

Good Works, Witnessing, and Evangelism (two part study)

(appropriate for Mid Schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily, September 2021

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

(Source: Rev. John S. Mahon, Grace Community International, Houston, TX)

Tonight we are going to talk about the relationship between Good Works, Witnessing, and Evangelism. We are going to learn how to share the gospel effectively even if you don't have the spiritual gift of evangelism. But the problem is the non-christians don't really want to hear the gospel, do they? Is that the problem?

Luke 10:2

And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore plead with the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Jesus said that the problem is not that the non-christians don't want to hear it. The problem is the Christians don't want to share it! Witnessing is hard when we are ashamed of the gospel.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Many non-christians may not want to hear it but enough of them do that if we share the gospel with them faithfully the result will be a plentiful harvest.

With that in mind let's get started. What is our goal in sharing the gospel?

II Corinthians 2:14

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

The key word in this passage is the word "knowledge". The goal, when sharing the gospel, is to make sure that we clearly transmit the key information that non-Christians need to make an informed decision. Should I accept Christ or reject Him? Its not about us feeling good or transmitting emotion. What they need is the critical information of the key doctrines of the Gospel so that they can make their decision.

God uses Evangelists and Witnesses to do this. Are they the same thing? No. What is the difference?

Ephesians 4:11-12

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Who is to do the work of service? The saints. Who is that? The saints are, "all Christians". So sharing the gospel is work that all Christians are to do. All Christians are to be witnesses. How many are to be evangelists? Some (vs 11). So, all Christians are to be witnesses but only some are to be evangelists.

Evangelism is a Calling and a Gift

Evangelist: *One who preaches the gospel to others with the intent of converting them to Christianity*

Evangelism is a calling given to someone who has the spiritual gift of evangelism. In other words, they have a supernatural ability that other Christians don't have. A spiritual gift is not something you can choose for yourself. It is literally a supernatural power that the Holy Spirit chooses to give a Christian. Although every Christian has at least one spiritual gift, most Christians do not have the spiritual gift of evangelism.

A big failure mode in witnessing can occur when someone with the gift of evangelism teaches a class on witnessing. Much of what they teach doesn't work for the rest of us. They only work if you happen to have the spiritual gift of evangelism. People with this supernatural gift can get away with things that the rest of us can't. For example, there is an evangelist named Ray Comfort. Ray likes to walk up to strangers with a microphone in his hand and a video camera. He says something to them like, "Have you ever told a lie? (yes), Have you ever stolen anything? (yes), have you ever lusted after a woman? (yes). "So, what you are saying is, you are a lying, thieving, adulterer! Isn't that right? The person smiles sheepishly and says, "Yes, I guess I am!"

Why are people reacting that way to Ray? Because Ray has the spiritual gift of evangelism. But I don't have that gift. What would happen to me if I did exactly what Ray Comfort does? People would get angry at me, they might even try to hit me. The experience would be horrible, and I would vow never to share the gospel again! This is what can happen if those of us without the spiritual gift of evangelism try to do the things that evangelists do. For example, evangelists speak in the second person. They are speaking to the person and they use the word "you". For example they might say, "You are a sinner. You are separated from God"!

A Witness is Different (All of us: Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26, Romans 1:16, II Timothy 1:8, II Timothy 1:12)

Witness: *one who has personal knowledge of something and provides testimony as evidence of a fact or event*

A witness speaks in the first person. (ex: "I was separated from God"). This is a very important difference. What if I said to you, "You are a sinner separated from God". What would you think of me? You might start getting irritated with me or argue with me. Someone with the gift of evangelism can say these things and get away with it, but I can't. I don't have that gift. But instead, what if I said, "I am a sinful person. I was separated from God". Now how do you feel about me? Me being sinful doesn't really bother you, does it? In fact, you might start feeling sorry for me. "Come on Mike, don't be so hard on yourself. You seem like a nice guy." The dynamic is completely different. Its hard to get mad at someone who is just talking about their personal knowledge instead of about you. This is very important because as soon as you use the word "you", you stop being a witness and you become an evangelist and if you don't have the spiritual gift of evangelism things can go bad on you pretty fast. So, as witnesses we say, "I", not "you".

Years ago, I was involved in a ministry where we received permission from the base commander to share the gospel and hold bible studies in dormitories on a USAF base. Each of us chose a dorm. I chose the dorm for soldiers at the special forces school. Once a week for a year I would go through the dorm and share the gospel. I led one of the soldiers to Christ and would also have a short Bible study with him. One night I was in one of the rooms with three of the soldiers and I was sharing the gospel. I started by saying "The Bible says that you are a sinner separated from God". One of the soldiers stopped me, looked at me and said, "Who are you to call me a sinner. You don't know anything about me." Needless to say, I was not able to share the gospel with him. But if I had said "I" instead of "you" that would not have happened.

