

009: Are You an Evangelist or a Sower of The Gospel?

Welcome to the Apprentice Approach Podcast Episode 009, where the ripples far exceed the splash... this is your host Jack McQueeney.

Many Christians struggle with making disciples; they feel busy, overwhelmed, and not qualified. We understand this struggle, which is why we've created a Bible-based framework so any believer can master the art of discipling.

Today, we have the privilege of talking with [Scott Morton](#)! Scott is the author of [Down-to-Earth Discipling](#) and *For You, My Friend: Spiritual Insights From a Skeptic*.* He's a long-time friend of ours and currently the International Funding Coach of [The Navigators](#) which takes him all over the U.S. meeting with and encouraging folks who are on the front-lines sharing the Gospel. One thing I wanted Scott share with us today is his practical experience with Evangelism. Specifically, I asked Scott to speak to the relationship between Evangelism and Discipleship. Scott's an expert at helping us see how Evangelism isn't that scary and also gives us practical questions to use in our next conversation!

Such a joy to have Scott with us today, so let's dive in...

Jack: Scott, some believers want to disciple others as long as it doesn't involve that scary word Evangelism. Help us with that, what do you mean by the title of today's podcast, "Are you an Evangelist or a Sower of the Gospel?"

Scott: Yeah, Jack, thanks. To take the scariness out of

Evangelism I think depends on how I see myself. If I see myself as having to be a preacher, then I am petrified. But if I see myself as a Sower of the Gospel, that's not so terrifying. I can do that. So let's look at two things today:

The first, is the misconception about my identity in Evangelism. And then the second is asking Gospel questions. I would like to leave our listeners today with questions they can use in their relationships with non-believers, and I would like to offer a book that they can give to their skeptical friends.

Jack: You mean that you just ask these questions outright to non-believers?

Scott: Well they're not magic questions and it's all in the context of relationship. So for example, I was talking with a colleague last November about how I invited my banking guy to do Bible Study with me. And he said, "Scott, how did that happen? What questions did you ask the banker that he agreed to do study with you? We don't know those questions." And I found that non-believers will respond to just these few key questions.

Jack: Okay, well let's table those questions right now, but let's dive into the misconceptions or the brass-tacks about Evangelism.

Scott: One reason that we believers are discouraged about Evangelism is because we think that we've got to take the identity of a Preacher and go from 0-60 in about 5 seconds. That is share the Gospel in such a winsome, powerful way that the person we're talking to completely understands everything about Christ, the Trinity, original sin, Substitutionary Atonement, and the Nicene Creed in about 45 minutes [laughing]

– and that’s not gonna happen. Or, we think that we gotta have the skills to twist the topic from the Green Bay Packers to the Gospel and sometimes that’s just too awkward. And we want to have our friends eager to see the Bridge diagram in about 10 seconds- it’s not gonna happen, Jack.

Jack: I get that, I can relate to that. So how can we switch our thinking about Evangelism?

Scott: I think we need to stop comparing ourselves with those who have the *gift* of Evangelism like Billy Graham, or Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade, or your Pastor. Some people are instinctive Evangelists, but most of us, including me, are not wired that way. Now, here’s a couple of Bible passages that I hope our listeners will jot down. The first is Romans 12:6-8. Now this is a list of the gifts, and it’s not all the gifts, but it lists seven of them: prophesying, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, showing mercy; Evangelism is not listed. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 also lists the gifts: 9 gifts and Evangelism is not listed. So now we come to Ephesians 4:11, “and he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.”

Jack: Well, are these gifts of the Spirit, offices, or are they *roles* within the Church?

Scott: Well, they could be either; and, I would say probably both. These gifts, or offices of the Church, are given by God to His people to be used for the equipping of the Saints to the building up of the body of Christ. Evangelism in Greek, I looked it up, simply means a messenger of good. Euangelion (I’m not sure I’m saying it right), “eu” means “well” or “good” and then the last half is “angelos” we get that “angel,” a “messenger.” So it’s a “well or good messenger,” a

“messenger of good.” It’s not a messenger of bad, nor a messenger of oratory, nor a messenger of skillful preaching, nor a messenger of condemnation; it’s a messenger of good news. So Jack, when we think about being an Evangelist we don’t have to be a whiz-bang preacher who can mesmerize a crowd. That’s not us, that’s not my gift, but what happens is we excuse ourselves from seeking to win others for Christ thinking that it’s someone else’s job.

