

010: Evangelism: Six Common Mistakes to Avoid

Jack: Welcome to The Apprentice Approach Podcast Episode 010, 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 having Scott Morton with us again for part two of our Evangelism series! If you haven't heard our previous podcast, I'd highly recommend listening in to a great conversation, including some very practical questions anyone can ask their skeptical friends. It's a great place to start. 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. This is one of the reasons we're talking with Scott about Evangelism – he knows how to do it and he actually lives this stuff out! But not only that, Scott is a master at helping us see how Evangelism and Discipleship go hand-in-hand... and neither are as scary as people think!

Today, Scott shares how to avoid six mistakes as we engage with people who need to hear the Good News of the Gospel, while also offering insight and advice about how to actually have these conversations... even if you don't think Evangelism is your gifting. Such a joy to have Scott with us again today, so let's dive in...

Jack: Well, here we're back with Scott Morton again. Scott being an International Funding Coach of The Navigators, is also a wrestler of Evangelism. He's deeply committed to this concept that when Jesus said to "make disciples," Evangelism and Discipleship go hand-in-hand. Scott, we know that statistics show that very few believers share their faith on a regular basis, some never. "It's the pastor's job," they say. You know, we have discovered that probably two out of five believers don't believe that they have non-believing friends. Talk to us about how that impacts their willingness to share their faith with others.

Scott: Yeah, I think a lot of us are reluctant to share our faith because of previous failures. Just yesterday, I asked a businessman believer if he'd ever shared his faith. "Oh yes," he said, "but it didn't go very well." So, he's got that in the back of his mind, Jack, as he thinks about sharing again and it's probably not going to happen. Now, a lot of believers, most I think, would like to reach out and disciple others. Not everyone knows the Great Commission, but some know that Jesus said to "make disciples of all nations." Recently a friend told me that he's retiring from his business early; he's in the prime of life and he says, "I've got more time now, I'd like to disciple some guys." I said, "Great." But, he was thinking about discipling guys in his church, but he was struggling to find a church member who would be interested in studying with him. So, I made this comment, I said, "How about some of your non-believing friends?" There was a long silence. This was a new thought for him.

Jack: Boy! I'm finding that also. You know, a Barna report that came out, stated that $\frac{1}{2}$ of believers in this day and age have only had one to maybe two faith conversations with non-believers this past year. And that, I think, is staggering in the context of what Jesus left us with, to "make disciples." So Scott, let's get into this dynamic tension between Evangelism and Discipleship.

Scott: Well, they fit together, and we Americans tend to think either/or: it's either Evangelism or Discipling, and I favor discipling or discipleship and I disfavor Evangelism because I'm out of my comfort zone. And if you don't have the gift of Evangelism, well then, we're stuck. But, we're not told to be Evangelists; we are told to "do the work of an evangelist" in 2 Timothy. So, what is the "work of Evangelism?" I also notice in Matthew 4:19, you know the story, where Jesus was walking on the seashore and he'd already met these guys before, but he said to Peter, and Andrew, James, and John, "Follow me and I will make you deeply spiritual men." [laughter] Well no, it doesn't say that. It says, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," in other words, "I will help you to reach out and touch other people." In Luke 5:10, you know the story there, where Jesus got into Peter's boat and pushed out and preached to the people, and they went out and caught some fish. And he comes back to shore and Peter is saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," and Jesus said, "From now on you will be catching men." Now this is what's on Jesus' mind: reaching out to other people. And so, this idea that we can be a disciple of Christ and then ignore Evangelism, ignore sharing our faith, it doesn't even compute, Jack. It's like an oxymoron, it just, it can't be. Reaching out is the normal Christian life, but we've made it (at least in the West), not reaching out is the normal Christian life. So, anyway, to reduce frustration in sharing Christ, I think it's more of a practical issue than a theological issue. We've got frustrations; we've made mistakes. So, here's six mistakes that I've made and that I think a lot of people have made on sharing your faith. Are you ready?

Jack: We're all ready.

