

CA 39 TFP4 METHODS OF EVANGELISM

Theme music

FOSTER: When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we receive two gifts. The first is forgiveness of our sins—and how great and wonderful that gift is! Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9 say, “*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*” [NLT]

The gift of salvation is ours to keep for all eternity. The Bible says no one can snatch us out of God’s hand. But the second gift is not for us to keep. It’s intended to be given away. So what is this gift?

Welcome to Champions Arise. I’m Foster Braun and I’m with Kent Darcie. The second gift God gives us is our testimony—the story of how God led us to the saving knowledge of His Son Jesus. This gift is unique to each one of us and is powerful because no one can dispute your personal testimony. But why do we give it away? And how do we give it away? We’ll discuss this when we return to Champions Arise.

Music Theme in – 5 SECS.

FOSTER: Kent, I’ve heard many testimonies, and it always amazes me how God can use such a variety of ways to draw people to Himself.

KENT: It amazes me too. I’ve heard people’s stories of how God used dramatic situations to bring them to salvation. And I’ve heard others say they accepted Jesus Christ when they were 6 or seven years old and continued to follow Him all their lives. But, Foster, I have a question for you. How do you feel when you hear someone share their testimony?

FOSTER: I guess...excited....encouraged... I think it... strengthens my faith.

KENT: Why do you think it strengthens your faith in God?

FOSTER: It’s exciting to see the different ways He pursues us. And also, and I probably shouldn’t think this, but I’ve heard some people share their testimonies and thought, “Wow, if God could save *them*, God can save anybody!”

KENT: Well, God *can* save anybody. And I’d say your thought about “if God could save *them*” is normal. We see examples of it in the Bible.

FOSTER: Can you give us an example?

KENT: A good example is the Apostle Paul. Paul wanted to crush Christianity. Acts 8 verse 3 says, “*He made **havoc** of the church, entering every house, and dragging off*

men and women, committing them to prison.” Acts 9:1 says “Paul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord’s followers.”

FOSTER: But then Paul accepted Jesus as His Lord

KENT: Yes, God could even save Paul. Acts 9 verses 20-22 say, “*And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!” All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” “And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?”* .”

Paul’s change was miraculous! And it encouraged believers in Christ that even Paul of Tarsus could be saved. But his conversion from an enemy of Christians to a follower of Jesus—at great personal risk—was also a very convincing witness to those who didn’t believe in Jesus.

FOSTER: But we don’t need to have a dramatic testimony like Paul’s to be used by God.

KENT: No. We just have to have a willing heart—and a love for those who don’t know Christ personally. In fact, I believe God puts people in our path that are the exact right people to hear our unique testimony. In our eyes our story may seem plain and boring, but God can use it mightily.

FOSTER: If we share it.

KENT: Exactly.

FOSTER: “Faith cometh from hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ (Ro 10:17.)”

KENT: Yes. That’s the gift we give away. Our testimony and the Word of Christ.

FOSTER: So that’s *why* we should share our testimony. The other question is *how* do we share our testimony and the gospel of Christ?

KENT: In their book, “The Four Priorities,” the authors Dr. John Tolson and Larry Krieger list six keys to sharing our faith with others. Sharing our faith is often called, “evangelism”. And the Bible tells of a situation where we can see all six of these evangelism keys.

In Acts chapter 8 we read about Phillip—sometimes called Phillip the Evangelist. At this time, Christians in Jerusalem were being persecuted and many of them fled Jerusalem and went to other parts of the world. But Jews who hadn’t converted to Christianity continued to come to Jerusalem for various festivals.

One of these was an Ethiopian official who was in charge of the whole treasury for the queen of the Ethiopians. He came to Jerusalem to worship and probably heard about

the recent events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection. After the Jewish Festival was done, he was heading back to Ethiopia when he met Phillip.

FOSTER: And this is where Phillip applied the six keys to successful evangelism?

KENT: Yes

FOSTER: If you just joined us, this is Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and I'm speaking with Kent Darcie. Today we are discussing how to share our testimony and the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

So Kent what is the first key to sharing the good news of Jesus?

KENT: The first key is having Sensitivity to the Lord's leading. As we continue to spend time in God's word, and with God in prayer, we'll be increasingly sensitive to what He wants us to do.

With Phillip, he had a growing ministry, but the Lord used an angel to direct Philip to leave his ministry and speak to the Ethiopian official. Even though Phillip had to leave his town, he didn't argue or hesitate. He was sensitive to God's wishes and obeyed quickly.

