



BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Personal Outreach

1 INTRODUCTION

There is simply no greater or more impacting truth than the gospel. Because of the gospel, we have been given eternity in Heaven with Jesus. Because of the gospel, we have joy and purpose in our lives today. Once we believe the gospel and make it the center of our lives, everything comes into place.

Yet, while all of that is true, But all that being true, it's still hard for us to share the good news of Jesus with the world around us. Many Christians today don't believe it is their personal responsibility to share Christ with others. Most have never intentionally shared the gospel with anyone. In this booklet, we will focus on what Scripture tells us about Personal Outreach.

2 THE PRINCIPLES OF OUTREACH

In personal outreach, both the why and the what are important principles to understand. Let's begin by considering the "why." Let's look at the biblical principles that drive our desire to share the gospel with others.

There is simply no other conclusion to come to when reading the Bible then this: We must reach out with the gospel!

To prove this point, let's consider the life of Jesus.

1. JESUS COMMANDS OUTREACH.

When Jesus was here on Earth, He taught many things in both word as well as in the way He lived. He spoke with authority and He lived out the example of how we should conduct ourselves.

READ Mark 16:15.

🔍 What did Jesus command His disciples to do?

🔍 To whom were they to do this?

READ Acts 1:8.

🗒 What did Jesus say the disciples would become?

🗒 Where were they to go?

This was the charge given to the church from the very beginning. It still remains the directive from Jesus to us today. He wants us to be a people who preach the gospel to others.

But not only did He say it, He did it!

READ Matthew 4:23.

🗒 Where was Jesus going in this verse?

🗒 How is He doing it?

READ Matthew 9:35-38.

🗒 What is Jesus doing in this text?

🗒 How did He feel when He saw the crowds?

One key reason we must share the gospel is because Jesus commands it.

But this is true as well...

2. THE GOSPEL DEMANDS OUTREACH.

READ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

🕒 According to verse 18, what did God do through Christ?

🕒 What has God given us?

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have been reconciled to God. That means that though we were estranged from God because of our sin, we are brought close to Him again. That's an amazing truth, and it means that we now have the joy and calling or, as the text puts it, the ministry to share that truth with others.

🕒 According to verse 20, what title do we have?

🕒 What is our plea to others?

🕒 And how are we to make the plea?

Since we have forgiveness, mercy, and grace through the gospel and have been reconciled, it is now our calling to bring others to that same forgiveness, mercy, grace, and reconciliation. The gospel demands that we reach out to others with the gospel.

3 THE PRACTICES OF OUTREACH

We have the command from Jesus, but we also have the example of Jesus. He reached out to others with the gospel when He was here on Earth and there is much to learn from His example.

From His example, we can create a step by step plan to effectively share the gospel in our everyday lives. Let's explore the how of personal outreach.

STEP 1. PRAY

READ Matthew 9:35-38.

🕒 What was the condition of the harvest, according to Jesus?

🕒 What did he tell His disciples to do?

If you stop and think about it, this is a bit surprising. Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

If it was you, what would you propose as a solution to this problem? The logical answer would be something like, "So go and work the fields!"

But that's not what Jesus says to do. The first step that He encourages is to pray.

Here are two brief reasons we need to pray. This will guide the specific prayer request we need to offer up to God in these prayers.

- **Prayer request #1 - "God, open my mouth!"**

READ Ephesians 6:18-20.

🕒 In verse 19, what prayer request did Paul have?

🕒 In verse 20, what title did Paul identify with?

✎ What did the title mandate?

Paul was the greatest missionary of his time, and perhaps of all time! And yet, he knew that he needed God's help to speak the gospel with boldness! If Paul needed God's help, we do as well.

Speaking the gospel with boldness is scary. Begin by asking God to send you as worker in the harvest and ask Him to give you a boldness to proclaim the good news!

- **Prayer request #2 - "God open their eyes!"**

READ John 6:44.

