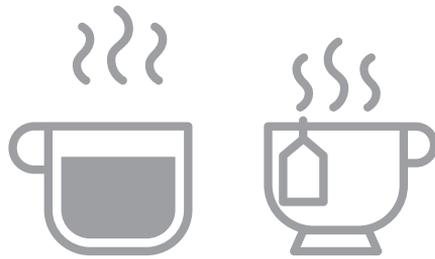


ALVIN L. REID



SHARING
JESUS

{without *freaking* out}

EVANGELISM

THE WAY YOU WERE BORN TO DO IT

Presentation

Starts in our Christian worldview

Assumes they have some knowledge of the gospel

Focuses on the lost person as a sinner

Effective with people with a church background

Focuses on immediate decision

Conversation

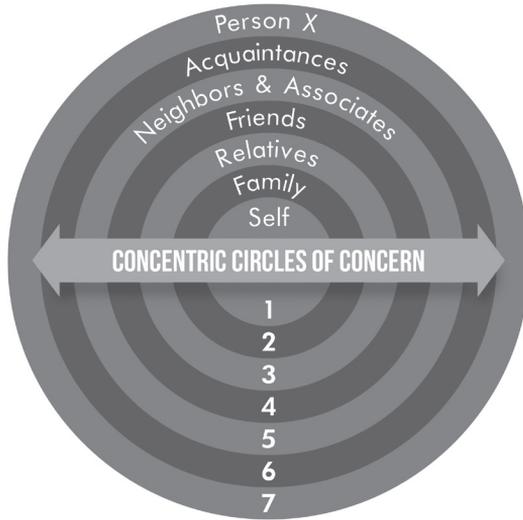
Starts in the other person's worldview

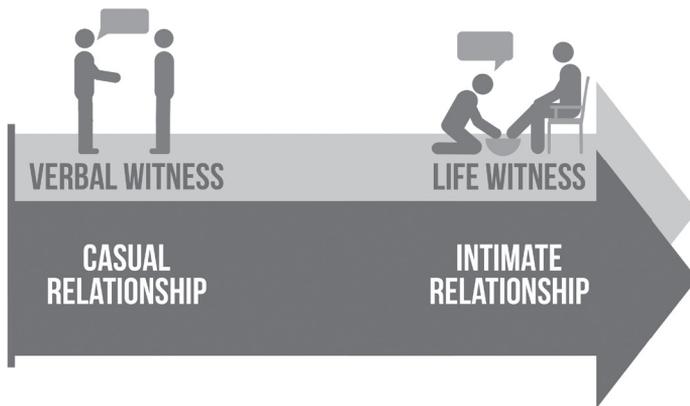
Assumes they don't know the gospel

Focuses on the *imago Dei* in the sinner

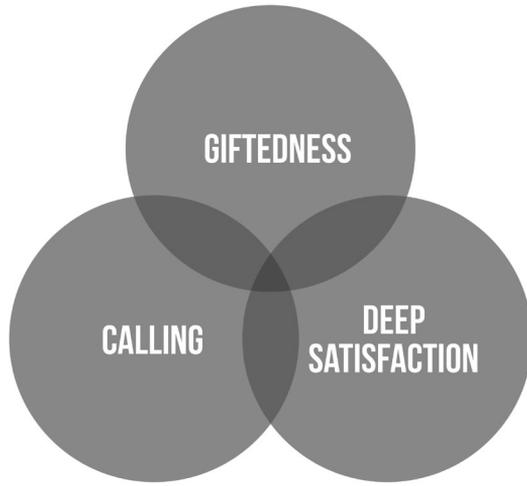
Effective regardless of church background

Hopes for a decision but appreciates the process involved in reaching people today





Note: verbal proclamation should always be a priority. This scale gives emphasis to the increasing need for our life to reflect our words based on the intimacy of our relationships.



