

Leading Small Groups With Purpose, Lesson #6
Book by Steve Gladen; This Study Guide by Josh Hunt
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Chapters 11 - 12 Evangelism

OPEN

Let's each share your name and who witnessed to you? Briefly, who influenced you to come to faith?

DIG

1. Today, we will be talking about evangelism. To get us started, how do you feel about evangelism?

Many of us struggle to find a way to communicate our joy in God. Research indicates that about 90% of Christians struggle with evangelism. We take the training and learn the verses and study the outlines and prepare our testimony but we still struggle. It can hardly be trained out of us. Most of us struggle with evangelism. That is why a book with a title like, *I Hate Witnessing* can resonate with so many. A lot of us feel that way. — Josh Hunt. (2007). *Christian Hospitality*.

2. 1 Peter 3.15 says we are to be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks regarding the hope that we have. Imagine a friend asked what it meant to be a Christian. What would you tell them?

The simplest illustration I've come across to articulate what sets Christianity apart from other religions is called "Do versus Done." I tell people who are on the Earning-Grace Plan that "religion is spelled D-O. At the end of the day, it's all about whether you do enough right things to earn God's favor. To get in God's good graces, the thinking goes, you have to do this and do that and strive and sacrifice and clean up your act and make all sorts of promises.

"But Christianity, on the other hand," I say to people, "is spelled D-O-N-E. The Bible says that what Christ did on the cross is enough. He did what you could never do — he uniquely satisfied God's requirement for a perfect sacrifice to take care of our past, present, and future sin — and if you receive what he accomplished, then not only will you be 'in God's good graces,' but your life will be made brand new. Because of what Christ did on the cross, your sins can be forgiven and you can find favor in God's eyes right here, right now."

Writing those two little words on a slip of paper cements this powerful truth on a person's heart and mind. Whether or not they make a decision for Christ at that moment, they will never forget what sets Christianity apart. The work that must occur to pay for sin and grant eternal access to God — it's already been done. — Hybels, B. (2008). *Just Walk Across The Room: Simple Steps Pointing People To Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

3. How many Christians would you guess have a gift for evangelism?

It goes without saying that not all members of the Body of Christ have the gift of evangelist. The whole body is not intended to be an eye (see 1 Cor. 12:17), much less a uterus. As we suggested in chapter 3, only a minority of the bodily members have been given any one gift. This in itself narrows down the number who have the gift of evangelist to between 1 and 49 percent.

Of course, all the gifts are not evenly distributed. We have two eyes, 10 toes, one stomach, and 32 teeth. That is why it would be foolish to figure that because there are 27 spiritual gifts an average of 3.7 percent of the members of the Body would have any one gift. The spiritual organism is much more complex than that. But I find that the general tendency of Christians enthusiastic about getting certain tasks done in the Body is to carelessly overestimate how many of the members should have one gift or another. If I want my particular job to get done well, I might tend to presume that an unrealistic number of people have the gift it takes. This happens frequently with the gift of evangelist.

So far in this book I have suggested only two figures for estimating the number of people who may have a certain gift. I said that those with the gift of intercession will figure to around 5 percent, and those with the gift of pastor will probably number between 3 and 6 percent depending on some variables, which were explained in chapter 6.

I am much more secure in my present suggestion on the percentage for the gift of evangelist because over a period of years it has been tested in case after case and found to stand the test. The average Christian church can realistically expect that approximately 5 to 10 percent of its active adult members will have been given the gift of evangelist. A mounting quantity of empirical evidence indicates that if a church has as few as 5 percent of its active members mobilized for evangelism, a healthy growth pattern of more than 100 percent a decade is a realistic expectation. If God blesses a church by giving the gift of evangelist to 10 percent of its members, theoretically it is in wonderful shape for growth. — *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*. Peter Wagner.

4. Can evangelism be over-emphasized?

Evangelism is so important for church growth that one can understand why many Christian circles tend to overemphasize it. Overemphasize?

Before I answer this, I need to stress that I personally believe in evangelism so much that I have dedicated my life to see that it happens on a worldwide scale. My personalized California license plate is MT 28:19 and my wife's is MT 28:20—the Great Commission wherever we go. I have already stressed that the gift of evangelist is the primary organ in the Body of Christ for church growth. My objective in this book, as in every book I write, is to advance the evangelization of the world in our generation. I do not want to be misinterpreted on this matter in the slightest, because what I am about to say may be controversial.

