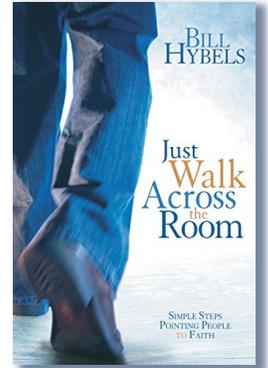


Big Idea: living in 3D

Effective, relationally based evangelism can only happen when Christ followers are truly engaged in the lives of people around them. This means that they choose to *Develop* friendships, *Discover* life stories and *Discern* appropriate next steps based on the Holy Spirit's promptings - in other words, live in 3D.



Develop Friendships (It's not about *doing* evangelism but *being* a friend)

- The reality for most Christians, the longer they have been a Christian - the less interaction they have with non-Christians. It's easier to remain in our comfortable Christian circles than venture out and the idea is that Evangelism is done by clergy or missionaries. Evangelism, however, isn't simply left up to superstars - its everyone's job. Because we fear telling people about Jesus, we barter with God saying; "I'll do the service work (pour tea, attend meetings, build houses, etc.) just don't make me *evangelize*."
- So, we fill our lives with ONLY Christian stuff that which is protected and predictable -safe- with no interference from non-Christians.
- But God treasures people. Opening yourself to God's Spirit allows you to love what God loves. Thus, it should be that the longer one walks with Christ the more one loves, the more outsiders one embraces. The challenge is to know the person next door, to hear the story of the lady at the pharmacy and to reach out to the person in the cubicle next to yours.
- "Jesus truly believed in the power of God to transform human lives - a belief that motivated his insatiable pursuit of all sorts of people at all points on the spiritual spectrum."
- The dream is one of RADICAL INCLUSIVENESS.
- Are we fulfilling Jesus dream of becoming a community of loving, outwardly-focused, Christ sharing people?
- "The astounding truth ... is that as we work to develop friendships with anyone and everyone we meet, we just might be the one the Holy Spirit uses."

Discovering Stories (People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care)

- In order to do this, we need to create "proximity points" - places where we can come into contact with non-Christians on a regular basis. For most of us this is relatively easy as we realize the opportunities we have in the office, university, local shops, gym and construction sites.
- Once you have built the friendships - the next step is to intentionally discover their stories. What life has been like for them? Hearing their dreams and their hopes.
- In doing this it is important to remain who you are - God has hard-wired you to be who you are for a reason. People have different styles of sharing their lives. (confrontational, intellectual, interpersonal, invitational, serving or testimonial). You do not need to be more aggressive, more verbal, more dynamic or more anything other than who God made you to be.
- Paul said, "To the weak I became weak to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 1 Cor 9:22
 - Paul here is talking about finding points of commonality with those around you. These are shared interests, similar life stories or life stages.
 - In these conversations it is important to be sensitive and keep doors open. Constantly try to hear more about their story rather than sharing your own. Be radically inclusive and accept them just as they are without being judgmental.
- We can discover the stories of Anyone -Anywhere
- "As Christ followers, we're accountable for regularly moving in circles with people far from God, uncovering their stories with compassion and grace, and then naturally and consistently making ourselves available when God opens a door of opportunity."
- The reality is that life is messy, and the stories people share are often uncomfortable and difficult. We are called to take the risk of side-lining our own agenda to be a part of what God is doing in their lives.

Discern Next Steps. (Wait for God to open the door - don't force it!)

- In every case these friendships and conversations will reach a point of decision. Will you take it to the next level or walk away?
- Watch for the crystal-clear signals people send -often unintentionally- that inform you about their needs ... and from this you can discern the next steps. It could be a timely word, a well asked question, lending a book, a helping hand, or an invitation to an event. You'll never know what the impact will be until you offer them.

- Our agendas take a back seat as we allow for God to 'interrupt' our lives with needs. This happens more and more as we view ourselves as 'resource providers', living by the question, 'How can I best assist this person?' Thus, our focus is what they need - not on ourselves. And there's no rush! We can patiently wait until they are ready to ask for help. We never know where these interactions will lead - to a long-term involvement where we get to be companions on a journey. Long term it's the 'be with' factor that makes a difference. It is important that we are committed to 'being with' members of our social groups - doing life with them and sharing journeys with them. This will result in us being available when God's work in them starts to be made evident.
- In all this it is vital to listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings in order to discern what the course of action or next steps should be.



Homework...

Who Are Your Neighbors?

1. Write the names of four of your current neighbors in the blanks provided.
2. Place a number beside each family representing how many years they've lived there.
3. Note what occupations are represented in each family.
4. Which of your neighbors are Christians? Draw a cross next to the names.
5. Circle the names of the people who have ever been inside of your home.
6. Place a star beside the ones with whom you've had meaningful conversation in the past month.

Families (Name)	Occupation	Years known

- Did you know as much as you thought you did?
- Did you confirm just how little you did know?
- Based on this homework exercise, what do you think the Holy Spirit is moving you to do?
- How can you better live a 3D life?