Script

**Introductory remarks (Greg)**

Before we engage in any form of evangelism, we must understand that we are not engaging in a man-made ministry, but rather the ministry that was started by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. After His baptism, and upon receiving the Holy Spirit, Jesus went forth preaching that men should repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). Jesus said "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45) and "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Throughout Jesus' life we see many wonderful and miraculous works, but we should also take note of how the scriptures point to His reverent submission to the Father, His empowerment by the Holy Spirit, and His solitary time in prayer and rest. In the days of His flesh, Jesus completely submitted to His Father in everything, giving us an example of the submission we need to have to the Father as well. After the resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20).

We have all been given a commission by our Lord and Savior, and that is to carry on the ministry of seeking and saving the lost picking up where He left off. While there may be many forms of evangelism in today, we can all agree with scripture which states that the Gospel [alone] is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16). The question then becomes: how, when, and where will we do it? Understanding that we all have unique gifts, and personality traits, I would encourage others to not try to imitate someone else's style, but rather to be in prayer and study in order to develop their own style. Of course, this may lead to many trial and errors, but the important thing is our willingness to go forth and be diligent as we witness to a lost generation, telling them about the good news of the Gospel.

**Preparation. (Tim)**

The most important thing to do to prepare for sharing the gospel to people is prayer. Pray for God to give you the wisdom you need to say what is glorifying to God. Pray for God to bring people across your path whom you can speak to about the gospel. Pray that God is glorified in the outcome of any interaction you have with someone regardless of what that outcome is.

If you want to use tracts as props, have them with you and at the ready. If you have certain routines for starting conversations, practice them.

Be in scripture and understand the gospel. If your head is not in the game, you are not going to notice those people whom you could talk to. Or you will stay silent when the opportunity is there.

For instance, Nick begins the day with a Bible study and prayer time. He will usually spend between 1-2 hours reading his Bible and praying for the Lord to have communion with him through His Word so that he can have his heart and mind renewed and focused on the task at hand. Once he gets to the location (usually a public place where many people are gathered), he will pray; thanking the Lord for the opportunity and the desire to come out, for God to go before him and prepare hearts and minds to hear the message, for God to direct Nick’s steps to those He wants Nick to witness to, for the words to speak that will be most edifying and fruitful, and for Him to guard Nick’s mind and heart from any distractions.

**Worst Cases (Greg)**

Now that you have prepared to talk to people in your life, what can you expect? As we give them the law first, let’s consider the worst case scenarios.

Would someone stop talking to you? Maybe.

Would someone call you a name? It is possible.

Would someone yell at you in the street? It probably depends on your approach whether someone would respond with this.

Religious violence is not that common in the US yet. It is also unlikely that someone will react violently to you starting a conversation. If they don’t want to talk or seem to be getting dangerously agitated, just let them go with a tract if they will take it.

A lot of the time, the worst thing that will happen is that someone refuses to take a tract or tells you they don’t want to talk anymore. If you are on the street, this is the end of the interaction. But if you see this person more frequently, this does not have to be the end. Other opportunities might come about with them.

Nick notes that as he talks to people, he is fully conscious of the doctrines of grace. This means that he knows man’s natural state is totally depraved, and that he is rebellious against God and His Word. Since we are incapable of performing the work that only the Holy Spirit can do on a man’s heart, Nick must fully trust that when he presents the Gospel, the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth of the message and bring about conviction. Therefore, the job of the evangelist is to present the truth about sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come, and allow the Holy Spirit to move where He sees fit to move. If a person is showing a lack of care, or conviction, to the message then it may be time to move on.

Nick states that the worst case scenarios are when we find ourselves following “rabbit-trails”. Usually this occurs when we don’t follow a system of strategic questions, or when we allow the person to bloviate about whatever they want. That’s not to say we don’t let people speak freely, but that we try to direct them back to the topic at hand.

Also, we need to avoid arguments, or doing anything else, which could bring reproach on our message or on to Christ. Sometimes we encounter hostility, or people who may try to trip us up with loaded questions. When that occurs, we need to practice good discernment in order to see the motives and walk away when necessary. We are not trying to win arguments. We are trying to present the gospel, but when people show that they are not interested we simply move on. Christ commanded us “do not cast your pearls before swine”. Again, this requires good discernment. It’s not our job to condemn anyone, but to recognize the signs of people who are mockers, or “enemies of the cross”.

