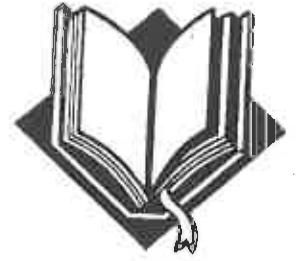


Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes from the Teaching Ministries of Dartmouth Bible Church

52 Morton Avenue North Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747

Series: Building Biblical Relationships
Scripture: Acts 2:41-47

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Lesson 1 (of 3) Sept. 13, 1992

Building Biblical Friendships

Introduction Loneliness is hell. Three times in Matthew's Gospel (8:12; 22:13; 25:30), it is recorded that Jesus mentioned a location called the *outer* or *most distant darkness*. It is, evidently, a location of judgment reserved for the lost and especially for those of the lost who have had opportunity to come to know Jesus Christ but have rejected those opportunities. Whatever else hell will be, it will be utter and complete loneliness.

Loneliness was also part of another judgment--the judgment that Jesus took upon Himself, undeservedly, on behalf of all and every person who would ever trust in Him. When He cried out on the cross, *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* it was the cry of abandonment and final judgment. Dear ones, the atonement that we commemorate each time we celebrate the Lord's Table was not just an atonement of crucifixion, of ridicule by people, of physical thirst--as horrible and excruciating as all those were. Primarily, Jesus had to undergo FINAL judgment for His people. Primarily, He had to undergo the final loneliness of the *most distant darkness*. We cannot, I daresay, even *begin* to fathom what that meant, and isn't that wonderful?

Loneliness was part of God's plan for His Son. The Father and the Son agreed together in eternity past that the Son would have to endure it if the people of God, as yet uncreated, would ever be able to reach heaven. But loneliness has never been part of God's plan FOR HIS PEOPLE. Beginning with the first man, Adam, God looked at him and pronounced his aloneness unacceptable. So, God created a companion for Adam, Eve. God Himself, is a God who has always existed IN RELATIONSHIP to Himself. There is one God, but that God exists in three persons. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have eternally existed in perfect love and fellowship with each other. And so it is understandable that the people He has created, who *individually* are intended to reflect His nature, should exist in relationships with each other. We began to speak of this back on the

sixteenth of August as I shared with you the third part of the ministry plan I believe the Lord wants us to exploit here in Dartmouth. My heart weighs heavy with the need to provide our community with a place where the Savior is *fervently being sought*, where the Bible is *taught* and where the people make engaging in relationships an important part of their lives--*biblical* relationships.

We live today in a self-fulfillment and *privatized* culture. All around us, and partly because its an American characteristic, people are divorcing themselves from one another. We are the do-your-own-thing civilization. Even the church community at large has struggled to resist this. But when we open our Bibles, as one of the things we do in seeking the Savior, we read about a quality of community life that is *supposed to* surpass the world. We read where Jesus told His closest disciples (John 13:34),

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another

We read in our Bibles about that special friendship that the young David had with his friend Jonathan (I Sam.18:1-4), and we really have little reason to believe that Jonathan was even saved. And yet, the Scripture tells us that this man loved David *as himself*, and he demonstrated it with the gifts he gave and with restraint upon the fact that he *could have felt* David to be a rival, and by protecting David from the wrath of his father, Saul.

Listen to something written a fellow named Bruce Shelley:

In America's self-fulfillment culture, the church IS God's answer for a fundamental yearning in the human heart, the need to belong, the need to be a part of a significant community. Countless social organizations in America, in addition to bars, testify to this deeply felt need: clubs, gangs, lodges, unions, fraternities. Human beings, it seems, are made to belong. What, after all, is the most severe penalty in penal institutions? Solitary confinement. Why? Because loneliness is hell. God created human beings for loving fellowship, and the marred image of God in human beings witnesses to this thirst that cannot be quenched by human communities alone. An individual Christian, trying to make it without the support of his or her own family, simply makes no sense. Membership in the church, far from being a matter of personal choice, is a spiritual *necessity*. All truly Christian experience is *communal* experience, experience gained, enriched and matured in the presence of Christ and His people. (*The Consumer Church*, p. 51, 1992)

RELATIONSHIPS are something that God intends for believers to enjoy and to depend on for strength. I want to share with you several different kinds of biblical relationships that are good, holy and right. And then I want to focus on ONE TYPE of biblical relationship, in particular.

