

# Session Eight - Evangelism

## Sharing Your Faith

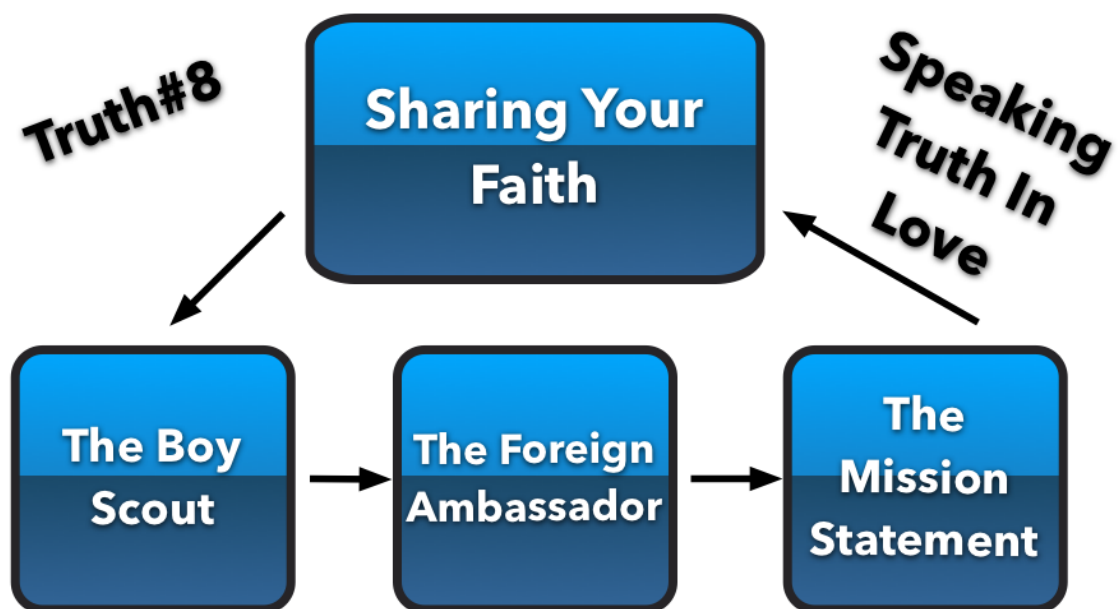
### Let's talk

In pairs, explain to one another what each of the lessons have been about, in your own words.

What are some things that you are proud of?

What is something that people often find you talking about?

### Overview Of This Lesson



## The Boy Scout Model

### Read 1 Peter 3:15

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

The Boy Scouts have their motto: be prepared. That is, don't get caught out wishing that you had packed your bag better or learned more skills for outdoor adventure. Be ready for anything.

We ought to know our faith.

This ought to be a personal faith and not simply a report on what your church believes.

Our faith will be evident to others and not hidden in our back pocket.

This is the Boy Scout method of sharing your faith:

**'Be prepared.'**

## The Foreign Ambassador Model

### Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

What is the message of these verses?

*<sup>2</sup> For he says, 'In the time of my favour I heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I helped you.'*

*I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of  
salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2*

The logic is simple: Romans 5:8 speaks of God's demonstrated love for us. He is serious about us. We became convinced of this and that to ignore this offer is to reject salvation. Our faith is true. Our faith is in him as king and not ourselves. We are now his walking foreign embassy on earth. We are God's representatives.

## The Mission Statement

Read Matthew 28:18-20

What do these verses say (in your own words)?

Make Disciples

Mature Disciples

Our mission is to be disciple-making disciples. We go beyond defending our faith as a Boy Scout, we go beyond pleading with others about the imminent danger, we become disciple-makers – teaching others how to grow and learn more and more about the one true God.

Picture It!

## Describe It!

“My prayer is that we will all realise afresh how kind God has been to us in bringing the gospel to us, and that in gratitude and love we will take the gospel to others.” John Chapman<sup>1</sup>

## Apply It!

Sharing your faith is really about speaking the truth. Not lying. If you are not fully convinced of your trust in God as he is revealed in the bible, then sharing your faith will feel like an act and a charade.

On the other hand, when you know who is LORD, then, even if you feel a little fearful of sharing this with others, talking about what you believe is an amazing way of exercising and training your faith. It will turn you to prayer. It will force you to put your thoughts together so that others can understand. It will help you identify where you are confident and where you still need to read and learn from the bible.

Basically, sharing your faith is a sure way of growing in your faith.

