

## Introduction:

What hinders most of us from evangelizing? Is it not the fear of failure? We are afraid we'll do something wrong and mess it up. We are afraid we don't know how to do it properly. We are afraid someone will reject our offer of the gospel. We are afraid someone will get mad at us. When you boil it all down to one simple common denominator, we're afraid we'll try our best at evangelism and it will fail. Let's face it. None of us wants to be a failure. I'd often rather not try something than to try it and fail. How about you? If I could share with you a 100% fail-proof approach to evangelism, would you try it? If I could share with you an evangelistic approach that works 100% of the time, would you practice it? That is what I plan to do in this lesson. I assure you, the simple plan I'm going to share with you in this lesson is 100% successful. It has never failed. And if you start employing it, you will never fail either.

## Discussion:

### I. What is the victory for our evangelism?

- A. One of the problems with so many failed evangelistic models and methods is they don't start by asking what our victory in evangelism actually is. They just jump in to trying to evangelize. Because the learners haven't figured out what the victory is they tend to continue to fail at evangelism over and over and over again, no matter how good the model or method is. Let's face it. You've got to know what the "win" actually is before you will ever be victorious at it, especially 100% of the time. Can you imagine what would happen to a football team that stepped out on the field thinking the victory was having the cleanest uniforms at the end of the game? They'd never actually be victorious because they were shooting for the wrong victory. In fact, thinking that victory is impossible, they probably wouldn't even really play the game.
- B. So, let me begin by shocking you. I'm going to share something with you that few people actually realize and that fewer still actually let sink in to their very souls. When you first hear it, you are going to think I'm wrong. However, I simply ask that you patiently allow me to biblically prove it before you boo me from the stage. Can we agree to that? Good. Here goes.
- C. You probably think Victorious Evangelism means baptizing someone. Wrong. Your evangelism is not victorious because someone got baptized at the end of it. Our evangelistic goal, brothers and sisters, is not to baptize people. Our evangelistic victory is not to convert people. I'm just going to let that sink in for a minute.
- D. Have you worked through the shock? Are you ready for my biblical proof? Read **I Corinthians 3:5-9**. What was Paul and Apollos's job? Their job was to plant and water. Was their job to cause the growth? No. Their victory wasn't tied up in getting someone to be baptized. Shockingly, despite the necessity of baptism to salvation, Paul said in **I Corinthians 1:17** that God sent Paul not to baptize but to preach the gospel. What is the victory? Teaching the gospel, planting and watering seeds. While we may actually do the baptizing, it's God's job to get people baptized, not ours.
- E. Understand, of course, that God hasn't failed if someone doesn't get baptized. God's Word actually never returns to Him void (see **Isaiah 55:10-11**). God's Word never goes forth but that it accomplishes the mission God sent it on. Sometimes the mission is the saving of a soul, and sometimes it is simply to leave someone without excuse. The reality is when someone hears the gospel and doesn't respond, neither the one who taught them nor God failed. The only failure there is the person who rejected the gospel message.
- F. Remember that God has given us an amazing gospel. According to **Romans 1:16-17**, the gospel is God's power unto salvation. I'm not. You aren't. This church isn't. The particular method of presenting the gospel isn't. The gospel is. As long as you are presenting the gospel to someone, they are experiencing the very power of God to save them. You don't have to worry that you are somehow messing it up. The gospel is simply too powerful for that.
- G. Therefore, as long as you are actually presenting the gospel to someone, you are being 100% victorious at evangelism. As long as you are teaching, you can't possibly fail at the evangelistic mission God has given you. Those people you have invited to church who have never shown up, they are the failures, not you. The people you've taught the gospel and they rejected it, they are the failures, not you. Please understand what this means. The only time you have failed at evangelism is when you haven't done it. If you're really afraid of failure, be afraid of that. You are not a failure when you've done something evangelistic and they didn't get

baptized. You are only a failure when because for whatever reason you didn't walk through the open door of evangelistic opportunity. Every time you plant and water a seed, you are 100% victorious.

H. Just think about the apostles in **John 4** as Jesus was talking to the woman at the well. They walked in to Sychar, got some food, and walked out. Nobody followed them back to Jesus. The woman at the well, however, walked in, told people about the man she met out at the well, and practically the whole city followed her out. What happened here? The woman was victorious, not because many of the people ultimately believed on Jesus. Rather, she was victorious because she told her friends and neighbors about Jesus. The apostles failed not because they taught and no one would listen. They failed because they were so distracted with their day to day living and trying to get food that they didn't notice the opportunities to tell people about Jesus. They probably thought these Samaritans wouldn't listen or didn't deserve it. Either way, they failed. Not because the people didn't listen, but because the apostles didn't speak.