KINDS OF BIBLICAL RELATIONSHIPS People are all confused today about what kinds of relationships are good and healthy. It has become "politically

incorrect" to reject most any kind of relationship and today's ethic has become *pretty much anything is appropriate, so long as no one is physically injured*. I guess we are just going to have to get used to being called "killjoys", "puritanical", "regressive", and the current favorite, "homophobic."

But here are a number of KINDS of relationships between people that need no further approval. They are good; they are healthy; they have been given to us by God, the giver of every good gift.

1. The personal relationship between God, Himself, and any person at all, experienced by faith and in the Holy Spirit.
2. Marriage. God intends for most people to discover a mate, marry them, and then live happily ever after.
3. Joint-Parenting. There is nothing like making a baby! That baby does may stay a baby for long, but they will always be the CHILD of those parents. That does not change.
4. Friendship. One of the things that I think we are becoming stronger on in this church, is the establishment and maintenance of good, solid, Christian friendships. A Christian friendship is one which has Christian expectations, and one which is *governed* by the fear of the Lord. Let me apply the words of an O.T. prophet here: *He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you; but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God* (Micah 6:8).

If friendships are happening in your life, through this church, then not much could really discourage you *about* this church. If friendships are *not* happening in your life, through this church...then it will not matter what kind of successes we could point to, you will not be a happy church member.

5. Partners-in-ministry. I put this down simply because it is so obvious in the New Testament. It is a unique relationship which Pastor Lou and I share--it is a *biblical* relationship. It is a special relationship which Laura Duarte and Linda Frasier share as leaders of the Women's Service Team.

Mary and Martha were partners-in-ministry.
Paul and Barnabas were partners-in-ministry.
Timothy and Mark were partners-in-ministry.
Silvanus and Peter were partners-in-ministry.

6. Being the witness. It is also part of God's plan that we have certain

7. Church membership. Joining a church is a special kind of relationship that, I believe, God intends for us to enjoy and promote. It isn't that God cares much about names on a list. He has His own list. But He does intend for us to visibly and meaningfully *be committed* to each other. Church membership should be a natural and painless step of growth your whole Christian life. If you move from this area to another area one of your first orders of business should be to locate a local fellowship which you feel comfortable joining.

Let me also say that I think it is healthy, Spirit-filled and it just plain *gives joy to the Lord*, when local churches *join each other*. I love it when we do something with another church. We are living out what our theology *says* about the unity of all believers...

A Final Few Words About Building Friendships...

Small Groups!
I love having Christian friendships! I have quite a few around the country and I treasure them. But meaningful Christian friendships require work and patience, and they require some sacrifice. In order to build strong Christian friendships, you need to THINK RIGHT about friendships, and you need to BEHAVE RIGHT within them.

By "thinking right", I mean you have fair expectations towards your friend, that you are willing to cut them a lot of slack when they need it, to *forget* insensitive things they may say or do. "Thinking right" about your Christian friendships means that you will not focus too heavily on only one Christian friend, drawing all your fellowship from that one person... "Thinking right" here means that accept the fact that they are different from you--and you *decide to enjoy* that fact.

Dear ones, do you know who my best friend is? It is now, and has been for 17 years, the same person who is my wife. Frankly, I would rather spend time with *her*, than with any of you folks (at least most of the time...)

And we need to BEHAVE RIGHT towards our friends:

That means I will not indulge a loose tongue with them, gossiping or saying things to them that are not profitable just because I am relaxed with them. It is not love to say something to my friend, or to tell them something that is not profitable *for them* to hear...

