

“The ‘Right’ Way to do Evangelism”

Mark 4:2–8, 14–20

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I am an assistant pastor here at Briarwood. If I didn't do anything else in my Christian life, leading my younger brother to Christ was the best ministry I ever had because of what God has done through him. Before I came here to be an assistant pastor, I was actually a Briarwood supported missionary. My wife and I, Jan, went to South Africa in 1980 and spent 22 years there. Had a great time. After we'd been there for about seven years, we moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town. For those of you who are geographically challenged, that's about a thousand miles. After we'd been in Cape Town for a year or so, I went back to Johannesburg to speak at the campus that I had previously worked on. I was with Campus Crusade for Christ, and there was hardly anybody there at the meeting. So I said to the director, ‘Didn't you tell them that I was coming?’ He said, ‘No, but word leaked out.’ So I was really fearful when Benny actually announced that I was going to be preaching whether anyone would be here. So, I'm glad to say some of the faithful folks are here.

I also do work with CMMA which is Christian Medical Ministry of Alabama. In fact, my primary job here at Briarwood is the director for CMMA. We have a ministry in the medical community here. We work primarily with those who are in training, students and residents, though we do some work with the professionals who are already in practice as well. We lead Bible studies; we share the Gospel with people. We counsel people through pre-marriage counseling. CMMA has been going for just over 40 years now, and we came to 21 years ago. It's been a wonderful experience and I thought since we've just come off of the global Ministry conference and we just did a mission trip, I'll tell you a little bit about it.

We got back a week ago today from the Dominican Republic. I took a team of 23 dental students, two optometry students, six dentists and our three CMMA staff down there for a week. Each day we would go out to a different village and set up in a church or a clinic and do dental work, optometry work and share the Gospel with people. It's a great learning environment. One of the reasons that is a great place to learn to do a dental work is because the patients all speak Spanish. That means if this dental student has no idea what to do next, he just says to the dentist, ‘What do I do now?’ And the patient has no idea what he said. The dentist can say ‘do this or that’ and that's the reason it's a great learning environment to be in that kind of situation.

We also pray for each patient. What was amazing was even people who are not Christians in that country love to be prayed over. This is my 17th trip there. We've been going there for 15 years now, and we've had people brought to tears just because we took the time to pray for them. It's a real sweet time to minister there. We also did evangelism with evangelism teams. I led one of the teams and a local retired dentist who worked part time at the dental school, led another team. As each patient would come in before they would go to see the dentist, they would come and sit with his team or my team, and we would talk to them about the Gospel. The students rotated so every few hours a different student would come and work with us. Again, it's a great place to train them in evangelism because the patients speak Spanish and they could get as far as they could and if they were stuck and didn't know what to do next, we would say, ‘Why don't you share this passage or that passage of Scripture?’ Students would get very excited about being able to learn to share the Gospel. Most of the students that were on that trip had never

shared the Gospel before in their life and this was their first time. So, it was a special time for them.

We had kind of unusual evangelism. The first day there was not room in the building for anybody but the dentists so they put us out under a tree, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise because there was a nice breeze and we're under a shade tree. They were sweating in this building where there must have been about 50 people at any time in this small little room. One of the things that we decided years ago that we were going to do is we wanted to be able to give health care, whether it's physical therapy, medicine or dentistry, with no strings attached, even though we do want to share the Gospel with people. So as people would come in and sit down, we would tell them it's not a requirement for them to talk to us about Jesus in order for them to see the dentist for they would see the dentist as they waited their turn, but we would ask them if they would like to talk to us. We didn't have a single person turn us down. It's not quite that way here in America, is it?

Every one of them wanted to talk to us, even though many of them were not Christians. It was a great place to be able to talk to people. I personally was involved with probably 25 or 30 conversations every day with people, some of whom were Christians, some were not. It was just a great time to be able to share the Gospel with them. They really appreciated it. On the last day, a little small lady came and I gave her my little introductory spiel, she told me that she was Catholic and I asked her if she knew for sure if she died today, would she go to heaven? She said 'no,' which didn't surprise me that she was unsure. We shared some Scriptures with her, talked her through how she could know that she was going to heaven and you could tell it was very meaningful to her. She had tears in her eyes. She was very appreciative. Then we prayed over her and she left. About 20 minutes later, we were talking to one of the other patients and this same lady came walking in with two big bags full of fruit and vegetables to give to me as a gift. Now, if you had any idea how poor this community was that we were in, that was an amazing thing that she would do that. I appreciate so much that we were there giving them free health care as well as that we are taking the time to share the Gospel with them.