What if we say "man" instead of "you"? "Man was separated from God". Even this will cause problems. Someone may say, "But I'm an atheist, I don't believe that". People will still interrupt you and argue with you. What about asking someone if they are a Christian? They might say, "Yes, I'm Catholic (Mormon/etc)". Now what are you going to do? Call them a liar? Remember, the goal is not to have an argument with a non-Christian. The goal is not even to have a spiritual discussion with a non-Christian. The goal is to share the key doctrines of the gospel with them in such a way that they listen to and understand the gospel and can make an informed decision to either accept Christ as savior and lord or reject Him. That's the goal.

I have shared the gospel hundreds of times in the form of the Bridge Illustration by speaking in the first person (i.e. "I"). I will show it to you in a few minutes. How many times have people interrupted me and argued with me? Zero. Once they agree to let me share with them how I became a Christian, every person has allowed me to go through the Bridge until I finish quoting the last verse (I John 5:13). After quoting I John 5:13, I start asking them questions to bring them to a decision. During this part, some people may disagree or start arguing but at this point I have already completely shared the knowledge of the gospel with them.

Sometimes saying “you” will work even if you don’t have the spiritual gift of evangelism. This can happen when the people you are talking to are very humble people such as small children or downtrodden people living on the street but these are small subsets of society and I want you to be effective with everyone. So if you want to share the gospel effectively with your peers (someone who goes to the same schools or jobs that you do), or your superiors, you will need to speak in the first person (ex: “I was separated from God”).

What about using gospel apps on your phone? I don’t recommend them because its goes against the idea that you are sharing how you became a Christian. People are expecting to hear something personally meaningful to you but then you show them an app on a phone that is obviously not personal. Once again the app puts you in the position of being an evangelist rather than a witness and some will start to disagree or argue. Better to just memorize the Bridge and present it. The fact that you memorized the Bible verses also communicates that this is something that is really important to you since you went to the trouble to memorize it.

Properly Constructing Our Testimony

Testimony: firsthand authentication of a fact; a solemn declaration usually made orally by a witness under oath

Notice that when we give our testimony as witnesses it is to be a solemn declaration. In other words, it is something to be done in a serious and thoughtful manner. It is not a time to ramble on about ourselves. It is to be something we have intentionally and thoughtfully prepared for. Why? People’s eternal lives are on the line. As witnesses, we give testimony that certain things are true but there is no requirement for a witness to talk about themselves. For example, a witness in a court of law talks about what they saw, not about themselves. Its important to remember that our testimony is supposed to be about God, not about us! There is nothing in the Bible that says we have to talk about ourselves. In fact, just the opposite.

II Corinthians 4:5

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.

Instead, our testimony is about God, eternal life, and Jesus Christ. We show up only briefly in a supporting role. In fact, God has already scripted out our testimony for us! Its found in I John 5:11-13.

I John 5:11-13

And the (your) testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

This does away with the “powerful” testimony. What is that? “Come tonight at 7pm to hear brother Johnson share his testimony. And you won’t want to miss it because brother Johnson has a powerful, powerful testimony”. What does that mean, “powerful testimony”? These are testimonies where the person goes into detailed descriptions of when they were a satanist, murderer, drug abuser, etc. “I was a hit man for the mafia, I killed 20 people, let me describe exactly how I killed each of them, and then I became a Christian”.

But if that is a “powerful” testimony then what would a “weak” one be? “I was raised in a Christian home. My parents led me to Christ at an early age, and from my youth I have served the Lord”. That would be a weak testimony, right? No! Do you see why its silly to talk about what we did instead of what God did? Instead, we will keep the focus on what God did for us, not what we did. We will keep our part as small as possible. The “powerful” testimonies can be useful for encouraging other Christians during times of fellowship but are of limited value when talking to non-christians.

Where does this idea of sharing your story come from? Some may argue that Paul talked about himself when he preached on Mars Hill (**Acts 17:18-34**) or before Agrippa (**Acts 26:1-32**) but these were special cases. In one case Paul was invited to give a philosophy talk by the Greeks on Mars Hill and he was following their presentation format. In the other case Paul was in a court of law on trial and was presenting his legal case following their presentation format.

If you are invited to give a talk to a university philosophy class or to defend yourself during a trial in a court of law you can do the same thing Paul did, but this is not the situation we are in when we share our faith with a friend, neighbor, or stranger.

Some point to the situation in **John 9** where Jesus restored sight to a blind man (i.e. "I was blind but now I see") and say that we should witness the way the blind man witnessed. The problem with this is that the blind man did not share the gospel. What the blind man did was provide physical evidence that Jesus performed a good work and a miracle, but the blind man didn't actually share the gospel. Since he didn't share the gospel, we can't use him as an example of effective witnessing. He also did not talk to the Pharisees with gentleness and reverence as we are told to do in **1 Peter 3:15** but was somewhat rude and taunting. Finally, God does not comment on what the blind man said, either good or bad. Instead the Bible just records what he said without commentary. As a result we should not use the blind man as an example of witnessing.

