

HOW CAN I SHARE MY FAITH WITHOUT AN ARGUMENT?

One answer is to go low-key, relational, and long-term. "Friendship evangelism" is an important way to attract people to the difference that Christ is making in us (1 Pet. 3:15). But is that the whole answer? Have some of us been using that strategy as an excuse not to talk openly about our faith?

When I met Bill Fay, I sensed a deep faith and conviction that rang true. Hearing his story and listening to him describe practical ways of being more direct in witnessing reawakened a sense of urgency in my own heart.

RBC offers Bill's experience and method of witnessing not because we think it's the only way, but because of the need to be influenced by someone who is doing all he can to reach people for Christ.

Martin R. De Haan II, president of RBC Ministries.

FOREWORD

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life. -
-Paul (1 Tim. 1:15-16)

Jesus Christ transforms lives. Just as He dramatically redirected the life of the apostle Paul, the Lord continues to change the lives of men and women today. Bill Fay, the author of this booklet, is one of those people. He was pursuing his own goals when the Lord brought him crashing to his knees.

Early in life Bill had determined that he was going to be number one in whatever he did--no matter what it took. In college he discovered ways to cheat to reach his goals. But more important, he learned how to gamble. In fact, his exceptional talents as a card shark helped pay his way through college.

After college he landed a sales job and rapidly moved up the corporate ladder. But his life took on a new dimension when he visited Las Vegas, the gambler's mecca. Because of his card skills he was noticed, and he made connections with prominent people in the underworld. While keeping his corporate job intact, he began to be a channel for mafia money around the country. Bill moved from city to city, job to job, wife to wife, pursuing his self-centered goals. He thought he had it made when he became the president and chief executive officer of a large heart pacemaker company. He had limousines, big expense accounts, recognition, Rolexes, diamond rings, and gold on his hands and around his neck. But amid all the money, power, and glamour, life was lonely and empty.

In addition to his regular corporate job, Bill then decided to get involved in another enterprise that would make use of his marketing skills. He built one of the larger houses of prostitution in

the United States. This business, however, got him into trouble. He was arrested on charges relating to his new venture, and his corporation fired him. But Bill started an executive search business and began making money again.

As a relaxing diversion during his high-rolling, high-stress life, Bill would escape to a vacation spot in Colorado called Lost Valley Ranch. He didn't know it at first, but the place was staffed by believers in Christ. He did notice, however, that there was something different about the place.

Bill could out-argue any believer who dared to take him on, but one Easter morning he heard something that would eat away at him until he gave his life to Christ. During a service in an open field, a young man about 22 years old talked about the difference between happiness and inner peace. Bill listened intently because he knew he didn't have inner peace. But when the young man said that peace comes only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, Bill got on his horse and muttered, "I don't need that kind of junk in my life." And he rode out of the meadow.

Some time later, Bill walked into a racketball facility and met a man who would play a key role in his coming to faith in Christ. Dr. Paul Grant had gone to play racketball that day after asking the Lord for an opportunity to share his faith. The two men met, and Paul lovingly told Bill about Christ.

Paul invited Bill and his wife, Peggy, to church. After the service he invited them to his home. Paul and his wife, Kathie, radiated a personal relationship with Jesus. Although moved by their testimonies, Bill was not ready to give his life to Christ.

Still on probation from his previous arrest, Bill was caught in a police sting. After a weekend in jail with a bond of \$250,000, his life came to a crisis point. Bill sat around his house for 2 days in tears. The pain in his life was surfacing. He considered escaping through drugs, alcohol, and even suicide. By God's grace he didn't take any of those options.

Bill's wife suggested that he call the pastor who had married them. After some initial reluctance, he picked up the phone. What he had heard 7 years before at the ranch was on his mind. He told the pastor he wanted inner peace. The next day he drove 85 miles to a little country church. Kneeling on the dusty floor, he came to know Jesus Christ in a personal way. That was on March 4, 1981. He left that church a different man.

