

LEARNING FROM JESUS HOW TO WITNESS

John 4:1-26

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Most Christians want to share the gospel with others but feel awkward in their attempts and then some just don't know how to go about witnessing so they become discouraged and either quit trying or never attempt to witness. There are all sorts of pamphlets available to hand out and many "classes" on "how to witness" that have been used by different Churches. Perhaps the best source of learning about witnessing is from the master Himself, Jesus. His conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well is a wonderful example.

I. CONTACT PEOPLE SOCIALLY

1. There must be social contact:
 - Jesus deliberately chose to go through Samaria - John 4:1-6
 - Most Jews didn't want anything to do with Samaritans.
 - Jesus chose to go through Samaria, assuring that they would meet people there.
 - Jesus deliberately chose to make social contact at other times - Luke 5:29-32
 - When people don't come to Jesus Christ, maybe Christians are not going to the people.
 - One can't be a fisher of men by fishing in a barrel, he/she must go where the fish are.
 - The thing about sowing seed is that the seed has to be taken out of storage and out to the fields.
2. There is a difference between separation and isolation:
 - Christians must remain "separate" from sin and sinners - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
 - Being separate from sin and sinners does not mean for the Christian to isolate him/herself from others.
 - Jesus prayed that God would keep Christians in the world - John 17:15
 - Paul said to use "disgression" in being around those sinful people - 1 Corinthians 5:9-11
 - To back away from those who have not heard or obeyed the gospel is contrary to what God wants.
3. There are many opportunities for social contact:
 - At school with other students.
 - Nobody is too young to be involved in leading others to Christ.
 - Sometimes young Christians have the greatest opportunities to tell others about Jesus.
 - At work with other employees or employers.
 - Many hours are spent with fellow workers.
 - By one's example he/she has a great potential to influence his/he co-workers.
 - At home with family, neighbors and friends.
 - One needs to get to know his/her neighbors.
 - Sometimes those closest can be the most difficult to reach o- Matthew 13:54-58; John 7:5; Acts 1:14
 - **"...Go into all the world..."** - Mark 16:15 - Christians are to go where the people are!

II. FIND A COMMON INTEREST

1. Common interests helps creat a bridge:
 - Note the first words Jesus said to the woman at the well - John 4:7-8
 - She had come to draw water.
 - Jesus was thirsty.
 - His first words to here centered around their common interest - water.

- Recognize the need to build a relationship:
 - Meaningful conversation is not always easy, especially about spiritual matters.
 - A common interest allows the opportunity to start a meaningful conversation.
 - Once communication has been established over a common interest, it will be easier to discuss God's Word.

2. Common interests can usually be found easily:

- Family (children, grandchildren, etc.)
- Activities (sports, jobs, hobbies, schools)
- Similar experiences (travel, work, etc.)
- Take time to be comfortable with common interests before talking about spiritual things.

III. BEGIN TO AROUSE SPIRITUAL INTEREST

1. Through one's actions:

- Jesus' example - John 4:9
 - As a man, Jesus speaks to her, a woman.
 - As a rabbi, Jesus speaks to her, an immoral woman.
 - As a Jew, Jesus speaks to her, a Samaritan.
 - Jesus aroused her interest by simply speaking to her.
- The Christian's actions:
 - One's example can at times arouse spiritual interest.
 - By showing kindness and compassion to everyone, the good, the bad, the wicked.
 - By not having racial or social prejudices to those who are different.
 - By one's own example of faith and hope - 1 Peter 3:1-2, 15

2. Through one's words:

- Jesus example - John 4:10-14
 - Jesus eased their conversation over to spiritual matters.
 - Jesus led into a discussion on a common spiritual interest - living water.
- The Christian's words:
 - One can raise questions or make statements that shifts the conversation to spiritual matters.
 - "Why do you think our world is in such a big mess?"
 - "Would you be interested in what the Bible says about.....?"
 - The conversation needs to first involve matters of common interest/agreement.
 - Start with things both agree on to build comfort and instill confidence.
 - Acts 13:16-22
 - Once spiritual interest has been aroused, then one can move on slowly.

