

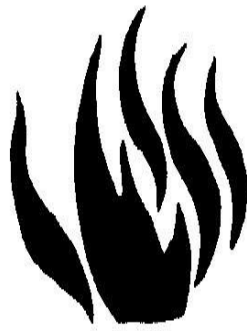
Listening Evangelism

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Edited by Rev Dr James D Kearny 2021

www.dunamisNW.org



Dunamis Course 6

Dunamis 6: Listening Evangelism

Welcome to Dunamis Course #6. These lessons prepare you and your congregation or small group to partner with the Holy Spirit in sharing your faith. The key is listening to the Holy Spirit and to the people God leads you to. This partnership is what Jesus modeled and taught to his disciples. Evangelism is not all on your shoulders. Your part is to be willing and available.

These 9 lessons, designed to be taken by a group, lead to the practicum, where you will go out on an outreach and put these teachings into practice.

If you have any questions please contact me, James Kearny, jdkearny@gmail.com, or the PRMI office, prmi@prmi.org.

May God richly bless you as He directs you to share your faith, bringing others closer to God.

Grace and peace,

Rev Dr James Kearny

On behalf of PRMI

Important Resources for Putting on this Course

- Refer to the Facilitator's Guide for specific instructions on leading this ministry in your congregation or small group. <https://sites.google.com/view/dunamisnw/leaders-resources?authuser=0>
- Refer to the Small Group Leader's Guide for practical instructions on leading a small group. <https://sites.google.com/view/dunamisnw/leaders-resources?authuser=0>

Refer to the "How to Pray During an Event" for guidance on praying during your Dunamis event. <https://sites.google.com/view/dunamisnw/leaders-resources?authuser=0>

Listening Evangelism

1. Introduction to Listening Evangelism **pg. 5.**

In the Great Commission, Jesus told us to make disciples of all nations. This course focuses on the first part of that Commission: sharing our faith with others.

2. The Heart of the Father: Motivation for Evangelism **pg. 11.**

Before we get to the specifics of evangelism, let's spend some time talking about what motivates us and God to evangelize. Evangelism sounds like a lot of work. Why would we want to do this in the first place?

3. Jesus as Evangelist **pg. 17.**

As followers of Jesus, as we learn how to evangelize, it is helpful to look the one we are following for his example. For Jesus is not only the subject of the message of evangelism, he is also our model of how we are to evangelize. By examining Jesus as evangelist, we won't be looking for techniques to imitate, but rather principles to guide us. In this lesson we will look at ten principles that guided Jesus as evangelist.

4. Circles of Influence **pg. 23.**

Jesus said, "*No one comes to me unless the Father draws them.*" John 6:44. What if you already know some of those people? Or what if God wishes to put you next to one or more of those people where the Holy Spirit is at work? In this lesson we are getting practical. We're going to make a list of people you can be praying for, people you might already know, with whom God wishes you to share your faith. Where all's that's needed is for you to interact with them and speak the word God gives you. For clarity, we are organizing these people into groups. Circles of influence beginning with those closest to you than radiating outwards.

5. The Holy Spirit Drawing People Faith **pg. 33.**

I began our last lesson with the words of Jesus, "*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him*" (John 6:44). But how does this "drawing" happen? How does the Father work to a bring person to Jesus Christ? Today, as we discuss how the Holy Spirit draws people to faith, we will focus on two words: thirst and links.

6. The Philip Model **pg. 39.**

In Listening Evangelism, we have seen how God works in people drawing them to faith in him. We have also learned how God works in us to help draw people closer to God. In bringing people into the kingdom of God, God works both sides of the equation. In our lives and in the lives of those God leads us to share our faith. Today, we will use the story of Philip and the Ethiopian to see how God works both in the teller and in the listener of the gospel, both sides of the equation.

7. Evangelism as Story Telling **pg. 45.**

So, how exactly do we tell the gospel? When you find yourself in a Kairos moment, and the person is waiting for you to share your faith, what will you say? How do you tell the old, old story? How do you tell that story in a way that meaningfully connects with the person? In this lesson, we will look at how to tell that story. We will go through four stories, the four stories that need to be told to draw someone closer to God.

8. Leading a Person to Faith in Christ **pg. 51.**

Imagine you are having a spiritual conversation. You've shared your faith. You sense the Holy Spirit hovering. The person seems convinced of the gospel. Then they look at you expectantly. You believe the person is ready to accept Christ. Now what? How exactly do you lead a person to salvation in Christ?

9. Practicum. Instructions for Going Out.

pg. 56.

Our final lesson is preparing a group of you to go out into the streets and share your faith. Like all the Dunamis Lessons, Listening Evangelism is designed to equip believers to advance the Kingdom of God. This means putting into practice what you learn from these courses.

Introduction to Listening Evangelism

Lesson 1



Listening Evangelism
Dunamis Course 6

Introduction: Welcome to Dunamis Course #6 Listening Evangelism.

In his Great Commission, Jesus told us to make disciples, a process that involves helping bring people to faith in Jesus Christ and helping them grow in that faith to become more like Christ. This course focuses on the first part of that process leading people to salvation through Jesus. More broadly, this course will equip us to bring people closer to Christ. This means encountering people who have never heard of Jesus. This means encountering people who have heard a lot about God and have a lot of experience with Christians and the Church. So, we will be covering a lot of topics.

In this course, you will:

- Learn how Jesus did evangelism.
- Learn what motivates God, and us, to share our faith.
- Learn where you are called to share your faith.
- Learn how to participate in the Holy Spirit's process of bringing people to faith.
 - How to listen for the Spirit's guidance in initiating spiritual conversations.
 - How to listen for a person's spiritual thirst.
- Be equipped to share your faith.
 - To communicate the big story of God's saving work in Jesus Christ so you can clearly communicate it at the right time and in right place, in a way that a person really hears the gospel.
 - To communicate how God has worked in your life so you can readily tell your own story at the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Learn how to lead a person into God's Kingdom.

Format and Presentation

Teaching—In the teaching segments the teachers provide a basic biblical framework for understanding the Holy Spirit's work of evangelism. They also provide practical information on how to move into the dynamics of cooperating with the Holy Spirit to do listening evangelism.

Small Groups—after each lesson, you will split into small groups for discussion and prayer.

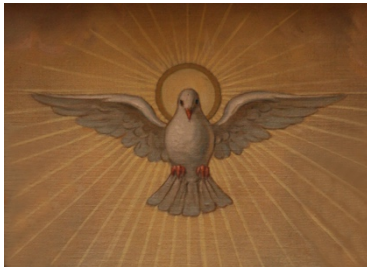
The Practicum—after our final lesson, you will put what you have learned into practice. You will go out into the community for a couple of hours to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in search of divine appointments, Spirit-led encounters with people for listening, sharing, and blessing. The best way to learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in doing Listening Evangelism is by taking the risk and doing it. This practicum might seem a little artificial but when you put yourself at God's disposal and God leads you to a person God has been working with, you will witness a genuine interaction that brings the person closer to God. You might even lead people into God's Kingdom. All this practice will prepare you for these encounters that will happen in your everyday life.

Evangelism: The Mission of God's People

The Father's mission is to bring about a restored relationship between human beings and Himself, including the whole created order. This relationship was the Father's original vision for creation but was shattered by the Fall. This restoration takes shape most fully as we enter newly reconciled relationship with the Father through the Son Jesus Christ.

The mission of the people of God is to cooperate with the Lord Jesus, as directed by the Holy Spirit, to join the work of the Father reconciling and restoring His original intention in creation.

The word Evangelism came from the Greek word meaning “to bring a message of good news”. It originated in the ancient world, when during a time of war, a runner or “evangel” would run from the battle to the city, to announce the victory of the city’s army. “Evangel” means a messenger of good news. As Christians, we have the privilege and responsibility given to us by our heavenly Father, to be his hands and feet and voice in letting people know the good news of God’s victory, that through Jesus, God has defeated the forces of death and sin. God has won our salvation. As evangelists, bringers of good news, we announce this salvation and invite people to turn from the dominion of death and darkness and enter God’s Kingdom of life and light.



The Holy Spirit as the Director of Missions and Evangelism

If you are feeling pressured about the whole topic of evangelism, pause for a moment. Take a deep breath, let it out, and turn the responsibility of sharing your faith over to God. We are not in charge of sharing our faith, God is, specifically the Holy Spirit. Evangelism is God’s work.

God brings people to salvation. Jesus said, “*No one comes to me, unless the Father draws them.*” John 6:44. In this course, we center evangelism in the sovereignty of God. It’s God’s initiative that draws people into faith. Our job will be to listen to the Holy Spirit and cooperate with Him in sharing our faith.

Jesus is Our Example

Jesus is our model in cooperating with the Holy Spirit to bring good news. Jesus began his mission when the Holy Spirit fell on Him at his baptism. The Holy Spirit equipped, empowered and directed Jesus to go about the work he’d been called to do which was establishing the kingdom and calling people into it. He did this as a Prophet, Priest and King.

Prophet

Jesus evangelized as prophet as he taught people, as he rebuked the Pharisees warning them of their hidden sin. He did this with the Samaritan woman at the well, where to worship. He did this with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, where he rebuked them for being so slow to believe Jesus’ teaching and then went through the Scriptures teaching them again how they spoke of his life, death, and resurrection.

Priest

Jesus evangelized through healing people and forgiving them of their sins, thus, convincing them of God’s love. We see Jesus convincing the woman caught in adultery of God’s love when Jesus forgave her of her sins, thus relieving her of this huge burden of sin and shame.

King

We see Jesus evangelizing as king when he calls people to follow him, calling them into the Kingdom. When he was walking by the sea of Galilee, he calls the fishermen to follow him. Or when he encounters the Gadarene demonic, he frees him of a legion of demons. Or when he rebukes the storm as he crosses the sea of Galilee.

In these three roles, Jesus evangelizes in many ways. This opens for us a wider variety of ways that God wishes to use us to proclaim the good news of His love and His kingdom.

What About Programs of Evangelism?

Often in response to the Great Commission, what the church tends to do is to put together a planning committee to develop a program or we rush off and start working. That is precisely what Jesus forbade at the start of it all. We must not go it alone. We must not think that the mission is all on us, our responsibility to do alone.



“You must wait,” he said, “for the promise made by my Father, about which you have heard me speak: John, as you know, baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and within the next few days” (Acts 1:4, 5).

The same is true for us. We must wait for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Right before he ascended to heaven, Jesus reminded his disciples of this again.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will bear witness for me in Jerusalem, and all over Judea and Samaria, and away to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:7, 8)

Jesus’ ministry began when the Holy Spirit fell upon Him, empowering and directing Him in the fulfillment of the mission given Him by God the Father. So too for us, the Holy Spirit as the Director of Missions, will come upon us in power, directing and enabling us in the cooperating with the Father and the Son in advancing the kingdom of God.

Does this mean that all programs of evangelism bad? Of course not. Listening Evangelism is a program. What is important is that we hold these programs lightly. So that God can work through us as we work with these programs.

Christians Co-operate with the Holy Spirit

We’re called to do the same thing. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit doing the work leads us to listening evangelism. We call it listening evangelism because we will be listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; we will be listening to Jesus; we will be listening to what the Holy Spirit is doing in the person, to their heart, their situation.

This will lead us to an orientation of witnessing to Jesus based on seeking guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit and cooperating with the Spirit’s work in kairos moments. We call that joining in the dance with the Holy Spirit, and this keeps us in step with the Holy Spirit.

What is freeing about listening evangelism is the realization that we are not the evangelists. The Holy Spirit is. He is the one who brings people to salvation. He is the director, and our job is simply to cooperate with Him!

We can all do this because each of us who are following Jesus Christ has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit! The same Holy Spirit who empowered and directed Jesus in fulfilling His mission will empower and direct us as well.

“He ... (the Holy Spirit) will bring glory to me [Jesus] by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” John 16:14.

You may ask: Is it reasonable to assume that the Holy Spirit leads and speaks to us? Yes! We believe it is. We see how in the Bible the Holy Spirit directs people like Philip to go witness to the Ethiopian. That the Holy Spirit does speak and lead us is the basic assumption for this course. We will spend more time on this later.

Why “Listening Evangelism”?

We have named this course Listening Evangelism because if we are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, the director and chief actor in missions and evangelism, we must seek to do the following:

- Listen to the Holy Spirit on where to begin. Who to talk to and when.
- Listen to the person to discern his or her spiritual need.
- Listen to how the Holy Spirit is working in the moment
- Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying and then respond accordingly.

Listening to the Holy Spirit allows us to keep in step with him and fulfill our unique role within any evangelistic endeavor, whether it is a particular event or program or, more simply, an opportune conversation. Listening to the person helps us understand how to communicate what we believe the Holy Spirit is saying to us, what the Holy Spirit wishes for this person to know.

Conclusion

At this point, I hope you are all feeling a bit of relief. Evangelism is not all on your shoulders. Like everything else in the Christian walk, it’s a partnership with God. That doesn’t mean you won’t still feel anxious. Initiating a spiritual conversation, sharing your faith take risk. What if I’m rejected? What if I get in a muddle and merely confuse the person? What if I don’t hear the Spirit’s leading properly? That’s ok. Anything worth doing involves risk. Risk means you are going to get it wrong at times. However, it also means that you will get it right. You will properly sense the leading of the Holy Spirit, you will experience the person understanding what you are sharing, and through your risky obedience, you will witness people drawing closer to God. That is truly worth the risk.