Scott: Alright here we go, number one: Too much, too fast. In Matthew 13, the parable of "The Sower" or the parable of "The Four Soils," the first seed is sown beside the road and it didn't make it into the good soil. You can imagine a seed

laying out on a dry, dusty, hardened, gravel road or concrete road- it didn't make it into the good soil. And Jesus said, "When anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart," that's Matthew 13:19, "does not understand it." Now the word "understand" here in Greek is suniemi, and it's the same word that's used for the word, "synagogue." In other words, it's a place of bringing things together. [Jack: Oh!] So, we have to help our friends "bring things together" about the Gospel. I have a friend in Iowa who said, "My goal at this stage in my life is to bump into people and help them sort out who Jesus is." I like that. We can do that. We can help people sort out who Jesus is. The fourth soil of the parable, Jesus says, "This is the one on whom seed was sown on the good ground; this is the man who hears the Word and understands it." So, helping someone understand the Gospel is critical. Now, sometimes we rush to encourage someone to pray the Sinner's Prayer to invite Christ into their hearts, but does that person understand what he's praying? He doesn't need to understand the Nicene Creed, but he does need to understand that basic Gospel message, or the enemy will rip it out of his heart. Jack, maybe you've had the experience of you talk with someone one time and they pray to receive Christ and a month later they're cold to the things of God; I think this is what happens.

Jack: Hmm. You know, it is interesting how we talked about in our past podcast [Episode 009], the importance of asking good questions, and then listening and drawing people out, and there's a sense that you know, as we're authentic and as we listen with empathy, folks will come along on the journey with us. So, let's keep going.

Scott: Well, number two. Number one was: "Too much, too fast." Number two is: "Too little, too late." I have dilly-dallied around with some of my friends and acquaintances waiting for the right time, you know what I mean? It's gotta be a "right

time," and so I say, "Well, it's not today; I might offend them, they've just gone through a struggle, I don't know," and so I wait. I wait. Sometimes we think that we must become their best friend and be invited to sing at their wedding and then we finally get to share the Gospel with them. Now my car body shop guy, and if you have a teenage son, then you will become well acquainted with the guys in the body shop, I assure you that. So, he and I met several times, we kind of liked each other and became friends. And he suddenly moved away and I couldn't find him, and I had never shared the Gospel with him. Even though we'd been together, Jack, probably 10 or 12 times. We'd gone out to supper as couples, and I'd never shared anything because of waiting for "just the right time" and it didn't happen. So, I heard he had left town, I went to the body shop and couldn't find him. They said, "Yeah, he's left town, but here's where he lives." I drove around his neighborhood trying to find this guy's car. I regret that I was too little and too late. I was working on building the relationship and never got around to sharing Christ. Another couple Alma and I were befriending, they had a million problems, we were their friends. We helped them buy groceries; we helped them with this and that, and he had AIDs and moved back to his country before we even talked about Christ. But, it had been close to a year, Jack, and I hadn't shared a thing. I was waiting for the "right time." Too little, too late. Number three: "Forgetting You're Part of a Big Team." Now, let's take a look here at 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 5-9. Let me just read this and uh there's some good insights here. 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, this is Paul writing to the Corinthians, a church he had started, "What then is Apollos and what is Paul? Servants through whom he believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity (underline it), opportunity, to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor, for we are

God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building." Paul didn't do it all by himself. Apollo didn't do it all by himself. Paul planted; Apollos watered; and God gave the increase. God changes lives. You and I cannot change lives. Now, verse 8 says that "he who plants and he who waters are one." We're teammates. We're not competitors, we're partners in this campaign directed by God. Verse 9 says, "we are fellow workers." But, though we are one we bring different talents to the team. Verse 8 says, "according to his own labor." So Jack, as you and I are talking to people, we might know the same people, we each have a little different contribution to make. [Jack: uh-huh] I think sometimes we say, "Well, since I can't make the entire contribution, I don't do anything." So, you are on a big team, God is moving in the lives of our non-believing friends, and you play an important role. Maybe you're a planter, maybe you're a waterer, but use the gifting God has given you in the process. So back to verse 5, who is Apollos and who is Paul? Servants. Jack, that's our identity, we are servants as links in the chain. The word here is a word diakonos, and it means "a lowly table servant." It's not even the top of the servant chain. It's at the bottom of the servant chain! So that's our identity: we're simply table waiters serving other people. Now notice that phrase, "as the Lord gave opportunity." We have opportunity. Now Jack, have you ever said, "You know, I should say something here. I should ask a question here." And we let it go, and then the moment passes. God gives us opportunities.

