



Introduction

What do you think about evangelism? And, equally important, how do you think about evangelism?

If you have been around Christians for very long, you've probably been exposed to multiple views about evangelism. The more you've heard, the more you may have become confused. There are a lot of different views out there, as well as different emphases, strategies and approaches. Many of these, of course, can be helpful. But at times the messages seem a bit conflicting. For instance, some suggest that you have to earn the right to be heard. Others advocate simply taking the initiative and trusting God to use the power of the gospel. Which is it—one or the other or neither or both? Hmm. Good question. And there are a lot more of them.

Our culture's influence hardly helps the cause. Evangelism is not a highly regarded activity by those who don't understand the issues at stake. So caricatures abound ("cramming the Bible down someone's throat"), as do calls for tolerance and pluralism. (You should never offend anyone, should you?) The relativism of today even makes one wonder if it matters at all. (Its okay as long as they sincerely believe something and, of course, don't harm anyone along the way.)

How do you sort it all out? Go back to the beginning. Study the primary documents — the New Testament. See what evangelism meant to Jesus and his early followers. With that foundation, you will be able to align your witness with what God desires and to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of today.

That is what *Getting Biblical About Evangelism* is all about. It is designed to guide you in the process of building a personal (and biblical) philosophy of evangelism. *Getting Biblical About Evangelism* is not an exhaustive study (and hopefully it will not be an exhausting one, either), but it will provide a valuable foundation upon which Christ can build for you a lifetime of fruitfulness.

Together or Alone?

Getting Biblical About Evangelism is designed as a personal study. There are no small group discussion questions built into it. This allows you to proceed at your own rate and draw your own conclusions. However, you may find it valuable to do this study in conjunction with others. After all, they may harvest insights from the passages that you might have missed. If you do it as a group, it is quite easy and profitable to gather each week and compare the discoveries from one or more passages. Simply share your findings to each of the five key questions and reflect on their implications for today.

A Four-Part Process

PART ONE | studying the PASSAGES

Getting Biblical About Evangelism is quite simple. It begins with studying fourteen key passages that either speak about evangelism or provide examples of evangelism. The first three are selected as foundational passages. If you only have a limited time (or interest), study these three and move on to STEP TWO.

Your investigation will be guided by five key questions that can apply to any evangelistic encounter. These questions parallel the five components of the Evangelism Model:

EVANGELISM MODEL

A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK



- The Master: God
- The Masses: The Audience
- The Messengers: Believers
- The Message: The Gospel
- The Methods: The Communication

As you study, ask God to speak to you through each passage. Ask him to help you think about evangelism as he thinks about it and to develop a sound and compelling ministry philosophy.

You may move quickly through this study. There are 14 passages. So if you do one passage each day, you can complete Part 1 in two weeks. Or, you may want to move at a slower pace. One a week will take you about a quarter of a year or three months to complete. Spend about 20–30 minutes reading and reflecting on each passage and record your insights within this booklet.



Part One: Acts 11:19-26 [sample]

¹⁹Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, (telling) the message only to Jews.

²⁰Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to (speak) to Greeks also, (telling) them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²²News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴He was a good man, (full of the Holy Spirit and faith), and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he found him, (he brought him to Antioch). So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul (met with the church and taught great numbers of people). The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

As you read, it may be helpful to highlight or mark the text in some way for each component. For example, you may mark everything having to do with the Master in red, the Masses in blue, etc. Or, use lines as in this sample key.

Sample Key:

-  = master (God)
-  = masses (Audience)
-  = messengers (Believers)
-  = message (The Gospel)
-  = methods (Communication)

[sample]

What do you observe about...

Date:

the MASTER | God and His part in evangelism?

- *God used the persecution to spread the messengers (and thus the gospel) to more people (19)*
- *God's hand was on the disciples, causing many to believe & turn to Him (21)*
- *God's grace is evidenced in the faith of new believers (23)*
- *God filled Barnabas with the Holy Spirit so he could bring many people to the Lord (24)*

the MASSES | The audience of evangelism?

- *They were both Jews (same ethnic background) and Greeks (different culture) (19)*
- *They were the people they encountered in their travels (19, 20)*
- *Many were responsive, believing and turning to the Lord (21, 24)*

the MESSENGERS | Believers and their role in evangelism?

- *The first seem to be ordinary Christian believers (19)*
- *They had been scattered by persecution. Yet they were still sharing despite that opposition. (19, 20)*
- *They weren't limited by their religious and cultural background (19, 20)*
- *They had the Lord's hand with them (21)*
- *They told the message as they went, witnessing as a way of life (19, 20)*
- *Barnabas, another witness, was a Christian leader, sent by the church (22)*
- *He was good, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith (22)*
- *Looked for evidence of God's grace in Antioch (23)*
- *Encouraged new believers to remain true (23)*
- *Get help from others in ministry (Barnabas went and got Saul) (25)*
- *Disciples first called Christians at Antioch (26)*

the MESSAGE | What was communicated?

- They shared the message (19)
- They shared the good news about the Lord Jesus (20)
- With those who responded, they encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts (23)

the METHODS | How was the message communicated? What was the relational context?

- The scattered believers told the good news as they went (which sounds more natural – with new acquaintances). But they didn't necessarily know the people they shared with, so it might have been more a ministry mode, intentionally meeting people to share with them (19, 20)
- Action verbs – telling (19, 20), speaking (20), bringing (24)
- Barnabas looked for where God was at work and encouraged the people there (23)
- Barnabas met with and taught new believers (23)

Personal Application:

Which truth from this passage is most important to you today?

- God's people tell the gospel wherever they go, with whoever they meet.

What practical way will you apply this truth to your life?

- I will pray about and seek to share with people in each arena of my life, that is, wherever I go and whoever I might meet.