To evangelize the world more effectively in our generation, I believe that many evangelicals need to get their heads out of the clouds concerning pronouncements about the degree of involvement the average Christian ought to have in active evangelistic work. We need to recognize certain basic things.

For one thing, every true Christian should be in tune with God who is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Most every Christian desires to see people saved and brought into the fellowship of the Body. This is not the issue.

For another thing, every true Christian is a witness for Jesus Christ whether or not they have the gift of evangelist. Furthermore, all Christians need to be prepared to share their faith with unbelievers and lead them to Christ whenever the opportunity presents itself. This is the Christian role that corresponds to this spiritual gift, and I will discuss it in more detail shortly. — *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*. Peter Wagner

5. How should we think about Christians that don't witness?

Having said this, it is time we admitted that many good, faithful, consecrated, mature Christian people are in love with Jesus Christ but who are not, do not care to be, and for all intents and purposes will not be significantly involved in evangelization in any direct way. Indirectly, yes. They will contribute to the growth of the Body of Christ as the lungs, the small intestines, the kidneys and the thyroid gland contribute to human reproduction. And they will carry out their role of witness when circumstances so dictate. But they won't go around looking for opportunities to share their faith.

It is a misunderstanding of biblical teaching, in my opinion, to try to convince all Christians that they have to be sharing the faith constantly as a part of their duty to the Master. We do not tell them they have to teach all the time, pastor others all the time; or be an apostle, a prophet, an administrator, a leader or a missionary if they have not been given the spiritual equipment to do the job well. To make people feel guilty if they get gasoline and do not share Christ with the filling station attendant, or if they do not leave tracts for the mail carrier, or if they do not witness to the server in the restaurant may actually harm the Body of Christ more than help it.

A recent study was done of Conservative Baptist seminary students, who we can presume are representative of average or slightly above average Christians in their spiritual life and commitment, if perhaps somewhat lower in maturity. Certainly their honesty is commendable, given the excessive pressures that have been put on Christians to share their faith at all times. Of the sample studied, it was discovered that 10 percent of them share their faith once a week or more, and 10 percent of them have led one to three people to Christ within the past year. The others, in varying degrees, indicated: (1) they have few contacts with non-Christians; (2) they do not desire help so they can relate better to non-Christians; (3) they probably would not bring unsaved friends to most church functions; (4) they do not want to learn to evangelize; (5) they feel they should lead people to Christ, but they do not want to give much time and energy to it; and (6) their prayer concern is high, but they do not spend much time actually praying for the unsaved.

Independent of this, but part of the same phenomenon, is a report from the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Board issued in June, 1973, expressing concern that the missionary candidates coming from the seminaries score high on the gifts of pastor and teacher, but low on the gift of evangelist.

How do we react to such a situation?

Some tend to throw up their hands, dress in sackcloth and ashes, and lament the low spiritual condition of our young people today. On the other hand, I tend to regard the situation as something that can and should be improved, but not something that is necessarily devastating to church health and church growth. — *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*. Peter Wagner

6. Should non-witnessing Christians feel guilty?

A key to relating the dynamic of the spiritual gift of evangelist to church growth lies in the question of the location of guilt. Guilt can be a blessing or it can be a curse, depending on where it is located.

First, Christians who have the gift of evangelist and who are not using their gift should be made to feel a responsibility for using it. If 5 percent actually have the gift, in probably the majority of churches that are plateaued or declining, only about 0.5 percent of the people are using the gift, if that many. This means that 4.5 percent of the people should rightly feel guilty if they are not evangelizing and evangelizing strenuously. Those who have the gift of exhortation should identify these people and help them discover, develop and use their gift. They will be happier and more fulfilled Christians and the church will grow better. If this produces guilt, it will undoubtedly be a blessing.

Second, 95 percent who have gifts other than that of evangelist should not be allowed to feel guilty if they assume secondary roles in the evangelistic process. This is where God intended them to be, or He would have given them the gift of evangelist. In some evangelical churches, the guilt trip for not evangelizing is so severe that when the 5 percent do evangelize and bring new people into the church, the new converts are often turned off by what they find. The general tone of the body, the negative self-image of the members, the gloom and defeatism that can be felt in the atmosphere of the church makes them think everybody must have been baptized in vinegar! They quickly decide they want no part of such a crowd and soon vanish, unnoticed, out the back door. — *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*. Peter Wagner

7. What are some ways we could cultivate and strengthen relationships with non-believers?

A friend of mine recently noticed that a new family was moving into a home on his street. He commented to his wife that they ought to do something to reach out and welcome them. She said, “Okay, let’s have a pie party.”

