



“A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man who has an argument.”

Lee Stoneking



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Witnessing— To Say or Not to Say



Okay ladies. Here we are. It's time to start talking. All of what we have learned has been leading up to this conversation. The person is right. The timing is right. Now, we just need to know what to say, or in many cases, what *not* to say.

This chapter will build your confidence in speaking with others and give you guidelines for stimulating conversation. Not that we ladies ever have *trouble* with stimulating conversation, but when it comes to sharing the gospel, sometimes we get a little lip-locked and tongue-tied.

First, relax—it's a lot easier than you think. Besides, you have already come this far. You are better equipped than you even realize. Remember, the Almighty One is beside you.

A witness, by definition, is someone who tells what she has seen or heard. A Christian witness shares what she has seen, heard, and experienced as a result of her encounter with her Savior, Jesus Christ.

God has done so much in our lives. With thankfulness and relief, we admit that most of us are entirely different people since *He* came to stay. At times it is difficult to know even where to start with explaining Christ to people.

This chapter offers guidelines that will help you be most effective in knowing what to say and not to say as you begin witnessing.

Witnessing Guidelines

1. Start with common topics.

When you begin to witness to someone, look for common topics to talk about. This does not necessarily mean you must start with something of a religious nature. Many times other topics of conversation will create the pathway to the one that enables you to share Christ.

Examples of common interest:

- a. Perhaps your children and *their* children both attend the same preschool.
- b. Perhaps you *both* share the same dentist or eye doctor.
- c. Perhaps your parents and *their* parents live in the same assisted-living center.
- d. Perhaps you found *their* wallet on the college campus.
- e. Perhaps you *both* ordered a caramel macchiato latte at Starbucks.

These examples of common interest could easily be expanded to become conversation starters that may open the door to lead the dialogue closer to Christ. Let's look at some possible conversation starters:

Examples of conversation starters:

- a. "We chose this preschool because its values matched our Christian beliefs."
- b. "I'm glad God gives doctors wisdom to know how to correct my vision (or fix my teeth or make wise diagnoses)."
- c. "Do you know about the weekly chapel services this retirement center offers?"
- d. "Hello. My name is _____. I found your wallet today on campus and wondered about the best way to return it safely to you."
- e. "We like the same coffee at the same Starbucks. Perhaps you would enjoy our women's Bible study we have here on Thursday nights. We call it "The Ladies Latte Club.'"

These scenarios are similar to the ones we find ourselves in every day. There are not many times when a stranger walks up and says, "You look like a good Christian. Please share with me what I must do to find God and be saved." Our witnessing is predominantly done over time as we walk, talk, interact, and exchange ideas and experiences with others.

Very little happens by chance. As we allow ourselves to become more aligned with God's will for our lives, we begin to recognize that everyone we meet is divinely ordered to cross our path. This meeting could allow them to learn from us, or for us to learn from them. God uses common *interests* to bring people together. Learning to be a successful witness includes learning to use *common*, everyday opportunities to win people everywhere we go.

2. Stay away from differences.

One of the strategies for witnessing is always to leave the door open for a second conversation. Differences quickly draw lines and often place you on a specific *side*. In the beginning, try to stay away from differences that could lessen your chances for subsequent conversations.

Discussing differences seldom leads a person closer to Christ. God

will give them further revelation as their hunger for Him grows. Our job is to keep the communication lines open to help build that hunger in them.

3. Never argue when witnessing.

Jesus never argued with anyone. He simply told them the truth and allowed them to choose it or turn away. For those who chose to leave, Jesus let them walk freely. A passage in John 3 gives us a pattern to follow when witnessing.

We do not see Jesus chasing the rich young ruler down the street, pressuring him to change his mind. After he asked Jesus, “What must I do to have eternal life?” the rich young ruler decided that the price of salvation was more than he was willing to pay. He walked away, and Jesus let him go. Jesus offered no rebuke or lesson laced with condemnation.

Most arguments are not Christ-like. Arguments involve pride, self-righteousness, or anger, and they ultimately do damage to the cause of Christ. No one ever *really* wins an argument.

One of the fears we have to overcome as soul winners is being afraid that witnessing will turn into arguing, or that we will be brought into a heated debate over Scripture. Let’s admit it. Most of us fear we would lose, for whatever reason: intimidation, lack of knowledge, inexperience, you name it. This fear can be alleviated. The solution is never to allow ourselves to get into that type of witnessing scenario in the first place.

Debates, if not handled carefully, can lead to arguments. We can learn a lot by observing how Jesus handled people that tried to draw Him into a debate. Jesus first discerned their motive and then often diffused their debates by answering a question with a question.

The Pharisees and Sadducees asked Him questions not because they wanted to learn, but because they wanted to make Jesus look bad in front of the people. They constantly asked Jesus questions that would polarize Him and possibly minimize His influence with the crowds.

When you are witnessing to someone and they start/suggest a debate, whether formal or informal, notice their tone. Discern their motive. If they are serious about studying the Bible, suggest a later time when you can study the topic together. This is a good test of their sincerity. Their response will determine your actions.