Jack: Well that makes sense because I can see myself as a “messenger of good news.” I like to bring good news.

Scott: Yeah, that’s fun. So, be yourself; you simply need to bring good news and we like to give good news don’t we? When my son was born in Madison, it was early in the morning, but I went home as soon as the baby was born and put a big note on the picture window of our house, “It’s a boy!” It was good news; I wanted to share it. So, getting back to the title of the podcast, “A Sower of the Gospel,” that’s good news, but it doesn’t have to be shared all at one time. I am holding here the links of a chain, it’s got about, I’d guess, 12 or 14 links on it. And, we need to see ourselves as being a link in a chain, not a preacher praying the Gospel prayer with people every time we meet them. There are many links that precede the final link. So instead of preachers, let’s think of ourselves as links. Now, in my own case, the first link in the chain (that I remember) was a painting of Jesus knocking at the door hanging in our little country church back in Iowa.

Jack: I remember you saying that, sharing that.

Scott: I was five years old; it made a big impression on me, but at age five I was way too cool to become a Christian. And then a Pastor came to our house when I was in Junior High, he talked about spiritual life; I appreciated it, but I don’t

remember what he said. And then I went forward at a meeting one time, don't particularly know why. And then a Grad student came to my room at Iowa State when I was a freshman and presented [The Bridge](#) diagram, and then I attended a Navigator Conference where a businessman quoted Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," and I thought of that picture. Now, all these were links in a chain, but that very day when I heard that businessman quote that verse, I walked into a prayer chapel and asked Christ into my life. That was the final link, or the link where I received Christ. But would that final link have been possible if those others had not been there? I don't think so. But Jack, everybody has links in a chain. How about you? What would be the links leading up to your conversion?

Jack: Yeah, I think for me, probably was an identity issue. I was so closely tied into my family, that God had to really shake that up in order to get my attention. Then a friend sent me a verse from the Bible, and then another friend, a Navigator staff, shared a simple illustration with me that really made sense and it clicked.

Scott: So it was several things leading up to that before you actually became close with Christ.

Jack: Correct.

Scott: Yeah. So we're not all gifted Evangelists, but we can *all* sow seeds. We can *all* be a link in somebody's chain. You might not even know when you are a link, probably won't know, but time will tell.

Jack: Yeah, what does that mean practically for our daily Christian lives?

Scott: Well, I think first of all, we remove ourselves from the guilt of having to accomplish what gifted Evangelists accomplish. Stop comparing yourself with gifted Evangelists.

Jack: That's good.

Scott: Now, I once traveled around Michigan with a gifted Evangelist visiting Navigator alumni. It was a great trip, I had a great time. But, I noticed the guy that was taking me around, at every restaurant he would engage with the waiter or waitress about the Gospel. It went very well. Even one time with a gas station attendant he gave him a little track; it went very well, and everybody he talked to seemed to appreciate the fact that he took an interest in them. But I thought to myself, "I can't do that, in fact I don't even *want* to do that." And I thought, "I am not him; God bless him for his gift of Evangelism." So, let's get out from the guilt of having to be something we're not. Number two then, let's stop excusing ourselves from our duty to be Sowers of the Good News. We say that since we don't have the "gift of Evangelism," then we don't have to bother with Evangelism at all. We can be nice to non-Christians, but that's about it. Maybe one day they'll go to Church or watch re-runs of Billy Graham late at night, but we are not excused from Evangelism just because we don't have the gift.

Jack: Well, what does that practically mean for us on a daily basis? Flesh that out for us.

