

Guaranteed Ideas to Reach the Men Around You

Mark 2:17, Luke 19:10, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, Acts 2

Good morning, men. I want to do a shout out this morning to a group of fellows who are meeting in Pensacola, Florida. The leader is Dale Simmons. There are about 15-20 men from different churches. They meet at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Pensacola. They are a discipleship group that has been meeting for about five years. Notice they have the same banner artwork from us and did something on their own. That was creative. Thank you, Dale Simmons for that. Join me in giving me a big, warm shout out. One, two, three, hoorah!

The series is “A City of Disciples.” The first week we talked about a fresh movement of God among the men of our city. The idea for the day was a city of disciples must first be a city of disciple-makers. Last time we talked about the next ten years. The question was ten years from now, what is it that you would like to be able to look back on and say I was part of that.” Disciple-making is God’s designated way of releasing the power of the gospel on every problem that is facing our city.

This morning what I want us to do is to move into training you – many of you already know how to do this –how to actually go and make disciples.

The first and most important thing to know is to understand what is a disciple? What is a disciple? Biblically, a great definition for a disciple is someone who is called to live in Christ – that is the born-again part; the knowing Jesus and having faith part, receiving Christ and coming to Christ; all the different ways it is said in the Bible and elsewhere.

Equipped to live like Christ is growth, ongoing spiritual formation, and transformation, like this Bible study. Sent to live for Christ – that is neighbor-love, doing good deeds, abiding in Christ, taking up your cross and following Jesus – you cannot be my disciple if you do not do that, Jesus said.

Those are the three biblical parts of a disciple: called to live in Christ, equipped to live like Christ, and sent to live for Christ. Basically they are the areas of evangelism, growth and service, just to make it easy, or know, grow, go. There are lots of different ways to put this. I like called, equipped and sent because they are biblical words and concepts and there are scores of Scriptures to support those three things. I especially like this definition, called, equipped and sent because it is actionable. You can go and make disciples if you build around these three rubrics.

This morning we will take the first one on, the area of being called, or the area of evangelism, or winning men to Christ. The title of this talk is “Guaranteed Ideas to Reach the Men Around You.”

WHAT IS EVANGELISM AND WHY DO WE NEED TO GET THIS RIGHT?

First up is what is evangelism and why do we need to get this right? You should be in Mark 2:17. In the verse before, the Pharisees saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. They asked

his disciples this question – why does this guy eat with tax collectors and sinners? These are the scum of the earth. Verse 17 says: “On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘Now that you mention it, I don’t know what I see in these people.’” No, He said this: “On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

I am in a funky mood this week because I just see this iron grip that sin has on the whole world. Sin has a grip on the whole world. In fact, the reason I am in a funk I say, “God, do I care more about this than You?”

Jesus said, “I have come to seek and to save the lost.” That is what it says in Luke 19:10. Whenever you would ask Bill Bright why Jesus came, he always said the same thing: to seek and to save the lost, quoting Luke 19:10. The reason Jesus came was to save sinners to seek and to save the lost.

But that is not all. 1 Corinthians 5 talks about this terrible thing going on in the Christian church. A man was sleeping with his father’s wife. They didn’t say his mother, so it was probably a second wife or something like that. Maybe a second wife like divorced and married again, or a second wife as a polygamist. She was probably not his mother, but his father’s wife. In Corinthians Paul says, you seem like you are proud of it. Then he says this man needs to be turned over to Satan. Let’s look at it. I want you to see this.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 5. This is unbelievable interesting and exciting to see how it actually turns out. 1 Corinthians 5:5. Paul says, “Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed [that is the flesh part of us] and his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.” This is part of where we get church accountability from. When you see people in church sinning and you don’t ask them to stop sinning or do something when they are sinning, then it is like letting a little child get away with murder and they grow up to be terrible.

However, this person is a wayward Christian. He is somebody who has gone astray. But, Jesus came to seek sinners. He came to seek and save the lost. He came to restore the brokenhearted. It is the ministry of reconciliation. You can’t just leave it there. That is why in addition to 1 Corinthians 5, we have 2 Corinthians 2.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 2. 1 Corinthians 5 must always be considered in conjunction with 2 Corinthians 2:6-7. Paul says now about this man who slept with his father’s wife, “The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.” Do you see it? The purpose of withholding fellowship is always restoration. It is always reconciliation. We don’t hold people accountable, cut them loose and then they are on their own. If you do that they will destroy their lives. They will be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. After an appropriate amount of time you come back around them.