Jack: That's so interesting. A number of years ago, I was with a group of men and we were talking amongst ourselves and some of these men were friends, but all their wives were involved in a Bible Study that Shaunda, my wife, led. And as they talked, they began, the conversation changed to the time that they spend over in our house in Bible Study. We bought a latte machine and they renamed our kitchen "Shaunda-bucks," but only to hear that these men were beginning to see the changes in their wives' lives as a result of not just their wives coming

to Christ, but, growing in their faith. And as they began to ask questions, they kind of pushed on me in a sense, and they asked, "What's going on there? We can't get that." And I said, "Well that's a great question, why don't we get together? And we can get together, we could go to my office or another room, and we could sit down and begin to talk about some of the same things that they talked about." Well long story short, as a result of stepping into that opportunity, we had a chance to see all those men come to Christ as well with their wives! But it was, again, it was what I could do. We all have stories and God has us all on journeys and my responsibility was just, at that point, to ask the right kind of question and move into that.

Scott: So Shaunda watered, and Jack or Shaunda planted, and Jack watered.

Jack: That's exactly right.

Scott: Well okay, so that's three. Number four is: "Forgetting that the Holy Spirit is With Us." 2 Corinthians 2:15 is a verse that I think is about sharing our faith, but we overlook it. It says, "For we are a fragrance of Christ to God, among those being saved, and among those who are perishing. To the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life." So, when you are among non-believers, you carry the aroma of Christ. There's an odor about you. Those who are following truth among our friends, that is, they're moving toward Christ, the aroma you give is a fragrance of life. It's attractive.

Jack: Well, hopefully it is.

Scott: Hopefully it is. But, it was attractive with you and Shaunda cause they wanted to find out more. And even on a bad day, Jack, you give off this aroma. Just by being around non-believers, even on a bad day, we smell of Christ. But, it's also an aroma of death to those that are not following truth.

But in any case, it's an aroma that's a reminder of Christ. It's a link in a chain. Now, John 15:26 is a verse that I think we all know, it's the one Jesus gave this at the Last Supper. He says, John 15:26, "When the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of Truth who precedes from the Father, he (not it), he will testify about me and you will testify also. Because you have been with me from the beginning." Okay, so the Holy Spirit is testifying to people about God and we are testifying to people about God. We are working in concert with the Holy Spirit, and we're the junior member here. The Holy Spirit is the prime mover, we're the junior member, but we are participating. So, I like to ask myself when I'm with someone new, or when the topic merges into serious things, instead of non-serious things, I say, "What is God doing right now? Lord help me to move in the right way. Help me to ask questions. Help me to make a comment. What do I, do I just stay quiet?" I want to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. God is much more interested in winning people to Christ than you and I are.

Jack: Yeah, that's good Scott.

Scott: In the classic book *The Hound of Heaven* by a guy named Francis Thompson written 120 years ago, this is what Francis Thompson said, "I fled him down the nights and down the days; I fled him down the arches of the years; I fled him down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind in the midst of tears; I hid from him." This was an opium addict running away from God in London in about the 1890's. Amazing. God is more interested in seeking people, and He's doing that, and you and I aren't the first people to the table. The Holy Spirit has already been working in our friend's lives, we get to participate in that.

Jack: Amen! You know Barna said, it came up in their research, he [David Kinnaman] talked about as the Barna Group: 47% of Millennials who are practicing Christians say, "it is wrong to Evangelize." Seems to me there's a misunderstanding that tolerance is in conflict with the wisdom it takes to move

people along in their Gospel journey. Talk to us about that, Scott.

