



NATURAL WAYS TO SHARE JESUS WITH OTHERS

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Recently, I walked into a conversation that others were having and I was ready to throw in my thoughts and contribute. So when I walked in and shared my super amazing insight, I realized they weren't talking about a film but talking about someone's actual circumstances. I was commenting like I was giving a movie review. Read the room, Alan.

Sometimes as Christians, we don't necessarily "read the room" either. I think at this time, in our culture, we are just like this awkward moment. Culture is having spiritual conversations that Christians aren't invited to because we are giving answers to questions that aren't being asked.

A question posed by most Christians:

"If you were to die to today, do you know where you would go?"

An answer given by some who are not Christians:

"I would become reincarnated and come back as a part of nature based on my good works that I contribute as a human being to better the planet because I believe in making the world a better place."

A response by Christians:

"Oh. Ummm, ok. I, uh ... Jesus says, ummm ..."

What is the right response for those around us who are outsiders of faith who need the redemptive work of Christ in their lives?

Barna has just released the findings of a new study commissioned by the discipleship organization Alpha USA, and one of the revelations is shocking.



The goal of the research was to better understand what Christian millennials believe about the gospel and sharing their faith. Though the vast majority agreed with statements like "The best thing that could ever happen to someone is for them to know Jesus," things changed when asked about sharing their faith. From the report: "Almost half of millennials (47 percent) agree at least somewhat that it is wrong to share one's personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith." That is far higher than Gen X, boomers and elders. (Gen Z wasn't included in the study.) That makes millennials the most evangelism-reluctant generation to date.

In a statement included in the research, Barna Group president David Kinnaman said, "Even after they are committed to sustaining resilient faith, we must persuade younger Christians that evangelism is an essential practice of following Jesus. The data show enormous ambivalence among millennials, in particular, about the calling to share their faith with others."

Cultivating deep, steady, resilient Christian conviction is difficult. Evangelism isn't just about saving those who need saving, but reminding ourselves that the kingdom matters, that the Bible is trustworthy and that Jesus changes everything.

The Bible puts it like this:

"Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone." – **Colossians 4:5-6**

Have the right response. Maybe we are responding wrong. The problem is we are trying to answer questions that no one is asking. Recently in pop culture these issues were highlighted:

- When does life start for a human being?
- How does race affect our relationships with each other?
- Can we be politically opposite but be united as humans?
- Can the gay community and the Christian community coexist?
- Resistance to authority or submission to authority?

This week, culture is talking about abortion, racism, injustice and bringing restoration to a world that needs it more than ever before. What are we sharing about in our churches that helps others draw nearer to Christ? Let's be honest, Jesus doesn't come across in Scripture like he is "forcing his convictions upon us. Jesus preached some of the hardest messages, yet crowds continued to flock to him. Part of the reason I think that faith isn't potent in our culture is because we get nervous when the term evangelism gets brought up. What is evangelism really?

Let me tell you what evangelism is not:

- Having an acute knowledge of theology
- Being super bold about faith issues
- Reserved for only certain Christians
- Bringing people to church
- Being extremely educated and extraordinary



The fact is that is the farthest from the truth. To be someone who can share faith with others, all you need to be is unschooled and ordinary.

"Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." – **Acts 4:13**

What if we saw evangelism as moving someone one step closer to Jesus? It's sharing your story of how Jesus has impacted your life with someone. It's inviting someone into your life and having a conversation with them about your life.

What if sharing your faith with someone were as easy as sharing your life with someone?

My life consists of the following slices of life: marriage, kids, job, church, social life, spiritual life, etc. Compartmentalizing these significant parts of my life compels me then to evangelize at the expense of others things. Or in other words, "I've got to find time to share Jesus." But if I live an integrated life in Jesus then my ordinary life becomes a life of evangelism because by living daily for Jesus is sharing Jesus daily with others.

Evangelism best benefits the church when you share your faith rather than evangelism benefits you when the church shares it's faith.

Here's how I think it works. This means that when you talk about your kids, your marriage, your job, your friends, your church, your passions, etc., you are talking about Jesus.

Sharing about the joys or your struggles to have a better relationship with your spouse or significant other becomes a moment that you can share how Jesus helps you to be a better, husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.

Your passions to be a designer become a talking point to share how Jesus has given you this passion and how you want to use your creativity to inspire others about the creator, etc.

Your love of being a father is like the love of God who is a father so when you talk about your kids you can talk about your heart that God gave you.

When I'm with my friends and engaging in my social life, I'm sharing in my community that is connected by Jesus and for others to be connected because of Jesus. When I'm in my church we are talking about Jesus and desiring to be more like Jesus so we can make a difference in our community and in our world. Your whole life becomes a representation of the gospel.

I know there will be moments where we have to intentionally engage with the others about hard spiritual matters (afterlife, heaven and hell, born again, God and suffering, etc). We absolutely need have these theological conversations. But the reality we face as the everyday Christian is sharing Jesus with someone can be overwhelming to many. But when Jesus becomes your life—is your life—talking about Jesus to others becomes less intimidating.

The church in Thessalonica understood this well: *"We were delighted to share with you not only the gospel but our whole lives as well"* ([1 Thess. 2:8](#)).

Bringing people to church to hear about Jesus is one way of sharing Jesus. Bringing the church to the people is another way of spreading the hope of Christ with the world. I would argue: Evangelism best benefits the church when you share your faith rather than evangelism benefits you when the church shares it's faith. That's why the church doesn't have to be the only valuable entity for sharing Jesus with the world. You are just as valuable if not more.