We are looking at guaranteed ideas to reach the men around you. There are two kinds of men that we are talking about – men who are lost and men who are wayward. We need to figure out how to evangelize and reach out to all of these men, get them into right relationship with God, and hopefully right relationship with each other as well.

That is the big picture. What could possibly have motivated God to disturb the bliss of heaven to enter the chaos of earth? Is it His holiness? I don't think so. It is His love. If you think about this the love of God is the only attribute of God sufficient to motivate Him to enter time and space and to redeem us. It is the love of God. The love of God is the motivation He had to seek and to save the lost and to reach the wayward and it is our motivation, too.

What I am hoping this morning is by the end of this you will be filled up, overflowing with a desire to seek lost and wayward men that is born out of a love and a passion that you have for God and knowing how much He loves you and how much He loves them that you will want to love them too.

If you get love right you will figure out how to get the rest right. Let me say from the start. You will not reach any man unless you desire to reach the man. All my teaching is the same. I want you to be a true believer because people do what they want. I could talk until I am blue in the face and you could listen until you are red in the face or white in the face. But unless you believe, that this is the truth, and that men's lives, their families and our city is at stake in this, then you will never do anything. You will get all revved up and excited, awe-inspired, talk about it at your group, it will be a big conversation. You will want to change the world, and then you will go on your appointments, and then it is 10 o'clock and then you will forget about it, unless you are a true believer. I want you to love men the way Christ loves men. Then all these ideas will make some sense.

Why do we need to get it right? Because there are guys right there today, from what I heard yesterday, who are thinking about committing suicide. There are guys out there today thinking about leaving their families. There are guys out there today who are so upside down, so broken so shattered, that they have no idea how they are going to make it. These are the men that are around you and me. They are there. You know they are there. If you don't know they are there, then listen double hard.

I was on a flight from somewhere in Canada to Phoenix so I could catch the redeye from Phoenix to Orlando. I got the window seat so I could put on my headphones and my eye shades and sleep. I know you are supposed to sit there and witness to everyone on the planes. Usually after a ministry trip, I am so exhausted the last thing I want to do is talk to someone about Jesus.

But this big guy sits down in the middle seat, like a pro-baseball player kind of big. Here is the deal. He is a chatterer. Blah, blah, blah. He doesn't even have his seatbelt on and he is already chatting me up. He was chatting about this and that. I am thinking I want to go to sleep. So I asked, "Are you a spiritual guy?" He goes off on how he is not really but he believes in a higher power. He is in AA. He is a recovery guy, and so he is going into all the different parts of that. He is such a narcissistic guy. He is so into himself, every word he says fascinates himself. I am just here to tell you, I was going to go crazy. My head was about to explode. I am thinking, I know I just talked to this guy about Jesus, but I don't care if he goes to hell. I don't like him – to hell with him. When the plane took off I said, "I'm going to sleep." I put the eye shade on and headphones on, and three hours later I woke up. He discovered there was another guy sitting next to him. He had been talking to this other guy three hours nonstop.

But the Spirit says, you have this book in your case. I carry books in my briefcase so I can give guys books. I had one copy left of *Is Christianity for You?* Even though I didn't want to, I asked,

“Are you a reader?” I was hoping that he wasn’t. He said, “Yeah, as a matter of fact I am going to a sales conference and since I am in AA, I don’t go out with the guys and I don’t have anything to do at night. I would love to get the copy of a book.” I said, “You wait for me at the end of the jet way in the boarding area, and I will get this out and give it to you.” He was this narcissistic, proud, overbearing guy. I get up to the boarding area and I pull the book out and asked him his name. I signed the book. I looked over at him and there was this broken, vulnerable, shattered looking silhouette of a man that I had seen on the plane. And I loved him. That whole thing was orchestrated by the divine sovereignty of a loving God who wants to invade that man’s life. I don’t know what happened or what will happen.

But another famous thing that Bill Bright used to say was witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. We don’t have to produce any particular result; we just have to be faithful. We do our part, God does His part. Chances are you won’t know what that is. It’s not important. It is just important for us to be faithful. This is important for us to get right. This is what God wants us to do.

WHAT EXACTLY IS EVANGELISM?

