**Seven Principles of Personal Evangelism by Mark Copeland**

**Introduction:**

I believe most Christians truly want to share the gospel of Christ with others but are afraid or feel uncomfortable doing so. By looking at how Jesus, the Master Teacher, engaged in personal evangelism, we can follow His example.

**Text:** John 4:1-26

**Body:**

1. **Contact People Socially** John 4:1-6 “Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.” NKJV

* Jesus went through Samaria, instead of going around it as many Jews would. This insured that he would make contact.
* We must sow the seed instead of keeping it in the sack! (Haggai 2:19) “Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.” NKJV
* While God calls Christians to come out from among them and be separate. He doesn’t want us to isolate ourselves. Note: I Corinthians 5:9-11 “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person.” NKJV
* Opportunities for social contact:
  + School and school functions
  + Work and businesses
  + Home – family, friends, neighbors
* Go where the people are. (Mark 16:15) “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” NKJV

1. **Establish A Common Interest** John 4:7-8 “A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.” NKJV

* Jesus’ words centered around their common interest – water. It’s important to converse with others and build rapport. Finding a common interest helps one to discuss spiritual matters later.
* Common interests might include children and grandchildren, work, hobbies, sports, community events, and travel.
* Don’t feel that you have to immediately begin talking about religion.

1. **Arouse Spiritual Interest** John 4:9-14 “Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’ ” NKJV

* Jesus aroused interest by just speaking to her. [A man speaking to a woman; a Jew speaking to a Samaritan.]
* We can arouse spiritual interest today by our example – showing concern and compassion, by being honest and sincere, not showing racial prejudice, setting a proper example of faith. (I Peter 3:1-2, 15) “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” NKJV
* Jesus’ words to the woman shifted their conversation to spiritual matters – “living water.”
* Today we can ask questions like, “Why do you think our world is in such a mess?” “Would you be interested in what the Bible says about . . .?”

1. **Don’t Go Too Far, Too Fast** John 4:15-16 “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’” NKJV

* The woman wanted the “living water,” but did she really understand what it was? Jesus saw she needed further teaching. She needed to know He was the Messiah. So He told her to get her husband which resulted in her being convinced that He was a prophet.
* Sometimes people will want to talk about a particular subject, but they really need something else first. Some want to study Revelation or the “end times” but they need to be grounded on the rest of the Bible first. They need milk before meat. (I Corinthians 3:1-2) “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ, I fed you with milk, and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;” (Hebrews 5:12-14) “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” NKJV

1. **Don’t Condemn Unnecessarily** John 4:17-18 “The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, I have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband in that you spoke truly.’ ” NKJV

* Jesus could have dwelt at length on her being an adulteress, but He did not. He came to this world to save it, not condemn it.

(John 3:17) “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” NKJV His Primary purpose was to offer this world salvation. (John 12:47) “And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.” NKJV

* Our primary purpose, as followers of Christ, is to also offer forgiveness and salvation to a lost world. God desires reconciliation with fallen humanity. In some ways, ours is a ministry of reconciliation. (II Corinthians 5:18-20) “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” NKJV

1. **Stick with the Main Issue** John 4:19-25 “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ ” NKJV

* The woman turned the conversation from herself to where one should worship. Jesus answered her question but also turned the conversation back to who He was.
* When talking with someone, stay focused and take one step at a time. Don’t skip ahead. Make sure agreement occurs before moving on.

1. **Confront Directly** John 4:26 “Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’ ” NKJV

* Finally, Jesus confronted the woman with His identity. This came after all the ground work He had laid.
* Ultimately you will need to confront those with whom you have been talking by inviting them to obey the gospel. (Colossians 1:5-6) “because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;” NKJV

**Closing:**

The result of Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman was the conversion of many souls. (John 4:39) “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ ” NKJV This shows the potential of personal evangelism. The fields are truly white for harvest. (John 4:35) “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’ ‘Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!’ ” NKJV

Bobby Stafford April 2, 2017