

Outreach and the Grace Administration

Sharing Christ: The Biblical Pattern and Practical Strategy

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Anchor Passages

John 4:35 *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Introduction

A. The Question

How did the gospel actually travel from one person to the next — first when Jesus walked the roads of Israel, then when the church carried it into the world? And what does that pattern teach us about sharing Christ today: in home fellowships, in everyday conversation, and at the front door?

B. The Real-World Constraint

Most real conversations about the Lord are short. A neighbor at the mailbox, a coworker on a break, a stranger at the door — often a minute or two, not an hour. Any approach to outreach has to work inside that window, not assume an unlimited audience with unlimited time.

C. The Good News About That

Scripture is full of short, complete encounters. Jesus reached a Samaritan woman in the time it took to draw water. Philip reached an Ethiopian official on a desert road. Paul and Silas answered a jailer's question in one sentence. The gospel itself is short. What we need is not more time, but a clear sense of where the conversation is going.

D. How This Study Is Laid Out

- **Chapters 1–3** look at the pattern in scripture: how Jesus did it, how the church did it under grace, and what changed and what stayed the same.
 - **Chapters 4–6** turn that pattern into practical steps for home fellowships, short personal encounters, and handling objections. These chapters offer practical wisdom built on scripture — in the spirit of Colossians 4:5, "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" — rather than commands scripture itself gives.
 - **Chapters 7–9** work through three objections you will hear again and again.
 - **Chapter 10** brings every conversation back to one central question: *Do you want everlasting life?*
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Chapter 1: How Jesus Did It

During His earthly ministry, before Pentecost, Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, under the Law, to the people of Israel. The audience and the message were specific to that time. But His method still describes the shape of real encounters today.

A. A Sent, Instructed Mission

Matthew 10:5 *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

Matthew 10:6 *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

Matthew 10:7 *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Matthew 10:11 *And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.*

Matthew 10:12 *And when ye come into an house, salute it.*

Matthew 10:13 *And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*

Matthew 10:14 *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*

Two principles sit inside this instruction, and both fit a short encounter perfectly:

- **Look for the open door.** "Enquire who in it is worthy." Find the receptive person rather than forcing every door.
- **Don't linger where the message is refused.** Say it plainly, then move on. A closed door is not a failure. It is information.

B. Luke 10: The Same Pattern, in More Detail

Luke 10:2 *...The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

Luke 10:4 *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.*

Luke 10:5 *And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.*

Luke 10:6 *And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.*

Luke 10:7 *And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.*

Luke 10:10 *But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,*

Luke 10:11 *Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*

This is where the familiar "person of peace" idea comes from. Look for the household or individual already open to the message, and invest there. Even a refusal is not wasted — the message is still delivered: "be ye sure of this." And "salute no man by the way" shows the urgency of the mission. It does not stop for every distraction along the road.

Notice, too, that the whole mission begins with prayer: "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." Outreach starts on our knees before it starts at the door.

C. John 4: One Person, One Conversation

John 4:9 *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*

John 4:10 *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

This one conversation holds almost everything the rest of this study will say:

- **He crossed a barrier first.** A Jewish man spoke to a Samaritan woman.
- **He started with an everyday need.** Thirst became the bridge to "living water."
- **He addressed her real life** (verses 16–18), honestly but without leading with condemnation.
- **He didn't get pulled into the side argument.** When she raised the great religious dispute of her day — "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (verse 20) — He answered briefly and went straight back to the heart of it: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (verse 24).
- **When she spoke of Messiah, He answered plainly:** "I that speak unto thee am he" (verse 26).

The whole exchange happened beside a well, in a short space of time — and it reached the point. The woman then went and told her whole town (verses 28–30).

D. Jesus Did Not Chase Every Seeker

Matthew 19:21 *Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

Matthew 19:22 *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*

The rich young ruler walked away, and Jesus let him go. He did not soften the truth to keep him talking. The goal of any encounter is a clear, honest presentation — not managing the other person's response by any means available.

E. Why People Respond Differently: The Sower

Matthew 13:19 *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

Matthew 13:23 *But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit...*

The same seed fell on four kinds of ground and produced four different results. The sower's job was the same every time. The harvest was not his to control. Paul said the same thing:

1 Corinthians 3:6 *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

That takes a great weight off the witness. Our part is to sow faithfully. God gives the growth.

