

Introduction: Why is Evangelism included in a course about the spiritual disciplines?

It is very important to answer to this, in order to be building on a firm foundation. So let's review a moment to answer first why we are promoting the practice of spiritual disciplines.

1. **We practice spiritual disciplines to grow in godliness**
 2. **We want to grow in Godliness because this is God's purpose in our lives**
 3. **We can have confidence of success because we know the outcome** Phil. 1:6;
Rom:8:18-39
- (Colossians 1:3-14) We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, **asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

So, if our goal is to grow in godliness, knowing it is God's purpose in our lives and we can be assured of ultimate success, we need to make sure we aim in the right direction, by seeking to understand what God is like, what He cares about and what He is doing

I. Evangelism has its foundation in God's Purpose in the gospel

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and blameless before him**. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, **according to his purpose**, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things

on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to **the praise of his glory**. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the **praise of his glory**. (Ephesians 1:3-14 ESV)

- ...And **you were dead in the trespasses and sins** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, **because of the great love with which he loved us**, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:1-10 ESV)

A. What God, through the gospel, has called us to be in Christ

That passage in Ephesians 1 says that...

- “He chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him.”
- I Thess. 4:3 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification...”
- Also, listen afresh to this familiar passage in Romans: “...the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, **for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...**” (Romans 8:26-30 ESV)

And so we make the purpose of God for our lives our ambition as well. As John says in his first letter,

- “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”(1 John 3:2-3 ESV)

This, then, is our basis for pursuing the spiritual disciplines. We do it to possess that for which we have been possessed. To obtain the outcome that has purposed by God. It is no fool who has made it his life ambition to achieve a goal that has been already promised by God. His success is absolutely guaranteed.

B. What God, through the gospel, has called us to do in Christ

a. The gospel calls us to do the works of Christ

- (John 14:12 ESV) “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father”
- For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10 ESV)
- (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

Again, after His resurrection, we see Jesus commissioning His disciples with these words in John 20:21—“...As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

b. What are the works of Christ?

- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17 ESV)
- “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10 ESV)
- “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 ESV)
- And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:31-32 ESV)
- In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10 ESV)

Jesus was the most disciplined, purposeful man who ever lived. Every word he spoke, every action he took, was centered in his relationship with the Father, and was a perfect expression of the purpose and will of the Father. On the last night before His crucifixion, He said in prayer to His Father,

- “I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do” (John 17:4-5 ESV)

And then, John tells us, Jesus said on the cross, ...“It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30 ESV)

- “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” (John 17:18 ESV)

The Mission is in the Call

We see this commissioning right up front when He called **Peter & Andrew, James and John** with the command, “Follow me, and I will make you a fisher of men.”

Look at the call of **Paul**, in Acts 9:12, where God is explaining His purpose for Paul to Ananias:

- But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
- Then we see in verse 20, the first thing Paul does: *And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”* (Acts 9:20 ESV)

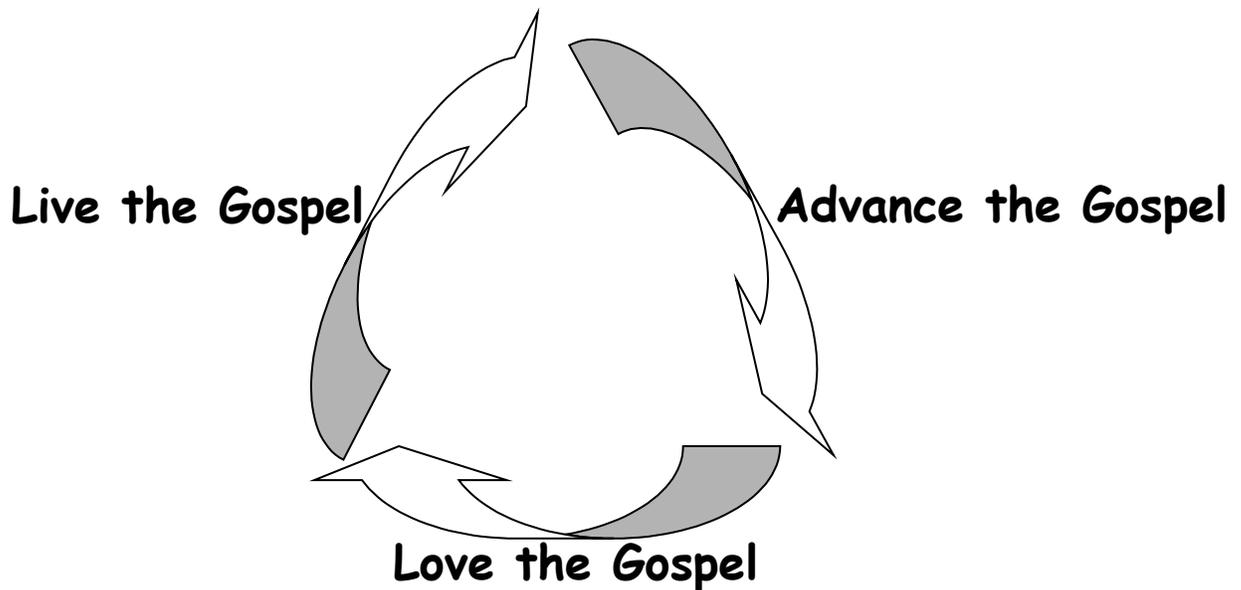
Our call to evangelism is integral to our calling as Christians, not something that is an addition, or optional. It is not a calling for a select few, any more than is our calling as Christians to participation in the body of Christ, or our call as Christians to increasingly reflect the character of Christ.