It means that I will not just TAKE, TAKE, TAKE from my friend who *likes* to give to me and to please me because we have this friendship. It means there is a balanced and relaxed GIVE AND TAKE relationship.

"Behaving rightly" in a Christian friendship means we communicate. It means that with *this person* at least, I am willing to take the risk of opening myself up to them so that that friend will really have the opportunity to understand me as I am. I take the risk of *disapproval* because I think that highly of them.

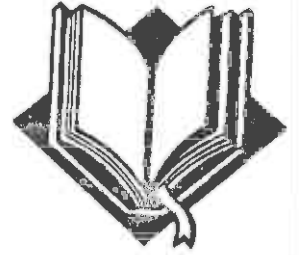
This came clear to me this week when a pastor friend of mine from Virginia called me and asked my opinion of a very sensitive area of his ministry, his preaching. He told me, "Neil, there are not many I would open myself up on about this." I was humbled and blessed by his invitation...

"Behaving rightly" in a Christian friendship means that I do things that will bless that friend, and I allow that friend to do things that will bless me.

Now, because good friendships take a fair amount of time and energy and effort to build, we do not have the capacity for a huge number of them. It is not my job to be the close buddy of every person in the Body, nor is it yours. Our capacities for friendship will vary from person to person. But I believe that God intends for us to *feed* off of each other's walk with Christ, to VALUE one another and to enjoy one another. That is one reason why we have so many social and fellowship activities in this church--far more than the average church of 200 people!

Dear ones, may the Lord Himself, who said to His disciples after three years of walking with them, "I know longer call you servants but I call you 'friends'", may HE burden all of us to seek to honor, to protect and to build biblical friendships

Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes from the Teaching Ministries of Dartmouth Bible Church

52 Morton Avenue North Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747

Series: Building Biblical Relationships

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18 - 6:4

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Lesson 2 Sept. 20, 1992

Building Biblical Family Relationships

Introduction No war is easy for a country to fight. But the Vietnam war, which involved our country for 10 years, was perhaps one of our most difficult and perplexing wars. In the viewpoint of some of our soldiers who fought there, the Vietnam war became a losing effort as early as 1967. This is an on-going debate, even today, but clearly Vietnam was a conflict where the enemy fought with completely different tactics than did the Americans. The American forces were backed by billions of dollars in technology, industry and advanced weaponry. But due to a great many factors, the American purposes there were ultimately defeated. I bring this to you today, because the American family as an institution, is waging the same kind of conflict.

We are blessed with material wealth.

We have more *information* available to us than any previous generation.

We are more mobile and more time-efficient than anyone has ever been.

And yet, we, the American family, are losing a guerilla war. We are being infiltrated by an enemy we cannot see and we are, while thinking the battle goes well--*losing* the war. I'm sure I don't need to run a bunch of corroborating statistics by you to illustrate my contention. All you really need to see is the state of American network TV, and the fact that America *tolerates* it and supports it. And what about Christian families? Are we immune from the diseases that are infecting the American family? Are evangelical families safe, sipping iced tea in a sidewalk café down in Saigon, while non-Christian families are being overrun and brutalized up in the Central Highlands? No, it isn't unheard of that Christian couples are getting divorced; it isn't unheard of that Christian parents are capable of abusing their children. It isn't unheard of that Dads are more excited about their jobs and careers than they are about their kids' soccer match or piano recital. Families who belong to fine, evangelical,

Bible-believing churches are losing the war in this country right alongside non-Christian families, even as we lull ourselves to sleep with more sophisticated church ministries, bigger and "badder" church facilities, classier music ministries and lots and lots and lots of great Bible doctrine being taught.