Chapter 2: How the Church Did It Under Grace

After Pentecost, the message and the audience both widened. The call was no longer "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" to Israel alone, but the finished work of Christ — His death, resurrection and ascension — proclaimed to the whole world:

Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

A. The Public Message: Acts 2

Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Acts 2:37 *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Peter's message had a clear shape: what they had done, the evidence (the resurrection, shown from their own scriptures), and a direct answer when they asked what to do. It is a shape any believer can follow.

B. The Short, Complete Encounter: Acts 8

Acts 8:30 *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

Acts 8:31 *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

Acts 8:35 *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

Philip did not open with a speech. He opened with a question that found out where the man already was — and then he started from the very page the man was reading. The whole encounter happened "as they went on their way" (verse 36), and it ended with the man asking to be baptized and going "on his way rejoicing" (verse 39). This is the clearest picture in scripture of a short, single conversation that reaches a real conclusion.

C. The Direct Question and the Direct Answer: Acts 16

Acts 16:30 *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Acts 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

When the question is already sharp, the answer should not be complicated or hedged. It should be given plainly. Chapter 10 of this study is about bringing a conversation to exactly this kind of moment on purpose.

D. Starting Where People Are: Acts 17

Acts 17:22 *Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.*

Acts 17:23 *For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*

Acts 17:30 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Speaking to philosophers who did not accept the scriptures, Paul began with what was already in front of him — their own altar, even their own poets (verse 28). But he did not stay there. He landed, without apology, on the resurrection. Start where people are; end where the gospel is.

E. Every Believer's Calling

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Colossians 4:5 *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

Colossians 4:6 *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

2 Corinthians 5:20 *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

1 Corinthians 9:22 *...I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

These words are written to ordinary believers, not only to apostles. Every believer is an ambassador. "Redeeming the time" and "how ye ought to answer every man" fit the short, personal conversation exactly. And Paul's "all things to all men" means adjusting the approach to the person in front of you — without ever changing the message.

F. Don't Chase Every Rabbit Hole

2 Timothy 2:23 *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.*

2 Timothy 2:24 *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,*

Titus 3:9 *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*

This is not permission to dodge honest questions — 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to be ready with an answer. It is permission to recognize when a question has become an argument for its own sake, and not to let a short window be swallowed by it.

Chapter 3: What Changed, and What Stayed the Same

A. What Changed

- **The audience** widened from "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" to "the uttermost part of the earth."
- **The message** moved from "the kingdom is at hand" to the finished work: Christ "died for our sins according to the scriptures... was buried, and... rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), and was then "taken up" into heaven (Acts 1:9) and "by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2:33).

B. What Stayed the Same

Through both periods the same practical pattern holds:

1. **Pray** for laborers and for open doors.
2. **Look for the receptive person** or household rather than forcing every door.
3. **Say it plainly**, even where it is refused, and then move on.
4. **Start from where the other person already is.**
5. **Don't get consumed by side disputes.**
6. **Bring the conversation**, wherever possible, **to a clear question** the person can answer.

That unchanging pattern is what the practical chapters build on.

Chapter 4: Home Fellowships — The Person of Peace

Jesus told the seventy to find "the son of peace," to stay in that house, and not to go "from house to house" (Luke 10:5-7). That fits the way home fellowships grow best today.

Start with one open person. Rather than trying to gather strangers into a meeting cold, find one person in an existing circle — a family member, a coworker, a neighbor — who is already open.

Grow along relationships. Build the fellowship outward through that person's own household and friends. The New Testament is full of household-shaped conversions: Cornelius with "his kinsmen and near friends" (Acts 10:24), Lydia "and her household" (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailer "and all his" (Acts 16:33), Crispus "with all his house" (Acts 18:8).

Why it works. A fellowship built this way holds together, because trust already exists before the meetings begin. Broad advertising tends to bring visitors with no relationships and little staying power.

Don't overinvest where the door is closed. The same instruction that says to stay with the "worthy" house also says to let your peace return to you where it is not received (Matthew 10:13). Time and love are both precious. Spend them where God has opened a door.