So, we want to discipline ourselves to engage in evangelism, first and foremost, because it is an integral part of our calling as Christians. These are the good works for which God created us in Christ Jesus.

II. Equipped For Evangelism

a. Healthy Evangelism Grows out of a Gospel-Centered Life

“Love the gospel, live the gospel and advance the gospel.” Our lives as Christians and as a church began with the gospel and should be built upon and defined by the gospel. The gospel should never cease to be our passion and our only boast. But that’s not all. Our lives do not just have their launching point in the gospel and then we go on from there to work on our sanctification and try to do the work of evangelism. No, these aspects of our lives in Christ are part of the gospel, and must remain rooted in the gospel. In other words, our sanctification and good works are gifts of grace, won for us by Christ’s death on the cross, that we walk in by the same faith that trusts in Him for justification by grace.



1. Our practice of evangelism must grow out of our love for the gospel.

We must first be people who understand the gospel and daily seek to walk out its implications in our lives. If we treasure the gospel, we will be increasingly marked by humility, joy, and compassion for others.

“The gospel isn’t one class among many that you’ll attend during your life as a Christian—the gospel is the whole building that all the classes take place in! Rightly approached, all the topics you’ll study and focus on as a believer⁴ will be offered to you ‘within the walls’ of the glorious gospel.” C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, 75-76

Study the themes of grace, know them, treasure them, seek God’s help to apply them to your life: Read Ephesians 1 & 2; Romans Chapters 1 – 3;

2. Our practice of evangelism must reflect the reality of living the gospel.

When we love the gospel, we begin to see the transforming effects in our lives that grow out of a completely changed perspective. This includes:

- Relationships, as we realize that *we* are the worst sinners we know, and that if God could pay the price to forgive us, we must extend grace and forgiveness to others. Matt 18:23-38; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13
- Possessions, as we realize that our treasure is in heaven that can never be taken from us, our relationship with the things of this world are transformed. Matt. 6:19-34; Luke 12:13-34; (See also Luke 18:18-30--Rich young Ruler; Matt. 13:34—Hidden Treasure; Luke 19:2-10—Zacchaeus)

- How we walk through setbacks, sickness and loss, as we realize that our greatest problem (our separation from God by our sin and our eternal condemnation under His impending righteous wrath) has been forever solved through Christ's death on the cross. Rom. 8:28-38; 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Becoming servants, as we see that Christ not to be served, but to serve, and He has called us to take up our cross and follow him. Matt. 20:20-28; John 13:3-17; Phil. 2:1-11

3. Loving the gospel and Living the gospel WILL RESULT in Advancing the gospel

A. True biblical boldness in evangelism is the mark of a person who is gospel centered in their own life. Loving the gospel and living the gospel produce three qualities that are characteristic of biblical boldness: Contrition, Certainty & Confrontation

1. Contrition

Isaiah

- And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"
Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."
And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." (Isaiah 6:5-9)

David

- Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you. (Psalm 51:12-13)

Peter

- "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."
Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me." (Luke 22:31-33; Luke 22:34 ESV)

2. Certainty

God wants us to have certainty, which is why He has given us his word and given us his Holy Spirit. "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." (Romans 8:16)

- Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were

eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

We have the certainty of Christ's authority over all things, and His commissioning:

- And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

We have the certainty of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit:

- "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27 ESV)
- And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Acts 2:38-39 ESV)

(Story of John Wesley & the Moravians)

3. Confrontation (or, Clarity)

Look at **Stephen**, a deacon (Acts 6:8 – 7:60), **Peter** (His sermon at Pentecost - Acts 2:14-40); **Paul** (in Jerusalem – Acts 9:26-28; Ephesus - Acts 19:8-10; Athens - Acts 17:22-32; Corinth - Acts 18:4-10, Iconium – Acts 14:1-3; before Festus & Agrippa – Acts 26), and **Apollos**, a regular believer – (Acts 18:24-28).

After the Lord Jesus himself, Paul gives us the greatest consistent example of boldness in proclaiming the gospel. Yet we see him more than once request prayer for boldness, also calling it clarity, a word which gives a fuller understanding of what is meant by boldness.

- ...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18-20)
- At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:3-4)

B. Prayer

When we have strong assurance of faith that God has commissioned us to evangelism and given us everything needed for the task, our hearts will be drawn to faith-filled prayer. Jesus gave the best example of a life of prayer.

- Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” And he said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And lead us not into temptation.”
And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:1-13)
- And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”
And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:29-31 ESV)
 - Luke 24:49; Acts 6:4; Acts 2:42; John 15:4-8

C. The Church

Jesus preached and performed miracles for 3 years, but had relatively few followers. That wasn't His plan. The plan was that the gospel would go forth and multitudes added through the corporate witness of the church. See how many were added from the first day of the birth of the church on Pentecost, and how the crowds were drawn from the corporate demonstration on all the assembled believers

- **John 17:20-23; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinth. 12:12-20; Eph. 3:21-4:16**

Take Action!

Plan, speak, pursue, invite, serve