



Community Group

Talk Sheet

Starting March 25, 2012 Week 10

Stamford Campus

SERMON TITLE: “HOW to Network”

Acts 17: 16—34

Message Summary

If my networking is notworking it is either because I don't know WHY I need to network or because I don't know HOW to network. Last time we studied the WHY question. This week we study HOW TO GIVE GOOD DIRECTIONS. God supplies directions to lost people through formerly-lost people who share these life-changing directions: **STOP. Turn around. Follow God through faith in Jesus Christ.**

As Christ-followers, it is our job to learn HOW to give good directions. So we study the Apostle Paul, a master of giving good directions to people who are lost. Acts 17:16-34 records Paul's interaction with the Athenians and teaches the 4 Principles of Giving Good Directions

The 1st principle to giving good directions is: **“I must make myself available to lost people.”**

I can't give any good directions to lost people if I never hang out with anybody who is lost. Paul left the synagogue and went to the marketplace day by day, mingling with those who happened to be there. Paul was looking for appropriate moments to talk about Jesus and seizing opportunities to give some good direction whenever possible. There's a myth out there about being one of God's networkers.

MYTH: Sharing my faith is forcing God into conversations in an awkward way.

This is a myth. If I pray for natural opportunities, God will give natural opportunities. Paul had one of those natural opportunities when the Athenians invited him to the Areopagus. If I am really listening to the people around me, I will hear many people inviting me to talk about my experience with Christ in a natural and conversational way.

The 2nd principle to giving good directions is: **“Start with where the lost person is, and where he/she wants to go”**

Paul started with an idol because he was starting where the Athenians were. Paul knew that this was where the Athenians were starting because he observed them, he asked them questions and he listened to them. If I am going to give good directions, I need to observe the people around me, ask them questions and listen to them. This gets to another myth.

MYTH: Most people are hostile to the message of a personal relationship with God.

This is a myth. Very, very few people are hostile to the idea of a personal relationship with God. By far, most people will listen to a listener. Whenever people express desires for what only God can give, they are expressing a need for God. When people express a desire for unconditional love, forgiveness and power to live with contentment and peace—they are expressing their desire for God because these are things that only God can give.

When I really listen, I will hear people express their need for God. Just like Paul, I need to observe, question and listen to people around me and then start with the needs that I hear expressed.

The 3rd principle to giving good directions is: “I must give directions in my own style”

When it comes to the lost people, the directions are the same: **STOP. Turn around. Follow God through faith in Jesus.** But the Style should be as unique as my fingerprint. There are 6 different styles of introducing Jesus to others. We all must learn to develop skill in ALL 6 styles, but there are one or two styles that fit my unique strengths and personality:

- The Intellectual Style
- The Confrontational Style
- The Testimonial Style
- The Invitational Style
- The Sacrificial Style
- The Interpersonal Style

This style issue brings up a myth. **MYTH: I must have all the answers before I can talk to others about Jesus.** This is a myth. When it comes to giving good directions, I don't need to have all the answers, I just need to share my personal experience with the truth. The list includes the “Testimonial Style,” because some people are really good at this...but the truth is that every Christ-follower has a personal story to tell...and I must know my story and be able to share it.

The 4th principle to giving good directions is: “Direct the lost as close as possible to their spiritual home (a relationship with God).”

Paul was the most persuasive person ever, and yet there were some who sneered, some who indicated interest in hearing more later, and a select few who followed Paul's directions and found their way home to God through faith in Jesus. Paul only “closed the deal” with a small fraction of those he spoke to...so none of us should feel like failures if we don't “pray a prayer” with the people we give directions to. Which leads to a destructive myth.

MYTH: When helping a person follow Jesus, it all depends on me. This is a myth for many reasons. First, many times, I will just be one link in a long chain of people who God will use in the life of the person to whom I give directions. Second, God is the one who draws people home. God is the one who opens eyes, unstops ears and softens hearts. God is the one who does the convincing and the proving. I can't do that. I need to make sure that I am giving good directions to the lost people around me. But the end result does not depend on me. I need to direct lost people as close as possible to their spiritual home but then leave the end results with God.

Possible Discussion Questions

1. (Icebreaking question) The topic this week is helping lost people. Allow group members to share a travel memory about a time when they were hopelessly, even comically, LOST.
2. The first principle to giving good directions is being available to lost people. What do you do to make yourself available? What times/places do you find most effective for spiritual networking?
3. The second principle to giving good directions involves really listening to people. As you listen to the people around you, what have you noticed and learned about what people truly want in life? How can this become a starting place for spiritual networking?
4. There are deeper needs motivating the workaholic, the party-er, the money-obsessed and others. What have you noticed about the deeper needs that drive the surface behaviors and priorities of the people around you? In your opinion, what do the lost people around you REALLY want?
5. The third principle involves giving directions in your own style. Of the six, which style do you identify with the most? How have you used this style in the past? Which style do you want to learn how to develop more?
6. Over the course of the message, 4 MYTHS were presented. What were the myths? Which myth do you struggle with the most and why? What do these myths reveal about thought patterns that cause the problem of our networking networking?
7. The purpose of this week's topic is very practical. What truths do you most need to apply to your life this week? What specific actions will you take this week?