much time in study so that he can explain various doctrines clearly and accurately.

6. In Acts 20:20-21, Paul explained to the leaders at Ephesus that there is a great need to show and teach publicly and from house to house. Paul said that the message that is to be shared publicly and from house to house is the message of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, we see that the one who has the gift of teaching will enjoy explaining the doctrines related to salvation to people both publicly and in their homes.

As we can see, the person with the gift of teaching is likely to build relationships with those who are not yet Christians primarily by answering questions about various doctrines that the person without Christ is trying to understand. If this gift is a spiritual gift that you have, may the Lord richly bless you as you build relationships with non-Christians by explaining to them the meaning of doctrinal words that they do not understand. For those of you who do not have this gift, you may find it very helpful to work as a part of an evangelistic team with someone who has this gift in situations where people ask you questions about doctrinal words that you have a hard time explaining. In the process of hearing them explained, you will become equipped to explain them to others also.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Exhortation

In our last three topics, we have looked at ways to use the spiritual gifts of prophecy, serving, and teaching to build relationships for the purpose of evangelism. Today, we will be looking at the gift of exhorting and some effective ways to build relationships with non-Christians if we have this gift. Those of you who have this gift will see some ways that God can use your gift to share the Gospel effectively. Those of you who do not have this gift will have a better understanding of why people with this gift build relationships in a different way than you do.

We might use the following definition for the gift of exhorting: “To encourage the saints to love, to good works and to godly living by giving specific steps so that the Word of God will not be blasphemed” - 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:15, 2:4-5. In relation to other Christians, the Christian who has the gift of exhorting will tend to emphasize growth toward spiritual maturity so that the Word of God will not be blasphemed. He will urge others to pursue a course of conduct which is always perspective, looking toward the future. The person with this gift will often encourage individuals to take small specific steps which will help them work toward spiritual development and spiritual goals.

Since the primary meanings of the word exhort or exhortation include “to help, to encourage, to comfort and to strengthen”, this is a gift that can also be used very effectively in building relationships for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. We are living in a world where there is such an emphasis on bad news and evil that almost everyone is open to encouragement. The following are some of the ways that the person with this gift will build relationships with non-Christians:

1. In 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, Paul “encourages” the Thessalonians to show more and more brotherly love to one another. In the New Testament this word is used to speak of the love that we are to show to one another as Christians. However, we are not limited to showing this love to just Christians. Instead, we are given strength by Christ to show this love to all people whether they are Christians or not. The person who has the gift of exhortation will often find more ways than most Christians to show this kind of love to those who are not yet Christians. This will be done both through words and through acts which encourage the other person.

2. In 1 Timothy 6:1-2, Paul tells Timothy to “teach and encourage” people to treat their masters (employers) with all honor. This means that we will honor our employers by our good works whether our employer is a Christian or a non-Christian. The way we work on our job will have a great impact both on our employer and on the other workers. Although all Christians are to show this honor and respect by the way we work, the person with the gift of exhortation will use the way he works to provide opportunities to encourage his employer and the other employees. This will often open opportunities to build relationships and then to share the Gospel.

3. In Titus 2:15, we see that the message of Christ’s return is something that we are to talk about as we speak, encourage and rebuke those around us. When we remind Christians of the blessed hope that we have of Christ’s return, we encourage them especially when they are going through difficult times. However, the return of Christ is also something that one with the gift of exhortation will often use to build relationships with the non-Christian. When a person who is not yet a Christian is going through difficult times, they are looking for someone to encourage them. In the process of encouraging the non-Christian in difficult times, we will build relationships and have the opportunity to present the hope of eternal life that a person can have who repents and places their trust in Christ.

4. In Titus 2:4-6, we see that older men and women often have the opportunity to encourage younger men and women. This opportunity to give wise counsel provides an ideal way to build relationships

between those who are older and those who are younger both with Christians and with non-Christians. A person who has the gift of exhortation will often look for opportunities to share wise counsel with those who are younger including those who are not yet Christians. In the process of sharing wise counsel with those who are not yet Christians, there will usually be opportunities to share the Gospel as we pray for the Lord to open the door for us to share the Word as a part of our counsel.