He returned home and stood trial, but the case was dismissed. As he left the courthouse he determined never to go near a jail or prison again. But the Lord had other plans. For the next several years he visited prisoners to tell them about Jesus.

Since then, Bill has shared his faith with people from all walks of life and has taught many others to do the same. But in Bill's own words, "The greatest miracle of all is not the change in what I do but in what I have become. The pursuit of power, money, and women has been

replaced by the pursuit of the virtues I had once scorned: love, honesty, loyalty, self-sacrifice, self-discipline, humility, faith, patience, and endurance. And because I know that the only life worth living is through Christ, I have made it my life's work to share Him with others."

In the pages that follow, Bill will explain how he shares his faith with confidence, and how you can too.

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OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Have you ever wanted to share your faith but chickened out? When I ask that question in meetings at churches, even the pastor's hand goes up. That's normal.

What makes it difficult for us to share our faith? During a seminar I was leading, people gave these replies:

I'm unsure how to guide the discussion to the Scripture.

I fear rejection.

I don't know how to start a conversation about spiritual issues.

I lack confidence that the Lord will speak through me.

I can't imagine that some people would even care to hear what I have to say.

We're going to deal with the how-to questions in the pages to follow, but we first need to clarify our role and the proper attitude.

We need to get away from a "win them" mentality. People do not put their faith in Christ because we cleverly "force" them to believe. We must realize that if we "win" someone to Christ, he's probably not saved. D. L. Moody, the evangelist, was riding on a train when a drunk came up to him and said, "Mr. Moody, I'm one of your converts." Moody replied, "I'm afraid you are, because you're obviously not a convert of the Lord's."

We also have to believe that success in God's eyes is sharing our faith and living out our Christian life. He does not measure success by how many people we lead to Jesus Christ. Our job is to be faithful to Him.

Still we fear failure and rejection. There is no stronger feeling in the world than that. It hurts. But we must remember that it's the gospel people are rejecting, it's Jesus they're rejecting, it's not us. It feels like us sometimes, but we have to get free from that desire to cause the conversion. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44).

The apostle Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth, "I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3). But that didn't stop him. In fact, most of the New Testament was written by that "coward."

God understands that we might be afraid. But we have no excuse not to tell others about Christ, because His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

I dread every hospital visit I have to make. It's hard for me. But it doesn't excuse me not to go to see the people that God puts in my path in hospitals. We've got to go--whether we like it or not.

Remember Moses. He stuttered. Moses would not have been a good TV personality today. God chooses the weak things of the world to shame the wise and the strong. And if anybody qualifies for that, it's me.

And finally, if you are thinking that the person you are considering talking to is an impossible case, you've got to trust that God is the God of the impossible. You and I need to remember our part and God's part in the process of sharing our faith.

OUR PART

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations'" (Matt. 28:18-19).

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:20).

GOD'S PART

" 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty" (Zech. 4:6).

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor. 2:4).

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44).

"No one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled him" (John 6:65).

HOW CAN I SHARE MY FAITH?

I would like to outline a simple step-by-step approach that I have used in sharing my faith with others. By following this method I have avoided unnecessary arguments that would have hindered a complete presentation of the gospel.

First, I ask five questions to determine the other person's spiritual condition. During this time I am probing for information, not presenting my case.

Next, I have the person read several key Bible verses and ask what the verses say to him or her. The goal here is not to preach but to allow the Holy Spirit to bring conviction as the person reads and thinks about the truths of Scripture.

The third step is another series of five questions. These summarize the truths of the verses the person has just read, and they call for a decision to receive Christ.

How Can I Share My Faith Without an Argument?

