

## WEEK 8: SHARING

### I. OVERVIEW POINTS

#### A. Introduction

1. You may think that this doesn't apply to our Discovery Class

- a. Most are retired, have limited contacts
- b. The contacts we have are almost entirely believers

2. But consider if this is really true - limited contacts

- a. Family members who are unbelievers
- b. Service people who come to your home to fix things
- c. Grocery people, restaurant help
- d. There are many left that God may put in your path that need to have the gospel shared with

3. Even if you have limited mobility

- a. Neighbors come to visit
- b. Wayne Temple
  - 1). Was in the hospital over 100 times in the past year
  - 2). Shared regularly with those attending him

4. So please don't tune this out - God may be preparing to put someone in your path that needs to hear or grow spiritually

#### B. The Discipleship process

1. Share > Connect > Minister > Disciple (SCMD)

2. A successful disciple-maker should respond to the person's stage of spiritual growth

3. Sharing is the process aimed at a person who is ...

- a. Spiritually dead > unbeliever, not born again
- b. Spiritual infant > born again, but spiritually ignorant

4. Sharing consists of three stages addressed to this person

- a. Sharing your life
- b. Sharing new truth
- c. Sharing new habits

#### C. The key that makes the process work

1. 1 Cor 3.6-7

2. God is the one essential participant that makes it work

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## II. SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

### A. How to recognize the Spiritually Dead

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#### 1. Reviewing Week 3's description

##### a. Their characteristics

- 1). Unbelief
- 2). Rebellion (broadly re. constraints)
- 3). Reject God's will (specific rebellion)
- 4). Deceived, blind to the truth
- 5). In need of a Savior

##### b. Their needs

- 1). An invitation to receive Christ as their personal Savior
- 2). An explanation of the Gospel
- 3). To see the Gospel lived out
- 4). Answers to their questions about the Bible, God, Christianity, etc

### B. Some cautions

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#### 1. Initial contacts

##### a. Don't try to make a sale

- 1). Ever encounter a sales person pressuring you for something you didn't ask for ?
- 2). Imagine how an unbeliever feels to have someone abruptly hit him with accepting a religious approach

##### b. Sharing requires having a relationship on which to make sharing welcome

- 1). Make it clear that the other person has a choice to "take it or leave it"
- 2). Listen and discuss (more later)

#### 2. Establish and develop the relationship 1st

- a. Example of fund-raising consultants' advice
- b. We are dependent on God to open and develop the relationship for who he wants us to disciple

### C. Importance of being in a relationship

#### 1. An old saying that remains true and growing

"They won't care about how much you know until they know how much you care"

#### 2. Reasons why a relationship gives a better chance with a spiritually dead person

##### a. Every person is unique

- 1). How can you know how to raise questions for the unbeliever to think about/answer questions they have if you don't know their perspective ?

##### b. Results of listening grows as relationship grows

- 1). Better listening = better foundation for knowing how to answer, ask and guide

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- c. Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason's Columbo Technique shows how
- 1). Based on the TV detective Columbo
  - 2). 3 steps based strictly on questioning/listening, no preaching
    - a.) # 1: Gain information by asking "What do you mean by that ?"
      - Clarifies the person's claims
      - Tells what the person thinks
      - Provides a good conversation start
    - b.) # 2: Make them defend their own views  
"How did you come to that conclusion ?"
      - Clears up the reasons for the person's ideas
      - Tells how the person thinks
      - Makes the person bear the burden of proof for their own claims
    - c.) # 3: When you see the flaw, ask  
"Can you clear this up for me ?"
      - Used when reasons don't support claims
      - Challenges a weakness or contradiction
      - Exploits a flaw with a question rather than a lecturing statement
  - 3). Note that you don't go on the offensive
    - a.) Stick with questions rather than statements
    - b.) Pull in the facts when the questions open up doubts