IV. DON'T GO TOO FAR OR TOO FAST

1. Give the person only what they are ready for:

- Jesus' example - John 4:15-16
 - The woman wanted the "living water," but she didn't really understand.
 - Jesus slowed down and built up the proper ground work to continue.
 - The woman needed faith in Him as the Messiah.
 - Jesus needed to provide evidence that He was the Messiah.
 - Instead of giving her the "living water:"
 - Jesus tells her to go get her husband.

- The woman will become convinced that Jesus is a prophet.
- Most people don't realize what they need first:
 - They will want to talk about some particular subject.
 - When they really need something else first.

2. Examples for today:

- Some want to study Revelation, but they need to be grounded in the rest of the Bible first.
- Some want to talk about issues related to church organization, work, worship, when they ought to be focusing on the basic principles of the gospel.
- It is important that a person does not choke on the "meat" of God's Word - 1 Corinthians 3:1-2

V. DO NOT CONDEMN THE PERSON

1. Jesus' example:

- Jesus could have dwelt on her being an adultress - John 4:17-18
- Jesus came to save the world, not to condemn it - John 3:17
- Jesus will one day judge the world, but the primary purpose of His first coming was to offer salvation - John 12:46-48

2. Do not condemn anybody in one's evangelistic efforts (witnessing)

- Sin may be preached against, but the Christian's primary purpose is to help bring salvation, not to judge - 1 Corinthians 5:12-13
- The Christian's focus should be to inform others of the forgiveness God offers - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
 - God wants sinners reconciled.
 - The ministry of the Christian is that of helping others be reconciled.

VI. STAY WITH THE MAIN ISSUE, DON'T GET SIDE-TRACKED

1. The Samaritan woman tried to change the subject:

- She turned the conversation away from herself to where one should worship - John 4:19-20
- Jesus answered her question and then quietly turned the conversation back to the original subject and that was "Who He was and What He had to offer" - John 4:21-25

2. Stick to your objective:

- If trying to find a common ground of agreement, don't jump ahead.
- Moving from common ground into uncommon ground:
 - Take only one step at a time.
 - Do not move on until an agreement over each step has been reached.
- If one's objective is simply to get consent for a home Bible study, avoid getting into a deep discussion right away - Proverbs 15:28

VII. DIRECTLY CONFRONT THE ONE BEING WITNESSED TO

1. Jesus' example:

- Jesus finally confronted the woman with His true, real identity - John 4:26
- He did this after He had laid all the groundwork.

2. How to do that today:

- If trying to set up a home Bible study:
 - Take advantage of any social contacts
 - Develop common interests
 - Be open to comments that indicate a spiritual interest while demonstrating one's own faith through actions and words.
 - Avoid fruitless arguments but emphasize common beliefs instead.
 - Praise their good points and encourage them in the right direction.
 - Have ONE primary objective - to encourage them to study the Bible even more:
 - ask if they would like to learn more about Jesus, the Bible, the Church
 - point out Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos - Acts 18:14-26
 - Confront them directly with the opportunity to study the Bible.
- If doing the course of a home Bible study:
 - Continue to develop social contact.
 - Continue to establish common interests.
 - Take time to study any common ground shared in one's spiritual interests.
 - Go from common ground to uncommon ground carefully.
 - Stress the gospel message, not pointing out any individual shortcomings.
 - Have one primary objective - to help them understand their need and gospel plan of salvation - Mark 16:15-16; Colossians 1:5-6
 - Confront them directly with the invitation to accept Jesus Christ as his/her Savior:
 - "Does this make sense?"
 - "Is there anything you don't understand?"
 - "Have I been talking about anything other than what the Bible teaches?"
 - "Would you like to be saved right now?"

CONCLUSION:

1. Remember, the result of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman was the conversion of many people in the city of Sychar - John 4:39-42
2. Personal Evangelism is for every Christian:
 - Who knows whether the one person you share with in turn may bring many to Christ.
3. ***"...Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest." John 4:35***
4. There is no better example than Jesus - follow His example.