What happens to me when the Holy Spirit wishes to work through me in some evangelistic way? I will be in the midst of a conversation with a person, when suddenly I will feel the Spirit drop a word or a phrase into my mind. I will sense a nudge that I should share that word or phrase. At which point I usually say, “Really God? I don’t want to say that. That’s not safe. That feels risky. What if I am rejected? What if I am not hearing correctly?” But what I’ve found over the years, is that it’s best to take the risk and obey the nudge. See what happens. Because very often, it is the Holy Spirit, and the word or phrase opens a spiritual conversation and spiritual fruit is born and it’s wonderful.

Just last week I was at the Home Depot, picking up some wood. I was talking with the salesclerk and there was no one else in line. I found out he had recently immigrated to the US from Indonesia. Suddenly I felt a question drop into my head, “Ask if he is a Christian?” I resisted. Chances were that he was Muslim. Indonesia is a Muslim majority nation. But I decided “oh

well, I'll just say it." So, I blurted it out. I said, "This might sound a little weird, but are you a Christian?" He responded, "I'm Catholic." I said, "That counts." This led to a spiritual conversation. Turns out, he didn't have a church. I knew of an Indonesian church in the neighborhood. So, I found it on my phone and gave him the contact information. Afterwards he told me, "No one ever talks to me. I really appreciate you talking with me." I looked back and there was still no one in line. God had protected our space, because He loved this young man and wanted to bring him a step closer to Himself and maybe to a group of believers.

As you practice these principles you will begin taking risks. As you take these risks, you will find yourself bearing fruit, bringing people closer to God. And you will say with me. "That was worth the risk."

Small Group Discussion and Prayer Exercise

Discussion Questions

1. What are you are afraid of about doing listening evangelism?
2. What positive experiences have you had with doing evangelism?

Prayer Exercise

Jesus taught his disciples to Pray – "Thy Kingdom Come."

In your group, spend some time praying "thy kingdom come",

Pray for the building up of the kingdom and the transformation of the human heart and of human society so it will reflect the kingdom of God, a kingdom that will touch every aspect of human society.

From the Heart of the Father Motivation for Evangelism

Lesson 2



Listening Evangelism
Dunamis Course 6

Introduction

Before we get into the specifics of evangelism, how to share our faith, let's spend a little time talking about what motivates us to share our faith. Evangelism sounds like a lot of work. It feels risky. Why would we do this? More importantly, what is God's motivation for us to share our faith?



What Motivates Us to Want to Do Evangelism?

Why do we share our faith with others? Why do you? Different people have different reasons.

A good answer, a biblical answer is love. "We love because God first loved us." 1 John 4:19. To share our faith is to share God's love. A second motivation is gratitude. We are so thankful to God for our own salvation that we want to share our experiences. As witnesses, we will often share the

specifics of the good things that God has done for us or shown us. Our salvation, how God has saved us, or the various comforts God has given us during difficult situations. These comforts are clues to how God wishes to use us, to connect us to others who are in similar situations, or wrestling with some of the same questions.

For example, I have a scientist friend who loves the book of Genesis and how things were created. He loves to study the connection of science and scripture, especially in the origin of things. God will often link him with people with similar mindset and similar questions. Then he can engage with them in ways that are meaningful and even instructive.

I recently read a book on the history of Armenia, and the profound role the Armenian church had in its history and national identity. Last week, I was getting my hair cut and my barber, turned out to be Armenian. She had been raised in the states, but her mother had her learn Armenian and to be very proud of her Armenian heritage. We got into a lively discussion about Armenia and the church and the profound impact of the gospel on her culture. She didn't go to church, so I connected her with a local Armenian church.

Our God's love is a generous love. To be filled with His love makes us want to share it with others. Especially the specific ways He has blessed us with.

Two Extremes

If love is our motivation to share the gospel, then why don't we. Here are some improper teachings on evangelism that you may have picked up on.

- **It's All Up to Us**

One extreme goes something like this. The whole world is going to hell. Every person you meet today is someone you better share the gospel with, because if you don't, they might end up in hell. Their blood might end up on your hands because you were too shy to share your faith. This teaching overemphasizes our role in sharing our faith. Remember Jesus said that no one comes to him unless the Father draws him. We're not called to save the world. That job has already been done. Our call is to be obedient and to share the gospel as God leads us.

- **It's All Up to God**

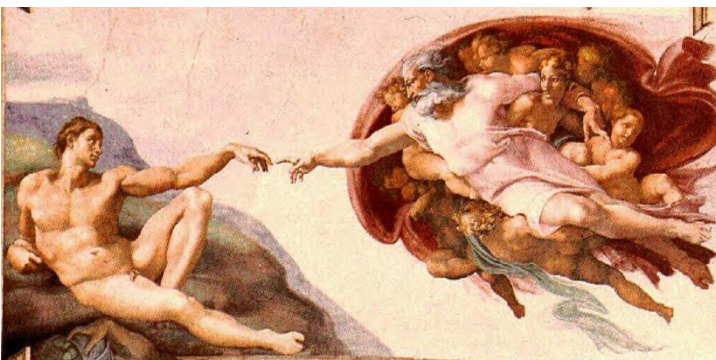
The other extreme is that salvation is all up to God. God will save people in His own time and in His own way. We don't need to get in the middle of all that. There is a story from the life of William Carey, an early Protestant missionary. He was a young, poor shoemaker in England in the late 18th century. He felt a strong call to go to India as a missionary. Once, after an evening prayer meeting, Carey went up to the elder preacher and told him of his great desire. To which the dour preacher tartly replied, "Young man, if God decides to save souls in India, He will do it. He knows His chosen." To which Carey replied, "But what if some of God's chosen don't know that? Don't they need someone to tell them?" Thank God, Carey ended up going to India, for he pioneered several new mission ventures where many thousands of Indians came to salvation. The sovereignty of God is not a call to passivity, it's a call to obedience. As we obediently follow God, He will lovingly open opportunities for us to share our faith. In His time and in His way.

Indifference

I think one of the more common reasons we don't share our faith is indifference. It's a heart issue. There are parts of our hearts that have been wounded, distracted, or caught with the pleasures of this world. We are not really convinced that God is good. If this is the case with you, then take a step back and ask the Lord to do whatever is needed with your heart to convince you that He is good. And then fill you with His Spirit. People will sense indifference, or something is not quite right, you don't quite mean it.

Acts 1 & 2

In the New Testament there were no programs of evangelism. The apostles were not telling their followers that they better share their faith. No, people shared their faith because they wanted to. In Acts 1, we see the disciples hiding out in the upper room. They were scared to share their faith. It wasn't until Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came on them in power and filled them, that they rushed out of the upper room, into the streets and began to share the gospel. They couldn't help themselves. They had been healed and they had been filled with the Holy Spirit. If you haven't been filled with the Holy Spirit, then in your small group, have them pray for you to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Watch what happens to your desire and ability to witness to your faith.



What Motivates God?

As important as it is to ask ourselves about our motivation, it's more important to ask another question: What motivates God?

If we ask why God reaches out to us, we'll have a place to begin to understand this endeavor of listening evangelism. Evangelism and missions

flow from the heart of God the Father.

God is Love and Love is His Motivation

The beginning place for evangelism is the heart and nature of God. In scripture and in Jesus we have the astonishing doctrine, that God is love.

God the Father

At the center of the universe is not some cold emptiness, some vast nothingness, some unapproachable deity. The Bible reveals that God the Father is love and Jesus Christ is the expression of this love.

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so, we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. (I John 4:14-16, NIV)

In the beginning, God created us as His children and He formed paradise for us to live in, because of His great love for us. He then wished for us to love each other. Even when we turned from Him and decided that we wanted to do things our way. Do things according to the devil's way. God responded by putting together a plan to redeem us. He sent His son Jesus to save us from our sin, our rebellion.

God the Son

“God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in him, shall not perish but shall have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:16-18.

Jesus is the expression of God's love. Jesus is God in the flesh. God walking around, encountering people. We see this in the gospels. In the death of Jesus, we see the extent of God's love for us. For Jesus poured out his life, his blood to save us, to pay for our sins, to remove the barrier between us and the Father, and open the gates to eternal life.



“For the joy set before him, he [Jesus] endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the Father.” Hebrews 12:2.

The joy? That's us. Jesus' joy is that through the cross I am going to be able to restore my relationship with my children

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God all over the place, taking what the Father did through Jesus and making it real to us. Giving us a dissatisfaction with our sin, with our way of leading our lives. Convincing us that the gospel is truth. That we have believed a lot of lies about God and about ourselves that have kept us from God. This brings us to repentance. God the Holy Spirit also fills us with His generous love that makes us want to dedicate our lives to loving God and loving others. That's what motivates God. It's love.

Conclusion

Where is all this headed? The sharing of God's love, the sharing of our faith, it all leads to relationships. Fellowship.

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.” I John 1:1-4.

This fellowship between us and each other, between us and the Father and the Son made possible by the Holy Spirit. It comes from the joy of being part of God’s beloved. Where we are born again, born from above, where we are ushered into the Trinity, where we enter this loving relationship. That’s where this is all headed. God wishes to use us to extend this throughout the whole world to every nation, tribe, and tongue.

At the end of the age, when Jesus comes back, there is going to be this big banquet. We are all going to sit down to the wedding feast of the Lamb. John gives us a glimpse of this completeness of the fellowship in his vision:

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” Revelation 7:9-12.

This explosion of joy in song comes from the fulfillment of God’s plan which is the restoration of all these relationships. There will be joy unbounded. This is what God wishes for us. As we go through these lessons, I encourage you to let His love flow through you. Deal with anything that is blocking that. So that when it comes time for you to talk about God, you feel God’s nudge to be a witness, you will be a winsome, loving witness.

Discussion Questions and Prayer Exercises

Today in our small groups, we’ll discuss our reaction to God’s motivation for evangelism and how it connects to our motivation.

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, sum up the motivation of God for evangelism. How does this affect you?
2. Tell each other about a time when you experienced the love of God the Father.

Prayer Exercise

Break up into groups of two or three to pray.

1. If you have never been filled with the Holy Spirit, then ask your small group to pray for you.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray that God the Father would send laborers into the harvest field. It came from his heart and was born of his love for us, his love for the lost. *“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”* Matthew 9:37–38.

2. Pray this now in your group. Pay attention to where your heart leads you.

Jesus as Evangelist

Lesson 3



Listening Evangelism

Dunamis Course 6

Introduction: As followers of Jesus, as we learn how to evangelize, it is helpful to look the one we are following for his example. For Jesus is not only the subject of the message of evangelism, he is also our model of how we are to evangelize.

By examining Jesus as evangelist, we won't be looking for techniques to imitate, but rather principles to guide us. In no particular order, let's look at ten principles that guided Jesus as evangelist.

1. Jesus prayed.

Jesus' practice of evangelism was grounded in his life of prayer. Jesus was able to know the will of the Father and be guided by the Holy Spirit because of his regular practice of prayer. For example, Luke records that before selecting his 12 apostles, Jesus spent the entire night in prayer.

If you want to share your faith more often and more effectively, begin by bolstering your habit of prayer. Especially listening prayer. Each day, ask the Father to show you your assignment. Then keep your ears and eyes open.

2. Jesus worked in submission to His Father

Jesus said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise."* John 5:19.

From these rich times of prayer, Jesus discerned what the Father was doing, and in obedience Jesus joined in. Jesus' intimate relationship with His Father was the source of what he did and how he did it. When the Father indicated what Jesus was to say and to do, the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to accomplish the Father's will.

We are to do the same. As we work to further God's kingdom, as we carry on the three offices of Christ, as Prophet, as Priest, and as King, we are to work in step with the Father and the Son. In our times of prayer, we are to ask, "Father, what is it that you wish to do?" For this work of evangelism is this partnership with God to do the Father's will, to bring the Father's kingdom, not ours.

3. Jesus Embraced the Life and Times he lived in

God the Father sent Jesus to a particular place and time. Jesus was born a Jew, in Judea, in the 1st century, speaking Aramaic, studying at the local synagogue, learning, and practicing carpentry. When he spread the good news about the kingdom of God, he went to where the people were. The market, places of work, their homes, and to where they gathered to worship. Jesus used all these places to share the good news of God's kingdom, to evangelize.

When were you born? What language do you speak? What are your current circumstances, your web of relationships, connections, your work, your hobbies, your social circles? Who has God placed near you? What abilities has God given you that enable you to translate the good news in ways that will make sense to those close to you? We will spend more time with this in our next lesson.

4. Jesus Welcomed Encounters with a Wide Variety of Persons



Next time you read a gospel, pay attention to the wide variety of people Jesus talks to. Religious, non-religious, Jews, Samaritans, men, women, children, babies, poor, rich, righteous, sinners, priests, Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, a Roman Centurion, a Syrophenician mother. Look at the diversity within his own apostles or the women that accompanied him. Jesus spoke to people like him, Jesus crossed cultural and racial lines to reach those not like him.

What about you? Who would be the sort of person you wouldn't expect to share your faith with? Black, white? Rich, poor, homeless? Liberal, Conservative? Jew, Muslim?

