

Digging Deeper

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15 NIV



“Evangelism” The Mission Of The Church

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The Mandate for World Evangelization

1. What does the Bible say about evangelism?

Biblical Support

Matthew 4:19

^{4:19} He said to them, "Follow me, and I will turn you into fishers of people."

Luke 24:44-47

^{24:44} Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." ^{24:45} Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures, ^{24:46} and said to them, "Thus it stands written that the Messiah would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day, ^{24:47} and repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Acts 1:8

^{1:8} But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth."

Acts 17:30-31

^{17:30} Therefore, although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, ^{17:31} because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to all by raising him from the dead."

Romans 1:16

^{1:16} For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 15:17-21

^{15:17} So I boast in Christ Jesus about the things that pertain to God. ^{15:18} For I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in order to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, ^{15:19} in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem even as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ^{15:20} And in this way I desire to preach where Christ has not been named, so as not to build on another person's foundation, ^{15:21} but as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Think about it!

1. How important is it in Matthew 4:19 that these are some of the first words of Christ to his disciples? How important is it for their understanding of what it means to follow Christ? How do they impact you? Do they have a structuring role in how you view your relationship with God?
2. In Acts 1:8 where is the gospel to be preached? What does Jesus imply that the disciples need in order to accomplish this? How does this relate to your life and how can you assist in getting the gospel to the end of the earth?
3. How does Paul describe the gospel in Romans 1:16? Is he focusing on “salvation” as entrance into relationship with God (Rom 4-5), “salvation” as life lived before God (6-8) or “salvation” as glorification in the next life (Rom 8:29)? Is it all of these or one or more of them? How does this relate to your life?
4. What kind of things does Paul boast about in Romans 15:17-21? What sorts of things do you boast about? Reread Colossians 1:23b.

2. Everyone an Evangelist

Biblical Support

Acts 8:4

^{8:4} Now those who had been forced to scatter went around proclaiming the good news of the word.

2 Corinthians 5:20

^{5:20} Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His plea through us. We plead with you on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God!”

Colossians 4:5-6

^{4:5} Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunities. ^{4:6} Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.

1 Peter 3:15-16

^{3:15} But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess. ^{3:16} Yet do it with courtesy and respect, keeping a good conscience, so that those who slander your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame when they accuse you.

Questions for Thought

1. According to Acts 8:4, what did those who were scattered as a result of the persecution in Jerusalem and the stoning of Stephen do? What do most people do today when trouble hits?
2. How does Paul refer to himself in 2 Corinthians 5:20? What does it mean to be an “ambassador”? Who is Paul representing? Who do we represent? If Paul’s message is “*Be reconciled to God,*” who has the problem, God or us?
3. Summarize Colossians 4:5-6. What would it mean to conduct ourselves with wisdom toward those who do not yet know Christ? How can we make the most of the opportunities? Do we even view our relationships with non-Christians as opportunities to love them and share Christ with them?
4. According to Col 4:6, what is more important than having the right answer when talking to others? How important is it to share Christ in a spirit of love and graciously say, “I don’t know” when you do not know the answer to a question. Be prepared to tell your friends, when they ask a tough question, that right now you do not have the answer, but you’ll get back to them on it. Then go and research an answer. That’s honest and it wins respect for the gospel.
5. In 1 Peter 3:15 what does it mean to set Christ apart as Lord in your heart? Do people often ask you about the hope you profess? This doesn’t mean that the term “hope” has to appear in their question, but does your life give them any cause to think about your God?

3. The Heart of the Gospel Message

The State of Man

Sin (Romans 3:23)

^{3:23} for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Death (Romans 6:23a)

^{6:23} For the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Certain Judgment (Hebrews 9:27)

^{9:27} And just as people are appointed to die once, and then to face judgment,

Questions for Thought

1. According to Romans 3:23 has anyone (apart from Christ; Heb 4:15) ever escaped sin? In this verse what does it mean to be a sinner? What is the “glory of God”?

2. In Romans 6:23 what is the result of sin? What does the word “payoff” connote or imply? What kind of death do you think Paul refers to?
NOTE: Death can viewed as spiritual separation from God, physical death, or the second or eternal death. Generally speaking it refers to conscience existence in a realm separated from the presence, love, joy, holiness, and power of God.
3. In Hebrews 9:27 the writer talks about what happens after we die. What does the term “appointed” mean? What is each man certain of following physical death?

