

OUTREACH WORKSHOP



self-study workbook

by Andy Cantrell

- 1 Be concise.** Please share your thoughts and answers, but be considerate so that others will have time to share their answers also. Be charitable and kind. Be willing to share with the group, but do not try to dominate the conversation. Use the time after the class to find help with any personal issues or problems you may be confronting in your life.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

(James 1:19–20)

- 2 Be thoughtful with your answer.** Consider your words. Do not simply regurgitate what you have always heard. We have the tendency to speak in “Christianese” — words that only people who grew up on the pews would understand. Think about how your words will be heard by others. Will they understand what you are saying? Is what you are about to say going to be useful for the building up of the faith of others? Or will your words be confusing, cause hurts, or worse, damage someone’s faith? Speak without harshness or anger, but with kindness and humility.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

(Ephesians 4:29)

- 3 Rely on the scriptures for truth.** It is easy to rely upon conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. Bible study is about seeking God’s answers for our lives, not dispensing the advice of the world. We must consider that our natural answers may be the wrong answers if they are not founded on God’s word.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

(1 Corinthians 1:25)

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Four Challenges of Sharing the Gospel

This article has two purposes. The first is to challenge each of us to examine why we don't do more talking about the Lord and His things with those we encounter. I apologize if I have made a wrong assumption about you, but I suspect you are like me and know you could do better. The second is to share some ideas that have helped the Christians who gather where I live to start speaking up, pay attention to opportunities, speak boldly, and communicate more clearly than we had previously. The following thoughts come from challenging discussions we have had in what our Deacons serving in the area of evangelism have called "Evangelism Workshops."

There are countless reasons why Christians struggle when it comes to evangelism, but I believe the following four categories cover most, if not all, those reasons. They are Care, Consciousness, Courage, and Craft. Most of the excuses we are willing to vocalize come from the last three areas. We are willing to admit we need to pay better attention (Consciousness) and are often scared to speak up (Courage), and that we don't know how or what or when to say the things we should (Craft). But it is rare to hear someone vocalize the most important (and most common) reason we don't share His things like we should: Care.

CARE:

Here is the truth about me. I often don't care enough about what God is doing in the universe to get involved in His business. Along with that, I often haven't cared that the most important thing God is doing in the universe involves the souls of the people walking by me each day—souls that "God so loved" that "He gave His only begotten Son" so that they would "not perish, but have eternal life." Can we please be honest about this? We can make all the excuses we want about why so many of us remain reticent about our Lord, but what truly is the source of our lack of Consciousness, our missing Courage, and our lazy or haphazard Craft if not Care? Everything follows this! In fact, it is my belief that if we care enough about God and those made in God's image, we will become more aware of opportunities, find the boldness to speak or serve, and diligently discipline ourselves toward saying things in such a way that it will "give grace to those who hear."

Here are couple thoughts about how to develop greater care. Sacrifice and service come from a realization of God's mercy toward me (Rom. 12:1-2). "We love, because He first loved us" (1 Jn.4:19). I must think more intensely about God's love and mercy offered me. I must thank Him more frequently for His loving kindness. I must enthusiastically engage my heart and mind in the prescribed disciplines of remembering Jesus, thankful prayer, noble-minded listening to God's Word, probing meditation, and all the other instructions God designed to train me to love Him and those He loves! I understand these are activities we participate in frequently. The problem is that many of us, somewhere along this journey, forgot that going through the motions was designed by God to stir our emotions.

CONSCIOUSNESS:

Jesus had to train His disciples to be conscious of opportunities. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matt. 10:37) surely would have been as uncommon a viewpoint then as it is now. When the Lord spoke to Paul that night in Corinth and revealed, "I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10) it surely would have been as shocking to him as it is to us. The key to both these revelations is that the disciples who heard these words must CARE enough about God's "harvest" and His "people" to actually become the "workers" and "go on speaking." Recognizing that every heart is soil (Matt. 13) and that every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5) contains the seeds of truth that can be planted in the lives of those around us is a necessary realization. Once realized and meditated on, every person, interaction, word, and deed become an opportunity for us.