Personally, I have often experienced a better response when I share the gospel with persons different from myself. I remember witnessing to a young Maasai man in Tanzania. He tended bar at the place where I was staying during a mission trip. He spoke very little English, mostly Maasai and Swahili. I co-witnessed with my translator, Zebedayo. As part of my witness, I drew a circle and said to the young man, "Imagine this circle is the entire earth. Zebedayo is from here, in Tanzania, I am from the other side of the earth, here in Seattle, and we are talking about Jesus who was here, in the middle, in Israel. All of us speak different languages. Yet, we are all talking about the same thing." I still remember asking the young man, Babu, if he wanted to follow Jesus. He simply said, "nDio." Yes, in Swahili.

5. Jesus Recognized People's Thirsts.

In his interactions with people, the Holy Spirit would often reveal to Jesus what they were thirsty for. In John 3, when Nicodemus met with Jesus at night, Nicodemus began the conversation by formally complimenting Jesus. "*Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God*" etc. Knowing Nicodemus' thirst, Jesus cut to the chase. "*Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.*" Jesus recognized why Nicodemus was there, what he was thirsty for. Nicodemus, as a Pharisee, had dedicated his life to seeking God and His Kingdom. Now, he approached Jesus thirsty to know how Jesus could help him obtain this kingdom. Jesus responded accordingly.



In John 4, when Jesus met with the Samaritan woman at the well, he recognized her thirst. He knew she was lonely, ostracized from respectable company but also, he saw that she had a deeper thirst to connect with God. First Jesus broke social conventions, by engaging her in conversation, addressing her thirst for connection. He began with a leading question, "*Will you give me a drink?*" and then answered her objection by directly

addressing her deeper thirst, "*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.*" Jesus saw in the woman a life marred by sin, by hurt, by rejection, and felt her deep thirst for wholeness and a connection with God. He saw that she, the unlikely suspect, was awaiting the Messiah.

In your interactions with others, ask the Holy Spirit, "What are their deeper thirsts?" Then look and listen for signs of what people are thirsty for and adjust your gospel witness to address that thirst.

6. Jesus Asked Questions

As a good Rabbi, Jesus often taught by asking questions. He asked a lot of questions. What this does is cause the learner to work to learn themselves. It also meant that Jesus spent a lot of time listening to the other person. Often when a person would come up to Jesus, he would ask a question. This meant Jesus began the conversation not by talking but by listening. When blind Bartimaeus threw himself at Jesus' feet, Jesus simply said, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" Jesus was quick to listen. We would do well to do likewise.

7. Jesus Practiced Power Evangelism

By Power evangelism I mean using signs and wonders as miraculous embodiments of the Kingdom of God. These miracles attest to the power and truth of the gospel. Now Jesus didn't perform signs and wonders as a sales gimmick. His miracles met the needs of those he encountered. These signs and wonders are gifts of the Holy Spirit that we have been teaching all throughout Dunamis 1-5. Jesus wove these through his interactions with people to bring the kingdom of God, as a part of transforming their lives and leading them to become followers of Jesus.

Take for example the woman at the well we just talked about. While Jesus was effective in drawing the woman into a meaningful conversation with his probing questions, it wasn't until he told her that he knew the particulars of her personal life that she lit up and ran off to tell her entire village about Jesus. Jesus knew the details of her personal life because of the spiritual gift of a word of knowledge. This miracle produced faith in the woman.

Or the Gerasene Demoniac, Mark 5. That conversation began with the man throwing himself at Jesus' feet and screaming, "*what do you want with me...don't torture me!*" Jesus commanded the legion of demons to leave the man. Because of this freedom, this exercise of power and authority, the man, freed from his torment, in his right mind, begged Jesus to let him follow him. It was the power of deliverance that convinced the man to be a follower of Jesus. It enabled him as well.

Power evangelism was normal for the early church. "*By the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So, from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.*" Romans 15:19. Or "*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.*" 1 Corinthians 2:4-5. For Paul this demonstration of the power of God with the miraculous was normal.

I've heard of this today from various Spirit-filled ministries around the world. These ministries go out and search for a person who God wishes to do a miraculous sign, a healing for example. Then after the healing, they will share the gospel. I've even experienced a bit of it. I remember being at an evening service at my church in Seattle on a Wednesday night. A young woman ran in, shouting that she was being pursued by something evil. I sat her down and asked a few questions. With a few members, we surrounded her with prayer. Sensing the presence of evil, I rebuked the demon and commanded it to leave her and never come back. The young woman looked at me astonished and said, "It's gone! I'm free." I then asked for God's peace to fill her, and she became very peaceful. I then asked her if she was a Christian. She replied, "No." I then asked her if she wanted to be. She said, "Well, I did come to a church looking for help. So yes." I led her to salvation in Jesus then and there. The deliverance was a tangible demonstration of the

power and the goodness of the Kingdom of God. The experience convinced the woman that she wanted more. The power encounter opened the way for a truth encounter.

A word of caution. If you move in power evangelism, be ready for a variety of reactions. Like with Jesus not everyone is convinced by miracles. Some claimed that Jesus exorcised demons by the power of Beelzebub. The neighbors of the Gerasene demoniac were so freaked out they begged him to leave their area. The Pharisees rejected his healings because he sometimes healed on the Sabbath, making Jesus a breaker of the Law therefore a sinner. Nevertheless, for many, like Nicodemus, the miracles authenticated that Jesus was sent from God and therefore his message was the truth. Likewise, if you allow God to perform miracles through you, not all your Christian brothers and sisters are going to be happy about it. But these signs and wonders will authenticate your witness to many and make a positive difference especially in those effected.

8. Jesus wasn't afraid of being disliked or misunderstood.

As Christians, I think we often act as if there were an 11th commandment. "Be Nice on all occasions." But that wasn't in Jesus' book of commandments. He wasn't afraid of being misunderstood or disliked.

When Jesus shared at his hometown synagogue, his friends and neighbors got so angry with Jesus they attempted to lynch him right in the middle of worship. Eventually, Jesus' evangelism got him crucified.

Our call is to *preach Christ and Him crucified*, I Corinthians 1:23. That can mean speaking difficult words. We need to speak wisely; hard words spoken are more readily received in the context of relationship of trust. But what we learn from Jesus' example is that "friendship evangelism," building bridges to share Jesus with others, must not be done in such a way that the truth of the Gospel is compromised. Do your best to be obedient to how you believe God is prompting you and let go of the results.

9. Jesus Came to Announce the Coming of the Kingdom of God not just to individuals but to the wider world.

Jesus was born into a world rife with oppression, hurt, bondage, false religious systems, unjust economic and political systems. He addressed social wrongs, broke religious conventions that kept people from God. Remember Jesus' harsh words to the religious leaders, calling out their robbing widows, making their disciples "fit for hell." He was executed by the rich and the powerful, not because the rulers didn't understand Jesus, but because they understood him all too well. They knew that if Jesus' ways were established, their positions of power within the unjust social structures of their day were over.

So too today, in our evangelism God may call us to challenge unjust social and political structures to not only save souls, but to transform human society, to bring the Kingdom of God not just to individuals but to social structures as well.

10. Jesus Evangelized in Many Different Ways.

For sharing the good news, Jesus' example provides us with a menu of possibilities. He told stories, he asked questions, he rebuked, he preached, he did miracles, he asked for a drink of water. The Holy Spirit may choose one or more of Jesus' approaches to use in our cooperation with Him. The Holy Spirit may provide us with creative ways of speaking or presenting the Gospel of the Kingdom of God for which we find no reference at all in the example of Jesus. The

point here is to walk in the dynamic of cooperating with the Holy Spirit for accomplishing the same intentions of the Father. This sets us free for great creativity that may be adapted to changing times and needs.

Conclusion

The point is that we are to go forth to accomplish the Father's will as the Holy Spirit guides.

As his disciples, Jesus commands us to follow his example as bearers of the good news. *"Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:21-22.*

Peace with you. Jesus is sending you to be his messengers of good news. Receive the Holy Spirit and be equipped and empowered to do that today.

Discussion Questions

1. Review Jesus' top 10 principles for evangelism.
 - a. Pick one principle you feel comfortable or adapt at. Share any time you have embodied this principle.
 - b. Pick one principle that challenges you. Why is this challenging to you? Would you consider taking a risk and doing this?

Prayer Exercises

We prayed last week for God send out laborers. Be ready to be the answer to your prayers. We need to be prepared to hear Jesus' call on us to go and be one of the laborers. Those who pray for the lost are those most likely to be sent to bring them into salvation. So, as you pray, pray for God to make you ready to obey. Pray for God to make you ready to be sent.

Circles of Influence

Lesson 4



Listening Evangelism

Dunamis Course 6

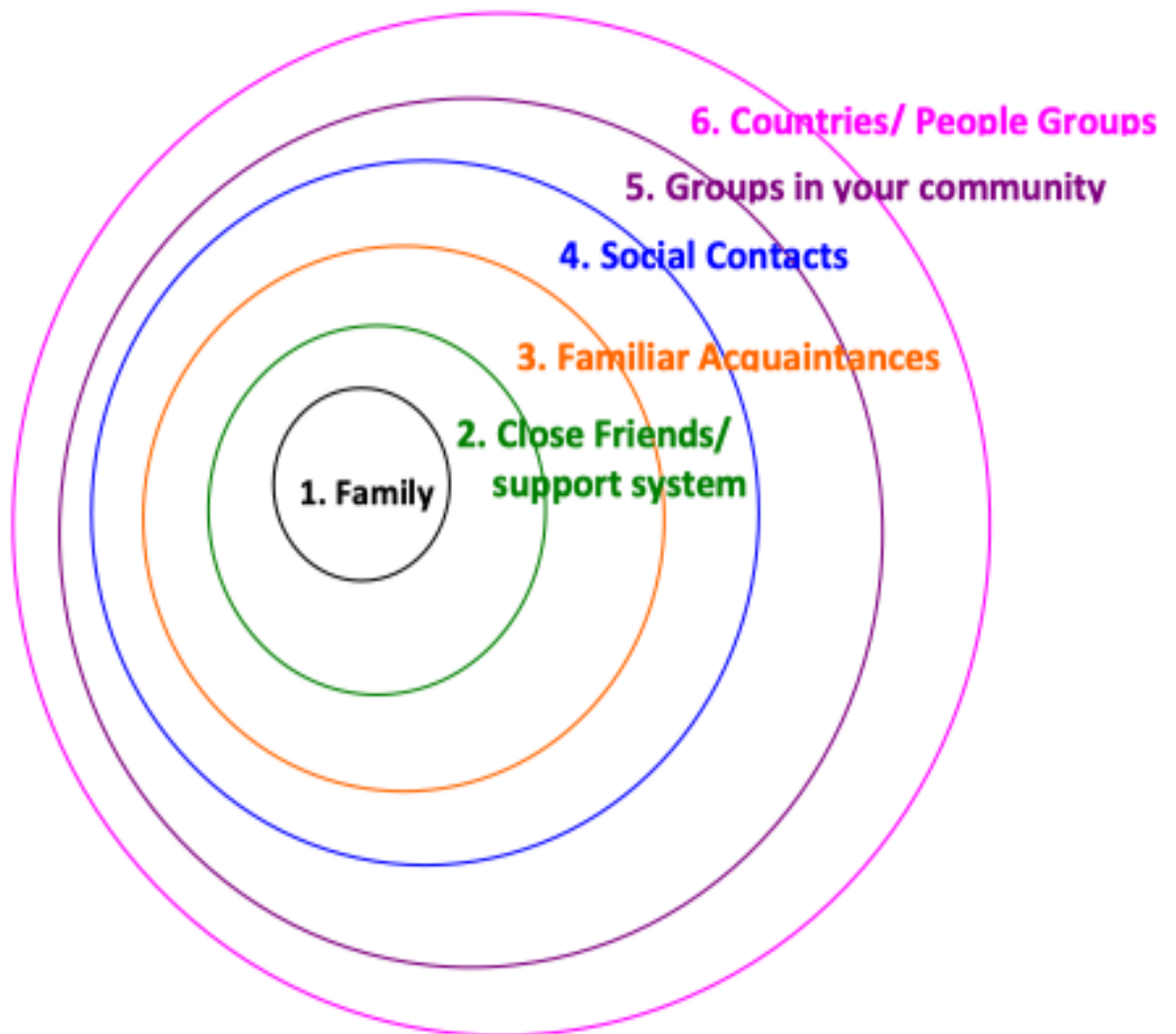
Introduction

Jesus said, “No one comes to me unless the Father draws them.” John 6:44. What if some of these people are people that you already know? Or that these are people that God wishes to bring close to you, next to you, as you go through your day.

In this lesson, we’ll learn how to discern whom God might like to reach through us, the place in which God has called us to bear witness to Jesus Christ and those places are our spheres or circles of influence. For an idea of our circles of influence, look at the figure on this page.

Most of us have many people in our spheres of influence but God usually calls us to particular individuals or groups, so today we’re asking the Holy Spirit to come upon us and show us people already in our life that Jesus died for. We’ll also ask Him to reveal how he wants you to love people in his name.

Please find a pen or something to write and use the figures in the manual as you work through this discernment process. This session is going to be very interactive. We are going to make a list of people for you to pray for.