“How does that work?” he asked.

“Simple. I’ll invite them to come over Friday night, and you pick up a pie on the way home from work.”

She did and he did, and that began a process of developing a genuine friendship that is gradually opening up to spiritual interaction. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008 *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

8. Bill Hybels talks about the idea of a “Matthew Party” based on Matthew 9.9. What can Matthew teach us about evangelism?

Social events strategically designed to mix members of the “religious ranks” and the “renegade ranks,” or, as they’ve become known around our church, “Matthew Parties,” can take virtually any shape or size. They’re usually designed to fulfill a modest purpose: to provide a neutral setting where contagious Christians can make low-key contact with non-Christian friends. These are ideal environments for strengthening existing relationships as well as cultivating new ones. And they’re great places to plant some spiritual seeds and strike up conversations about matters of faith.

Wheels may start turning that can, over time, result in a whole new eternity for many of the people you’ve invited. You’ll be surprised by how quickly some of them will open up and take significant spiritual steps in the direction of Christianity. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008). *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

9. Look over Steve’s list of ideas for evangelism in chapter 12. Are there any ideas that resonate with you? What ideas do you think might work in your group?

I would make a strong emphasis on inviting. Anyone can invite. Invite them to church. Invite them to special events. Invite them to small group. Invite on Facebook. Invite often. Invite with a smile.

10. How often would you guess the average church goer invites someone to church?

The next obvious question is: Are Christians inviting nonChristians to church? The heartbreaking answer is no. Only 21 percent of active churchgoers invite anyone to church in the course of a year. But only 2 percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church. Perhaps the evangelistic apathy so evident in many of our churches can be explained by a simple laziness on the part of church members in inviting others to church. — Rainer, T. (2009). *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages As Keys To Sharing Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

11. Guess what percentage of unchurched people say they are open to an invitation to church?

82 percent of the unchurched are at least “somewhat likely” to attend church if they are invited. Perhaps we need to pause on this response. Perhaps we need to restate it: More than eight out of ten of the unchurched said they would come to church if they were invited. If you take anything from this book, please remember this point. — Rainer, T. (2009). *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages As Keys To Sharing Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

12. In his book, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels talks about various ways we can be involved in evangelism. Let’s talk about several of these. One is service. What are some ways someone with the gift of service could be involved in evangelism?

The Bible says in Acts 9:36 that Tabitha (also called Dorcas) was “always doing good and helping the poor.” She was well-known for her loving acts of service which she performed in the name of Christ. Specifically, she made robes and articles of clothing for widows and other needy people in her town.

She was, in effect, a quiet practitioner of what we're calling the service approach to evangelism. It would have been very hard for people to observe her activity and not get a glimpse of the love of Christ that inspired her. In fact, her work was so important that when she died a premature death, God sent Peter to raise her from the dead and put her back into service.

People who take this approach find it relatively easy to serve others. It's how God made them. They naturally notice needs others don't see, and they find joy in meeting them, even if they don't get a lot of credit for it. Often more quiet types, these people enjoy expressing compassion through tangible forms of action.

I sometimes look at God's activity of touching people through me and say to myself, "Who'd have ever think it!" God seems to delight in using ordinary, everyday kinds of people in surprising and exciting ways.

Though this style tends to get less press than the others, and it often takes a much longer period of time before producing spiritual results, it's one of the most important of all the evangelistic approaches. That's because service-style evangelists touch people nobody else can reach.

Ginger, a woman at our church, had a brother with whom she was trying to share Christ. But he was into New Age ideas and was disinterested in Christianity. So she did what came naturally to her and her direct style — she challenged him with the claims of Christ. When that didn't seem to make a dent, she studied and came to him with reasons why he should change his position. She tried everything she could think of, but nothing got through. Finally, all hope seemed to dissipate when he moved his wife and kids out of state to join a New Age religious sect.

But God had another card up His sleeve. When Ginger's brother moved into his new home, he soon met the people who lived next door. They turned out to be wonderful neighbors. These people were constantly doing things for him, like helping him get settled in, lending a hand when something needed to be fixed, bringing over food when someone in his family was sick. Just ordinary acts of service — done out of their love for Christ.

These people brought down the wall between Ginger's brother and God, brick by brick. And within a year's time, he had committed his life to Christ, moved his family back home, and celebrated his first communion sitting next to Ginger at one of our worship services!