If they are not interested in this, but would rather get into the “he said, she said,” “I think” type of dialogue—the results will be fruitless. The moment the conversation becomes argumentative, stop discussing the topic. Jesus never converted anyone by arguing and neither will you.

Let’s summarize this point by looking at four groups of people that Jesus witnessed to:

a. Nicodemus

Nicodemus was genuinely hungry, but he had a lot of wealth and political influence. He came to talk to Jesus secretly by night, while he counted the cost of a possible conversion. He had much to lose as a member of the Sanhedrin council by aligning himself with Jesus (John 3).

b. Rich young ruler

The rich young ruler was already religious (Luke 18:18-23). He asked Jesus a question with only partial sincerity. He didn’t *really* want Jesus to tell him what it took to be saved; he wanted Jesus to tell him he was fine the way he was.

c. Pharisees-Sadducees

The pride of the Pharisees and Sadducees kept them from admitting that Jesus was right about anything. They were all about protecting themselves and their image. Their goal was to trap Jesus with His own words and to discredit Him among the people.

As you share your faith, you will deal with people of these types. If you do not learn to discern their motives, you may

expend a lot of energy and become frustrated at the lack of results you have in leading people to Jesus.

Many people, like Nicodemus, hear the truth, but are not immediately ready to embrace it and allow it to change them. Some people, like the rich young ruler, are more concerned with appearing to be real than actually embracing the full truth and being real. You need to be able to identify someone like the Pharisees and Sadducees by their argumentative tone. These people are not looking to you for help; rather, they want to take away/reduce your influence or convince you to change *your* mind.

c. Hungry and thirsty

Apart from these three groups there is a fourth and final group that makes soul winning worthwhile and even addictive. Jesus referred to this group as “good ground” in the parable of the sower when He said,

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (Matthew 13:8)

These types of people are like fertile soil. They are hungry and thirsty to be fed and watered with truth. When you invest in these people, you see immediate results. You know, the ones you stay up late to cry with in the middle of their worst crisis, and they are so appreciative of all you have done that they promise to come to church on Sunday, or they tell you they are ready for that Bible study. With this type, not only do you have the gratification of their soul being saved, but the celebration of knowing that the testimony of their conversion will also bring more souls into the kingdom.

These conversions are a soul winner’s dream. God sprinkles these people along our journey to bring us encouragement.

There are others who are *also* good ground, but their field needs a little time to be enriched before the blossoms can spring forth.

When some people questioned Jesus and posed arguments, Jesus simply answered their questions by planting a seed of truth. While they did not embrace this truth immediately, they did embrace it later and received their reward. Such was the case with Nicodemus.

After inquiring of Jesus about the necessary steps for salvation, we first see Nicodemus turning *away* from the Lord. Scripture shows later that Nicodemus turned *to* the Lord (John 19:39). At the time of Jesus’ burial, Nicodemus joined up with a secret disciple of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathaea. Nicodemus brought one hundred pounds of spices to use in anointing the body of Jesus. In assisting with this burial, Nicodemus made an open confession of his belief in Jesus Christ, despite the costs. Jesus was worth everything.

This is a perfect example of what is possible when we allow people, after having heard the truth, to come to Christ in *their* time. Jesus did not press for an immediate conversion with Nicodemus, but rather allowed the seed to produce fruit in its season.

This concept worked for Jesus, and it will work for us with our family, our friends, our neighbors, and the strangers we have yet to meet. Plant the seed, water and cultivate the ground, and then wait for the soil to become fertile.

The bottom line is this: the gospel works only on the hungry and thirsty. When you get the opportunity, spend your time and energy on them.

4. Witness in small doses—plant, water, and nurture.

You do not have to convert someone in a day. For that matter, Scripture never implies we have an obligation to do any witnessing on a certain timetable. It just tells us to *be* a witness. Some days we will just plant seeds. Other days we will water them. Many days we will resist the temptation to pull them up to see if they are actually growing or not. On privileged days, we may get to reap our harvest or a harvest that others have been nurturing. (Remember that soul winning is a team effort.)

Because soul winning is a process, it is crucial to witness in small doses. This means we must understand how much people can handle. This takes maturity and discernment; maturity on our part not to try to reap a harvest that is not yet ready, and discernment to know when they *are* ready for more.

The Bible says that when we pray for wisdom, God will give it to us (James 1:5). Oftentimes the wisdom He gives us is the reassurance that we don't have to do it all. He has other people working this ground too. As Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6).



"Lidia" (the lady to whom this book is dedicated)

We had just moved to Texas to assume the role of co-pastor of a thriving church. One day when we were out shopping, I saw a coupon for \$10 haircuts at Ariana's Salon. My husband had told me earlier that day that he needed to look for someone to cut his hair. I brought the coupon home, and Jason used it later that week.

Ariana's Salon was owned and operated by a beautiful lady named Lidia. She gave my husband a wonderful haircut, and he came home exclaiming, "I've found my new hair stylist!" He told me all about his experience and about Lidia.

The next time he went for a haircut, I went with him to meet Lidia. Just as Jason had told me, Lidia was delightful and humble and a real people person. I liked her immediately.