Step 1--The Approach

Step 2--The Bible

Step 3--The Close

How Can I Share My Faith

STEP 1 - THE APPROACH

When you ask questions, it allows people to express their viewpoint. People love to give their opinions. When you ask a question, don't respond with your own answer. Then you won't end up on some rabbit trail. The minute the other person says he's going to reincarnate or fizzle when he dies, you are going to want to jump in and respond. *But don't!*

In addition to the following questions, I sometimes use other introductory "bridge" questions. Here's one of my favorites: Do you go to church anywhere? It's so nonthreatening. Try that on people at work and watch what happens. That question can serve as an effective transition into the questions that follow.

- 1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?** The first question does not ask people if they believe in God. That'll give you the response, "None of your business." But if you ask them if they have any spiritual beliefs, they'll talk to you, some for 5 or 10 minutes. Let them talk, because when they're done they'll have very little to fight with you about. If they simply answer yes without explaining, go on to the next question.
- 2. To you, who is Jesus?** When you ask a person what he thinks of Jesus, he will usually respond, "The Son of God," or "The man who died on the cross." But if I were to ask one of you who Jesus is, I hope your response would reflect your personal relationship to Him. I hope you would say, "My Lord and my Savior." So listen carefully to the person's answer.
- 3. Do you think there is a heaven and a hell?** The third question is safe. It is an intellectual question. It simply asks what they believe about the life to come.
- 4. If you died right now, where would you go? If heaven, why?** I asked a woman, "Do you think there is a heaven and a hell?" Her exact words were "Absolutely not." But the fourth question is personal. So when I asked her where she would go when she died, she said, "Heaven, of course." The issue went from her head to her heart. When you start talking about the personal aspect of a person's life, he or she will get very serious.

If people answer, "Heaven," you ask, "Why?" The answer they give will pinpoint their true beliefs. If they say, "I don't know," continue on to the next question.

5. If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it? The last question is a tough one. Jesus drove the Pharisees and Sadducees nuts with hard questions, so I make no apology for asking them. What are the two possible answers to question number 5? Yes or no. If it's yes, you go on. If the answer is no, stop. And I'll tell you what will happen almost every time you stop. The person will say, "Well, aren't you going to tell me?" Very rarely will you ever get a no that sticks. If you do get a no, remember, it's not your problem, it's God's.

VARYING THE APPROACH

You can vary the approach a number of ways. Let me give you some examples.

Example 1: I was at an airport and I happened to be where they take the tickets before you get on the airplane. I noticed a woman who was all by herself. I walked up and said, "I have a question." And she said, "What is it?" I said, "If you died right now, where would you go?" She said, "That's an important question." So I took her off to the side while she gave her life to Jesus Christ.

These questions are merely a probe to see if the heart is ready. You can adjust them any way you want. If you want to go right to the heart of the matter, just ask. There isn't a conversation you can't turn to any of these questions.

Example 2: You could say to someone, "In the newspaper you read about sports superstars who are making lots of money but whose personal lives are a mess. What do you think makes a person happy? I'm curious, do you have spiritual belief in anything? What is your understanding of who Jesus is?"

Example 3: You could say, "You know, with the current world tensions and wars going on, do you think about all those soldiers who may die? Do you ever wonder what may happen to people when they die? I'm curious, what about you? If you died right now, where would you go?"

You can turn any conversation into a tender confrontation. But don't get away from the questions, or you may not get the opportunity to talk with them about the Lord.

Example 4: A Jehovah's Witness came to my door. I was running late for an appointment, but I opened the door anyway. She said, "Hi, I'm here from the Watchtower." I said, "Look, I really need to go but I have just one question." She said, "What is it?" I said, "If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?" She replied, "Oh, but sir, what I believe is true, and I came here to share truth and revelation with you." I said, "Ma'am, that's not my question." I did this 12 times. Finally she said, "Well, yes." And she's been back twice.

The whole idea of these questions is to get to the Bible. The power is in God's Word. I want to get to His Book.

Example 5: I have a friend who reads 1,200 words a minute and remembers everything he has ever read. For 20 years he was a practicing atheist with a hobby of tearing apart other people's religious beliefs.

