

HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

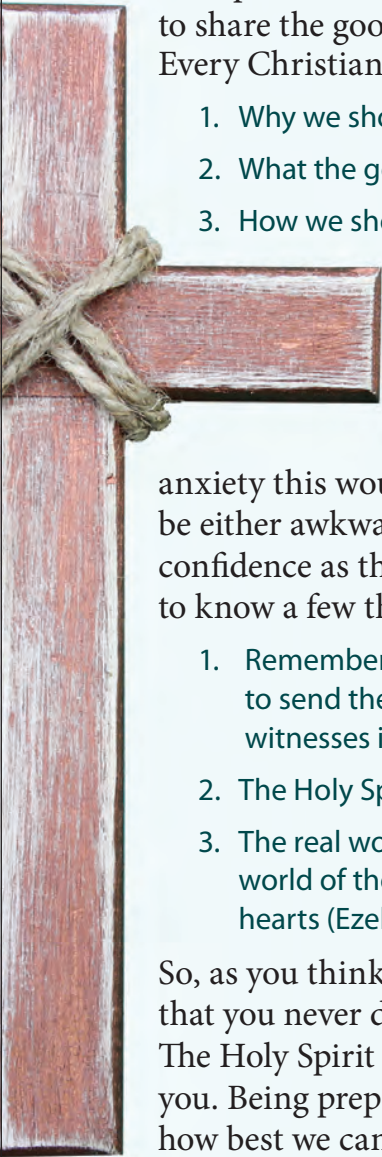


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THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Jesus called his disciples to spread the good news throughout the world. Ever since then, Christ's followers have lived the good news and spoken and written about it. Today, the need and responsibility to share the good news is not any less serious, urgent, and present. Every Christian should know:

1. Why we should share the good news
2. What the good news is
3. How we should go about sharing the good news



Knocking on a stranger's door to share the gospel is not for everyone. Some people are simply too terrified with that idea, others do not feel that their lives are worthy of being Christ's ambassadors, and others cannot deal with the anxiety this would cause. Sharing the good news does not have to be either awkward or cause a high level of anxiety. To give believers confidence as they share the good news, it's helpful for all believers to know a few things:

1. Remember that the Holy Spirit is in charge. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to all believers so that we may be his witnesses in the world (Acts 1:7-8).
2. The Holy Spirit will give you the right words (Luke 12:11-12).
3. The real work belongs to the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of the need of a savior (John 16:8), changes people's hearts (Ezek. 36:27), and transforms people (John 3:5-6).

So, as you think about the call to share the good news, remember that you never do it alone and the timing is not yours, but God's. The Holy Spirit is with you to remind you, empower you, and guide you. Being prepared with the content of what we should say and how best we can say it is, however, always a good idea.

Many believers feel that they cannot share the gospel effectively unless their own lives are perfect. How would you reply to this issue? Do we have to wait until our lives are perfect to represent Christ?

WHY WE SHARE THE GOOD NEWS: CALLED TO MAKE DISCIPLES

We share the gospel because we are moved by the conviction that God called us to do just that: make disciples.

1. Sharing the good news is an intimate part of what being followers of Christ means (Matt. 28:19–20).
2. Despite any nervousness or anxiety we might feel, the evangelistic experience is full of blessings.
3. The world is in need of the good news we have available.

Jesus has called us to become lifelong learners. Think about a child. When a child is born, she doesn't know how to speak, feed herself, get dressed—nothing. All she knows is that she feels hungry, cold, and tired and wants to have her basic needs met. She begins to learn by observing and copying. This begins lifelong learning by imitation. That's a disciple! See? We already know how to be a disciple: We all are disciples: we started out by being followers, copiers of the behaviors we saw growing up. But in terms of sharing the good news, we need to learn to be a more specific kind of disciple: a disciple of Jesus.

BEING DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Being disciples of Jesus means:

1. We are imitators of Jesus (Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6).
2. We learn to see people and the world as Jesus would—with love and compassion (2 Cor. 5:16).
3. We recognize that Jesus is King of our lives and the world (Phil. 2:9–11) and belong to him alone (1 Cor. 6:19–20; Rom. 14:8).
4. We seek to live out the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: “love, joy, peace, forbearance [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23).
5. We become God's instruments, spokespeople, and envoys to:
 - . Testify of his goodness and love;
 - . To warn of the dangers of a life away from God and of impending judgment;
 - . And to do justice, act with love, and show mercy in a world that is desperate for justice, love, and mercy.

How are you being a disciple of Jesus in your life?

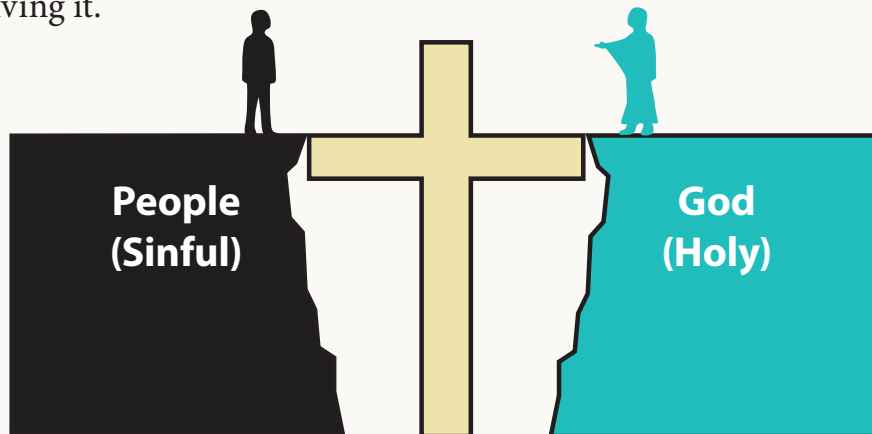
WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS? THE BASICS OF EVANGELISM

Some people accept the good news after hearing the stories of the conversion experiences of believers. Others find God's transforming love through friendships or by listening to or reading about other people's lives. Others discover it alone while reading Scripture or after going through an unexpected experience. Although the Holy Spirit draws people and opens their eyes in many different ways, the basics of the message are the same:

1. God loves people.
2. People are bound to sin and cannot get free on their own.
3. God sent Jesus to free us from sin and death.
4. Because of God's grace—not our works—we can be assured of our salvation.
5. Becoming disciples of Jesus begins with repentance of sin and a request for forgiveness.
6. As disciples of Jesus, we grow and mature in a deeper relationship with God throughout our lives.

John 15:8: "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

These are some helpful tools that organize the basic message and are intended to help both the one presenting the gospel and the person receiving it.



This drawing illustrates how Jesus' work on the cross allows sinful people to begin a relationship with God and be rescued from eternal death.

THE FOUR CIRCLES illustration, by James Choung, shows God's original intention for his creation. (1) God made humans to be and do good. However, (2) sin affected our ability to do good. We became self-centered and enslaved to sin. Our sin breaks our relationship with God, nature, and one another.

(3) Thankfully, Jesus came to restore humanity. His death on the cross liberated us from the slavery of sin and death.

(4) Being free from sin, believers can become ambassadors of God. God is sending believers to heal relationships by preaching the good news of Jesus to a lost humanity.

Humans cannot move from circle 2 to 4 because sin has opened a gap that separates God from humans. Only through Christ is it possible to reach God.