Can you see why this style deserves to be celebrated? Those neighbors will probably never be famous, but God is using their efforts to reach those the rest of us haven't got a clue how to reach.

You may not have the knowledge of Paul or the courage of Peter and the Samaritan woman. But you're a whiz at making meals or fixing cars. I hope you can see how those things, and so many others like them, can be done in a way that points people to God. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008). *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

13. Acts 2.38. How would you describe Peter's approach to evangelism? Who in this church is like Peter?

It's no secret that Peter was a "Ready-Fire-Aim" kind of guy. Whatever he did, he did it unhesitatingly and with full force. When Jesus asked the disciples in Matthew 16:15 who they thought He was, Peter didn't mince words; he declared flat-out that Jesus was the Messiah. Then a few verses later he challenged Jesus' stated mission head on. Can you imagine trying to correct the Son of God? You might, if you have the direct style yourself!

When Peter was in the fishing boat and wanted to be with Jesus, he didn't hesitate to do whatever it took to get close to Him, even if it meant trying to walk on water. And when their enemies came to take Jesus away, Peter was ready to cut off their heads.

All Peter needed was to be convinced he was right, and there was almost no stopping him. He was confident, he was bold, and he was right to the point.

Is it any wonder God chose him as his spokesman on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2? It was a perfect fit! God needed someone unafraid to take a stand, right there in Jerusalem, the city where Jesus had been crucified a few weeks earlier. He wanted to let the thousands of people who were there know in no uncertain terms that they'd crucified the Messiah, and that they needed to call on Him for His mercy and forgiveness.

Peter's personality was custom-designed to fill the bill. With the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, he stood quite naturally and confronted the people with the facts. And God miraculously used his efforts: three thousand people trusted Christ and were baptized that same day.

As exciting as that historical event was, we need to turn our focus to today. Do you realize that there are a lot of people in your world who won't come to Christ until someone like Peter holds their feet to the fire?

I have a friend who for years played church and pretended to be a Christian. He'd heard lots of good teaching, knew the gospel message inside and out, and could quote numerous Bible verses. The only thing he lacked was a direct-style evangelist who could get in his face about his need to start living the truth he knew. Then one day God sent one. This man looked my friend in the eye and told him he was a hypocrite.

That made him angry, but it made him think. And within a week's time he'd committed his life to Christ, a decision that has transformed his life over the last twenty years.

Some people are just waiting for a contagious Christian who won't beat around the bush, but who'll clarify the truth of Christ and challenge them to do something about it. Could that Christian be you? Do you resonate with Peter's approach, or are you ready to move on to the other five options?

Actually, this is the style that's most natural for me. It's not hard for me to look people directly in the eye and ask them where they stand. I enjoy confronting and exhorting those in need of God's grace. Other people who have this style include Chuck Colson and, in his own unique fashion, Billy Graham.

But don't despair. You don't have to start at their level! God can use direct-style Christians at all degrees of development.

If you think this approach is for you, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to know how, when, and where to direct your words and challenges, as well as the wisdom you'll need to do it with an appropriate mix of grace and truth. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008). *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

14. John 4.29. What can the woman at the well teach us about evangelism?

Don't you love the way God picks unlikely people to fulfill His divine purposes? We've seen it with the blind man, with Matthew, and now with this woman from Samaria. And, as you get more involved in personal outreach to others, you'll probably feel this way about yourself. I sometimes look at God's activity of touching people through me and say to myself, "Who'd have ever thunk it!" God seems to delight in using ordinary, everyday kinds of people in surprising and exciting ways.

The Samaritan woman had three things going against her: she was a Samaritan, she was a woman, and she was living an immoral lifestyle. Back then, any one of these would be enough to disqualify her from being taken seriously by society. But do you think that stopped Jesus? You can read in John 4 how He ignored all the conventional wisdom and political correctness of the day by striking up a conversation with her.

It didn't take long for the woman to realize that the man she was talking to was no ordinary Jewish teacher. His prophetic insights and authoritative answers convinced her of His claim to be the Messiah.

So what did she do? She immediately went to her town and brought a bunch of people to the well to hear Jesus for themselves. This simple invitation resulted in His staying in their town for two days. Many of the woman's friends declared, in verse 42, "Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

There are many people who would make great strides in their spiritual journey if someone would go to the effort of strategically inviting them to a seeker-oriented church service or outreach event.