Scott: Yeah, a lot of people use the frame, "I don't like the Gospel shoved down my throat." And nobody likes anything shoved down their throat. You and I don't either [Jack: Right]. So, in doing Evangelism, we are not shoving things down people's throat, we are not being judgmental, we're not telling people something that they don't even want to hear, being impolite about it. So, we are tolerant, of course, we are tolerant, but this message needs to be shared. And I think if we work with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is going to touch people's lives and maybe in ways that are uncomfortable for them. But we are participating with this, and the Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He doesn't, he's not impolite, but he will get through to people in ways. You know, I think of Peter, how did God get through to him? With the miraculous catch! It wasn't poverty, it was success that got Peter's attention. So, the Holy Spirit is going to get people's attention; we are participating with him, we're not shoving things down people's throat.

Jack: And he rarely does it the same way with each individual!

Scott: Everybody's different, yes exactly. Yeah, good. So, number four: "Forgetting About the Holy Spirit in Our Ministry Efforts." Number five: "Neglecting the Bible." I have found, Jack, and well I think you have too, in the example you just mentioned, those people who will read the Bible with me over time often come to Christ. Not because I'm such a great Bible teacher; I'm not, but simply because they're in the Word. My teaching and answering questions is important, building friendships is important, but "the Bible is sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12). You know a few years ago, I was meeting with a returned missionary who had done badly on the field and came home as a failure. And it was my job to pick him up at the airport and take him to lunch and try to cheer him up a little bit. Well, I took him to White Castle

Hamburger shop, which maybe my first mistake. [laughing] [Jack: Haha, culture shock!] We sat there for three hours and I listened, and I tried to give advice, and finally at the end of three hours I said, "Is there anything at all I've said (because it wasn't going anywhere), is there anything at all that I've said that's been any encouragement at all?" He said, "No, not really." Which was humbling. But he said, "There was a verse you shared, what was that verse again?" Jack, we have got to stop talking and start sharing the Scriptures, because the Scriptures are powerful. So, let's get our non-believing friends into the Bible.

Jack: That's good. That's good, Scott.

Scott: Now here is a practical tool. So, when you meet a seeker friend, either for lunch or for a coffee break or just in your office or home, wherever. Should you bring a Bible? Should they bring a Bible? I'm finding with this generation they're not gonna carry Bibles around in the glove box of their car, so I usually don't ask them to bring a Bible. Sometimes I'll bring two little New Testaments and give them one as a gift, that's powerful because they might read that when we don't talk about it. But usually, I Google a New Testament story about Jesus and then I copy it, simply Xerox it, and I try to find a story of Jesus maybe 10-20 verses long, not too long, and then I give one copy to him and we keep a copy. So, after we've had our lunch, I take my time, I say, "Okay, should we take a look at the life of Jesus?" And, I give him the paper and then I read through it, I usually don't ask him to read through it; he might not be comfortable reading out loud. So I say, "This a great story; let's read it." I read the passage aloud and after I read the passage, I just let it sit for a few seconds, then I say, "What happened here?" And then I review the facts of the, because I'm finding that sometimes if you ask them just to say, "What do you see?" they don't know where to start. So, I'll just review the facts, so Jesus was in the boat, they went out to deep water,

and I put it in my own words. And then I say, "Okay, what do you see? What stands out to you?" And there's no science to it really, it's just being real with your friend and discussing things. And I usually like to quit when it's kind of at a high point so that there may be something else we can discuss the next time we get together. But I always ask at the end, "What's the takeaway for you?" I like that word "takeaway." If I can get people to study the Bible about Jesus, then that puts them on a train that takes them to Heaven. It's not about me; it's between them and Jesus's Word.

Jack: You know it is interesting, Scott, how that takes hard work [Scott: Yeah!] and a real commitment to hang in there with people. Because inevitably, they'll cancel, things will come up, and there's always something else other than wanting to get together to talk about the Bible.