Scott: Well, I like to think of it this way: when I was playing baseball, everybody on the team had to learn to bunt the ball to advance the runner. Are there certain skills involved in bunting? Yes, you have to start with your bat at the top of the strike zone; you let the ball hit the bat; you don't push at it, which is a big mistake... and everyone on the

team had to learn to do that. Now, some were better at it than others, maybe some were even “gifted” at bunting, but we all had to do it. No one said, “I’m a home run hitter, I don’t need to bunt,” and I was a pitcher and I said, “Well, I don’t do anything but pitch.” No, I had to learn to bunt right along with everybody else. So we all need to learn to be Sowers of the Gospel, whether it’s our gift or not.

Jack: So, that seems to be a challenge – to get our arms around learning these skills of Evangelism. How can we do that?

Scott: Well, I don’t think, I think we make it harder in our minds than it really is. Let’s start with questions that we can ask non-believers. Now, here’s six questions that I ask and that the person I talked to last fall said, “Scott nobody knows these questions.” Well, I think we do, we just haven’t articulated it.

So here’s the first question, Jack, this might work in a role play a little bit, but so the question is with someone that I’ve been around awhile. So, I would go like this, so “Joe, we’ve done business together for a couple years, but tell me about your history, where you grew up; I don’t know anything about where were you born? What was your life like?” And so I just invite them to share their family story. And then I say, “Wow! You’ve had quite a life so far, but what about your spiritual journey during those days?” And it’s interesting to me, Jack, I have not had anyone hesitate to share that. Now they may say, “Well I don’t have much of a spiritual journey at all,” and it might be just two sentences, “I went to church a few times,” but listen. Find out. And then, I like to ask, “Now that you’re an adult, what’s your spiritual journey like these days?” And then I say, “Well Joe, could I tell you my background?” So, I’ll tell them where I was born and I don’t go into two hours of detail here, but just a little bit. And

then I say, "Let me tell you a little bit about my spiritual journey." Now, I may not give a full testimony at this point or the Gospel, but just a little bit about it. And that seems to go pretty well.

Jack: I like how you've weaved in the spiritual journey piece in the midst of your story. We all have these, even non-believers have that. Is that threatening for them?

Scott: I've not found it to be so. Jack, I think we'd be surprised at how eager people are to talk about the spiritual dimension of life in a non-threatening atmosphere. So, if you're genuine and you're authentic and you're getting to know this person, I don't think they're gonna consider it, in fact, I think they're gonna like to talk about it, at least that's been my experience so far.

The second question is someone I've known for quite awhile and I go like this, so let's say, "Greg, we've been acquainted for a long time but I don't think I've ever told you about something that means a lot to me, my spiritual journey. Have we ever discussed that?" (Now, I'll give them a chance to answer, because maybe we have.) "I wonder if the next time you come and we get together, if I could tell you about it? It's not about Church, it's not about religion, but it's pretty interesting." So, at the next time we're together, whether it's over lunch or whether he's a vendor coming in my office, I'll say, "Greg, let me take a couple minutes and just tell you something that marks my life, and I don't think I've ever told you."

Jack: Yeah, I like that. So it really makes sense with your chain illustration that this is really a process. And what other ways can you engage non-believers rather than just over a meal?

Scott: Well I've noticed a lot of my Gospel sowing *is* over meals; maybe it's just because I like to eat, but it can be done a lot of different ways. And Jack, I think you've done it over golf and just life celebrations – a birthday party in the neighborhood – and I find sometimes my neighbor, when we're out shoveling snow together, we'll just chat a minute or two. [Jack: Yeah, that's good.] So, anything you can do to build the friendship. And, I find that showing genuine interest in people, that's compelling.

Jack: You know it is interesting to take advantage of those windows of opportunity, those teachable moments.

Scott: Good way to put it, yeah. The third question is maybe something that is a bit more of a risk, but I'd say something like this, "Bob, besides my job here at the real estate company, one thing I like to do is I like to do Bible Study with young business guys like yourself. Now, you said you were once in a Bible study in your Church a few years ago? Tell me about that." So, I'll let him tell me about that, if he's had a background in it. And I'll say, "Well Bob, why don't we meet for lunch a couple times and study the life of Jesus? We need to understand what Jesus was about, and by the way it's my treat. Do you like Mexican food? I got a place." And, Jack, no one has ever turned me down on this. Now, I don't think it's just because they're afraid to turn me down; I think they'd turn me down, but they sense that I'm interested in them. But more than that, it's not because of my personality, God is in this. And God is willing to go to bat here.

