

### 3. Learning to Cross the Barrier of Fear in Evangelism

In our last topic, we talked about four barriers that we cross as we share the Gospel. Those were: the barrier of fear, the barrier of making contacts, the barrier of understanding another culture, religion or ethnic group, and the barrier of language. Today, we will focus on crossing the barrier of fear.

To understand the barrier of fear, we have to go back to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:7-13, we see that original sin made some dramatic changes in Adam and in every person since Adam. When Adam sinned, it changed his relationship with God, with himself and with others. The results of those changes were:

- Relationship with God: separation (Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God)
- Relationship with self: fear, guilt and shame (I was afraid and I hid myself because I was naked)
- Relationship with others: blame (The woman that you gave to be with me)

From the time of Adam, these five things, (separation, fear, guilt, shame, blame), have been what have motivated every person on this earth from the most powerful leader in the world to the least important person. That should help us to understand why some of our leaders do what they do. However, once we become Christians, we have the opportunity to begin to learn to reverse the effects of original sin. Instead of separation from God, salvation brought us back into relationship with God. As we learn to yield to God, we learn to experience fellowship with God (and others). At each moment that we are in fellowship with God, fear is replaced by love (1 John 4:18), guilt is replaced by forgiveness, cleansing and forgiving others (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32), shame is replaced by understanding we are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and blame is replaced by accepting personal responsibility for our choices (James 1:13-15).

This means that there are two basic factors involved in learning to witness without fear. First, we need to be shown how to share the Gospel clearly. (If you do not know how to share the Gospel clearly, find someone who does and go along with that person until you learn how to share the Gospel clearly. (Acts 20:20-21) Second, each time before we try to share the Gospel, we need to yield ourselves to God so that we witness in the power of the Holy Spirit (instead of our own strength - Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8, 4:23-31) and allow the love of Christ to motivate us (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) and flow through our lives.

We see that the disciples, by their first recorded witness about Christ, showed the four groups with which it is the easiest to learn to share the Gospel. Andrew first introduced Christ to a relative (John 1:40-42), Philip to a friend (John 1:43-46), Matthew to co-workers (Luke 5:27-29) and Peter to neighbors and other acquaintances (Mark 1:29-33).

A very helpful idea that I use in helping new Christians (see diagram on final two pages of this manual) learn to share Christ is to suggest that they make four lists: relatives, friends, co-workers and other acquaintances and then to the right of the names have two columns: the first titled when I started praying and the second, when God answered this prayer. (New Christians always get

excited when they are able to record the first answer to this prayer.) Then, I encourage them to pray for the salvation of each person on their lists every day. I also offer to go with them to share the Gospel with each person on their list. That way they introduce me to others and I show them how to share the Gospel. In addition, this often speeds up the process of getting into new homes to share the Gospel by about two or three years, because the new Christian comes as a relative or friend, while I would come as a stranger. May the Lord richly bless you this week as you witness in the power of the Spirit and as you begin to show others how to share the Gospel without fear.