Then one day in Guam, on a bus, he saw a guy who was being teased by several people. Someone grabbed the man's Bible and tossed it out the window. My friend, who had a sensitive heart, walked up and said, "Why do you let them do this to you?" The man said, "I'm a Christian."

My friend responded, "Do you mean to tell me that you believe that somebody got vomited out of the mouth of a whale?" The guy's answer was yes. My friend's immediate response was, "How do you know?" His answer was, "My Bible tells me so."

This went on with more questions and the man replying with a yes or a no and saying, "My Bible tells me so." This shook my friend so badly that he went home, borrowed a Bible, and read it through over the weekend. A verse in Job that said "Stop and consider God's wonders" spoke to him (Job 37:14).

For 2 weeks he intellectually struggled between killing himself or trusting Christ before he gave himself to the Lord. Today he is a strong Christian defender of the faith.

The point is this: Don't get intimidated. Let your yes be yes and your no be no.

How Can I Share My Faith

STEP 2 - THE BIBLE

God uses Scripture to change people's lives. The next step in sharing your faith without an argument is based on two principles. The first is from Romans 10:17, "Faith comes from hearing." Hearing is the key. The second principle is in Luke 10:26, which I paraphrase, "What does it say to you?" The Holy Spirit will do the convincing and the convicting. You're just going to stand by and watch God do something.

1. Romans 3:23--"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

When I'm sharing, I take my Bible and I put it in front of the other person--on the table or on his lap. I point to Romans 3:23 and I ask him to read it out loud. Then I ask him, "What does it say to you?" When you do it this way, he can't say, "That's just your interpretation." He will read it and tell you what it says. Then he won't be able to say *you* told him. When you do that, the other person will be doing the speaking, the Holy Spirit will be doing the convicting, and nobody can start an argument with you about the interpretation.

After the person reads this verse and tells you what it says, if you feel that the person needs more clarification simply say, "Have you ever committed murder?" The person will likely say, "No, I haven't." You then say, "Well, have you ever hated someone or been angry?" He will probably feel a little defensive and say, "Yeah. Haven't you?" You say, "Sure I have." And then

you could say, "Did you know that God says anger is the same as murder?" At that point you usually get silence, because suddenly he realizes that by God's holy standards he's a mess.

2. Romans 6:23--"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ask the person to read the verse, and then ask, "What does it say." He or she will tell you it says that for one sin we die.

This verse can devastate a person's religion and his feeling that he's okay. In Romans 6:23, underline or circle the word *sin*. Then draw a line through the word *death*. In big letters near it, write the word *hell*. Then circle the word *in*. (Do this in your Bible before you talk with someone.)

There is a tendency in us to be harsh. We might want to tell a person, "Listen, stupid, for one sin you're going to hell. And your dumb religion isn't going to save you!" If you do that, it's not only unloving, but the person is not going to listen. You can get the message across in a more gentle way. The whole key is where you point.

After the person has read the verse and told you what the verse says to him, you can simply say, "Did you notice that in my Bible I've underlined the word *sin*?" (Point to the word.) He will say, "Yes." Then you say, while pointing to the word *sin*, "This reminds me that there's no *s* at the end of the word? God says for *one* sin He will send *me* to hell." You point to yourself, but the other person gets the idea.

Now suppose the person you're talking to is a churchgoer. You say, "Did you notice that I have circled the word *in*? It reminds me that I am to be *in* a relationship with Jesus Christ, not *in* a religion." Right then his infant baptism, his confirmation, his church membership, or whatever other religious actions he was trusting just went out the window. With this verse you have politely shown him that he has no hope. And you've done it nicely.

3. John 3:3--"No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

As a reminder to yourself, in the margin of your Bible by John 3:3, draw a cross like the cross of Christ, and alongside of it write the question, "Why did Jesus come to die?"