The Principles

Principle 1: *God created you for his glory, to advance his gospel with the gifts, talents, and opportunities he gave to you.*

Principle 2: *In order to share Jesus confidently and consistently with others, first share him confidently and consistently with yourself.*

Principle 3: *Shifting from giving an evangelistic presentation to having an evangelistic conversation takes pressure off the witness and relates the gospel more clearly to an unbeliever.*

Principle 4: *God has sovereignly placed you in this world at this time with the abilities and gifts you have to bring glory to him and show the joy of the gospel to others.*

Principle 5: *Effective evangelistic conversations connect the unchanging gospel with the specific issues people face.*

Principle 6: *Expect people to be open to the gospel, and learn to share Jesus where they live.*

Principle 7: *Talk to the actual person in front of you about the Jesus inside you; let them see and hear the change Jesus makes in you.*

Principle 8: *Developing a lifestyle of sharing Jesus consistently flows out of a plan to share Jesus regularly.*

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Eight Week Challenge

Introduction

The Eight Week Challenge is a way for individuals, small groups, and seminary classrooms to interact with the teaching and principles in *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out*. The purpose is to answer the question: So now what? Now that I know to connect with people's pain or passion, what are the next steps? How do I walk out a life of evangelism in my context? In this Eight Week Challenge, we're going to make this teaching personal so that at the end of eight weeks you are well on your way to a lifestyle of evangelism.

These short, weekly segments were created for busy folks. In a few minutes each day—whether first thing in the morning, over lunch, or after the kids are in bed—you can walk through the practical steps that will help you learn how to share Christ and to do it on a regular basis. Just like with diet and exercise, a life of evangelism is a lifestyle change, not a quick fix. Be prayerful and diligent but also patient with yourself as you move through the next eight weeks. And remember: this is all for God's glory and your good.

Week 1

Principle 1: God created you for his glory, to advance his gospel with the gifts, talents, and opportunities he gave to you.

Scriptures to Meditate on:

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.” (2 Tim 1:7)

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.” (Matt 28:19–20)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. What freaks you out in general?
2. What freaks you out or holds you back from sharing your faith?
3. What is the absolutely worst thing that could realistically happen if you spoke to someone about Jesus this week? (Hint: it’s probably not going to!) Now, what’s the most wonderful, amazing thing that could happen if you did?
4. If you were raised in a Christian home, was evangelism part of your family culture? How so?

WEEK 1

5. Do you know the names of your neighbors? Do you know them well enough to know the pains or passions of their lives?
6. How different would your life look if you started living each day, just that day, passionately pursuing a life that glorifies God?
7. What is the one thing that keeps you from that? What is one thing you can do today to move toward that goal?
8. Reflect on this statement: "If you feel like you should share Jesus with someone, it's probably not the world, your flesh, or the devil. Take the risk."
9. Think about someone you know who doesn't know Jesus. Write their name down. Pray for him or her. (You don't even have to witness this week but it's okay if you do!)
10. Ask God to reveal to you what holds you back from sharing your faith. Then ask God for the grace to overcome that fear, believing he will do it.

This Week, Pray for:

- God to help you face and overcome your fears.
- God to help you meet your neighbors if you haven't already, and begin developing relationships with them.
- Each day this week, pray the three-fold prayer of the witness:
 - a. God, give me this day: an opportunity to share Christ
 - b. The wisdom to see it
 - c. The courage to take it

Week 2

Principle 2: In order to share Jesus confidently and consistently with others, first share him confidently and consistently with yourself.

Scriptures to Meditate on:

“For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, . . .” (1 Cor 15:3–4)

“My soul, bless the LORD, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. My soul, bless the LORD, and do not forget all his benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; he heals all your diseases. He redeems your life from the Pit; he crowns you with faithful love and compassion. He satisfies you with good things; your youth is renewed like the eagle.” (Ps 103:1–5)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. Have you ever thought about yourself as an evangelist for good news? Think back over something you’ve shared on social media or with good friends or family in person. Was it stressful or was it natural and fun?
2. Look again at the story of the gospel. What are the four major points of the gospel story plotline? Can you see how they relate to movie plotlines?