I find it interesting that when Paul encouraged the Colossians to, “Conduct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity,” (Col. 4:5), he began the thought in verse 2 by reminding them to pray, keep alert, and be thankful! So often I forget to devote myself to prayer concerning my awareness and opportunities. For what it’s worth, I stopped just now while writing this to pray for you concerning this. Please pray for me and for God’s people everywhere—that our eyes be opened, and that the Lord send forth workers.

COURAGE:

Most of the things I am afraid of concerning evangelism are selfish and embarrassing to admit. I’m afraid I will no longer be liked, or thought of as unkind, or excluded from activities or conversations, or embarrass myself, or stick my foot in my mouth, or some other thing that is only about me and my comfort. I feel much better about confessing the other things I am afraid of because they genuinely result from my concern for the other person. I worry I will push them away, ruin an opportunity, say something wrong, or not actually help them in some way. Some of these fears are valid, but really only if I fail to get one of two things right. We are to be “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). If I speak the truth but am not motivated by love it will do no good for me and could potentially hurt the one I seek to help. If I love but fail to speak the truth, it does no good for them. This pursuit is so freeing to me. I find great courage in this! Just think of the incredible implication—as long as I love them and speak what I know to be true, God is pleased, they can be helped, and I have nothing to be afraid of!

Notice how Scripture gives us courage to speak up. Jesus told a man who knew very little to, “report...what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you” (Mk.5:19). God does not expect, or need for us, to speak of things we don’t know! We need not, and should not, speculate, or add to what God has done or said! He can accomplish His purposes with the truth that He has already taught me, even if I have so much more truth to learn. In Acts 4:20 this same principle is taught. Peter and John said, “We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” How encouraging! They were not expected to speak of things they hadn’t seen or heard, and neither are we. Look closer at your fears. If you have heard enough truth to gain faith, then what you have heard is enough to help another find faith. As long as we are willing to speak only what we know to be true, and refrain from speaking of things we don’t know, we have nothing to fear. And more importantly, God’s truth is powerful enough to help another even if we deem it to be small or incomplete.

CRAFT:

God is a craftsman. Children of God should be imitators of their Father. Paul wrote in Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Some eaters just stuff their face; others take the time to collect, measure, and season their meal to make it enjoyable. When I was younger, I did everything in haste. As I have matured, I have seen the value in taking my time to prepare and do things with much more thoughtfulness. Why would we not do this when it comes to speaking with others, or serving them on behalf of our Lord? Perhaps, it’s because we are lazy. Perhaps, it’s because we don’t want to think deeply about our shortcomings to know what another might need. Perhaps, we just don’t care enough.

I have started to practice some things lately that have helped me communicate more clearly, more kindly, and more effectively. It actually is something I do after encounters, not before. I try to replay the conversation in my mind and honestly critique what I said, how I listened, and what I could have done better. I have also begun to be a more serious student of how Jesus spoke in various situations to different kinds of people. I sure have a lot to learn. But I finally care. I hope you do too.

— Andy Cantrell

NOTES

1 Where do you see the English word "evangelism" in your Bibles? What is "evangelism"?

2 Look at Luke 1:19. What word in the text do we get the word "evangelism" from?

3 Why do we struggle with inviting others to hear the gospel or discuss spiritual things?

4 There are four aspects for consideration for outreach:

CRAFT

COURAGE

CONSCIOUSNESS

CARE

5 Scriptures concerning inviting:

John 1:35-49

Isaiah 1:18-20

Isaiah 55

Matthew 11:28-29

Revelation 22:17

6 What are we inviting people to?

7 What can we do to invite people to assemble with the church?

8 What can we do to invite people to personal Bible study?

9 What can we do to listen and share about life?

10 Read Colossians 4:2-6. What do you learn about preparing to reach out in each verse?

Verse 2:

Verse 3:

Verse 4:

Verse 5:

Verse 6:

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When Assembling

- 1 What do these passages teach about our behavior, attitude, or purpose while assembling?

