

GRACE BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE (GBTC)
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY
ARUSHA - TANZANIA

SUBJECT: **EVANGELISM & CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

LESSON 2: **EVANGELISM IN PRACTICE**

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Introduction: - 2Timothy 4:2; John 4:34-38; Matthew 9:35-38; John 16:7-14; 3:1-21

In lesson 1, we looked at the various types of evangelism and the fact that every believer in Christ is called to be a witness for Christ and to do the work of an evangelist.

In this lesson, we will be studying the various aspects of actually putting this into practice and what is involved in evangelism.

The following topics will be covered:

- a) Preparing for evangelism
- b) Leading a soul to Christ
- c) Salvation Plans
- d) Follow up methods and materials

A) Preparing for Evangelism

Evangelism is a spiritual battle to save the lost from the power of sin controlled by the devil and his demons (*2Corinthians 4:3-4; 10:3-6; Ephesians 2:1-3*). The devil not only blocks the sinner from seeing the light of the gospel but resists the believer in his efforts to share the gospel. It therefore requires adequate preparation to save souls.

We need to bear in mind also that as we make efforts to share the gospel, people will often object to or make excuses for rejecting the gospel. Some of the reasons are:

- 1. They love darkness and do not want to be exposed – *John 3:19-21; Ephesians 5:13*
- 2. They cannot understand spiritual things – *1Corinthians 2:14*
- 3. The devil blinds their minds so that they cannot believe the gospel – *2Corinthians 4:3-4*

The following are the main essentials for preparation:

- 1. Pray for boldness to share the gospel (*Acts 4:29-31; Ephesians 6:18-19*). Through prayer, deal with personal inhibitions and difficulties, such as;
 - i) I lack confidence that the Lord will speak through me
 - ii) I am shy and afraid of people (*2Timothy 1:7-8*)
 - iii) I fear rejection (*Jeremiah 1:6-9*)
 - iv) I don't know how to start a conversation about spiritual issues
 - v) I am not sure how to guide a discussion to the Bible
 - vi) I can't imagine that some people would even care to listen to what I have to say.
- 2. Pray also for the sinners that they would be open to the gospel (*Acts 26:17-18; 2Corinthians 4:4*)
- 3. Have compassion for the lost (*Matthew 9:36-38*). Be motivated by love to share the gospel and not by guilt (*2Corinthians 5:11-15*). Hate sin but love the sinner. Don't present a 'holier-than-thou' attitude.

4. Remember that the power for salvation is in the gospel (*Romans 1:16*). We cannot 'convert' or 'win' a soul, because it is the Holy Spirit that convicts and converts (*John 16:8-11; 6:44; 1Corinthians 3:6-7*). 'Gospel' means 'Good News' of reconciliation, hope, grace, forgiveness, and eternal life.
5. Have a salvation plan which is Bible-based and be familiar with its use (See examples in Section C). However, be flexible in the presentation of the gospel.
6. Always carry a Bible with you (if possible a small, compact pocket Bible), a little notebook and a pen for jotting down observations or contact details.
7. Be led by the Holy Spirit (*Acts 8:26-29; 16:6-10*)
8. Have a personal living testimony of a growing relationship with Christ.

B) Leading a soul to Christ

The quality of a person's conversion depends to a large extent on the quality of the gospel as presented. The whole gospel therefore demands a full response. Therefore;

1. Don't weaken the message (*Galatians 1:8-10; 1Corinthians 2:4-5*)
2. Don't be ashamed of or make excuses for the gospel (*Romans 1:16; Mark 8:38*)
3. The message should be God-centred and not man-centred, that is,
 - a) Man-centred message focuses on the person's needs or problems. For example, "Accept Jesus Christ and He will solve all your problems".
 - b) God-centred gospel focuses on the holiness of God and man's sinful condition. It focuses on the availability of God's grace and mercy to forgive sins. Confession and repentance from sin are therefore necessary for salvation.
4. Don't confuse people with 'spiritual jargons'. **Use a language or words that people can understand.** Avoid phrases like 'Born again', 'Ask Jesus in', 'Accept Christ', 'Washed in the blood', etc. They won't know what you are talking about (See an example in *John 3:1-11*).
5. Use simple and practical ways to open a conversation to the gospel. For example, you can start by asking the following questions:
 - a) Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
 - b) Who do you think Jesus is?
 - c) Do you think there is a heaven or hell?
 - d) If you died right now, where would you go?
 - e) If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?
6. Try to relate the gospel message to the person's situation or interests, or to current events. For example, Jesus and the Samaritan woman and their common need of water (*John 4*).
7. Don't be afraid to ask people to make a commitment to Christ. This is referred to as 'Closing the deal'. (See helpful ideas after Salvation Plans in Section C).
8. Your testimony is a valuable witnessing tool. Use it.

C) Salvation Plans

The following are three simple methods or plans for leading a soul to Christ. Learn any one of them that works for you and be confident with its use.

