

# *Individual Evangelism (1)*

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Individual evangelism is the kind of evangelism offered to people to attract them to God and His church. The targets of this evangelism are the individuals who live with you or interact with you regularly: your coworkers, your classmates, your neighbor, or someone who you would like to guide towards God and His church. Let us look at some aspects of this type of service.

## *1- Source of Joy*

It is a joyful service. Imagine the joy you will experience when you, with God's grace, introduce someone to eternal life and salvation; you can show this person salvation from the eternal condemnation and thus change his/her entire life. As St. James says, "remember this: Whoever turns a sinner **from** the error of his way will **save him from death** and cover over a multitude of sins" ([James 5:19-21](#)).

It is the passion of all evangelism workers to bring souls to Christ. Its reward is so great. First, bringing someone to God, brings joy to the entire heaven, as the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I say to you that likewise there will be more **joy in heaven** over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" ([Luke 15:6-8](#)). Second, it brings joy to families who were praying unceasingly for the repentance of the person. Third, it brings a flood of inner peace, joy, and fulfillment to the repented person.

## *2- Time of Individual Evangelism*

While group evangelism is mostly offered at a certain time in a certain setting, individual evangelism is informal and thus it has no certain time and or a specific place. It reminds me of St. Paul's advice to Timothy, "**Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching**"([2 Timothy 4:1-3](#)).

The time of evangelism with friends, largely depends on the kind of relationship you have with them. Time is an expensive commodity; therefore, always be considerate to people's time. In addition, always make sure that you're not taking the person away from other important tasks. People, including friends, appreciate those who value and respect their time.

## *3- What is the Best Time to Evangelize?*

First, are people always ready to hear about God? Of course not, some people will give you every possible excuse to flee from you and your evangelism. When this happens, turn to prayers, since the person is not ready yet. You can pray that God opens their hearts to receive Him, and also pray that you are able

to speak to them in a way that will touch their hearts. Thus, there may come a time when a person may be willing to hear you out, even if he/she refused before. Sometimes, the same person, who refused to listen before, is now searching for anyone to talk to. This can be your time to reach out to this person.

Each person faces sorrow, losses, afflictions, or difficult circumstances. Although most people attempt to conceal their real feelings from others, but if you watch them closely, you can tell easily that they live in agony. I am not talking here about an angry person who is irritated and cannot listen to anyone. It is not a good idea to talk to or approach an angry person for many reasons. But, I am referring to a withdrawn person who needs help, but he/she cannot find the courage to talk to someone or cannot find a trustworthy person.

Once I worked for a very independent, proud boss who had no time for anything except work. One morning he was informed of his father's death. After returning to work, I approached him in a supportive way with listening ears. He started to tell me about his beautiful memories with his father. Although he felt his father showed favor to his other siblings, he still wanted to share all the wonderful thoughts he had about his father. From there he talked about his sleepless nights since his father's death. I was shocked to hear from this courageous man that he was afraid. I asked, "Afraid of what?" "Of death," he answered. Then, he stopped to listen to me talking about God, eternity, death, and eternal life. If it were not for his father's death, this interaction would have probably never taken place.

Death is not the only event that may soften people's attitude towards a spiritual talk. Turmoil, disasters, or any time of agony can soften a person's heart and pave the way to God. Those who watched closely the American people after the September 11th attack, noticed a significant surge in church attendance all over the US. While some people might become very angry with God after certain challenging circumstances arise, the hearts of many people are softened and ready to hear the gospel of the Lord.

There are other times in a person's life when he/she would like to come closer to God or wishes to hear about Him. One example is when a person feels that all doors are locked. Another example of this is when a person is struggling with many different circumstances, and he/she feels defeated. Other circumstances include: divorce, sickness of a beloved person, losing a job, substantial materialistic loss, or failure in school or at work.

In addition to individual circumstances, there are certain general times when people are in greater need than other times. Take for example, Christmas time. It is well-known fact among psychologists and counselors that Christmas time can be the depressing time of the year. Simply, people get depressed during Christmas time because they think of the members of their families, who for

example may have passed away or have terminal diseases. Remembering them brings sorrow to the heart. Some people feel lonely because they have no family to go to and no one to welcome them. Children with divorced parents sometime feel unwelcome in the fathers' home or mothers' home, and therefore they feel unwanted. Other people wish to visit their families but are unable to because of work, obligations, lack of money, or other reasons. There are many people who need love and help during time of Christmas, and this could be the best time to evangelize.

In summary, *while people are different in their willingness to accept God's gospel, there are certain times when a person is more opened and agreeable to hear about God. We, as evangelist workers, need to use this time effectively.*

### ***General Rules for Individual Evangelism***

#### ***Personal Readiness:***

- 1- Let your life style evangelizes before your words. As they used to say, **“Walk the walk before you talk the talk.”**
- 2- Always **pray before, during, and after your talk.**
- 3- **It goes without saying** that you need to pray for sometime before you approach someone.

#### ***Attitude:***

- 1- Approach others as a sinner and not as if you are a saint or better than them. The best approach is to feel you need to share with them the everlasting joyful message. You are not better than them, but the grace of God made you who you're now.
- 2- **Be meek, considerate, and loving.**
- 3- Let the person feels the love you have and also God's love.
- 4- **Never be judgmental**, even when the person is the worst sinner on earth. Learn from our Lord when He met the Samaritan woman or any other sinners. He never judged any person.

