

# Friendship & Confrontational Evangelism

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Is there a right “method”?

There is much talk about the methodology between friendship and confrontational evangelism. Frankly, we admire people who never share the Gospel in a public venue but who are faithful, consistent witnesses in their workplaces, in their families and in their neighborhoods giving those persons a verbal and lifestyle witness of the full truth of Christianity. We felt that the truth of Christ is far more difficult to witness to friends, family, co-workers, etc..., than it is to witness among strangers. However, why would anyone wish to limit their prospective evangelistic efforts to only those one knows? The early church engaged in both relational/friendship evangelism, but their greater activity is recorded in bringing the Gospel to the strangers and marketplace of their communities. The terms friendship/relational, we define as ***building a relationship with someone prior to sharing the Gospel with them, and for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with them.*** There is a strong belief among those hold solely to a friendship/relational method of evangelism that one cannot share their faith until the relationship is first established. Consider the following questions and comments.

1. Must one build a relationship with everyone prior to sharing the gospel?
2. Does building a relationship necessitate earning the “right” to be heard about one’s faith, and is that grounded in Scripture or cultural opinion?
3. Can one not share their faith first, and build a relationship along the way, as it is true that 10 out of 10 people die (an average of 150,000 every 24 hours). Do you know for sure that you will have tomorrow to share your faith with the person you intend to? Realize that neither you nor the other person may be alive to engage in that dialog. Tomorrow nor the rest of this day is promised to NO ONE!

There is a mock dialog in the Way of the Master Basic Training Course study guide in which a conversation takes place between **Christian** and **Mrs. Smith**. **Christian** goes to his friend Erik’s workplace, and greets the receptionist, **Mrs. Smith**. After talking with **Mrs. Smith** it becomes clear that Christian intends to share the Gospel with Erik, but doesn’t want to “shove it down his throat.” He feels that a no – strings attached non – confrontational evangelistic approach will work best with Erik. He feels that if he is just a good friend to Erik, maybe one day Erik will bring up the subject about spiritual things with **Christian**. Toward the end of the conversation, **Christian** asks Mrs. Smith to contact Erick and she contacts Erik’s secretary to get a hold of him. While on the phone, Mrs. Smith’s face turns pale and he asks her what’s wrong. With horror in her voice she hangs up the phone and tells **Erik Loveless** “I’m afraid Erik died during the night. He had brain aneurysm in his sleep and was pronounced dead at 8:17 this morning...”

***“Friendship evangelism that doesn’t seek a way to quickly tell a person about their eternal fate is the ultimate betrayal of trust. How can we call ourselves a friend of someone we don’t bother to warn of terrible danger? Friends don’t let friends go to hell.”***

Tony Miano says it like this. Make a list of all the people that you refuse to share the Gospel with. Now make a list of all the people you want to go to Hell. **The two lists should be the same!**

4. The evangelizing Christian does not intend nor purpose for his brothers and sisters to feel guilty when it comes to sharing publically about Christ; he or she simply does what he does out of the LOVE for the LORD and the LOST and earnestly desires more Christians DO the same.

## **Dealing with guilt**

What some professing Christians fail to realize is the fact that the source of the guilt stems out of disobedience to Christ’s command for His children to proclaim the Gospel among the lost, and faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. Where is a

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Christian’s love for the Lord if they never talk about the One that died for them with the unsaved? C.H. Spurgeon said, “Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself, be sure of that.”

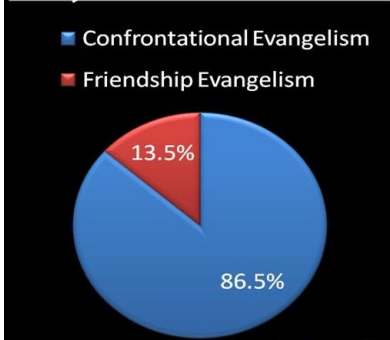
If you are offended, please first bring it to the Lord in prayer and search the Scriptures. If after doing so you still feel that what has been shared here is unbiblical then please inform us as the Scripture is our correcting tool (2 Tim. 3:16). If however you feel this way because of disobedience then we plead with you brother or sister in Christ, to repent and begin to obey the Gospel.