Occasionally I would join Jason for his haircuts and visit with Lidia. She was also a pastor's wife of a small but growing Hispanic congregation. Ariana's was a place where you always felt better leaving than when you came in. Lidia's beautiful spirit just had that effect upon you. No matter how you came in, you would be laughing when you left.

About three months had passed when my husband came home after a trip to Ariana's and said, "Something is wrong with Lidia. Today she was unusually quiet, and she looked like she had been crying. I think you should call her or go see her." Together, we said a

prayer for her. I immediately felt impressed to send her flowers. On the card I simply put, "We love you," and our names.

The next day I went by to see Lidia. She broke down. The day before, her husband had told her he no longer loved her and left. She was in complete shock—so hurt, disappointed, and confused. I listened and tried to empathize the best I could. She said, "The 'I love you' on the card meant so much since he just told me he didn't love me."

We stayed close to Lidia as her whole world unraveled. Her husband forced her and her seven-year-old son out of the house, the church asked her husband to resign, and the challenges just kept coming. During this time, we began planting seeds of God's unconditional love in Lidia's heart. We knew He would see her through this most trying time.

Lidia began visiting our church. After each visit there would be questions and answers and wonderful discussions. Lidia had loved God since she was a child and had spent her adult life helping others, but she did not understand all that God had made available to her.

The people at our church loved Lidia and her son and embraced them wholeheartedly. Each person she met formed another friendship and made her connections at our church stronger. Other families began inviting Lidia and her son over for dinner and spending time with them during the week. These church families helped to water and nurture the seeds we had been planting.

Within a couple of months, Lidia and her son were baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost on the same night. It was one of those days I will never forget. The joy on their faces is forever etched in my mind. (*continued in chapter 15*)

5. Ask questions that are stimulating but not offensive.

The goal when asking questions is to learn about people, their backgrounds, and what makes them who they are today. The answers to

their questions will help you prepare for the next steps in witnessing.

The gospel message originally came as a result of people asking a question. During the Feast of Pentecost, Jewish groups from every region of the world had come to celebrate Passover. On this particular Day of Pentecost (Acts 1-2), they witnessed more than another religious ritual. They observed a divine encounter of 120 who received the promise of the Father. Our story starts in Acts chapter 2.

First, they heard the sound of a mighty wind. Then they saw separate flames of fire hovering above each head. (Imagine that sight!) The tipping point came when they heard men and women declaring the works of God in their own language through a supernatural utterance. This prompted these observers to ask, “What meaneth this?”

Peter answered their questions and assured the observers that those speaking in tongues were not drunk on alcohol, but they had been filled with the Spirit of God. Peter then explained the true identity of Jesus Christ to these Jews.

Now when they heard this [the message that Jesus, the One they had crucified, was indeed both Lord and Christ], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37)

Peter’s response gave them direction.

When questions are asked by the one witnessing or the one being witnessed to, they often form a bridge for new revelation to be discovered. Questions are important in witnessing when you know how to use them effectively. There are three important rules to remember when asking questions. (We will discover ways to answer questions later on in this handbook.)

Rules for Asking Questions

Rule 1—Questions should be asked with sensitivity.

Rule 2—Questions should be non-confrontational.

Rule 3—Questions should be asked without judgment attached to them.

Once you have established a friendly relationship with someone, whether that process has taken days or years, here are a few open-ended questions that you can ask them:

1. Have you ever felt God before?
2. Would you consider yourself a religious person?
3. What are your religious beliefs?
4. Do you ever wonder if there’s more for you?
5. Do you have questions about God?
6. Do you have questions about the Bible?

Questions can be used to allow people to think about their life now and how they would like it to be. Many times in answering questions, people will share valuable life experiences with you that will give you insight into their needs.

Questions typically bring more questions with them. Many times they will turn and ask you the same question, so be sure to have your answers ready. This allows for a wonderful exchange of experiences that can open the door to share more of Christ with them.



Example:

You ask, “Have you ever felt God before?”

They answer, “Yes, when I was little, my grandmother used to take me to Sunday school.”

You reply, “What do you remember most about it? What was it like?”

Possibly this discussion would lead to a conversation that would bring

up many important thoughts and ideologies that this person has about God. You can learn a lot with a few strategic questions.

6. Share your testimony.

One of the easiest ways to witness is to share exactly what it is God has done in your own life. (Note: You do not need a criminal background or a history of drug abuse, alcohol, or immorality to have a testimony of God's delivering power.) All of us were born in sin, and He delivered us all from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Since this is all that is in the world, we can all relate to this. Maybe God pulled you from an existence without His joy and peace.

Start with giving people highlights of what God has done for you. Don't risk boring them with minute details. The long version of your testimony should come as a result of them showing real interest. Wait until they draw it out of you with their questions.

Sharing your testimony may be simpler by answering the following questions. You should think of the possible answers to these questions before you begin witnessing. We all have more than one testimony and should be equipped to share the one that is most appropriate.

Example:

Having a financial miracle is a great testimony, but it might not be the one needed if you are witnessing to someone who is requesting prayer for a terminally ill loved one. They will need to hear of a time when God brought healing to you or someone you love.