We will also keep our words to a minimum and use God's Words as much as possible. Why? Because His Words are powerful, ours are not.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Witnessing is spiritual warfare. When the Holy Spirit gets ready for spiritual battle He goes into His war closet to get His weapon of choice. What is it? Is it the War Axe of Miracles? Is it the Club of Visions & Dreams? Maybe its the Spear of Healings? Or perhaps it is the Dagger of Speaking in Tongues? The Holy Spirit walks past all of these until He comes to His weapon of choice, the Sword of the Spirit, which is, the Word of God. The most powerful weapon we have is the Word of God. Therefore, our testimony must be saturated with the Word of God if it is to have power.

Ephesians 6:17

And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

1 Peter 1:23

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Salvation only comes from hearing the living and enduring Word of God. It doesn't come from hearing our words. Hearing God's Word does not mean restating Biblical concepts in your own words. If someone is hearing the Word of God it means that someone is quoting Bible verses! And satan knows this. As a result he will do anything to get you to share the gospel without quoting scripture. You can have a spiritual discussion, you can talk about apologetics, you can tell your story – all of that is fine – just don't quote scripture! And there are many well meaning people that will try to tell you not to quote scripture, just tell the story in your own words. But this is not what the Bible says.

(hold up a gospel tract) What is this? It is a dead tree. It has no spiritual life in it. Yet because it has verses from the Bible in it a non-Christian can read this and become a Christian. Something that is spiritually dead can make someone spiritually alive! Why? Because it contains the Word of God. That is where the power is.

In the first half of the 20th century one of the most successful evangelists in the world was a man named Charles Templeton. He led thousands of people to Christ. After some time in the ministry he published a book called, "Farewell To God" where he explained how he was actually an atheist. He never believed in Hell or in the creation event as described in the Bible. He never actually believed the gospel. Yet he led thousands to Christ. How? By quoting Bible verses while sharing the gospel.

So, if a dead tree can lead people to Christ by quoting scripture and an atheist can lead people to Christ by quoting scripture then maybe, just maybe, Christians could lead people to Christ by quoting scripture! The power of the gospel that brings people to faith is not in the messenger, it is in the quoting of the Word of God. This is why our gospel presentation must be saturated with the Word of God to be truly effective.

There are some people who will say that they had a spiritual discussion with someone without quoting scripture and that person became a Christian. What is going on in these situations is that some time previously, that person heard the Word of God from some other Christian or source but they decided not to become a Christian. Later, they have a discussion with someone or some other event occurs in their life and the Holy Spirit uses that to remind them of the scriptures they heard previously.

So, sharing the gospel without using scripture means that your effectiveness in sharing the gospel will be limited to those people who have already heard the scriptures from someone else previously. This is a very small percentage of the world's population and I want you to be effective with everyone, not just a small percentage. This is why the Bridge Illustration has us quoting 11 verses as we share the gospel. That's where the power is.

There is a saying, "don't take only a knife to a gun fight or you will get killed". If you try to share the gospel without quoting Bible verses, you are doing the spiritual equivalent of showing up at a gun fight with just a knife!

Putting It All Together

OK, so I think we're ready. We want to give a first person testimony that is serious, focused on what God did not what we did, and uses the Word of God as much as possible, providing the knowledge needed for people to become Christians.

So, let's try it. "Randy (name of an audience member), may I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes two hours". No? Wow. That did not go well, but I am not going to give up. I will try again. "Randy, may I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes one hour". No? Gosh, I am not good at this witnessing thing, but I know why. I have figured out what the problem is. The problem is, I don't have the spiritual gift of evangelism. Is that the problem? No. The problem is I'm taking too much time!

I have asked people in the U.S. how much time they would be willing to spend on something that was not part of their schedule for that day. The answer they gave back was "about 5 minutes". I have asked this same question of people in Zambia, Nigeria, and Cameroon. They all said "about 5 minutes". Guess what the answer is? About 5 minutes! If we can get the gospel message down to 5 minutes, the number of opportunities to share the gospel goes up exponentially, even in the most industrialized, busiest countries.

I'm sure you can find a college student willing to spend an hour talking to you about God, or a group of children who would be happy to hear you share the gospel for 20 minutes, but these are small subsets of society and I want you to be effective with everyone – not just small subsets of the population.

In the professional world people expect you to be able to explain complex and important issues in about five minutes. When I have to give a presentation for an executive they want the first slide of the presentation to be a "BLUF" slide (i.e. Bottom Line Up Front). In other words, they want all of the critical summary information and conclusions on the first slide and for me to give them a five minute overview. After they hear the five minute overview, then they will decide how much of the rest of the presentation they want to hear. If everyone in the world is being trained to deliver their critical messages in five minutes then we need to be able to do it too if we want to be effective with everyone.