D. Building a relationship is far easier in our nucleus than "cold calling"

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1. People we are already a little familiar with
2. People with at least a few common interests
3. Examples for the class
  - a. In your housing complex
  - b. Stores you frequent
  - c. Doctors/dentist offices
  - d. Places you volunteer
  - e. Car dealers/maintenance crews
  - f. Tradesmen giving support
4. Two opportunities
  - a. Grow the relationships you already have
  - b. Build new relationships with casual/infrequent contacts
  - c. People respond when....
    - 1). They know you are interested in THEM
    - 2). That you will LISTEN to THEM

E. Examples of Jesus establishing a relationship

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1. Note the progressive steps Jesus took in building relationships
  - a. Mk 1.16-20: Chooses the fishermen by relating to fishing
  - b. Mk 3.13: Calls growing groups of disciples to Him and chooses 12 to strengthen bond
  - c. Mk 1.38-39: Jesus seeks to build relationships by going to people vs. having a big tent meeting for them to come to Him
  - d. Note that Jesus performed no miracles before He had built relationships with His disciples
  - e. John 13.34-35: Jesus emphasizes that strong relationships are needed to promote the Gospel and spiritual growth
  
2. Note other relationships He built by challenging the individuals
  - a. Woman at the well
  - b. Zachias
  - c. Accepted dinner invitations from Pharisees

F. Key areas of your preparation for opportunities in a relationship

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1. Key goal is to allow God to develop it to the point of sharing the Gospel
  
2. Be prepared in advance as to how you will answer typical questions
  - a. Common questions unbelievers ask
    - 1). Why are there so many versions of the Bible ?
    - 2). Who was Cain's wife ?
    - 3). Could God have really created everything in three days ?
    - 4). Is there really a God ?
    - 5). Did Jesus really live ?
    - 6). Why is God different in the Old and New Testaments ?
    - 7). Isn't there more than one way to God ?
    - 8). What about those who have never heard the Gospel ?
    - 9). What about all the hypocrites in church ?
  
  - b. Some resources to help you prepare
    - 1). Web sites from leading pastors and authors
    - 2). Web sites from leading evangelical organizations
      - a.) Man in the Mirror
      - b.) Navigators
  
3. Be prepared in advance to share your testimony when you get the chance
  - a. Some key steps
    - 1). Your life before you accepted Christ as Savior
    - 2). How and why you accepted Christ
    - 3). What has your life been like since

### III. SHARING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE WITH THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

#### A. Opening thoughts (1 Peter 3.15)

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1. Peter gives three points to follow
  - a. We are to set Christ apart as our Lord
    - 1). Not just as our Savior
    - 2). As Lord, Christ commanded us to share the Gospel
  - b. We are to BE PREPARED to share the Gospel
    - 1). What does that mean for each of us ?
    - 2). It is necessary to be prepared because we never know when the OPPORTUNITY to share will occur
  - c. Peter always tells us what our attitude & demeanor should be
    - 1). We should be GENTLE when we share
    - 2). We should be RESPECTFUL when we share
2. Let's look at each of these in more detail

#### B. Always be ready to give an answer

##### 1. Self defense/police teaching: 4 colors of situational awareness]

- a. White/green: Unaware, not paying attention
- b. Yellow: Attentive, but relaxed
- c. Orange: Focus is directed at an immediate potential threat
- d. Red: A threat has been defined

##### 2. Like this, note Jesus' balanced approach to being aware

Matt 10.16

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves;  
so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves"

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##### 3. Now that is defense, but are you ready to go on the offense when God presents the opportunity ?

###### a. Are you aware of what is going on around you ?

- 1). Listen for typical "phrase from the stage" 's that should cause you to realize you have an opening for a spiritual conversation
  - a.) Spiritually dead person
    - I don't believe there is a God
    - The Bible is just a bunch of myths
    - Evolution explains away a need for God
    - I am not a Christian because Christians are responsible for all the wars in history
    - There are many ways to get to God
    - I am a Christian because I go to church and I am a good person
    - I have been a good person, so I will be okay

b.) Infant believer

- I don't have to go to church to be a Christian
- I gave my life to Jesus and I go to church, but I don't need to be close to other people.
- I pray and read my Bible. That is good enough for me
- I don't have time to be in a relationship with another Christian.

b. Are you aware that God likely has set this situation up as an opportunity for you to share ?