4. The Holiness and Love of God

Biblical Support

1 Peter 1:15-16

^{1:15} but, like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all of your conduct, ^{1:16} for it is written, “*You shall be holy, because I am holy.*”

Hebrews 10:26

^{10:26} For if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for us, ^{10:27} but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a *fury of fire that will consume God’s enemies.*

John 3:16

^{3:16} For this is the way God loved the world: he gave his one and only Son that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Questions for Thought

1. What do you think 1 Peter 1:15-16 means when it refers to God as “holy”? Does this necessarily mean he is an ogre? Was not Christ just as holy as God the Father? So then, what does the term mean and how does it relate to God’s love? What should our response be to the recognition of God’s holiness?
2. How does God relate to those who hear the gospel and continually reject its truth and claim upon their lives? What will God carry out in regard to them? What does this teach you about him?
3. According to John 3:16, a familiar verse to many people, how did God handle his love for the world? Why did he give his one and only Son? Where do you stand in relationship to God’s gift of his Son?

5. The Need for Faith Alone and the Place of Good Works

Biblical Support

Romans 4:4-5

^{4:4} Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited due to grace but due to obligation. ^{4:5} But to the one who does not work, but believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Ephesians 2:8-9

^{2:8} For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ^{2:9} it is not of works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:10

^{2:10} For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.

Questions for Thought

1. What two things does Paul contrast in Romans 4:4-5? Explain the verse and summarize it in your own words? What does it mean for your own relationship with God?
2. In Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul says that people are saved by grace and not by works. Why, however, won't works save us? Can't we just keep trying to do better? When Paul refers to salvation as a gift, what does this imply? And, is there any room for bragging about human achievement, either in attaining salvation or living it out?
3. According to Ephesians 2:10, are works important to God? Where do they belong, however, in the "salvation equation"? Are they the "root" or the "fruit" of salvation? Is genuine saving faith ever without some evidence (James 2:14-26)?

6. The Death of Christ

Biblical Support

Romans 5:8

^{5:8} But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18

^{3:18} Because Christ also suffered once for sins, *the just for the unjust*, to bring you to God, by being put to death in the flesh but by being made alive in the spirit.

Questions for Thought

1. When did Christ die for us? In what state were we in and how many of our sins were still future to him? How great is his love!!!
2. How many times will Christ suffer for sins? Why did he suffer? In 1 Peter 3:18 the Spirit is given credit for the resurrection (see Romans 1:4). Actually, the NT writers view all three members of the trinity as involved in the resurrection (John 10:17-18; Eph 1:20).

7. Assurance of Salvation

Biblical Support

1 John 5:11-13

^{5:11} And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ^{5:12} The one who has the Son of God has this eternal life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have this eternal life. ^{5:13} I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

John 5:24

^{5:24} "I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears my message and believes the one who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life.

Questions for Thought

1. What does the word "testimony," mean in 1 John 5:11? What does it refer to and how does it impact you? What does "eternal life" mean (see John 17:3)? What is the condition for the possession of this life in 5:12? In 5:13 why does John say he has written this letter to them? What is the relationship between our assurance of our security in Christ and God's written word?
2. What is the condition for eternal life in John 5:24? Do people just grow into having eternal life or is there, according to this verse, a definitive "event" that takes place? NOTE: A person may certainly grow in their understanding of what happened to them when they were saved, but from God's perspective, there is clearly a moment before salvation and a moment after entrance into a saving relationship with him.

8. The Heart of a Gospel Lifestyle

Biblical Support

Matthew 5:16

^{5:16} In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honor to your Father in heaven.

1 Corinthians 10:31

^{10:31} So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

Philippians 1:9-11

^{1:9} And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight ^{1:10} so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, ^{1:11} filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Titus 1:16

^{1:16} They profess to know God but with their deeds they deny him, since they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed.

Titus 2:5, 10

^{2:5} to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited...^{2:10} not to pilfer, but showing all good faith, in order to do credit to the teaching of God our Savior in everything.

Titus 3:8

^{3:8} This saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on such truths, so that those who have placed their faith in God may be intent on engaging in good works. These things are good and beneficial for all people.