Scott: Stuff always comes up. This week I had to move an appointment to next week, "Golly, Scott, I can't make it."

Jack: Yeah. You know I have found, I've picked up a couple good apps on my phone that I share with guys before we actually get together. And I'll say, "Hey download this free app, but download this and begin to read through it because I think this might be a fun little story in order to talk about during our time together." It's interesting once they do that, then it remains open on their phone after we get done, they may get home and at night when they're going through, inevitably going through a text message or a thread or checking email, that app will come back on their screen, that app will pop back up and before they close it out they may re-read it. So, it's something that we have found that has been helpful as it related to dealing with you know the Bible, getting people in the Bible.

Scott: That's a great idea. It's a great idea. It's one more little seed dropped along the way that makes a difference. Well the last one is: "Forgetting to Pray." Jack, I confess

this is a weakness with me. I'm not a good prayer, I wish I was. But, what I have done is in my journal on the second page, and you don't have to keep a journal, but I encourage everybody to keep some sort of a prayer list, because our minds are like grasshoppers, I mean they're all over the place. So, on page one is all my praises and all my confessions of sin, it takes a whole page. And then on page two I've listed my non-believing friends and contacts. Some of them I know better than others, I just write their name down and, on my better days, I put my finger on their name and I say, "Lord touch this person, draw them to know you, I don't know what to do; draw them to know you. I'm going to meet with them next week. Touch their life. Let me be in the right place at the right time." And I'm finding that as I pray over them things begin to happen. A lot of people say, "Well, I don't see God working in my life with daily miracles and so on." Listen, if you get involved in reaching out to your friends, you will see little things like this.

Jack: Yeah, and you know, Scott, I have done the same and one of the things that before I get together and I pray for people, I ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind something that they may have said. And inevitably, I've been able to see, you know my memory comes and goes, but the Spirit of God recalls something that they've said that I've been able to pick up on and carry, maybe even to the next level. And so again it's part of that engaging the Spirit in a supernatural way through this the power of prayer.

Scott: Yes. I like Job 42:10, "The Lord restored the fortune of Job when he prayed for his friends." Just that little phrase, "when he prayed for his friends." Jack, we can do that. We don't have to be the greatest preacher in the world, we're not called to do that. But, we can pray for our friends. So, I suggest, make a list of your non-believing friends, start by praying for them. Don't start by saying anything just yet. Just pray. And say, "Lord bring them across my path," and

then be ready for some miracles.

Jack: That is great, Scott. And that is encouraging to think about just our involvement with the Lord in this process. And I go back and think about these catchy points: “Too much too fast,” “Too little too late,” “Forgetting you’re part of a bigger team...” I think the important and significant part of what it is to “keep the Bible at the center point of what we’re engaging in,” and then “Forgetting to Pray.” I think how important it is, the power of prayer. Someone told me, “Jack, prayer is not part of the ministry, it is the ministry.”

Scott: Yes, that is convicting: it is the ministry. Right. And then also “Not Forgetting that the Holy Spirit is With Us.” [Jack: Oh yeah, sorry.] We’re a team player with the Holy Spirit.

Jack: Yeah, well thank you so much for putting some of this together and being with us today. And I hope you, our audience, really grapple with some of these points that Scott has made and turn this to become practical aspects of who you are in your sphere of influence.

We’ve really loved having Scott with us during this series, talking about such a relevant topic and helping us see these six common mistakes we can find ourselves making as we engage with non-believers. Scott shared great wisdom for how to avoid these mistakes and also engage at a heart-felt level with our non-believing or skeptical friends. Also, I want to remind you to check out our Resources page and Blog for more great tools and conversations about Evangelism and how it goes hand-in-hand with Disciplemaking.

Well, we hope you’ve enjoyed this episode and learning community and feel encouraged and better equipped to be a disciple who makes disciplemakers! For more on The Apprentice Approach, including our regional training events, resources, blog, and to sign up for emails, visit our website

TheApprenticeApproach.org, and if you haven't subscribed to The Apprentice Approach Podcast in iTunes, do it today!

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