

Overcoming the Barriers to Evangelism

Objective

To understand the barriers which prevent us from evangelizing and how to overcome them

References

- ✠ 2 Timothy 1:7
- ✠ Acts 1:8
- ✠ 1John 3:18
- ✠ Proverbs 31:26
- ✠ 1 Corinthians 15:6
- ✠ Diocese of the Southern United States - www.suscopts.org

Theme Verse

“You shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8)

Lesson Guidelines

Before we can effectively evangelize, we need to understand the barriers that reduce our effectiveness at witnessing to others. These include:

Fear of Rejection

- ✠ One of the greatest needs in life is to be accepted.
- ✠ Sharing our faith in Christ with others obviously does not meet established status quo.
- ✠ Pursuing this subject is considered an invasion of our friend’s personal privacy and can sever the relationship.
- ✠ Though the Scriptures call Christians to be “special people”, few of us want to stand out and prefer the safety of conforming to the world.

Fear of Failure

- ✠ Many of us feel inadequate and incompetent in explaining or defending their faith.
- ✠ We are paralyzed by the fear that we may not be able to answer peoples’ questions.

There are many tools that can be used in evangelism. An excellent summary can be found in **2 Timothy 1:7**: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind”

Power

There are 3 supernatural agents you can depend on when sharing faith:

- ✠ The power of the Gospel – the Gospel is simply the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- † The power of the Holy Spirit – In **Acts 1:8**, you learn that in order to accomplish the task of proclaiming the Good News, “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me”
- † The power of prayer – when you pray for an unbeliever, or a Christian who has strayed, you confess your dependence on God for His leadership, wisdom and timing.

Love

The greatest force on earth is love. The unconditional, caring love of Christians attracts the unbeliever to the reality of Christ. In **John 13:35**, the Lord Jesus proclaims: “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”.

Love can be expressed in 2 ways that demonstrate Christ’s presence in your lives:

- † Love in deeds (**1 John 3:18**) – there are so many practical ways to show people your love such as visiting a sick person or caring for their children.
- † Love in word (**Proverbs 31:26**) – this could be in the form of encouraging or praising people. However, what does your verbal lifestyle testify to others? Are you sarcastic, do you gossip, or do you express compassion in your conversations?

Sound mind

The Christian faith is based on facts. In sharing your faith you should offer the historical, trustworthy testimony of the Bible.

- † The resurrection – not only His disciples witnessed His resurrection, but “He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once” (**1 Corinthians 15:6**).
- † Fulfilled Scriptures – there are many predictions in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the New Testament.
- † Manuscript and archaeological evidence – There are thousands of manuscripts and many archaeological findings through the centuries that have verified the Bible’s authenticity.

Conclusion

Evangelism is the responsibility of every believer and should be practiced whenever we have a chance. Evangelism with our acts is also important and supports our preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Activities/Discussion Points:

- † Form two groups; one would identify other additional obstacles to evangelism and how to overcome them and a second group would identify means of support during evangelism.