5. In James 1:19-20, we are told the importance of being a good listener. Those verses tell us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Being a good listener will always build relationships with people whether they are Christians or non-Christians. The person who has the gift of exhortation knows that he has to listen to the other person so that he knows how to encourage him. Since the person with the gift of exhortation will usually encourage a non-Christian, that person will become more and more open to listen in return when the Christian shares the Gospel with him.

6. In 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, Paul talks about providing an example for the Corinthian believers to follow. He said that although there were many who would try to lead by rules and severe discipline, he had the care and concern of a loving father and encouraged the Corinthians to follow his example. We build relationships both with Christians and non-Christians as we provide an example for them to follow. The person who has the gift of exhortation will use his example as a key way to encourage others. As he encourages those who are not yet Christians by his godly example of care and concern, he will have opportunities to share the message of repentance and faith.

7. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, God tells us that He comforts us so that we will be able to comfort others with the same comfort with which we have been comforted. Because the gift of exhortation causes a person to want to comfort and encourage others, he will see more opportunities than most Christians to provide comfort both to Christians and to non-Christians. As he comforts those who are not yet Christians who are in sorrow or trouble, the Lord will open opportunities to share the Gospel as the source of lasting comfort.

8. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, we see that Paul says that we are ambassadors for Christ. God has given us the opportunity to encourage people to be reconciled to God. Today, we are living in a day of fractured relationships and people are hurting. Because the person with the gift of exhortation focuses on how to encourage others, he hears people when they are hurting because of these broken relationships. As a result, he will often have opportunities to help them see that through reconciliation with God they will lay a foundation to be reconciled to those with whom they have broken relationships.

As we can see, the person with the gift of exhortation is likely to build relationships with those who are not yet Christians by finding a variety of different ways to comfort and encourage. As a result, a person with this gift will often be able to build relationships with those who are hurting. If this gift is a spiritual gift that you have, may the Lord use you mightily to build relationships and share the Gospel with those who are hurting. For those of you who do not have this gift, develop a close friendship with someone who does so that they can give you ideas about how to build relationships with those who are hurting. May the Lord richly bless you as you reach out to non-Christians who need encouragement and comfort.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Giving

In our last four topics, we have looked at ways to use the spiritual gifts of prophecy, serving, teaching and exhorting to build relationships for the purpose of evangelism. Today, we will be looking at the gift of giving and some effective ways to build relationships with non-Christians if we have this gift. Those of you who have this gift will see some ways that God can use your gift to share the Gospel effectively. Those of you who do not have this gift will have a better understanding of why people who have this gift build relationships in a different way than you do.

We might use the following definition for the gift of giving: “To give generously so that faith may be strengthened, needs may be met and others may be able to minister because we have given of our own souls - Romans 12:8, 1:11-12; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:8.” In relation to other Christians, the Christian who has the gift of giving tends to emphasize giving to needs which are often not recognized by others. There will also often be an emphasis on giving to missions so that the Word of God can be carried worldwide. The person with the gift of giving will often encourage other Christians to share in the ministry of giving so that his or her giving is multiplied.

The word that is translated “to give” means “*to impart or to share*” and deals with much more than just giving money or things as we will see when we look at the various verses related to this particular word. This is important to understand because it helps us to recognize the many situations where the Holy Spirit uses this gift to build bridges to share the Gospel. The following are some of the ways that a person with this gift will build bridges to share the Gospel with non-Christians:

1. In Romans 12:8, we see that the one with the gift of giving is to give with simplicity or liberality. Here, we see that the one who has this gift is to use that gift free from hypocrisy and with an openness of heart that reveals itself by generosity. As we share with those who are not Christians, they will be quick to recognize any hypocrisy so we need to examine our own attitudes. The person who gives with a God honoring attitude will not be looking for thanks or personal recognition but his purpose will be to glorify God. The person with the gift of giving is often much more quick to recognize needs and share to meet those needs both with Christians and non-Christians. When this giving is done to glorify God, the non-Christian feels accepted and loved by the Christian. If this giving is done for thanks or personal recognition, the non-Christian will feel that he has been used.
2. In Romans 1:11-12, we see that Paul wanted to share some spiritual gift so that the Romans could be established. The purpose of this was so that they could be encouraged. Here, we see that giving may involve the giving of encouragement. Most non-Christians are open to one who will share encouragement with them as they go through times of trial in their lives especially if those times include times of need where someone shares to meet their particular need. The story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 is certainly an excellent example of one who reached out to another during a time of great need.
3. In Ephesians 4:28, we see that one of the purposes for working and earning money is to be able to share with those who have needs. Then in Galatians 6:10, we see that we are to do good to all especially to those who are of the household of faith. The Lord gives us the opportunity to work so that we can earn money to share with those who have needs, including those who are not yet of the household of faith. As we share with the genuine needs of those who are not Christians, we will have the opportunity to share the reason why we have a care and concern for the person who is not yet a Christian. In this way we may cause the person to have a desire to know why Christians are different. That often results in opportunities to share the Gospel with that person.

4. In 1 Thessalonians 2:8, we see that the word is used to speak of sharing your life with a person. Paul, Silas and Timothy shared their lives with new Christians so that they could help these new Christians grow. As they shared their lives with new Christians, the families of those new Christians had the opportunity to see the difference that Christ makes in a life. Through sharing with new Christians, the Lord also opens up opportunities for us to share the Gospel with their family members that are not yet Christians. In fact an ideal way to build a relationship with a non-Christian is to invite a new Christian to bring a friend or family member to share a meal with you so that you can get acquainted with the non-Christian. We see in Matthew 9:9-13 that Matthew found that was an ideal way to share Christ with his friends.

5. In Luke 3:11, we see that sharing is very effective in building relationships with non-Christians when it involves sharing with others to meet their basic needs. In this verse we see that clothing and food are two of the most basic needs that we can meet as we share with others. One of the things that we see in that verse is that the person shares a specific thing with a specific person to meet a specific need. The value of sharing to meet basic needs is that it provides an opportunity for face to face contact with the person so that we can build a relationship with that person. That will often open up opportunities to share the Gospel.

6. In 2 Corinthians 5:18, we see that God has shared with us the ministry of reconciliation. Since God has shared that particular ministry with each of us, He will lead us to opportunities to share with others as we pray and yield our lives to Him each day to be His hands, His feet and His mouth to share that message of reconciliation with others. Those who have the gift of giving will often find that those opportunities come as they are sharing with other kinds of needs of non-Christians.

7. In Acts 20:34-35 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-9, we see that sharing with the weak and the poor are two key opportunities to share with those who are in need. The word that is used for weak speaks of those who are without strength, the needy or the sick. In these verses, we see that:

- ◆ Paul worked to meet his own needs
- ◆ Paul worked to meet the needs of his companions
- ◆ Paul worked to give to the weak
- ◆ Paul encourages us to give generously
- ◆ Paul encourages us to give as we have purposed in our hearts
- ◆ Paul encourages us to give cheerfully
- ◆ Paul encourages us to give by the fact that God will provide so that we can abound in every good work
- ◆ Paul encourages us to follow the example of God who scattered abroad and gives to the poor

God has given us what we have so that we can share with others. Those who have the gift of giving will often notice needs that go unnoticed by others. The Lord will use their actions to meet those needs to build relationships with those who are not yet Christians so that they can share the message of reconciliation with them. May the Lord richly bless you as you use what God has given you to build bridges to those who are not yet Christians for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with them.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Leading

In our last five topics, we have looked at ways to use the spiritual gifts of prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting and giving to build relationships for the purpose of evangelism. Today, we will be looking at the gift of leading and some effective ways to build relationships with non-Christians if we have this gift. Those of you who have this gift will see some ways that God can use your gift to share the Gospel effectively. Those of you who do not have this gift will have a better understanding of why people who have this gift build relationships in a different way than you do.

