



## ***Part 1 – Reaching People Who Need Jesus***

### **Does this sound like you?**

“I feel guilty about not making a better effort at sharing my faith. I get so nervous because I am not sure what to say. If I get enough courage to speak up, I’m afraid that I will say something wrong. I also have a deep concern that people might think less of me. So, it’s a struggle for me to start a conversation about Jesus.”

### **Three things needed.**

Evangelism is sharing the good news of Jesus with people. There are many books and programs to instruct and assist us with evangelism. Many of these are helpful, but the impression that they may leave with us is that evangelism is quite complicated.

Essentially, though, it is not. There are three basic things needed for evangelism to take place: the gospel, people who have the gospel, and people who need to hear the gospel.

God has revealed the gospel in the Bible. That’s the first thing needed. By God’s grace, we have it. Secondly, the Holy Spirit used the gospel to bring us to faith in the way of salvation through Christ. The third thing for evangelism is people who need Jesus. They are people who don’t have faith in him, or they are people who may confess Jesus but do not actively participate in a Christian church. There are millions of people around us who need Jesus. And the number is growing. The immensity of the job before us can be overwhelming but remember that God works on the hearts of people one at a time.

### **Identify the people you know who need Jesus.**

Sharing the gospel can make a difference for the people that you know who need Jesus. Identify them. Are there some among your family? How about people with whom you work or those that share leisure time with you? Do you have neighbors whose cars regularly stay stationary in their driveways on Sunday mornings? Do you know people in the organizations or groups that you attend who have little to do with Jesus?

Write down their names, and list what you know about them. Are they single or married? Where do they live and work? What about their family? What are some of their interests? Getting to know people is an important first step toward building closer relationships with them. It’s natural and more comfortable for us to share the good news of Jesus with people that we have come to know. The trust and respect that exist in close relationships help us overcome our hesitancy and concerns. As we spend

time with people and grow in our relationships with them, there will be opportune moments to speak a fitting word about Jesus and what he means for us. Our love for these people will help us understand the importance of turning small talk into conversation about things that matter eternally.

### **Relationships are important contexts for sharing Jesus.**

There are several important things to remember as we seek to get to know people and build relationships with them:

- ♦ ***Accept people in Christian love.*** Acceptance is believing that a person is valuable and that we are ready to put some time and energy into building a relationship. Acceptance is an act of unconditional love. That does not mean approval of sinful behavior. It does mean that we will be a friend with someone in spite of their “warts.” Such unconditional love will move the friendship to a deeper relationship in which we will have plenty of opportunity to talk about the unconditional love of our best friend, Jesus.
- ♦ ***Be interested in people who need Jesus.*** Focus on them (not on yourself) to find commonalities and make connections. We grow closer with people when we do things together regularly. Spend time with your friends, sharing ordinary times of life together. As Christians we build friendships not just for friendships’ sake. We have an eternal goal in mind. We want to share the good news with our friends that Jesus is the Savior of all people.
- ♦ ***Help people in their everyday needs.*** Our actions testify to the power of God’s love working in our lives. A kind word, a helpful deed, an unexpected gift are ways that we can let our faith show and generate curiosity about “what makes us tick.” Likely our charity will open up various opportunities to explain our faith.
- ♦ ***Commit yourself to the Lord in prayer.*** Ask God to help you be more confident about sharing your faith. Pray for the knowledge you need for speaking about Jesus as the world’s Savior. Pray that Christ give you a deep concern for the souls of all people, but especially for the ones that you know personally. Ask God for the privilege of being used by him to reach out with the gospel to those people who need Jesus. Then get ready for the Lord to answer your prayer. This is a *dangerous* prayer! Most likely, he will use you to tell about his Son.