



360 REVOLUTION: FOUR-WEEK PRAYER & EVANGELISM DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 1: A COMMITMENT TO CARE

“The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” —Matthew 9:37 NLT

No doubt, there is a lot of work to do, but not many people will actually do it. They’ll find an excuse not to reach out. You are on the front line of God’s work. If you don’t reach your friends, family, and neighbors, who will? The cold harsh reality is that not only will those people be separated from God in this life, but they will be separated from God for eternity. Right now in your heart, you’re probably having one of these reactions to these statements.

1. You’re willing to reach out, but you don’t know how.
2. You’re not willing to reach out right now because either you’ve tried and failed or you think that someone else will do it, and that you can just be the best Christian you can be, and that that’s enough.
3. Your heart is broken by hearing this.

Which one are you? Are you somewhere in between those points, or is one of those dead-center where you are today? Hopefully God will move your heart toward Number 3, where you will be excited about reaching out to the people around you and that your heart would break for them!

According to research from the Barna Group, the people around you may be ready for a conversation about God. Many say that they pray to God and that they want a deep relationship with him. The door is open. Your friends at school, the dudes at the mall, the people at the movies sitting behind you talking or making out—many of them are open to Jesus and open to you.

Consider the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–35).

Now think about the man who was beaten up in this story. Is there anyone in your school, anyone at the grocery store, anyone on your street or in your path who needs to know and experience the love of God?

- The priest in the story who went across the street to avoid the hurting guy is like some of us who see the need but don't want to take the risk of reaching out.
- The temple assistant is like some of you who may be willing to reach out but figure that someone else will lead them to Jesus. Someone else will do it.
- The Samaritan is the one who cared, the one who stopped and met the man's needs, took him to where he could be healed, and then even promised to follow up and take care of any extra needs he might have. Despite their differences, he cared. (Remember, Jews strongly disliked the Samaritans!)

This is what a commitment to care is all about:

- Being willing to meet someone's needs—their physical, emotional, or spiritual needs.
- Doing something about it, taking them to the place they can be healed or get help, and being willing to take Jesus to them and help them see how much he loves them.
- And following through by looking out for that person's spiritual growth.

Would you take seriously this week your commitment to care? Start your commitment to care today by examining and thinking about your response to this crucial question: Do you really care about the lost people around you?

Nike once aired a great commercial that asked the question, "Is it in you?" Along with showing people achieving great things, it shows them failing and asking themselves, "Is it in me to win?" If you join this 360 REVOLUTION, you will fail from time to time. People will laugh at you; they may call you names. But what you have to keep asking is, "Is it in me to do what God said and tell other people about Jesus so they can experience the life God planned for them? *Is it in you?*"

WEEK 2: A COMMITMENT TO INFLUENCE

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." —Matthew 5:13–16 NLT

Can you be a person of influence for Jesus in your workplace? In your neighborhood? In your school? At the gym, the mall, the church?

Can you be Jesus to those with whom you cross paths? When you see someone in need, do you lend a hand? Can you respond to conflict differently than the world? How do you handle times of difficulty? Are you kind, but firmly grounded in Christ? Are you investing in people more than projects and tasks? Do what Jesus did. Get to know people first, tell them that God's looking for them, and point them in his direction. When you do, you'll be in good company with Jesus.

He was misunderstood. Some of Jesus' closest friends rejected him and dropped him. Jesus' area of influence was near where he lived, where he spent most of his time. Outside your house, you spend most of your time at the office or church (or if you're a minister, perhaps your church or a local restaurant is your office!). These are major ministry settings for you! Relationships really mattered to Jesus

So how do you do it? How do you have influence? How do you do what Jesus did? First make sure that this verse stays hidden in your heart!

“Be assured that when we speak to you we're not after crowd approval—only God approval” (1 Thess 2:4 MSG).

If you approach having influence on others with this verse in mind, and not with fear or ego in mind, it will significantly change your focus. So memorize this verse and keep it close by to remind you what you are doing if you take on this challenge. So how do you become a person who helps influence people toward the new life that Jesus brings?

The first thing you've got to do in all this is build relationships. Did you become a Christian through a TV ministry or by reading a theology book? Possibly. But most people accept Christ because a family member or a pastor or a friend built a real relationship with them and shared God's love with them.