**Begin to pray for three people you know that need to hear the gospel – a family member – a work colleague – a neighbour or friend?**

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<sup>1</sup> Chapman, John C. *Know and Tell the Gospel: the why and how of Evangelism*, Hodder and Stoughton, Rydalmere, 1990.

## Listen To A Sermon



Mark Dever, an American Baptist preacher, offers a description of what it means to become a Christian. This sermon, titled 'What is Conversion' pulls many themes that we've looked at over our eight studies to remind us what it is that Jesus is calling us into.

## Read Something Great

Mark Dever has also published an excellent book titled *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*. Every chapter is worth reading and brings out very practical suggestions to being an ambassador for Christ. This chapter is on *how to do it*.



## For further reading...

Chapman, John C. *Know and Tell the Gospel: the why and how of Evangelism*, Hodder and Stoughton, Rydalmere, 1990.

# appendix A

## Where from here?

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### Growing further in your faith.

Joining a Growth Group is a great way to grow in your knowledge of God and in connecting with other Christians.

### Serving with the local church

Attending church weekly is essential for all Christians as we learned in session seven. Being part of the body of Christ, however, means exercising your gifts and talents and skills where there is need for them. Being part of a ministry team is more than being useful, it is about connecting again with members of the church for encouragement. See appendix B for a list of ideas to get you thinking.

### More courses?

Courses on *how to read the bible, an overview of the Old and New Testaments, sharing your faith* and many other aspects on maturity and being equipped to serve are being offered frequently at church. Keep an eye out for the next one or approach the ministry staff and suggest an area of learning that you are interested in.

There are accredited training courses also for those who wish to pursue deeper learning of God. Moore Theological College offers courses by correspondence. All Christians, regardless of current occupation, would benefit from these studies. Talk to a minister about these for more information and encouragement.

# Appendix B

## Ministry Ideas In The Church

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Here is a list of ministry ideas to help decide where to serve. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be something that you can offer that has never been considered.

### Church Service Related Ministries

- Welcoming team
- Audio/Visual setup and operations
- Morning tea/Supper
- Musician
- Reading the Bible aloud
- Public prayer

### Mid-Week Ministries

- English For Life
- Office assistant (volunteer)
- Bible study leader or co-leader
- Social networking coordinator
- IT services
- Graphic Design services
- Evangelism team
- Hospitality



# Appendix C

## Move To Maturity

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### Preface

This is the transcript of a talk given at a church house party of the same title. It was the first lecture of a series of eight which borrowed the same training material from this *Start Living* course. Although the opening talk differed, the remaining talks became the bulk of this course. What was the opening talk for that weekend away is now offered as an appendix to the journey that you have now started.

### Introduction

#### What Sort Of Things Motivate You?

I walked into a flower shop recently and noticed the wall was covered in artwork for sale. The artwork all had one theme and that was to inspire or motivate. They all contained quotes that were meant to lift your mind out of whatever day you were having and think of an optimistic future or to view your current situation in a positive way.

Quotes can be inspirational and they can successfully put a better spin on things.

*"Inspirational quotes and motivational quotes have the power to get us through a bad week, and can even give us the courage to pursue our life's dreams."<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/05/28/inspirational-quotes/>

For example, these quotes are not from the wall of the flower shop but are a small collection of favourites from the forbes.com website...

"Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

**Napoleon Hill**

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

**Steve Jobs**

"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value."

**Albert Einstein**

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

**Robert Frost**

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

**Walt Disney**

"When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy.' They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life."

**John Lennon**

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us."

**Helen Keller**

The quotes that I saw inside the flower shop, however, were just like the products they sell - fluffy, flowery and for sentiment only...

"Don't dream your life, live your dream"

"I am not failed. My success is just 'postponed'."

"Live every moment, Laugh every day, Love beyond words."

"Everybody wants happiness, nobody wants pain, but you can't have a rainbow without a little rain..."

"Fly with the angels, Dance with the stars!"

(What does that last one even achieve for me? Is it telling me to get on a plane with an 80's rock band and perform on a reality TV show - Dancing with Stars? - Is this a motto for the living or the dead? - how is this inspirational quote at all practical?)

Now quotes can be wonderful - they can sometimes perfectly capture a thought or a worldview that it is just worth writing down and perhaps sharing with others. But much of it is just FLUFF! Even the good ones are just a bit of a passing moment for me - nice to hear and remember but how does it really help when life falls apart! If I want to grow up to be 'happy' (like John Lennon), how do I do that? I want to know the answer that works - not just a band-aid moment.

Where's the truth that works? Where's the convictions that move people to action? What's the foundation for all of these inspirations? Are our lives really that plastic? How can such small sayings and quick quotes make any real difference in our lives?