**If the goal is to be an effective witness consider the following:**

1. Was the true Gospel proclaimed?
2. Was the true Gospel understood?
3. Was Christ glorified?
4. Was the attitude of the Christian biblical as he or she communicated the Gospel (2 Tim 2:24 – 26; 1 Cor. 13)?
5. Are Christians being properly trained to do biblical evangelism (Eph 4:11 – 12), which carries out the principal of Law to the proud and grace to the humble?

When evangelism in the Bible took place what was the primary method? Just as other biblical disciplines must be examined in light of Scripture (preaching, prayer, fasting, fellowship, etc...) so too must one examine evangelism in light of the New Testament. “As we do, we will discover that the primary method of evangelism in the New Testament as evangelism amongst strangers.” We should know that we cannot do better than Jesus in the Gospels and the early Church in the book of Acts.

## Evangelism in the Life of Christ



Of the 89 instances of Christ and His associates doing evangelism in the four Gospels, **77** happened in the context of **confrontational** and **12** in the context of **friendship/relational** evangelism. Scripture references for confrontational evangelism in the Life of Christ (Gospel):

### Confrontational:

**Matthew:** 3:1-17; 4:18-22; 23-25; 5-7; 8:1-4; 5-13, 18; 9:1-8, 9, 18-26, 27-31, 35-38; 10:1-11; 1, 12:1-8, 9-13, 15, 22-30, 46; 13:1-12, 54-58; 14:13-21, 34-36; 15:21-28, 29-31, 32-39; 17:14-21; 16-26; 20:29-34; 21:8; 23:1-39; 27:11-14; 28:18-20  
**Mark:** 5:1-20; 7:31-27; 8:22-26; 10:1-12; 16:15  
**Luke:** Luke 2:16, 36-38; 5:1-11; 7-16, 24-30, 36-39; 8:1-3; 9:10-11, 51-56; 10:1-16, 25-37; 11:14, 29-36; 12:13-21; 13:10-17, 22-30, 14:1-6, 25-35; 17:11-19; 18:15-17; 19:1-5, 28-44; 22:66-71; 23:42-43, 47-49; 24:46-47  
**John:** 1:35-42, 43-51; 3:22-36; 4:1-26, 39-42, 35:1-9; 6:22-59; 7:25-31, 32-36, 8:1-11; 9:1-41; 12:20-26; 18:20-21

### Friendship:

**Matthew:** 8:14-17; 11:19; 25:34-36; 26:6-13  
**Mark:** 2:15-17  
**Luke:** 7:36-39; 10:38-42; 11:37-44; 15:1-16:13; 19:5-10  
**John:** 2:1-10; 11:1-44

Of the 46 instances of the early church engaging in evangelism as recorded in the book of Acts (both confrontational and friendship/relational), **38** happened in the context of **confrontational** and **8** in the context of **friendship/relational** evangelism.

Scripture references for confrontational evangelism in the early Church (Acts):

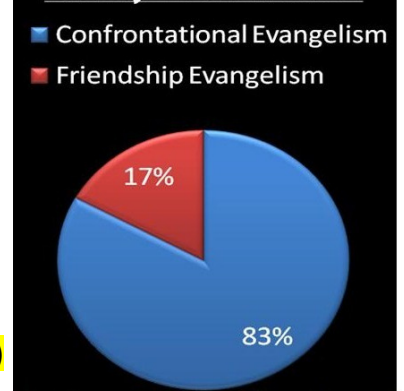
### Confrontational:

**Acts:** 1:8; 2:5-13; 3:1-10, 11-26; 4:5-12; 5:12-16, 20-21; 6-7; 8:4, 5-8, 26-40; 9:17-19; 10:24; 11:19; 13:5, 6-12, 14-33, 44-45; 14:1-5, 7, 15, 16; 11-15, 25-34; 17:1-9, 10, 17, 22-34; 18:4-6, 7-11, 19; 20:20; 21:40-22:23; 23:1-11; 24:10-25; 26:1-32; 28:7-15, 17-22

### Friendship:

**Acts:** 9:20-22; 19:8, 9; 20:20; 24:26-27; 27, 28:23, 30-31

## Evangelism in Acts



Info taken from Evangelism in the New Testament, by Jon Speed (Appendices pp. 46-47)

Below is an article by Jews for Jesus on Lifestyle Evangelism taken from their November 2000 Newsletter. Jews for Jesus is a strong, active evangelism group that reaches out to both the lost among the Jewish people and the Gentiles. You can visit them on the web at [www.jewsforjesus.org](http://www.jewsforjesus.org).