✎ What does this verse teach us about those who come to Jesus?

If someone's heart is opened to the gospel and they believe it for themselves, then one thing can be sure: God has called them. It's a supernatural work, and apart from the Father opening people's eyes to see it, it will never happen. So let's pray that God will work in people's hearts and draw them to Himself through the gospel!

STEP 2 - LOOK!

READ Matthew 9:35-38.

The text says that Jesus saw the crowds of people. He looked beyond their physical appearances and social status and He saw down to their hearts. And, as a result, His heart was impacted.

✎ When was the last time you were in a crowd of people?

✎ What did you see?

✎ Did the spiritual lives of the people you saw impact your heart?

✎ Why do you believe that is?

In a similar text, Jesus makes an amazing observation.

READ John 4:35.

- ① What does Jesus tell His disciples to do in this verse?

- ① According to Jesus, what condition did he say the fields surrounding us are in?

They are white or, as the NIV translate it, they are ripe for the harvest.

Is that what you would say about the crowds of people around us? Would you really say that they are spiritually ripe? As we look around at the crowds, we would probably think that most people are cold and not ready to hear or receive the gospel. But Jesus says they are ripe. That means there are people all around us ready to hear and receive the gospel! In fact, according to Jesus, the problem is that there are so many people in need who are ready to receive the gospel, but there aren't enough workers to bring in all the harvest that's ready!

To summarize, this text says that there is a ripe harvest all around me, and the first step is to lift up my eyes and see it.

A couple of quick questions to answer, but don't cheat!

- ① What color is your neighbor's front door?

- ① Does the house across the street from you have shutters?

You probably look at your neighbor's house everyday. But we often see without really looking.

- ① How do you view others around you?

- Do you tend to just go about your day with little thought about the eternal destiny of the people you see?

We need to look like Jesus looked. Who did Jesus see? Who did Jesus go to? Who did He share the gospel with?

To get a proper perspective, we need to balance a couple of truths.

READ Mark 15:16.

There is no question that Jesus wants us to share the gospel with everyone around us.

But when you consider who Jesus spent the most time with when He was on Earth, an interesting pattern emerges.

He didn't spend most of his time with the Pharisees, the most "religious" people of His day. He didn't spend most of his time with people whose lives were going smoothly with little difficulty. No, Jesus intentionally spent time with the broken, sinful, and needy.

READ Matthew 9:10-13.

- Who was Jesus reclining with in this text?

- Why did He say He was spending time with them?

STEP 3 - ENGAGE

Jesus said the fields are ripe but when we look around we see many people who seem to be cold. But He says, "Lift up your eyes!"

But, He wants us to do more than just see people.

READ Matthew 9:35.

- What two activities were Jesus doing in this verse?

READ Matthew 4:23-24.

- ① What two activities were Jesus doing in this passage?

- ① What was the result, according to the first part of verse 24?

Jesus preached the gospel and helped people in need. He did both and He did them at the same time.

There are two ditches that churches tend to fall into. They usually do one or the other, but they don't do both well.

In the past, churches were in the forefront of helping people in need. Lutheran, Methodist, and even Baptist churches built hospitals, shelters, relief organizations, and more.

But to do this well, it took a lot of energy and resources to maintain. So, it didn't take long for churches to have to focus on running the organizations. Therefore the gospel ministry fell by the wayside. In addition, the gospel message began to be viewed as a barrier. People didn't want to hear and some would turn away instead of getting help. Further, to meet federal and state legal requirements, there were massive restrictions put on what could be said and to whom it could be said. So, it didn't take long for these efforts to focus on the one side of meeting the needs of people, but leave the gospel behind.

On the other hand, there are churches who could see the error of the "social gospel." They would proudly say that they preach the gospel and that's it. They march to the banner of: "We're not about healing the sick. We're not about social reform. We preach the gospel!"

