



(ETM) EVANGELISM THAT MATTERS : Evangelism that is faithful (and effective).

As the church, we are given the command to make disciples for Jesus Christ (Mat 28:19). In other words, to help others embrace the good news (gospel) message of "Abundant Life in Jesus Christ by submission to Him as Lord Before Savior in the relationship of Covenant through His Church."

However, to be faithful (and effective) to this evangelistic command requires we adopt the same philosophy as those in the Bible. Their philosophy of evangelism consisted of the following essentials:

1. FRIENDSHIP

1.1. Friend (def): Someone w/whom we share a personal, caring relationship.

1.2. The influence of a Christian friend plays a big role in the conversion of many people both today¹ and in the bible (tbd). That because we (as human beings) tend to listen more to those we consider our friends than anybody else. In other words, we trust we those have a personal, caring relationship over those who are simply capable of presenting us w/the truth (e.g. Greg Boyd's Open Theist god, gospel and church).

1.3. Being a friend is different than being friendly. The latter simply makes you an acquaintance (not necessarily a friend). This is often what distinguishes the person with plenty of friends from the one who lacks them. It is not a matter of disposition - i.e. whether or not you are friendly, but commitment. Those who have friends are committed to being a friend - i.e. having a personal, caring relationship w/others.

1.4. What being a friend (i.e. having a personal, caring relationship) REQUIRES:

1.4.1. Sharing your Christian life² w/them (1Th 2:8; 2Co 6:11; Joh 15:15).

What this looks like today: inviting them into your home or to activities, talking about your life, history, conversion to Christ, worldview, job, aspirations, hopes, likes/dislikes, hobbies, fears, family, how your week is going, what you did last weekend, what trips you are planning, etc. so that they get to know/appreciate/respect you as a person; visiting w/them on the phone, through text, email or Facebook³; sharing photos, recipes, etc., having an "open-door policy" in re: to coming over to your house or calling you any time (e.g. the late Christian singer, Keith Green and his family always set an extra plate on the table at dinner time since others were always welcome to come and join them for dinner).

1.4.2. Being involved in their life/Getting to know them (Joh 4:40-41; Luk 19:1-10; This is why Jesus was identified in this way - Mat 11:19; 1Co 9:12-23 - Notice, Paul viewed his evangelistic efforts in befriending others as including accommodation [12-18] and assimilation [19-23], but never compromise [21]).

¹ 48% of professing Christians claim a friend to be the primary influence in their conversion according to Tom Rainer ("High Expectations", p. 128, Exhibit 7-7).

² In everything we do should carry the "aroma of Christ" (2Co 2:15) which means that in sharing our lives w/others this sb obvious - i.e. the things we do and discuss will be "peppered" w/ references to God (e.g. Me: "Hey Bob! How's it going?" Bob: "Okay - except for all this rain!" Me: "I know! It's hard as Coloradans to live w/so little sun! Still, I don't complain since I know this is God's will and it is always what's best"). This wb discussed in more detail under the 3rd imperative, Worldview.

³ Texting, Facebook and other forms of social media have become common today yet lack the ability to be as personal as verbal communication. Having a personal relationship requires personal time.

What this looks like today: going to their house or participating in their (permissible) activities, talking about their life, history, religious background, worldview, job, aspirations, hopes, hobbies, fears, family, how their week is going, what they did last weekend, what trips they are planning, etc. so that they KNOW you appreciate/respect them as a person.

The importance of this particular aspect of friendship cannot be over-estimated: it is the pre-requisite to the next evangelistic essential (Apologetics, what matters most to people and what gives us the ability to connect the gospel to their lives in an effective way. It is also the aspect that seems to be most lacking in our attempts to be-friend and evangelize others at DRC! (e.g. My mother's recent conversion from Quakerism - though I have been talking to her for 20 yrs, was facilitated by me becoming her friend -i.e. getting to know her and appreciate where she was coming from).

1.4.3. Genuinely caring for their needs: emotionally, spiritually - and even at times, financially (Mat 5:44-48; Act 4:21-23; Luk 10:25-37, 16:9; Pro 17:17).

What this looks like today: praying for their needs and salvation, letting them know you care about them and their eternal state, extending your condolences when they suffer loss, offering to help when they are sick/injured (not lazy or in trouble), buying them gifts for Christmas, birthdays, etc., taking them out for dinner (at a place they like and is permissible) and getting the bill, taking them to a sporting event or something they like (and is permissible) and paying for it, etc.

1.4.4. Being the one who always tells them the unvarnished truth (Pro 27:6; 1Th 2:5).

What this looks like today: sharing the sound gospel message in its entirety (i.e. explaining its three main heads: AL, LBS, C/C); not "rounding off the edges" when asked moral questions or what they will face should they die w/o Christ, not laughing at their dirty jokes, telling them they are NOT a Christian (for those who claim to be but are clearly not), telling them that their gospel is wrong and church is false. When done in love, people will respect and trust you b/c of such truthful speech. Likewise, people are very good at picking up on those who compromise so as not to "spoil the party" . Such people lose the respect and trust of their friends and therefore their ability to effectively share the gospel message (e.g. Article written by an atheist regarding his Christian friend's silence on eternal things).

1.4.5. Not discriminating b/c they are different or difficult (Mat 5:46; Luk 14:12-14; 1Co 1:26 - Consider Paul's words in light of who he was intellectually).

What this looks like today: not avoiding people b/c of how they smell, look, talk or act (e.g. Me).