Here is the one exception when you *do not* ask the person what the verse means to him. Why? Because he won't know.

The way to get into this verse is to turn to the person and say, "I know somebody like you who walked up to Jesus Christ and asked him how to get into heaven. This was a religious guy, but he knew that going to church didn't cut it. I want you to read aloud what Jesus said to him." And he will read, "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." *Do not* ask him what it means to him. He won't know. We know from Scripture that Nicodemus was confused. You can then say, "You're probably wondering what Jesus was talking about. Nicodemus thought Jesus meant he had to go back inside his mom. But no, Jesus was talking about a spiritual birth."

Now's the time to ask a question. Take out a pen and make the sign of a cross with your finger across your pen. Then ask, "Why did Jesus come to die?" Fifty percent of the people won't know. Listen for an answer. The person may say that Jesus had to or that He wanted to. Ask, "Why?" Eventually he may say, "Jesus came to die for sin." Say, "That's right. The wages of sin is death. You just finished reading that in Romans 6:23." Then say, "Jesus Christ hung on the cross and He took upon Himself all of your sins, and my sins, and the sins of the whole world. When He died on that cross, He died for me, for my forgiveness. That forgiveness is a gift from God."

Then take your pen in your hand, hold it out, and say, "If you want this pen, what do you have to do to get it?" In response he may say, "I'd have to thank you." You would say no. Then he might say, "I have to pay you." Say, "No, it's a free gift." Don't give him the answer. Eventually he will say, "I just need to take it, accept it, or receive it."

I don't know what it is, but people just hate to take anything that's free. But when they take it, that's when you can say, "Look, that's the same thing you have to do with the cross. It doesn't become your gift until you accept it for yourself."

4. John 14:6--"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

When you turn to this verse, ask the other person to read it aloud and then ask him what it says. The person will tell you it says that there is no other way to go to heaven to be with God except through Jesus.

Once in a while I'll say, "Do you see any other way to heaven except through Jesus Christ?" And I've had people angrily say, "No!" Why do you think they're aggravated? It's because they think it's a stupid question, which it is, because the verse is very clear. If they see it, they may give you an agitated "No!" What you are hearing is God at work.

5. Romans 10:9-11--"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.'"

One of the most difficult things for people to believe is that they can be forgiven. After you have asked the person to read Romans 10:9-11 and he has read it, ask him if the phrase "If you . . . believe . . . you will be saved" includes murderers, alcoholics, drug addicts, etc." You ask that, because if he believes God will forgive a murderer he will believe God will forgive *him* for adultery, alcoholism, drugs, unlovingness, or whatever. It's a key issue.

But let's suppose that when you ask him if it includes murderers he says no. Ask him to read the verse again. Let the Spirit teach him. Remember, this is the Holy Spirit's problem. It is not your problem to enter into an argument about whether or not God will forgive murderers.

6. Revelation 3:20--"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me."

As you did with the other verses, ask the person to read this verse out loud. Then ask, "What does it say to you?" He will say that when we open the door of our lives to Jesus, He will come in.

With this verse you want the person to realize that Jesus is eager to enter into our lives. The Lord longs for us to be in a right relationship with Him. Now you are ready to move to the final step.

How Can I Share My Faith

STEP 3 - THE CLOSE

This is the part that many of us fear most-- the call for a decision. Here's how to do it. These final five questions are a recap of all the key verses you just guided the other person through.

1. *Are you a sinner?* This question points back to Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned." Earlier he saw that the "all" includes him.
2. *Do you want forgiveness of sins?* Romans 6:23 says that forgiveness is a gift provided by Jesus Christ. To have that free gift we must accept it for ourselves.
3. *Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?* In John 3, Christ explained that He would die for our sins and that we must put our trust in Him to be born again.
4. *Are you willing to surrender yourself to Christ?* John 14:6 says that the only way to be right with God is through Jesus Christ.
5. *Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and into your life?* Romans 10:9-10 states that we are saved when we personally accept the truth about Jesus and put our trust in Him. When you ask this final question, be silent--and pray silently for the person. The Holy Spirit will be working on him. Thirty seconds of silence will feel like 20 minutes to him. This is the moment when somebody is making a decision about whether he wants to follow Christ or Satan. So whenever I ask that final question, I pray in my mind as hard as I can while I silently wait for his answer.