WEEK 2

3. Think about a favorite movie. Why do you love it so much? How does it move you? How does your favorite movie reflect God's epic in Scripture?
4. Think through how you can naturally make a connection between your favorite movie and God's redemption of the world. Practice sharing that story with yourself this week in preparation for sharing it with others.
5. Do you have an authentic, growing relationship with God? Are you talking to him daily? Are you reading his Word regularly? Does a relationship with him excite you?
6. In Psalm 103, David is stirring himself up. He's reminding himself of God's faithfulness and kindness. How have you experienced God's benefits? Spend some time each day this week remembering specific ways you've experienced God as *great*, *glorious*, *good*, and *gracious*. Maybe it was that time you were laid off and each month—despite the fact that there was less money coming in than bills to be paid—you were somehow able to pay each bill in full. Maybe, after years of prayer, you finally met the person who would become your spouse or you were able to have children or you landed your dream job. Maybe it's finally seeing fruit bear in a severed relationship after decades of investing and waiting on God. Maybe it's remembering the ways God showers us with his love in the details of our lives—the rainbow after a funeral, the call from out of the blue from a friend when you needed it most, a surprise check in the mail that met a need you'd never mentioned.

This Week, Pray for:

- God to continually grow your understanding of the wonder of the gospel.
- God to grow your desire to share the gospel with others.
- God to give you his love for those around you.

Week 3

Principle 3: Shifting from giving an evangelistic presentation to having an evangelistic conversation takes pressure off the witness and relates the gospel more clearly to an unbeliever.

Scripture to Meditate on:

“Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: “To an Unknown God.” Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands.” (Acts 17:22–24)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. Where is a place you love to meet people for conversations? Starbucks, Cracker Barrel, an activity like hunting?
2. Have you ever introduced two people you love to one another? Maybe at a wedding or on a blind date or informally over coffee. Was it scary or did you enjoy it?
3. What are the three things people can tell about us in a conversation? Spend some time this week observing this in people you meet. Did the checkout guy at the grocery

WEEK 3

store (or your waiter or a casual acquaintance) care about you as a person?

4. As you observe if others genuinely care about you, also observe if your actions reveal if you care about others.
5. Over the next seven days, pay attention to how often and in what ways people talk about their pain or their passion. This includes anything from trivial matters to serious, life-altering events. Write down several examples.
6. Reflect on these instances and how the good news of Jesus can speak to these points of passion or pain. Practice connecting that person's situation to Jesus.
7. Even though we're three weeks into our study, I'm still not asking you to stand on a street corner wearing a cardboard sign saying Jesus is coming! We're taking small and deliberate steps here toward a lifestyle of evangelism. Spend this week continuing to look for opportunities and ways to share Jesus in everyday conversation with others.

This Week, Pray for:

- God to help you see the opportunities to connect with others in everyday conversations.
- God to help you grow in your witness.
- Pray about developing a long-term relationship with at least one unbeliever at your work, school, or in your neighborhood.

Week 4

Principle 4: God has sovereignly placed you in this world at this time with the abilities and gifts you have to bring glory to him and show the joy of the gospel to others.

Scripture to Meditate On:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet 2:9)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. God did not make a mistake when he uniquely created you and positioned you in this world. List at least three specific ways you can see God has wired you for his glory and the good of others. Are you a good listener? Do you love meeting new people? Do you enjoy talking about sports, music, or the arts? We tend to look only at our weaknesses. Take a few minutes to thank God for the good gifts he has given you.
2. Name at least one limitation in your life you would change if you could.
3. How can God use that limitation for his glory? Perhaps you came from a troubled home as a child and, although you still have struggles at times, you can joyfully share

WEEK 4

how Jesus has helped you through your past. Or maybe you have battled cancer or some other crisis and the struggle in one area has actually made you stronger in another.

4. Think about and articulate *why* you want to share your faith. Is your *why* big enough?
5. What are the things in your life that stir your affections for Jesus? What are the things that diminish your affections for him? What is one thing you can pursue or remove that will bring you closer to God?
6. How is sharing the gospel different from selling a product?
7. How can you bring the joy of God to others around you? Keep in mind your abilities, gifts, and current circumstances. Who is someone already in your life that you can bring joy to this week? How will you do so? Maybe it's paying for the fast food meal of the person behind you in line. You might volunteer to help a neighbor with yard work. Or you could simply provide a listening ear to a coworker struggling with a family issue.