So, they go door to door. They stand on a street corner or participate in some other very aggressive form of preaching Jesus, and then tend to find very little response at all.

Let's again, look at the example of Jesus. What is He doing? He's preaching the gospel. Never backing down, never sugarcoating, never watering it down. He boldly, passionately, and aggressively preaches the gospel.

But he's doing it while meeting the needs of those around him. He's healing the sick, bringing relief to the hurting.

So, here's the principle:

Help people in need while you preach the gospel.

Let's move on to step 4.

STEP 4 - SPEAK

Francis of Assisi said:

“Preach the gospel everyday and, if necessary, use words.”

Though his sentiment is right, what he communicates could not be more wrong. Just living different than the people around you will not give them enough information to believe the gospel and be saved. It is always necessary to use words.

To back that up with Scripture, consider this passage.

READ Romans 10:13-14.

- ✎ Summarize this passage in your own words.

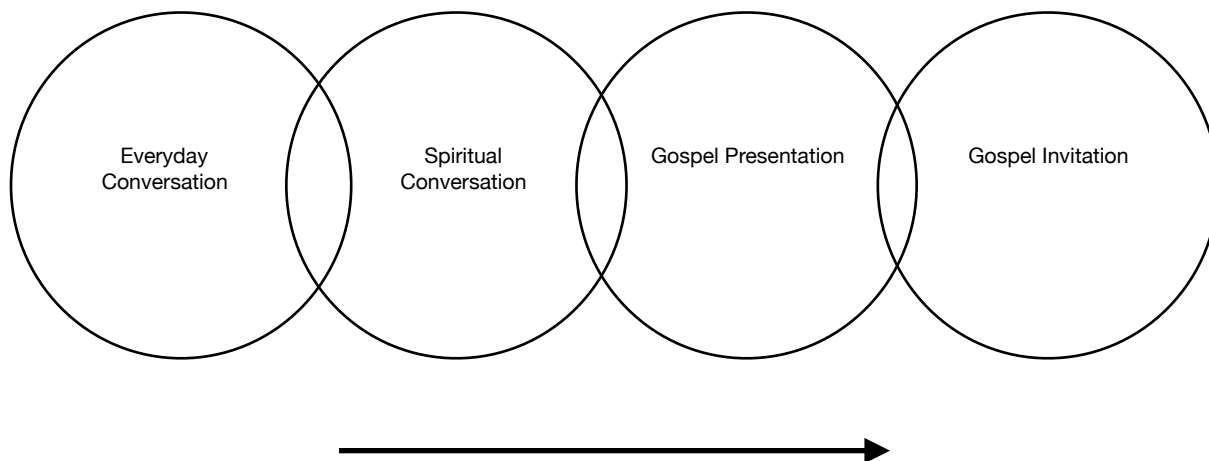
In order for them to call, they have to first believe. In order to believe, they have to first hear.

What has to happen for them to hear?

This is the tricky part. How do you get to the gospel in your conversations with people?

You get into conversations everyday. And, if you think and work at those conversations, they can turn into gospel opportunities!

4 CONVERSATION FLOW



Let's take this diagram apart.

1. STEP 1: EVERYDAY CONVERSATION

We can pretty easily get engaged in an everyday conversation with topics like the weather, sports, news, etc. Now, to move this from a surface conversation to a spiritual conversation, you must get more personal.

To make a conversation more personal, you can begin to ask questions about their job, hobbies and activities, immediate family, kids, etc.

Then, go deeper with questions like:

- *Where did you grow up?*
- *How many siblings do you have?*
- *Did you have a close family?*

Then you can get to the point you want to go with questions like:

- *What is your church background?*
- *What is your religious background?*

These questions will lead you from an everyday conversation to a spiritual conversation.

2. STEP 2: SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

Now that you are in the arena of spirituality, you need to discover a few key things.