Key Point: Witnessing is providing a first person testimony that is serious, short, to the point, focused on what God did not what we did, and uses the Word of God as much as possible, providing the knowledge needed for people to become Christians.

I am now going to share with you a 5 minute presentation of the gospel in the form of a first person testimony that contains as little as possible about me and uses 11 verses from the Bible.

(Share the gospel using the presentation in appendix C).

Note: As I am sharing the gospel I avoid using the word “you” (until the end as described in the next section) and instead use the word “I”. However, some of the verses I quote have the word “you” in it. Since God is the one speaking, its OK to say “you” when quoting the verse.

As you come to the end of your Bridge Illustration, we are going to break our rule about saying “you” one time and when we do we are going to turn into an evangelist. This is OK because at this point we have completed the communication of the knowledge of the gospel which was our primary goal. Now we are moving toward asking them to make a decision. As we approach the decision question we are going to ask, “If this is true, where would you be on this bridge?” At this point the spiritual battle can get intense and satan will throw up whatever distraction he can think of. At this point some people may argue with you or want to stop the discussion which is OK. Others may do the following:

After telling you where they are on the bridge, the person may start asking questions or making statements about side issues - the “whatabouts”. What about evolution, what about drinking, what does your church believe about same sex marriage? At this point you must stay focused, understanding that this is a spiritual battle, not an intellectual discussion. No matter what they say, wait for them to take a breath and then say, “Would you like to pray right now to receive Jesus Christ as your savior and lord?” Often the person will stop, think for a moment, then respond with a yes or a no.

satan will do anything to stop you from asking the question, “would you like to pray right now to receive Jesus Christ as your savior and lord?” Just ask the question, no matter what.

Our goal is to share the knowledge of the gospel. Whether they decide to become Christians or not is not our job. That is between them and God.

END OF PART 1

START OF PART 2

(Share the gospel using the presentation in appendix C).

Errors in Thinking about Witnessing

1) **Cultural Relevance** – God’s Word is ancient. Modern man cannot relate to it. Therefore, quoting scripture should be avoided and we should witness in our own words. **Truth:** God’s Word has spiritual power. Your words do not. God’s Words are relevant to all peoples in all cultures, in all times of history. Your words are not. People often ask me, “How do I share the gospel with an atheist, a Mormon, Catholic, etc. If you are using a method that is focused on quoting scripture the answer is easy. We share the gospel exactly the same way with everyone! Why? Because God’s words are relevant to all peoples in all cultures, in all times of history. Our words are not. We don’t have to have culturally adjusted arguments tailored to persuade different types of people. Nice! In fact, the Bible actually tells us not to do that!

I Corinthians 2:4-5

and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

And what is the source of power? – the Word of God. When I was on mission trips to Zambia, Nigeria, and Cameroon I led people to Christ using the Bridge Illustration with God’s Word, even though I was an alien to them in culture. My ability to be culturally relevant was zero.

This is also true for people in different cultures in America. God's word is effective with children, teens, college students, college professors, relatives, laborers, oil workers, computer programmers, businessmen, mid-level government officials, high level government officials, engineers, elderly people, and special forces soldiers - all of which I have led to Christ using the Bridge Illustration. And you can too, because the power is not in the messenger but in the Word of God. I can take the Bridge Illustration anywhere in the world and, if the people speak English, they can understand it, and some will become Christians. When the focus of your gospel presentation is quoting verses from the Bible, cultural relevance is automatically built in by God.

- 2) **Relationship Witnessing** – People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. **Truth:** The longer people get to know you the more things they are likely to discover about you that they don't like! More importantly, in the book of Acts the gospel was shared with people within 24 hours of the first meeting Christians had with them. Building relationships is fine but don't get tricked into thinking you can't share the gospel until you have spent a year becoming friends with someone. I have led people to Christ who sat next to me on an airplane that I had no relationship with and never saw again (Its OK to do that). Relationship evangelism can even work against you. Once you have become good friends with someone you may be afraid to share the gospel with them because you don't want to lose them as a friend. You might also fall into the trap of having a good opportunity to share the gospel with someone but not doing it because you have only known them a short time. This is bad. If you have a relationship with someone witness to them. If you don't have a relationship with them, witness to them. Relationships are nice, but they aren't really relevant to whether or not you should witness to someone.
- 3) **Visions & Dreams** – people in closed countries have dreams and visions of Jesus which causes them to become Christians. **Truth:** People become Christians because a Christian shared the knowledge of the Gospel with them. God may or may not use visions and dreams to get people's attention, but people don't receive Christ because of a dream. They receive Christ because somewhere along the line a Christian shared the Gospel with them. A dream may get their attention but then the Holy Spirit reminds them of the gospel the Christian shared with them and they change their mind and accept Christ.

(skip to point #4 unless this appears to be an issue with the audience)

Here are some problems with the Vision argument:

(Colossians 2:18-19)

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,¹⁹ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

Another problem with visions of Jesus is that the scripture indicates He will only appear one more time, not many times in visions.