I'm going to tell a couple of more stories as we go through our study. Our topic is the right way to do evangelism. We will start by looking at Acts 13. The context here is that the Apostle Paul was on his first missionary journey after being sent out by the Church of Antioch. He goes across the Mediterranean to the big island called Cyprus.

Acts 13:6-12 says [6] *When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. [7] He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. [8] But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. [9] But Saul, who was also called Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, looked intently at him [10] and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? [11] And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. [12] Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.*

We are not sure how Paul said what he did in verse 10 but I think he was bold and direct in his manner of speaking to this fellow. So that must be the divinely ordained way to do evangelism, right? I am not so sure but maybe it was an okay method for Paul. Maybe it would be okay for us if we have the apostolic authority to strike people blind when they oppose us,

maybe that's a good method. I don't think any of us have that, but it was an effective method in Paul's case. I'm being a little bit tongue and cheek for I'm not advocating this as the preferred way to do evangelism. Certainly, it worked for Paul in that one situation, although we don't have any other record of him doing it that way any place else, but it worked there and he did it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit there.

I think that there are other ways that we can think about evangelism besides something quite so confrontational. So, with that, let's turn now to our chief passage for this study which is Mark 4. This is the parable of the Sower. I want to give a little explanation to start with. Some of you may be from a farming background and you may know something about planting seeds. I think the way they did it back then thought was very different because the Sower in those days would generally have a little bag and the bag would have all the seeds in it. They would literally walk around in the road and they would pull out a handful of seeds and would just throw it out randomly as they walked down the field. After that, they would come back with a plow, which would turn the dirt over and cover some of the seed. It was probably not the most efficient process for your seeds, but that was the way they did it.

Mark 4:1-9 says *[1] Again He (Jesus) began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. [2] And He was teaching them many things in parables, and in His teaching He said to them: [3] "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. [5] Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. [6] And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. [7] Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. [8] And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." [9] And He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

Jesus just a little later actually interprets this parable for His disciples who didn't seem to understand it. Here's Jesus' Divine interpretation of the parable in Mark 4:14-20 which says, *[14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. [16] And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. [17] And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. [18] And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, [19] but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. [20] But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."*

In other words, the Sower in verse 14 is the one who gives out the Word of God, and in terms of evangelism, specifically the Gospel – the Sower shares the Word of God with people. According to verse 15, whenever we engage in evangelism, it automatically involves us in a spiritual battle. Satan is not mentioned here for no reason. He and his demons don't want to give up their slaves. We know that people without Christ are enslaved. They're enslaved to sin and their children of the devil, and he doesn't want to give them up. So, he's trying everything he can to stop us and that is why prayer is so important to effective evangelism. The first thing to be effective in evangelism is to make sure we're praying for people. Someone encouraged me years

ago, to have a list of people that did not know Christ that I was praying for. Now, some of those people, as a result of knowing them in some way, I was given opportunities to share the Gospel with them myself. Others I didn't get to share with, but someone else did, but the starting point is praying for people. Have a list of people family, friends, coworkers, people you know who are not saved that you can be praying for.

Last week we were in the Dominican Republic, and one of the places that we went to, we saw the power of prayer in that particular place. It was a village in the Dominican that had a lot of people from Haiti that had moved there. As a result, the village had been a stronghold of voodoo and black magic. The church we were at, you might say, they planted the church, on the front porch of hell. It was a really difficult place when the pastor first went there, but as we began to talk to people in our evangelism station, we heard about the faithful believers who were living in the midst of this difficult community. One by one, they told us they had been led to Christ by the pastor or his wife.

This is a pastor who quit his job working in the sugar cane fields just as a laborer with a machete because he felt God called him to preach and plant a church in this village. So, quitting his job means he all of a sudden had no income. This man had an eighth-grade education and not only did the Lord use him to plant a church in that community, but three other churches in surrounding communities that he's planted over the years. It was phenomenal to meet these people and talk to them. Of all the villages we went into last week, it was the calmest, most peaceful community that we worked in, and it was because the Gospel had taken root there in the lives of so many people, which started with prayer and then sharing the Good News. That's something we have to keep in mind as we talk about evangelism. We have good news. The Gospel is good news. We're telling people something that is good for them and that should make us not hesitate.