Biblical Relationships This little mini-series I'm bring in the pulpit is on the overall subject of "Biblical Relationships." There are many kinds of friendships, ministry relationships (including witnessing relationships) that God has given us to enjoy. And a whole category of relationships that God intends for us to have and to occupy ourselves with and to enjoy, is the category of **family relationships**--but family relationships which *God has ordained*, not which man has invented. This week I was over at "Fantastic Sam's" waiting to haircut and I was leafing through a *Time* magazine. The article was tracking the change in "family values". There was a picture of a typical American family for each of the 30's, the 40's, the 50's, the 60's, the 70's, the 80's and the 90's. The one for the 60's grabbed my eye, because it was a *Life* magazine pic I remembered from when it was originally published. The one for the 90's also grabbed me. It was two gay men, caring for two AIDS babies they had adopted. Now it may be hip and modern, but homosexuality is not a family relationship with which God approves or invented. Neither is having multiple lovers of the same sex.

Biblical Family Relationships God's ideal--and there is no reason why this isn't possible for most people-- is that one man and one woman choose to spend their lives together and raise children as part of the process. In this family structure you have a husband wife relationship, a father-son or father-daughter relationship, a mother-son or mother-daughter relationship, a brother-brother, sister-sister or brother-sister relationship. And then, likely, you have the whole set of relationships dealing with the grandparents. Now these alone require a fair amount of energy and attention, don't they?

But having a *Biblical* family relationship, and working on it, has to do also with the *quality* of relationship too. I don't know how many times I have heard a person in an unhappy marriage say to me, "Do you think God wants me to stay unhappy, just to remain together for the sake of remaining together?" AS IF perpetual misery is the only possible scenario of honoring the marriage vows. To this outcry, I reply that God wants you to be happy, sure. And He wants to change you sufficiently to give you the joy of the Spirit and in the case of two Christian partners, to change both so that the marriage will not only *survive* but become the thing of joy and fulfillment He designed it to be, and that you both

thought it would be on your wedding day. Do you remember this verse in the Bible? **Hebrews 12:4...**

BUILDING Biblical Family Relationships Now the passage today in **Ephesians 5** gives us a blueprint for how to BUILD happy and therefore Biblical family relationships. Evidently it was a problem in the ancient church in the city of Ephesus, because Paul brought it up.

Now this is a *HOW-TO* passage because there are a bunch of verbs that Paul says, "Hey guys, DO THIS..." How do we BUILD Biblical, God-honoring, joy-giving family relationships? We follow Ephesians 5 and 6.

I *keep* working on it over the years. I don't give up on my commitment to Ephesians 5 and 6 because

I believe this book is more than just another religious book; it is God's **WORD** to me.

I don't give up because Jesus has not yet given up on me.

I don't give up because all the alternative lifestyles I see that the world (and some Christians, even) are opting for, are flops!

Now there are four types of people addressed in this passage:

HUSBANDS, WIVES, CHILDREN and FATHERS...

The *wife* has two "how-to" verbs addressed to her, *submit yourself* and *respect*.

The *husband* has three "how-to" verbs addressed to him, and those who are *fathers*, an additional two. Husbands are to *LOVE* their wives, and this home-building skill is recommended four times in the passage. In addition, he is told to *nourish* and to *cherish* his wife. As a father, a man is to restrain himself from *provoking* his children to anger--and I suspect there's a whole sermon series just in *that* verb, don't you think? And, he is told to *bring the children up* in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, which of course, is the point of the Parent Dedication/Child Presentation ceremony we enjoyed here this morning... **THE HUSBAND/FATHER IS THE KEY TO THE FAMILY'S SUCCESS AND BASIC HEALTH.**

Finally, even *the children* are addressed by Paul. I think that if he were to come and visit our church, he would spend some time with the kids! And to the Ephesian kids he holds *them* responsible to Christian disciple-

ship, too! He says that for them, their unique area of responsibility is to *obey their parents* and to *honor their fathers and mothers*. The first part, I believe, becomes obsolete upon reaching adulthood, but the second part never becomes obsolete.