#### ***The Message:***

- 1- Talk about **the God who loves us, welcomes us, forgives us**, and who is ready to start new with us every morning; “Lord's mercies are new every morning” (Lam 3:23). Make sure to open the door of God before people. Once I met a daughter of a pastor who was far away from God. Talking to her, I discovered that her father was talking to her all the time about Hades and eternal fire that God created to torture the sinners. As a result, she did not like this God.
- 2- In a few cases, you may need to remind a person of the eternal life and the choices we have.

### ***Obstacles:***

- 1- **Do not be afraid** to talk about God. We talk about everything from our dogs and cats to food and clothing, then why not talk about God.
- 2- One great obstacle in evangelism is the **fear of rejection**. To handle this effectively, ask yourself, “What is the worst thing could happen?” The person, may say, “Thank you, I am not interested.” You have not lost anything. These words should not be taken as a personal insult. “Just ask, you have nothing to loose,” is a good rule of thumb. It applies perfectly in evangelism. I present what I have; if a person welcomes what I say, I win and they win. If not, I did not loose anything. Actually, I tried before God, and my words may work in the person sometime in the future.
- 3- Some people are afraid of evangelism because others may label them as religious, old fashion, or some other labels. I am proud to be a Christian. Some may mock you for your faith. But if you live what you preach, they have respect in their hearts for you and may wish they could be like you in your strength and conviction. I heard so many stories about high school students who were mocked because of their faithfulness to God’s commandments. Later on, the same people who were mocking the Christians came to them telling them how they would love to follow their path and asked for their guidance.
- 4- The enemy will always put obstacles in your way to hinder you from evangelizing to others. **Be courageous and a person of prayers**. Be ready to carry your cross, as our Lord Jesus said, “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt 10:38).

### ***The Approach:***

- 1- **The best approach is the one that flows naturally** in the conversation. People talk about what they did this weekend, and they may ask you about what you did. Then you may answer saying, “We had a marvelous event in the church,” and then talk about it. As others talk excitingly about their activities, you can do the same.
- 2- Learn from our Master the Lord Jesus in His dialogue with the Samaritan woman. He was sitting on the well, so He started by asking about a drink of water. St. Paul in Athens started talking to people by mentioning their “Unknown God” in their town.
- 3- With friends, you may say, “I read something nice **I’d like to share with you,**” then start talking about a story from the Gospel or a verse from the Bible.
- 4- People sometimes discuss an issue, social, psychological, or marital. As everyone gives his/her opinion, you can share your opinion **in reference to** a Biblical perspective. However, say it in an attractive, logical, compelling, yet informal way. Do not be shy to say afterwards, ‘by the way this is a Christian view.’”
- 5- **Be supportive**. Then people will like you and like to talk to you. This will give have a chance to evangelize.
- 6- When people are sad or in agony, offer your help then say, “**I will pray for you** if you believe in prayers.” People usually respond, “Yes, I do. Please pray for me.”

### ***The Message:***

- 1- To evangelize to an individual does not mean you preach until he/she finds an excuse to flee from you.
- 2- The rule is, **“walk as they walk and stop as they stop.”** Watch to see if the person is interested or not and see if he/she welcomes your talk or not. Respond according to the reaction of others to your words. If they go one-step, I go one-step forward with them.
- 3- Evangelizing does not mean you carry a big Bible around, open chapters, and read long passages. You may do that in a Bible study or with a person who has already accepted the word of God and welcomes readings from the Bible. However, to evangelize, especially for beginners, is to **mention one verse or one idea or one conclusion.** Then wait for a response. If no positive response results, stop. **Then come a few days later to say another brief spiritual thought,** and continue to do it while continuing your prayers for these people. A Hindu convert told me that she had a Christian friend who used to say one Christian phrase every week, and she continued to do that for a long time. She added, this one phrase was not judgmental or threatening or putting me down. After months she asked her Christian friend to give her a copy of the Bible to read. This was the beginning of her conversion to Christianity.
- 4- **Never attack the person, his/her current religion, or his/her cultural background.** Instead, say, “I am sharing this with you about the faith and practice of the early Christian church.”
- 5- **Do not stir arguments.** I always ask, “What is the purpose of the argument? Are you willing to learn?” If the answer is ‘Yes.’ Then, I ask to have a dialogue and not an argument and have it without emotions and in a low tone voice. This way you pave the way to a productive conversation in an atmosphere full of love and respect.
- 6- Your **messages should always respect others,** no matter how sinful they may be.
- 7- Never put any person down in your talk.
- 8- **Find something nice to say about the person** to let him/her open up for you. The more you find positive things about the person and talk to him/her about, the more the person will listen to your message.
- 9- Ask about feedback. Don’t just talk, but allow others to talk back to you.
- 10- Always talk about God who cares about them and willing to help if they ask and give Him a chance.
- 11- **Be a good listener.** If you listen to people, mostly people will listen to you when you start talking.
- 12- **Make the message interesting.** If you talk to a scientific person, make your talk scientific. If you have a person fond of philosophy, then you need to arm yourself with philosophy. In brief, relate to the person and their areas of interest.

In the following lesson, we will talk about how to handle special situations in individual evangelism. Let me leave you with the following beautiful verses about evangelism:

“And my speech and my **preaching** were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”  
[1 Corinthians 2:3-5](#) (in Context) and [1 Corinthians 2](#) (Whole Chapter).

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have **preach**ed to others, I myself should become disqualified,”  
[1 Corinthians 9:26-28](#) (in Context) and [1 Corinthians 9](#).

“We **preach**, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”  
[Colossians 1:27-29](#).