I. Let me be abundantly clear about this. None of us want to be failures. So let me repeat and be clear about what failure in evangelism is and what victory in evangelism is. The victory in evangelism is planting and watering the seed. If you have planted and watered the seed, you have been victorious. Every time you plant and water the seed you are 100% victorious, because the planting and watering are the victory. That means the only time you and I fail at evangelism, the only time our evangelism doesn't work successfully, the only time is when we do not take the opportunity to plant and water the seed. The reality is evangelism never fails, no matter how anyone responds. The only failure is to fail to evangelize. As long as we are evangelizing, we cannot possibly fail at evangelism.

## II. 5 ways to be victorious in evangelism.

### A. *Pray:*

1. How much time do you spend praying for the lost around you? Do you have anyone on your "lost list"? That is, do you have any specific names of lost people you are actively praying for on a regular basis? In **Romans 10:1**, Paul expressed that he prayed for the lost. In **Matthew 9:37-38**, Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray for more laborers to go out into the harvest. All this makes me wonder if the harvest among churches today is so barren because our praying for the lost is so anemic. Do the lost get any more than a passing mention in our praying? We pray for hours and hours and hours about all the physical sickness that everyone's great aunt is experiencing (or at least we announce those prayer requests for hours and hours), but what about the lost people we know? Are we praying for them? Are we seeking others to pray for them?

2. Consider Jesus's statement in **Matthew 5:44-45**. What better thing can we do for our enemies than praying for their salvation? And if we should do that for our enemies, how much more for our friends? Pray that, whether by us or someone else, the good news can be planted in their heart, take root and bear fruit. Evangelism begins, is carried on the back of, and ends with prayer. Are you praying?

### B. *Care:*

1. In **Matthew 9:36**, the reason Jesus prayed for evangelism and the lost is because He cared about the people He saw. He didn't dismiss them because of their sin and rebellion. He didn't hate them because they didn't measure up. He didn't ignore them because they didn't cut it. He cared. If we are not careful, evangelism can be nothing more than a numbers game. We view the people we approach as trophies to be garnered, notches on our Bibles to be displayed. We end up not talking to them about the gospel because we actually care about them but because we want to hang them on our evangelism trophy wall. When we care for people, we will evangelize.

2. Show your care through compassionate service. Jesus often demonstrated His compassion by healing those He came in contact with (**Matthew 14:14**). He fed the 4000 because of His compassion (**Matthew 15:32**). No, this doesn't give a congregation authority to entice people to hear the gospel with secular and social draws. But it does demonstrate what individual compassion and caring looks like. Care about the whole person. That means asking about their story. That means serving when they are in need. That means listening to their fears and hopes and perspectives. It doesn't necessarily take a long time to demonstrate caring. In fact, even with a complete stranger if you ask about their story or ask if there is something you can pray for them and then listen, they can see your care.

### C. *Ask:*

1. One of the reasons we miss opportunities to evangelize is because we don't ask for them. Too often, we wait around for a Philippian jailer to ask us what he must do to be saved. Why not develop some questions that ask for the opportunity. A book I recently read ([Share Jesus Without Fear](#) by William Fay) had a list

of five questions you might use to end up in a spiritual conversation. I don't agree with the author's view of the gospel, but I think his five questions are good:

- (1) Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs?
- (2) To you, who is Jesus Christ?
- (3) Do you think there is a heaven or hell?
- (4) If you died, where would you go? Why?
- (5) If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?

2. Ask these questions and don't argue, just listen. Demonstrate you are listening by responding with "hmmm." Then get to the last one and if they say, "No," you might ask, "Why?" And then just let them answer. They may realize on their own how silly it is to refuse to be corrected if they are wrong. If their objection is answerable by you, provide an answer and ask again, "If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?" If they persist in saying, "No," then just "hmmm" and add them to your prayer list for the lost. If they say "Yes," now you have an opportunity to ask the most important question.
3. "Can I share some passages from the Bible with you?" If they say, "No," again, you might ask them "Why?" and then listen. They may realize on their own how silly it is to refuse to even listen to what the Bible says about these issues. If you have a response to their objection, give it, then ask again if you can share some passages from the Bible with them. If they persist in saying, "No," then let them know you'll be happy to if they ever want to know what the Bible says about these issues and then add them to your prayer list for the lost. If they say, "Yes," now you can point them to God.