People who walk closely with God develop this kind of sensitivity over time. Psalm 1 says, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night (Ps 1:1.2.)"

FOSTER: So the first key to evangelism is to be sensitive to the Lord's leading. What is the second key?

KENT: The second key is to be Available to move. 1 Peter 3:15 says "*if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.*" Your testimony is a powerful tool. Be ready to share it and also be familiar with sharing the gospel message of Jesus. By being prepared, you will be available to move when God leads you.

FOSTER: I think the lack of preparation increases our fear of sharing Jesus with people.

KENT: I agree, but I also think the third key to evangelism is part of it. The third key is Initiative. God's Holy Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it (Acts 8:29.)'"

The Ethiopian official was on his way home and sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah. Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. And said 'Do you understand what you are reading?' (Acts 8:30.)"

Phillip took the initiative to engage the Ethiopian official. When we're sensitive to God's leading, we still need to take the initiative to engage with the person to share God's truth with them.

FOSTER: This seems to be the step that hinders us from sharing our testimony and the gospel. Why is that?

KENT: Often we succumb to fear. What if we do it wrong? What if they ask us a question we can't answer? What if they reject us? But we have the answer to the greatest fear of mankind—death. Most people fear death. But Christians can say what Paul said, "*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*" (1 Cor. 15:55) We have our undeniable testimony of how God led us to Him and how He is working in our life. And we have the answer to man's fear of death—Jesus. So we can take the initiative because we have the answers.

FOSTER: And what is the fourth key?

KENT: The fourth key for evangelism is Tactfulness. Tact is "*a keen sense of what to say or do—to avoid giving offense.*"¹

We have the Holy Spirit to guide us. So we don't need to argue, insult people, or be afraid to share the full truth of their sinful condition. But we do need tact. We see with Phillip that he joined the Ethiopian official in his chariot, but not before he was invited. He also showed genuine concern, was courteous, and supported the official's dignity. When a person is genuinely seeking the truth; when his or her heart has been prepared by God's Spirit, a tactful presentation of the good news can lead them to Christ.

FOSTER: What a privilege it is to be used by God to lead someone to Jesus Christ. Kent, we've discussed sensitivity, availability, initiative, and tact, what is the fifth key to evangelism?

KENT: Using Precision is the fifth key.

Continuing with the story of Phillip, the Ethiopian official asked Philip, 'Please tell me, who is the prophet [Isaiah] talking about, himself or someone else?' Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:35.)"

Phillip was asked a direct question and answered the question without a lot of extra words.

FOSTER: Sometimes we feel like we have to say more and more, when in many cases, saying less can work better.

KENT: Yes we need to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

FOSTER: And what is the 6th key. Our last key.

KENT: Decisiveness. Throughout the story of Philip and the Ethiopian official we see decisiveness. Phillip obeyed God without an argument. He went to where God told him

to go immediately. He approached the Ethiopian official without hesitation. Phillip engaged the man and preached the truth of Christ in a tactful, but direct way. And this story has a great ending.

Acts 8 verses 36-39 says, "As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the Ethiopian official said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The Ethiopian official answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the official did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing."

With God's help and guidance, any of us can be used like this to effectively share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

FOSTER: Kent the story of Philip and the Ethiopian official is a great example of effective evangelism. But I'd like to remind our listeners that in addition to these 6 keys, it's important to share the correct message.

KENT: Good point. People need to know that we're all sinners—with no exceptions. God's penalty for sinners is death. There is nothing we can do on our own to change that. As we read earlier, Ephesians 2: 8-9 say, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.*"

God demonstrated His great love for us in that while we were still sinners, He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son, to die for us. So by believing on Him, we can be saved from the wrath God will pour out on all sin. That is the good news.

FOSTER: That is the best news Kent. Thanks for this intriguing look at evangelism. Could you give us the six keys to effective evangelism again please?

KENT: Sure. The six keys to effectively sharing our faith are sensitivity, availability, initiative, tactfulness, precision, and decisiveness. As you and I read and study the Bible and depend on the leading of God's Holy Spirit, sharing our faith will be a joyous opportunity we look forward to.

FOSTER: Thanks Kent. I hope you've been encouraged today to share your testimony and the good news of salvation that is freely offered through Jesus Christ.

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Program Close

FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed why and how we

share the good news of Jesus Christ. This material was from chapter 24 of the book "The Four Priorities," by Dr. John Tolson and Larry Kreider. This book is published by "The Gathering USA" in 2007 and used by permission. You can learn more about this book and listen to any of these programs at our website championsarise.org and click on 'The Four Priorities.' I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tact>

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