

A FIELD GUIDE FOR MEN

Leading Someone to Christ

How to bring a friend across the line without being weird

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You've got a guy in your life. Maybe he's your brother-in-law, your old squad mate, the man three houses down who waves but never comes inside. You know his story. You know he's not right with God. And every time the conversation gets close to it, your chest tightens and you change the subject.

You're afraid of two things. Blowing it. And being that guy, the one who corners people at cookouts with a tract and a look in his eye like he's closing a sale. You don't want to be him. Good. Neither does God.

This isn't a script. It's a field guide. A few things to carry in your pocket so when the door opens, you walk through it instead of standing there stammering.

1. Your job is faithfulness, not results

Here's the pressure valve. Nobody, not you, not the sharpest pastor you know, has ever talked a man into salvation. That's not how it works.

"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." (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

You water. God grows. If your friend walks away tonight the same man he was this morning, you didn't fail. You planted a seed in soil you don't control. That's the whole job. Say the true thing, in love, and leave the results with the only One who can actually change a heart.

That takes the sale off the table. You're not closing anything. You're being faithful with what's in front of you.

2. Know the message before you open your mouth

Before you bring it up with him, get it straight in your own head. Strip it all the way down.

Every man, you included, has sinned. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Not some men. All of them.

God didn't wait for anybody to clean up first. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) Christ died in the place of men who hadn't earned a thing.

And He didn't stay in the grave. The cross without the empty tomb is just a sad story. "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9) A dead teacher can't save anybody. A risen Lord can, and He is alive right now.

And nobody works their way in. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) Grace, through faith, a gift. Not a paycheck for good behavior.

Made, fallen, ransomed, raised, offered. That's the gospel in plain beats. You don't need a seminary degree to say it. You need to believe it yourself, first.

3. Bring it up like a man, not a salesman

Forget the ambush. Forget the perfect opening line you rehearsed in the shower. Most gospel conversations don't start with a verse. They start with a real question about a real thing in his life.

"How are you holding up, really?" "What do you think happens after this?" "You ever think about your dad since he passed?" A man who's hurting will usually tell you, if you ask and then actually wait for the answer instead of filling the silence yourself.

When the door cracks, walk through it plain. "Can I tell you what got me through that?" No throat-clearing, no big windup. You're a friend telling a friend something true, not a rep running a pitch.

If the door doesn't crack today, that's fine. Love him anyway. Show up again next week. A friendship that only shows up to close a deal was never a friendship.

4. When he says "I'm not religious"

He's not rejecting Christ. He's rejecting a building, a guy in a suit, a childhood he didn't ask for. Don't argue the word. Agree with the part that's true.

"I'm not either, really. This isn't about religion. It's about a Man who died for you, specifically." Religion is a man trying to climb up to God. The gospel is God coming down to him. Say that plainly and let it sit.

5. When he says "I've been too bad"

This is the wall that keeps the most men out, and it's the easiest one to knock down, because Scripture already did it.

"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." (1 Timothy 1:15) Even Paul, the man who dragged Christians to prison, said that about himself.

And Jesus made a promise with no fine print. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." (John 6:37) Not "I'll consider it."

Not "depends what you did." He will not cast him out. Tell your friend that straight. His worst year isn't a disqualifier. It's the reason Christ came.

6. When he says "not now"

This one's sneaky because it sounds reasonable. Later, when things settle down. Later, when he's ready. Later is a room that never opens.

"For He says, 'At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you.' Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation.'" (2 Corinthians 6:2)

You don't have to scare him into it. Just tell him the truth: today is the day he actually has. Tomorrow is a promise nobody made him.

7. Help him turn, don't hand him a script

There's no magic sentence that saves a man. If he repeats four lines after you with his eyes closed but his heart is still folded shut, nothing happened but a recitation. What saves him is an actual turn, away from sin and self, toward Christ, trusting Him instead of himself.

"For 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" (Romans 10:13) That's it. Not a formula. A man calling out to the Lord for real, repenting of what he's been running from and believing Christ died and rose for him. If he wants words, help him say it in his own, not yours. God isn't grading his grammar.

If he does turn, don't disappear on him. Get him a Bible, get him around other believers, walk with him the next thirty days. A newborn left alone in the field doesn't make it.

8. You're not carrying this alone

Some nights you'll go home replaying the conversation, sure you said the wrong thing, sure you should've pushed harder or not pushed at all. Let that go. I'm not writing this so you'll feel the weight of another man's soul on your own shoulders. That weight was never yours to carry.

You're a messenger, not a savior. Say the true thing. Love him whether or not he ever comes around. Pray for him by name. And trust the One who's been chasing that man a lot longer than you have.

The verses to have ready

- God grows it, not you: 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
- Every man has sinned: Romans 3:23

- Christ died for sinners: Romans 5:8
- Believe He was raised: Romans 10:9
- Saved by grace, not works: Ephesians 2:8-9
- Even the worst sinner qualifies: 1 Timothy 1:15
- He will not cast you out: John 6:37
- Today is the day: 2 Corinthians 6:2
- Call on the name of the Lord: Romans 10:13

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