

## Sharing the Gospel (With a Friend)

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Jesus spent His last physical moments on earth giving a direct command to His followers. We know it as “The Great Commission” (Matt. 28:19-20). We know it, we believe it, and we understand its importance. So why don’t we do it? Many books have been written on the subject of evangelism. Conferences and seminars have been presented for scores of years on this topic. Plans are made, evangelism teams are formed, and out we go - energetic, excited, enthused, and ready to lead everyone we talk with to the Lord. By the end of the day we limp back worn out and defeated. Then we question why no one wanted to give their heart to Jesus. We told them “Jesus loves you” and even smiled when we said it, just like we learned to in “Evangelism 101.” Still no lives were changed. Oh well-I did my part. I tried. Now I can check witnessing off my list of things that Christians are supposed to do. I guess it’s just not my gift.

The lack of successful evangelism, if any evangelism at all, is a disheartening scenario in many of our churches. But why? One reason stands out. In this technological world we have become *social* without being *relational*. We now do networking instead of getting to know each other. We have “Face Book friends” that we will never physically talk with face to face. I may “like” your personal profile but I don’t know the real you. True relationships take time. Real friendships take more than just a mouse click.

Leonard Albert is currently Coordinator of Personal Evangelism for the Church of God. He has spent his entire adult life with one main goal on his mind: to introduce as many people as possible to Jesus Christ. He does this himself, personally, and through his many books and videos on evangelism. His latest book, *Share The Gospel In Three Stories*, is one of the most simplistic yet effective evangelism methods ever to be put into book form. This method crosses cultural, economical and educational lines. It can be understood by all age groups and can easily become an everyday lifestyle. Imagine evangelism becoming a natural part of your daily life, not just a monthly or quarterly church event.

This incredible book is just part of an even more effective evangelism plan called **Take Five**. **Take Five** is an evangelism plan for Christians who love people. It's a small-group home based evangelism plan focused primarily on relationships, making an effort to get to know someone and allowing them to know you as well. Know you so well that they want the same peace, joy and love that are in you. It becomes so easy to explain Jesus once they have seen Him working in your life.

During a five month period, your small group of ten (at the most) will eat, learn, and pray together. I am currently part of a **Take Five** group and love it! During our first monthly meeting while praying for specific names on a small list one of them sent a text to a group member. It basically said that they were thinking about coming to church but just weren't sure if they would feel accepted, a very common feeling for unchurched people. A reply was sent immediately saying that eight people wanted them to come to church so much that they were praying for them by name before their text was even sent! Calls were made to that person during the next few days. Guess who showed up at church on Sunday morning. They were met with smiling faces and several requests to "sit with me". There are so many others who would go to church if they knew that someone was waiting for them and wanting them there.

Some of our groups shared benefits have been our families getting to know each other better and praying not only for the lost but for each other. We share our individual evangelism stories and the whole group gets excited because we all had a part in it. We are forming relationships with those who are not in church and strengthening the relationships with others who are in church. Not only is church membership growing, church members are growing also. Other churches have asked how we do evangelism because of the impact it is having, not only in our church but in the community as well. It's all about real relationships. It's getting to genuinely know our church family, our unchurched relatives, co-workers, neighbors and the greatest relationship we will ever have - Jesus Christ.