

The Compass

a tool for disciplers



Equipping Believers for Ministry

Motives for Evangelism

Conversation On the Journey

There are many different reasons why a person would do the difficult work of engaging with another person to tell them about Jesus. Some might be gripped with the terror of Hell and desire to rescue people from it. Others may be more concerned about the here and now consequences of life without Christ. Yet others might just be so excited about what Jesus has done for them that they want the whole world to know how great He is.

These are all great. In this lesson you are not ranking motives to see which is the most spiritual. Instead, help your disciple know that there are a variety of things that might motivate her to share the Gospel as a way of life. If you can show her the basic motives and help her tap into the things that most naturally inflame her heart, you will go a long way in helping her become a Christ-centered laborer.

One way to categorize these motives would be to note the focus. In evangelism, there are three different parties who might benefit, and therefore be at the heart of the motivation: God, the lost, and you. It is good and right to concern yourself with the betterment of each of these persons, including yourself, but more on that one later. Try taking your disciple through a mini Bible study on each of these and show him their proper Biblical foundations.

God: A Passionate Pursuit of His Glory

The Westminster Catechism declares: "The chief and highest end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." And so it is. What is meant by the phrase "God's glory?" The glory of God is the ultimate end not only of man, but of every created thing in the universe.

Why did He create the world? To display His glory. Psalm 19:2-4:

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Why did He save us? So He would be forever praised for His grace. Ephesians 1:4-6:

For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace.

This Week's Excursion

In this lesson you want to point out to your disciple the three basic motives for evangelism. Help him discern which one most resonates in his heart. Knowing this, can help you, and him, fan into flame a passion for the things that are most on the heart of God.



Why do we suffer? According to 1 Peter 1:7 it was so that “your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Why do we share the Gospel? To display His Glory. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

Like everything else, evangelism terminates at the glory of God. This is true in at least two ways. First, when we are sharing the Gospel, we are necessarily giving praise to God. We are telling people about God’s great love, His tender mercy, His uncompromising justice, and His sheer brilliance to devise a way to forgive us without being unjust. Even if no one ever responded in faith, proclaiming the Gospel brings glory to God.

Second, when we share the Gospel, God moves in people’s hearts to produce faith, and they believe. As a result they begin to live for Him instead of for themselves, and they give Him praise. As John Piper says, in evangelism we are raising up white-hot worshippers of God. He deserves to be praised by people from Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and even your neighborhood. As we share the Gospel, we enhance His glory. Does your disciple have a passion for God’s glory? Help them see how evangelism can fulfill this desire. Revisit the “First Things First” article in *The Compass* to get more perspective on this.

The Lost: A Heart Broken for People

Knowing her stubborn heart and seeing the judgment she would undergo, Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 13:34). In the parable of the prodigal son, God is pictured as a father rejoicing at the restoration of a lost son (Luke 15:11-31). In Romans, Paul says that he is so burdened for his lost countrymen that he wishes he could go to Hell in their place (Romans 9:1). Yearning for the protection and rescue of lost people is a powerful motivator and probably the most common reason people share their faith. It’s not hard to see why.

We readily identify with lost people, having once been lost ourselves. The evidence of destroyed lives surround us, and it’s altogether appropriate that our pity should be aroused. In fact, lack of this hurt for others is an evidence that something is wrong. Encourage your disciple to think about a handful of people he knows. What are they suffering from now? What are they likely to experience in the near future? How can Jesus help? More pointedly, what will happen to them when they die? Help them make the connection between what the Bible teaches about Hell, and the terrible possible futures of people they love. While it’s not always best to confront non-believers with the reality of hell, as Christians we dare not ignore it. C.S. Lewis said:

Remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption which you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations..It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.

Next Steps

As a homework assignment ask your disciple to spend a quiet time thinking through which of these most captures his heart. Have him read Scripture relevant to each one. Have him involve his imagination in it. What would it be like if there was a world-wide revival with people giving praise to God? What kind of changes would take place in his friends’ lives if they began a relationship with Jesus? What do you think heaven will be like? Try to imagine hearing Jesus say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”



Who, of those close to you, is it most saddening to think of as “lost.” Have you had a chance to speak to them about Christ? What have you done with the opportunity?

You: The Promise of Rewards

This is the one people are most uncomfortable with, but it’s a real motivator that the Bible offers us: There will be an accounting for our lives and rewards will be given. As Maximus put it, “What we do in this life echoes in eternity.”

Walk your disciple through 1 Corinthians 3:11-15:

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Heaven itself is a gift. We can’t earn it, and once received, we can’t lose it. We are invited to enjoy it not because of our righteousness, but because of Jesus’ righteousness imparted to us and received by faith. But on top of that there will be rewards, not based on our righteousness, but on how well we invested our lives. Though the nature of those rewards is not made clear, Paul at least gives a hint in 1 Thes 2:19: “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”

In some way, it seems that for all eternity we will have the pleasure of knowing that others are there with us because we influenced them to believe. Whatever the full nature of these rewards, we can trust God that it will be worth it.

Remember, all of these are legitimate motivators. Different people will be captured by different ones at different times in their lives. If you are wise you will speak often about each as you invite others to join with you in proclaiming “the most joyful news ever announced.”

End 

Side Trails

An excellent chapter on motivations for evangelism can be found in:

Tell it Often Tell it Well.
Mark McCloskey. New Life Resources.

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