This Week, Pray for:

- God to help you grow in your ability to share Jesus.
- Pray by name for your neighbors, friends, and family who don't know Jesus. If you still don't know anyone, ask God to introduce you to those already in your life who don't know him.
- Ask God to open your eyes and ears to how you can creatively bring joy to others.
- A way each day to encourage at least one person.

Week 5

Principle 5: Effective evangelistic conversations connect the unchanging gospel with the specific issues people face.

Scripture to Meditate on:

“Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. Let's take a quick inventory of where our prayer life is today.
 - Are you praying regularly for God to help you live the gospel well?
 - Are you asking God each week to help you grow in your witness?
 - Are you praying daily and specifically for any unbelievers or asking God to introduce you to an unbeliever?
 - Are you still battling fear and/or insecurity in sharing the gospel? If so, are you willing to ask God each week to increase your desire to share Jesus with others?
 - Are you proactively partnering with God in prayer or is there some way you can be more diligent in this area?

WEEK 5

2. Which of the five approaches seems most natural or appealing to you? Why?
3. Can you think of a person you know where that approach might help?
4. This week, seek to utilize one or more of these approaches in an evangelistic conversation. Reflect on the experience afterwards. What went well? What was hard?
5. Consider keeping a journal or record of what you're praying for and your progress in sharing your faith.
6. Pay attention to when the thought of Jesus comes to mind in a conversation. Be bold and starting talking about Jesus as you think about him.

This Week, Pray for:

- God to help you live the gospel well.
- God to fill you with his love for people.
- God to help you use one of these approaches in an evangelistic conversation with someone.
- God to help you love and affirm a non-believer you know whose lifestyle you wouldn't necessarily endorse.

Week 6

*Principle 6: Expect people to be open to the gospel,
and learn to share Jesus where they live.*

Scripture to Meditate on:

“A woman of Samaria came to draw water. ‘Give me a drink,’ Jesus said to her. . . . ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ she asked him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would ask him, and he would give you living water.’” (John 4:7–10)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. Ask a friend, coworker, or family member to tell you his or her story. Or, if you know the person well, to catch you up on his or her story. How might you empathize with that individual’s story, seeing ways your story relates to his or hers? How might you retell that person’s story from the perspective of being changed by Jesus?
2. Think of a sphere of life you care a lot about (music, work, sports, and so on). Listen carefully when others talk and consider how you can relate it to the gospel story. For example, you could ask a coworker why they

WEEK 6

work at your company. If they say it's fulfilling, talk to them about how our desire to live a fulfilling life comes from our Creator, and share the gospel story. If they complain about how they hate their job, show them how our pain comes from a broken world, and share how the gospel brings hope in the midst of a frustrating world.

3. Do you expect others to be open to hearing about Christ? If you don't, spend time reflecting on the root of that belief.
4. How do you see evangelism? Are you making new friends or are you making new contacts? Is it about relationships or about numbers? Is sharing Jesus about listening and loving others well, or is it about performance?
5. Are you actively expecting God to do great things in your neighborhood, workplace, home, and school?
6. How can you empathize with the brokenness others are experiencing? Where are the pain points in your own life and how has Christ has rewritten your story? Think through how to share an example of God's transforming love and power from your life with an unbeliever.
7. Reflect on a past conversation with an unbeliever. Did you show that other person empathy, love, and compassion? Or did you judge him/her for language, dress, level of ignorance, or lifestyle?
8. Reflect on your recent encounters with unbelievers. Did you start with them, engaging them where they are? If not, how could you have done so? Remember, this isn't about being down on yourself, this is about growing in our witness. Thoughtful reflection is a key ingredient to becoming better at sharing our faith.