Stimulate your thoughts and strengthen your foundation as you answer the following questions:

Building Your Testimony

- a. When did you first experience Him?
- b. How has He changed you?

- c. What was your life like before you made Jesus Lord?
- d. How has this affected the lives of your family?
- e. What is your hope now?
- f. What has He currently done for you?
- g. What prayers have you recently had answered?
- h. What areas of service has He called you to?
- i. How does Jesus empower you for those areas of service?
- j. How did you discover your purpose for life?

Your personal testimony is your absolutely greatest asset in witnessing. No one will be able to argue away your experience. Since God is no respecter of persons, if He did it for you, He can do it for them. People begin to understand this as they listen to your story.

Many people do not know that God is capable of healing cancer, banishing loneliness, or putting a broken marriage back together. They have never heard of someone who has been supernaturally delivered from the prison of drugs or alcohol. When we share our testimonies, it creates possibilities in their mind of what God can do for them.

The six guidelines above could best be illustrated by the story we find in John 4, about Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

Jesus and the Woman at the Well

Start by finding common interests.

When Jesus met the woman at the well, He found familiar territory with her. He was thirsty, and she had a water pot. Jesus started the conversation by discussing natural water, intending later to talk about the *living* water.

Stay away from differences.

The woman tried to change the subject several times to talk about confrontational topics such as gender, race, and politics.

Never argue when witnessing.

Jesus refused to get embroiled in these dead-end areas.

Witness in small doses.

He kept bringing the conversation back to the most important thing. She was thirsty, and He had something that could quench that thirst—forever.

Ask questions that are stimulating but not offensive.

Jesus inquired about her marriage in a non-offensive manner. He said, “Go, call thy husband” (John 4:16).

Share your testimony.

She listened and replied because she was ready for more. When she became vulnerable and said, “I have no husband,” her honesty allowed Jesus to deal with the real issues in her life. He told her what was at the core of her being. In humility, she accepted this truth, and He offered her the revelation of who He was. She exchanged her water pot for living water to quench her real thirst.

This woman, overcome with the unconditional love of her newly revealed Messiah, ran through the streets of Samaria shouting her testimony. She could not keep it to herself. I can hear her shouting, “Come see a man who told me everything I ever did, but He loved me anyway!”

It did not matter that He had exposed her heart; it only mattered that He healed her and gave her a fresh start.

Because of her testimony, many Samaritans believed on Jesus and invited Him to teach in their city.

The story of the woman at the well came at the beginning of the Samaritan revival. In Acts 8:16 we see the phenomenal impact her witnessing had. When Philip came to Samaria, this lady had them hungry and thirsty for what she had received. Scriptures say that multitudes of Samaritans heeded the Word, and the whole city was baptized. This shows the power of a *shared* testimony.

Who will your testimony reach?

7. Build on what they have already experienced.

Many people are on a path to find God. Every step toward Him is a step in the right direction. As they begin to share their experiences with God, it is critical that you listen and celebrate every positive encounter they have had with Him.

If God has entrusted you to meet them at this particular juncture, then you have something to give or add to their experience. When we start by celebrating the journey they have already covered, we empower them to keep growing in God.

As Christians, we never reach a point in discovering *all* truth. God is so big, so all-encompassing, that we will never be able to comprehend all of Him with our finite minds. Truth is as big as God is. It will take all of eternity to know all there is about God. Since the heavens are His throne and the earth His footstool, we can be sure we will never have Him all wrapped up.

As we begin to share the biblical truths we have discovered, we can take confidence in knowing we are not alone. Alongside of us is the Holy Spirit doing what it does best—leading and guiding. “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

What we *can* share with others is the *next step* in their journey toward salvation.

Perhaps you are just a few notches ahead of them in the journey. God placed you here at just this moment to give them encouragement and

direction. When you celebrate where they have been, you can use their past experiences as a springboard to show them the next step they are seeking.

Examples:

If a person tells you she believes in God and wants to know more, then share with her the wonderful privilege she has to repent.

- § You could say, “God wants to live in your heart, and He has given you a method for this. When you sincerely repent, you confess your sins and ask God to forgive all the wrongs you have done. He forgives you, just as He promised. When your heart is clean and empty, then there is room for Him to come in and fill you up.”
- § If she tells you she has repented and wants to be filled with the Spirit of God, take her to Scriptures where people were filled with the Holy Spirit and talk about what happened in each incidence. How did the people receive the Holy Spirit? How did they know they were filled? Give her scriptural answers.

The Bible gives us an entire chapter as an example of how we can effectively minister to people who are devoted to God but are seeking more truth. In Acts 10 we meet Cornelius, an Italian man of influence and integrity, and yet a man in search of truth.

Cornelius already had a history with God. He gave to the poor, and his entire house feared God. Cornelius even fasted and prayed. God sent him an angel to prepare the way for this new door God was opening. Even though Cornelius’s prayers had come up as a memorial before God, Cornelius obviously did not know everything he needed to know, or else the angel would not have told him to call for the apostle Peter.