(Hebrews 9:28)

so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

Name 5 facial characteristics that are different between Jesus and satan. What are they? You can't. You don't know what satan looks like and you don't know what Jesus looks like, do you? You don't know what that vision really is do you?

(II Corinthians 11:14) - No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

This is why we don't put our trust in visions of Jesus. We put our trust in the Word of God. We don't know what satan or Jesus look like. For example, how long was Jesus' hair? It was short!

(I Corinthians 11:14)

Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

- 4) **Traumatic Events** - Occasionally you may hear a testimony from someone claiming that they became a Christian because they experienced a traumatic event. Someone may say they became a Christian because they were in a serious car wreck and they almost died. **Truth:** If this was true then the best way to bring people to Christ would be for all of us Christians to drive around and intentionally crash into people's cars! The truth is this person was witnessed to by at least one Christian at some point in their life. At the time, they rejected Christ and forgot about it. When the car crash occurred, the Holy Spirit brought back to mind the knowledge of the gospel they had previously been given by the person who witnessed to them, and then they received Christ. God can use traumatic events to get someone's attention, but by themselves they don't bring anyone to Christ. This is why we witness faithfully and use the Word of God. So that He can use it in the other person's life both now and in the future. As the scripture says, it is the knowledge of the gospel in the Word of God that leads people to salvation.
- 5) **Good Works** – If people know that I am a Christian and they see me doing good works, they will become Christians. **Truth:** People will give glory to God for your good works. Then they will die and go to hell! Good works draw people's attention and cause them to give glory to God, but that does not save them.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

(Ephesians 2:10)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

When people come up to you and say something like, "I just have to say I think what you (or your church) are doing is great, I'm impressed" what are they doing? They are glorifying your Father in heaven. When that happens that is our signal to witness to them – God is giving the opportunity to us on a silver platter!

Instead of saying, "Thank you", which is us taking God's glory for ourselves, we could say something like, "Its because I am a Christian. May I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes." Without the knowledge of the Gospel, our good works don't result in people's salvation. We still have to share the gospel. It's not that hard, we just have to be prepared.

Key Point: *If you hear people praising you for your good works, that's your signal that it is time to witness to them. If we don't witness to them we are taking credit for God's work in our lives instead of giving that credit to Him, the rightful owner.*

- 6) **God will give me the words to say** - Some people may say that you don't need to prepare to share your faith because the Holy Spirit will give you the words to say but these passages, such as **Mark 13:9-13**, are talking about Christians living during the Tribulation when access to God's Word will be very limited, pastors and Bible teachers will have been raptured, and all the Christians will be less than seven years old in the faith. In that situation, as the young Christians are being put to death, God will supernaturally give them the words He wants them to say.

But for those of us living in the Church Age (pre-rapture) God wants us to prepare ahead of time.

I Timothy 4:7 - ... discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.

I Peter 3:15 - but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you ...

I Peter 1:13 - Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- 7) Talking about apologetics leads to sharing the gospel** - I have not found this to be true with non-christians. It usually leads to a disagreement or confusion. If they ask me about an apologetics issue I usually say something like, "I'm happy to discuss that but first, may I share with you how I became a Christian – it only takes five minutes". If they say no, they most likely are not really interested but I will still talk to them about apologetics if they want. If they say yes, I share the Bridge with them. After we are done then I am happy to discuss apologetics with them. Apologetics are useful and encouraging for Christians but have limited value with non-christians without the gospel first. I shared the Bridge with a college student sitting next to me on an airplane. He prayed to receive Christ. After that he had a lot of questions about science and the Bible that I was able to answer for him. Apologetics help to remove doubt in the heart of Christians but apologetics does not have the power to generate a saving faith – only God's Word can do that.
- 8) Having a spiritual discussion leads to sharing the gospel** - In college there were people who liked having spiritual discussions and this approach might work with some types of college students but in the working world most people don't want to spend the time. For those that do, the discussion often leads to disagreement. I recommend sharing the Bridge first, then afterward, I'm happy to have additional discussions. I shared the Bridge with a newlywed couple on an airplane once. They were already Christians. Afterwards they had a lot of questions about assurance of salvation so we discussed that in more depth.
- 9) I don't have to memorize verses – I can read the verses from my Bible** - What is the problem with this? TIME. Fumbling around looking up verses takes time. Also, most of the time when you will have opportunities to share the gospel you won't have a Bible with you. If you have it all memorized it becomes more natural to share the Bridge verbally with people over the phone or in situations where you can't write anything.

I was once asked to give my testimony during a Sunday service at a church with 300 people in attendance. I stood at the podium and presented the Bridge Illustration verbally. It worked just fine. I just had to change the ending a little.

