



Part 4 – Keep on Sharing Jesus

Advantages of Witnessing to Friends

The relationships that you have with people are wonderful settings for sharing your faith. Think of the advantages. You have a variety of opportunities to talk about Jesus with the people you know. You don't have to force the situation. As you spend time with friends, you can comfortably build on spiritual conversations that you had previously. You will sense opportune moments when a friend might be more willing to discuss spiritual truth. When you spend time with people, they will also see your faith in action. As they observe your way of life, and think about their life in comparison to yours, they may ask for help to find the strength that they see in you. That opens the door again to talking more about the awesome love and tremendous power of Christ!

Love for Their Souls

Sharing Jesus with your friends is grounded in a love for their souls. Try to imagine what it would be like to be without Jesus in your life. Think of the confusion there would be about the purpose that you have on this earth. Imagine the uneasiness in your heart as you think of your sin and how you stand before God. Visualize yourself haunted by the fear of what will happen to you when death approaches. But what a difference Jesus makes for you! He is the rock of your salvation. Your life of faith is securely built on the Savior's peace through the forgiveness of sins and the certain hope that you will live forever with God.

In sharp contrast to the confidence we have as Christians, our friends without Jesus are lost. Separated from him, they are headed toward an eternity of such horrendous suffering that it makes us shudder. We don't want this to happen to our friends, or to anyone else. We can't be so indifferent to say or do nothing. As Christians, our hearts are moved to reach out to people, especially our friends. A famous preacher by the name of Charles Spurgeon once said, "Winners of souls must first be weepers for souls." We share our faith with people because we weep for them. We know that without Jesus they are void of true joy and lasting hope. With all our heart, we want to keep on sharing the good news of Jesus with our friends.

Things to Keep on Doing

Start by regularly praying for your unchurched friends. It is a privilege to include them in your prayers, confident that God will hear your intercessions for them and answer according to his will. You may let people know that you are praying for them. This will

help to communicate your love for them and your concern for their spiritual life. They may even ask why you are praying for them or what you are praying about, which opens up the opportunity to talk more about Jesus and your faith.

It's important to keep building up your relationship with your friends. When, overtime, they learn that they can trust you, your friends will be more apt to confide in you with their questions about the Christian faith. They will have the confidence to ask for your help with their spiritual concerns or fears.

Be patient and persistent. People may need to hear Christian truth in several different approaches at many different times. Patiently share Jesus with them. As opportunities present themselves in your relationships with people, share your faith as the apostle Peter instructs us, "Do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

Be careful about the words that you use. Words that hold rich meaning for Christians may not communicate clearly to non-Christians. Even commonly used words will probably need careful explanation. The challenge is to share the truth of God clearly without losing or changing God's message. A great way to prepare is to restudy Luther's Catechism. Turning to the index, look up words like *sin*, *salvation*, *faith*, *gospel*, and so forth. Go to the sections of the Catechism that treat those subjects. Study the passages listed and the definitions that are given.

Be careful about the words that you use. Words that communicate rich meaning to Christians may not communicate clearly to non-Christians. Even commonly used words will probably need careful explanation for our unchurched friends. In expressing important spiritual concepts, we need to use words that express meaning and value to the other person. The challenge is to share the truth of God clearly without losing or changing the message. Think through how you can clearly explain the concepts that these words convey: *sin*, *salvation*, *law*, *gospel*, *faith*, *grace*, *Christian*, *repent*, *blessing*, *mercy*, *redeem*.

The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of souls. While our life of faith and our eloquence to explain our faith are important to witnessing, they won't save anyone. God the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to turn the hearts of people to Jesus and work saving faith. So, after we talk to our friends about Jesus, how can we follow-up on those spiritual conversations to bring them into more contact with God's Word? Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Invite your unchurched friends to a special service or event at church.
- ◆ Invite them to a Bible study. Your friends might be more inclined to come to classes that address issues that they have questioned and talked to you about. Additionally, offer to attend the pastor's Bible Information Class with your friends.

- ♦ Share good Christian books, tracts, and videos. If your church has a library, share some of those resources that address your friends' curiosity and questions about the Christian faith.
- ♦ Introduce your friends to other Christians who have similar situations, concerns, or interests. God may use the witness of others to help reach them with the gospel.
- ♦ Point them to helpful web sites: www.WhatAboutJesus.com or your church's web site.
- ♦ E-mail daily devotions on portions of God's Word. Subscribe for e-mail delivery of inspirational devotions each weekday. Again, go online to *WhatAboutJesus.com* and click on *Today's Daily Devotion*.
- ♦ Send Christian cards for their birthdays, special occasions, and holidays.

God wants to use us to share the message of his love for the world in Jesus. We have considered various aspects of witnessing to our unchurched friends. What remains is doing it. People need to hear about their best friend, Jesus. Prepare yourself and with God's help, you can confidently share Jesus with your friends.