Hebrews 10:23-25

James 2:1-4

1 Corinthians 14:23-25

- 2 In what ways do you believe our assembly can affect evangelism/outreach (positively or negatively)?

- 3 What would be helpful in our conversations with guests? What might be unhelpful?

- 4 What would be helpful for guests during our worship? What might be unhelpful?

- 5 What would be helpful for guests during our Bible classes? What might be unhelpful?

- 6 What are ways can you think of that would be potentially helpful or harmful to creating an environment that is welcoming, challenging, inspiring, and in every way encourages those assembling (whether Christian or not) to be edified and grow closer to God?

1 Read Ephesians 4:11-16

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:11–16 ESV)

What is the goal of the text?

What did God do to accomplish the goal?

What is your part in accomplishing the goal?

2 “When each part is working properly” (vs. 16)

Right now what do you think is your part?

What are the “part” (vs. 16) or “works” (vs. 12) necessary to build up the body?

(Think of as many roles, works, activities, etc as you can)

3 “Equip the saints for the work of ministry” (vs. 12)

How exactly does “equipping the saints” take place?

(How should it be done? How could it be done? If it was your job, how would you accomplish it?)

4 Specific areas needing attention:

Inviting:

Greeting:

Friendship:

Hospitality:

Teaching classes:

Burden bearing:

Support of teachers:

Prayer:

Other areas?

5 What do you believe is your part in this work?

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Jesus' Instructions For Outreach

Introduction: Serving and teaching others comes with many challenges. We get tired. We get hurt. We do not always know when to move on. We do not always know what to say. Jesus is aware of this. In this great chapter of Matthew 10 we see Jesus encouraging, warning, and instructing some disciples he was preparing to send out teaching and serving. Though not every detail is the same for us, there are many wonderful things to learn about the work we long to do for our Savior. Let's explore and see what we find.

Below are four areas that need to be given careful attention when it comes to evangelism. Deficiency in these areas is one reason we often find ourselves not doing as much as we know we should when it comes to sharing the gospel with others. Think about how this interaction between Jesus and his disciples teaches us something about each of these areas:

Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Look carefully at the text to find principles and instruction that will help us in our teaching. Record your thoughts and answer the discussion questions.

1 Matthew 10:1-4

Do you believe these individuals taught in the same way or sounded the same? What was the same for them? Why is this important for us to think about?

2 Matthew 10:5-6

What are some limitations Jesus's might give us at first?

3 Matthew 10:7-8

What are some things we have "freely received" that we should "freely give"?

4 Matthew 10:9-10

In what ways might we find support as we teach others?

5 Matthew 10:11-15

Why is it so hard to move on sometimes?

6 Matthew 10:16-23

What is the worst persecution you have faced by teaching? What is the worst fear you have?

7 Matthew 10:24-39

How does fear affect sharing the gospel for you? How does love affect sharing the gospel for you?

8 Matthew 10:40-42

Why is it important to think of the future of the people around us?

Introduction: Consider the importance of the following ideas as regards starting conversations with others:

Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

1 Read Colossians 4:2-6 and write down your observations from the text.

Principles For Discussion

2 "Continue steadfastly in prayer"

3 "Being watchful in it with thanksgiving"

4 "God may open a door"

5 "That I may make it clear"

6 "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders"

7 "Making the best use of the time"

8 "Let your speech always be"

— Gracious:

— Seasoned:

— Knowledgeable:

Introduction: Why do we often struggle with inviting others to hear the gospel or discuss spiritual things?

Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

1 Scriptures concerning God's fellow workers:

Matthew 28:19-20

1 Corinthians 3:5-10

2 Corinthians 5:17-6:10

2 How the Lord encouraged a fearful evangelist:

Acts 18:9-10

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

3 What kinds of challenges to outreach are beyond our control or influence?

4 God opening doors:
Acts 14:27

1 Corinthians 16:19

2 Corinthians 2:12

Colossians 4:3

5 What things can we trust God is already doing in our city regarding outreach?

6 What things can we continue to pray for that would help us be more effective in the growing of God's kingdom?

OUTREACH WORKSHOP

Conversations With People Who Think About God

Introduction: Consider the importance of the following ideas as regards starting conversations with others:

Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

1 Consider Colossians 4:2-6 and how to start spiritual conversations:

2 The kinds of "God-conscious people" we meet:

Devout to their religion/denomination:

Superficially religious:

Searching for God, answers, truth:

Church shoppers:

Love God but not "religion":

Believe Jesus is the Christ and in his authority:

3 Determining our goal in each conversation:

Get into a Bible study?

Meet again to talk about a subject, challenge, or seeking God?

Plant seed of an idea or truth?

Invite to assemble with the church?

What other goal(s) might we have?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler

Read Mark 10:17-27 (cf. Matthew 19:16-25; Luke 8:18-30)

1 Jesus shows us there will be **negative responses**:

What should be our measurements of success in outreach?

What can be learned from negative responses?

2 Jesus shows us the **value of asking questions** in sharing the gospel:

Consider why Jesus might have answered this man's question with a question. Also consider why Jesus asked this particular question to this man.

3 Jesus shows us that we can often **build on what is already there**:

What did this man have going for him spiritually speaking?

4 Jesus shows us that some people have **false understandings of salvation**:

What are some modern ways people often misunderstand?

5 Jesus shows us that **love is vitally important**:

6 Jesus shows us that **some people lack one thing**:

7 Jesus shows us that people can **start and finish very differently**:

8 What other lessons do we learn concerning evangelism in this text or the surrounding context?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Jesus and Nicodemus

Read John 3:1-21

- 1 Jesus shows us that **knowing our audience** is important in sharing the gospel:

Is it possible to improve on knowing what is in a person? If so, how?

- 2 Jesus shows us that **we cannot predetermine contacts** in sharing the gospel:

What kind of people do you typically shy away from having a spiritual discussion with? Why?

3 Jesus shows us that **patience in a person's understanding and growth** is needed:

What kinds of teachings often take people time to understand or grow into?

4 Jesus shows us that **dialogue is valuable** in sharing the gospel:

What kinds of questions might we anticipate from others and offer to others?

5 Jesus shows us that **contrast is powerful** in sharing the gospel:

What contrasts do you see in this discussion? Which of these could you see being valuable with people today? Why?

6 What other lessons do we learn concerning outreach in this text or the surrounding context?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Jesus and Legion

Read Mark 5:1-20

1 Jesus shows us that there is **no situation too difficult** in sharing the gospel:

Do we ever prejudge people or circumstances? If so, how?

2 Jesus shows us that **there is no place for fear** in sharing the gospel:

What things are we often afraid of?

3 Jesus shows us that **extraordinary compassion** is needed in sharing the gospel:

In what ways might we show love to people that could use it? Be specific.

4 Jesus shows us that sharing the gospel is **worth high costs**:

What might be the cost for us (personally and collectively) to share the gospel?

5 Jesus shows us that **some people will not be interested** in the gospel:

6 Jesus shows us that **everyone can be involved** in sharing the gospel:

7 Jesus shows us that **where we may be most effective** in sharing the gospel:

8 What other lessons do we learn concerning outreach in this text or the surrounding context?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Jesus and the Waters

Read John 5:1-17

1 Jesus shows us to **go where the need is:**

What would have kept people from this location?

2 Jesus shows us that **there are many people looking for healing:**

What are modern day examples of people we can help and places we might find them?

3 Jesus shows us that **tough questions are needed:**

What are similar questions that get to the heart of things?

4 Jesus shows us that **people have many excuses:**

What are some you have heard? What can be done for people like this?