Occasionally I will have a non-christian friend or co-worker stop by or call me and ask me questions about salvation. With the Bridge verses memorized I can easily quote the scriptures for them without taking up a lot of time looking up verses. It also communicates to people that this must be really important since you went to the trouble of memorizing it. Funny thing is when you have the verses memorized and always ready to go – sharing the gospel actually does seem more natural!

What to Expect When Sharing the Gospel

Once someone knows you are a Christian or some type of religious person look for a time when you might have 5 minutes alone with them. When that happens ask them, "May I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes." If they say, "No" your job is done. Smile and say, "OK, thanks." You have completed your task and God will reward you in heaven just the same as if they had said, "yes".

If they say, "yes" then you share the five minute Bridge Illustration with them. At the end you ask them, "Would you like to pray right now and receive Jesus Christ as your savior and lord?" If they say, "no" your job is done. Smile and say, "Thanks for letting me share that with you". You have completed your task and God will reward you in heaven just the same as if they had said, "yes".

If they want to receive Christ you pray with them. Afterward you can talk with them about getting and reading a Bible and finding a church. They may also have additional questions they want to discuss with you, which is great. You can also give them your email address if they want to contact you or a key website that could help them.

Don't be discouraged if you can't follow up with them or disciple them. Most of the people I have disciplined in my life were not led to Christ by me and most of the people I led to Christ I did not end up discipling. This is a team effort. Do what you can and trust God to use other Christians to help them further.

Have a Plan

Witnessing is not natural. It will take some intentional planning. Always have a blank sheet of paper in your shirt pocket and a pen wherever you go. If you are in a situation where you have 10 minutes alone with someone you can just ask them, "May I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes."

Make a list of people you plan to witness to: Family, co-workers, neighbors, service people, people sitting next to you on airplanes, public events, etc. Pray for them and ask God to give you opportunities to witness to them. When you see the opportunity, share the gospel. If people praise your good works, share the gospel with them. And remember, it still counts if you ask the question, "May I share with you how I became a Christian?" and they say, "No".

For service people who are working and don't have much time but who start asking questions about a Christian activity you are doing, it is helpful to carry a bridge tract you can hand them to look at later that explains what (or why) you are doing the activity. You can order bridge tracts from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association titled, "Steps to Peace With God". <https://www.billygrahambookstore.org/steps-to-peace-with-god-pack-of-25-purple.html>

How to Get Started in Witnessing

The first step in witnessing is baptism. If you have not been baptized yet, that is your first assignment, just as it was when Paul became a Christian (**Acts 22:12-16**). Why? Because when getting baptized you are witnessing to all of those who are in attendance in your church.

The next thing is to memorize the 5 minute Bridge Illustration from this lesson and customize the dialog to fit your life but remember that the focus of the presentation is on the gospel using God's Words (**Eph 6:17**). Your testimony is not really about you, its about Christ. Spend your 5 minutes sharing from God's Word what the person needs to know to become a Christian instead of sharing things about yourself that will only be relevant to a small percentage of people.

Now that you have the gospel presentation memorized, you can present it to people in your church. Perhaps there is a children's class you can present it in. What about Vacation Bible School? If someone visits your Sunday School class or Bible Study group this would be a good person to ask, "Can I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes". In fact, make it a point to share the gospel with visitors to your church that you come in contact with since it only takes a few minutes. They are already open to listening to religious ideas since they chose to come to your church. Do the same thing with your Christian friends and relatives. Although you might assume that these people are already Christians, you will find when you share the gospel clearly with them that some of them are not, even though they are supportive of Christian things.

Now its time to think about those outside your church. The first step here is to get used to letting people know you are a Christian. How do you do this? When they ask you questions you answer truthfully. For example, if they ask, "Did you do anything interesting this weekend?" Instead of saying, "No", you could say, "Yes, I went to church like I usually do." Now they know you are some type of religious person. When people ask me what I do I often say, "Well, I'm trained as an engineer but what I really enjoy doing is working with teenagers at my church". Think of ways you can answer common questions so that people can tell that you are a Christian.

Now that most of the non-christians know that you are a "religious person", they may occasionally ask you questions or comment on something good they saw you do. If they ask you, "What do Christians believe?" you can say, "Well, I can show that to you in about 5 minutes", or if they say, "I was impressed with what you did in that situation" you can say, "Its because I am a Christian. May I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes". The key here is to always be ready. Review your verses once a week and carry a pen and folded piece of paper in your shirt pocket everyday so that you will always be ready if God gives you the opportunity to share your faith. If you can find one or two Christian friends to work on this with it will be more encouraging for you than trying to do it alone. On a final note, there is a special reward or Crown that God will give to those who have been faithful to share their faith - the Crown of Exultation (**I Thess 2:19-20, Phil 4:1**)

END OF PART 2

Appendix A: How Does The Bridge Method Compare to Other Ways of Sharing The Gospel?