God spent a lot of time dealing with Peter so he would know how to handle Cornelius. Through biased eyes, Peter asked God, “How could someone who is not saved, see angels and have his prayers answered?” (Sometimes God works harder on us than He does on the people He sends us to witness to!)

Once Peter was delivered of his prejudices, he accepted the fact that God could deal with people outside of his accepted framework. When Peter finally went to Cornelius’s house, he gave those hungry Italians the next revelation they needed to be saved.

They were ready for more truth, and the Bible says they received the Holy Spirit while Peter was *still preaching*. Then Peter baptized the whole household. Knowing Italians (I married one), I imagine they celebrated with spaghetti and meatballs for days.

Just like Cornelius, there are many dedicated and sincere people in our world today that are looking for more of God. They are living in all the truth they know and doing it in faith and love. As we share with them what God has given to us, we first rejoice in the truth they already have. The truth they have embraced so far brought them to where they are today. Then we build on their foundation and celebrate each new revelation that they receive.

When we talk to people and share the love of God, it is important that we talk *to* them—not above them, not beneath them—but *to* them. This is the language of respect, and respect is necessary for effective witnessing. In fact, respect is the foundation for every healthy human relationship.

8. Never take away from their Christian experiences.

Along the path of soul winning, we will encounter people who know a lot more than we do. However, if God has revealed to *us* the essential elements that will bring salvation to their souls, we have a responsibility to share what we know with them. To be a successful witness for Him, we must act like Jesus did when He encountered people with less truth. He shared with them what He had to give and *never* rebuked them for not knowing more. We should do the same.

Nothing is more frightening than someone being told that their entire religious experience is a sham. You will cancel out your good work and your previous investments in people if you minimize what they have already experienced in God.

Aquila and Priscilla are the biblical model of a soul-winning couple (Acts 18). They were busy making tents for a living when they took in Paul, a former-persecutor-now-Christian and fellow tentmaker. Inviting him to be a long-term houseguest was certainly a gesture of compassion in action.

While they shared their home, Paul shared his heart and life-altering testimony. Just think: Aquila and Priscilla were housing the man responsible for killing many Christians. They accepted Paul *before* he wrote this: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I wonder, could we show this same level of forgiveness and trust in our new brothers and sisters as this couple did? Aquila and Priscilla did not hold Paul’s past over his head and wait for him to prove himself. They decided that if *God* could forgive Paul, then *they* could forgive Paul.

When we are skeptical and unwilling to accept new Christians, we can actually unravel their confidence in their growing Christian experience. The early church embraced new converts and allowed them to be witnesses immediately, showing faith and confidence in their spiritual transformation. We would be wise to follow this biblical pattern.

Enjoying their companionship, Paul invited Aquila and Priscilla to join him for an excursion to Ephesus. While in Ephesus, they met Apollos in one of those God moments. This juncture in the road was divinely ordained.

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.
(Acts 18:24-26)

Apollos walked in all the truth he knew. God arranged for Aquila and Priscilla to be in the right place, at the right time, with the right spirit.

The little phrase, “they took him unto them” could mean a variety of things. I picture Aquila and Priscilla having Apollos for dinner at their home and telling him how refreshing it was to hear him teaching so boldly in the synagogue. Then they begin to ask about his fervency in the Spirit and how he acquired it. Their eyes light up as he tells his stories. Aquila and Priscilla are thrilled to know he shares their same passion.

God loves us the way we are,
but too much to leave us that way.

-Leighton Ford

Then the conversation takes a turn toward the baptism of John.

They drink it in as Apollos relives his experience of being baptized unto John’s baptism. Aquila and Priscilla rejoice with him in the fact that Apollos understood his need to be baptized. “We were also baptized,” they tell Apollos. They pause long enough for Apollos to inquire of their baptism.

At this moment, Aquila and Priscilla carefully share with Apollos the new revelation of baptism they have received. As they expound unto him the way of God *more perfectly*, they offer him the opportunity to share in their experience. Notice, they do not tell him he has been baptized wrong. Apollos has been baptized correctly in the time in which it happened. He has not heard anything beyond John’s baptism; He is walking in all the light that he knows.

Aquila and Priscilla explain the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to Apollos. This Jesus is *the One* John has pointed toward. They show Apollos a new mode of baptism available now that John has passed from the scene. The new baptism will be done in the name of Jesus. Since Apollos already understands John’s mode of baptism, Aquila and Priscilla build on the foundation Apollos already has. They use his knowledge as a stepping-stone to update his theology.

After spending time with his new spiritual mentors, Apollos leaves with more revelation and a fresh fire that publicly convinces the Jews that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28).

God is dealing with many people around you. They have some truth, but, like Apollos, they also need an update on their theology. Just as Apollos was put in the pathway of Aquila and Priscilla, God will direct people to you when you have the wisdom and skills to direct them to Him.

9. Talk about empowering places and resources that meet a need in their life.

Everyone has needs in their life. People are searching for ways to find answers to those needs. As Christians, we know that God is our abundant supply, but people who have not met Him need to be exposed to resources that will help them find Him.

