

# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR THE GOSPEL

## A PROCESS FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Every believer is called to share in Jesus' mission to make the gospel known by word and deed to all people—across the street as well as across the ocean. As God works in our hearts, we begin developing the habit of praying missionally and seeking opportunities to serve missionally. We also need to explore ways to build relational bridges with people where we live, work, and play— family, friends, colleagues, and those whom God brings across our paths. We need to envision having a spiritual conversation with them and the opportunity to share the gospel.

In some cases, we may meet someone, have a meaningful conversation, and share our testimony or even the gospel message with them right there on the spot. More often for most of us, we will intentionally cultivate relationships with those with whom we live, work, and play, continuing to pray for them, nurturing our relationship with them, and looking for an appropriate “door of opportunity” (see Col. 4:3) to step through to tell them about Jesus.

### “Tools” for Your Evangelism Toolkit

The following concepts roughly correspond to a typical process toward getting to the point to share the gospel with someone. Remember, though, you may have the opportunity to share the gospel at any time. You certainly don't *have* to go through these steps to get there. Think of these as different tools in your toolkit for living a missional lifestyle and being equipped to give a reason for the hope you have with gentleness and respect (1 Pet. 3:15).

- *Simple Ways to Be Missional.* Develop a list of ideas for how to build bridges with non-Christians around you. Begin to incorporate some of these ideas into your lifestyle so that you are always seeking to build bridges for the gospel with those around you.
- *Nurturing a Missional Mindset: Colossians 4:2-6.* Internalize Paul's prayer for his own evangelism and that of the Colossian church for yourself, so that you are praying and looking for opportunities that God brings into your life.
- *Finding a Person of Peace.* Learn from how Jesus sent the 12 and the 72 and how the Apostle Paul entered different cities on his missionary journey so that you know where to look and what to look for in order to connect with those in whom God's Spirit is already working to prepare them to hear the gospel.
- *Wondering Questions.* Develop a list of questions that can serve as conversation starters that go beneath the surface in people's lives. Not all are explicitly “spiritual” questions, but as you engage in meaningful conversations, it will be more natural to have spiritual conversations. By “wondering,” you will find that your friends will often be the ones to bring up spiritual conversations with you, rather than you feeling like you need to force the conversation in that direction.
- *Sharing Your Testimony through “Mini Grace Stories.”* Consider how to shape your testimony in a way that helps you 1) relate the issues your friends share about their lives to God's work of grace in your own life, 2) illustrates the relevance of the gospel and 3) gauges if they're interested in talking more.
- *Sharing the Gospel through “The Three Circles.”* This simple gospel explanation summarizes our need (which can easily be related to any struggles our friends have shared with us), our failed efforts of solving our need on our own, God's provision in Christ, and what it means to trust and follow Jesus.

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## A PROCESS FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM

### ► PERSONAL REFLECTION

Reflect on the following questions as you consider engaging in an process for personal evangelism:

- What about this process do you look forward to, and what about it scares you?
- How do you feel about the prospect of building bridges with people in order to share the gospel with them?

Now ask God to motivate and empower you with the gospel of love that He demonstrated to you in Christ. Ask him to make you a conduit of His love to the least and the lost.