Questions for Thought

1. According to Matthew 5:16 how can we make God known to people? How does this relate to Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31?
2. How does Paul pray for the love of the Philippians? In what ways does he want it to grow? What is the purpose of this? NOTE: There is both an intermediate and an ultimate purpose involved here? What are they? What does the term “filled” imply about our Christian lives in 1:11? Some people barely make it through each day. Is this the way Paul envisioned the Christian life?
3. In Titus 1:16, what do sinful deeds actually end up solidifying? Can true and pure belief exist in a person who constantly lives in a way that is evil?
4. According to Titus 2:5, 10 what do good deeds do? What kind of character traits or virtues does Paul say should adorn Christian women and all Christians for that matter?
5. What is the outcome of good works in Titus 3:8?
6. In 1 Peter 5:11 how does Peter talk about the works of the flesh? What does it mean to be in a battle? Have you experienced this? How do you deal with it? Even though some non-Christians malign the Christian way, we ought still to do good deeds so that when Christ returns these

“maligners” may give glory to God admitting that he was at work in his people.

9. Dealing with Sincere Objections

Wasn't the Bible written by Men...

Yes, the Bible was written by men. But, this does not mean that it necessarily erred in what it says, for not everything men say is in error, spiritually or otherwise. Second, the testimony of Scripture is not just that man wrote it, but that man “carried along by the Holy Spirit” wrote it (2 Peter 1:20-21). The superintending work of the Spirit guarantees its truthfulness. While there are problems in interpretation at times, and certain archaeological and historical issues still remain to be solved, the highly spiritual nature of the Bible, its diverse, yet consistent testimony to the character of God and man, and the way of salvation, as well as the number of perplexing historical issues that have already been satisfactorily solved—combined with the overwhelming testimony of church history regarding its spiritual power—help to demonstrate its authenticity as ultimately a book from God.

I Believe That Jesus Was A Good Man, But...

Everyone should believe that Jesus was a good man, lest they reveal something of their own depravity. How can someone call evil a man who loved others so deeply and sacrificed so much for them? The question is not, “Was Jesus a good man?” Rather, the question is, “Was he *only* a good man?” We may say a few things in response. First, he never claimed to be just a good man. Second, the record indicates that he claimed much more, indeed, he claimed that he had a special and unique relationship with the Father (John 8:58). Third, he did miracles and raised the dead. From this we would at least have to admit that he was no *normal man*. Fourth, he claimed he was the only way to God and that all other ways were dead ends (John 14:6). These are not the claims of a good man, for then he would have been a liar; no man, who is simply a good man, can be the *only* way to God. Finally, the records state that he rose from the dead and both the existence of the church and the personal claims of Christians (down through the ages) *to know him* (not just about him) argue strongly for the truthfulness of his claims.

What About Those Who Have Never Heard...

The fate of those who have never heard is an important question which has recently been at the forefront in the thinking of many people. Let me say again that I think this is an important question. I must also tell you that those who have asked it of me, if they were really concerned, should have showed more personal interest in making their own hearts right with the Lord. Since they often do not, I regard their asking as only a red herring in the discussion.

To answer the question, then, we know in a Biblical worldview that ***no one will ever come to God apart from the merits of Christ***. What we do not know is if God in his infinite mercy has shown himself *savingly* to others apart from missionary preaching. Certainly he has preserved people and prepared them for the hearing of the gospel. Again, he may have even brought people to himself, in the Bible and nowadays, without the aid of a human instrument. But we must

stress that this in no way undermines our need to carry the gospel to our neighbors around the world. People perish for not understanding the gospel, and this fact, understood in the proper way, is our responsibility. How shall they believe in one they have not heard? And how shall they hear unless someone is sent (Rom 10:14)? We will be held accountable for our efforts to reach all men with the gospel.

Don't All Roads Lead to God...

The answer to this question is simply “no.” Not all roads lead to God. If we make any claim about truth, we believe that there is also error. This cannot be avoided. If we believe there is truth and error, we believe that our minds are able to grasp the difference. If this is true, we believe in the law of “non-contradiction.” In short, we believe that our minds can grasp truth, at least to some degree, namely, to the degree that no two statements that affirm opposite claims about God, in the same way and at the same time, can in fact be true. Either both are false or one is true and the other false. Since this is true, and most religions, including the world’s great religions offer competing theologies about God, they cannot all be true. Either they’re all false, or one is true, or each contains some elements of truth that require yet another synthesis. Therefore, not all roads lead to God.