I once watched someone break out in beads of sweat. I didn't say a thing. I just maintained eye contact with him and prayed. Finally he said, "Yes." And I said, "Yes what?" He said, "I'm ready." I said, "Ready for what?" I wanted him to make a clear, personal decision. It had to be his choice, an expression of his heart's desire.

A SUGGESTED PRAYER

When the person you are talking with says that he is ready to invite Jesus into his life, you may wish to guide him through a prayer like this one:

Father, thank You for the free gift of eternal life. I know I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I am sorry for my past sins, and I ask You to forgive me.

Jesus, I believe You died on the cross for my sins and arose from the dead. I now open the door of my heart and invite You to come into my life. I realize there is nothing I can do to earn my salvation, and I place my complete trust in You alone for eternal life. I choose to follow You as my Lord. Please make me the person You want me to be.

DEALING WITH OBJECTIONS

When you talk with people about trusting Christ, you will hear objections, reasons they don't want to believe. In dealing with their objections, the key word you need to remember is *why*. Let me give you an example. I know a man who owns several McDonalds. I heard that he wanted to talk with someone to learn more about God, so I arranged to meet him at one of his restaurants. We sat down in one of those little chairs. We got all done going through the questions and the Scripture and he said, "That's it, Bill?" And I said, "That's it." He first objection was, "What is God going to do with my business?" Because I didn't know whether God was going to bless him or bust him I asked, "Why? What about your business?" Either God dealt with that objection or it wasn't important because he switched to a completely different objection. He said, "What about my mother?" I wondered why a successful businessman was worrying about his mother so I said, "Why, what about your mom?" He said, "She will disown me!" I turned to Matthew 10:37, which says, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." I had him read it out loud, then I asked, "What does it say to you?" He said, "I better worry about Mom later and give my life to Jesus now." Here are some other types of objections:

"I'm not ready." What are you going to say? You don't have the foggiest idea why the person is not ready, so you can simply ask, "Why?"

"I have to think about it." Again, ask why. It's disarming, isn't it? Because often times the first objection is just a reflex defense.

"I've always believed in God." I would say something like, "If you've answered yes to all five questions, then you won't have any problem accepting Christ. Let's pray for you to receive Him." People tell me all the time that they have always believed in God. But I tell them, "That isn't going to help you any. The demons believe in God and shudder" (James 2:19).

Remember the [pen illustration](#)? You could refer back to it again and say, "Believing that I have a pen in my hand is fine, but until you take that pen it's not your gift."

"My friends will think I'm crazy." You could say, "That's probably true, but the issue now is: Are *you* ready to invite Jesus into *your* life?"

"Other religions tell me that I need to work my way into heaven." There are only two types of religions in the world. One says that Jesus might be a prophet, a teacher, or a good guy, but that He is not God. It also believes that you can work your way to heaven--by a terrorist act, eating the right food, performing religious rites, or living a good life.

Christianity, however, makes two opposite claims: (1) Jesus is God, and (2) God had to come to man; man couldn't go to God.

So we have opposing views that can't both be right. The important questions are: Which one is true? and How do we know? Start by examining the claims of Christ. He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. Christ either lied about being God, or He was demented, or He is all He claimed to be. There is no evidence that Jesus lied. He certainly didn't have any of the symptoms of a lunatic. So it leaves only one conclusion: He is who He claimed to be.