While God is not necessarily in a particular church—He dwells in the hearts of people—a church building full of godly people who are worshipping Him creates an atmosphere for Jesus to make Himself known. When His power is present, people can receive forgiveness, healing, deliverance, and salvation. A thriving, healthy church acting as a hospital, rather than a museum, is a wonderful and safe place to invite people.

Maybe you belong to a women's Bible group, like the Ladies Latte Club, or a support group for divorcées, widows, or new mothers. These are powerful resources you could share with people as God puts them in your path.

Many churches offer a variety of ministries that are equipped to meet people's universal needs. While this list is inconclusive, the following are a few of the ministries found in most growing churches. Next to each ministry is the group it targets.

Common Church Ministries and Target Groups

College Campus Ministry—young adults, singles

Singles Ministry—never been married, divorced, or widowed

Discipleship Classes—new believers

Young Marrieds Ministry—newly married couples

Nursery—mothers, families

Divorce Care—people dealing with this issue

Overcoming Addictions—people with drug and alcohol dependency

Mentoring classes—for children of single/divorced parents

Golden Age/Keenagers/Pillars—ministry to the senior citizens

Choir Ministry—people who love to sing

Musicians—people with musical talent

Women's Ministry—women of all ages

Men's Ministry—men of all ages

Sunday School—children of all ages

Youth Groups—ages 12-25

Soup Kitchens—all ages

Clothes pantry—all ages

Counseling—all ages

Bible Study groups—all ages

Mother's Day Out—stay-at-home moms

Preschool—working parents with children

Just from this list alone, there are unlimited resources available for you to share with others.

Example:

If God puts a single mother in your life, tell her about the exciting Sunday school classes your church offers for her children. You could also tell her when the next singles event is at your church. Let your new friend know what is available to her through a faith-based church and outreach center.

Books and Christian literature are other sources of inspiration and encouragement that have proven helpful in spreading the gospel of Jesus for centuries.



Recently, I received news that Marmi's mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. My friend, a Hindu, has had a marvelous encounter with Jesus Christ. Sitting in church with me one day, God gave Marmi a vision of Himself that changed her belief in God's real identity. It has been thrilling to watch as God has revealed Himself to Marmi a little at a time.

I believe her mother's sickness is an opportunity for God to show Marmi another side of Himself. To my knowledge, Marmi has never witnessed a miracle of physical healing.

Since Marmi and I no longer live in the same city, it is difficult to bring her to church. However, God impressed me to send her the book *I've Just Started Living* by Priscilla McGruder and Judy Bentley. This book details the journey Priscilla encountered as she trusted her Master and Creator with this same diagnosis of cancer. It ends in the triumphant celebration of the complete healing Priscilla received from her Maker.

I believe this book will be a resource that will show Marmi what is possible through prayer and faith in Jesus Christ. Her great need is to see her mother healed, and I know the One who is the cure.

He already defeated cancer at the cross. Marmi needs to know Jesus is accessible to her, despite her limited experience with God's supernatural glory.

This book, my prayers, and my contact with Marmi may just be the resources she needs to expand her revelation of healing and salvation through Jesus Christ. Marmi needs the daily reality of the supernatural in her life—the bright side of the supernatural. She is hungry and at a crossroads. I am praying for wisdom to know how to reach and help her, even from another city.

10. Never talk negatively about your church.

Negativity is unattractive, depressing, and a turn-off. We should be careful how we talk about our church to anyone, especially people we are trying to win to the Lord. Church is a reflection of the mercy and grace of God. The fact that there are imperfect people in the church, whom God is not afraid to call His own, should be a welcome sign, not a roadblock to newcomers. This is all the more reason why people should want to come and partake of the love of God.

If people feel like they have to be perfect to fit in a church, then they will never feel worthy. The true church is a hospital for the hurting, not a place where people have become perfect. Christianity does not make humans divine, but it gives us a hope to help with our humanity.

When we are witnessing, it is critical that we only speak positively about our church, our leaders, and our Christian friends. It is the devil's job to be an accuser of the brethren; he certainly does not need us aiding him in the job. Besides, there are so many positive things happening around us. *This* should be the focus of our conversation.

11. Lift Jesus Up.

Sometimes the best way to witness to people is just to brag on Jesus and lift Him up. Talk about healings, conversions, or restorations you have witnessed. People may not share your faith or your particular

brand of religion, but they will be drawn to hearing about a God that is alive, relevant, and actively doing something. This was the case with Devin and Sandy, our former neighbors.



“Devin and Sandy”

Devin and Sandy were our neighbors when my husband and I were newlyweds. Our condo was right next to theirs. Our front doors were twelve feet apart. Devin and Sandy, delightful and intelligent, were the kind of twenty-year-olds that were financially and intellectually way ahead of the game.

We had been neighbors for only a couple of weeks when Sandy asked me who we worked for. She looked puzzled as I explained that we worked as full-time evangelists and that we really did not work for any one person or company; we had no official employer—our Boss was God.

“How do you know where to go each week? Who calls you?” she asked.

“Pastors, missionaries, or ministers from churches call us and invite us to speak for their congregations. We go where we’re invited.”