- 1). You can't know what is going on in the background of this person's life, but God does
- 2). An opening response to the phrase you heard>>>

"Would you like to hear what I believe about that ?"

- a.) Avoid giving an initial claim to your greater experience, Bible knowledge, scientific knowledge, etc
- b.) You are keeping it on a person-to-person personal level, not a lecture or diatribe

C. Adopt a technique to simply and quickly share the Gospel

1. Suggested to use the Bridge Illustration [quick overview]

a. What do I need to be saved from ?

- 1). God's world is perfect, and wants only perfect citizens
- 2). Humans disobey God's rules and break the relationship [Illustration Pg 132 of gap]
- 3). Separation from God is permanent if the person's sins aren't paid for somehow

b. What can save me ?

- 1). Works can't do it
- 2). A substitute must take the sinner's place to replace the relationship permanently
- 3). Jesus took the sinner's place, paid his/her sins, and replaces the relationship when His sacrifice is accepted [Illustration pg 132 of cross as bridge]

2. Whatever technique you use to present the Gospel, follow up with a few key questions to help the listener to focus on a decision

- a. Do you feel that you have sinned against God ?
- b. Do you understand that only Jesus' sacrifice can pay for your sins permanently ?
- c. Is there anything keeping you from accepting Him as your Savior right now ?

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## IV. SHARING YOUR LIFE WITH SPIRITUAL INFANTS

### A. Spiritual infants

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#### 1. When a person accepts Christ as Savior, they become a spiritual infant

##### a. Acts 8.30-31 The Ethiopian eunuch

30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet,  
and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?"  
And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

b. As the workbook says, "Spiritual infants don't know what they don't know"

#### 2. Disciple-makers goal for spiritual infant

a. Guide toward a personal walk with Christ

b. Eventually teach them to walk with Him independently

#### 3. This requires more than a periodic Bible study/meeting with them

##### a. It requires sharing your life with them

1). Include them in regular activities so they see your  
believer's approach to life

b. Be available for questions as the Spirit grows them

c. [Examples of Jesus spending time with the Twelve outside  
of the crowd of disciples]

1). Lk 5.27-32: Shared a meal & taught about His mission

2). Lk 7.36-50: Shared a meal at a Pharisee's, allowed  
His feet to be washed by a sinful woman, shared a parable  
to teach about God's forgiveness

### B. Note again the three characteristics of spiritual infants

#### 1. The three

a. Ignorance

b. Confusion

c. Dependence

#### 2. These generate questions and needs of various urgencies

a. Some need to be addressed immediately

1). A family argument over church issues

b. Some the infant will have to wait for a response

1). "I just read where Jesus said to hate my family. True ?"

c. Some can wait until your next meeting

1). What kind of Bible should I buy ?

#### 3. Keys to answering questions

a. If you don't know the answer, say so and promise to get back  
when you have researched the answer

b. It's important for a disciple to see

1). The disciple-maker doesn't have all the answers

2). The disciple-maker depends on studying the Bible,  
and praying for the Spirit's guidance to answer

## V. SHARING NEW TRUTH WITH SPIRITUAL INFANTS

### A. Spiritual infants require maintaining contact to grow

1. Much like a human infant does
2. They may join a study group, but they will need personal 1-1 contact periodically
  - a. To rehearse, analyze straighten out what they have learned (they become *confused*)
  - b. To ask questions of someone they have come to trust (they are still *dependent*)
  - c. To be guided into growing into new areas of the truth (they are still *ignorant*)