"Will God want me to quit drinking and start going to church?" When I was converted on March 4, 1981, I turned to a godly pastor and asked, "I don't have to be a Bible thumper, do I?" "No," he answered. I said, "Good. I don't have to read the Bible to be saved, do I?" "No," he replied. I asked, "Can I go home and have a drink?" He said, "Yeah, but don't get drunk." He knew that if my conversion was real, I didn't need to get into the minutiae. (By the way, today I read my Bible daily and I haven't had a drink in 10 years.)

When people ask you a direct question, don't waffle. If they ask you, "Will I have to give up my live-in relationship?" you better say yes. Why? Because the conviction is already on them--or else they wouldn't ask the question. If they don't bring it up, don't start bringing up all the sins you know are in their life. Look at all the sins in your life now, let alone before you knew Christ.

"How could God send anyone to hell?" Do you realize that God doesn't simply look around and say, "I'll send that one and that one to hell"? God sent His Son into the world to save the whole world, not some of it. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13).

"I'm not ready." I have just one question for a person who says that: "If you were to die right now, having not accepted Christ, where would you go?" If he realizes that he would go to hell, he won't resist much longer.

"There's error in the Bible." When I hear that, I simply hand the person my Bible and say, "I've been reading this for a while. Could you show me one?" Usually the person will say, "Well, I haven't read it." So, depending where you are in the process of sharing, you simply point back to what the Bible says. That will be the last time you will hear that objection.

"Aren't there many translations of the Bible?" The answer is absolutely yes. There are many translations, but they all say the same thing. When somebody asks that question, it's usually a defense mechanism. Simply say yes, and then turn them back to the Bible verses you had been looking at.

"How do you know the Bible is true?" For one thing, archeological data proves it. There are over 14,000 New Testament manuscript copies in existence today. And when scholars compare them, they can't find more than a paragraph's worth of difference--and most of those are

misspellings or alternate spellings. None of them affect basic doctrinal issues. All the evidence points to the conclusion that we have an accurate text. The first manuscript fragment of the gospel of John is dated only about 40 years from the time it was written.

Even though we know the Bible is 100-percent true, we need to realize that we can't force people to accept it as true. If they don't want to accept it, they won't, no matter how much evidence we give them. Every time we offer evidence, they will ask for more--because they don't want to believe.

When I run into intellectual skeptics, I remember that they're tough, angry, and confused, and that they've been given a lot of misinformation. I remind myself what I used to be like before I was saved.

When a leading lawyer at Harvard University decided to hold a mock trial to see if there was enough evidence to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, do you know what he concluded? He said that beyond a shadow of a doubt, the preponderance of evidence exists to show that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. But he said, "I choose not to believe it."

You can't make anybody believe anything. You could try to convince me that Abraham Lincoln lived, but if I didn't want to believe it I wouldn't.

The question I ask people who say they won't believe the Bible is this: "What would it take to prove to you that it is God's Word?" Most of the time they don't even know. It is a practiced defense they are giving you.

A PERSONAL CHALLENGE

People who are spiritually dead are all around us. People without a born-again, personal relationship with Jesus Christ are in our workplace, our neighborhood, our home. As an evangelist, I travel around quite a bit. I see churches with all of their activities and programs that seemingly have little or nothing to do with bringing anyone to know Jesus Christ. I think there are some hard questions that have to be asked of the church today.

HARD QUESTIONS

How many of us have been the means by which someone came to know Jesus Christ? Do we really believe that unless someone is born again he is damned? Where's our sense of urgency? I'm fearful for all of us, that when we stand before the living, holy God we are going to be humbled into the dust because we have so pitifully failed to carry out the Great Commission. We seem to have forgotten our mission, and that God has provided everything we need to fulfill it. The resurrection power of Christ, the power that raised Him from the dead, lives in us. With that kind of power, what excuse are we going to offer to God for not sharing our faith?

YOU ARE NEEDED

Out of 100 conversions, only 15 come to know Christ from an event like an evangelistic service. Eighty-five come to know Christ through a personal witness. That's how important it is for us to speak to others about Christ.