There are many ways to share the gospel besides the method taught in this lesson. Each method, although effective in certain circumstances or with certain subsets of the population, has its weaknesses. The Bridge Illustration taught in this lesson, has been optimized by missionaries over many years and has been demonstrated to be effective with English speaking peoples in nations all around the world and with people from all levels of society. It has been intentionally designed to avoid most of the weaknesses of other methods. So far, I have found the Bridge Illustration to only have one weakness. It requires us to not be lazy. We are going to have to memorize eleven Bible verses. What I have found is that most of the people who want to deviate to other methods are not doing so because they believe the other methods are more effective. They are doing it because they perceive those methods will be easier for them. But that is not what we are trying to achieve. We are looking for a method that is the most effective in enabling the maximum number of opportunities to share the gospel, in all circumstances, while also being maximally effective at giving the non-Christian the information they need to decide if they will receive Christ or not. Its not about what is most convenient for us. Its about what is best in helping people avoid a Christ-less eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Below is a list of questions to ask yourself about your method of sharing the gospel:

- 1) **Does it cover all the essential doctrines of salvation the non-christian needs to hear?**
Many gospel sharing methods leave out key doctrines. For example, the doctrine of God's Judgment of people after death is critical to include if non-christians are to come to Christ (**John 16:7-8, Heb 9:27**). Most experienced-based testimonies leave out this doctrine. Other doctrines that are often left out are the assurance of salvation (**Eph 2:8-9, I John 5:13**), repentance (**I Peter 2:24**), the need to receive Christ personally (**John 1:12**), the new life of following Christ (**I Cor 5:17**), and the need to make a personal decision to accept or reject Christ (**II Cor 5:20**). These doctrines need to be included in the gospel presentation to give the non-christian a full picture of what they need to know to make their decision.
- 2) **Is each doctrine supported by a direct quote from God's Word?** If not, the method won't be effective for everyone. God's spirit working with God's Word impacts and changes people (**Heb 4:12, I Ptr 1:23**). Our words don't. There might be situations where you have a spiritual conversation with someone without quoting Bible verses and they still become a Christian. How could that happen? Easy. At a previous time there was another Christian who quoted Bible verses with them but they rejected Christ. Then you came along and talked with them and the Holy Spirit used the conversation to remind them of the Bible verses they had previously heard and they decide to become a Christian. But I don't want you to be limited in effectiveness to only those non-christians who have heard God's Word previously (this is a small percentage of the population). I want you to be effective with everyone!
- 3) **Can it be presented in the first person** (e.g. "I was separated from God") or is it presented in the second person (e.g. "You/We are separated from God)? If the method presents the Gospel using second person language, you become an evangelist instead of a witness. As a result, it will tend to irritate all but the most humble non-christians, unless you have the spiritual gift of evangelism. Since the percentage of the non-christian population that is humble is small (the downtrodden or children?) and because few of us have the spiritual gift of evangelism, methods using second person language (including phone apps) have more limited application. For example, the Roman's Road method is often taught using second person language making it more of a method for evangelists rather than witnesses. Also, second person methods make it more difficult to get permission to start. You can't say, "May I share with you how I became a Christian"?
- 4) **Can the presentation be completed in five minutes or less?** Many people have their time tightly scheduled. They will not be willing to spend more than five minutes on unplanned, optional activities. Also, if you can't complete it in five minutes then you also can't start by asking, "May I share with you how I became a Christian, it only takes five minutes". That would be untrue, so you can't say that. As a result, you will have to say a longer time or not say a time. In either case, the most likely response will be "no". If the method can be completed in five minutes, it maximizes the likelihood that people will say "yes". Other variations are to show the verses from a Bible instead of quoting them except you may not always have a Bible with you and looking up verses means you will likely not meet the five minute time limit. Finally, quoting scripture instead of showing the verses from a Bible or tract demonstrates that this is really important to you personally.

Appendix B: Passages On Faith And The Word Of God

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. This means that someone or something is quoting Bible verses!

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

1 Peter 1:23

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Matthew 13:23

And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

John 20:30-31

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Romans 16:25-26

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, ²⁶ but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

Galatians 3:2-5

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Appendix C: First Person, Five Minute, Bridge Illustration for Witnessing

Michael R. Daily, June 2013

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

May I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes.

(Take out a blank sheet of paper. Draw the two sides and label, "MAN" and "GOD").

As a child my parents took me to church to learn about God and the Bible. I learned that I was a sinner separated from God. (Write: "ISAIAH 53:6").

Isaiah 53:6 - All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

I also learned that I was dead to God. (Write: "ROMANS 6:23").

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And I realized I was heading for judgment. (Write: "HEBREWS 9:27").

Hebrews 9:27 - And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

In college, I was invited to attend a Bible study - so I did. This is where I learned that God loved me and wanted to give me eternal life. (Write: "JOHN 3:16").

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

He also wanted me to have an abundant life on the Earth. (Write: "JOHN 10:10").