Finally, we need to do our best to present ourselves to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth (2 Timothy 3:15). That doesn’t necessarily mean that we will know all the answers to every single question that we are asked concerning God, or Christianity, but we should at least know the hope that we have in Christ, which is the Gospel. Nick finds it helpful to have a Bible on hand in order to show them the scriptures we are citing.

**Beginning the Conversation (Tim)**

Wherever you go, there are things. We are surrounded by things. Those things can be easily turned into props. It just take a little looking at what is there and thinking about the more interesting things to come up with an opening line about that thing. From that opening line, you can begin chatting about some neutral object with a complete stranger. From that, you can learn a bit about them and build rapport.

The best props are the things that belong to the person or are of interest to that person.

For instance, ask a person at a cruise in about their car. Ask a well-dressed woman about fashion.

Show some empathy and listening skills. Make eye contact. Be present in the conversation and act like you actually care about talking to the person.

Why would we do this? Let us see what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:22:

*I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some.*

Take some time to listen to the people you talk to and understand them. Build rapport. Then you can pivot to discussing the gospel. Depending on the time you have with them, you will have to be more or less abrupt. Tracts can help when time is short. They can be selected to challenge a world view. You will be challenging a world view.

Nick likes to take his own props. His aim is to get people to really think about what they believe concerning God, the Bible, eternity, the law and conscience, and then the judgment to come. His preferred props are various gospel tracts which are aimed at challenging the person’s spiritual worldview, but which also contain the gospel message, and the others that contain the tenets of the Christian faith. These can start the conversation and be given to the person at the end of the conversation.

Nick usually starts by offering the person a tract, which usually presents a question for consideration, and explains what it's about. If the person appears curious, or intrigued, by the tract question, Nick will begin to probe about their thoughts about the tract, and if they even think about things like God, heaven and hell, or eternity. Nick listens to their thoughts on it, and then asks follow up questions in order to direct them through God's attributes, the law and conscience, and the gospel. If he sees that the person is uninterested in having a conversation, or leaves the conversation for whatever reason, he asks them to read the tract at home later. The tracts he uses have the gospel presented on them, and that message is sufficient to save them if and when they read it.

**The meat of the conversation.** (Greg)

This is what you are there to discuss. This is what you have been called to do.

Remember Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

You know the gospel. You know the need for the gospel. This is where you present to them the argument that they are not right with God and in need of salvation.

This can be easily done by discussing the Ten Commandments. At least some of them are well known among most people and it is fairly easy to show them that they have broken at least one which leaves them condemned.

If they are treating the discussion seriously and agree to your chain of logic up to this point, proceed with the good news of the Gospel. If they are hostile or not serious, you may want to stop here and bid them farewell. They might not be ready. Maybe someone else is meant to pick up where you leave off.

Regardless, you have done what you have set out to do.

**Ending the Conversation (Tim)**

When ending the conversation, there could be a number of questions that come to mind. To pray or not. To give them something. If they were actually reached by the gospel and saved.

After you have presented the gospel, it is important to not assume anything about the person. It can be a trap to assume you know if the Holy Spirit has worked in them or not. If you do this incorrectly, you can can mislead someone and do harm. It can help to remember that this is not about getting numbers and convert counts.

Perhaps the most important thing is to avoid the evangelistic pitfalls we have all heard of. Getting the person to pray the sinner’s prayer and sign a card is most definitely not the right thing to do. If you want to pray for them, to re-emphasize your message and provide a stronger witness, that can be a great thing. Giving them reading material or a DVD is a good thing if you have it to give. Some people are introverts and like to think about things or like to understand by reading or watching a video. Giving them something for later reflection can be good for these people to review and better understand where they stand before God and what the gospel is. Conversations can fade in time or be subject to memory fade. But the right people will remember what you say. You never know who that is though.

**Common Anxieties (Greg)**

Everyone has some level of anxiety when they do something new or that could be unpleasant. You could have anxiety over things such as angering someone, losing a friend or acquaintance, looking foolish, being unliked, being in danger. Or maybe you are anxious about your own internal sinfulness. Prayer is the answer for this . Pray that God’s will be done and that God be glorified in your interactions, regardless of the outcome.