Jack: That makes total sense. You know, Scott, you ask such great questions. But, I think one of the things of knowing you and seeing you in action, I wanted to ask you the question: what have you learned about the power of listening? Because you are such a good listener and from that are able to pull out things as people talk to you in a very practical way.

Scott: Well, I think listening is a learned skill. If you'd have talked to my wife twenty years ago, you would not have had that same conclusion. [Laughing] Listening, instead of while the other person is talking, instead of thinking what we're going to say, we have to genuinely be there. And so, we're looking at them, but don't stare at the person steady for thirty minutes, that's gonna spook them. So, just be natural and I like to say, "Tell me more about that." There's always a, everybody has a story, and it's usually a sad story. So, I think we probe. We ask questions. And, it's okay for there to be periods of silence. I think the first good listener I ever talked to, I was telling him something and he said, "Tell me more," and then I told him more, and then he said, "Tell me more," and then I told him more and then there was silence, and I kept going. This man was a good listener and I thought, "I can do that." Listening is a learned skill; I think we can do it.

The fourth question is one about The Navigators; so you often get asked, "Where'd you go last weekend?" "Well, I went to a conference sponsored by The Navigators," or the Lutheran Church, whatever it is, because you're going to meetings like this, if it was about marriage, "Can I tell you about something I learned?" So, this is just, we bring in our regular life experiences with our friends. So people say, "Well then, what's The Navigators?" "Great question, The Navigators is an inter-denominational organization that helps people discover how to develop their spiritual life, especially for those people that would never darken the door of a church." And, sometimes my people say, "Well that's me." And so, I like to say, "Well let me tell you how it began. The Navigators began with a young drunk Presbyterian man trying to swim across a lake with his girlfriend late at night in Southern California. That's how it began." Well, they're intrigued, but I would encourage everyone to read the book [Daws](#) and learn Dawson's testimony because you can tell it;

it's safe. It's fascinating. But, it gets the facts of the Gospel out.

Jack: Yeah, I like what you said how people can take what they've learned and utilize that in such a way, "Hey, you know there's something that I picked up at Church that I wanted to bounce off of you," or on the radio, or there's a piece on the news that they can practically get their arms around in order to create conversation. You know, Scott, what have you found, the best way to transition conversations towards the context of spiritual things? How do you make that shift?

Scott: Well, I don't try to be sneaky about it. I used to try to be sneaky about it and then people feel like they're being manipulated.

Jack: Yeah, that's good.

Scott: Just be who you are. So the best phrase I think I've come up with is, "You know, I don't know that I've ever told you about something very precious to me: my spiritual journey. I wonder, may I tell you about that?" And so, you get their permission. If it's with a stranger of course, you wouldn't do it that way, but with someone you've known awhile, I've found that to be probably the key phrase.

Jack: That's good.

Scott: One more question, sometimes people ask me and they'll ask you as well, they'll say, "Scott when did you get out of baseball? Why'd you get out of baseball?" Or it could be with you, "Why did you get out of being a lawyer?" Whatever it is. And I like to say, "Well, it was a fascinating journey. All I can say is that I followed God's leading. Next time we get together, could I tell you the whole story? We don't have time

now, but I'd like to tell you the whole story; it's fascinating and I'd love to share it with you."

Jack: I like that, John Crawford once said to me, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, but you can rub a little bit of salt on his tongue," and I thought, "there's some things there that we can drop in and create interest that they'll want to continue the conversation to the next link, to the next link."

Scott: I think we identify with Christ and leave a little question out there and the Holy Spirit will go to work on our friends.

Jack: That's good. Hey, Scott, like you, I travel a lot and I get on a plane and I sit down and I look across to the person sitting next to me, to my seatmate, and all of a sudden I realize either they want to talk or they don't want to talk. They'll put their headphones on, but 9 times out of 10, there are a lot of people that just want to talk. How do you engage someone in that environment?