GOD'S BUILDING PROGRAM FOR DBC What does God want for us here in DBC? I believe that in addition to this becoming a place where everyone is really working at seeking the Savior, and in addition to this being a church where the Bible is taught effectively, the Lord wants us to concentrate on the construction of Biblical family relationships. This means couples will *desire* to work on their marriages and not stagnate. They will *want* to make use of couples-retreats, small groups of other couples, and all the other marriage resources we have.

It means that one thing you will be able to really see is husbands working on making their families their #1 priority.

Dads will sacrifice other interests for the few years they have children around at home in order to BE WITH them--just to BE WITH them.

Moms will make career decisions which, instead of subordinating the home to the career, the career is subordinated so she can be the best possible family member within her God-defined role.

It means kids are taught that family activities come before recreational activities. I did not say *instead of*, I said before.

Let's say we just decided as a church to build an addition on to this building and to just do it ourselves. And we got everyone on line for some function and we picked up the shovels and the hammers and the nail-guns and the paintbrushes (and the carpet-laying tools, because brethren, I want some nice *carpet* in this addition...) and we just started an old-fashioned building program! It would be like a bee-hive out here, wouldn't it!

That's what God wants in the areas of our families. He does not intend for us to lose this war even if the country goes to hell in a handbasket. He wants us to work on a "building program" of strengthening each other's families, or praying for each other's families, and when a family goes into stress it is not allowed to just become isolated and then just burn up, but we work to *rescue* it as best we can. May God, for whom this is clearly His will, energize us and enable us to make this our vision, to *own* it and to DO it.

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes from the Teaching Ministries of Dartmouth Bible Church

52 Morton Avenue North Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747



Series: Building Biblical Relationships
Scripture: Various

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Lesson 3 September 27, 1992

Building Relationships With Seekers

Introduction The continuing mission for all Christians in every era, is to "make disciples." Every true believer in Jesus Christ is commissioned with this mission. Even though cultural features in societies change, even though nations are born and then all eventually die, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have been charged with *making more disciples*. In other words, the "prime directive" (putting it in "Star Trek" terminology) is that all Christians are to be multiplying themselves by making new disciples of Jesus Christ.

Now, this is a great problem.

First of all, the vast majority of unbelieving candidates out there do not *want* to be made into disciples.

They do not know what a "disciple" is; they have long since decided that churchy -stuff is not for them; and

They have eyes and can see that we, the "already-disciples", have all kinds of inconsistencies and short-comings in our lives.

In addition, they already have an invisible "master" who has blinded them (Satan), and he is far more intelligent than any of us "already-disciples", he is invisible, he has lots of demons to help him, and he owns the media.

The task of "making disciples" for us, the "already-disciples" of Jesus, is a problem...

A Theological Basis for Evangelism But folks, I want to encourage you today--because I believe that our God is sovereign. I believe that His "elect" *will* come to faith in Christ despite our weaknesses as evangelists, despite our shortcomings, despite Satan. I know that God will even use US to make new disciples of His Son, and indeed, He has already, and He is even now. Listen to Acts 13:46-48, especially 48. And Acts 16:14.

I also believe that the best tool He gives us to make disciples, is through the godly relationships we establish with those "not-yet-disciples", whom I shall call "seekers." I said "godly" relationships with seekers because women, you don't have to sleep with that seeker, you don't have to fall in love with him, you don't have to compromise yourself by marrying him in order to get him saved. Men, I say "godly" relationships with seekers because you don't have to go into a shady business deal with that seeker just to win a chance to share Christ with them. You don't have to compromise your faith in order to win that seeker for Christ. In fact, your maintaining a holy lifestyle--not a *holier-than-thou* lifestyle; a holy lifestyle--will say more about your Jesus to them than anything, probably.