The new young Christian is rethinking evangelism in a new way. Here are a few thoughts to get you inspired to share Jesus more often:

1. Have More Conversations and Fewer Confrontations.

It's a different era now than before. The question of "If you were to die today, do you know where you would go?" This was a stirring question in the '60s, '70s, etc., because of the Cold War and the nuclear threat was very real to those in this era. However, today the engagement with others in your community (neighborhood, school, workplace, etc.) about Christianity is more of an abrasive issue than in any time in history. The culture war is dying out and the idea of being in a "battle" is imagery that is less appealing to both Christians and non-Christians. If we posture ourselves toward a dialogue rather than engaging in a battle for truth, we will most likely be more effective.

2. Being an Inviting Person Is More Important Than Being a Convincing Person.

Being convincing is a good thing. But choosing to sacrifice our access to others to the expense of being assured by others we are right makes us not only lose touch with our culture, but it isolates us as well. If our posture is being open with those we are having a conversation with, then usually that is reciprocated and they will be more open with you. Underneath it all you can and are certain, but it's not what you lead with because your confidence will be arrogance to an outsider to the faith. Smugness and superiority in things of faith are not appealing, but humility and serving goes a long way. I think that's why grace is so appealing. Grace is inviting and not imposing. Grace and truth go together (John 1:17). So let grace lead the way and truth will back you up when necessary.

3. Passion Is the Key to a Message Worth Listening To.

I have been reading a book titled, *Talk like Ted* and one of the takeaways from that worthwhile read is that "people cannot inspire others until they are inspired themselves." A genuine passion for Jesus, who he is and what he stands for is critical when sharing authentically with others. But it's a passion for the right thing that is important. Howard Shultz, founder of Starbucks, wasn't as passionate about coffee as he was about creating a "third space." This is a space that would create incredible customer service and be a place that people would love coming to work and be treated with respect. Coffee was the product, but the passion was the care of the people (customers and employees). When sharing passionately with others, the focus must remain on the people and not the theology of Christianity. Jesus was more passionate about loving others and less concerned about religious laws—let that be our model as well.

4. Stop Categorizing People.

It's easy for us to put people into categories: unsaved friends, worldly neighbors, secular campus, immoral co-workers, etc. I understand that these are harmless descriptions in most instances, but over time we place ourselves in a position of us and them when God is desiring we.

Jesus created meaningful relationships with society's sinners and outcasts. Many Christians, without realizing it, shame and condescend others by creating a rigid exclusivity that over time can be hard to penetrate by someone who lacks faith. I personally believe the word hope is one of the most powerful words in our culture, and bringing the hope of Jesus to a world that is severely lacking in hope could be one of the most robust words to share when talking about Jesus in our culture. The new young Christian believes grace, hope and inspiration are potent words that work powerfully in unbelieving contexts. They wake up every day, on mission to simply live like Jesus did by not categorizing their relationships but by seeing others around them as creations of God in need of restoration.



5. Live a Lifestyle of Generosity.

Simply put, find ways to be a blessing to others. This not only blesses you and produces incredible fruit in your own life because of your own giving, but it shows the world that your actions line up with what you say. It shows that you live what you believe. Saying you're a Christian is one thing, but living it authentically on a daily basis is something else.

6. Choose Integrity in All Circumstances.

Don't compromise your beliefs. Be honest. Be truthful. Have credibility. Situations happen every day where compromise is not only contemplated but expected. I had a situation in college when I was a server in a restaurant. Every day I would pay for my soup while most of the other college student just "took a little bit" before their shift. I chose to pay even though after my discount it was under a dollar. Little did I know that my manager saw this and it moved him to make this statement: "Most of my other employees steal from me by taking a small cup of soup without paying, but you choose to pay me the 75 cents for the soup and you're studying at Bible College to be a pastor? I want the kind of faith you have." I'm proud to say I led him to Christ in the back of the restaurant that day. It's who you are when no one is looking and who you are when everyone is looking that not only defines your faith but speaks a message.

7. Model Forgiveness.

The ability to forgive quickly and often is one of the most powerful ways to show how Christianity really works. When you model forgiveness you show the world an attribute that is not only rare, but healthy and healing for the soul—no matter who you are or what faith you come from. Jesus modeled the ultimate forgiveness by saying these words, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do" ([Luke 23:34](#)). That kind of forgiveness of loving your enemies and forgiving quickly is authentic proof Jesus is who he says he is.

8. Live Vulnerably.

Being authentic is showing an unhidden you, but being vulnerable is not just showing who you are, but revealing the broken parts of you. Sharing your story or testimony with others lets people know they aren't alone. Sharing the broken parts of your life creates common ground for the gospel to be planted. Knowing your faith is knowing your story. Where Jesus entered, what he has done and what he continues to do in you and through is powerful for people to hear. How God is revealing himself to me individually is my testimony. How God is revealing himself to us corporately (our church) is our message, what we preach as a church and how we live. God's revelation to us has the same effect it had on the disciples from the days of Jesus, "For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" ([Acts 4:20](#)).

9. Be Extremely Hospitable.

So you invited someone to church and they didn't accept your invitation. Why not invite them to your house instead, and share a meal with them and share Jesus with them while you're at it. For many of us it's rare to be invited to a dinner party. But Matthew used a dinner party to invite many of his friends who didn't know Jesus and to be introduced to him ([Matt. 5:27-32](#)). Your pool party, game night, block party, Christmas Tea, Chili Night, spaghetti dinner, movie to DVD premier, baseball Sunday, neighbor night or Super Bowl party could be the moment that your friend gets introduced to Jesus. So invite your friends who love Jesus and let them meet others who don't and see what happens. God seems to give a healthy community, whose intentions are for the common good of others, restorative power to change the world ([Heb. 10:24-25](#)).