Scott: Well, sometimes I'm so tired at the end of a trip that I say, "Lord don't let them talk to me." I confess I don't want to talk. My life was touched by a friend of mine who we were at a conference together and we were sharing a bathroom and I could overhear him in the next bedroom early in the morning having his quiet time and he prayed out loud. He was praying, "Lord on the way home today may I sit with someone who needs to hear the Gospel and would you give me the words to say?" He was eager to share the Gospel.

Jack: Boy, that takes some courage!

Scott: Yeah and I thought, "I can't do that!" but I thought,

“Lord I *will* do that.” And so, it was not long after that that I came across Romans 1:15; we all know Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ...” but Romans 1:15 has another “I am.” It says, “For my part, I am eager to preach the Gospel to you who are also in Rome.” *Eager*. I thought, “I’m not eager; I’m anything but eager, I’ll do it if I have to.” Let’s get rid of that attitude. So, on an airplane trip or someone I’m not gonna see again probably ever, I’ll say something like this, “Bob, I really enjoyed talking with you today; now we might never see each other again, but may I give you a gift as we depart here? This little booklet...” (now hold it up and I’ll maybe blow some dust off of it and I’ll hold it up to them), and I’ll say, “This little booklet was written by a friend of mine and it’s about developing a strong spiritual journey and you can see (I’ll page through) it’s got some cartoons in it and it’s got some sarcasm and some humor and it’s even got a nasty word in it, so I thought you’d enjoy it.” And I hold it out to them and everyone I’ve ever presented this to has taken it, Jack. So I’ll put my business card in it here and “God Bless You” and that’s it. And, that’s a link in a chain. That is being a Sower of the Gospel.

Jack: Boy, I like that. And I like this little book. And for our friends listening, we’ll, in our show notes in just a second, we’ll talk more about that.* But, Scott, what I hear you saying is that we can be ourselves, not compare ourselves, but just be faithful to what we know God has asked us to do. And as you’ve done that, I love this little book that you’ve written on the spiritual insights from a skeptic. It gives, it brings up practical things that people are wrestling with. How did you come up with this idea?

Scott: Well I wrote it originally for a friend of mine (way smarter than I am), and I couldn’t answer his questions. I didn’t even know what kind of questions to ask him and one night I was thinking of him, laying in bed at night. At

midnight, I got up and started writing this book. And there's nine guidelines or principles for developing a spiritual life and it doesn't end with the sinner's prayer; it ends with a question of, "Lord, I think if you're there I want to know you more; lead me to the next step." It's very open-ended. But, I wrote it because he and I agreed on a lot of things. For example, the first one: "Life is not fair." He agrees with that. I agree with that; and so, then it just takes us down to where we agree on a lot of things. So, I wrote it as a way of keeping the conversation going, because a lot of us, after we get done talking about the Green Bay Packers, we don't know where to go.

Jack: [with a laugh] Oh, I don't know about that. We can certainly *start* from there.

Scott: We start from there, but to get to the Gospel. So, I find this is a way of keeping the conversation going and I use this with strangers. But also, I used it with my grandson. We met for Mexican food after school and we would do a chapter a week and we'd read through it and then I would bring in a Bible verse connected to it. I also have mailed it off to friends and one woman wrote back and said, "You know your little booklet, my kid's not walking with the Lord; but, the booklet was laying on the coffee table. He picked it up and said, 'Could I take this with me?'"

Jack: Huh! That's great!

Scott: So, you never know when you're going to be a link in a chain.

Jack: That's great. Well, more to come on this booklet and how you can utilize it! Well, Scott, thank you so much for today and it's always a challenge to not only be with you, but as

you talk about your own personal experiences, it's a challenge for me too. You're one of my heroes in this area as we take a look at how Evangelism is in total sync with Discipleship and the importance of that, so thank you so much.

Scott: Thank you, Jack. Appreciate you.

Jack: We've learned today that there is opportunity for everyone to engage with others in the hopes of them hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ, regardless of if they are "gifted" in Evangelism or not. We just need to focus on taking opportunities to be a link in the chains of the lives of others.