Now think about the gospel. Is the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ any better for us? Is there a depth to its teaching that can really change us? Or is the gospel on the same level as the other quotes I have mentioned - it's a good strong message for quick reflection but that is it? It's as good as a bumper sticker? It's as effective as a fortune cookie?

What do you mean when you say: Jesus is Lord? God is good. Jesus died on the cross. That God so loved the world that he gave his one

and only son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life!

Sayings and phrases can grow too familiar to us that they begin to lose their meaning. Or even worse - that the original meaning was never really grasped to begin with. Some may find more comfort in the 'serenity prayer' or the 'footprints in the sand' poem than in the words of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles.

I want to talk this weekend about MATURITY. I'm going to argue that there is a necessity for Christians to mature, that there is a God-given direction or pathway or method for maturity and that we let one another down when we ignore the call to maturity.

## 1) Maturity Is Serious

The book of Hebrews, in the NT, is a remarkable book. It's unclear who the author of the book is - it is clear that the writer places Jesus Christ at the highest place in God's revelation and some of the ways that the writer uses the OT is amazing. Some of the greatest moments in the NT occur in the pages of this book.

The writer is on a mission to teach us, the reader, about the glory of God revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. At the heart of his lesson, as he's explaining to us that we can approach the throne of God above with all confidence because of all that Jesus has done and that there is no need for any other sacrifice, or mediator because Jesus Christ is it! - Then, in the heat of his discussion, he stops. He comes to an abrupt halt as if he was a conductor of the best orchestra that has ever existed and right before the climax of their greatest piece, as the musicians are getting to

their highest moment, the conductor stops the music, turns to the audience and says:

You're not ready for this. You're still babies. I should be playing you baa baa black sheep - that's what you'd understand! There's a whole world of beautiful music to show you but you are still listening to The Wiggles.

### **The readers are compared to infants who are still drinking milk from their mother's breast:**

HEBREWS 5:11-13

The metaphor of milk here is referring to the elementary stuff of the gospel. Heb 6:1-2 describe what this elementary stuff looks like: the reminder to repent, to trust God, about water rituals such as baptism and the church leaders praying for you, the teaching of the resurrection and the judgement to come.

Does this list surprise you? I expect that it should. Many of the things listed there are the basic gospel: That we are sinners who need to repent and have faith in God - be baptised and hear again and again about the consequences of not repenting. This small sample of elementary teaching is awfully close to 2-ways to live or a similar gospel presentation!

The issue being raised by the writer of Hebrews is this: the readers are happy to be spoon fed by others - they are not trying. (vv 11, 12). You see, there is a problem raised by the writer for those who will think about God and their relationship with him only when someone else is bringing it up. It's worse than that. There is a problem with those who remain students of the gospel and not teachers of it.

Verse 12: "by this time you ought to be teachers." There's an expectation of maturity here because there is an expectation that all

who turn to Jesus to be saved ought to grow up and become teachers of the gospel. ALL! Notice that he addresses this to all his readers! Have you thought of yourself as a teacher of the gospel? Or a teacher in training? If not, chances are you are still an infant and this writer wants your attention. He wants you to mature. To move forward.

*6:1 "Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity!"*

How do we move to maturity? If the gospel is the mother's milk, what is the solid food? Look at 5:11-14 again:

**Firstly, it is about turning our ears on and our brains on and trying to understand what is being taught.**

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If milk is the elementary teaching that is spoon-fed to the listener - the listener just looks and nods their heads - does what they're told by others. There is no concentration or fight required - much like a newborn who opens their mouth and swallows whatever they are given. You cannot teach others unless you have understood what you have been told to begin with. And one great way of seeing whether you have properly understood someone or something is to try and teach it to others! First of all, we turn on our ears and our brains.

**Secondly, it is about constantly using the teachings that you have received.**

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It's one thing to learn how to ride a bicycle from a book - it's another to get on a bike and ride! The teachings of the bible are written by the God who created this world to the people who inhabit it. The contents of the bible are meant to be such that you can test them out! It's not a far off philosophy meant for the narrow minded or simple minded to just swallow and accept - no, it is a genuine message of hope for all

who walk on this planet to put to the test! Therefore, 5:14, we put what we have learned to the test and see that we are indeed living in a world that is ordered and maintained by a higher power - that he has a purpose for this world and a purpose for us - and we are called by God to trust him in everything. This kind of walking by faith - of living a life of trusting God results in us being able to distinguish good from evil. We will no longer be looking to others - to teachers to show us what is right and wrong because we will be familiar with this world that God has shown us.

