

How To Reach Others With The Gospel

Mark 16:15-16 is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. Though this commission was given exclusively to the apostles, there certainly are principles that apply to us. God wants people to be saved and the gospel is the way to reach them. But how do we reach others with the gospel? There is more to be done in this regard than just standing up in the pulpit and preaching (though this is a legitimate way). Not everyone can stand up in the pulpit and preach. But each one of us can do different things to help reach others with the gospel.

Word of Mouth

Paul said he taught the brethren in Thessalonica by word of mouth (2 Thessalonians 2:15). This is the most obvious way of reaching others with the gospel. This can be done either publicly or privately — “from house to house” (Acts 20:20). Public teaching can be done in the assembly, as Paul preached in Troas when the disciples “were gathered together to break bread” (Acts 20:7). One may also set up a regularly scheduled time in a public place to teach the gospel, as Paul did in Ephesus as he was “reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9). Public teaching may also be done in an impromptu setting, like when Paul was in Athens and taught “in the market place ... with those who happened to be present” (Acts 17:16-17). Teaching may also be done privately. When Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos, “they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). When Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch, the study was conducted only between the two of them in the chariot (Acts 8:30-35).

Written Word

In addition to teaching by word of mouth, Paul also taught the brethren in Thessalonica by letter (2 Thessalonians 2:15). The writing that we use to teach others could be anything from religious articles to notes of encouragement. Writing certainly has its challenges. It requires effort for one to ponder, search out, and arrange material in order to “find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly” (Ecclesiastes 12:9-10). But writing also has its advantages. Thoughts can sometimes be better expressed through writing (2 Corinthians 10:9-11) and can provide a lasting resource for the reader (2 Peter 1:12-15).

Sharing Material

The brethren in Colossae were told to share the letter they received from Paul (Colossians 4:16). Sharing material, as these brethren were told to do, allows us to take advantage of the work that others have done. We can share material today in the form of bulletins, tracts, CDs, material available online, and more.

Supporting Preachers

In addition to churches (2 Corinthians 11:8), individuals can help support gospel preachers. In writing about individual responsibility, Paul said, “The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him” (Galatians 6:6). The more support a preacher receives, the more he is able to devote himself to the word (Acts 18:1-5). John wrote about the importance of supporting those who are doing the work of preaching. Not only does it help the preacher to receive his living from the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14), but it also provides the one sending the support the opportunity to “be fellow workers with the truth” (3 John 8). Not everyone has the financial ability to help support a gospel preacher, but it is a good work for those who are able to do so.

Teaching By Example

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). People should be able to see Christ living in us (Galatians 2:20). Our good example can then lead to opportunities to teach, as we are called to make a defense for our faith and explain why we are willing to be different than the world (1 Peter 3:13-15). However, a good example alone is not enough. There are good examples of upright behavior and character to be found among some non-Christians. Good examples do not save anyone — the gospel does (Romans 1:16). Therefore, while we should be good examples, we should also be prepared to teach.

Offering An Invitation

There may be times when we feel unable to teach others ourselves. There may be a number of reasons for this. But even when we think we are not capable of adequately sharing the truth with others, we can invite them (either to the assembly or a Bible study) in order to put them in contact with another teacher. This is what Philip did with Nathanael. When Nathanael was skeptical about Philip’s claim about Jesus, Philip simply said, “Come and see” (John 1:45-46). We can invite people to “come and see” today.

The gospel is “the power of God for salvation” (Romans 1:16). Those who do not hear it or obey it will be lost (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Therefore, we should do what we can, using some of the tactics we have considered in this article, in order to reach others with the gospel.

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