Here are five things that you can do to build these relationships the way Jesus did:

1. Start with people you know.
2. Pray. Ask God with whom he wants you to develop a deeper friendship.
3. Use common interests to your advantage.
4. Listen. When you listen to someone, it shows that you have special respect for them. Most people have very few friends who really listen to them.
5. Talk about spiritual things early. You can do this casually. A friend asks, “What are you doing this weekend?” You say, “I'm going to the mall, hanging out with Becky, and going to church.” “You go to church? Really? Why or where?”

Making some or all of these things a priority will result in you having the opportunity to really make a difference for eternity in someone's life.

WEEK 3: A COMMITMENT TO INVEST

“Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others.” —1 Corinthians 10:24 NLT

People do think we are weird sometimes when we bring up Jesus.

Most of the time it's not the most effective method to share Jesus with people the first time you meet them or really early on in the relationship. Certainly, there are situations where someone is in a crisis or you just sense that they are open to the message or God moves you to talk to strangers, but most of the time building a relationship is the most effective way.

Talking without a relationship is often not as effective. And sometimes it even closes the door to more conversations later. It's sort of like being a door-to-door salesman without knowing the person. Relationships are key. With people you really know well, you can share things with them that other people can't. It might make them upset if someone else said it to them, but you can say things to them because you are real friends. You can say hard things and be real with each other because you trust each other and know each other.

There is a great verse that says: "There are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov 18:24 RSV).

But the key to really want to build a relationship because we love people. We want the best for others. We want people to know we care. Some of you need to take some risks in your current friendships. You need to take a chance and share about the love of Jesus. Some of you are in a bubble. What I mean is that when we talk about this stuff, you say, "Hey, I go to a Christian school, and all my friends are Christians. I don't have anyone to share with." You are blessed to be around people who know Jesus. You've been given a special gift there, and because of that maybe you owe something a little extra back. You've gone faster in understanding things about God, so you have to work harder at reaching others. If not at your school or in your immediate circle, how about your neighborhood or other outside areas or activities? Look for people to get to know and reach out to them. Show some interest in them. Show them that you care. The Bible says: "Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others" (Phil 2:4 NCV).

It never seems like the right time to share.

Sometimes you have to work at making it the right time. There's a book called *Outbreak* that's about sharing your faith. With people he knows well and sometimes not so well, the author uses pop culture to bring up Jesus. For example, at the movies maybe there is something about God in the story or there is a hero figure like Jesus. At a Superman movie, for example, you could say that Superman is a guy who goes around saving everyone. That's kind of the mission of Jesus. And your friend might be like, "What? Jesus is Superman?" Then you have a chance to explain and talk a little.

There's all kinds of pop culture that can flow into spiritual conversations. You can lead into this conversation with people when they bring up some big life thing, like their aunt has cancer or their grandma is dying or something like that. You can be a real friend in that situation. You can also say, "Yeah, life is crazy. What do you think about heaven and stuff?" Maybe that will lead into a deeper conversation.

A great discussion starter question is to ask, "Do you have any spiritual beliefs?" You can learn a lot about a person that way. Then you can ask, "What do you think about Jesus?"

I don't want to share because I don't know enough about God to answer any questions.

Realize that you're never going to know it all, but you can know enough. Focus on these things:

- Know who Jesus is.
- Know how he loves.
- Know why he came.
- Know what he offers.

Sit down and write out the answers in your own words so you will be ready to share when you get the chance.

1 Peter 3:15 says, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (NIV).

People are going to pretend that they don't care to hear the message, but there is something inside of them, something inside all of us, that wants to know. There is a God-shaped hole inside of us that can only be filled permanently with a relationship with Jesus. People try to fill it with everything else the world has to offer, but it just slips on out. It doesn't fill the God-vacuum that all of us have without Jesus.

There is a simple strategy to help us called the 360 REVOLUTION. The overall premise of the 360 REVOLUTION is to look around you 360 degrees to see where God is at work and the opportunities he is giving to you to share with others—at work, school, home, wherever you go, whatever you do, and whoever you meet.