If you have never opened your mouth, you are guilty of the sin of silence. Maybe you think you can't make much of a difference, but you can. Consider, for example, the following story. One evening a deacon, for a reason known only to him, set aside a visitation card that somebody had turned in to the church with a request for a home visit. That week President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. To that deacon's shock, the next Tuesday when he came back to look at the cards for visitation, the name on that particular card was Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who had shot the President.

EXCUSES

There is a tendency for Christians today to expect someone else to evangelize. We have the classic excuses: "I'm too busy." "It's the pastor's job." "I don't have the gift of evangelism." We find excuse after excuse after excuse.

When Peter denied Christ three times, he said, in so many words, that he had never seen or heard of Jesus. None of us would have the audacity to say that. But we do the same thing in another way: We deny Jesus Christ by our excuses and our silence.

HOW MANY SHARE THEIR FAITH?

I want to ask a very hard question. Have you, in the last year, taken your Bible and turned the pages of Scripture with someone who is unsaved, to show him how to become a born-again Christian? I have never been in a church where more than 10 percent of the congregation indicated that they had shared their faith in the last year. May God forgive us!

This is serious business. A person without a born-again, personal relationship with Christ is on the way to hell. The endless torment, the darkness, the gnashing of teeth. There is an urgency about sharing our faith. Yet some of us remain in silence. I don't understand it.

A DREAM

I had a dream. In my dream was an ocean full of drowning people. There was a rock that came up out of this ocean. Some people crawled up on that rock and got to safety.

As I watched, 10 percent of the people on the rock became active in making ropes and ladders, getting near the edge, trying to pull others up on the rock. But 90 percent became very active in their rock gardens, their rock music, their rock jobs, their rock lives. They had a lot of rock

meetings where they spent lots of time developing their programs to go back to the ocean--but they never went.

The thought that kept coming through all the time in this dream was, "Could they have forgotten that they themselves were once in the sea?"

A small group of people who seemed to be the leaders bothered me even more. They spent time trying to get up higher on the rock. It seemed they didn't want to get near the edge because it was risky down there. The dead, the diseased, the lost--they were down there. But the group on the rock spent more time cloistered in false security on the higher parts of the rock. Yet every one of them heard a voice say, "Will you come? Will you help Me?"

WILL WE TAKE A RISK?

In my dream, the rock was the cross of Calvary. The voice they heard was Jesus Christ, calling you and me to come. There's only one thing that remains, and that is whether or not we will. The question is, will you and I be different? Will we be willing to hear the voice and take a risk and speak out in order to rescue others?

If your answer is yes, pray these words right now:

God, make me Your willing servant. I have been wrong to be silent. Every day, every moment, I will endeavor to share You with others.

REMEMBER: Success is not leading someone to Christ. Success is acting out your Christian life, sharing the gospel, and trusting God for the results.

KEY WORDS

Born Again: to be given new spiritual life through Christ; to become a child of God (see John 3).

Christian: someone who has personally accepted the free gift of salvation provided by Jesus Christ.

Eternal Life: the state of being in a right relationship with God, and existing forever in heaven.

Evangelism: the process of telling others about Jesus and what He has done for them.

Faith: the act of trusting, relying on, depending on someone to do something for you. To be rescued from sin's penalty we need to trust Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness: the removal of the penalty for the wrongs we have committed.

Gospel: the truths about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and how we can have eternal life.

Heaven: the place of God's special presence and the eternal home of all who have been forgiven.

Hell: the place of eternal judgment for all who have rejected Christ.

Inner Peace: a personal sense of joy and contentment that comes to those who are in a right relationship with God.

Jesus Christ: the second person of the triune God who became the God-man in order to pay the penalty for our sin and restore us to God.

Salvation: the work of God by which He rescues sinners bound for hell and grants forgiveness because of what Christ has done on the cross.

Sin: any violation of God's laws.