

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“We love, because
 He first loved us,”

—1 John 4:19

**Servants during September:**

Songleader: Stanley (7), Larry (14),
 Dwight (21), Stanley (28)

Reading: Stanley

Announcements: Larry

Table: Marty, Stanley, Mike

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (3), Stanley
 (10), Kris (17), Larry (24)

Lawn Mowing (week starting): Marty
 (7), Stanley (14), Larry (21), Kris (28)

Area Meetings:

**Pepper Road, 20-24; Jordan Park, 21-
 24, Ben Walker; Mt Zion, 21-24,
 Lowell Sallee; Southside (Athens), 26-
 27, Paddy Kendall-Ball; Gooch Lane,
 26-28, Kevin Clark**

Hays Mill church of Christ

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Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Four Challenges of Evangelism

By Andy Cantrell

This article has two purposes. The first is to challenge each of us to examine why we don't do more talking about the Lord and His things with those we encounter. I apologize if I have made a wrong assumption about you, but I suspect you are like me and know you could do better. The second is to share some ideas that have helped the Christians who gather where I live to start speaking up, pay attention to opportunities, speak boldly, and communicate more clearly than we had previously. The following thoughts come from challenging discussions we have had in what our Deacons serving in the area of evangelism have called “Evangelism Workshops.”

There are countless reasons why Christians struggle when it comes to evangelism, but I believe the following four categories cover most, if not all, those reasons. They are Care, Consciousness, Courage, and Craft. Most of the excuses we are willing to vocalize

come from the last three areas. We are willing to admit we need to pay better attention (Consciousness) and are often scared to speak up (Courage), and that we don't know how or what or when to say the things we should (Craft). But it is rare to hear someone vocalize the most important (and most common) reason we don't share His things like we should: Care.

CARE: Here is the truth about me. I often don't care enough about what God is doing in the universe to get involved in His business. Along with that, I often haven't cared that the most important thing God is doing in the universe involves the souls of the people walking by me each day—souls that “God so loved” that “He gave His only begotten Son” so that they would “not perish, but have eternal life.” Can we please be honest about this? We can make all the excuses we want about why so many of us remain reticent about our Lord, but what truly is the source of our lack of Consciousness, our

missing Courage, and our lazy or haphazard Craft if not Care? Everything follows this! In fact, it is my belief that if we care enough about God and those made in God's image, we will become more aware of opportunities, find the boldness to speak or serve, and diligently discipline ourselves toward saying things in such a way that it will "give grace to those who hear."

Here are couple thoughts about how to develop greater care. Sacrifice and service come from a realization of God's mercy toward me, Rom 12:1,2. "We love, because He first loved us," 1 Jn 4:19. I must think more intensely about God's love and mercy offered me. I must thank Him more frequently for His loving kindness. I must enthusiastically engage my heart and mind in the prescribed disciplines of remembering Jesus, thankful prayer, noble-minded listening to God's Word, probing meditation, and all the other instructions God designed to train me to love Him and those He loves! I understand these are activities we participate in frequently. The problem is that many of us, somewhere along this journey, forgot that going through the motions was designed by God to stir our emotions.

CONSCIOUSNESS: Jesus had to train His disciples to be conscious of opportunities. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few," Mt 10:37, surely would have been as uncommon a viewpoint then as it is now. When the Lord spoke to Paul that night in Corinth and revealed, "I have many people in this city," Acts 18:10, it surely would have been as shocking to him as it is to us. The key to both these revelations is that the disciples who heard these words must CARE enough about God's "harvest" and His "people" to actually become the "workers" and "go on speaking."

Recognizing that every heart is soil, Mt 13, and that every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5, contains the seeds of truth that can be planted in the lives of those around us is a necessary realization. Once realized and meditated on, every person, interaction, word, and deed become an opportunity for us.

I find it interesting that when Paul encouraged the Colossians to, "Conduct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity," Col 4:5, he began the thought in verse 2 by reminding them to pray, keep alert, and be thankful! So often I forget to devote myself to prayer concerning my awareness and opportunities. For what it's worth, I stopped just now while writing this to pray for you concerning this. Please pray for me and for God's people everywhere—that our eyes be opened, and that the Lord send forth workers.

COURAGE: Most of the things I am afraid of concerning evangelism are selfish and embarrassing to admit. I'm afraid I will no longer be liked, or thought of as unkind, or excluded from activities or conversations, or embarrass myself, or stick my foot in my mouth, or some other thing that is only about me and my comfort. I feel much better about confessing the other things I am afraid of because they genuinely result from my concern for the other person. I worry I will push them away, ruin an opportunity, say something wrong, or not actually help them in some way. Some of these fears are valid, but really only if I fail to get one of two things right. We are to be "speaking the truth in love," Eph 4:15. If I speak the truth but am not motivated by love it will do no good for me and could potentially hurt the one I seek to help. If I love but fail to speak the truth, it does no good for them. This pursuit is so freeing

to me. I find great courage in this! Just think of the incredible implication—as long as I love them and speak what I know to be true, God is pleased, they can be helped, and I have nothing to be afraid of!

Notice how Scripture gives us courage to speak up. Jesus told a man who knew very little to, "report... what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you," Mk 5:19. God does not expect, or need for us, to speak of things we don't know! We need not, and should not, speculate, or add to what God has done or said! He can accomplish His purposes with the truth that He has already taught me, even if I have so much more truth to learn. In Acts 4:20 this same principle is taught. Peter and John said, "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." How encouraging! They were not expected to speak of things they hadn't seen or heard, and neither are we. Look closer at your fears. If you have heard enough truth to gain faith, then what you have heard is enough to help another find faith. As long as we are willing to speak only what we know to be true, and refrain from speaking of things we don't know, we have nothing to fear. And more importantly, God's truth is powerful enough to help another even if we deem it to be small or incomplete.

CRAFT: God is a craftsman. Children of God should be imitators of their Father. Paul wrote in Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." Some eaters just stuff their face; others take the time to collect, measure, and season their meal to make it enjoyable. When I was younger, I did everything in haste. As I have matured, I have seen the value in taking my time to prepare and do things with much more thoughtfulness. Why would we not do this when it comes to speaking with others, or serving them on behalf of our Lord? Perhaps, it's because we are lazy. Perhaps, it's because we don't want to think deeply about our shortcomings to know what another might need. Perhaps, we just don't care enough.

I have started to practice some things lately that have helped me communicate more clearly, more kindly, and more effectively. It actually is something I do after encounters, not before. I try to replay the conversation in my mind and honestly critique what I said, how I listened, and what I could have done better. I have also begun to be a more serious student of how Jesus spoke in various situations to different kinds of people. I sure have a lot to learn. But I finally care. I hope you do too. 

Remember in Prayer

Donna Craig is home following open heart surgery; **David Harwell** has returned home, as well. **Betty** is still in Limestone Rehabilitation on W Hobbs St, but is now in Room 94.

Please continue to pray for **Callie H; Carolyn; Deborah and Serenity; Hazel; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard; Joshua and Kayla V; Pam B, Kaylee, Julie and Violet; and Pam McNatt.** 