This particular soil, the path He's talking about in Mark 4, describes those with a real shallow perception of the Gospel. One of the things that we saw in the Dominican Republic was many people had been to church for years. I'll never forget the very first trip I took there 15 years ago. I was talking to a young man and I asked him if he was a Christian and he said 'no' but before asking him if he was a Christian, I said to him, "This is a really good church here. Do you go to the you attend this church ever?" He said, 'Yes.' I said, "Oh, how often do you attend?" He said, 'Every week, usually twice, Sunday morning, a Sunday night.' I said, "How long have you been doing that?" He said, 'Oh, five or six years.' I said, "Oh, are you a Christian now?" 'No.' So he had a superficial attachment to a Christian community because he came to church, but he was not a Christian and we found that very often.

We also found people that would say, "I used to be a Christian." In further conversation and talking to our translators who were Dominicans about it, we discovered that the health and wealth gospel is unfortunately spread to that part of the world. Many people there have the misunderstanding that if they go to church, all their health problems will go away and they'll get wealthy. That may mean, in their case, just getting a job because that's all they want. So, they would go to church expecting those things to happen and after five or six months, they had no job and they were still sick. Then they would say, 'this Christianity doesn't work.' So, they would leave the church.

When we came along, and they would say to us 'well, I used to be a Christian' they didn't used to be a Christian, did they? They went to church, but they had a superficial, shallow attachment to the church. They didn't really know the Lord. In our country, we have a lot of people who have a very shallow attachment to the church as well, and I call those nominal

Christians, and that is their Christian in name only. That was a term that my pastor in South Africa used to use. He said, 'I'm a member of the gym. My name is on the roll there but it doesn't mean I go to the gym and workout. I'm a nominal member.' A lot of people are that way about church, aren't they?

Friends, we need to be honest with people when we are sharing the Gospel for we don't want to paint a picture saying, 'Hey, come to Christ and all your problems will go away for everything will just be peachy keen. Everything will just be fine.' That's not true. Becoming a Christian does not solve some of your daily life problems. In fact, even though we have access to the power of God as Christians, we now have Satan as our enemy so in some ways, life gets more difficult and we need not sugarcoat it. We need to tell people the truth about what it's like to be a Christian. We know from some of the stories we heard at the recent global ministry conference that in many of the countries where our missionaries work, to become a Christian means you can be ostracized, you can be kicked out of your family, you can be killed. That's why some of our missionaries, for the sake of their constituents, couldn't put it publicly up on a screen or in a printed book what country they're in, because they were doing that to protect their people. We haven't gotten to that point yet in America but we have had people losing jobs and other things, so we need to be honest with people.

According to Mark 4:18-19 it seems as if these people seem to be making some progress initially, but the worries of this world distract them from what's really important. Riches are deceitful because they seem to promise security and happiness, but they cannot deliver those things. Those come only from God. Just think of all the rich and famous people that you hear about in the news from day to day who've had trouble with divorce, depression, suicide. Being rich and famous doesn't solve all the problems of the world.

According to Mark 4:20, these are those who are ready to respond to the Gospel. Over and over, we find in the Dominican Republic that people will say, 'Yeah, I've heard the gospel before, but I'm not ready to become a Christian.' Our first day in the Dominican, I heard that several times in a row as I talked with people – 'Yes, I know. I know this message, but I'm not ready to be a Christian.' So, I was a bit surprised when a lady came and sat down with me. She had a little girl with her and we started talking. She seemed just like all the others so I was asking her some questions to see if she understood the Gospel and she seemed to understand it. I'm just waiting for her to say, "yes, I understand it, but I'm not ready for this" but she didn't say that. She just sat there and she had a look on her face like she was waiting for me to say something else.

I said, "okay, let's go over here to John 1:12 where it talks about receiving Christ." We talked about that for a few minutes. Then I said, 'let me ask you a question. Is this something that you've done, that is to receive Christ as your Savior or is this something you need to do?' She immediately said, "I need to do it." Again, I'm waiting for the but...yet there was no but as so I said, 'I have a question that I'd like to ask.' I call it my test question to see if they really grasp the weight of what we're talking about when we share the Gospel. So, I ask her this question, "Well, when do you think would be a good time for you to receive Christ?" She immediately said, 'Now,' but she was adamant. That told me she was getting the message. She's understanding it. So, she prayed with us to receive Christ. We had a number of people do that over the week.