Remember Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Pray that God gives you the wisdom and words to speak and rest in God’s sovereignty over your life and what will happen.

Then go and do what you are anxious about. Keep talking to people. If God puts someone in your path, talk to them even though you might be anxious. And Repeat. God will put people in your path.

Women will probably have a specific set of anxieties that men don’t have or experience to a lesser degree, especially out in the world talking to strangers. Men can present hard evangelistic targets for women. Thus, it might be good to work with another sister or a brother in Christ if you are out on the streets or intentionally knocking on doors. You might have to take additional steps to take care of personal physical safety.

Men and women would be wise through to heed any sense of danger and split to protect their physical safety. There will be other times and other people to talk to anyone you would have talked to.

**Overcoming Internal Excuse Making (Tim)**

You will probably not want to get out there and talk to people at first or at times when it would be more convenient for you to stay silent. This is a temptation to a sin of omission. You will probably try to rationalize it in some way. We all do this. We all say things like

* It isn’t my calling
* I have not been “good enough” recently
* Someone else can do it
* They don’t need to hear this from me.

We have all been told to go make disciples regardless of whether we have a special gift of evangelism. Paul says he became all things to all people for the sake of the gospel. We have that as a model for a reason. We have a responsibility to the One who saved us from ourselves to proclaim Him to everyone we can and it doesn’t matter if we don’t feel like it. We all fall short on this and do not fulfill this command as well as we should.

You might also find yourself with some other excuses specifically about talking to strangers and new people:

1) “**We don’t know enough.”** We may not have every answer to every question, but we should at least know what brought us to Christ, and what the Gospel message is. If we know it well enough to believe in it, then we should be able to explain it to someone else.

2) “**We don’t have the right personality”** This commission is not just for those who are outgoing, or extroverted. Christ commands us to go out and lean on His grace in our times of weakness. I have personally found that when I am walking in obedience the Lord supplements my weaknesses with His grace, joy, and boldness.

3) “**People won’t respond the right way, and not like me.”** Unfortunately, this may be true. However, we must remember that people rejected Jesus and His message too. We as Christians are called to identify ourselves with Christ’s life, and to suffer for His sake in this way. Scripture tells us that we who have been saved possess the treasure of God’s Word, that it is the power of God for salvation to those who believe it, and that we have crossed over from death unto life as a result of it. If we as believers are the living, then the unsaved are the dead, and how can we not present the Gospel to those dry, dead, bones so that they may live? It would be unloving, selfish, and disobedient to God, to not present the Gospel to a lost and dying world. We should strive to make our lives more and more conformed to the life of Christ, and if we are willing to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow in His footsteps, we will be faithful as His disciples.

1. “**I don’t have time to evangelize”** We don’t all need to go out to an event in order to evangelize. We can evangelize to people when and wherever we go out. It’s just important to know that the power of God for salvation is in the gospel message, which always requires words!
2. “**My family needs me at home”** Family is a tremendous blessing from the Lord, and a ministry in its own right. However, I would encourage people to go out as a family, obviously, in a safe and public setting, and lead your family by example.

“**I have other priorities like work”** Certainly it would be a bad witness if we were not fulfilling our obligations to people, or if we were not taking care of our finances. However, I would encourage you to have the perspective of “seeking first the kingdom of God and HIs righteousness, and all things will be added unto you”. Of course, that doesn’t mean that we can be negligent, but what it does mean is that we need to recognize that God is the source and sustainer of our blessings, and therefore if we continue to pursue Him and His righteousness, through faith and obedience, He can supply our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**Overcoming Common Objections (Greg)**

When you engage someone you do not know, you don’t know where they are coming from. They could bring up a number of things, such as past church crimes, liberalism or ecumenism, atheism or materialism, or just be stubborn and unwilling to talk. Aside from someone who just doesn’t want to talk, you can, with practice and forethought avoid their rhetorical traps and stay on your message. It is often applicable to their objections to just acknowledge it and say you can get back to it, but first you want to cover some fundamental things. There is a good chance that rhetorical attempts to side track you are simply meant to side track you.

It can be even more challenging when you are talking to more than one person. It is probably good to deal with one person at a time and tell the others you will address one at a time. If need be, give tracts to those who will take them and then end the interaction.