

The Gospel for the Long Haul

I. OK, I've given them the gospel and they want no part of it. Why can't I get through to them?

What are some of the barriers people have to receiving the gospel?

1. As Christians we talk too much and don't listen well.
2. Their life is too busy (or ours is).
3. They are in love with their sin. John 3:19
4. Pride—I don't need anyone's help in my life.
5. They think they are good enough.
6. They fear the changes that would be required in their life.
7. Past hurts—I can't believe in a God who allowed ... to happen to me (or others).
8. Christians behaving badly.
9. They tried it already and it didn't work for them.

Remember that while the gospel is indeed good news, it is also condemning to those who reject it.

II. If I honestly care for those I am witnessing to I can't just shake the dust from my feet and walk away. Now what?

1. Be persistent and prayerful. Luke 18:1-8, James 5:16
2. Don't grow weary in doing good... Galatians 6:9

III. The strongest support that I can give to the truth of the gospel is the testimony of a transformed life. Romans 12:1-2

1. Be real. Be consistent. Be different.
2. The fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-25 are a very good place to start in identifying characteristics of a life marked by the effects of the gospel.
3. Remember that you are not perfect yet but a work in progress under God's grace. Continue working out your salvation in fear and trembling. Philippians 2:12

IV. But what if I pray and witness faithfully and they never accept the gospel?

1. Success is the American dream. God's desire for us is faithfulness. Sometimes our role is just to plant or water, not harvest. I Corinthians 3:7
2. In the mystery of God's calling, predestination, and mankind's limited freewill, God's love grants each individual the privilege and responsibility of choosing to accept or reject His offer of salvation.

Questions for Discussion Groups:

Pick one or two of the barriers people often raise when you present them with the gospel and describe how you would respond to them.

What elements in your life story can you confidently point to as proof of the transforming power of the gospel?

What would others who know you well point to about your life as indicators that you are different in a positive way from those around you who are living outside the gospel of Christ?