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## Jews For Jesus Newsletter

**Moishe's Musings on Lifestyle Evangelism**

**by Moishe Rosen, Founder**

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**This article originally appeared in the November 2000 Newsletter**

Far be it from me to disparage any kind of evangelism. But I have noticed that in some circles, "lifestyle" or "friendship evangelism" has become a euphemism for, "Be nice and don't mention Jesus until they ask." Now don't get me wrong, I believe that Christians ought to love and demonstrate respect for Jewish people and everyone else. It's the waiting until people ask part that bothers me. Frankly, if people had waited for me to ask about Jesus, I would not have heard the gospel. Most Jews don't bring up that subject to Christians; it is too sensitive.

Let us approach this subject positively by asking, "How soon after meeting Jewish people (or anyone else) should one mention Jesus?" The answer is simple: it depends on how important Jesus is to you. Friends talk to one another about what they regard as important. If you seek God's face daily in prayer, believe that He answers prayer and that one's personal salvation is the most important thing in life, you will mention Jesus fairly soon and your faith will often figure into your conversation. I am all for that kind of lifestyle evangelism and wholeheartedly admire those who practice it.

There is another kind of "lifestyle evangelism" that I can't endorse. It's the kind where people congratulate one another that actions speak louder than words, and that if others know they are a Christian, they need not say anything about Jesus so long as they live exemplary lives.

Isn't it interesting that Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, an Orthodox Jew, promoted this kind of evangelism about a year ago in his article "Witnessing vs. Proselytizing," which was posted online at the *Christianity Today* website. Eckstein is a man of great sensitivity and tact, but he is not a believer and his goal is not to see other Jews become believers. Helping people win Jews to Christ would make Eckstein anathema in the Jewish community. Yet some Christians regard him as an expert on how to successfully share their faith. Eckstein claims to uphold the Christian mandate to witness, but eventually he discloses his opinion that it is arrogant for Christians to think that Jewish people need Jesus. His article outlines a history of anti-Semitism that Jews have suffered in the name of Jesus, and Eckstein concludes, "If Christians want to share their faith with Jews, they should start by being good friends and neighbors, and wherever possible, 'good Samaritans.' Evangelicals call this style of witnessing 'lifestyle evangelism,' and it seems to me a self-evidently superior form of outreach."

I think that Christians should be concerned that Rabbi Eckstein has gained quite a platform among evangelical Christians. As reasonable and affirming of the Christian religion as Eckstein might seem, his commitment as an Orthodox rabbi is still at odds with those of us committed to seeing all people, including Jewish people, find salvation in Jesus. In truth, he would probably mourn over each Jew who came to believe in Jesus if he takes his rabbinical calling seriously.

I'm afraid that some Christians have been so flattered by Eckstein's approach that the utter lack of logic in using him as an authority on Jewish evangelism escapes them.

In a way, I am glad that Eckstein speaks so highly of "lifestyle evangelism" because it affords thinking Christians the opportunity to reflect on how to fulfill the Great Commission. The kind of lifestyle evangelism Eckstein praises centers on how nice people can be, whereas the Bible centers on why the cross is so necessary.

It's absolutely right to be kind. Yet the Great Commission was not to go into the world and be nice to everybody until they see how wonderful you are and ask, "What makes you to be so wonderful?" The gospel is about the wonderfulness of Jesus. Yes, we should reflect the fruit of His Spirit in our lives to attract people to Him. But we do not have to earn the right to tell anyone about God's wonderful plan of salvation. It is our obligation and our privilege to tell what God has done. The gospel is not how nice I am, but how Jesus is the sin-bearer and how He died according to Scripture and rose again from the dead.

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## Is there a right "method"?

The gospel that we preach is foolishness to those who perish. The cross is always an offense. If you expect Jews for Jesus to be liked by everyone because we are very nice people who are never controversial, I am sorry, but we will be a disappointment.

We think it is most important to carry the cross courageously and to proclaim that cross as God's only way of salvation. If lifestyle evangelism means having the courage to let people know what Jesus has done for us in the course of everyday life, I hope you will pray with us that we will always have the heart to maintain that kind of "lifestyle."