I. Your Family

The first circle represents your family. It's the people you live with and share a home with and your immediate family. Often our families are the hardest people for us to influence they have the potential for the greatest impact in many cases. A couple of tips when sharing with your family. One, less is more. Remember that in these relationships, you are in for the long haul. Little bits, words, brief interactions tend to be enough. Second, remember that your life is a witness. Your family already know a lot about you, your ups, your downs, your choices. That has influence. I find that as I pray for my family, God sets up opportunities for me to share, and then gives me specific words at those times.

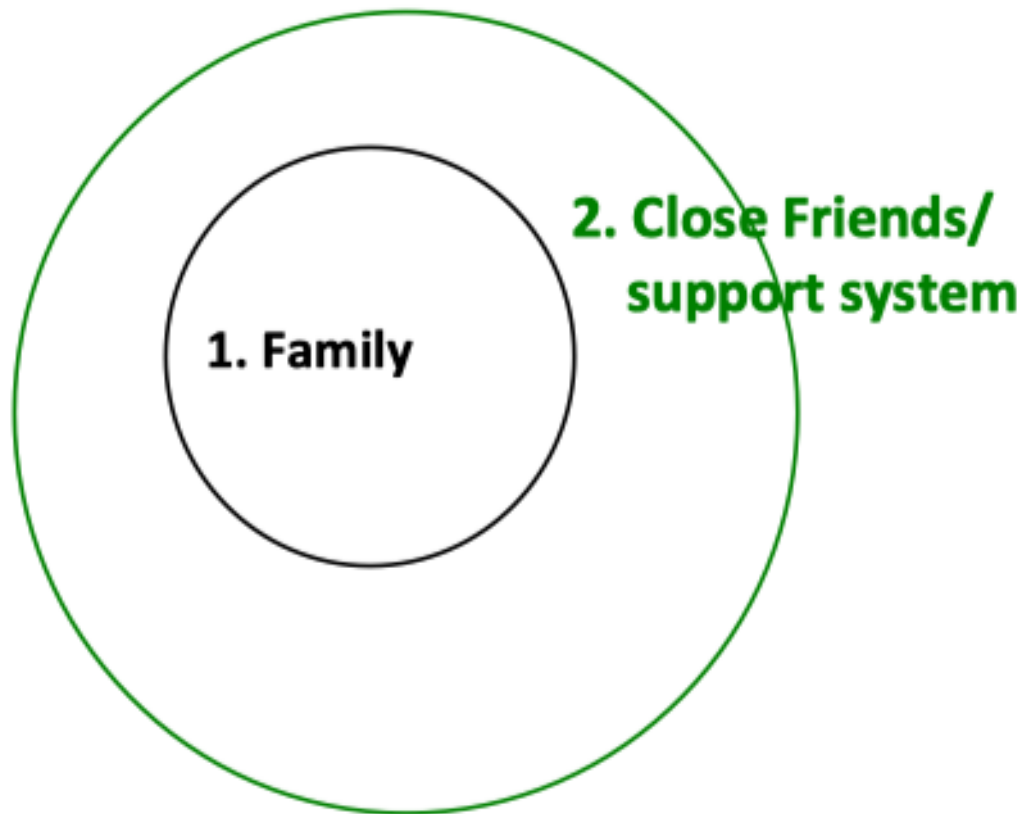
Think about them in spirit of prayer. Take a few minutes and write their names down in the circle.



II. Close Friends/Support System

The next circle sphere of influence is made up of people we chose to allow into our lives, to love, and to be with. They are close friends and support system and, in some cases, members of our extended family. There is a lot of love in this circle. Remember that if people know that we love them, they are open to our influence.

Write their names in this circle. As you're writing ask the Lord to give you his eyes to see them and show you how he wants to move in their lives.



III. Familiar Acquaintances

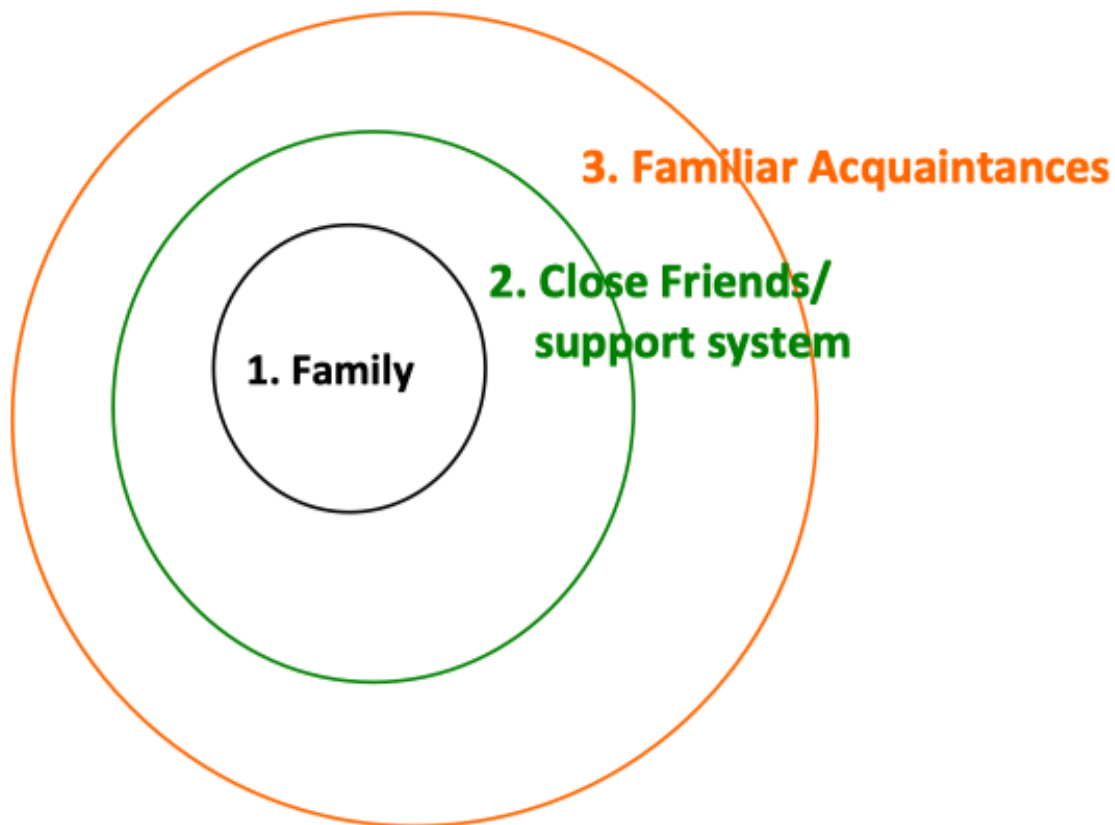
Familiar acquaintances are people whom God has placed in proximity to use through major life choices we've made: work, where you're going to live, schooling, etc. They include co-workers, neighbors, the parents of your children's friends. We believe that none of these people are in our lives accidentally, that God has sovereignly placed us in a particular workplace or neighborhood that God has sovereignly led us to put our children in a particular school or group, so we have regular association with those parents. He may have led us to join a particular group or to volunteer for an organization.

How do you share with these people? Do you walk up to them and begin to talk about Jesus? No. That is too much too soon. Begin with small talk. Talk about simple things like the weather, or what brings you together, like a child's soccer game. Small talk is a wonderful way for people to begin to interact. In small talk a lot is going on beneath the surface. You are testing to see what this person is like. You are seeing if they have a sense of humor, do I like them, are they crazy? You are also seeing if you have something in common. Often small talk goes deeper when you find an area of common interest or concern. During this small talk, ask the Holy Spirit is there

something that you wish me to say that will lead this conversation to something deeper. Then take a risk and see what happens.

In this third circle, write the names of familiar acquaintances who come to mind. If you don't know the person's name but keeping seeing the face, use another label such as "lady next door."

As you're writing ask the Lord to give you his eyes to see them and show you how he wants to move in their lives.

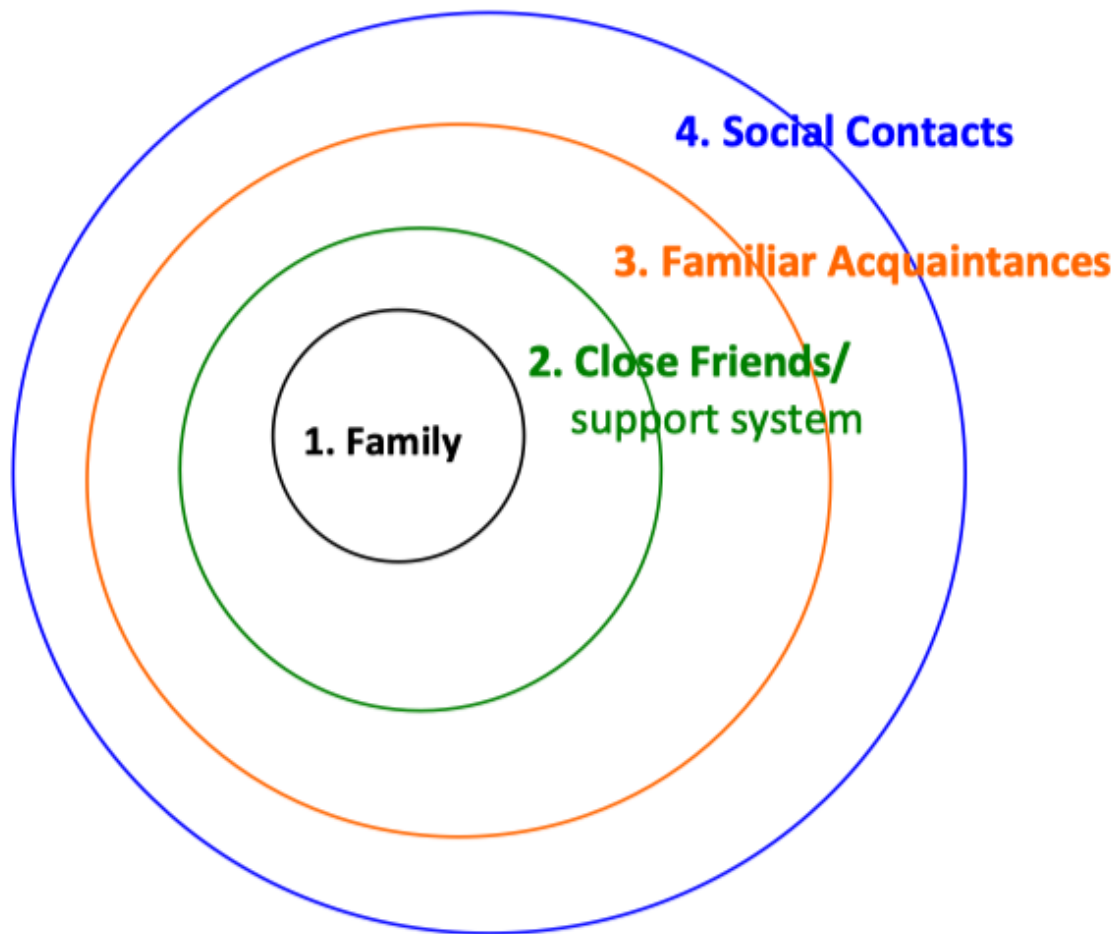


IV. Social Contacts

The fourth circle is social contacts. These are the people you see when you're out, the people you regularly have some regular contact such as the person who cuts your hair, the person at Home Depot, the barista at Starbucks.

Think about these people for a minute. Do you know their names? The people in this circle are those who serve us often and often are nameless faces. Often, they are people who have moved here from another nation and are trying to make their way. These are people whom Jesus loves. You can begin with small talk. Ask them their name and where they are from. If nothing else, this shows that you care about who they are. They are not just a nameless person serving you.

In fourth circle, take a few minutes and think about whom the Lord might be write their names or a little bit of identifying information. Take a few minutes and see who the Lord might be drawing your attention to.

