

Simple Evangelism Series  
**Your Bible Is Your Best Text**  
By Bill Denton

**INTRODUCTION**

A. As we continue our series on simple evangelism, I want challenge you to think about what evangelism is all about, and how we know what to teach people

1. During the 1950s and 1960s, and even well into the 1970s, churches of Christ were among the fastest growing churches in America
  - a. at some point in there, we were actually #1 on the list
  - b. it was a time of energetic evangelism, with many churches baptizing over 100 people every year
2. Then something happened, and since around 1980, evangelism has declined
  - a. those are all rough estimates, so don't hold me to a specific date
  - b. you can also still find exceptions to the rule – during the heyday of evangelism some churches barely grew at all, and today there are still some highly evangelistic churches
  - c. what others are doing really doesn't matter nearly as much as what we're doing, and we would all admit that evangelism needs a boost

B. For a time, there were any number of evangelistic methods in use, and that were taught in seminars, workshops, and training classes

1. Jule Miller published a filmstrip study
2. The Open Bible Study Series was widely used
3. Bob Danklefsen's materials from White's Ferry Road were popular
4. The Gospel Advocate had a Bible study series
5. There were several individuals who travelled the country teaching their own unique methods of reaching the lost
6. Some of you may have attended such training and participated in reaching the lost with the gospel through one or more of these methods

C. I have some opinions about some things that happened along the way that nobody could foresee

1. We burned people out by fanning the evangelistic flames into unnatural activity
2. We inadvertently communicated to people that you had to be an expert or be trained by an expert in order to know how to reach the lost
3. With almost competitive emphasis on converting people, evangelism became a game to play, not a serious part of our faith to live
4. We even came face-to-face with our own questions, limitation, doubts, fears, questions, and ignorance – and a lot of Christians didn't like it
5. Did all these things happen to everybody in every place? -- NO! But they happened to enough that evangelism began to decline until we have today's situation where evangelism is hard to get going

D. In all of this, I think we forgot the basis for evangelism – the text that makes it possible to reach the lost

1. Methods became more important than the message
2. Ritual became more important than faith development (HBRCB)

E. So tonight I want to talk about the Bible – it is our best text to reach the lost

1. The Bible is the best training tool for those who want to be evangelistic
2. The Bible is the best resources for teaching
3. We need to restore the place and power of scripture for Christians who want to reach out, and for the lost who want to be saved

## I. A FEW IMPORTANT PASSAGES TO CONSIDER

### A. Romans 10:5-17

5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." 8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." 14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" 16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. NASU

1. I don't believe that studying the Bible is the only thing that contributes to faith development
  - a. the example of faithful people helps
  - b. life experience that confirms what the Bible teaches helps
  - c. reasoning and thinking through the failure or shortcomings of other religious teaching or philosophy helps
2. But I will say this: nobody can believe properly unless they are taught the inspired word of God
  - a. the Bible is God revealing himself to us
  - b. this is what God wants us to know about ourselves, about him, about life, about Jesus, about eternity, about salvation – and more

## B. Romans 1:16-17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." NASU

1. This is one of the most important statements in all the Bible
2. The gospel is the power to save
3. That statement has huge implications to understand exactly what we must communicate to the people around us

## C. 2 Peter 1:1-11

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. NASU

1. Look at verse 3 for a moment
  - a. if you know Jesus Christ, and the message of salvation through him, you've got everything that pertains to life and godliness
  - b. you don't need anything extra, no latter day revelations, no superseding prophets – just what is revealed in the Bible you hold in your hand
2. You can stop looking for secret information, hidden mysteries, something new or something available to a select few people
3. You've got all you need to please God – but understand it's a lifetime venture

D. There are other passages that might contribute to this line of thought, but this is enough to make the point: the Bible is the complete text for teaching those who do not know God or have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ

## II. HOW DO WE MAKE THE BIBLE THE BEST TEXT FOR REACHING OTHERS?

A. We've got to develop a more positive attitude toward the Bible

1. To do that, we need to make a slight change in how we talk about the Bible
  - a. we need to stop telling everybody else that they ought to study the scriptures
  - b. we need to start telling everybody else how we're studying the Bible, what we're learning, and how it's helping us
2. People don't really want to know that you think they should study the Bible, they might be interested to know that it's helping you
  - a. that's really the best way to recommend anything
  - b. if you can't demonstrate how something is helping you, why should I think it will help me?

B. Learn how to relate Bible characters, Bible events, Bible teachings, etc., to today's people, events, needs, etc.

1. For example: David turns out to be a terrific way to help people who are depressed, or who are struggling with sin
  - a. he shows us that even good, godly people can struggle with life
  - b. he shows us the power of turning one's mind to God
  - c. he shows us the power of repentance and forgiveness
  - d. his psalms are comforting and encouraging
2. The teachings of the Bible largely concern truths that are universal
  - a. they help us understand the kind of personal character that pleases both God and other people
  - b. godly morals and ethics work regardless which age we live in

C. Learn how to share more than the negative elements of biblical teaching

1. It's been said that sometimes people know us more by what we don't believe in than what we do believe in
2. Sure, sometimes it's good to stand against some things, but what do you stand for? Amazingly, that question will stump a lot of Christians, and that's really sad

D. Most religious arguments could either be eliminated altogether, or significantly reduced, if we would study the Bible and not argue our religious opinions

1. Besides, what will get a person to heaven – believing the same opinions that you believe, or believing in God's word
2. It might shock some people to know that their opinions aren't too important

E. Of course, to do what I'm suggesting in this lesson, it demands that you are a reader and a student of God's word

1. Do you have a regular time to just read the Bible – not study, just read
  - a. you'd be amazed at how much information you will pick up reading
  - b. reading is a good prerequisite to study
  - c. reading allows you to digest God's word as a whole before you start to take it apart in study
  
2. Do you have a regular time to study the Bible
  - a. Bible study is hard work – which is precisely why some people don't do it, or do it badly
  - b. Bible study will open up God's word to you in a continually fresh and new way

F. Following these suggestions, and focusing on the passages such as the ones we looked at earlier, you will have a much better chance of communicating reasonably with other people

1. That, after all, is really our goal isn't it
  - a. not out-arguing people
  - b. not being abrasive or hard-headed with them
  
2. We're trying to earn the right to speak about God
  - a. you don't automatically have that right
  - b. you have to give people a reason to open up and let you speak about God, about Jesus Christ, about why other people should believe

## CONCLUSION

A. Here's the point of this lesson: The Bible is your best text for reaching others

1. It's all you need
  
2. It's God's power to save
  
3. It's the best source for an informed faith

B. Believe all that yourself and it will transform how you reach others

C. Invitation