We might use the following definition for the gift of leading: “To lead under the leadership of the Lord so that the good works of all will be profitable and fruitful - 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Titus 3:8, 3:14.” The word translated “lead” actually means “*to stand before or to lead*”. In order to lead effectively, God has given the person with this gift the ability to see what a church or other ministry needs to do to accomplish the work of God in the future. The Christian who has the gift of leading (ruling) tends to take a long range view and to make long range plans so that the work of God can be completed smoothly and efficiently. The person with this gift will often be given insight by the Lord which helps that person to see what a group needs to do to move forward and make progress in their ministry.

The word that is translated “to lead” or “to rule” means “*to set or place before and speaks of one who goes before, one who is set over or one who is a protector*”. As we look at the various verses that use this word in the New Testament, we see that this word is used to describe leadership in the home and in the church. As a result, the person with this gift will often be effective at leading his family or the whole church in sharing the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians. The following are some of the ways that a person with this gift will build bridges to share the Gospel with non-Christians:

1. In Romans 12:8, we see that the one with the gift of leading is to lead with diligence. The word that is translated “diligence” means “*to do something with haste or earnestness*”. It has the thought of one who is striving or reaching after something. As a result, the person with the gift of leadership will build relationships and show love to non-Christians by being quick to make contacts. A person who has the gift of leading will be effective at quickly making contacts as he yields to the Holy Spirit. In Acts 8:29-30 we see an illustration of this as Philip was led by the Holy Spirit to make contact with the man from Ethiopia. Because he was being led by the Holy Spirit, we read, “So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” Here, we see that Philip did three things which helped him to make contacts:

- he ran to the man (he was quick to obey the Holy Spirit)
- he listened to what the man was reading (he immediately looked for a point of contact)
- he began the conversation by asking a question

2. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, we see that Christians are to respect and esteem highly those who are leading them. As a result, the person with the gift of leading is one who can be effective at making contacts and can also mobilize other Christians to join him in making contacts with those who are not Christians. This means that the person with the gift of leading can multiply his effectiveness by taking other Christians with him as he makes contacts so that others also develop relationships with those who are not yet Christians. Most people learn how to make contacts best by seeing how others make contacts.

3. In Titus 3:8, we see that the person with the gift of leading is to lead by good works. Here, we see that example is one of the most important things in the life of any person but especially in the life of one who has the gift of leading. Leading by good works attracts people to Christ because the non-Christian

sees how the life of the Christian is changed by Christ because of his good works. Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." As the world around us sees our good works, it will draw them to Christ and cause them to glorify God.

4. In Titus 3:14, we have a second verse that emphasizes the importance of leading by good works. That verse says, "And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful." Here, we see that the whole church needs to learn to lead by good works. This means that those who have the gift of leading are to help the entire church become organized to reach out to those who do not yet know Christ. As a growing number of people in the church learn to lead by good works, there will be two results according to this verse:

- they will meet urgent needs in the world around them
- they will become fruitful

5. In 1 Timothy 3:3-5, 12, we see another key way that we can build relationships to share the Gospel. Verse 3 points out that a leader is to be given to hospitality. Then in verses 4-5 and 12 we see that one of the qualifications for leaders is that they know how to lead their own family effectively. When we invite non-Christians into our home for a meal or for some other reason, the non-Christians have an opportunity to observe our family. As they observe our family, they will often ask for ideas to help them in raising their own children especially if they have teenagers. This provides an opportunity to share that following Christ is what makes our family different. This will often open opportunities to share the Gospel.