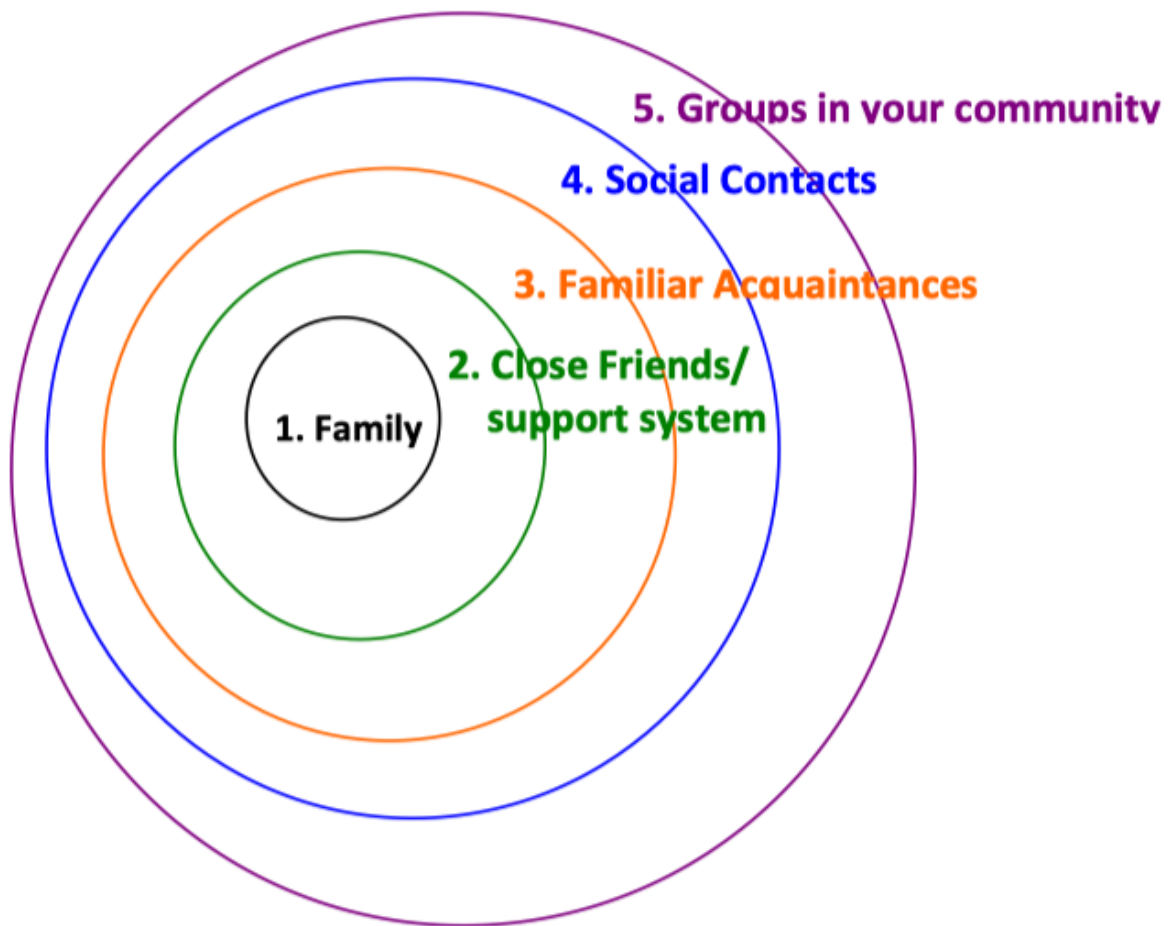


V. Groups in Your Community

The fifth circle is for groups in your community. In each of our communities we have different population groups: the elderly, the homeless. Where is your heart drawn to? Single mom, children, immigrants?

Please think about different groups in your community and who your heart is drawn to. For me, I was raised in a Naval family, so growing up, I was always moving to new places, new schools, new neighborhoods. That painful experience gave me empathy for new people. I find that I love to meet immigrants. I love to hear their stories, their struggles, their successes. I go to a barber shop staffed by Vietnamese and frequently they pour out their heart to me. The Lord fills my heart with so much love when I go into this place. I've gotten involved in the lives of the owners who don't speak English well.

Who is it for you? Which group in your community do you feel drawn to?



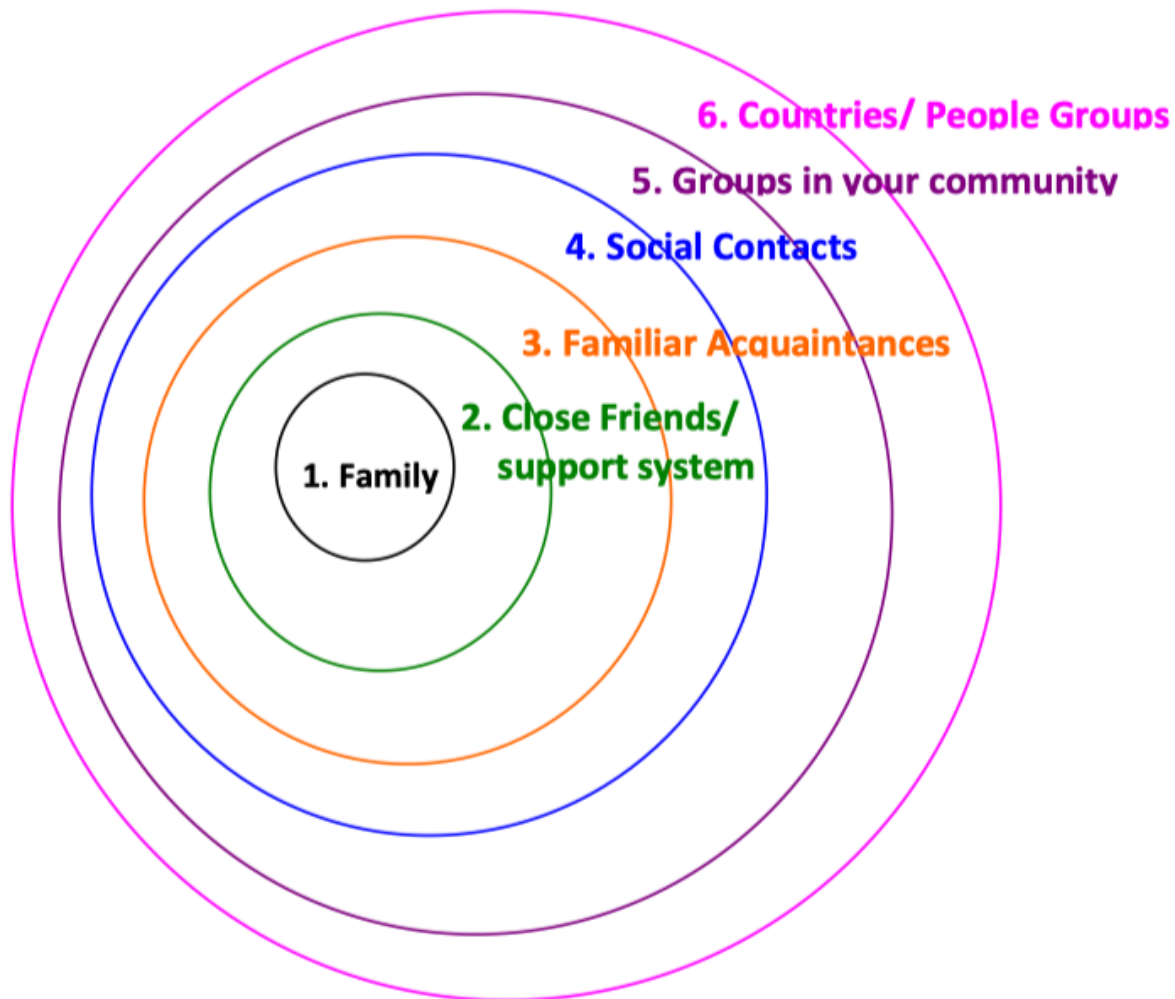
VI. Countries/People Groups

The outer circle is for countries or people groups. Is there a particular country, or people group outside of your nation that you're drawn to? You don't have to have been there or speak the language.

What we've found is that often God puts the seeds of his love for another nation in the lives of many of us. And he calls us to cooperate with the Spirit in advancing the Kingdom of God in those people groups.

Maybe you've never thought about this before. Today, please think about what nation, continent, or people group you feel drawn to and write their names in the sixth circle.

Take a risk. If nothing comes to mind, pray, and ask the Lord what he would have you write down.



VII. Strangers

Outside the circles I would like you to write the word “strangers. There are times the Holy Spirit will give us a nudge or impression to initiate a conversation with someone we don’t know. There’s something that the Lord wants me to say, and I get to encourage them or lead them one step closer to the Lord. There may be people you’re drawn to. So be aware that. This happens to me on airplanes. This happens when I go on an outreach in my church’s neighborhood, where we go out looking for strangers, people we have never met, that God wishes for us to speak with. This seems risky, and it is, because you don’t know anything about this person. It is also not risky in that you probably won’t see them again. But these one-time encounters can be impactful just because they seem so random. Imagine you having a particular need, or a burden and a stranger comes up to you and cares for you. Who listens, says an encouraging word, perhaps prays for you. Wouldn’t the very chance nature of the encounter highlight God’s hand? That God loves them, God remembers them.

Social Media

Bonus section. Social Media: web sites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. There's no circle for this because it includes people from every circle. This sort of interaction can be a tremendous gift. Social media as a means of communicating the faith has been able to overcome geographical, cultural, even legal boundaries. Through social media we can reach people for Christ in ways that were unthinkable a generation ago.

But in giving our witness, we need to be careful. Social media does some things very well. It does a great job of telling our stories. Being witnesses through our life events and struggles and victories. Testimonies are great ways of sharing our faith, because since we are telling our story, it doesn't pressure another person. One for Israel is a ministry that has filmed and posted a long series of Jews who have come to Christ. They are in Israel and do most of this in Hebrew, knowing that most young Israelis are on their smartphones. That's where they live. Often, a young Israeli, after watching dozens of these stories, will go to the deeper materials to investigate what all these Jews have been talking about.

So, if you want to use social media to share your faith begin by telling stories of how God has moved in your life. You can also ask for prayer. Because prayer requests come from a place of vulnerability. This is none threatening and sets up a testimony of when God answers the prayers. Social Media is not a good place to convince people of your faith or your point of view. There is a lot of that going on, but that tends to rev up the troops, those already convinced, as opposed to convincing someone new. Remember, over social media, witness is best as a noun, not a verb. Finally, if you believe it's time to express your faith over social media, be careful of your tone. If it is anxious, angry, or smug, your tone will undercut your witness. People will wonder, "Why are you angry? Isn't your faith a good thing, a loving thing?" or "Why are you anxious? Are you not convinced by what you say you believe?" Social media does allow some back and forth, but not like an immediate conversation.

Conclusion

You now should have a little "map" of the people God has put into your life; as well as possible areas where the Lord might be ready to invite you to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of extending the Kingdom of God. Pray that the Lord will use these makes as steppingstones for many, many people to come to know Jesus Christ and find the joy new life in Him.

Discussion Questions

1. Break into pairs and share a couple of the names in one or two circles and how God is drawing your attention to them.
2. Today, we're not focusing on their stories or situations, but rather on you.
3. We're teasing out the Holy Spirit's activity. So, ask yourself the following questions:
 - a. How are you noticing these people?
 - b. And why is it that God may be leading them to you?
 - c. What is it about you that would make you the one to witness to the Love of Jesus Christ?

Prayer Exercises

- Pray for How God would use you to witness to them. And pray for the people the Holy Spirit is highlighting in your various spheres of activity.
- As you pray for those God highlighted for you, Prayer with Confidence. Pray believing that he will answer your prayers and Jesus will get glory.

Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”* John 14:12–14.

The Holy Spirit
Drawing People to Faith
Lesson 5



Listening Evangelism
Dunamis Course 6

Introduction: I began our last lesson with the words of Jesus, “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him*” (John 6:44). But how does this “drawing” happen? How does the Father work to bring a person to Jesus Christ? Today as we discuss how the Holy Spirit draws people to faith, we will focus on two words: **thirst** and **links**.

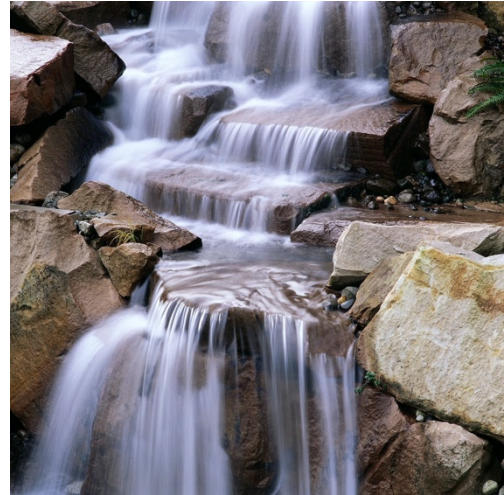
I. Thirst

When God wishes to draw us to himself, he first makes us thirsty. A thirst that cannot be quenched by anything the world can offer, thirst that sets us on a journey that leads us to the only one that can satisfy that thirst.

A. Spiritual Longing

We were created to be in relationship with our creator. It is not normal or good for us to be apart. It’s a sign of spiritual health when we begin to have a thirst for God.

In the words of St. Augustine: “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” Or to quote Pascal, the French mathematician, “We have a God-shaped vacuum.” When we begin to get restless with our present circumstances, when we feel that there is something missing, a hole in our hearts, that is a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work in us, giving us a thirst for God.



B. Expressions of Thirst

Each of us long for God in different ways. Our thirsts are expressed according to how each of us is wired. Let’s break these thirsts into three areas, head, heart, and gut thirsts. This is a way of describing people’s centers, the part of themselves where they lean in when interacting with the world and processing what those interactions

a. Head.

A Head person spends time thinking about the world around them. A head person thirsts for significance or meaning. They might wonder, why am I here? What’s the meaning of life? Why am I the way that I am? Or where am I going? What path should I take in life? Or how do random collisions of atoms result in the beauty and complexity of creation, or explain the mystery of human consciousness, or the pervasiveness of similar moral structures?

b. Heart

A heart person focuses on their feelings and the quality of their relationships. A heart person thirsts for whole relationships. Or maybe they are consumed with guilt for how they have fallen short, or how they have hurt others. They thirst for forgiveness, for reconciliation with those they are estranged from. Maybe they are lonely and seek community. They might thirst for validation or unconditional love. Even peace, a sense of well-being. Or larger concerns, why is there so much hate in the world? Who or what can begin to solve the world’s hatred, can reconcile a world of broken relationships?

c. Gut

A gut person focuses on the bottom line. What happens to me after death? Or will I have enough money to pay my bills, provision. What if I get sick? Or they might worry about being safe. This thirst could be larger than their own concerns, such as a thirst for justice, for the safety and well-being of others, or a concern for the environment, for the restoration of the physical world.