The three steps to the 360 REVOLUTION challenge us to

- Invest in 3 people who don't know Jesus. These could be family members, friends, teammates, neighbors, cousins, students in your classes, a boss, a teacher, and so on. It can be anyone God has put in your path.
- Pray for them 6 days a week, taking action at least one of those days.
- Miss 0 opportunities to plant and water a seed of truth about God.

In the 360 strategy, we find 3 people, pray for them 6 days a week, and miss 0 opportunities.

We will also begin to pray for these three people six days a week. (Note: Why not seven days? There was a time when Moses was praying and God said, in essence, "What are you doing still praying? Get up and do something." We are going to do something at least one day a week for these three people. This may be writing them a note, sending them an e-mail, or doing something with them, but do something.)

WEEK 4: A COMMITMENT TO INVITE

“So everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen, warning them and teaching them as well as we know how.” —Colossians 1:28 TLB

Questions to consider:

1. What has happened in your heart toward those that are far from God in the last three weeks?
2. Have you had increased opportunities to share what God has done in your life in the last three weeks?
3. Have you seen anyone of your 3 move forward in the journey to knowing Jesus?
4. . How has your prayer life changed as a result of this study?

Important: Know that regardless of whether or not your friends have moved closer toward knowing Christ or whether you’ve have had the opportunity to share their faith, God will honor your heart and faithfulness. Joining God in his mission to recover his lost children is a lifelong journey. Whether or not you see immediate results, or whether those results take more time, God will honor your devotion to his mission.

Sharing Your Story

Take a sheet of paper and label the top Pre-Christ. Label the middle Meeting Christ. Label the bottom Post-Christ. In three minutes, write under the Pre-Christ header what your life was like before you came to faith in Jesus. This does not have to be in paragraph form or even complete sentences.

You might have accepted Jesus Christ at a very young age. Focus on what it is like for you to live a day, a week, or a season without Jesus at the forefront of your life. Perhaps you’ve experienced seasons of growth by which you can contrast life before you lived as Jesus intended.

Next, take three minutes to write the events surrounding the how you met Jesus, under the Meeting Christ section. Write down as many details as you can remember—where you were, who was with you, what caused you to make the decision, etc. You might also write down how Jesus got ahold of your heart to go deeper with him at a later age.

Finally, write down, in the span of just three minutes, how your life has been different since you became a Christ-followers in the Post-Christ section.

Consider practicing sharing your story with another believer. Realize that your story may be a rough draft; keep practicing and it will get better!

Remember: The point of sharing your story is not that you sound like the next Billy Graham, but that your friends who are far from God know your life has been changed by Jesus. The change Jesus brings to their lives is infinitely more powerful than being able to tell the story like a professional

preacher. For a resource in your personal study, you may want to refer to Paul's testimony before King Agrippa in Acts 26. He follows this basic outline to share his story, and he does it in just a few minutes.

Sharing Jesus' Story

Leaders, in this section, your students will learn a method for sharing the gospel of Christ in a clear, straightforward manner. If your church has a particular way to approach this, feel free to use it instead.

There are a number of fantastic resources to help you with this section. Warner Press has a tool called *It's Awesome*. This is a simple tract-type visual that you can use to help them describe the new life in Christ to their friends. You can order online at www.warnerpress.org or by calling 800-741-7721. *How to Become a Contagious Christian* by Bill Hybels includes "The Bridge Illustration," which has been effective for thousands of people. Another resource is The Bridge to Life tool, available from the Navigators (www.navpress.org). It's a very simple visual you can use to describe the fact that we are separated from God because of our sin, but that Christ bridges the gap between us and God. You can also do a Google search for "gospel presentation" for a number of free resources.

You can also take a look at *How to Share Your Faith Without an Argument* by Bill Faye. The Internet site is <https://discoveryseries.org/courses/how-can-i-share-my-faith-without-an-argument/>. If there is time, have them pair up and practice going through the illustration with each other. Encourage them to commit the illustration to memory so they can easily explain the basics of the gospel with their friends.

Now go and tell. Commit to invite.

"Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." —James 4:17 NLT

Special thanks to Greg Dewey, creator of 360 Revolution. www.JesusIsTheSubject.org/360