

What Do I Say When They Ask Me the Way?

Sharing Biblical Basics with Not-Yet Christians

by Philip M. Bickel

Session 1

I. Discussion Question.

How is personal witnessing like cooking a meal for a friend?



II. A Witness Appetizer: John 3:16 (from Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ).

GOOD NEWS!

- Put your name in the blanks.

For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer, die, and rise in victory for _____, so that believing in Jesus as the Savior from sin, _____ shall not perish, but _____ shall have everlasting life.

Paraphrase of John 3:16

This is God's promise to you! (He cannot lie. Titus 1:2)

III. The Main Meal: The First Course.

Direct casual conversation to a spiritual dialog.

- Ask about their spiritual background.
[Listen and discover their interests.]
- Share your personal testimony.
[Relate your experiences to theirs.]

C. Ask diagnostic questions.

[Discover their beliefs with one or all of these questions. Analyze their replies.]

- Do you consider yourself to be a Christian?
- How does a person become a Christian?
- Do you know for certain that you are going to be with God in heaven after you die?
- If God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" what would you say?

D. Build a bridge to further dialog.

- If they express uncertainty, reply, "I have good news for you. In fact, I would go so far as to say that in the next sixty seconds you will hear the greatest news you have ever heard."
- A person becomes a Christian through God's free gift. Becoming a Christian is not earned or deserved.
- Heaven is a free gift. Many people assume that if they are ever going to get to heaven, they have to earn it. But heaven is absolutely a free gift—it is unearned and undeserved. It's free. Isn't that amazing?
- Would you like to learn how to receive this free gift?

IV. Seasonings for Flavor.

A. Bible verses.

- "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23
- "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:13

B. Illustrations.

C. Stories from your own experience.

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Session 2

I. Discussion Question.

When witnessing, what concepts do we need to explain that people may consider distasteful?

II. Practice items from last week's session.

III. A Witness Appetizer.

- Sin
- Sorrow
- Savior
- Spirit



IV. The Main Meal: Second Course.

Describe the human predicament.

- Every person is a sinner.
- Every person is born spiritually dead.
- No one is able to save his/her self.

V. Seasonings.

A. Bible verses.

1. "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matt. 5:48
2. "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6

3. "All have sinned and fall short of God's glory." Romans 3:23
4. "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." James 2:10
5. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 14:12

B. Illustrations.

1. Sin includes not just actions, but our words and thoughts. See Matt. 5:21-22, 27-29.
2. Sins are not only bad things that we do, but good things that we could have done but failed to do.
3. How many times each day do we break God's laws? Psychologists tell us we forget 99% of all the things we have done wrong. We suppress them, because they are unpleasant to think about.
4. Suppose someone could get by with sinning only three times a day. We would consider that person a saint. But even if he were that good, it would add up to 1000 offenses against God's law every year of his life. Our sin total is much higher.
5. We try to make ourselves appear by comparing ourselves to other people. But God doesn't call us to compare ourselves to others. He tells us to compare ourselves to Him.
6. Back in school, we always wondered what the passing grade was. God does not grade on the curve. He expects us to be holy, perfect, and sinless.
7. We couldn't make an omelet out of five good eggs and one rotten egg and expect it to be acceptable. Even less can we serve up our lives to good, which may have many things in them that people would call good, and yet are filled with deeds and thoughts that are rotten, and expect them to be acceptable to God.

C. Stories from your own experience.

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Session 3

I. Discussion this dilemma.

Consider the unbelievers you know. Do some think God will wink at evil? Why? Do some live in dread of His punishment? Why?

II. Practice items from last week's session.

III. A Witness Appetizer: The Roman Road.

- A. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23
- B. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23
- C. God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8
- D. If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:9-10

IV. The Main Meal: Third Course.

Describe the God's predicament.

- A. God is just--therefore must punish sin.
- B. God is merciful--doesn't want to punish us.
- C. This creates a dilemma which God solved through Jesus Christ.