And a lot of non-Christians are open to this approach. A poll by researcher George Barna showed, for example, that about 25 percent of the adults in the United States would go to church if a friend would just invite them. Think about it: one in four of your friends would be willing to join you! The primary question you'll need to answer is what kinds of events — church services, concerts, movies, plays, or other programs in your church or community — would be appropriate to bring them to. Consider their perspective and interests in order to make the best choice.

Although invitations are a great way for all of us to reach out to others, some people, like the woman at the well, have a knack for getting people to go places with them. Maybe you're one of them. Do you find yourself constantly widening the circle of people involved in your activities? Have you found that when there's an outreach event going on your minivan is getting a bit tight? Maybe it's time to trade it in on a full-size SUV so you can expand your evangelistic efforts!

It's hard to think of well-known examples of people with the invitational style. Many of these Christians tend to stay out of the limelight. But when you see one you'll probably know it. They love to pick up strays. They're the unsung heroes who make outreach events successful by filling them with people who need to hear the message.

Mark knows someone named Nancy who has this style. A few years back his friends threw a birthday party for him. There were about thirty people there, including one guy he'd never seen before. Later, this man took out a violin and played "Happy Birthday." Mark thought it was a nice gesture, but he still wondered who this person was. Finally, someone filled him in. The violinist was trekking across the country alone, and Nancy had met him at the train station. She decided to bring him to Mark's birthday party, just in case he might meet some contagious Christians who'd be able to help him come to Christ. Now that's the invitational approach! — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008 *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

15. John 9.25. What can the blind man teach us about evangelism?

Though we know less about him than we do about Peter or Paul, we can be sure about this: the blind man healed by Jesus in John 9 had seen something happen in his life that was worth talking about!

He'd been blind since birth, and regularly sat begging from people passing by. But his routine quickly changed when Jesus came along and gave him the gift of sight. No sooner was he able to see than he was thrust in front of a hostile audience and asked to explain what had happened.

It's interesting that the man refused to enter into theological debate with them (John 9:25), though Paul probably would have been happy to oblige them with a few compelling arguments. And he steered away from direct confrontation, whereas Peter might have given them a shot of truth. Those responses didn't fit who he was.

Instead, he spoke from his experience and confidently said, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" That's a difficult declaration to argue with, isn't it? It's pretty hard to escape the implications of such a testimony, even from a fledgling Christian.

Notice that in verse 3 Jesus said this man had been born blind "so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." That's an example of what I've been saying: that we are custom-tailored for a particular approach. God had been preparing this man all of his life for these events and his telling them in a way that would point people toward Christ.

And there are a lot of people who live and work around you who need to hear a similar testimony about how God is working in a believer's life. They might not respond very well to a challenge or an argument, but a personal account of someone's coming to faith would influence them powerfully.

Could that story be yours? Do you, like the man who had been blind, feel comfortable telling others how God led you to Himself? Even if you haven't done that yet, does the idea excite you? Stories like yours can be powerful tools.

Examples of people who effectively use this testimonial approach include Dave Dravecky, the former baseball pitcher who lost his arm to cancer, and Joni Erickson Tada, a quadriplegic woman whose account of how God helped her through her tragic accident points people clearly toward Him. Another example is Lee Strobel, who often uses the details of his background to appeal to unbelievers, combining the intellectual style with the testimonial.

It's important to point out that effective testimonies don't have to be dramatic. Don't exclude yourself from this approach because you have a garden-variety testimony. Maybe you went to church and were religious all your life before you realized that those things didn't make you a Christian. But the story of how you moved from religion into a relationship with Christ will be more relevant to most of your acquaintances than a sensational story of someone coming to Christ out of a life of witchcraft and drugs.

Some people are just waiting for a contagious Christian who won't beat around the bush, but who'll clarify the truth of Christ and challenge them to do something about it. Could that Christian be you?

As a matter of fact, the difficulty of personally relating to the dramatic testimony may give your friends an excuse. "People like that need religion!" they might say. But your everyday story will relate to their everyday life and show them that they, too, need the grace and leadership of God that you've found.

And if you do have a more dramatic story, ask God to lead you concerning how much detail to give and to whom to tell it, so that they'll hear the aspects of your experience they can connect with, and be drawn to seek what you've found in Christ. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008). *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

16. Of the ways of being involved in evangelism we have discussed, which most resonate with you?

After spending many years helping seekers come to faith, I've been fascinated to find that one of the biggest barriers to effective outreach is the problem of misconceptions. And that's true on both sides of the evangelism equation.