But be encouraged--evangelism is something that WILL be accomplished because the Holy Spirit is the main agent in winning men and women and children to Christ, and He is sovereign. Jesus said that the matter of someone being saved--He called it becoming "born again"--was UP TO THE SPIRIT, who is like the wind that *blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it but don't know where it comes from and where it's going...*(John 3:8) The Holy Spirit invisibly and mysteriously (to us) moves and wins people to Christ howsoever He desires. Now, this is the *theological foundation* of why we have any hope at all to win new people to Christ, and why we see it happen--sometimes in very unexpected places!

I've told you about the guys over at the health club that I know only because I see them in the locker room. John Quinn, the Democratic candidate for State rep. right now, is one of them. You pray for him because he is a friend of mine and I would like to have a real opportunity to share Christ with him...

Now, I think that our most effective tool--or maybe I should just say what I think: the *smartest tool* for reaching new people for Christ is through personal relationships we work at establishing with them. These relationships may be at work, they may be within our own families, they may be across the back fence, they may be at the supermarket or the health club. But they are *relationships*, not just quick encounters, that make the difference.

Now, sometimes people say to me, "Neil, you don't know how hard it is to strike up the kind of relationship you're talking about, out there. People are awful pagan, and sometimes hostile." That's why you look for *seekers*, folks! I don't mean you exploit the vulnerability of weak-spirited or weak-minded people. I mean you look and *pray to find* those people whom the Holy Spirit has been preparing to hear the good news

of Jesus Christ! Yes, its true, I don't always know who that is. But I know this: they're out there, and if you look for them, you'll find them.

Now, this is the last message in this series on the overall subject of "building Biblical relationships"--for the time-being, anyway... Dear ones, I do not want this church to become like so many others, a place to "go to church", or even a place to hear the Bible preached and just get fed. I am utterly convinced that GOD does not want us to degenerate into an institution like that. I think that God wants us to be so much more than that! I think that the Lord wants us to be like His Son, Jesus. Jesus was a man of relationships. He formed close relationships, He formed loving relationships, He accepted people they way they were--and then told them to "go and sin no more" after He healed them or restored them.

When Jesus said to His first disciples, *Come and follow Me*, it was an invitation to join Him in a permanent relationship. He spent most of His time in those last three years of His life "on the road." They didn't drive, either--they walked. That meant that He and the guys spent a great deal of time together talking, eating, making housing arrangements, ministering side-by-side to other people--a great many other people--that they would encounter. And after His ascension, those same disciples--commissioned with the charge to keep making more and more disciples--took up the same lifestyle of moving about in teams and living in close relationship to people. Sometimes living in close community-style relationships with other people involved some friction. Paul and Barnabas got ticked off at each other at one point. It healed. And the Spirit moved them to let love cover a multitude of sins so that divisions that *did* occur within the church were healed up in time.

This family-like quality of the church has become its most effective tool in winning new people to the Savior. I believe that God wants to keep building this church here, to become a center for Biblical relationships. And one kind of relationship that God gives you, is the relationship with that *non-Christian* who is truly seeking the Savior, even though in the early stages he may not know it yet. It is a well-established fact that most people come into the church by being brought there; they do not wander in off the street, they really don't come here or at least, *stick in the church* because of special one-time outreach programs. *This building* is not primarily a place of evangelism. It CAN be a place of evangelism; but basically evangelism is going to be done mainly through the relationships that you, the individual people sustain on the outside. THEN we bring them here and into our lives to be instructed, to worship and to grow in NEW relationships with other believers.

We're Talking About "WATERING" We're basically talking about the ministry of watering. In 1 Cor. 3:1-9 we have two different styles of reaching people with the Gospel. Paul was a seed-planter. He would *introduce* people to the claims of Christ. He also watered, but primarily he was gifted as a planter. ***Apollos***, on the other hand, was a waterer. In Acts 18:24-28 we read about how Apollos got involved with spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. He was an intelligent man, skillful in showing how Jesus of Nazareth was really in fact the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. Paul considered him a waterer. He had the patience to feed the seedbed and nurture it and keep it nourished over time. He would undoubtedly engage in many personal relationships as part of the process. We read that Apollos himself, in the early days, was brought into something of a relationship--we don't know for how long--with Priscilla and Aquila, who took him alongside and ministered to him by sharpening his gifts.

