

Series: Basic Evangelism
Title: Fighting Fear
Text: Isaiah 41:10
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Research regularly reveals that public speaking is the foremost phobia. Some surveys even show that people are less afraid of dying! When it comes to the Christian life, sharing the gospel may be the chief fear. Many are scared of how others may respond; or worse, they dread not knowing what to say. Our culture's emphasis on tolerance doesn't help. The old saying seems true — "You can talk about anything. Just don't talk about religion and politics!"

Despite the terror that's often associated with telling others about Jesus, I believe the issue doesn't have to be so fear-invoking. Christ has commanded us to be witnesses, and He's promised to be with us (Acts 1:8). His Scriptures are chock-full of admonitions to "fear not" (Isaiah 41:10). Let's talk about two actions that can take some of the fright out of witnessing. By focusing on these ideas, we will take our eyes off of the fear that paralyzes us, and we will become more equipped to witness faithfully and effectively.

RECOGNIZE THE TIMES FOR SHARING

1. Spontaneous Times

When I was in college, an older man in my church disciplined me. I remember an evangelistic lesson he taught me. He told me to start each day with a prayer for the lost. Since then, I've tried to include something like this in my morning devotional time — "Lord, send someone my way today to whom I can witness." It's amazing how the Lord has answered that prayer repeatedly. Try praying it yourself. You'll be shocked at the opportunities that arise. Each day presents a plethora of people to whom we can witness. Be on the lookout. Use new interactions and supposed chance encounters to say something for Jesus. Try to mention your church, your faith, your Lord to people you run into. Work to mention Jesus to your banker, your barber, your waitress, or the lady in the checkout line. Let the Lord use your spontaneous interactions for His glory!

2. Systematic Times

We all do things in our daily routine that can be used as springboards for gospel advancement. I am strategic about getting my haircut. I go to a barber shop with multiple employees. I don't let the same person cut my hair each time. Why? I want an opportunity to witness to more people. In a similar way, I like to use my lunch breaks for evangelism. When I go out for lunch, I usually take a small New Testament and a gospel tract with me. I make it my aim to give them to the person who serves me my meal. If you think about it, you'll discover you have a multitude of ways to witness within your daily schedule. Get creative. Think of ways in which you can systematically share the gospel with others.

3. **Special Times**

Holidays, birthdays, meetings, special get-togethers, funerals, and weddings are all great opportunities for telling others about Jesus. I once knew a woman who used Christmas as an occasion for sharing the gospel with her family. She sent a special card to each family member. Along with the card, she included a small gift — a Christian music CD, a gospel tract, or a devotional book. She then spent the holidays praying that the Lord would use what she sent to make a difference in the lives of her family members. Maybe you can think of a way to do something similar.

4. **Scheduled Ministry Times**

Are you a part of a ministry in your local church? Maybe you serve in the worship ministry or go on mission trips. Perhaps you work with children or youth. Do you teach Sunday School? In whatever capacity you serve, be intentional to use your platform as a pulpit for the gospel. Share the good news! The Bible teaches that we all have a part in helping others be made right with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), and we each have been given a spiritual gift for this purpose (Romans 12:6-8). Are you using your spiritual gift so that others might come to know Christ? If not, make a fresh commitment.

REMEMBER SOME TIPS FOR SHARING

1. **Be real.**

Some think they have to be someone they're not in order to share the gospel. I've seen this with my own eyes. A well meaning friend once struck up a gospel conversation with another college student. As he did, his demeanor was transformed, and he used a tone of voice I'd never heard. It was as if he had been transformed into a religious gameshow host before my very eyes. I know my friend meant well, but I felt he was being unnatural for the purpose of trying to impress. Don't do that. Do what Paul did. He determined to never use worldly gimmicks or methods when presenting the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Just be yourself. You'll feel a whole lot less pressure, and you'll likely be more effective.

2. **Be relevant.**

It's also important to show that you are normal. This happens best when you find a real-world avenue for connecting with the other person. You can talk about sports, family, work, health concerns, retirement, kids, or grandkids. Remember, God has always used real flesh and blood people to spread His good news. You don't have to be so spiritual that you can't talk about everyday things. In fact, conversations about earthly things are often good segues to heavenly topics. Paul knew this was true. That's why he determined "to become all things to all people," so that he might reach more for Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

3. **Be resourceful.**

People don't automatically understand gospel concepts. They need someone to guide them. Think about Philip's witnessing encounter with the Ethiopian official. He patiently showed the man scriptures, and asked questions to make sure he understood (Acts 8:30-37). Being a good witness requires something similar from you. Take your time.

Give space, and don't pressure. Be helpful. Do your best to answer questions and provide resources. God will bless your humble efforts.

4. Be reliant.

No one can lead another to conversion without the help of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). This is actually a good thing. The pressure is off of you. The gospel itself contains intrinsic power to change lives (Romans 1:16). It's not your responsibility to save anyone. You simply have an obligation to show and share the love of Christ. When you witness, keep a calm confidence in Christ's power to convert.