### B. Spiritual infants need to be fed spiritual milk

1. Heb 5.12: "milk" > elementary principles of the Christian beliefs and life
  - a. Gk: *stoy·khi·on* > rudimentary principles, beginnings
2. So we need to teach the spiritual infant "the basics" > Acts 2.42
  - a. **The apostles' teaching**
    - 1). Scripture from both the OT and NT
  - b. **Breaking of bread**
    - 1). Includes, but not limited to, Communion
    - 2). Teach the meaning linking this to the Gospel  
1 Cor 11.26, 15.3-4
  - c. **Prayer**
    - 1). Not the prayers of the Pharisees, boastful pronouncing and requesting
    - 2). But talking with God in a relationship way
  - d. **Fellowship**
    - 1). Heb 10.25 We are commanded to gather together with other believers to encourage each other
3. Explore these categories with a spiritual infant by asking a leading question in each to draw him/her to understanding
  - a. **The Bible:** What is the Old Testament ?
  - b. **The Gospel:** Why did Jesus have to die ?
  - c. **Prayer:** Why would you want to pray to God ?
  - d. **Fellowship:** Where do you think you can find Christian fellowship to grow by ?

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C. Some specific goals in each category

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**1. Goals regarding the Bible**

**a. Needs of spiritual infants**

- 1). Too often, we see someone accept Christ and then dumped into church/a Bible study
  - a.) Input tends to be topical, Bible book oriented
  - b.) Spiritual growth becomes exceedingly slow because there is no foundation laid to build on from these venues
  
- 2). The foundation must be built as soon as possible
  - a.) Overview of what the Bible says, Genesis through Revelation
  - b.) Understand the theme of God's plan to redeem sinners from Adam & Eve through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as everyone's Savior
  - c.) Do it via high points, which means you have to prepare in advance

**b. Key stories to tell from**

**1). Old Testament**

- a.) Creation/God's gift of a perfect world: Gen 1-2
- b.) The Fall/The entry of sin into the world: Gen 3
- c.) Noah's Ark/God's Judgement on sin/New Beginnings: Gen 6-9
- d.) God's promise to Abraham/Spiritual seed to follow: Gen 12
- e.) Slavery in Egypt/Rise of a God's people: Exod 1-4
- f.) Ten Commandments/God's Law to live by: Exod 20 & Deut 5
- g.) Israel asks for a king/rejection of direct rule by God: 1 Sam 8
- h.) King David is chosen/Rule by a man after God's own heart: 1 Sam 16
- i.) Exile to Babylon/God's judgement on a declining nation: Dan 1-3
- j.) Return of Nehemiah/God's grace in restoring his people: Neh 1

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**2). New Testament**

- a.) Jesus' birth/God comes as perfect Man: Lk 1-2
- b.) Baptism/Jesus shows obedience to His Father: Matt 3-4
- c.) Sermon on the Mount/Jesus' key teachings: Matt 5-7
- d.) Jesus healing physically & spiritually: Lk 5.12-26
- e.) Feeding of the Five Thousand/Jesus meeting physical and spiritual hunger: John 6
- f.) Raising of Lazarus/Jesus' power over death and the grave: John 11
- g.) Crucifixion/Jesus paying for mankind's sins: Matt 26-27
- h.) Resurrection/God's victory over Satan's power: John 20
- i.) Jesus Commissions His disciples/Command to spread the Gospel worldwide: Matt 28.18-20
- j.) Jesus Ascends to Heaven/ The King returns to His kingdom victorious: Acts 1

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## **2. Goals regarding the Gospel - Why did Jesus come ?**

- a. For everyone: To show us God's character
  - 1). God's concern for human suffering and daily needs
  - 2). God's compassion for saving them from the penalty of their sins
  
- b. For believers: To be the substitute in paying for our sins
  - 1). On earth: Freeing us from the control of our spiritual nature and Satan
  - 2). Freeing us to enter heaven
  - 3). To give us the Holy Spirit
    - a.) To keep us assured of our salvation
    - b.) To keep us steadfast to God's will in temptation

## **3. Goals regarding the Church**

- a. Rom 12.4-5: We are ONE body
  - 1). New members may not want to be a part of an organization
    - a.) But they need to see how essential the church is to their spiritual growth and effectiveness
  
