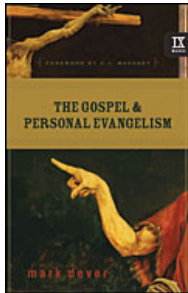


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# Getting Personal about Personal Evangelism

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Just yesterday, a pastor told me of a candidate for ordination to the Gospel ministry who told the examining council that he had never shared the Gospel with another person one-on-one. That was shocking enough. But the real shock came when the pastor reported that the ordination council nevertheless recommended the man for ordination — to the *Gospel* ministry, no less.

Perhaps this is not so shocking in light of the fact that so many Christians never share their faith in Christ with others. In his important new book, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism* [Crossway Books], Mark Dever writes of his hope that this reality can be reversed. “We want evangelism to be normal — in our lives and in our churches,” he writes.

Dever is pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC — a church that practices what Dever preaches. In *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, Dever defines the Gospel, reminds us that *all* Christians are to share Christ with others, and rejects the idea that this is just too much to expect of most Christians. He grounds evangelism and the Gospel in God’s passion to save sinners through faith in Christ and argues — persuasively — that personal evangelism should be *normal* for Christians.



Along the way, he also offers several correctives. He helpfully insists that social action and apologetics, for example, are ministry but not evangelism. In his words:

*Evangelism is not an imposition of our ideas upon others. It is not merely personal testimony. It is not merely social action. It may not involve apologetics, and it is not the same thing as the results of evangelism. Evangelism is telling the wonderful truth about God, the great news about Jesus Christ. When we understand this, then obedience to the call to evangelize can become certain and joyful. Understanding this increases evangelism as it moves from being a guilt-driven burden to a joyful privilege.*

Finally:

*The Christian call to evangelize is not simply a call to persuade people to make decisions, but rather to proclaim to them the good news of salvation in Christ, to call them to repentance, and to give God glory for regeneration and conversion.*

*We do not fail in our evangelism if we faithfully tell the gospel to someone who is not subsequently converted; we fail only if we do not faithfully tell the gospel at all.*

That failure is writ large across the church today. *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism* is a much-needed corrective.