On the seeker side, the misguided ideas people have about God's character and His church preclude them from making an open and honest spiritual search. Their inaccurate image of God and what serving Him would be like pushes them away from Him.

But when people's mistaken notions of God's nature are replaced by an accurate understanding of His grace-filled and compassionate heart, they become much more open to trusting Christ. And when they discover the acceptance, joy, and purpose that come from being part of a biblically functioning body of believers, they'll be drawn in even further.

On the believer side of the equation, misconceptions about the outreach enterprise itself tend to inhibit people from getting involved. In fact, I'm convinced that one of the greatest impediments to individuals in churches getting active in personal evangelism is that many Christians misunderstand what it actually entails. The dreaded "E word" fills them with fear and guilt.

To illustrate the kinds of perception problems I'm referring to, let me call in one of my key witnesses: you.

I'd like to know what image comes to your mind when you think of the word "evangelist." Does it evoke enthusiasm for reaching your irreligious friends and family members? Or do you, like most of us, have some negative associations that come to mind with the mere mention of the word?

I've asked this question in enough groups to know that on hearing the words "evangelism" or "evangelist," many people immediately conjure up memories of infamous televangelists, known primarily for extracting large amounts of money from their well-meaning followers. Or they think of the stereotypical street preacher, megaphone in hand, blaring out barely intelligible indictments about the end of the world and the impending judgment of God.

I'm convinced that one of the greatest impediments to individuals in churches getting active in personal evangelism is that many Christians misunderstand what it actually entails. The dreaded "E word" fills them with fear and guilt.

Admittedly, many people do have a few positive images of evangelism. But the fact that so many individuals make such unflattering associations points to the immensity of the problem.

In fact, *The Day America Told the Truth*, a book by James Patterson and Peter Kim, reports that when a national survey asked respondents to rank various professions for their honesty and integrity, TV evangelists came out almost at the very bottom, below lawyers, politicians, car salesmen, and even prostitutes. Out of the seventy-three occupations compared in this integrity rating, only two ended up lower on the scale: organized crime bosses and drug dealers! Fair or unfair, it's easy to understand why so many of us struggle with our perceptions at this point. We want to honor God by directing those around us toward His love and truth, but we wonder what we'll have to become in the process.

Has this problem affected you? Has your passion for communicating your faith been dampened by the thought that you'll have to become something that's contrary to your own personality? Or have you, like Mark, tried to adopt an evangelism style that doesn't fit you at all?

This kind of thinking is a tragedy for the church. And it's even worse for lost people. In fact, I believe it originated as a satanic scheme to defeat the expansion of the kingdom of God. And while it's been an extremely successful strategy, it's time for the church to put a stop to it. How can we do this? By understanding the great news that's both freeing and empowering: God knew what He was doing when He made you. He did! He custom-designed you with your unique combination of personality, temperament, talents, and background, and He wants to harness and use these in His mission to reach this messed-up world.

God custom-designed you with your unique combination of personality, temperament, talents, and background, and He wants to harness and use these in His mission to reach this messed-up world.

That means He wants to use you in a fashion that fits the person He made you to be. God doesn't call us all to spread His truth in the same way. Instead, He built diversity into the fabric of His body of believers. And until we realize that, we'll find ourselves needlessly imitating each other's outreach

efforts, wastefully duplicating some approaches while harmfully squelching others. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008). *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

17. In what way do you need to change to become all God wants you to be evangelistically?

I hope you've been encouraged as you've read about these different approaches to spreading the faith. Maybe you've breathed a sigh of relief as you've realized that you can be yourself, and that God knew what He was doing when He made you.

Let me emphasize that nobody fits perfectly into just one of these styles. In fact, you'll probably find opportunities to use all of them. The point is that God designed diversity on His team, and each member is stronger in some styles than in others. You might come up with style number seven or eight, and that's fine, too.

The important thing to know is that the most contagious Christians are those who've learned to work within the design God has given them. They identify approaches that work for them, and then they develop and deploy them to advance the kingdom. They also team up with other Christians who have different styles, so that their combined strengths can be used to reach virtually any kind of seeker. — Hybels, B., & Mittelberg, M. (2008). *Becoming A Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

18. Can you identify people in your group that might relate to one of the styles we have discussed?

19. What do you want to recall from today's conversation?

20. How can we support one another in prayer this week?