5 Jesus shows us that **the healed and helpers may suffer persecution:**

6 Jesus shows us that **people are more important than propriety:**

7 Jesus shows us that **the work is with the Father:**

8 What other lessons do we learn concerning outreach in this text or the surrounding context?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Jesus and the Blind Man

Read John 9:1-41

1 Jesus shows us that **unplanned gospel sharing** is important:

How many opportunities would we have if we paid more attention? Give examples.

2 Jesus shows us that there there is **a sense of urgency** in sharing the gospel:

3 Jesus shows us that **obedience is needed** to respond to the gospel:

Did Jesus need to spit, use clay, or use the pool to help this man?

4 Jesus shows us that **unexpected answered might help** in sharing the gospel:

What either/or questions have made you feel pressured in religious discussions? What different angles/topics/answers have helped you start discussions?

5 Jesus shows us that **people progress in their understanding**:

Explain how patience is an important part of helping others to genuine faith.

6 Jesus shows us that **people will respond differently** to God's work:

7 What other lessons do we learn concerning outreach in this text or the surrounding context?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Read John 4:1-42

- 1** List as many things as you can find that contributed to Jesus getting this opportunity with the Samaritan woman:
- 2** Give examples of how we can apply these same principles and create opportunities with others:
- 3** How does Jesus spark this woman's interest and move her to speaking about spiritual things?
- 4** Give examples of how we can apply these same principles and develop interests in others:
- 5** How does Jesus challenge this woman? How does Jesus encourage her?
- 6** Give examples of how we can apply these same principles when we try to motivate others to allow God to change their lives:

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Paul at Athens

Read Acts 17:16-34

- 1** Who was Paul's audience? List them all.
- 2** How did Paul get the opportunity to teach?
- 3** What appears to be Paul's motivation to teach?
- 4** What impresses you about how Paul approached teaching these people?
- 5** What important concepts and principles does Paul include in his sermon?
- 6** What do you learn from this text about how we can grow in our efforts to reach others with the gospel? Be specific.

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

- 1 What word does Paul use to describe the work he did in verse 6? What word for Apollos' work?
- 2 What is the difference between these two aspects of gospel sharing?
- 3 Explain how we can plant.
- 4 Explain how we can water.

Read Ephesians 5:6-16

- 5 Summarize what is expected from us in this text.
- 6 What are we told not to do? What are we told to do?
- 7 How can we actually expose darkness (5:11)?
- 8 Do you think this is an easy work or difficult work? Why?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:13

- 1 What is an ambassador? What are the activities of an ambassador?
- 2 What reasons does Paul give for why he sees himself as an ambassador?
- 3 What is the urgency Paul has with sharing the gospel?
- 4 Does Paul see himself as alone in this work?
- 5 Describe Paul's efforts to share the gospel. How is he commended as God's servant?
- 6 What can we learn from this text about how to become ambassadors for Jesus? What attitudes must we have?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

- 1** Why do you think many do not do much in the way of sharing the gospel? Think about this question in terms of planting, watering, defending, enlightening, and displaying Jesus.
- 2** Which of the above reasons do you struggle with the most?
- 3** There are many important works that are involved in sharing the gospel and reaching the community. Not everyone has the same gift or role. Make a list of the things that need to be done in order to accomplish this goal.
- 4** Which of these areas do you presently feel you have the most to offer?

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Care:

Consciousness:

Courage:

Craft:

1 TELL OTHERS WHAT YOU KNOW (Mark 5:19)

What did Jesus tell this man to share in Mark 5:19?

Write down what you can share with people right now:

2 START WHERE YOU WILL BE MOST EFFECTIVE (Mark 5:19)

Write down some people you can start with:

3 REMEMBER WHO IS IN CONTROL (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Who has the power for salvation? Can you control the outcome from sharing the gospel? What can you control?

4 ALWAYS BE CONSCIOUS OF THE GOAL (Ephesians 4:15)

What must always be our motivation? What must we always speak?

5 SEE THE WORLD LIKE JESUS DID (Matthew 9:37-38)

How did Jesus see the work? What can we do? How can we prepare our hearts?