

3. Sharing One-to-One

In our last two topics, we have talked about the three kinds of meetings mentioned in Acts 2:41-47 and the meetings of the whole church from 1 Corinthians 14:23-35. One of the types of meetings we discussed in Acts 2 was meetings from house-to-house. Another title we might use for such meetings is one-to-one meetings. We will use this title because:

- ◆ They do not always happen in homes (Christ met the woman of Samaria beside a well).
- ◆ There may be more than one person coming to share (Peter took six brothers with him when he went to the home of Cornelius – Acts 11:12).
- ◆ There may be more than one person in the home (Cornelius had gathered his relatives and near friends – Acts 10:24).
- ◆ There may be an emphasis on salvation – (Christ talked to Nicodemus about his need for repentance – John 3:1-21).
- ◆ There may be an emphasis on further instruction (Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos home with them and explained to him the way of God more perfectly – Acts 18:26).
- ◆ There may be an emphasis on training through on-the-job training (Paul had Timothy join him and Silas – Acts 16:1-5)

However, all of the meetings mentioned above have one thing in common. They all provided an opportunity for one person to answer the questions of another person so that the second person could grow in his or her understanding of how to build a Biblical relationship with God and learn to serve Him. One-to-one Bible studies can be divided into many different types of Bible studies like:

- ⇒ Evangelistic Bible studies - John 3 and 4
- ⇒ Follow-up Bible studies - Acts 18:24-26
- ⇒ Growth Bible studies - Luke 10:39
- ⇒ Ministry equipping Bible studies - 2 Timothy 2:2
- ⇒ Specialized training Bible studies and many others - Acts 28:30-31

Each person who is not a Christian has questions that he or she needs to get answered in order to come to an understanding of what it means to become a Christian. Usually, those questions must be answered before that person is ready to trust Christ. That is why an evangelistic Bible study can be so effective. Acts 17:11-12a tells us, “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.” These verses give us a pattern for evangelistic Bible studies, whether they involve one person or a group. The focus needs to be on searching the Scripture to find out whether these things are so.

When we get together to talk with another person, our talk and discussion will usually focus on one of three things once we get into a serious discussion about life. We will tend to share one of the following:

- My opinions
- My convictions
- Biblical principles

The New American Standard Version translates Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in the faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.” We all enjoy giving our own opinions. In fact, I had a teacher who used to say that if we get two people together, we will have three opinions. That is why we are to accept the opinions of one another, whether we agree with them or not. Many Christians struggle when they try to witness to non-Christians because they are not willing to accept the opinions of the non-Christians. The Christian would rather say, “You are wrong,” instead of just listening to the opinion of the other person. Listening to another person does not mean that we agree with the person. Rather, listening indicates that we respect and accept that person and give him the right to share his opinion.

However, our opinions will seldom make a lasting impact on another person because we are just sharing opinions and the other person is sharing his opinions. In fact, the sharing of opinions can often lead to arguments if we are trying to persuade the other person to adopt our opinion. In that case, we may win the battle of words, but we will lose because we have just created a new barrier between that person and Christ.

The second thing we may choose to share is our convictions. Joshua gives us a good example of how to share our convictions in Joshua 24:15, “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” In this verse, Joshua shared the convictions he had for himself and for his family.

However, Joshua made it very clear to the people that they had to make their own choices. Each person had to choose who he was going to serve. We see that Joshua actually helped the people to understand that they had at least three choices:

- They could serve the gods of their fathers
- They could serve the gods of the Amorites
- They could choose to serve the Lord

One of the key things that helps people to make wise choices is to ask them to write out the four or five possible choices they have about a decision. Then, ask them to list the consequences of each choice below the choice. Some consequences will be good and some consequences will be bad. Ask them if they would like to eliminate the choice which has the worst consequence, or sometimes the two choices which have the worst consequences. Then, let them know that they are the ones to decide which of the other choices with its consequences they want and let them make the choice, not you. That is exactly what Joshua did as he talked to the people.

When we are in a discussion about the issues of life, we can also ask a person what Biblical principles might apply. In cases where they are not yet Christians, we may share the Biblical principles and explain how those Biblical principles can be applied in life. As we explain Biblical principles to those who are not yet Christians, it forces them to think and allows the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.

An illustration might be from Genesis 3:7-13. In those verses, we could ask a person how Adam's sin changed his relationships. Then, we could help him to discover from those verses that it changed his:

- Relationship with God – there was separation
- Relationship with himself – there was fear, guilt, and shame
- Relationship with others – blame

At that point, we can ask if those are the same five things that motivate all people today. Then, we could ask how those relationships can be changed so that we are no longer motivated by separation, fear, guilt, shame, and blame. Their answer will usually provide an opportunity to share the Gospel.

When we are talking to a Christian, we can share a Biblical principle and then ask how that principle can change our life and help us in our spiritual growth. For example, to illustrate this, we might take Romans 7:14-25 (the passage on "I" trouble) and compare it with Romans 8:28-39 and ask why many Christians experience Romans 7:14-25 when God wants Romans 8:28-39 to be our experience. After letting the person give their thoughts and opinions, you might mention that in the first seven chapters of Romans, the Holy Spirit is mentioned four times, while in chapter 8 the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times. This provides the opportunity to help him understand the Biblical principle that each time we depend on our own strength, we experience Romans 7:14-25. Each time we yield to the Lord, we will experience Romans 8:28-39.

Then, we can go back to Romans 6:1-16 and show that those verses give us three key things that we do each time we are faced with a choice (we may face several hundred choices every day). In those verses, we see that:

- ◆ We must know certain things – verse 6 – our old man has lost his power
- ◆ We can then make the choice to act on what we know – verse 11 – “reckon” is an accounting term which means *we have the power to act because of the fact that the old man has lost its power*
- ◆ We can choose to yield to sin, or we can choose to yield to God as a Christian – verses 13 and 16. If we choose to yield to sin, we will experience Romans 7:14-25. If we choose to yield to God, we will have the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and the love of Christ flowing through us because, at that moment, we are experiencing Romans 8:28-39. That power and love will last as long as we continue to yield to God moment-by-moment. (Our problem is that most of us stop yielding after the first choice or two and then try to handle the next group of choices in our own strength and fail).

The more time we spend sharing Biblical principles, rather than our opinions or personal convictions, the more we will see non-Christians examining their lives and the more we will help new Christians grow because they are learning to yield to God instead of trying to act in their own strength. May the Lord richly bless you as you work with others in your one-to-one times together with them.