I want you to notice something about this parable and its interpretation as Jesus gives it. Nowhere does it tell us that people come to Christ because of how the man sowed, right? The Sower just goes out to sow. He indiscriminately sows the seed. He gives the Word of God – the Gospel – out to people. The method we use is not what brings people to Jesus Christ. It's not about all the right words and verses we think we have to know and memorize. God is the One

that has to work in people's hearts. He's the one that brings them to faith. It's not our clever techniques.

It was also not the quality of the seed. He doesn't say anything in this parable about the seeds. He didn't say some of the seeds are bad. In fact, in the case of evangelism, what is the seed that we're sowing? It's the Gospel, and that's the best possible seed to sow. It's always good and so we are sharing Good News with people. The key to those who receive the Word and became fruitful, had to do with the condition of their hearts. Ask yourselves the question how are hearts made ready to receive the Good News? The answer is only God can do that. He has to do a work in their hearts that we can't do. So again, we can talk about the importance of prayer. We can ask God to change people's hearts.

Another thing is, that God has given us something that we can do as part of the process that He uses to change people's hearts, to be good soil, to be ready to receive the Word, is to use the tool that God has given us, which is the Word of God. He's given us a Word which is powerful. Here is a quote from J.I. Packer from his book, Knowing God, "Since God must do a work in the heart of the unbeliever, should we conclude that preaching the Gospel is a waste of time and write off evangelism as a hopeless enterprise that's doomed to fail? No, God will open blind eyes. It is not for us to imagine that we can prove the truth of Christianity by our own arguments. Nobody can prove the truth of Christianity except the Holy Spirit, by His own Almighty work of renewing the blinded heart. It is the sovereign prerogative of Christ's Spirit to convince men's conscience of the truth of Christ's Gospel and Christ's human witnesses must learn to ground their hopes of success, not on clever presentation of the truth by man, but on powerful demonstration of the truth of the Spirit." Amen to that.

There is something, as I said, that we can do. Hebrews 4:12 says, *[12] For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* So, one of the things that we can do is get into situations where we share God's Word with people who don't know Christ. God will use that. God knows who He is selected, who are the elect and so we can go with confidence that some will respond.

When I was in college, I went to an evangelism training seminar at the old Briarwood Church over on Highway 280, and one of the teachers that was training us in evangelism was Dr. Bill Buck, who's been with the Lord for about two years now. Dr. Buck was teaching us how to share the Gospel using the Four Spiritual Laws and at some point, he stopped to tell us a story. He said, "I was doing this in another church not long ago and a man stopped me as I was training people how to share the Gospel and said, 'I don't think this is the right way to do evangelism.' So, I said to him, 'What way do you use?' and the man was silent for a moment then fumbled around a little bit and I said to him 'Do you share the Gospel with people? I didn't think so. Maybe this isn't the right way, but I think God likes me doing it the wrong way rather than me not doing it at all.'" Then he said to the rest of us "We're going to continue with the seminar." You have to know Dr. Buck, to know that he'd be one of the few people who would do something like that.

What is the right way? That is the title of this study – The 'Right' Way to Do Evangelism. It's any way you want. That's the bottom line. Are you using EE3? Then keep doing it. Are you using the four spiritual laws? I've used that thousands of times. Keep doing it. How about the Bridge to Life? That's what we teach here at Briarwood. That's excellent. It's a great tool. I've used it many times. People use it on some of our mission trips. If you're doing that, keep doing it, if that's what you like to do. I have found that everyone is different. Different

people are different in the way they do things. Pastor Harry talked about this when he talked about spiritual gifts. We're all different. We have different personalities. So I'm encouraging you not to have a method that I say is the right way, but to find something that works for you.

When I was in South Africa, I met a man named Dick. Dick ran a business where they put exhausts on cars and he had two prices. If you paid with a check or a credit card, there was one price. If you paid with cash, there was a lower price and the reason for that is if you paid with check or credit card there was a paper trail and therefore, he had to pay company tax on that, which was very high in South Africa. If it was a cash transaction, he just stuck the money in his pocket and didn't have to report it to the government. So, it was a way to make an extra profit. Everyone knew that for it was rife in all the auto industry. Then Dick became a Christian. I shared the Gospel with him one day and he told me he's already a Christian. He wasn't at the time and later admitted that, but he eventually became a Christian. That's a long story for another time.