John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

In order to give me these gifts, God decided to come to the Earth in the form of a man named Jesus Christ. (Draw the CROSS). Jesus paid for my sins by shedding His blood and dying on the cross. He was buried and 3 days later He rose from the dead. By doing this, Jesus became a bridge for me to cross back over to God's side and have life. (Write: "1 PETER 2:24").

1 Peter 2:24 - and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

In order to cross back over to God's side I had to do 2 things. First, I had to believe these things that we are talking about. (Write: "BELIEVE" and under it write "JOHN 5:24").

John 5:24 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

(Draw the arrow from Man's side to God's side)

Second, I had to RECEIVE Christ as my Lord and Savior. (Write: "RECEIVE" and under it write "JOHN 1:12").

John 1:12 - But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

So, when I was 18 I prayed and asked Christ to come into my life as my Lord and Savior: “Lord I know I could never be good enough to earn my way to heaven. Thank you for paying for my sins by dying on the cross. Please come into my life right now and be my Lord and Savior”.

The moment I prayed that prayer God gave me eternal life and I can never lose it, because I didn’t do anything to earn it. (Write: “EPHESIANS 2:8-9”).

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Since becoming a Christian, Christ has changed my life for the better. (Write: “II CORINTHIANS 5:17”).

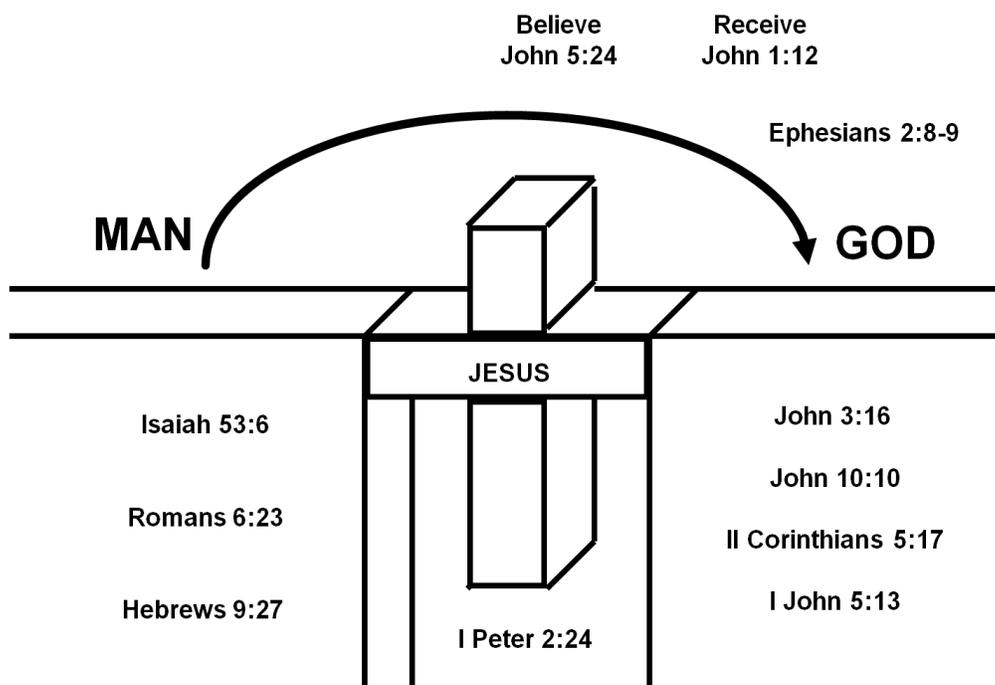
II Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

And I know for sure – 100 percent for sure - that when I die I will live in heaven with God forever. (Write: “I JOHN 5:13”).

I John 5:13 - These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

- 1) If this is true, how would a person cross over to God’s side? (if they are not sure or get it wrong just tell them – “believe these things & pray to receive Christ as Lord and Savior”)
- 2) If this is true, where would you be on this bridge? (if they say anything other than God’s side ask question 3, if they say “God’s side” ask them when they received Christ. If they don’t know then ask question 3, if they really are already a Christian thank them for letting you share this with them).
- 3) Would you like to pray to receive Christ right now? (If they say “yes” then take their hand and pray with them to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. If they say “no” ask them if they would like to meet with you to study the Bible and learn more about these things. If they still say no thank them for letting you share this with them).

Draw the illustration below on a piece of paper while you are speaking. Let them keep the paper:



QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Good Works, Witnessing, & Evangelism*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 4:11-12, I Corinthians 12:30*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 1:8, I John 5:11-12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Philippians 3:17-19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Good Works, Witnessing, & Evangelism*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 17:17, Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17, I Peter 1:23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 2:18-19, Hebrews 9:28*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Corinthians 11:14, I Corinthians 11:14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Good Works, Witnessing, & Evangelism*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 5:16, Ephesians 2:10, III John 1:11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 1:16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 10:1-2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?