V. Seasonings.

A. Bible verses.

1. "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Jeremiah 31:3
2. "He [God] does not leave the guilty unpunished." Exodus 34:7
3. "Nothing impure will ever enter it [heaven], nor will anyone who dies what is shameful or deceitful." Revelation 21:27

B. Illustrations.

1. Picture an orchestra preparing for a concert and one instrument is out of tune. The conductor cannot allow the instrument to continue as it is. Spiritually, we are out of tune with God. He is morally perfect. We are morally imperfect. Just as it was necessary to cast the discordant instrument out of the orchestra, so it is necessary for the God, who is in perfect harmony with good, to cast out sinful, discordant human beings.
2. People realize that if we have done wrong that we should be punished. Suppose a judge had a criminal in court who had, let's say, 100 offenses against the law with evidence to support the charges. What would you say if the judge simply dismissed the criminal and let him go, because he said he was sorry and would never do it again? He cannot simply excuse their crime. Justice must be satisfied. God, who is more honest and fair than any human judge, must do the same.
3. God loves us, not because of what we are, but because of what he is. "God is love." 1 John 4:8
4. People ask, how can a loving God condemn people to hell? They assume that human beings are not so bad and God is only love. But recognizing that God is holy and that we are far from holy, the question we ought to ask is, "How can a perfect, holy God allow us sinful, rebellious people into his perfect heaven."

C. Stories from your own experience.

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Session 4

I. Discussion this dilemma.

Consider the unbelievers you know. Do some think God will wink at evil? Why? Do some live in dread of His punishment? Why?

II. Practice items from last week's session.

III. A Witness Appetizer: SOS.

- A. The Law **S**hows us **O**ur **S**in.
- B. The Gospel **S**hows us **O**ur **S**avior.

IV. The Main Meal: Fourth Course.

Share how Christ solves both our predicament and God's.

- A. Who Jesus is—both God and a human being.
- B. What Jesus did—He paid for our sins and purchased a place for us in heaven.
- C. What Jesus offers—the free gifts of forgiveness, a living relationship with God, and eternal life

V. Seasonings.

A. Bible verses.

- 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us." John 1:1, 18



- 2. "Thomas said to him [Jesus], 'My Lord and my God!'" John 20:28
- 3. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16
- 4. "We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6
- 5. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23
- 6. "It is finished." John 19:30

B. Illustrations.

- 1. God saves us from sin death and hell by the work of Christ on the cross and the empty tomb. That is grace. The word 'grace' can stand for God's Riches At Christ's Expense.
- 2. God knows everything we have done, all our sins thoughts and motives. Picture all these things recorded in this book in my right hand. If God judges us on what is recorded about us, we will be declared guilty. The book is like a weight holding us down from rising to live with God. But at the cross a great transaction took place. God took all of our sins and failures and placed them on his own Son. Jesus is our substitute who paid the full penalty for our sins.
- 3. On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." He didn't mean, "My life is over." The Greek work he used (*tetelestai*) means, "the goal has been reached," and "The debt has been paid."
- 4. Our good works cannot add to the gift of salvation. Suppose a friend gave you a beautiful gift, and suppose your response to the gift were to pull out \$5 to help pay for the expense. What an insult it would be. You must accept gifts freely. If you pay even a penny, it is no longer a gift. It is the same with salvation. Even a small attempt to pay for salvation forfeits your receiving it. Christ's gift of salvation is all him and none of me.

C. Stories from your own experience.

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Session 5

I. Discussion. Consider the unbelievers you know. What would they be likely to say, if you asked them, “What do you think about Jesus?” Do they know who Jesus is, what He did, and what He offers? What important details require explanation?

II. Practice items from last week’s session.

III. The Main Meal: Fifth Course.

Share how one receives the gift of salvation.

- A. Repentance for your sins is not merely being disappointed that you were caught. It is being truly sorry for your disobedience and desiring to change your ways.
- B. Saving faith is not simply knowing about what Christ has done. It is believing with all your heart that what he did applies to you.
- C. Saving faith is not simply trusting in God to help you through the trials of this life. It is trusting in Christ alone who has won for you the gift of eternal life.
- D. Repentance and faith are created in us by God the Holy Spirit through the message of salvation.



IV. Seasonings.

A. Bible verses.

- 1. “You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” James 2:19

- 2. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.” Ephesians 2:8a
- 3. “They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ Acts 16:31
- 4. “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:29
- 5. “Faith comes by hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17
- 6. “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:3

B. Illustrations.

- 1. Faith is the key that opens the door of heaven. But just we may have many keys, but only one will open a particular door, so we need to identify exactly what kind of faith brings us into a saving relationship with God. Saving faith is NOT:
 - a. merely believing there is a God.
 - b. intellectual agreement with the historical facts about Jesus.
 - c. trusting God for health, protection, and other daily needs.
- 2. Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the gifts of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Without Christ, you are like someone rowing a severely leaking boat. As your row boat is sinking, Jesus pulls alongside in a seaworthy cabin cruiser and offers to rescue you. Now the question is: Will you stay in your sinking boat, or will you accept His invitation and step on to His rescue ship. That is what faith is like. It will do no good to say, “I believe” and stay in your boat. Nor will it help to keep one foot in your boat and one foot on the deck of Jesus’ ship. To trust in Christ means to wholly transfer all your trust and hope from yourself to Him.
- 3. Faith is not something we conjure up from within our souls. Faith is generated by hearing the word of God. It arises from the very promises of God, as we hear how much God has loved us through the saving work of Christ.