Looking even more puzzled, Sandy asked, “Well, how do you know if they are going to call you?”

“We don’t.”

“Well then, who pays you?” Sandy asked almost fearfully.

In my most reassuring voice, I explained, “Well Sandy, it’s kind of like this. Usually, the pastors or ministers who invite us pay us. They take care of our traveling expenses and give us an honorarium for speaking for them.”

“How do you know what they are going to pay you? Do you have a set fee?”

“No,” I answered, “we do not have a set fee; we never really know how much they are going to pay us. We just trust that it will be enough.”

Sandy was almost in a panic now. I had not sounded convincing to her. I could see her conjuring up images of her new neighbors packing up and moving out, unable to make the mortgage payments. Financial security had been a way of life for Sandy, and she could not imagine living week-to-week by faith. I admitted to her that it was not always easy—this faith walk—but that God had proven Himself trustworthy.

“Sandy, Jason and I feel called to this job, to live this lifestyle. Jason has been traveling like this for seven years, and God has always taken care of him. I have confidence that since we are doing His work, He will take care of us.” Her look told me she would wait and see.

As the weeks turned into months, the four of us grew close. Surprisingly to Sandy, we always had enough money to pay the mortgage and keep our lights on.

Knowing money was a concern and interest to Sandy, each time God did something special in the area of finances, I would always share it with her.

This was my time to brag on Jesus without getting into a religious or doctrinal discussion. Over the three years we were neighbors, God intervened financially for us on numerous occasions. I shared these testimonies with Sandy.

One time we had an unexpected, sizeable check come in the mail. I stopped by Sandy’s door before going to my own to show her how God had provided for us. She was shocked. I left smiling and thanked God for doing it *again*.

Another time as we headed home from preaching in Bethel Springs, Tennessee, one of our tires blew out. Since we had not yet left the city limits, we called the pastor we had just preached for and inquired about a reputable tire shop.

The pastor graciously met us there and paid the shop to put not just one, but *all* new tires on our car, to the tune of \$900! This was a huge expense, especially for an evangelist. We were grateful and excited, to say the least. We drove home safely and in style, sporting our new top-of-the-line tires.

As we arrived home and parked in front of our house, Sandy noticed our new tires.

The next morning she came over and mentioned the new tires to me. I knew she was curious about how we could afford such nice new wheels.

I jumped at the chance to witness again of our Boss. Sandy was wide eyed as I told her how God took care of us by moving on the heart of this pastor. “God let our tire go out in a city where the pastor was compassionate enough to help us leave his city better than how we came in. Instead of just fixing the busted tire, the pastor looked at all of our worn tires and paid \$900 to have all of them replaced!” I exclaimed to her. Sandy was dumbfounded and admitted she had never met a boss quite like ours before. I wanted Sandy to see how much Jesus cared for the little details in our lives.

Sandy had grown up praying for others but never understood that she could pray for herself. She had thought this type of prayer would be selfish. Sandy did not understand a God that she could pray to herself and have her own needs met.

By lifting Jesus up, we witnessed to Sandy in a way that brought new revelation to her—God cared about even the little needs in our lives. *(continued in chapter 10)*

You will never go wrong in witnessing by bragging on Jesus and telling of the great things He is doing in your life. It will make people hungry to know just what kind of God you serve.

12. Refer to journal notes from previous conversations.

In chapter 6, “Turning a Stranger into a Friend,” we talked about the effectiveness of keeping a journal of new people you are witnessing to and writing down important things they tell you. This information is to be prayed over and also used for subsequent conversations. Now is the time when this journal information comes in handy.

Before you make plans to see your new friend or talk to her, look over your journal notes and reacquaint yourself with the names of her family members, job information, special needs she has, and other pertinent information. As you are witnessing to her, intermingle as much of this information as possible throughout the conversation. It helps make a stronger connection with her and builds her trust in your friendship.



“Tracy and Vincent”

Earlier this spring, my husband and I put our house on the market. Tracy and Vincent were the first couple to show a serious interest in it. They were in the process of relocating and were house-hunting when God allowed our paths to cross via the telephone and our realtor. While we talked on the phone, there was an instant connection, even from our first conversation. We could tell this was more than a house thing, we were supposed to meet each other at this time in our lives.

While we shared stories and swapped frustrations of the moving and relocating process (a process I endured six times in nine years), Tracy and I had many good laughs. She also told me about her children, her husband’s job dilemma, and her concern of finding a good church they could attend upon moving to Dallas. I made notes in my journal of these important nuggets of information.

Tracy called me later and told me she and her husband had chosen not to purchase our home, but had decided to build a new one instead. She told me she would still like to meet me once they got to Dallas.

After a few weeks, I called Tracy to check on them. She was excited that I remembered her and called even though they had decided not to buy our house. My call let her know that my care was genuine and not the kind of care that lasted only if or until a business transaction was completed. We made plans to get together in a few months once they got on location. I gave Tracy my number to call once they had settled.

Just last night, I received a call from Tracy. I saw the last name on the Caller ID and answered the phone, “Well hello, Tracy.”