  - 2). Essential they understand the Lord's plan for the church
    - a.) Each member has one or more gifts given by the Holy Spirit
    - b.) The gifts work together to make the church more effective than an individual in carrying out God's mission on earth

## **VI. SHARING NEW HABITS**

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- A. Spiritual Infants need to develop essential growth habits
  - 1. How they develop spiritual habits depends on personality
  - 2. But some are core to growth, and they need help in developing them
  
- B. Bible Reading Habit
  - 1. Reading, studying, meditating on Bible passages is essential to feeding spiritual growth
    - a. The more they learn, the less confusing it becomes
    - b. The less confusing, the more enticing to accelerate growth
  
  - 2. Here's some ideas to help them get started
    - a. Choosing a reliable Bible version they can understand comfortably
    - b. Set goals for Bible reading at least three times per week, and ask them about what they read
    - c. Emphasize why it is important to choose a location to read each time
    - d. Give them a starting point in a plan, like reading about Jesus in the short book of Mark

3. Continue to encourage the person's Bible reading & growth
  - a. Share study methods
  - b. Share what your reading plan is, what you learned recently
  - c. Show how to journal what they learn, how to highlight passages

C. Gospel-Sharing Habit

1. A spiritual infant is somewhat unique among other believers
  - a. Still has many friends who are unbelievers to share the gospel with
  - b. Likely has a high degree of enthusiasm about his/her newfound faith, and is eager to share it
2. Get them to see this unique position they have, and how to build on it to sharing the gospel
  - a. Just tell how and why they came to accept Christ as their Savior
  - b. Help them to diagram a simple few steps as to how they want to share with others
  - c. Help them to choose a few key Bible verses to highlight what they want to say
    - 1). John 3 and Rom 10 are excellent chapters to set the stage, and emphasize key passages
    - 2). Can be highlighted with Eph 2.8-9, Act 4.12
3. Help them to get ready for opportunities
  - a. Show the steps you use to present your gospel story
  - b. Help them to rehearse theirs
  - c. Encourage them to make a list of prospects to pray for an opportunity to share with

D. Praying Habit

1. Praying is not natural for spiritual infants
  - a. They must learn TO pray, and HOW TO pray
2. This habit is best picked up by example - pray with them
  - a. Will see how it is intended to be a conversation with God, not a ceremony
  - b. Will also see the purposes of prayer
  - c. Explain the principle segments of the Lord's Prayer so they get the thanks, praise, confession, request sequence

## E. Church Attendance Habit

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1. It is likely the unbeliever's Sunday morning routinely consisted of something like sleeping in, casual breakfast, round of golf etc.
  - a. Establishing a new habit in place of this can be difficult for the spiritual infant
  - b. The best thing is to convince him/her of the importance of regular attendance
  
2. Understanding again the importance of the church is key
  - a. Heb 10.24-25
  - b. This brings out at least two important aspects of attendance
    - 1). Getting to know other members to support each other in need
    - 2). Getting bolstered for the next week of challenges and opportunities
  
  - c. Without regular attendance, the spiritual infant often declines in growth and fellowship in a short time
    - 1). Personal spiritual benefits are lost
    - 2). The support structure we all need in life fails to emerge, will not be present in significant and critical needs

## VII. CONCLUSION

### A. From Pastor Hershel Hobbs

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For the Samaritan woman (John 4) the wayside well became a cathedral in which Jesus could present His claims to a needy soul. From Him we learn that the Christian can witness anytime, any place. We cannot allow those opportunities to slip away.

The greatest obstacle for witnessing is the fear of failing. Persons who witness cannot fail. The very act of bearing witness is success!

### B. Paul Tan *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, famous evangelist, said that the New Testament records tell of forty people, each suffering from the same disease, who were healed by Jesus. Of this number, thirty-four were either brought to Jesus by friends, or He was taken to them. In only six cases out of forty did the sufferers find the way to Jesus without assistance. Of the vast number of people who find their way to Jesus today, most of them reach Him because the friends of Jesus are concerned about the welfare of their souls