So, solid food is chewing on the word of God for ourselves. Each of us is to graduate from infants who simply lick the mixing bowl - we become cooks in the kitchen ourselves.

Now, you may be thinking that remaining infants sounds nicer - less work. Listen to the gospel taught by others and we'll be right! We're saved by grace, why push ourselves beyond our comfort zone and work hard at swallowing the word of God for ourselves. We have reasonable teaching at church - that should be enough - why all this pressure to move forward and become teachers?

Because it is a matter of life and death! 6:7-8

Those who receive the benefit of teaching from others and only produce thorns and thistles are in danger of being burned up - cast away. Those who benefit from teaching by producing more crop of their own are healthy and will receive blessing. The writer of Hebrews describes the fate of those who are lazy infants as 'falling away'.

Maturity is serious. The bible expects that all who hear the word of God will grow up in it. They will be born again, as Jesus put it, but will mature or else they may fade away.

And...

## 2) Church Is A Workshop For Maturity (Eph 4:11-16)

### First, Christ Has Given Us The Church As A Place For Learning.

Eph 4:11-14a. The church is no accident or an afterthought by men and women to control people or recite religious words. No, it is a place of learning - it is an educational place - where evangelists, pastors and teachers teach the word of God to all who will come and listen. Those who come will, by God's grace, become infants, born again as a new creation. But we will continue to learn and mature together. Church is a God-given training ground for maturing Christians.

### Secondly, The Teaching Of The Church Is Aimed To Bring Security To People In A World Of Deception.

Eph 4:14-16. The church mustn't throw around cute little slogans that just make people feel a little happier on a Sunday or mid-week - it is to teach the word of God in all its depth and richness so that those who come to learn will find stability in a storm of ideas.

Like that famous photograph of the lighthouse that is being pumpled by huge waves and standing on the balcony of the lighthouse is a man, holding a mug of coffee or tea but without fear of the waves - because he has confidence in the lighthouse.

The church is not a social venue or a religious house. It is first and foremost a school of theology! Do you expect that all who come to church should be aiming to graduate as teachers of the gospel? Put that another way - do we see new faces in the church and imagine that one



day they might be preachers or Sunday school leaders? Put it a third way - do you think of yourself as a student of theology aiming for the highest education and useful in God's mission to bring safety to others in a world of deceit and ruin? Eph 4:12 tells us that the people of God are responsible for building one another up and moving the whole body of Christ to maturity.

Maturity is serious and it is a work of the whole church. Are you interested to move to maturity? Do you see the urgency to do so? If you still don't see it, let me remind you of a story Jesus once told...

#### LUKE 8:5-8

The disciples didn't get the meaning of that parable the first time round either, and so they asked Jesus to spell it out for them - they still needed to be taught.

Now...

### 3) There Are Those Who Move To Maturity And Then There's...

#### LUKE 8:11-15

11-12. The seed on the path doesn't take root at all - they will not be saved.

13. The seed on rocky ground are those who hear the good news but don't move beyond infancy. Babies don't cope with hard times.

14. The seed among the thorns are those who hear the word of God and respond well - but they fail to apply it - the thorns of this life choke them - their faith was not able to withstand the worries of this world and they withered away.

15. There is only one of the soils in this parable that is worth imitating. The good soil are those who hear the word of God and cherish it. It is their life and blood. They hold on to that word through drought and storm and come through stronger - trusting in the word of God all the more.

Jesus knew that many would hear the word of God and it would do them no good. They would either not listen, or they would not cling tightly to the promises of God. As the Hebrews writer said, many will hear the word of God but won't do anything with it - they are in danger of being burned up.

Maturity is serious. It is life and death. It is the expectation of all who turn to Christ that we will all move to maturity. The bible is plain about this. Infants need to grow up. We must receive what we first heard - that Jesus died for our sins - and learn to understand this profound saying in the context of all of life. For this is our hope. Jesus is our eternal hope. Without him, we are weak plants surrounded by thorns. But with him, we can grow to be men and women of the church who lead others to the same confidence that Christ has shown us.

## Conclusion

We need more than simply inspirational quotes that will help us get through the week with a positive outlook. We need a sure confidence in what is true and eternal - in what we know is worth our while and bigger than us.

Let's decide today to move to maturity - knowing that we will teach others to do the same. Holding firmly to the truth that was once taught to us and leading others to eternal life. Maturity is about standing firm on the promises and knowledge of God. Maturity begins with knowing how real and how serious God is about us.

# Notes

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