6. In Acts 10:23-24 and Acts 11:12, we see another key way to use the gift of leading to build relationships and share the Gospel with those who are not Christians. In those verses we see that Peter took six other Christians with him when he went to share the Gospel in the house of Cornelius. Those six Christians had the opportunity to see how Peter built relationships and how he shared the Gospel with those at the house of Cornelius. We can use the gift of leading to help others learn how to share the Gospel by encouraging them to begin praying daily for specific people who do not know Christ:

- ◆ relatives - John 1:40-42
- ◆ friends - John 1:43-46
- ◆ co-workers - Matthew 9:9-10
- ◆ neighbors and other acquaintances - Mark 1:30-33

Then we can offer to go with them to visit those relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances to share the Gospel with those for whom they are praying. The fact that we come with a relative or a friend will help us to quickly build a relationship with that person. At the same time we will also have an opportunity to show the one with us how to build relationships and share the Gospel with those who are not Christians.

The very fact that a person has the gift of leading will also give many other opportunities to lead others in the community in a variety of different situations. These also all provide opportunities to build relationships with others. Then as we pray that the Lord will open a door for our message - Colossians 4:3 and give us boldness to speak - Ephesians 6:19-20 we will see the Lord work in our lives and through our lives to share the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you share the Gospel with others.

Building Relationships and the Gift of Showing Mercy

In our last six topics, we have looked at ways to use the spiritual gifts of prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving and leading to build relationships for the purpose of evangelism. Today, we will be looking at the gift of showing mercy and some effective ways to build relationships with non-Christians if we have this gift. Those of you who have this gift will see some ways that God can use your gift to share the Gospel effectively. Those of you who do not have this gift will have a better understanding of why people who have this gift build relationships in a different way than you do.

We might use the following definition for the gift of showing mercy: “To feel such sympathy with the misery of another that it produces comfort and thankfulness for the opportunity to show mercy” - Matthew 20:30-34; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Romans 12:8. The Christian who has the gift of showing mercy tends to be more sensitive to the inner feelings of others and demonstrates loving concern to those who are in inner distress. The person with this gift is usually effective at offering comfort to those experiencing inner distress.

The word that is translated “to show mercy” means “*to have mercy on or to help one who is afflicted*”. Since all people, both Christians and non-Christians, have times when they suffer affliction, the person with this gift is able to minister to all people. In Romans 12:8, we see that the person with this gift is to show mercy with cheerfulness. It is usually difficult to minister to those who are suffering from affliction unless we have a cheerful heart. The following are some of the ways that the person with this gift will build bridges to share the Gospel with non-Christians:

1. In Matthew 20:30-34, we see that one of the ways that Christ showed mercy was by having compassion on two men who were blind. This compassion caused Christ to call the men to Him and ask them what they wanted Him to do for them. Here, we see that one of the ways we show mercy and compassion is to listen to those who are suffering or hurting either physically or spiritually. A person who is going through a time of grief or sorrow wants to know that there is someone who cares enough to just listen to them. Christ demonstrated the fact that we show mercy by taking time to listen and ask questions of those who are hurting. The very act of listening and sharing the hurt of those who are hurting will often provide opportunities to share the Gospel. Jude 22 points out the fact that we save some by this very compassion.

2. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 we read, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” In these verses, we see that God is the God of mercy and comfort. He is the one who comforts us in all of our tribulation. The result of His giving comfort to us is that He shows us how to comfort those who are in any trouble with the same comfort with which He has comforted us. The one who has the gift of showing mercy will have a special ministry of being a comfort to those who are experiencing inner distress. This comfort often causes non-Christians to become open to hear the Gospel.

3. In Romans 12:8, we see that the one who has the gift of showing mercy is to do so with cheerfulness or to do it quickly. One of the things to remember about affliction is that it can come at any time and it always has immediate effects. That is why the person who has the gift of showing mercy is told to show mercy quickly. The Good Samaritan immediately began to minister to the needs of the man who had been robbed and beaten. The very fact that one responds quickly to show mercy to those who are hurting or in distress shows that someone cares. Those who are not Christians want to know that someone cares for them before they are ready to hear what the person has to say, so it is important for all of us to show mercy.

