



Evangelism – Sunday School

III. Apologetical material.

- A. We should first prepare as best we can to respond to such questions with **intelligent, biblically** _____ **answers**.
- B. We should second prepare to answer those questions we do not know how to answer with _____ **and honesty**.

Two more things that are important to remember under this point.

- First, you are going to make mistakes in your arguments – we all do.
 - Second, many people will not think your arguments are convincing, no matter how logical and true they are.
- C. We should thirdly prepare to answer not just with words but also as those who have _____.
1 Peter 3:15 - “but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Notice that Peter wrote that the hope is “in” us.

Remember: One of the most powerful testimonies to those who oppose our faith /// is our hope.

Living in hope is a critical part of our apologetical witness to the lost.

- It tells them that the God we believe in has given us great treasures in heaven that far surpass the value of the treasures of this world.
- It tells them that God is with us always and that His love is better than life itself.

A final question for this section: How do we know at which time we should use which of the three categories of material we have looked at in relation to our evangelism?

- When the person is arguing against the existence of God, what would you recommend?
- For someone who already believes God exists but is yearning to know Him personally, what would you recommend?
- And in some situations you will find yourself using two or even all three categories, with one category leading into another, as, for example, “apologetical” arguments often open someone up to be willing to listen to our conversion story.

Ultimately, we must aim to convey the content of the gospel, because it is only by understanding and believing the gospel that one can be saved.



1. Take some time to answer each question below.

- What is the most difficult question you have been asked when sharing the gospel?
- How did you answer it at that time?
- How would you change your answer if someone were to ask you that question today?

Excursus:

Questions for discussing the book.

- A simple overview of the content of the book
- Key lessons you learned from the book
- Any weaknesses found in the book

Newman:

Once a team of skeptics confronted me. It was during a weekly Bible study for freshmen guys that we held in a student's dorm room. The host of the study, in whose room we were meeting, had been telling us for weeks of his roommate's antagonistic questions. This week, the roommate showed up—along with a handful of likeminded friends. The frequently asked question of exclusivity arose, more an attack than a sincere inquiry. "So, I suppose you think all those sincere followers of other religions are going to hell!" "Do you believe in hell?" I responded. He appeared as if he'd never seriously considered the possibility. He looked so puzzled, perhaps because he was being challenged when he thought that he was doing the challenging. After a long silence, he said, "No. I don't believe in hell. I think it's ridiculous." Echoing his word choice, I said, "Well, then why are you asking me such a ridiculous question?" I wasn't trying to be a wise guy. I simply wanted him to honestly examine the assumptions behind his own question. His face indicated that I had a good point, and that he was considering the issues of judgment, eternal damnation, and God's righteousness for the first time in his life. The silence was broken by another questioner, who chimed in, "Well, I do believe in hell. Do you think everyone who disagrees with you is going there?" I asked, "Do you think anyone goes there? Is Hitler in hell?" (Hitler has turned out to be a helpful, if unlikely, ally in such discussions.) "Of course, Hitler's in hell." "How do you think God decides who goes to heaven and who goes to hell? Does He grade on a curve?" From there, the discussion became civil for the first time, and serious interaction about God's holiness, people's sinfulness, and Jesus' atoning work ensued. Answering questions with questions turned out to be a more effective, albeit indirect, way to share the gospel.... When I asked my dormitory interrogators if they believed in hell, I paved the way for the concept of divine judgment. Many ideas that are central to our gospel message—God's holiness, people's sinfulness, Christ's atoning work on the cross, and people's responsibility—are alien today for many people. Questions bring these concepts into clearer focus for consideration and even acceptance.¹

Answering questions with questions is not the only way, and a direct answer is in many occasions preferable.

Part 3: Strategies for evangelism

When speaking of strategies for evangelism, I am referring generally to ...

- setting goals,
- determining actions to achieve those goals, and then
- mobilizing resources to execute those actions.

Strategizing for evangelism should involve a two-pronged approach:

- (1) The church should intentionally _____ to evangelize, and
- (2) The church should encourage spontaneous evangelism.

¹ Randy Newman, *Questioning Evangelism*, Kregel Publications, Locations 321-382, Kindle Edition.

I. The church should intentionally plan to evangelize.

It is easy to allow our schedules to get so filled that we never have time to evangelize.

Strangely, some Christians think that making plans for evangelism is to usurp God's sovereignty.

Matthew 10:5-15.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. ⁹Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. ¹¹And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Please note: If something is found to be ineffective, do not give up, and do not think God is displeased with your efforts to evangelize. Simply pray for wisdom and make some adjustments so that you can hopefully see more effectiveness in your efforts. But also remember that there are seasons of planting as well as reaping, and a recent lack of response may mean you are in a season of planting. So keep at it with the hope that at the time of reaping there will be a larger harvest.

Whitney: "Unless we discipline ourselves for evangelism, it is very easy to excuse ourselves from ever sharing the gospel with anyone."²

II. The church should encourage spontaneous evangelism.

Often opportunities for evangelism are unplanned but just come and sit right next to us.

Steve, who comments on how he began to learn how to practice spontaneous evangelism:

As I read your words, I couldn't help but remember a guy I met in Boston just 4 weeks ago. I was there for a Christian conference but he was there because his job was to shine shoes in the hotel lobby. I, and hundreds of others, walked past him several times my first day there without a thought. Finally, I decided to stop. He said his name is Charlie and he is from Uganda. I sat down, not for a shoeshine, but to show a genuine interest in this guy that nobody seemed to notice. I probably talked with Charlie for 30-45 minutes that day and I learned a lot about what it was like growing up in Uganda during the reign of Idi Amin. I felt the pain of a man who saw his mom get shot and killed when he was but a boy, and who saw the same thing happen with his dad just a few years later. He told me how he stayed in the woods with his dad's body for three days hoping that he would come back from death, and

² Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 108.

how he then grew up orphaned and homeless. And I listened to this man ask me a question that he's been asking himself, and God, all of his life, "Why am I still alive?" A door to share the gospel had opened up, an opportunity I would not have had if I had continued to ignore Charlie that day. From this experience I have come to realize that our lives are full of "Charlies" ... like Narender who worked at our corner convenience store (he's been to our house a couple of times and came to our Christmas Eve service), or Jared at the local OfficeMax (we've gone to lunch, during which he opened up to me about his life and I was able to share with him how Christ had changed my life), or Aaron at Costco (I walked out of the store with him during his lunch break and ended up praying with him while sitting on the curb near the parking lot), or ... You see, they're everywhere.³



2. Take some time to answer each question below.

- What has been the most helpful point of this section for you?

- Why?

³ Erik Raymond, "Why I don't Evangelize," <http://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/erikraymond/2007/02/28/why-i-dont-evangelize/>