

## 7. 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.