

Help! I Don't Have the Gift of Evangelism

By Madeleine Turner

“But I don’t have the gift of evangelism!” my friend exclaimed. “I’m not an extrovert. I haven’t been to Bible college and I don’t know how to start gospel conversations with people. It’s just not my thing. There are other people who do it far better than I can. I’d rather leave it to them.” I listened as my friend poured out her frustration over the pressure she felt from her church to ‘evangelise’.

I’d heard this kind of reasoning before, countless times. I’d once embraced this sort of thinking myself. I’d let my own insecurities, fears and lack of training discount me from thinking I could ever share my faith effectively. ‘If only I was more like this person. If only I was eloquent with my words. If I only I had more Bible knowledge. If only I had “the gift” of evangelism...’ Maybe you’ve been tempted to think this way too.

A common misconception Christians have about evangelism is that it requires a special class of people to do it – usually, the “super spiritual” types. And since it requires a special class of people to do it, some Christians assume that if they’re not ‘gifted’ or ‘called’ in that way, then it relieves them of any requirement or expectation to evangelise.

After all, isn’t that what Ephesians 4 says? It was Christ who gave some to be ‘apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body may be built up.’ (Eph. 4:11).

But if you read the end of verse 11 carefully, you’ll notice that an evangelist is someone *who prepares God’s people for works of service*. They not only tell nonbelievers about Jesus, but equip and encourage Christians to do the same.

The job of an evangelist is not to take the responsibility of

evangelism away from other members in the church, but to equip them to live out that responsibility faithfully.

After all, Christians are called to be Christ’s ambassadors in this world (2 Cor. 5:20). Faithfully and intentionally, we are to represent Jesus in everything we do and say. This is not a part-time calling; it’s a lifestyle.

We are to carry out Christ’s orders for “He has committed us [his ambassadors] to the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19). Our responsibility as ambassadors is to tell others about God and his love for us, sin, and the redemption we can receive through the Lord Jesus Christ. When we proclaim the gospel, we are being ambassadors for Christ.

So it’s helpful to start seeing our identity correctly because it’s tied to the central mission of the church – the Great Commission. Some of the last words Jesus tells his disciples is “to go therefore and make disciples of all nations”. We do this by speaking the gospel to others (Matt. 28:19-21).

This mission that Jesus leaves with his disciples is a command for all believers at all times. The Bible teaches that every believer is called to do evangelism (Matt. 5:14-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15; Phil. 2:14-16; Col. 4:5-6). It’s not simply a job for the extroverts or Bible scholars amongst us. It’s a spiritual discipline all Christians are to pursue. That means we ought to plan for it and become attuned to the opportunities around us.

Unfortunately, many Christians have been trained to outsource their spiritual responsibility of the Great Commission.

Churches can inadvertently peddle the message: bring your friends to church and we’ll do the rest. Leave it to the pastor

and the paid ministry staff to evangelise and disciple. We're the professionals! Is it any wonder many Christians feel ill-equipped and inadequate when it comes to evangelism?

Of course, there are Christians who are particularly gifted at evangelism and they may be given a public platform to use that gift. But you don't have to be the Apostle Paul or a George Whitefield to evangelise. If you are a Christian, you just have to be you.

God has made us all different and uniquely placed us in various situations to reach people where we are. To be mission-minded ambassadors of Christ is to see ourselves as missionaries wherever we're located.

Where has God already connected you? Your family, neighbourhood, workplace, school, gym or coffee shop are your "mission" fields. Do you look and pray for opportunities to witness or do you see Christian witness as an optional extra in the Christian life?

If we're serious about sharing our faith, we ought to be intentional about how we order our lives, how we pray, and how we interact with nonbelievers.

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