

YOU CAN SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS! (1)

Your evangelism muscles By Bob Young

My wife and I exercise several times each week. As we grow older, we recognize the importance of keeping our muscles active and strong. Physically, we are able to do more, we are able to do more longer because we exercise. We are stronger, we have more endurance.

Have you considered your evangelism muscles? Are there exercises we can do that will help us build our evangelism muscles? The answer is “yes!” Exercising a muscle simply means using the muscle repeatedly in order to build strength, endurance, and joy. When I was younger, I loved to run. The more I ran, the further I could run, the longer I could run, the faster I could run, and it was fun to run.

Running enabled the “more” — more distance, more time, more speed, more joy, more often. Exercising our evangelism muscles will have the same impact. More spiritual conversations, more people, more opportunities, more often. How can you exercise your evangelism muscles?

- Be Jesus’ presence everywhere you go. Radiate the presence of Jesus, in your attitudes, actions, words, example.
- Talk about Jesus in daily conversations and you will become comfortable talking about Jesus.
- Learn to ask questions, learn how to develop interest in others, learn how to evaluate needs.
- Learn how to evaluate hearts, develop evangelistic perception. (Think of the parable of the sower-soils.)
- Practice, practice, practice: **pray** into the heart of Jesus, go forth **seeking** the lost, be the **presence** of Jesus, **talk** about Jesus, initiate **spiritual conversations**, ask **questions**, **invite**.
- Physically, some muscles are harder to develop. Think about levels of physical exercise—beginner, intermediate, advanced. The same is true of our spiritual, evangelistic muscles. Begin with the easier exercises mentioned above. Focus on one exercise for a day, or several days, perhaps a week, until you are able to do it naturally and easily.
- Eventually, you will be ready for more difficult exercises — **proclamation** and **persuasion**.

For the most part, our traditional methods of evangelism put the responsibility for the entire evangelistic process on one person. One person, one prospect. Biblically, evangelism is the work of the spiritual body. Traditional methods of preaching the gospel become less effective as time passes, traditional methods of preaching the gospel are less effective in today’s world. Still, people have needs and desires: relationships, to be welcomed, to worship, to know more about the Bible, to be able to understand and explain faith.

I challenge you to test and exercise your muscles. Which are your strongest muscles? Who in the church has the strongest persuasion muscles? Who in the church has the strongest proclamation and gospel presentation muscles? Who has the best friendship muscles, establishing relationships and presence? Who loves to talk, and talk, and talk? Who is a good listener, asking questions, learning, helping, encouraging?

I encourage you to strengthen all of your evangelistic muscle set, but I especially want to encourage you to find your gift, and use your gift so the local church can be more effective in evangelism.

God wants us to exercise our muscles and reach out with the gospel. Strengthening our evangelistic muscles will help us grow spiritually, will help us share Jesus more comfortably, will result in the lost being saved, will contribute to the numerical and spiritual growth of the church.

Philemon 6: “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” As you develop evangelistic muscles and share your faith, you will grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ and become a stronger disciple.

The goal is to S.H.A.R.E. our faith. The next article in this series will suggest a memorable model that will help you make sharing faith a part of your conversations every day!