

When I was growing up in the eighties, our youth group would do street evangelism. We would spend a few hours work-shopping and role playing so we all knew the right answers to question about salvation. Then we would head out to the mall or the park and approach strangers asking if they know Jesus. God often used these encounters to draw people to Him. Indeed, most Christians could benefit from approaching a stranger with the gospel. As young people, we became more confident about what we believed and more capable of taking risks for the Gospel - both good things.

But there is a downside. When we reduce our evangelism to a program, the lost become targets, projects, and goals for us to achieve. We sally forth, do battle and then count our successes by how many folks "said the prayer". "So what?" You might ask. After all, people are being brought to Christ. There is truth to that. Paul said that he was happy the gospel was preached even imperfectly ([Phil 1:18](#)). But evangelism is more than converting people. Jesus called us to make disciples ([Matthew 28:19](#)) not just converts. Getting folks to say a prayer, handing them a New Testament, and saying God bless you, is the easy part of evangelism. In truth it costs us little more than some vague discomfort. And because it costs us very little, it does very little for us in our Christian life.

How do we approach winning the lost? We must see people as Jesus sees them. We make disciples. We really see them, really hear their hearts and we are genuinely concerned. We allow Jesus' love to flow through us and we allow Jesus eyes to see through us. And it should cost us something.

Time

You cannot make disciples on a schedule. You cannot decide that, "Saturday morning is discipleship time." Jesus saw a random man named Zacchaeus (let's call him Zach) perched in a tree to get a better view. He called him down and then... He invited Himself over for dinner. He spent time seeing Zach and hearing him. Jesus won him over to the point that Zach gave half His money away and became a follower. ([Luke 19:1-10](#))

Extended Reach

You can't live in a bubble. The folks around Jesus were incensed that he went to dinner with Zach. They looked down on Him for eating with a sinner. It feels safe in the Christian bubble. We have Christian friends, Christian literature, and Christian media. It is good to live a Christ centered life. But it is not Christ centered to be quarantined from the world and unable to see the suffering of the lost around us. With Christ as the center, we need to reach out and draw others into His love. This means taking risks. If we are paying these costs - if we are willing to see, hear and show concern for the lost rather than just teasing them up for conversion - it does something in us. We become more in tune with the heart of God. We become more effective at love and serving.