

Open Doors & Closed Doors

A Few Facts To Start With:

Every **Christian** is called to make **a difference**.

Matthew 5:13-16, 1 Peter 4:10, Colossians 4:2-6

Not every **situation** is an **open door**.

Matthew 7:6, 10:1-20, Acts 16:6-10

Remember that even **Jesus** and the **disciples** got **rejected**.

Mark 10:17-27, Acts 13:49-14:7

Judge success by your **obedience**, not **their decision**.

Mark 4:1-20

On average it takes **six people** to make a **difference**.

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Six Tips for Sharing Your Faith:

- ① Start with **prayer**, and one **person**.
- ② Begin with your **actions**, not your **words**.
- ③ To be **listened** to, start **listening**.
- ④ If no one is **questioning**...stop **answering**.
- ⑤ Keep to **simple truths**, not **rocket science**.
- ⑥ Leave them with **something to do**.

Food for Thought

For the week of August 5, 2012

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. Chris talked about looking for open doors when it comes to sharing our faith. For some of us, the fear is that a door will actually open and yet we won't have the ability to share. Although most of us aren't facing persecution when we share our faith, there is often fear of rejection, not feeling knowledgeable enough, or not having an answer. How could the following verses help give confidence to someone who is fearful of witnessing to others?

Luke 12:11-12

"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, [12] for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." [NIV]

Matthew 10:19-20

But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, [20] for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. [NIV]

How did God address Moses' concerns in Exodus 4:1-10?

Exodus 4:1-10

Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?"

[2] Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A staff," he replied.

[3] The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. [4] Then the Lord said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. [5] "This," said the Lord, "is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has appeared to you."

[6] Then the Lord said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow.

[7] "Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

[8] Then the Lord said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. [9] But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground."

[10] Moses said to the Lord, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." [NIV]

2. James 1:19-27 gives us guidance on how we can live so we make an impact on other people. Read it and write down any principles that could apply to you in terms of sharing your faith with someone else?

James 1:19-27

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, [20] for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. [21] Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

[22] Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

[26] If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. [27] Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. [NIV]

3. How we tell people about Jesus will have a direct effect on how open people are to hearing about him. What practical advice do the following verses give in being tactful when we share with others?

Colossians 4:6

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. [NIV]

Ephesians 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. [NIV]

1 Peter 3:15

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]