What is your thirst?

How God has met your deep needs, answered your deepest questions, satisfied your inner longings, could be a clue to how he has prepared you as a witness to others who have the same needs, the same questions, the same longings. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians, *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”* Vv. 3,4. In your interactions with others, pay attention to how they are thirsty. Their thirst could be a sign of where the Holy Spirit is at work.

II. Link

Evangelism is more than a one-time event or encounter; evangelism is a process. It is a series of many links that connect them to God. A person’s connection to God doesn’t begin when a person says yes to Jesus. There are many links that come first. Much goes on before a person makes a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit does a lot of work prior to conversion. There may happen through many conversations with people or encounters with God before a person chooses to enter God’s kingdom.

As the apostle Paul wrote, *“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”* 1 Corinthians 3:6. Paul uses a farming or gardening image to describe this long process of bringing a person to faith and then maturing them in their faith.

To use another image, think of our connection to God as a chain. Each evangelistic encounter whether with a person, or with God is a single link in that chain. In short, Evangelism involves a series of events, and each step forming a link between God and a person.

I don’t know about you, but this way off. thinking about evangelism reduces the pressure on me. Because when I sense the Holy Spirit at work in a conversation, I don’t have to close the deal. I don’t have to lead that person to make a commitment to Christ. I just need to seek to make that next link in the person’s connection to God. This could be the first link. It could be the final link. Most often it’s one in the middle.

I remember talking about Jesus to an exchange student from Vietnam. This young person had been raised as an atheist in an atheist state, Communist. This person had never even heard the name of Jesus. I realized I was helping to form the very first link in their chain. I wasn’t dealing with spiritual baggage or tending to what others had planted. I was the first. I remember talking about my faith to a young man who had been raised as a secular Jew. He was eager to commit his life to Christ. As I led him in a prayer of commitment, I was aware of the many people before me who had formed links in his chain to God. Because of their work, I was privileged to help form the final link. Most of the time, I am working on a link somewhere in the middle of the chain.

What do these links look like and how do we form them?

Types of Links

God uses all kinds of events to bring people along in their journey to faith. Let's look at few kinds of events that can create a link between a person and God.



A. Spiritual Conversations

Spiritual conversations can happen between friends, or between strangers. It could be a conversation about faith around a dinner table, in a taxi, or at a poolside. With the Holy Spirit at hovering over, this type of conversation quickly goes spiritually deep and moves the person forward in their journey to faith.

These conversations leave people with a spiritual thirst to know more. They want to know who or what can satisfy that thirst.

B. Revelations

God sometimes reveals an aspect of himself to a person directly. This encounter leaves the person desiring to know more about who He is. This has become very common in the Muslim world, especially where there is a limited gospel witness. Go to YouTube and search “Muslim’s Becoming Christian”. You will hear story after story of former Muslims whose first step towards Jesus began when Jesus appeared to them in a dream. This doesn’t just happen in countries closed to the gospel. can happen in countries with lots of churches as well. My wife was raised in Southern California in a non-Christian family. She became a Christian in her 20’s after the Holy Spirit began revealing himself through visions while she was housesitting for a friend in downtown Seattle. I was the only Christian she knew at the time—this was when we had just met. She told me what she was hearing, it was straight scripture. Yet she had never read a bible. This led her to become thirsty for more of God. She began attending a church with me, made a profession of faith, was baptized and is a Christian to this day.

C. Reflections

God sometimes uses our reflections, the type of thinking we do when we turn things over in our mind and realize that life’s circumstances have put us in a place where we’re at the end of our rope. I call this two in the morning thinking. When the busyness of the day is stilled, the quietness of the night gives room for us to ask the big questions. We wonder why we’re here on Earth. Where did we come from? Where are we going? Or we realize that we are losing our appetite for sin, for what the world offers.

During these quiet reflections, the Lord stirs in us our need for Jesus Christ by showing us the emptiness in our life, giving us a thirst for something more.

D. Sermons

God uses sermons, the preaching of the word of God to link us to God. In the book of Romans, Paul wrote, “*Consequently faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*” Romans 10:17. The Holy Spirit speaks through sermons when the preacher gives room, and

sometimes when the preacher doesn't give room. The Holy Spirit speaks through sermons when the preacher feels confident in the message and sometimes when they don't feel a thing.

I've had the opportunity to preach on many occasions where something in the sermon hits a person so precisely that they take a step closer to Christ, even respond to an invitation to follow Jesus. I remember one Sunday when I gave an invitation for people to make a commitment to Christ and no one responded to my invitation during the sermon. I had felt a strong nudge to offer an altar call. So, after no one raised a hand to say yes to Jesus, I just let it go. I thought, "Well, I was faithful to what I thought God was calling me to do. I'll just leave the results to God." After the service a youth in my church came down front and asked me where he needed to go. I wasn't sure what he was asking. He said, "you said that if anyone wanted to say yes to Jesus, that needed to come down front. Everything you said in your sermon spoke directly to me." So, I directed him to our youth pastor who led him to Christ.

So don't be shy about inviting a friend to church. God just might speak to them through the service, through the sermon.

E. Life Circumstances and Pain

God may use a sickness or a trauma to awaken a person to their need for God. For example, a person may receive news that she has terminal cancer and then wonders what's next. The person may have been self-sufficient all her life, able to buy solutions for everything else that has gone wrong. Now she asks the eternal question: "What happens when I die?"

The Lord can use these types of events to help us to develop a spiritual thirst, or to continue our journey to see our need for Jesus, for forgiveness, or to have a relationship with God.

What are the links in your chain? What conversations, revelations, circumstances, reflections even trauma that has connected you to finally say yes to Jesus and enter his kingdom?

Conclusion

Thirst. Jesus said, "*Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never thirst.*" John 4:14. . . "*he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*" John 6:35b. "*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.*" John 7:37.

Jesus is the only water that satisfies a spiritual thirst. And as people discover their spiritual thirst, they are compelled to seek a solution.

The Holy Spirit uses this thirst in our conversations, in our sermons we may preach or hear, along the way to magnifies people's thirst as part of a process of drawing them to Jesus. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, convicts us of God's righteousness and judgment, and helps us respond to God's irresistible grace.

Links. Evangelism is a process, a journey, a chain made up of many links that connect us to God. Most of us didn't wake up and have an entire change in our worldview. Rather we experienced elements of thirst that moved us one step forward in the journey to finding our faith in Jesus.

The bad news is that before the Holy Spirit moved in our hearts, we were all dead in our trespasses and sin. We were enemies of God because of our evil behavior.

The good news is "*But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions.*" Ephesians 2:4. God took the initiative

to make us spiritually thirsty; the Holy Spirit stirred the longing for the water of life; the Holy Spirit who made us spiritually alive to be able to respond to the offer of God's irresistible grace.

This training is about preparing you so that you will be ready when God brings you someone who is spiritually thirsty, someone God wishes for you to form the next link to God.

Discussion Questions

We learned about Links and Spiritual Thirsts. Think of significant events that happened to you before you professed faith in Christ that formed links that brought you closer to God.

Or if you have always been a Christian and do not remember having a conversion experience, think back to some significant events when your faith and commitment linked you closer to Jesus Christ.

- Who did God use to draw you to Jesus?
- What conversations did you have that moved you deeper?
- What "chance" encounters did you have?
- Was there a sermon or Bible reading that had a deep impact on your life? What circumstances drove you to seek God?
- What events took place that made you spiritually thirsty?
- How would you describe that thirst? Was it a Head, heart, or Gut thirst?

Prayer Exercise

Take some time giving thanks for these people that were part of your coming to faith or growing in faith.

The Philip Model

Lesson 6



Listening Evangelism

Dunamis Course 6

Introduction: In Listening Evangelism we have seen how God works in people drawing them to faith in him. We have also learned how God works in us to help draw people closer to God. In bringing people into the kingdom of God, God works both sides of the equation. In our lives and in the lives of those God leads us to share our faith. Today, we will use the story of Philip and the Ethiopian to see how God works both in the teller and in the listener of the gospel, both sides of the equation.

Philip and the Ethiopian

“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. So, he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his



way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me? By b” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.” Acts 8:26-40.

This story illustrates God working both sides of the equation, in Philip and in the Ethiopian. Let's get closer and look at how God is working both sides, step by step.

The Steps.

A specific assignment. *“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza’” Acts 8:26. Through an angel the Holy Spirit gave Phillip a specific assignment that included a particular direction and road. Notice that*

the angel does not tell Philip that he has someone for him to share the gospel with. The angel only gives him one step. That's how God often leads us. One step at a time.

Obedient response. *“So, he started out”* Philip is immediately obedient. No hemming and hawing. No complicated, cautious questions. Philip *“started out”* with the guidance he had received.

When We receive a nudge or an impression or even an angel to go to a certain place and our job is to obey that step. we don't need to know why. That's part of the relationship of trust we have with Christ. Let go of having to know everything in advance before you obey. Let God be God. Let him lead.

Also, be ready for an assignment. Being a follower of Jesus, a subject of God's Kingdom is 24/7. Be alert. Like a fireman on duty. You never know when a call will come.

Risk Rewarded. *“On his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”).”*

And on the other side of the equation, trust that God had prepared the situation he leads you into.

If all this sounds scary and risky, do not get down on yourself. It is all of that. I get anxious every time I go on an outreach or am prompted to share my faith. However, nothing beats the feeling of having a Spirit-led, Spirit-filled conversations about our faith. If we take that risk and obey these nudges, we will experience great joy. We will discover that the reward is worth the risk.

Spiritual Thirst. Let's take a moment to review the other side of the equation, the Ethiopian. *“This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.”*

This man was spiritually thirsty. God had prepared the eunuch for this meeting with Philip. Imagine the journey this man had taken in his quest for God. Leaving his very busy, very important job to take this long pilgrimage. His excitement at finally arriving at Jerusalem. Then his disappointment at not being able to get into the temple since he was a Gentile. Plus being a eunuch, he may not have even gotten into the court of the Gentiles. Now turned away by religious regulations he consoles himself by reading a book about God but even now he's confused.

Little did he know that God had arranged a very special, customized visit from Philip to slake his spiritual thirst.

Incremental guidance. Back to Philip. *“The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”* Philip received his second nudge, his next bit of guidance. Notice that God says *“that”* chariot. God was directing Philip to a very particular person with whom he was to speak. Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch, his assignment. God doesn't waste out time. When He prompts us, He has a reason.

That how the Holy Spirit works with us; he draws our attention to a certain person, a person in the line at a store or behind the counter at Starbucks. Our attention becomes riveted on the person as Philip's was on the man in the chariot. Again, notice the Spirit doesn't say it's time to share the gospel. He just gives one more step, go up to that guy. Then ask, “what now, Lord?”

More Obedience. *“Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.”* Again, Phillip cooperates with the Holy Spirit. He *“runs”* to the chariot. Chariots move faster

than walking. I wonder if the Ethiopian noticed this unknown man running next to him. If he did, I wonder what he was thinking, or feeling.

Things start to speed up Philip doesn't even have time to ask what's next. He hears the man reading aloud. This was normal for reading in ancient times. Words were meant to be spoken, not silently read. Hearing the verses from Isaiah 53, Philip knows they are referring to Jesus the Messiah. He calls out.

Spirit Puts the Pieces Together. *"Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.*

Imagine the excitement of the Ethiopian. I'm guessing he was asking for insight even as he read. Then poof. God supplies the interpreter. At this point both Philip and the Ethiopian know something special is happening.

In our spiritual encounters don't make assumptions Like Philip, first ask questions. See if there is interest, spiritual thirst, and then help people think through some of their ideas and questions. I encourage you to learn the skill and art of asking questions of those who don't yet know Christ.

Questions help:

- with personal discovery
- to amplify spiritual thirst.
- to provokes thought development
- to keep a conversation flow naturally

Even so, Philip is respectful. He doesn't accost the man with the gospel, put a track into his hands, push Jesus on him. He asks a question. Philip asks, *"Do you understand what you are reading"* Philip might have suspected but he didn't know the man was spiritually thirsty. He needed to ask.

Once, while on an outreach in my church's neighborhood, I ran into a couple of believers who were passing out tracks. That was all they were doing. For them evangelism was simply getting as many people as possible to accept a track. I guess they figured the track could do the rest. I invited them to join us. We were walking around asking the Holy Spirit to guide us into spiritual conversations with people where we would strike up conversations, ask questions, pray, and when led, share the gospel. These two people were amazed how the Holy Spirit led, and the rich conversations they had with people in the neighborhood. These two evangelists became a regular part of our team. Interesting detail, both these two believers were Ethiopian

Kairos Moment.

Then the Ethiopian replied to Philip's question, *"How can I unless someone explains it to me?"* So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: *"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.* After the question Philip began sharing the gospel with the same passage the eunuch had been reading. Philip began where eunuch was, the passage he was reading. When sharing the faith start where the other person is at.

Now The Holy Spirit put the puzzle pieces together. They entered a kairos moment. A kairos moment is God's special time. When God's time enters our time.

The Holy Spirit had prepared the moment: the circumstances were lined up and the fruit was ripe and ready to pick. God had been working both side of the equation and now was the fulfillment of all that work.