D. *Point:*

1. Let me backtrack a moment. Make it your daily habit to point people to God in your life. Because Christianity has had such a profound impact on our culture over the last two millennia, just being a nice, honest person who has never murdered anyone, stolen anything, or raped anyone doesn't make you stand out. There are a lot of benevolent atheists out there. We obviously don't want to be the person who brings God up in the conversation to display superior spirituality over everyone around us, but we do want to point to God whenever we can. Someone asks, "What did you do this weekend?" Don't just tell them about your day of working in the yard on Saturday, tell them about meeting with the saints for worship on Sunday and what a blessing it was from God. If someone asks what's been going on in your life, don't just tell them about the kids at school and the latest job accomplishment, let them know you've been growing spiritually and learning from God how to be more what He wants you to be. Pointing people to God in these ways can open up opportunities in a myriad of ways.
2. But, I am now specifically talking about the opportunity you have just opened up by asking if you can share some Bible passages with them. Notice I said, "Point them to God." Not, "Point them to this church." I believe this congregation is practicing the truth. I believe there are a lot of congregations that aren't. But this church won't save anyone. Only God through Jesus Christ will. We don't have to start off on a litany of Bible passages that points out why they should come to church here. We need to show them what God has done for them.
3. Obviously, there are a lot of good study materials out there. If you have been given the opportunity to have a long sit-down study with someone and you feel comfortable with those materials, take them through it. But perhaps you just have a few minutes or maybe a full on Bible study freaks you out. Can you remember what **Romans 1:16** says? The gospel is the power of God for salvation. If you can simply share that with them, you've shared God's power for salvation. Then just let God's gospel work on their hearts. You don't have to work on their hearts. Remember, you are victorious just because you planted this seed not based on how they respond.
4. Can you prepare a short list of scriptures that summarize the gospel? What are some passages that have impressed you with the gospel message? You don't necessarily have to use "my list." What would yours be? Allow me to share some with you briefly. Perhaps you can write these down in the back of the Bible you carry with you everywhere you go or on a note page on your tablet with which you access the Bible and just take someone through the passages.
  - (1) **Romans 3:23**—"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
  - (2) **Romans 6:23**—"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
  - (3) **John 14:6**—"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

- (4) **John 3:3, 5**—“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’... Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”
- (5) **Romans 5:6-9**—“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”
- (6) **II Corinthians 5:15**—“And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”
- (7) **Romans 10:9-10**—“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”
- (8) **Acts 2:38**—“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

5. Use these passages or ones similar. Have the person you’re talking to read them out loud. Then simply ask, “What does this passage say to you?” If their response is something not in the passage, just ask them to read it again and repeat the question. These passages show why we are in need, what Jesus did for our need, and what He expects of those who respond to Him.
6. After all these passages are read and explained by the person you are talking to, you need to ask them to respond. “Are you a sinner? Do you need forgiveness? Do you want the salvation Jesus offers? Will you be baptized for the remission of your sins and then live for Him?” If they say, “No,” you might simply respond, “Why?” They may actually demonstrate themselves that their objection to salvation is silly. But then again, they may maintain their objection. If you know how to answer the objection, do so, and then ask them again. If you don’t know how to answer it, let them know you’ll think about it and get back with them. Then contact someone for help.
7. If they say, “Yes,” contact someone with a key to the building or with a swimming pool and let’s let that person die with Jesus Christ as soon as possible.

E. *Invite:*

1. Let me backtrack again. As simple as what I’ve presented is, some of you may still be a tad freaked out. If you really feel like you couldn’t write down these passages in the back of your Bible or chain reference these passages so you can go through them with someone, there is at least one thing you can do. Invite them to our assemblies. Even that is a means of victorious evangelism.
2. If the person says, “No,” to your offers of the gospel. You haven’t failed. You have been victorious. Remember, your goal wasn’t to convert them. Your goal was to plant the seed. You can water it with later conversations and prayer. You have succeeded. You stepped up and shared the gospel. Even though they have said, “No,” let them know you will be happy to talk more with them any time they want to. And then take the opportunity to invite them to our assemblies. **I Corinthians 14:23-25** demonstrates that the early Christians invited unbelievers to their assemblies. They may not have immediately responded to your presentation of the gospel, but they may be interested in learning more. Invite them.
3. If the person says, “Yes,” and you have baptized them, their walk with the Lord isn’t done. Remind them of what they read in **II Corinthians 5:15**. Jesus died for them that they might live for Him. Let them know that means being part of a faithful congregation. This will likely be very natural, especially if you’ve brought them here to this building to baptize them. But you need to invite them to our assemblies. Of course, if you have had this conversation with someone who lives somewhere else, then you need to do the work of finding a faithful congregation for them and getting them connected there.
4. No matter the result, the next step is for you to invite them to either check out the congregation or be part of it. If they rejected the gospel, who knows what might spark obedience as they spend time with us. If they obeyed the gospel, they need the fellowship of God’s people so they will live for God.

Conclusion:

There is only one way to have 100% Victorious Evangelism. You have to evangelize. Here’s the great thing. As long as you take the opportunities to pray and care for the lost, to ask the spiritual questions, to point to God and His gospel, and invite them to the assemblies, you’ve been victorious. If they reject the message, you didn’t fail. They did. So, who are you going to pray for and talk to this week?