

TOP TEN MYTHS ABOUT EVANGELISM ¹

1. **It's my responsibility to convert people.**

We are only responsible for what we can do, not what others do. Our responsibility is simply to proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God. We don't have to push.

2. **We can witness by osmosis (i.e. without words).**

By definition a witness is "one who testifies." What if all the "witnesses" in a court trial only answered in mime? As Christians our lives need to be consistent with our words but they are not a substitute for them.

3. **We must "earn the right" to be heard.**

While there is merit in the idea of gaining a hearing, the notion of "earning the right to be heard" can also put Christians on their heels. Do Hollywood producers call you to ask if you might be offended by the scenes and themes of their upcoming movie? Do professors in colleges distort Christian ideas and qualify their lectures with an apology? All around us people are making bold assertions about what is right and true. We have the truth. We are called to declare it sensitively and assertively.

4. **My friends already know what I believe.**

If your friends did understand what you believe and why you believe it, then they might believe it too. It's better to ask than assume. You'll soon discover that people all around you have all sorts of false notions about God and what it means to be a Christian.

5. **People's beliefs about God are based on reason.**

We often assume others have thought about their spiritual beliefs to the extent we have. Many people believe what they do more for emotional reasons or expedience. People often believe what they *want* to believe – what makes them feel good. This is especially true among those influenced by the philosophy of postmodernism, reflected in this way: "Whatever you believe about God is fine and true for you, but it's not for me." On some occasions you might succeed in thoroughly answering a person's intellectual objections only to find they still resist. We need to lovingly discern "smoke screens" and surface the core issues that keep a person away from God.

6. **People aren't interested.**

Our experience on Gospel Outreaches verifies that there is overwhelming interest in discussing the substantive questions of life. Nobody likes to be pushed, but there is strong interest in discussing spiritual ideas. By experience we're seeing that many people are tired of shallow conversations and the rules of political correctness that make it taboo to talk about God.

7. I must have all the answers.

”And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

8. I must have a close long-term relationship with someone before I can share the gospel with them.

While this helps, the gospel’s inherent power is not bound by our personal connections. God may bring people across our path for even a brief time by His sovereign design in order that we would share the message of Christ with them. Remember the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch? (Acts 8:26-4) Sharing the gospel is a supernatural endeavor that requires supernatural power. That’s why the disciples were told to wait for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be God’s witnesses (Acts 1:8). That power is now available to every believer.

9. I must wait for people to come up to me, ask me why my life is so different, and ask me to tell them about Christ.

Do you fish? When was the last time a fish jumped out of the pond, flapped all the way up to your house and asked, “Hey, where’s your fishing pole? I wanna get on your line right now.” Fishing for men requires initiative on the fisherman’s part, not the fish! Sharing the gospel with others is an active endeavor, not a passive one.

10. Sharing your faith is inherently confrontational.

Most people are uncomfortable with interpersonal confrontation. Sharing your faith should be a conversation not a confrontation. Although there is a very real battle taking place in the spiritual realm, on a personal level people need to know that we genuinely care about them. We need to refine the art of asking good questions and listening. See Luke 2:46-47; the principles in this passage are excellent and very insightful with regard to our personal witness. If someone is clearly uncomfortable discussing God then we should back off. Whoever said that the same rules which apply in “normal life” don’t apply in personal evangelism?

BONUS: I must tell a person everything I know about God in every situation.

Not every opportunity to share the message is going to be equal. In some cases you’ll have just a few minutes to talk, ask a question, share an idea, or simply listen. Make the most of it and relax (Colossians 4:5). Try to discern how much a person is ready to hear. Jesus Himself said “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear” (John 16:12). Even with His disciples he did not feel compelled to unload everything at once.

¹ Modified from a *Campus Crusade for Christ* article.