I can only imagine what both Philip and the Ethiopian were thinking. Philip was praising God for leading him to this man thirsty for the gospel. The Ethiopian was praising God for bringing this man to explain the gospel to him. That's the sweet spot, that's a kairos moment. Once you have experienced this, you will be ruined for passive Christianity.

Be Ready to Explain the Gospel

The eunuch asked, *"Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"*

Philip was ready. Beginning with these verses, he gave a coherent presentation of the gospel.

When God leads you to these moments, will you be ready? Will you be able to communicate the gospel clearly, calmly? If not, don't worry we will spend our next lesson going through a few ways to present the gospel. You will be able to choose one or two to practice them so that you will be ready as Philip was.

The Result

The Ethiopian committed his life to Jesus. Philip baptized him and the Ethiopian went home rejoicing to share his newfound faith to a whole new continent.

Conclusion

The Philip Model of Evangelization focuses on God working both sides of the equation. In these conversations, God brings together a person He has been making spiritually thirsty to a Christian whom He has prepared to share the gospel. As we submit to God's guidance and pray for opportunities to share our faith, God will lead us to these spiritually thirsty people with whom we will have a spiritually rich conversation. Evangelism is not all on us. This reason for great hope when we take these risks. For once we take a risk, and find a person has a real hunger for God, there's a connection, and you have a spiritually deep conversation, it ruins you for passive Christianity. You can't go back to how you were before. So, as you go through these lessons, do so with hope. Be assured that God has these spiritual conversations out there for you. It could be that God has something for you that is completely out of the box like Philip and the Ethiopian. This guy who thought his life was over, his search for God was at an end. Then Philip enters the scene with the gospel and the man goes on his way rejoicing.

Discussion Questions

1. Get out your pages from lesson 4 on which you have the diagrams of the circles of influence showing your relationships.
 - a. Pray for those relationships and that the Holy Spirit will be in those people preparing them for an encounter, making them hungry and drawing them to Jesus.
2. Ask God to help you notice opportunities and to discern spiritual thirst.
 - a. Ask the Lord to open you to hear those beckoning calls like Philip did.
3. Pray for discernment to be aware of kairos moments when the Holy Spirit is ready to work in someone's life. There's a sense of now's the time.
 - a. Ask the Lord to guide you as to how you are to obey

4. Assignment. Be ready this week to pray for such divine encounters. Ask the Lord to give you two such conversations this week.

Prayer Exercise

Pray for one another now to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to seize these moments. Pray for the gift of faith and for God to work. Go from this meeting expectant that you'll have an opportunity to be a part of what God is doing. Next week come back and report what God has done.

Evangelism as Story Telling

Lesson 7



Listening Evangelism

Dunamis Course 6

Introduction: In our last lesson “The Philip Model” we looked at how God works both sides of the equation, how God prepares a person to hear the gospel, and how God leads us to that person who desires to hear the gospel.

So, how exactly do we tell the gospel? When you find yourself in a Kairos moment, and the person is waiting for you to share your faith, what will you say? How do you tell the old, old story? How do you tell that story in a way that meaningfully connects with the person?

In today’s lesson, we will look at how to tell that story. We will go through four stories, the four stories that need to be told to draw someone closer to God.

1. Their Story

You begin with their story. You begin by listening. Use questions to help the person tell their story with questions, you can learn about their spiritual thirst, their loves, their hurts. You can learn where you are in their story with God. Are you the first Christian they have met? Have they heard the gospel before? Do they have another faith, another religion? What do they think about God, about Jesus? What has been their experience with church and Christians?

By beginning with their story, you then know how to tell the other stories. Also, this interest in them shows that you care about them. Remember, evangelism is not about you, it’s about them. So, our first story is their story.

2. Own Story—how we came to faith.

Your second story is your story: how you came to faith. Remember, J Jesus said, “*You will be my witnesses.*” Acts 1:8.

Witnesses tell about what they have witnessed, what they have seen and experienced.

This means telling the story about how you met God. How did you become spiritually thirsty? Who was a significant influence or witness to you at that time? What were you like before you met Jesus and how did meeting Christ change you?



3. Our Story—how God is at work recently

Our third story tells how God has been at work in your life recently. Sometimes the Spirit will lead you to people who are going through similar struggles, asking similar questions as you, or have similar experiences. This means opening up and being vulnerable. These tender areas can be powerful places of connection, especially when God has helped or comforted you in these areas.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Of course, you need to open up with care. Oversharing is off-putting. A good way to become skillful in sharing your story of both God bringing you to faith and God being at work in you recently is to practice these conversations with other Christians. Tell these stories and then invite feedback. What works? What doesn't? What parts of your story have the most impact?

4. God's Story

Our fourth story is, at last God's story. The gospel story. There are many ways of telling this story. But in its simplest form, God's story of redemption has four parts.

- God loves us: *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son that whosoever believes in Him will not be condemned but will be saved."* John 3:16
- We are separated from God because of our sin. *"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."* Romans 3:23. *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God. And your sins have hidden His face from you."* Isaiah 59:2.
- Jesus Christ is the only way through our sin barrier to come to God. *"God has reconciled us to himself through Christ."* 2 Corinthians 5:18. *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus."* Romans 6:23.
- We must believe and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."* John 1:12.

Okay, you know the facts of the gospel but are you ready to explain them to someone else in a way that is easy to understand? Keep in mind, opportunities to share the gospel can pop up when you are in the middle of doing something's for I else. If you were put on the spot, could you calmly and clearly communicate the gospel?

Mastering a Gospel Presentation.

There are a variety of tried-and-true ways to share the good news about Jesus. Here are some of the most popular.

Roman Road the Roman Road is a series of scriptures from the book of Romans. While it is particularly powerful for someone who believes in the authority of Scripture, I've found it effective even with skeptics.

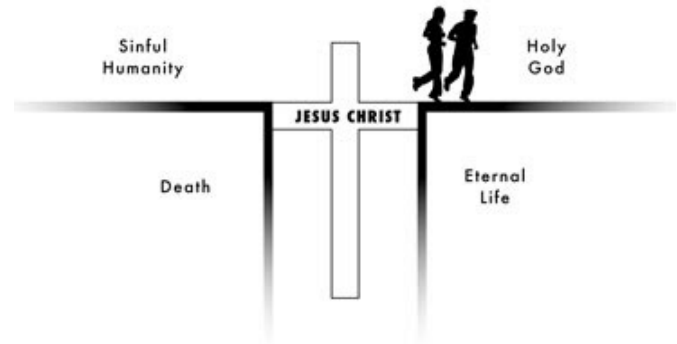
<http://www.gotquestions.org/Romans-road-salvation.html>

1. Yellow/ Sin. Romans 3:23, *"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."*
2. Black/ Death. Romans 6:23a, *"for the wages of sin is death..."*
3. Blue/ Gift. Romans 6:23b, *"...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
4. Red/ Love. Romans 5:8 *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*



5. Green/ Life. Romans 10:13, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
Romans 10:9, “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The Bridge. <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/how-to-use-the-bridge-illustration> This works best seated with pen and paper. Draw two cliffs separated by a great chasm. Write you on one cliff, God on the other. Talk about how God created us to be with him, but sin has separated us. Write Sin in the chasm. We can try to build a bridge over the chasm with good deeds, right living, and sacrifice, but these are never enough to span the gulf. Draw a few bridges that aren't long enough. Then draw a large cross spanning the chasm, connecting the cliffs. On the cross, Jesus paid for our sin and reconnected us to God. By the cross we can cross over the gulf of our sin and be with God.



Do vs. Done—excellent for 1 minute back of the napkin gospel presentation. Use a napkin or piece of paper. Talk about how religion is all about us realizing there is something wrong with us, something wrong with the world. Write DO on the paper. Religion tells us what we must do to correct these wrongs. Then add NE, spelling DONE. On the cross Jesus paid for our sin, for all that is wrong with us and with the world. Our salvation is DONE. There is nothing left for us to DO except to accept his gift of forgiveness. <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/do-versus-done> Now this leaves out a lot: scripture, Jesus' Lordship, the Kingdom of God. But it quickly describes the difference from grace and works, the difference between the gospel and all other religions.

Other Scripts

Four Spiritual Laws from Campus Crusade—tried and true. Easy visuals.

https://crustore.org/media/wysiwyg/pdf/Four_Spiritual_Laws_English_.pdf

1. God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.
2. Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.
3. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.
4. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

Then What? <https://mwtb.org/products/then-what?variant=39101731786>

Evangelicube: an object lesson that you can fold the cube around to tell the elements of the gospel story. <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/evangelicube-gospel-script> this works well when language is a barrier.

HAND FAITH FIRE (From Relay training) <https://bcmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/RELAY.pdf>

The Ten Commandments material popularized by the Way of the Master
<https://www.compellingtruth.org/way-of-the-master.html>

Good Person Test: <http://www.goodpersonstest.com/>

All these scripts contain elements of the gospel story and any one of them can become our default setting for sharing the gospel if we learn it well. Choose one or two and learn them well. Practice them on a Christian friend so that when the moment is right “*you will be able to give an no account for the hope that is within you.*”. 1 Peter 3:15.

Weaving these four stories together

As you listen to the person tell their story, and listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, imagine you have two file drawers in your mind labeled **My Story** and **The Story**. Allow the Holy Spirit access to those drawers. He will go in those file drawers and pull out a bit of information here and a bit there, pulling out a scripture here, a story there, giving us the right material for the moment.



This way you meet that person where they are. You don't overwhelm them with your life story or too many scripture verses. Rather, you cooperate with God on sharing which bits of information that person needs now to bring them one step closer to God. This type of cooperation makes us gentle, loving, and sensitive while still sharing the truth of our faith.

Keep in mind, it is not our job to convince them. It's the Holy Spirit making the connection. It's God's work to change their hearts. It's our job to be a loving and winsome witness to the goodness of God.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15.

Conclusion

At its heart, Evangelism is story telling. Telling their story. Our story. God's story. There is no set script to share our faith. Every encounter will be unique. What we can do is be ready for these moments by practice telling how God has worked in our own journey of faith and learning a gospel script or two. Then let the Holy Spirit weave together the stories that lead the person further along the road to faith in Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

In this practicum, there are two exercises for you to do in your small groups.

Exercise 1

1. Take a few moments to think about something God is doing now in your life that makes the gospel good news.

2. Then share it with the group. When you do, avoid generalizations; for example, “God helps me in my life.” Be specific about how he helped you. If the situation was difficult, take a risk and share what you can.

Exercise 2:

Do the Roman Road one with someone. You may feel a bit awkward practicing it will help you.

1. Break into pairs. One partner shares the bridge script with the other.
2. Change roles and have the other partner share the gospel using the bridge script.

Prayer Exercise

Pray for open doors and fearless proclamation of the gospel.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” Colossians 4:2-4.

Assignment for This Week

Find a gospel a script and learn how to use it so well that you can do it so well you can do it without thinking about it.

Leading People to Salvation in Christ

Lesson 8



Listening Evangelism

Dunamis Course 6

Introduction. Imagine you are having a spiritual conversation. You've shared your faith. You sense the Holy Spirit hovering. The person seems convinced of the gospel. Then they look at you expectantly. You believe the person is ready to accept Christ. Now what? How exactly do you lead a person to salvation in Christ?

While there is no formula for leading someone into the kingdom of God, there are essential elements. Like our last lesson on evangelism as storytelling where we had four important stories, today we have 7 essential elements or steps in leading someone to salvation in Christ.

The Steps

We'll begin by breaking down a verse from the gospel of Mark. "*Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news."* Mark 1:14-15.

Step 1

1. Jesus went "**proclaiming the good news of God**"

There needs to be someone to announce the good news. If you've reached this point in the conversation, you've already covered step one. Congratulations. Opening our mouths to talk about Jesus is the hardest step.

Step 2

2. "**The time has come**" The word for time here is *kairos*—the right time, God's time.

Step 2 is announcing the good news at the right time. Again, if you've gotten to this point, and the person seems ready, Congratulations again. You've accomplished Step 2.

Step 3

3. "**The kingdom of God has come near**"

Step 3 is telling the person the significance of what they are wanting to do. The invitation to say yes to Jesus is not about joining a new religion, it's about entering a new kingdom, God's kingdom. When a person comes to a *kairos* moment and wants to make a commitment to Jesus Christ, it's important to explain the immensity of this decision. What does the person expect when they are say yes to Jesus? Perhaps the person is dissatisfied with their life, and they see Jesus' offer of salvation as a solution. I'm not denying that Jesus is the solution to all our problems, I'm saying that saying yes to Jesus includes a whole lot more. It's becoming a part of God's redemption of all things. It's leaving the kingdom of darkness and entering the Kingdom of Light. This means Jesus will not only be your savior, but he will also be your Lord, your King. Step 3 is announcing that saying Yes to Jesus is entering a whole new kingdom.

Step 4

4. "**Repent**"

Word Study

ευαγγελιω—
euangelio—is
the Greek word
for good news. It
comes from two
words, 'eu' good
and 'angelio' to
announce. We get
the word 'angel'
messenger from
this word as well.
This word for
'good news' is the
root for
evangelist—
ευαγγελιστας—
-euangelistas.

Step 4 is repent. Entering a new kingdom, begins with saying no to the old kingdom. This means repentance. Repent comes from the Greek word *Metanoia Μετανοια* —which means to change your mind, not just change your opinion or belief about Jesus, but to change your entire mindset, your way of seeing the world, your system of values. It means saying goodbye to a great many things.