Shocked, she said, “Wow—I can’t believe you knew it was me and you remembered my name. It’s been so long since we talked, I didn’t know if you would remember me.”

“Of course I remember you.”

Tracy laughed, “Well, you told me to call once we were here, so here we are.”

My mind immediately raced to the “Tracy” notes in my journal and the prayers I had been praying for her and her family. I began asking Tracy about these items throughout our conversation. “How are your children doing in the new schools? Did your husband find a new job? Have you found a church yet?”

Tracy told me she was so impressed that I remembered the ages of her children and had been praying for her husband to find a new job. “I really thank you for remembering the things I asked you to pray about,” Tracy said. “With many people, you ask them to pray and you don’t know if they ever really take it to heart. It really means a lot to me that you remembered all the little details.”

Tracy then asked me what church I went to and told me she and her family would like to come with me, as they were still looking for the right church for them.

I told her we would be delighted to have them visit our church and that we would love to have them over for dinner as soon as

possible. She readily accepted and said they needed to make some new friends. We made dinner plans for next week.

I can’t wait to see what happens.

As you can see by this story, my journal tidbits, notes, and reflections from my first conversation with Tracy aided me in having quality conversations with her in the weeks and months that followed. She could feel the sincerity in my inquiry about her prayer needs that we had discussed several months ago. I could not remember all the details, but my journal could. So can yours; make it work for you.



Chapter Summary

Witnessing is exciting only when you have the confidence to know what to say and when to say it. This chapter offers twelve guidelines for you to use in deciding what to say and not to say when you are witnessing.

1. Start with common interests.

Start with conversation that reflects common interests. As you discuss things you have in common, a bridge is formed. In time, this bridge will allow you to cross over into opportunities to share Christ with people.

2. Stay away from differences.

Differences often force people to choose a side. If differences are an immediate point of conversation, walls will go up, and you will have fewer opportunities to share Christ with them.

3. Never argue when witnessing.

Arguing is never an effective method of witnessing. It brings attention to the flesh and accomplishes little. Since Jesus refused to argue with His opposition, we should do the same.

4. Witness in small doses—plant, water, and nurture.

Understand that witnessing is a process. Their interests determine the level of what we share and how much we share. As the Spirit leads us, we progressively share His truth.

5. Ask questions that are stimulating but not offensive.

Questions are helpful in learning about people's pasts and also their

hopes for the future. People's answers to strategic, non-confrontational questions will provide insight about their need for God and whether they are ready to take the next step toward Him.

6. Share your testimony.

The Samaritan woman, after a life-changing experience with the Living Water, discovered there is no greater witnessing tool than the power of a shared testimony. As you share your testimony, it will make others thirsty for what you have experienced. What city awaits your testimony?

7. Build on what they have already experienced.

Validate and rejoice over the experiences they have already encountered with God. Use this as a foundation to build upon and to share the next step in their salvation process.

8. Never take away from their Christian experiences.

If we invalidate people's experiences in God, we forfeit our chances to lead them into more truth. We are to build and empower people, not destroy them by our lack of support in the truth they *do* possess.

9. Talk about empowering places and resources that meet a need in their life.

People are searching for answers to their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. Suggest to them church events, prayer groups, outreach ministries, books, media, and other resources that could minister to their specific needs.

10. Never talk negatively about your church.

Just as positive people are attractive magnets, negative people are a sure

turn-off. Refrain from doing the adversary's job of being the accuser of the brethren.

11. Lift Jesus up.

Brag on the good things God is doing in your family, your church, and your community. People will be drawn to a God that is alive and active.

12. Refer to journal notes from previous conversations.

Since our minds cannot remember everything, we write down what is important to remember. Look at your journal to remind yourself of specific prayer needs people have and other points of interest that could be used in conversation as you witness to them.

All of these guidelines work together to build strong and effective communication tools while witnessing. You will learn when the time is right to use a particular guideline. Some you will use more than others. Then there may be times when you use several guidelines in one conversation.

Example:

You may start out with talking about a common need you share and about an empowering resource that has helped you. Before you know it, you may move into telling part of your testimony that would relate to the common need you share with them and lift Jesus up in the process.

As you begin to practice these strategies for engaging people in stimulating conversation, you will be so excited to speak to people that you will look for opportunities to start a conversation. The more you use these strategies, the more natural conversing with others will become and you will be confident and effective.



Let's Go Fishing

1. In witnessing, why is it important first to start with common interests and stay away from differences?

2. Compare the four types of people Jesus encountered in His ministry with the types of people you encounter while witnessing. How are they alike? How do they differ?

3. What should be your response to people who try to draw you into a heated debate or an argument over Scriptures?

4. List three reasons why questions can be effective in witnessing.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. Why is it important to witness in small doses?

6. What are three questions you should be ready to answer as you share your testimony?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

7. What are some of the benefits of building upon people's experiences with God and their foundation of truth?

8. List resources you know about that could minister to these specific groups of people:

a. Young families

b. Senior citizens

c. Lonely single parent

d. Suicidal teenager

10. Why is a journal an effective tool in witnessing?
