

The Communication of Witnessing

By JoJo Tabares

"Are you a Christian?"

"Uh, no, I'm not."

"Well, then you're going to HELL!"

This is probably not the best way to bring people to Christ. I have seen well-meaning Christians who are so on fire for Jesus that they practically beat unsuspecting souls over the head with the Gospel and are surprised at the reaction it elicits. People stop listening when they feel that their beliefs are being attacked. This phenomenon is what I call "Screaming in a Deaf Man's Ear." He can't hear what you're saying, but you sure are making him angry. How you say something can be even more important than what you say.

So what does it hurt if you approach someone the wrong way about Jesus? The worst they can do is say no, right? Wrong! Someone who has been told repeatedly that he is going to hell in a handbasket may grow weary of people spiritually beating him up. It leaves him with a bad taste in his mouth about Jesus, Christianity, or Christians in general. This can apply to other Christians who don't see things exactly as you do. *"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God . . ." 1 Cor 10:32*

Here are some tips for better communication when witnessing:

1. Know your audience.

Everyone sees the world differently, and each one of us has had different experiences that got us to this point. You cannot expect to present a topic the same way to everyone. Some people are ready to hear about the Lord and are desperate to find a reason to accept Him into their heart. Some have never seriously thought about the subject. Some are angry. They are so tired of people screaming, "Sinner!" that they stop listening whenever anyone so much as mentions Jesus. You cannot approach them with a one-size-fits-all speech and expect them to interpret your message the same way.

2. Be considerate of others' beliefs.

Never insult someone's beliefs. It never endears you to the other person, and it has almost zero chance of convincing anyone that his position is wrong.

Wrong: "How could you possibly believe in that?"

Better: "What do you believe about God?"

3. Never badger someone.

If someone tells you that he isn't interested in hearing about the Lord, he is not open to listening right now. The more you harp on the topic, the more he will resist. Remember that we do not have the power to "convert" anyone. That is God's job. We are only His instruments. Sometimes we just plant the seeds in His garden. Sometimes we water them, and sometimes we help harvest. If we hit people over the head with the Bible, we don't show Christ's love.

4. Remember that the Lord changes hearts.

If we remember that the Lord is the one who changes hearts, then we won't feel the pressure to bring each and every encounter to this conclusion. We also realize that the Lord doesn't force us to accept Him. He merely shows His love to us, and He allows us to choose. Think of it more as "sharing" your faith with others and not "converting" them.

5. Avoid Christian-speak.

There are words that Christians use a lot that are foreign to some people or that can turn them off without giving you a chance to share with them. "Praise God!" Quoting Scripture may cause some people to put up a barrier that prevents them from hearing you.

6. Let your faith shine through your actions.

Sometimes you don't even need words to introduce people to the love of Jesus. They can see it by looking at your life. They can see the peace you have through the way you deal with others. Show others the love of Christ by the actions you take to help someone else. These things can minister to others as powerfully as any words you could use. I am not saying that you shouldn't share your faith with people, but sometimes just living your life as a Christian example can share enough about Jesus that will pique someone's curiosity to wonder or even ask.

Also, we shouldn't forget that we are living examples of our Christian faith just by how we live our lives. There is a story floating around the Internet about a woman who was pulled over by a police officer because she was yelling and cursing in her car. The police officer pulled her over because she had a fish symbol on her car and deduced that the car was obviously stolen! The communication we send can draw people to the Lord or draw them away!

7. Ask to pray with people in trouble.

"Can I pray with you?" A great way to minister to others who are hurting is to ask if you can pray with them. Very few people would take offense to that. The worst they could say is, "No." They would at least have a good feeling about you and Christians and maybe Jesus!

8. Finally . . . don't hide your faith under a bushel.

I am cautioning you not to be a stumbling block to a non-believer by being harsh or coming off as pushy, but I don't want you to think that I am asking you to apologize for being a Christian. Don't be ashamed of your faith. Don't shy away from an opportunity to help others to come to know Jesus. Don't be afraid to mention Him by name! I just want you to think about the one who is hurting—the one who needs Jesus' love. Meet him where he is. Give him what he needs.

If you keep these things in mind and approach people with humility, honesty, and love, you will bring glory and honor to the Father.

Biographical Information

Copyright, 2009. All rights reserved by author below. Content provided by [The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC.](#)

JoJo Tabares holds a degree in speech communication, but it is her humorous approach to communication skills which has made her a highly sought-after Christian speaker and writer. Her articles appear in homeschool publications, such as Homeschool Enrichment Magazine and The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, which also endorses her Say What You Mean curricula. You can also find JoJo on Web sites such as Crosswalk.com and Dr.Laura.com. For more information on communication FUNDamentals and Christian-based communication skills for the whole family, please visit <http://www.ArtofEloquence.com/>.