What exactly is evangelism? Evangelism is not coming to Christ – that is a different thing. Evangelism is the process by which we help other people come to Christ. It is a process. This is the big idea for the day. **The bar for evangelism is quite low. Evangelism is simply taking someone as far as they want to go toward Jesus.** That is all it is. You don’t have any duty. You don’t have any responsibility except help men understand however much they want to understand and go as far as they want to go.

The word evangelism itself seems to be very scary to people and creates a lot of fear. Maybe it makes you think evangelism is not my business what is going on in their life. Why is it your business? Because Jesus says it is your business. He has commanded you to be His witness. He commanded you to go and make disciples. He commanded you to bring people to spiritual maturity. It is a duty to which you can either obey or disobey.

Anything and everything that you do that helps someone take another step toward Jesus Christ is evangelism. It is you talking to them about Christ, but it is just as much you living a life in Christ so people look at you and see that you are different. The greatest compliment that you will ever have is I want what you have. There is no greater compliment you can ever receive than I want what you have. By the way, as a sidebar there is no greater degree of spiritual maturity than to not need to say I want what that person has – either the believer or the nonbeliever – because you are so content in Christ yourself. When you get there, or close to there, people will see that and they may not articulate the words, but they are thinking – wow – I don’t know what it is that Jeff has, or I don’t know what it is that Kevin has, or Pat has, but that is what I want. Then it opens up. By the way, they are never going to think that if they think you don’t love them. By the way, they will never think that if you are angry with them. By the way, they will never think that if they feel your condemnation, or that they need to win your approval, or that you are trying to control them. They will never feel that way. Love them the way Christ loves them.

I watched *The Passion of Christ* – it took me three years to get up the courage to watch it a second time. I watched it on Easter Sunday and I was so struck by the immensity of the love. Then I walked in the kitchen, my wife said something and I snapped her head off.

HOW IS EVANGELISM DONE?

How is evangelism done? This is how you do it. I am not going to teach you didactically; I am going to give you stories and case studies. I want to tell you about Sid. Sid is 37 years of age. He lives in San Antonio, Texas. He works at a Toyota truck factory with 2000 employees. They produce all the Toyota Tundras and another Toyota truck, worldwide. Sid was becoming obsessed with Christ and Christ's love for him. He could see the brokenness among the others that he worked with. God put an idea in his heart. He decided that he would invite some of his coworkers to lunch, pay for the lunch himself, and give his testimony.

He actually did this. He sponsored the lunch and twenty guys showed up. After he gave his testimony one of the guys said he would like to meet with Sid and talk about these things. They started meeting on a weekly basis. Sid started a little Bible study and soon he had six guys in the Bible study at work and these men's lives began to change and be transformed. He also started a couples Bible study, so he is leading two Bible studies. His boss is going through marital problems. He knew this and gave his boss a copy of *The Man in the Mirror*, and when he walks by his boss' office he can see him in there reading this book from time to time.

This is a very practical example to speak the words. The book of Acts is like one story after another of how the church increased in size and numbers. The church grew. The theme of the book of Acts is growing the church and growing the number of disciples. The first one is Peter right at Pentecost with people speaking in different tongues, and people were asking what does this mean?

How is evangelism done? You want to get people to wonder about your life, about what is going on with you. What does this mean? I want what you have. Then when these people asked Peter what does this mean, then he used that as an opportunity to speak, he told them, just like Sid. He had a little better result – 3,000 people came to Christ that day.

In the early days of the study Scott Crossman, of the real estate company, came here. I would say he is one of my disciples. How do you actually let those words come out of your mouth? He is Christ's disciple, but I have played a role in his life. He has played a role in my life too. Don't be timid about saying that you have made a disciple. 17 years ago Scott helped another man come to Christ and the man said, "Why don't you have a Bible study?" Scott quit here and he started his own Bible study with 10 men. They went through *The Man in the Mirror* book, chapter by chapter. Then they started inviting other guys to come. What are the kind of men that come? Broken men; men who have business problems, men who have marriage problems and they minister to them.

Let me read you this. We helped each other cope with family and business setbacks. We actively recruited guys to join our group who were broken in the middle significant setbacks. We witnessed many reconciled marriages and recovered businesses. Our discipling method was letting these broken men know we cared. That we too had experienced brokenness and that Jesus loves them. We spend an hour a week studying the Bible and then pray for a few minutes.

They have had 150 guys come through in the last 17 years. They average about a dozen, but they've had about 150 men go through the study over the last seventeen years. They have had won men to Christ and won men back to Christ.