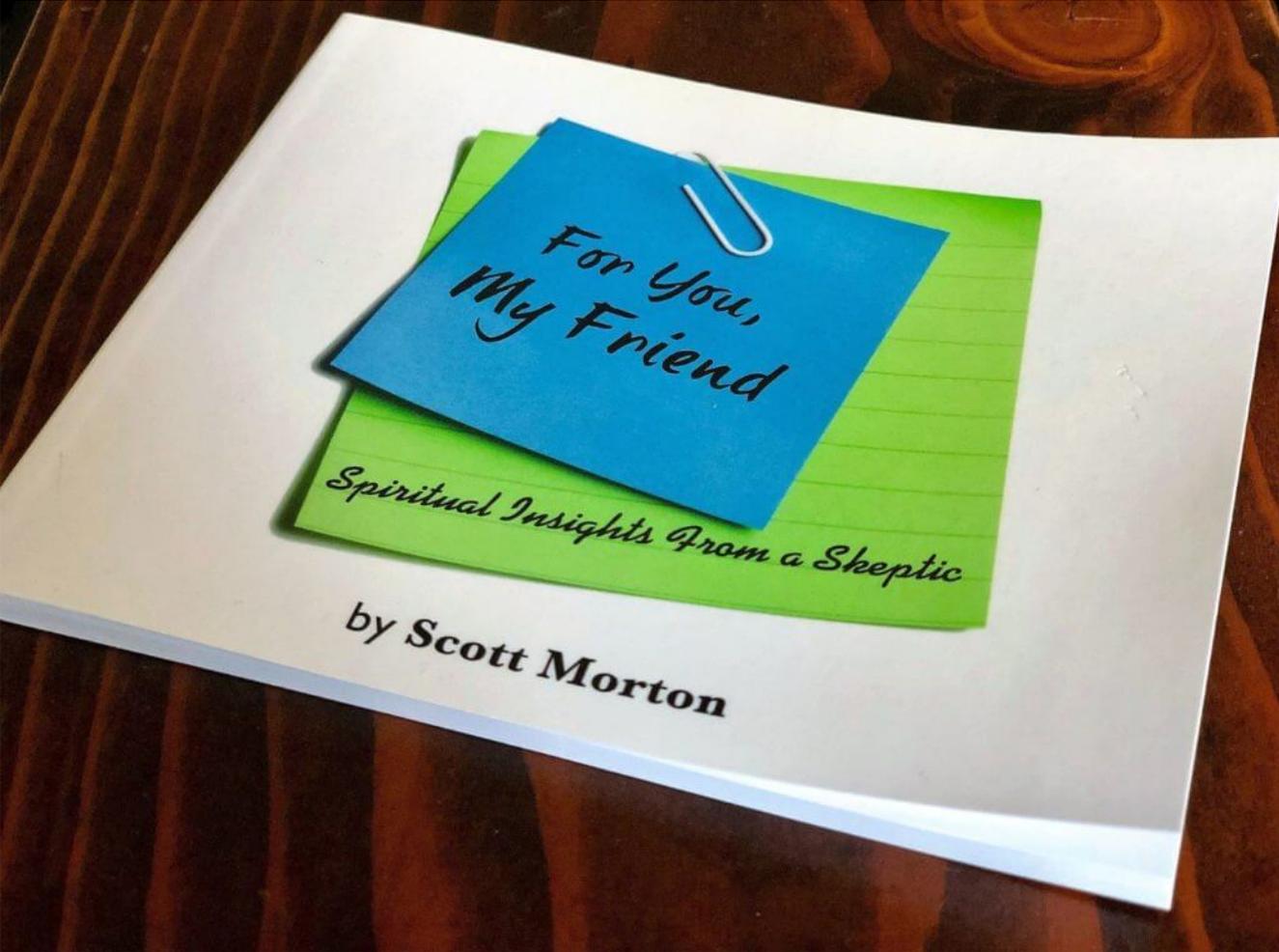
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Until next time, this is your host, Jack McQueeney, believing God for generations of men and women like you!

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*For You,
My Friend*

Spiritual Insights From a Skeptic

by Scott Morton