

## Sharing the Story of Christ with Others

By Bruce Murphy

First, I want to say that there are no formulas. Each person is a creature of God and at any point in their lives, has unique needs that only God can fulfill. When one goes to share Christ with another, there are some helpful tips that should be considered.

1. Pray first to the Holy Spirit asking God to go before you and prepare the hearts of men, women and children to become fertile soil where seed may be sown and take root.
2. Ask the Lord to continue to change you and give you only what needs to be said asking for direction when an occasion to pray with a person is presented by the Lord.
3. Study each day to grow in your understanding of the sacred scriptures and of church teachings.
4. Finally, know that God loves you and he desires all to come to know him in a personal relationship.

*“In the beginning, God made them male and female. In his image, he created them.”*

At the very beginning of time God created all that was. After each day, we read that God said it was good. He created Adam and Eve in his image to go forth, multiple and to subdue the earth. In the Garden of Eden, all was perfect. Adam and Eve enjoyed a relationship with no barriers. One commandment God gave them was they could eat of any fruit in the garden, except from the tree of knowledge of good and bad. After some time, the serpent (the most cunning of all the animals) came and seduced Eve by asking, “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?”. When Eve answered him in the positive, he replied, “No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad. Eve saw it looked good, listened to the serpent and ate of this fruit. She then gave it to Adam and he also ate of the fruit.

*Thus man disobeyed God’s commandment and sin became real.*

It is “sin” that now separates man from God, so that he cannot obey God. Each person is born into this world and has already been infected with sin from birth. It is the sin of each man, woman or child that brought death into the world and with it, all of the things that plague us (disease, sickness, bitterness, envy, murder, strife, discontent, blame, etc.). Sin is the barrier that separates man from God. God showed man that he must now labor and till the soil for food and woman would bear children in pain. This would not have been so, had they obeyed God.

*God still desired for man to live in relationship with him.*

God attempted to show man his love for him and reached out. We see this in Abraham, where he established a covenant with him. Then God did this with Moses, who he called his intimate friend. He continued to reach out to man for many generations after that

trying to show his love for us and help us to see the right way. During this time, humanity continued to disobey God and show disdain for his commandments from one generation to another.

God revealed to his people through the prophets that he would one day send a messiah to save his people and lead them once again. It is here that Christians distinctly speak of this reality. Jesus, called the Christ (the anointed one), is the fulfillment of God's message to his people down through the ages. "God sent his only Son, so that whoever believes in him, might not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God became man and through Jesus, he showed us what God is like. Jesus reached out with reconciliation and forgiveness, showing the power of God through healing and casting out of demons and even his power over death, by raising the dead. He then showed man, that the ultimate sacrifice for our sins could be paid.

Jesus obeyed God (the new Adam) and went to the cross, so we might have forgiveness of our sins. Through this single act, Jesus atoned for our sins and brought life to us, where only death had reigned. He is the only way to be reconciled with God for our sins and to receive eternal life from.

When a person accepts Jesus as their savior, they are saying they believe Jesus went to the cross for them to atone for their sins. By asking God to forgive them through his Son Jesus, they are forgiven their sins and they have eternal life.

*But is that all there is and what happens after that?*

Once a person says 'yes' to God, they take the first step and become his disciple, a follower. To follow Christ means to obey him and his commandments. Jesus did not leave us on our own to figure it out. When he went back to heaven to sit at God's right hand, he sent his Spirit into the hearts of believers to empower them to live as he lived. As disciples, we must become docile to the Holy Spirit, continuing to grow in our understanding and leading others to know Christ. It also means understanding what God wants of our lives. Sometimes that takes a while to fully understand, but it the Holy Spirit who will show us and empower us to live as Christians.

As Christians, we live in community with each other living and showing each other the love of God. Jesus said, "They will know you by your love for each other". Left to ourselves, we cannot live for God, but by his Spirit and the grace and love we have in communion with God and each other, we are changed and those around us.

## *Summary*

The beginning of any journey is making the decision as to where one wants to go and how they will get there. In this life, many paths to God are presented by various groups of people. There is only one truth and one way to get to heaven and that is through Jesus, who died upon the cross for us. No other name under heaven can save a person (Acts 4:12).

Explaining this to a person may take on different ways as different scriptures or one's own experience is shared with another. The key is that a person must come to the reality that Jesus is the way that God has provided. They need to be shown and taught this by both what they see in us and how we share with them. The witness of our lives should lead people to ask us about our faith and hope in Christ.

If you share with a person long enough, or if they are ready because others have been sharing with them, a simple prayer is all that is needed to start a person on their way. You can ask the person to pray something like the following.

“Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive my sins. I believe God sent you into this world to die for me upon the cross as my savior and to give me eternal life. Thank you for this gift. Send your Holy Spirit into my heart to empower me, to deliver me and show me how to live for you and obey you. I love you Jesus. Amen.”

This is only the beginning. We must continue to reach out to a person and help them to become a disciple, correcting and showing them the way to walk in Christ. As they grow, they too will realize the love God has for them and will want to lead others to know him also.

It means hanging in there with others. We sometimes just want to pray with a person and then walk away and leave them to their own doing. This is very dangerous and has led many to wonder why they ever started this journey. When a person comes to Christ, they then have a real enemy who wants to disillusion them back into their former way of life.

We must pray for them, encourage them, talk and listen to them and show them how to walk. Making disciples is a messy thing. It means we all must change and most of us don't want to do that. This is where we must be willing to let God work in our own lives.

Finally, there is a difference between a witness and an evangelist. All are called to share their faith in Christ as witnesses, but some are given a special gift to be an evangelist who is able to share sacred scripture, church teachings and life experiences to call others convincing, reprimanding and showing them how to follow Christ. As St. Paul said, “some water, some plant, but it is God who gives the increase”.

May each of you desire to serve God and to call others into the kingdom!