Some of us are good at introducing people to the claims of Christ for the first time. We need people who enjoy and really make an effort to confront people with the Gospel for the first time. But I believe the seed has been planted in many people's hearts around here. What a great many of people around here need is waterers. Most folks around here need to have the seeds of the Gospel watered and nurtured. They need someone to strike up a friendship with them and to keep pouring on the water--not too much; you don't want to *wash* away the soil and then that poor little seed just floats to the top and *never* grows. But with a watchful eye on the relationship, you keep yourself ready at all times, indeed *looking* for opportunities to do as Peter, another evangelist said we should do: ***...sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence*** (1 Peter 3:15).

Watering Means Building Relationships With Seekers One thing you do not see in the Book of Acts or anywhere *else* in the New Testament is Jesus or the apostles wasting a lot of time on people who simply are not interested or open to the Gospel. We sow the seed all over the place and then decide OURSELVES which seeds *have to* sprout. Dear ones, that is God's business. OUR business is to water the shoots that DO come up.

Now, building these relationships with seekers means some time spent with them. It means some patience on your part. It means you might have to grow some thicker skin sometimes. It means you learn how to SHARE the Gospel so that when you have the chance, you can *lead* this seeker to Christ.

Its not that hard to share the Gospel--any Christian can do it! Here's the basic elements:

- 1. All have sinned.**
- 2. Sin's penalty.**
- 3. Christ paid the penalty.**
- 4. Must receive Christ.**

You don't have to marry someone to win the chance to share this with them. But with many, before you can *get to this point*, they need to trust you a little bit. They want to know you care about THEM as people, before they're going to believe you care about their eternal destiny.

If we're going to be a place where seekers can come and SEEK the Savior, we need to not get too blown away and offended at how they smell. I don't mean they're actual *odor* (although that may be part of it sometimes). I mean the pagan smell that an unbeliever still has from being completely polluted out in the world.

The apostle Matthew "smelled bad", evidently, to some of Jesus' followers because he was a tax-gatherer, the scum of the earth to the ancient Jews.

The apostle Paul "smelled bad" to the first Christians in Jerusalem (except Barnabas - see Acts 9:26). Many others could be mentioned.

The story is told of a coastal New England town a few years ago, and on the beach there was a life-saving station, manned by a couple of brave-hearted souls, who, when a ship would strike the rocks and begin to sink, these two would run from the little shack and row in their single boat out to the sinking ship and rescue as many as they could. The station became more and more noticed and soon more people joined up with the team. Then a second life-saving boat was acquired, and then a third. Soon someone said, "Hey, we need a bigger shack--we can't feed and clothe so many ship-wrecked people in this little shack." So they put up a nice new facility next to the shack, and they still went out whenever there was a shipwreck and brought the people in. Then someone else said, "Let's have some banquets and make this into a club!" So they spiffed the place up and put in a banquet hall. Soon there was more attention given to the banquets than to saving people. Then someone said, "Let's bring that original boat inside the banquet hall and clean it up real nice and varnish it, in fact, and have it as a special piece of memorial furniture." Then someone said, "You know, these shipwrecked people are kind of wet and smelly and actually, they don't really fit in with the kind of people in our club, here. Let's make a place for them outside, so they can be together..."

Dear ones, I believe God wants us to work at building Biblical relationships. With each other in friendships and ministry-team relationships; in our families. And with seekers. DBC needs to continue to become a center for godly relationships. Will you do it? I pray that we shall.

The Gospel:

1. All have sinned.
2. Sin's penalty.
3. Christ paid the penalty
4. Must receive Christ.