Sometimes the person is already aware of the cost of their committing their lives to Christ. This is the case for the Iranian Muslim whose country's blasphemy laws that makes a Muslim becoming a Christian a capital offense. Or for a Jew, whose family might hold a funeral for whatever family member says yes to Jesus as Messiah. It might sound like bad salesmanship, but does the person understand that saying yes to Jesus means saying no to their former way of life? That's why Jesus told the Pharisee Nicodemus, "*Unless you are born again—born from above—you will never even see the kingdom of God.*" John 3:3. Being born again or from above means starting over again. Jesus was letting Nicodemus know from the beginning the cost of entering the kingdom of God. It would mean Nicodemus being rejected by his friends and family, losing his position at the synagogue, destroying his reputation, being kicked out of the Sanhedrin. Even as a professional, educated, religious leader, entering the kingdom of God would require Nicodemus to start from scratch and learn everything about God and himself and the world all over again. Repentance is both painful and joyful. It's painful to humble our pride

and independence. But it's joyful to lay down our burden of sin, to experience the peace that comes from surrender into God's loving arms. Step 4. Repent.

Step 5

5. Jesus concludes with "**Believe the good news**"—

Step 5 is inviting the person to enter the kingdom of God. This circles back to Jesus' announcing the coming of the Kingdom. By believing, Jesus is not just inviting us to think that the good news is true, Jesus is inviting us to act as if the good news were true. Ask the person, "*Would you like to say Yes to Jesus today?*"

Time out.

Often a person at this point becomes fearful. After all, this is a big decision. *They might question the good news.* "What if all this is a fantasy? What if I make this massive change in my life, all hell breaks loose, and God doesn't take care of me? My advice is to acknowledge their fears. Let them know that it's ok to be scared. In fact, their anxiety shows that they are aware of the significance of the decision they are facing. Remind them that many have faced this same choice. That when they made the same leap of faith, they discovered just how true the promises of God were. Just how good this news could be. In fact, only by testing the promises of God, only by placing your life in God's hands are you able to know if the promises of God are true.

Both Savior and Lord

When we confess our sins and ask Jesus' forgiveness, Jesus saves us. He delivers us from our sins, from all our past mistakes. Jesus becomes our Savior. When we commit our life to following Jesus, putting Jesus in charge of our life, Jesus becomes our Lord.

This circles us back to Jesus' announcement at the beginning of his ministry. The good news is Jesus' invitation to enter the *kingdom of God*. This means dedicating every part of our lives to Jesus' Lordship, no part of our lives is out of bounds. We don't need to know exactly what this means, but again, it's important to let people know what they are committing themselves to before they say the sinners' prayer.

They might question themselves, "What if I can't follow through with my commitment? What if I am unable to bear the rejection of my friends or family?" Jesus promised that if we jump into his arms, he will never let us go. He will be with us, no matter what will happen. He will take care of us like a good shepherd, Jesus will care for his sheep. We only need the faith the size of a mustard seed. What is important is not the size of our faith. What is important is the size of the object of our faith. The object here is God. He's big enough to take care of us if we simply put our trust in Him. Step 5 is inviting the person to say yes to Jesus.

6. **Confessing our Faith.** We need to act, to take that step, that leap of faith. In step 6 we confess our faith. This has two parts. First, we confess our sin and old ways of life we repent. Second, we confess our faith in Jesus, we receive his forgiveness for our sins, we confess Jesus as our savior and we commit to follow him no matter what, we confess Jesus as Lord

Paul described this in Romans 10:8–10:

“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

With step 6, we proclaim that we belong to Jesus and have decided to follow him, that we have surrendered to Jesus, and he is our Lord. We are saying that no other power, whether it is the government, president, king, or person has our final allegiance. The one who has our final allegiance is now Jesus Christ, Lord of lords and King of kings.

Step 6, we confess aloud our repentance of sin and our allegiance to Christ.

Step 7

7. Be baptized

One final step, be baptized. Jesus told his followers to *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* Matthew 28:19.

Baptism seals the deal. In baptism we publicly express our faith in Jesus and our confession of His Lordship. This is where we go from being “me and Jesus” to “we and Jesus”. A local congregation is where we will worship, where we will develop Christian friendships, where we will learn about God’s Kingdom, where we will find places to serve to advance God’s Kingdom.

Baptism is a profound mystery, a sacrament, meaning an outward visible sign of an inward invisible grace. In Baptism the Holy Spirit confirms our death to our old self, and our resurrection into our new self. Therefore, many churches practice baptism by immersion. Going down into the water symbolizes our death with Christ. Coming up from the water symbolizes our being raised to new life in Christ.

The waters of baptism also seals our cleansing from sin. Therefore, some churches practice sprinkling. The sprinkling of water is like the priests sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice to sanctify all touched by the shed blood.

In Baptism, the Holy Spirit ingrafts us into the body of Christ. In baptism the Holy Spirit attaches us to Jesus’ body, like a branch engrafted into the trunk of a vine. John 15.

Finally, in baptism, the Holy Spirit seals us as God’s own. The Holy Spirit marks us as a citizen of God’s Kingdom.

Think of baptism as you being an immigrant standing before a public official pledging your allegiance to your new country. In baptism we stand before the community of faith, the local representatives of the kingdom of God, and publicly commit to our new kingdom.

Conclusion

To sum up, leading a person to salvation in Christ means announcing the good news of God’s kingdom, tell them the seriousness of this decision, inviting them to join. Leading them in a prayer of repentance of sin and commitment to Christ. Then urging them join a local congregation and be baptized.

How Much Water?

The amount of water is up to you and your church community. Total Immersion emphasizes our burial and resurrection with Christ, our total commitment to our new life, our new King.

Sprinkling reminds us of the blood of the sacrifice cleansing the altar and the worshippers in the Jewish tabernacle.

There is nothing more wonderful than seeing someone come to Jesus. I pray this experience for all of you, so when you get to heaven and look around, you'll see people you helped bring to Christ because of your role in cooperating with the Holy Spirit. In the words of the old spiritual, "What a day of rejoicing that will be."

Discussion Questions

Exercise: Break into groups of 2s or 3s. Role play leading a person to Christ. Take turns until everyone has had an opportunity to lead another to Christ.

Debrief the experience. What worked? What seemed awkward? What would you change?

Prayer Exercise

Prayer. Pray that God will give you these opportunities.

Pray that you'll hear God's guidance in that moment.

Pray that you'll help them respond to God's gracious offer of salvation.

Sample Prayer of Commitment

Dear Heavenly Father, I am thankful for the life you have given me. I am sorry for all the ways I have sinned and fallen short. Please forgive my sins, my rebellion, all the ways I have said No to you and your ways. Thank you for sending Jesus to pay for my sins by dying on the cross. I receive his forgiveness and commit my life to following Jesus as my Lord. Please fill me Holy Spirit and strengthen me to walk in this new way, as a citizen of heaven. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Practicum
Instructions for Going Out
Lesson 9



Listening Evangelism
Dunamis Course 6

Introduction

Our final lesson is preparing a group of you to go out into the streets and share your faith. Like all the Dunamis Lessons, Listening Evangelism is designed to equip believers to advance the Kingdom of God. This means putting into practice what you learn from these courses.

For Listening Evangelism, this means sharing your faith. That's why listening evangelism ends with a practicum, setting aside a couple of hours to partner with others and go out into your neighborhood, your public parks, and coffee shops asking God to lead you to people who are ready to have a spiritual conversation.

You might ask, "that sounds intrusive. Who would want to be accosted by a total stranger to talk about Jesus?" That also sounds scary. What's the value of going out on an evangelistic outreach?"

1. It's good for you. These outreach's give you opportunities to try out what you've just learned. To activate your knowledge. Give it a test run. Develop comfort and facility in sharing your faith.
2. It's good for those you encounter. There are a lot of lonely hurting people in our neighborhoods that God wishes to comfort through us. I think that's the most meaningful reason to go out. It's also the most common encounter I've experienced.
3. These outreaches develop a missionary mindset in you. If you set up a regular outreach, say once a month, you will begin to see yourself as a missionary to your own context. It's amazing how these experiences synch us up with Jesus's teachings. After all, what did Jesus do? What did he train his disciples to do?

I've led lots of them and it scares me every time I go out. But if you are strong and courageous, set aside a couple of hours, and go out, God will lead you to people in whom God has been working. I have gone on many of these outreaches, in Seattle and across the US, and I have many stories of amazing "coincidences" where God has moved through me and my team members in kairos moments that change lives, heal souls and bodies, and bring people closer to God, even to committing their lives to following Jesus.

The Practicum: How To.

To prepare for an outreach, I've got 7 steps.

Step 1. Set a time and place.

Set a time and a place to go out. Allow 2-3 hours for the entire experience. Pick a place. If your church is in a neighborhood start there. Or you can go to a mall or a particular neighborhood or a park. I led groups the second Saturday every month from My church in Seattle. We met at the church and then went out to meet the neighbors. I'm fact I would begin conversations by stating that very purpose. "Hi. I go to that church over there. We're out meeting the neighbors." That let people know up front why we were talking to them. It also let them know that we were part of the neighborhood. I would encourage you to have your church or your group set a regular date, like the same Saturday every month.



Step 2. Training.

When you meet, say a prayer, then have everyone introduce themselves to each other then have someone go through a brief orientation. Explain the schedule for the day. Then go through Steps 3-6 briefly.

The 4 Words

One simple training for outreach is to have people remember 4 words.

Love—you are going out to love people. Outreach is about them, not you.

Listen—"Be quick to listen and slow to speak." James 1:19. When you are in conversation with a person you meet, focus on listening to them. Also be listening to the Holy Spirit.

Discern—given what you've heard from listening to the person and listening to the Holy Spirit, discern what you believe the Holy Spirit wishes you to do.

Respond—take a risk and respond as you are guided. This might mean praying for them, sharing the faith. It might mean meeting a practical need.

Step 3. Form your groups.

Split up into groups. I suggest that you go in pairs, no more than 4. A larger group is intimidating. Mix the groups, age, and gender. A man helps an all women group feel safer. A woman helps an all-male group feel safer to those you meet. Children and dogs are welcomed. Children are often natural evangelists. Let them share their faith, it's disarming. Dogs are natural ice breakers. Dog walkers naturally trust other dog walkers.

Step 4. Prayer.

Have intercessors praying for you. These can be on site, or off site. Have them pray for protection as well as blessing and guidance. Once you've formed your groups, pray for each other before you leave. Put on your spiritual armor. Ephesians 6:14ff. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you to people He has been working on, "open doors". Colossians 4:3.

Then be praying as you walk, avoid small talk. Stay focused on the reason you are out.

Pray during each encounter. Usually, one person will take the lead in the conversation. Have the other team members Pray for those who are in conversation. Pray against distractions, pray for protection. After the encounter, if you are feeling disturbed in any way, pray for spiritual cleansing.

Step 5. Go Out.

As you walk around keep 4 things in mind.

1. **Watch for the nudge.** As you walk, be ready for an assignment by the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to any inner prompts to go in a certain direction, to speak to a particular person.
2. **Look for spiritual thirst.** How has God has prepared the person? Remember the head, the heart, and the gut thirsts.
 - a. Head—thirst for meaning, understanding, or "what's my purpose?"
 - b. Heart—thirst for belonging, for healed relationships.
 - c. Gut—thirst for provision, safety, or "what happens after I die?"
3. **Discern where you are in their story.** Begin with listening to them. Use questions.
4. **Suggest a next step.** As you listen to them, ask the Spirit, "what do I do now?" Do they desire prayer? Is there an objection to remove? Has there been faith which has gone dormant? After prayer, be prepared to tell God's story.

Step 6. Debrief.

After each interaction, ask each other, “How did it go?” “What did you learn?” “What could have gone better?” “How do you feel now? Do you need any cleansing prayer?”

Step 7. Story Time.

When you return, have a time to share stories. If you have a big group, organize the time so everyone gets time to share. Keep the stories to the point, avoid unnecessary details. What did you learn? Also, consider sharing stories at church during worship.

Conclusion

That’s it. In all this keep grace in mind. You don’t need to be perfect. You need to be available. Think of a scheduled outreach as scheduled availability. Remember that God delights in using the weak to overcome the strong, to use the foolish to outwit the wise.

No Small Group Discussion or Prayer Exercises

This practicum is both the discussion and the prayer exercise.

Treasure Hunt

One model of outreach is called a treasure hunt. Basically, your team prays for specific guidance—where is the Holy Spirit at work in a person or persons? What is your assignment? In prayer, your team asks for a word of knowledge which will let you know when you find your assignment. This can be a name, a date, a color, a place, any specifics which you will then hunt for. This is not magic—meaning God is obligated to show you specifics. It is not automatic. Hold it loosely. If you receive specifics, take a risk, and see where it leads. If not, don’t worry. Ask God, “Now what should I do?”

Going on from here.

Consider becoming part of the **Dunamis Fellowship**.

The Dunamis Fellowship International (DFI) is the fellowship of those who have experienced the teachings of PRMI and seek to encourage one another to grow in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. It is a unique combination of a missionary society, a seminary faculty, and an intentional prayer community that enables us to help you cooperate with the Holy Spirit

Go to <https://www.primi.org/ministries-of-primi/dunamis-fellowship-intl/> to learn more.