Chapter 5: The One- or Two-Minute Conversation

When a conversation may last only a minute or two, it helps to know where it is going. Here is a simple shape, drawn from the scripture examples above.

A. The Shape of a Short Encounter

- **Open respectfully.** Brief, friendly, and asking permission: "Do you have just a minute?" If they say no, thank them warmly and move on. A polite no is not a defeat (Matthew 10:14).
- **Build a bridge.** Use an ordinary, honest question, the way Jesus used thirst and Philip used the scroll: "Can I ask what you believe happens after we die?" or "If you died today, do you know for sure you'd have everlasting life?"
- **Listen before you answer.** Their answer tells you which kind of ground is in front of you (Matthew 13) and whether one of the common objections in Chapters 7–9 applies.
- **Give the gospel plainly.** It is short, and brevity is a strength:
 - all have sinned (Romans 3:23);
 - the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23);
 - Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4), and ascended to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33);
 - whoever believes on Him has everlasting life (John 3:16), and whoever confesses Jesus as Lord and believes God raised Him from the dead shall be saved (Romans 10:9).
- **Come to the question.** Whatever the detours, aim for the one question in Chapter 10: *Do you want everlasting life?*
- **Close with kindness either way.** If they say no, they are still owed respect (Luke 10:10–11). The message was delivered. This is not the last door.

B. What It Might Sound Like

"Hi — do you have just a minute? I'm talking with neighbors about something that matters a great deal to me. Can I ask you a question? If you died today, do you know for certain you'd have everlasting life?"

(Listen.)

"The Bible says we've all fallen short, and that sin leads to death — but that God sent Jesus, who died for our sins, rose again, and is now at God's right hand. And it says whoever believes on Him has everlasting life. Would you like that — everlasting life?"

If the answer is yes, give the answer Paul and Silas gave: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31), and walk them through Romans 10:9. If the answer is "not today," thank them, leave something to read if you have it, and go on your way with peace.

Chapter 6: Handling Objections — Four Simple Principles

A. Find Out What the Real Objection Is

Ask a short question before answering: "What specifically comes to mind?" Guessing wastes precious time, and very often the question itself does most of the work.

B. Answer Briefly, Then Return to the Main Road

This is what Jesus did at the well: a real answer, not a brush-off — but not an invitation to a long debate either. The goal is not to win the side argument. It is to answer it honestly enough to move past it.

C. Don't Mistake an Argument for a Decision

Someone can lose every point in a debate and still walk away unchanged. Someone else can raise no objection at all and still be far from a decision. Salvation is a matter of the heart (Romans 10:10), not only the intellect. The central question in Chapter 10 is aimed at the heart.

D. Know When to Let It Go

Not every conversation reaches a decision the first time. That is the parable of the sower, not a failure of method (2 Timothy 2:23-24; Titus 3:9). Plant the seed, and trust God with the increase.

Chapter 7: "I'm Jewish"

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

A. An Identity to Respect, Not an Objection to Overcome

"To the Jew first." This conversation deserves special care. It is rarely a one-minute conversation. More often it is the beginning of a relationship, and treating it that way — rather than pressing for a decision on the spot — is the wiser course.

B. Continuity, Not Replacement

Jesus came to fulfil the Hebrew scriptures, not to discard them:

Matthew 5:17 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

Genesis through Malachi is shared, trusted ground. Start there, as Philip "began at the same scripture" (Acts 8:35).

C. Let the Hebrew Scriptures Speak

Isaiah 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Daniel 9:26 *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself...*

Psalms 22:18 *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

A practical note: many Jewish translations read Psalm 22:16 as "like a lion, my hands and my feet" rather than "they pierced my hands and my feet," so opening with that verse can turn the conversation into an argument about translation. Isaiah 53 is usually the better place to begin.

D. Know Paul's Own Heart

Paul's longest discussion of this question is Romans 9–11. He wrote of "great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart" for his own people (Romans 9:2), and of his hope that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25). Go into this conversation with that same love.

E. In a Short Conversation

Don't try to compress Romans 9–11 into thirty seconds. Plant one clear seed, offered as a genuine question rather than a trap — "Who do you think Isaiah 53 is describing?" — show real respect for the scriptures you share, and offer to talk again.

Chapter 8: "I Believe in God — What Else Is Necessary?"