4. In Romans 11:29-32, we see that God has shown that all are in unbelief so that He can have the opportunity to show mercy to all whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Here, we see that God gives us an example of looking for ways to show mercy. The one who has the gift of showing mercy will often see opportunities to show mercy to others because the Holy Spirit causes their spirit to be sensitive to the inner spirit of others. This causes them to sense when others are experiencing inner distress. In these verses, we see that one of the purposes of God is to show mercy so that others will be drawn to Christ. We become partners with God in this ministry as we look for opportunities to show mercy to others.

5. In Mark 5:19-20, Christ told the man who had been delivered from the legion of demons, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.” This man went everywhere telling family, friends and other acquaintances what Christ had done for Him and especially how Christ had shown compassion to him. Those who have experienced the mercy and compassion of the Lord are usually the ones who can understand the hurt of others the best. They are able to share what Christ has done in their own lives to show mercy to them. That provides an opportunity to share the Gospel even with people who were formerly hostile to Christ like the people in this area who had asked Christ to leave their area.

6. In Matthew 15:22 and 17:15, we see that Christ showed mercy to two children who were being vexed by demons. The fact that He showed mercy to those who were troubled gave opportunity to share with both the children and their parents. Today, we live in a world of many troubled children. The one who has the gift of showing mercy is especially sensitive to the inner spirit of these troubled children. This provides opportunities to show mercy to both those children and their parents. In the process of showing mercy to those who do not know Christ, the opportunity often opens up to share that Christ is the One who will defeat the power of Satan in the lives of those who repent and place their trust in Christ.

As you can see, Christ does use our spiritual gifts to help us build relationships with those who are not Christians for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with them. Each of the seven spiritual gifts that we have studied in Romans 12:6-8 are used by the Lord to help us build relationships with non-Christians as we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit can use the gifts that He has given to us to share the gospel with those who are not yet Christians.

The person who has the gift of showing mercy will be sensitive to the inner spirit of others at all of the times when he is yielding to the Holy Spirit. He will not be sensitive when he is depending on his own strength because he is quenching the Holy Spirit in his life. The same is true for each of the other gifts. We will all use our spiritual gifts effectively at those times when we are yielding to the Holy Spirit because He is the source of those spiritual gifts and empowers them. We will either not use our spiritual gifts when we are depending on our own strength or we will misuse them to benefit ourselves instead of serving the Lord and others. May the Lord richly bless you as you yield to the Holy Spirit so that He can use your spiritual gifts both to serve other Christians and to build relationships with those who are not yet Christians for the purpose of sharing the Gospel.

Driven by Fear or Led by Love

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

When we are driven by fear:

1. We are experiencing the results of Adam's fall - Genesis 3:7-13
2. We will fear people instead of fearing God - Romans 3:18
3. We will focus on the law (or man's rules - Romans 3:19-20) when we are no longer under the law - Galatians 3:24-25
4. We will serve out of fear instead of love - 2 Timothy 1:7

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

When we are led by love:

1. We no longer live for ourselves - 2 Corinthians 5:15
 2. We no longer regard people according to the flesh - 2 Corinthians 5:16
 3. We realize that we are new creations - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 4. We realize that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation - 2 Corinthians 5:18
 5. We realize we have been given the word of reconciliation - 2 Corinthians 5:19
 6. We realize that we are ambassadors for Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:20
 7. We realize that we have received the righteousness of God in Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:21
 8. We pray for boldness to speak the Word of God - Acts 4:13, 29-31; Ephesians 6:19-20; Philippians 1:20
- I. We will pray and share the good news of Christ with our relatives
He first found his own brother...and he brought him to Jesus. - John 1:41-42

Started Praying for: Prayer Answered:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

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II. We will pray and share the good news of Christ with our friends

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph."...Philip said to him, "Come and see." - John 1:45-46

Started Praying for: Prayer answered:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

III. We will pray and share the good news of Christ with our co-workers

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow me." ...Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. - Matthew 9:9-10

Started Praying for: Prayer answered:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

IV. We will pray and share the good news of Christ with our neighbors

Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John...And the whole city was gathered together at the door. - Mark 1:29-33

Started Praying for: Prayer answered:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.