When he became a Christian he immediately stopped doing that. A man came into his shop who had been there numerous times before and said, 'What's the cash price today?' Dick said, "One price, it doesn't matter how you pay." The man said, 'What? You can't do that. If you try to do that, you'll go out of business.' Dick said, "I became a Christian." He didn't know how to share the Gospel with the man but he said 'I became a Christian. And now I do things honestly.' The man said, "Well, I'm going elsewhere." He said, 'That's fine. Go elsewhere.' God blessed his business. He had actually hired extra workers to get the job done. People would come to Dick's place to say, 'I heard something about you. Is this really true that you no longer have a cash price?' Dick would say, "That's right." Then they'd say 'Is it true because you're a Christian?' "That's right."

There was one man named Frank who had a tire business, and so he said to Dick "How do I get what you have? I don't understand this." Dick thought, 'Oh, now I'm stuck. I don't know what to say' other than his testimony. He was sharing his testimony with so many people that a lot of these men were coming to our Friday morning men's meeting that we had at the Hard Rock Cafe. One night, Dick called me up and said, "Do you have breakfast appointment tomorrow morning?" I said, 'No.' He said, "You do now. You're meeting with Frank, the husky guy that comes on Friday morning to our men's meeting. He wants you to sit down and explain the Gospel to him." This was because of Dick's testimony. So, a testimony is a very powerful thing to do.

So I'd say the only option that is really wrong when it comes to a method of sharing the Gospel, is simply not sharing your faith at all because God has commanded us to do that. We each need to find a way that works for us and this church has all kinds of great trainings to show you how to do this. The Bridge to Life training is done here and I highly encourage that but, in this study, I want to introduce a new tool that we're also using here at this church called Christianity Explored. Basically, it's a 7 to 8 week course that gets people into the Word. We use Mark's gospel. This course is designed for people who are not Christians. When you give a person who's not a Christian, a big Bible, and you say to them, turn to Mark, that's embarrassing to a lot of people, for they start looking at the table of contents. I had a guy recently who couldn't even find the table of contents and you could tell it made me very uneasy. We give them a little booklet that is just the gospel of Mark. We all have the same page number, so it just makes it easy for a non-Christian to be there and to participate in this.

Because the Word of God is powerful, this is a great course because it gets them into the Word of God. We ask them to read through the gospel of Mark during the course, and each week we have discussions. We have a little study guide with discussions on different passages in Mark. All of them gospel centered. One of them might be on grace, one of them might be on the resurrection, one of them might be on sin but there are different Gospel oriented topics to give people an opportunity to discuss. It's not a lecture. It's an opportunity around a table to be able to talk and people to ask their questions and have a discussion about what the gospel is and what it means. This is a very useful course.

Audio from a video shown from another church that is using this Christianity Explored method in sharing the Gospel:

Hi, I'm from Wisconsin and I came to Christ from the Christianity Explored Program after seven times going through the curriculum. About a year after we moved to Colorado Springs through a business opportunity, we met Dave and Kathleen. I remember sitting on their couch having this business conversation. We were getting ready to leave, wrapping up and I said "Just so you know, I'm not a good Catholic. I know Christmas is coming up. I need to go back. What's a good Catholic Church?" Kathleen came over as she's smiling and smirking. She said "How about this? I'll tell you about a good Catholic Church after you come with me to this Sunday night event. There is a meal. We'll have a conversation and if you ask me for a Catholic church after that, I will tell you." Ends up it was Christianity Explored and it was the third week. It was inviting it. It was so strange to have a culture of inviting and willing to listen. They were letting me figure out why I had those questions and what the answer was supposed to be on my own. So I actually get to ask my questions when I've never been able to ask them before. I think I'll come back and I went back.

I'm Eli, and God showed His love to a very broken and hurting young man. The first Christianity Explored I went to, I thought, 'You guys are all nuts.' To be absolutely honest, they gave me food and that was my whole motive. I just knew I needed to be fed for that day. For some reason, I kept coming back and I couldn't figure it out. I had long hair down about mid waist and my slayer shirt on, with tattoos, was drunk, was high, and hated everybody. My sole purpose was to break your soul and that's what I did. I was not a pleasant human being at that point in time. I was asked 'Is there anyone you could trust?' That's a powerful question. At that point in life, the only reference I had with caring people is that they're going to leave me. I had to watch my mother die and watch my brother get murdered. I watched my father leave me on the streets and I've said it before that if there was a loving God for a kid who had no choice in the situation that he was put into, why would You put me into a situation like that? I specifically remember the episode that was shown, that was on grace. I remember hearing it for the first time. Most people don't understand grace because they don't understand the depths of their sin. I understood that I was no good and worthless. There was nothing good that was going to come out of me. But now there's something telling me that it's not about you, that this is going to come through you, this grace alone radically changed my life.