Here are some good questions to ask:

- *What's your understanding of the Bible?*
- *What's your understanding of heaven and hell?*
- *Who is Jesus to you?*
- *What did Jesus DO for you?*

Don't be satisfied with Christian cliches and standard "churchy" phrases like, "I love Jesus." or, "I've always been a believer." You need to know what this person actually believes about his or her salvation.

Ultimately, we are trying to get down to one key question:

- *If you were to die today, do you know where you are going?*
- *Why do you believe that?*

If the answer is anything other than, "I'm going to heaven because I believe Jesus died for my sin and rose again." Then they need help.

We should then ask:

- *Has anyone ever showed you, from the Bible, how we get to heaven?"*

then...

- *"May I show you?"*

That brings us to the next circle in the conversation flow.

3. STEP 3: GOSPEL PRESENTATION

Using mostly the book of Romans, you can easily share what they need to know in order to be saved.

Here's what we suggest as a process. Open your Bible to each of the following passages, have the person read the verse, then ask, "What does that mean to you?"

Then go on to explain each verse to them.

- Romans 3:23

Here, we want people to see they are sinners. Repentance comes before salvation. In order to repent, they need to understand their need to repent. So, they need to know they are sinners without hope.

Taking them through several of the ten commandments might help. We are all guilty of breaking them!

Once they understand the fact they are sinners, bring them to the next verse.

- Romans 6:23a

Have them read up to the word “death.” Again ask, “*What does that mean?*”

Because of our sin, we deserve a “payment” (wages). The payment we deserve is spiritual death. Revelation 21:8 clearly defines this as the “second death” or eternal separation from God. It’s talking about hell.

Because of our sin, we deserve hell.

If someone says, “Why would a loving God send anyone to hell?” you can use the “Good Judge” illustration.

“If there was a man before a judge who was clearly guilty of murder, would the judge be a good judge if he just let him go unpunished? No. He might be loving, but he’s not good. A good judge ensures the law is upheld!”

God is good, therefore He must punish sin. And since we are all sinners, we all deserve punishment.

That’s the bad news. Here comes the good news.

- Romans 6:23b

God has a gift for us and that gift is not eternal death, but eternal life! And He’s giving that to us through Jesus Christ!

- Romans 5:8

Since the punishment for sin requires death, Jesus chose to die for us. I am the guilty one and I deserved to die. But Jesus chose the cross in my place to die for me! When He did, He paid for my gift.

Now, I have to take it!

- John 3:16

The way I take the gift of eternal life from God is to believe. Believe means to trust. We must trust that the only way we will get to heaven is through Jesus dying on the cross for us and raising again. Only when I trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus as payment for my sin can I be saved.

The idea of trust is putting your full weight on something.

An illustration that may help is to tell them about a frozen pond. If it was winter and we went out to a pond, I could ask you, “Is that pond frozen?” A person could say, “I’m sure it is! It’s been cold for a long time and I can see all the ice!” I could then say to that person, “If you really believe, step out on the pond!”

It’s one thing to know, it’s another thing to trust.

- Romans 10:13

The way we put our weight in the gospel is by calling on the name of Jesus to save us! It's saying a prayer admitting our sin, acknowledging that Jesus died and rose again for us, then calling on Him to save us!

Which brings us to our last circle, in the conversation flow..

STEP 5 - INVITE

Gospel Invitation

When sharing Christ this way, it's a good idea to have the person repeat back to you what you have taught them.

1. We are sinners and cannot save ourselves.
2. Because of our sin, we deserve hell.
3. Jesus died for our sin and rose again
4. When we believe in that truth and call on Him, He will save us

Once they fully understand, we should invite them to pray.

It's a good idea to have the person pray out loud so you can be sure they really understood and ask God to save them.

This method of conversation flow has been used many, many times to great effectiveness.

When used with the other steps as we follow the example of Jesus, God will do great things for His glory as He opens people's eyes to hear and believe the gospel and we get to be a part of that! There is simply nothing more enjoyable than leading someone to Christ!