James 2:19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

A. Believing God Exists Is Not the Same as Saving Faith

This is the clearest verse for this objection. Believing that God exists is true and good — "thou doest well" — but the devils believe that much too. The person saying this is usually sincere and has simply never had the difference pointed out. Point it out gently.

B. God Has Always Asked for More Than "He Is"

Hebrews 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Even this verse asks for more than bare belief in God's existence — it asks us to come to Him and seek Him. And today God has told us exactly how to come:

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Romans 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

C. In a Short Conversation

Use a simple two-step:

1. **Affirm what is true.** "That's a great place to start — the Bible says that's necessary."
2. **Ask one gentle question.** "Who do you believe Jesus is?" or "What do you believe God asks of you?"

The answer often reveals a belief in God with no real claim on the person's life — which is exactly the gap John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 speak to, and the natural doorway into the question in Chapter 10.

Chapter 9: "The Bible Has Too Many Contradictions"

A. Find Out Which Objection It Is

This sentence usually means one of two things, and the first step is to find out which:

"What's an example that comes to mind?"

Very often, no example follows. The claim is something the person has heard, not a problem they have actually looked into. In that case it is honest, not evasive, to say gently: *"That's fair to ask. A lot of people say that, but most haven't run into a specific one. Is there one that's bothered you?"* There is no need to manufacture a debate that neither of you actually has (2 Timothy 2:23).

B. If They Name a Specific Passage

You don't need to solve it on the spot. Three things are worth knowing:

- **Many "contradictions" are different eyewitnesses** describing the same event. Several honest witnesses to a car accident will differ in detail and emphasis without contradicting one another. The Gospels often fit this pattern.
- **Many are resolved by context** — who is speaking, to whom, and what the original words meant.
- **A few are hard**, and careful, believing scholars still discuss them. It is honest to say so.

Offer to look at the passage together later. That keeps the conversation honest without letting it drift from its purpose.

C. Bring It Back to the Resurrection

Paul at Athens did not defend every detail first. He went to the resurrection. The case for Christ rests there:

1 Corinthians 15:3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

1 Corinthians 15:4 *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

Scholars across a wide range of views — including many who are skeptical of the Bible elsewhere — recognize these verses as a very early statement of faith that Paul himself "received," dating from within a few years of the events. The heart of the message was being taught long before a legend could have grown up. The resurrection's claim on a person's life does not have to wait until every hard passage is settled.

Chapter 10: The Central Question — "Do You Want Everlasting Life?"

A. Jesus' Own Way of Putting It

Whatever detour a conversation takes, aim for this one question. It is not a gimmick. It is how Jesus Himself most often framed the offer:

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 4:14 *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

John 6:47 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

John 17:3 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

B. The Question People Already Carry

The rich young ruler asked it on his own, without prompting: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16). This is not a foreign question imposed on a conversation. It is the question many people already carry, whether or not they say it out loud.

C. Why It Works

Everyone shares this one concern, whatever their background:

Hebrews 2:14 *...that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

Hebrews 2:15 *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

The Jewish neighbor, the person who "believes in God," and the skeptic worried about contradictions have three very different objections — and exactly the same stake in this one question. Asked plainly and kindly, "Do you want everlasting life?" cuts past the detour without dismissing it, and speaks to the heart, where believing happens (Romans 10:10).

D. When the Answer Is Yes

Answer the way Paul and Silas did:

Acts 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

Walk them through Romans 10:9 — confess Jesus as Lord, believe God raised Him from the dead — plainly and without padding. The gospel does not need decoration to be understood.

Outreach at a Glance

- **Pray first** for laborers and open doors (Luke 10:2).
- **Look for the open person**, and grow along relationships (Luke 10:5–7).
- **Start where they are** — a need, a question, what's in front of them (John 4; Acts 8; Acts 17).
- **Listen before answering.**
- **Keep the gospel short and clear:** sin, Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, and belief (1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Romans 10:9).
- **Answer objections briefly** and return to the main road.
- **Don't chase rabbit holes** (2 Timothy 2:23).
- **Ask the question:** *Do you want everlasting life?*
- **Give the answer plainly:** "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31).
- **Leave in peace either way**, and trust God with the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Romans 10:14 *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

Romans 10:15 *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*