C. Stories from your own experience.

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Session 6

I. Discussion faith.

Consider the unbelievers you know. How do they understand the term faith? In what are they putting their trust??

II. Practice items from last week's session.

III. The Main Meal: Sixth Course.

Listen to their response and clarify where they now stand.

A. Does this make sense to you?

B. Would you like to receive God's gift of eternal life?

- + If they reply "No," discuss the next step they could take to explore the truth of the Bible and the Gospel.
- + If they reply "Yes," follow the points below.

C. Let me clarify what this would mean.

1. Transferring trust from other "gods" to Christ alone.
2. Willingness to repent and turn from sinful practices.

D. Lead in a prayer thanking God for the gift of salvation and dedicating life to Christ as Savior and Lord.

E. Assurance of salvation.



IV. Seasonings.

A. Bible verses.

1. "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12
2. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9
3. "I tell you the truth, he who believes has eternal life." John 6:47
4. "There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:10

B. Illustrations.

1. To help the person clarify what they now believe, you may choose to repeat these diagnostic questions:
 - a. Do you know for certain that you are going to be with God in heaven?
 - b. If God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?", what would you say?
2. If the person is not willing to receive the gift of salvation, you have not failed as a witness. Remember that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, a miracle that He accomplishes according to His timing. Focus on what your friend has gained from your chat, and discuss what steps he/she should take next.
3. Repentance means to turn around, to do a 180. When we turn back to God, we are amazed to discover that He is right there, for He has been seeking for us all along.
4. Repentance also includes willingness to turn from one's sinful habits. If you take your car to the shop for repairs, you have to turn over the keys to the mechanic for him to fix anything. Are you willing to turn over the keys of your life to Christ? Are there any sinful practices in your life that you are unwilling to relinquish rather than trust in Christ?

C. Stories from your own experience.

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Master Outline

“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4

I. The First Course: From casual conversation to spiritual dialog.

- A. Ask about their spiritual background.
[Listen and discover their interests.]
- B. Share your personal testimony.
[Relate your experiences to theirs.]
- C. Ask diagnostic questions.
[Discover their beliefs with one or all of these questions. Analyze their replies.]
 1. Do you consider yourself to be a Christian?
 2. How does a person become a Christian?
 3. Do you know for certain that you are going to be with God in heaven?
 4. If God were to ask you, “Why should I let you into my heaven?” what would you say?

II. Second Course: The human predicament.

- A. Every person is a sinner.
- B. Every person is born spiritually dead.
- C. No one is able to save his/her self.

III. Third Course: God’s predicament.

- A. God is just--therefore must punish sin.
- B. God is merciful--doesn’t want to punish us.



- C. This creates a dilemma which God solved through Jesus Christ.

IV. Fourth Course: Christ solves both our predicament & God’s.

- A. Who Jesus is—both God and a human being.
- B. What Jesus did—He paid for our sins and purchased a place for us in heaven.
- C. What Jesus offers—the free gifts of forgiveness, a living relationship with God, and eternal life

V. Fifth Course: How to receive the gift of salvation.

- A. Repentance for your sins is not merely being disappointed that you were caught. It is being truly sorry for your disobedience and desiring to change your ways.
- B. Saving faith is not simply knowing about what Christ has done. It is believing with all your heart that what he did applies to you.
- C. Saving faith is not simply trusting in God to help you through the trials of this life. It is trusting in Christ alone who has won for you the gift of eternal life.
- D. Repentance and faith are created in us by God the Holy Spirit through the message of salvation.

VI. Sixth Course: Their response.

- A. Does this make sense to you?
- B. Would you like to receive God’s gift of eternal life?
(If they answer “no”, discuss steps they could take next.)
- C. Let me clarify what this would mean.
 1. Transferring trust from other “gods” to Christ alone.
 2. Willingness to repent and turn from sinful practices.
- D. Lead in a prayer thanking God for the gift of salvation and dedicating life to Christ as Savior and Lord.
- E. Assurance of salvation.