We went through Christianity Explored for the seventh time and I had known Dave and Kathleen three, almost four years. But after knowing each other for three years, having that relationship outside of the church, they knew and they had seen what I was really thinking. I just didn't know it. They sat me down after that final class at seventh time and said, "Chelsea, we love you, but don't you dare come back until you've made a decision if you are going to follow Christ or not."

It took me two months to finally get over my stubbornness, get over the offended nature of my ego, and sit down and read through the gospel of John. John 15:5, says 'I am the vine. You are the branches apart from Me you can do nothing.' It had nothing to do with me. How relieving is that after 27 years to hear it's all about what I can do for Him, but in reality, it had nothing to do with what I was doing for Him and what He had already done for me millennia ago and was still doing for me on a daily basis that I just wasn't willing to acknowledge because I was stubborn.

There was one point in time I drank myself to the point where I'm bleeding internally. Drugs have taken effect, and I just remember telling God that it has to change now, because if You're not going to take my life, I will. That night, I don't actually remember how I found my way back to the church but there Dave and Kathleen were, still in the same spot as consistent as possible. They see me walk in and saw a drunken mess. Haven't figured that out yet, but he gave me a kiss on my right cheek and then grabbed my hand, took me in, sat down right next to him. Since that moment, I have never left his side.

Christianity Explored has been a venue like nothing I've ever seen where true discipleship can take place. It's easy, especially in the West, to just not really care about the lost and relationships with people is where true evangelism and discipleship really does start. You don't need five or six Billy Graham's to lead Christianity Explored, you just need the right type of people who can listen and ask the right kind of questions. Christianity Explored is the opportunity to bring new people in. This is my home. This is where I belong. Questions can make you uncomfortable. Questions are going to break your heart. I think people are going to make you laugh. It's just going to be a beautiful experience of a ride. (End of video audio)

We've been training people here at the church, but we've realized for a long time that getting non-Christians here to the church on a Wednesday night is not easy and it's intimidating. So, we're going to start moving this into homes. People who have been through the training are going to lead this in homes. There will be different homes that are going to be hosting these Christianity Explored groups. Why am I telling you this? It is because you can help get people there. All of you know people who are not Christians. So, we've got people who are trained who are going to open their homes to these groups which last about seven or eight weeks and you can help invite people to go to those. You can go with them to help get them there. It's going to be a casual evening. Some homes will have a dinner first, some will have a dessert, but it'll be a relational time. That's one of the ways that you could be involved.

Another way you be involved is to turn your existing group into a Christianity Explored (CE) group temporarily. Some of you have been in small groups that have been meeting in someone's home for ten years or more. This church provides the training that you in turn can do in your existing small group for a period of time. This is an idea I discussed with Pastor Reeder, and he loves that idea. He thinks it would be great if many of our small groups would just take a break from what you're doing for seven or eight weeks, invite some non-Christians and go through something like this to give them an opportunity to hear the Gospel, as they will over and over and over through CE.

Christianity Explored is a two-part training that will be happening here on Wednesday night. So, we'd love you to get involved in that way. This is a new tool is not the only tool, maybe not be the best tool, but it is a way that we have found that is working. I did this with one of my groups. I had a small group with dental students last year, and when this year was about to start, one of them said to me, "I've got a friend in class who told me he's not a Christian, he doesn't know anything about Christianity. Where do I start with him?" I said, "How about we

just turn our small group into a group where we let him explore what Christianity is about?" For a couple of weeks I went through some training with my group, and then the next week they all invited people and they got five guys there who either weren't Christians or weren't sure if they were Christians and we did CE for a couple of months. This is something you can do very easily. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You have given us Good News to share with people. I pray that You would be putting in our hearts a burning desire to share it with people, whether it's family, friends, neighbors, people at work, that You wouldn't let us rest unless we have a desire to be involved in some way in trying to get the Gospel to people. Thank You for the people who have put together tools like the Bridge to Life, like Christianity Explored and others that we can make use of to reach out. I pray that You would bless this effort of Christianity Explored to bring many people into Your Kingdom, and I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.