WEEK 6

This Week, Pray for:

- An expectation that people are open and eager for the gospel, and that God is going to do something great in your context.
- God to help you understand where someone is at and engage with him or her right in that moment.
- God to give you growing discernment to pick up on when people speak about their pain or their passion.

Week 7

Principle 7: Talk to the actual person in front of you about the Jesus inside you; let them see and hear the change Jesus makes in you.

Scripture to Meditate on:

“In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live when they observe your pure, reverent lives. Don’t let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry, but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.” (1 Pet 3:1–4)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. When you think of evangelism, what automatically comes to mind? Is it sharing the gospel with the random person you sit next to on the plane? Is it knocking on the front doors of complete strangers? Do those closest to you come to mind?
2. Reflect on whether or not you believe you have to know the answers to all the questions before sharing the gospel. Think through how you will respond to someone when you’re asked a question you don’t know how to answer.

WEEK 7

3. What does it mean to show Jesus by the way you live? Think about the ways you've experienced others living out their faith without words.
4. Reflect on this statement: *The closer you are to someone, the less your words matter and the more your actions matter.* What is one way you can better love those closest to you today? Think of times like family reunions when you are around unbelieving family members. Instead of obsessing over how you will drop the gospel on them, what are ways you can serve them?
5. Think about your experience talking to others about how Jesus has changed your life. Can you identify a rhythm or pattern that works well for you? Maybe, like my friend in finance, you're intentional about sharing a faith experience every fifth time you've talked to someone. If you don't see a pattern yet, ask God to help you identify what works best for you in your context.
6. Look again at the list of people you recorded from the Concentric Circles exercise. For whom are you most broken over their salvation? What might you do this week to show and to share Christ with that person?
7. Think about someone you know very well who doesn't know Jesus. How might you show them Jesus in your life even as you share him with your lips?

This Week, Pray for:

- God to help you identify a witnessing rhythm that's right for your context.
- God to show you how to demonstrate the gospel by your life even as you share good news with your lips.
- God to help you see how costly it is to live a life that consistently shows the radical change the gospel makes, and to help you live like that.

Week 8

Principle 8: Developing a lifestyle of sharing Jesus consistently flows out of a plan to share Jesus regularly.

Scripture to Meditate on:

“Follow me,” he told them, “and I will make you fish for people.” (Matt 4:19)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. Is your life focused on the gospel? How do you plan to preach Jesus to yourself daily and speak of him to others regularly?
2. Do you understand your giftedness, calling, and those things that bring deep satisfaction? What are the abilities and gifts God has given you? (Family? Friends? What are you good at?) What are the things you must do? (Help broken families? Create art? Help people learn?) What deeply satisfies you at the end of the day?
3. What are ways you can share Christ out of the sweet spot of these three categories? For example, do you share the gospel by listening or talking? I have a friend who is naturally gifted at offering wise counsel to others. He feels called to care for those struggling emotionally. He gets great satisfaction in seeing people overcome emotional hurdles. It's no surprise he's helped numerous people

WEEK 8

come to Christ in the context of helping them deal with their past.

4. Identify people in your Concentric Circles. What is a specific way to share with at least one person from this list weekly?
5. Are you meeting regularly with an accountability partner or mentor? Spend that time focusing on moments you do well sharing your faith, not on moments where you may have missed an opportunity.
6. Reflect on where you are in your commitment to sharing the gospel. Can you commit to the plan we outlined in this chapter? Why or why not? What concerns or worries do you have?
7. What specific ideas, truths, people, or principles has God placed on your heart over the past eight weeks?
8. As you think about all you've learned over these weeks, write down your evangelism goals. Where do you want to be in six months? One year? Ten years?
9. How can you make evangelism part of your family culture?
10. Write out in one paragraph a summary of your plan for regularly sharing Christ in conversations with others.

This Week, Pray for:

- God to prepare you, to use you, and to work in the lives of those you meet.
- God to cement these lessons in your heart and help you discern wise goals as you continue on your witnessing journey.
- God to continue to grow you in your witness and open your eyes and heart to the people he puts in your path who need him—for his glory and your good.