

LIGHT UP YOUR WORLD

Stories for *Easier Evangelism* (Part 12)

“Bridge Building Qualities” (Acts 8:26-39)

INTRO: We come to final lesson in our series ... I pray it has made evangelism somewhat easier, esp. in what success looks like. Closing with two examples of how to engage in a spiritual conversation. Last lesson the woman in John 4 with a dark past. Today, conversation is between Philip and a man from N. Africa. Read Acts 8:26-39... Quite a story of God-given opportunity that Philip engaged with boldness and clarity to explain the Gospel (all about Jesus) to someone open and interested.

PHILIP (Acts 6:5) - Philip, the disciple and Philip, Layman, Deacon, Evangelist. Here, the layman evangelist is in mind.

J.R. Stott ...

2 Cor. 5:17-20 (What we are to be) God used willing and available Philip to build a bridge to introduce Jesus to a lost man, “reconciled” (5 x’s in 3 verses, us, we). All ministers of reconciliation—building bridges to Christ. How build bridges? Largely depends on where a person is in their relational journey with God.

LOST DIAGRAM ...



Philip’s approach is very similar to Jesus in John 4. In this story we find 6 Bridge-building qualities to connect lost people to God. (How we are to do it). A powerful story of how God works in the lost to get them the gospel and in the lives of the saved to get them to share the gospel. Context of Acts 8:1-5... MAP ...

BRIDGE-BUILDING QUALITIES TO MAKE PERSONAL EVANGELISM SLIGHTLY LESS DIFFICULT—6 KEY WORDS:

1. **SENSITIVITY/AWARENESS** (v. 26) — Note: This encounter occurs outside corporate worship. In Jesus’ ministry and early church evangelism *rarely* took place in worship context (10 of 132...). Philip was sensitive to the voice of God and His leading. I think we force too much evangelism. Never forced by Jesus or early church. Almost always in flow of life. I truly believe if we’ll be sensitive and aware, God at work (Jn. 16:7-11; 6:44) God’s Spirit will lead us to those who are ready to hear. Pray to see opportunity (Col. 4:3; 1 Cor. 16:9).
2. **AVAILABILITY/OBEDIENCE** (vv. 27-30) – Once you know, then be available and willing to go—all about obedience. Again, he hears from God and eagerly (“ran”) and instantly obeys. This requires great courage.

3. **INITIATIVE** (v. 30) — *Another note: Evangelism in the early church most often initiated by a believer.* Philip (Jn. 1:45) has a brilliant approach—asking a question, then listening. In our secular, post-modern, post-Christian and anti-Christian society, asking is less offensive than telling. Here are some great open-ended questions to consider... Answer? Hmmm...principle!
4. **GRACIOUSNESS** (vv. 31-34) – Philip is so gracious, tactful, courteous, respectful, etc. Anything but judgmental, condemning, obnoxious, offensive. The gospel (cross) is offensive (1 Cor. 1:18-25; Gal. 5:11, Col. 4), but the messenger must never be. Love like Jesus.
5. **FOCUS** (v. 35) – Philip focused on the issue—Jesus—the gospel. No escaping—to be His effective witness, we must understand who Jesus is and His gospel message. Stay focused. Don’t get distracted by social issues (abortion, definition of marriage, etc.). Make it all about Jesus. Is it possible that Philip included *his* story of how Jesus had changed him? Why have you personally chosen to follow Jesus?
6. **RESPONSE** (vv. 36-39) – Jesus and His message demands a response (maybe not always at that moment). 3-fold response: belief, baptism, rejoicing. No coercing, forcing, manipulation—just opportunity to decide. We are not alone—Holy Spirit is with us (vv. 29, 39).

SERIES SUMMARY:

1. Expect Opportunity – sensitive, aware, available
2. Engage in Conversation – initiate (with questions)
3. Explain the Gospel – Grace & Truth (need...answer)
4. Enjoy the Joy – Rejoice (Lk. 15)

ILLUS: Once upon a time . . .

CONC: God has placed you where He has placed no one else. Light up *your* world. No one has the relationships you have, or goes to the places (office, school, grocery) you go in a moment in time—we must be sensitive, available, take initiative, be gracious, focus on Jesus, and let them respond. Let’s be like the seventh boat... We aren’t just His sales force; we are His reporters, too. Our role is to report His story and how it changed our story. Again, let’s go back to lesson one and pray this prayer . . . We have about 30 conversations a day; let’s make some about Jesus! If we want God to use us, we must let Him *have* us!