1. How to become a Christian

- i) You must recognise your NEED
Isaiah 53:6; 64:6; Romans 3:23; 6:23; John 3:3-6
- ii) You must be aware of God's PROVISION
Romans 6:23; John 3:16-18; Titus 3:4-5; 1Peter 2:24; 3:18
- iii) You must RESPOND to God's grace
Acts 16:30-31; 2:37-39; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9
- iv) You must receive the ASSURANCE of salvation
2Corinthians 5:17; John 6:37; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:19; 1John 4:15-16

2. The Roman Road

- i) Man's NEED - Romans 3:23
- ii) Sin's PENALTY - Romans 6:23
- iii) God's PROVISION - Romans 5:8
- iv) Man's RESPONSE - Romans 10:9-10

3. Steps to Peace with God (as used by Billy Graham Ministries)

- i) Every man is a sinner, lost and condemned
Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:3; Romans 6:23
- ii) Man cannot save himself
Titus 3:4-5; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9
- iii) God loves man and made a way through Jesus Christ
John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 5:1, 8; John 10:10; 1Peter 3:18
- iv) Every man must respond
Revelations 3:20; John 1:12; Romans 10:9-10

Closing the Deal

After sharing any of the salvation plans, it is important to close the deal. 'Closing the deal' is a call for a decision after presentation of a salvation plan. The following steps can be adopted which takes the form of questions:

- i) Do you now recognize that you are a sinner?
- ii) Do you want God's forgiveness of your sins?
- iii) Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
- iv) Are you willing to surrender yourself to Jesus Christ as your Lord?
- v) Are you ready to invite Jesus Christ into your heart and into your life?

If the person is able to answer 'Yes' to each of the above questions, you can then guide him or her through a sinner's prayer as suggested below:

*"Father, I thank You for the free gift of eternal life.
I know I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness.
I am sorry for my past sins, and I ask You to forgive me.
Lord Jesus, I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead.
I now open the door of my heart and invite You to come into my life.
I realise there is nothing I can do to earn my salvation, and I place my complete trust in You alone for eternal life.
I chose to follow You as my Lord and Saviour.
Please make me the person You want me to be.
In Jesus' Name I pray. AMEN!"*

The next step would be as discussed in Section D under Follow-up.

Write down in your notebook the convert's contact details – name, home address, phone number, email address (if he has it), gender, and any prayer requests.

D) Follow-up methods and materials

It is always exciting when, in the course of witnessing or evangelism, someone decides to give his or her life to Christ (*Luke 15:10*). The difficulty lies in following up the person, that is, getting the person to go on with God and be integrated into the life of a local church.

Billy Graham once said that 'decision is 5%, following up the decision is 95%'. It is one thing to give birth to a baby but it takes a lot of effort, patience and time to nurture, care, and build up the baby to maturity. Without proper care the child may die.

The same thing goes for a young convert. Without an effective and proper follow-up, the convert slips out of our hands and all the effort of getting the person to Christ becomes a waste.

We have been called to 'make disciples' and NOT 'decision-makers' (*Matthew 28:19*). Every effort must be made to ensure that our 'fruit remain' (*John 15:16*). Follow-up should therefore be seen and taken as the most important part of evangelism. A conversion that lasts is partly the result of an effective follow-up.

The new convert and a baby

For an effective follow-up, it is important to imagine a young convert as a new-born baby and what you would likely do when a baby is born. From the following statements below, we can see similarities with a young convert:

1. There is joy everywhere when a baby is born (*Luke 15:10*)
2. When the baby comes into a new environment it cries because it feels uncomfortable. It should be kept warm and comfortable.
3. Preparations are made for the new-born baby in the form of clothes, cot, toiletries, food, etc.
4. The baby cannot take care of itself. It is totally dependent on the parents or guardians. It needs loving and tender care.
5. The baby cannot reason like an adult. It cannot also be made or forced to understand what adults do. A good and patient understanding of the baby is essential.
6. The baby cannot eat solid food but milk. It has to be weaned as it grows up (*Hebrews 5:13-14*). It also has to be fed regularly for it to grow (*1 Peter 2:2*).
7. Regular communication with the baby is essential for proper growth.

Practical ideas for follow-up

1. Be willing to commit yourself to the responsibility of disciplining people for Christ by;
 - Showing genuine love and concern for them
 - Listening to their heart
 - Being patient, flexible and forgiving
 - Being firm about right and wrong
 - Teaching them to live by God's word
2. Phone up or contact the new convert within 24 hours of him or her making a decision and pay a visit to his or her home within the first few days. Be sure to have a proper name, address and telephone number. Early contact is essential for encouragement and assurance. Subsequent visits should be arranged and complied with.
3. Immediately, begin to invite and involve the disciple in fellowship and spiritual activity. Bring or escort the person to church and home fellowships. Be gentle. Do not pressurize, but be persistent.
4. The disciple should be encouraged to read the Bible daily and to pray regularly.
5. Pray for the disciple regularly and encourage him or her.
6. Never drop the disciple. Discipleship is a commitment on both parties.

7. Lead the disciple to Christ and not to yourself. Don't allow the disciple to depend too much on you.
8. Recognise your limitations and where necessary refer the disciple to someone else.
9. Avoid disciplining members of the opposite sex.
10. Be an example in every way.