There are so many other ways that evangelism could be done. Mike and Bob started meeting at McDonald's in Lake Mary. They sat there and were talking about their needs and their problems, and other guys started seeing what they were doing and said, what does this mean? I want what you have. Now, you are here, and you are here, and others because of that. They have 7 or 8 guys that meet on Saturday mornings. It's like a magnet up at that McDonald's. That is how you do evangelism.

There are so many other examples around this room. **The big idea today – the bar for evangelism is quite low. Evangelism is simply taking someone as far as they want to go toward Jesus.**

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CAN YOU DO?

The final item is what specific thing can you do? Number one is you have to want it. It is the desire. Remember what I said about being a true believer – people do what they want. It is to desire it. If you don't want to win men to Christ, I get it. But do you at least want to want it? You could pray to want to want it. Say, "Lord, I want this." Or you can pray, "I don't really want this, but I want to want it." Pray God will give you the desire. The starting point is always prayer.

Secondly, is to get trained. On the tables, everybody should get one of these in their hands. It is a personal testimony worksheet. We did this last year and we do it periodically. This is a worksheet to help you put together a three-minute personal story so you can tell your story. You need to be able to tell your story. Here is how you can specifically do evangelism.

Number one is asking a man where he is on his spiritual journey. Why? Because if guys are asking what does this mean and what do you have? You need to know what you are working with. It's Selling 101. This is on the first page of the manual. Ask questions. Find out where he is coming from. Step number one is asking the question, "Where are you on your spiritual journey?"

Yesterday my cable box went out and they sent a guy named Jeff. He changed it out. Because I have the desire, my antennae were up. I asked, "Where are you in your spiritual journey?" I gave him one book, and then I gave him a second book, *Is Christianity For You?* I thought about giving him all my books, but I just gave him two. It is such a low threshold of pain, to give a guy a book. There is no pain or fear. There is no worry. You can give a book. I can give you this book with such confidence because then I am out of it. You don't have to do anything. It either works or doesn't work. Ask where the guy is on his spiritual journey. Then you will get enough information to know whether to go to the left or to the right. The second thing you need is training.

Step one is where are you on your journey, and because you have training then you are able to tell them your testimony and share how they can become a Christian, or if you don't know how to share it, give them the tracts so they can know how to do that. Trust that God will do what God will do; that God will do what God always does.

Be spontaneously intentional or intentionally spontaneous. In other words, you have your radar up, living your life but you are at the ready so that when Jeff shows up to change out your cable box, you are ready to do whatever the Spirit needs. Let the Holy Spirit lead you.

One of our former members, Bob Baird had a son named Butch. Butch was gay and caught AIDS. Bob asked Jim, who had a son who died of AIDS, if he would go and meet with his son Butch who was on death's door and talk to him about Christ. Jim walks in, first words out of Butch's mouth were, "I don't want any of that Jesus stuff."

Jim said, okay, no problem. Although he said he did slip a lot of Jesus stuff in. They met for the next eight weeks, about ten times. Jim asked Butch if it would be alright if he said a prayer when they would meet, and he allowed that. One day several visits in, Butch asked, "What do you know about AIDS?" It was at that point that Jim told Butch about his own son, Tim, who died of AIDS. That formed a bond.

The next visit Butch asked, "How do you feel about guy men?" Jim said, "Butch, how do you want me to feel? All I know is that God loves you, God loves all of us very much, but I think He might love you a little extra special."

Jim was able to make this connection to love him with the love of Christ. Not long after that there was a blinking message on Jim's answering machine. Butch was getting ready to die. Jim went by the hospital. He said, "Butch the train is coming now." This was Butch's language that he had been using. He said, "The train is coming into the station now. If you don't receive Jesus you are going to be going to the left, where there is total darkness. But if you receive Jesus you will go to the right and you will see His loving hands stretched out for you and you will go to be with Jesus. Would you like to receive Jesus and go to be with God?" At that moment just before he was about to die, Butch said, "Yes, I would like to be with Jesus." Jim helped Butch become a Christian. He died an hour later.

What specifically can you do? You know what to do. **The bar for evangelism is quite low. Evangelism is simply taking someone as far as they want to go toward Jesus.** Let's pray about it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Our dearest father, Lord Jesus, and Holy Spirit. We do know what to do. We pray You would give us a passion for this most important command, duty and task You gave us – to call men to live in Christ. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.