

Be-e Stings That Poison Evangelistic Effectiveness

Excerpted and Adapted from *Any-3: Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime — Lead Muslims to Christ Now!*

“Lift up your eyes, look on the fields, that they are white for harvest” (Jn 4:35). This has never been more true, but Satan uses a number of *be-es* to *sting* our ministry to reduce the harvest.

Be-e Really Careful!

Some missionaries entering countries hostile to the gospel are told: “Your goal is to be there a long time. Don’t be too aggressive in sharing the gospel or you may be deported. Worse yet, you might get us all kicked out!”

The turning point for us came when we decided to share the gospel with anyone, anywhere, anytime. We put the results and consequences in God’s hands and obeyed. As a result, the new believers caught this same attitude, and shared the gospel unbound by chains of fear.

Be-e Sting: Bad things may happen, so I must be really careful about witnessing.

Antidote: Realistically evaluate security concerns, count the cost, then share the gospel more freely. God is sovereign over all things.

Be-e Really Smart!

Some Christian workers are taught to master the culture and religion before they share the gospel. We find being a bit “dumb” better than being too smart, as expertise in the local culture can provoke defensiveness. Asking questions lays a foundation of respect.

Ask locals what they believe and share the gospel with them. As you listen and learn, you will become more effective in sharing the gospel.

Ali, a gifted evangelist, says, “I used to use the Quran as a bridge, but with Any-3 I no longer have to guess who is going to be open to the gospel.” Ali regularly leads conservative Muslims to faith, and streams from Ali’s work are now multigenerational.

Be-e Sting: I must understand the culture and religion before sharing the gospel.

Antidote: The gospel is relevant in every context. Learn all you can about your community while you share the gospel.

Be-e a Friend Maker!

My friend Bill said: “I have known my Muslim friend for six months now. When should I share the gospel with him?”

Being a friend is great, but a lost person shouldn’t have to become my personal friend to hear about Jesus from me. Everyone deserves to hear the gospel even if I never see them again.

If we share the gospel immediately, we can be certain that those who become our friends will know the gospel and know our commitment to it. Otherwise, we might spend years developing a friendship before sharing the gospel, only to discover that our friend is not interested.

When we share the gospel immediately with lost persons, they more often come to faith than when we delay or only share with them step by step over a period of time.

Be-e Sting: Delay sharing the gospel until a solid friendship has been developed.

Antidote: Share the gospel early in every relationship.

Be-e A Quiet Example!

Another stinger confuses good Christian behavior with sharing the gospel. But waiting for others to ask the reason for our behavior places the responsibility on the lost rather than on us.

Others should see Christ-like character in us, but they will see our glaring flaws as well.

People get saved by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:14-17). Your life, no matter how good, is no substitute for a gospel presentation.

Be-e Sting: Living a godly life is as good as sharing the gospel.

Antidote: Live a godly life while joyfully sharing the gospel with anyone, anywhere, and anytime.

Be-e Really Generous!

When we link sharing the gospel with meeting physical needs we risk confusing the two. Physical needs are here today, and gone tomorrow; eternal salvation is forever. We should not delay sharing the gospel until physical needs are met.

Luke had mastered the language and used community development as a platform to share the gospel. Yet he saw very little obvious evangelistic fruit. After adopting Any-3, Luke began proclaiming the gospel more quickly. Within six months, dozens had professed faith and seven new groups were formed.

We the best disciples are those who respond to the gospel out of hunger for righteousness. They submit to Christ as Lord.

Using Any-3, we are finding hundreds who are “selling all” to follow Christ without any hope of payment from us. God becomes their treasure, and they minister to one another’s personal needs as the body of Christ.

Be-e Sting: Give employment or benefits and meet physical needs so others will be open to a gospel witness.

Antidote: Share the gospel without condition while lovingly yet discretely helping those in need.

Be-e Really Incarnational!

Often missionaries seek to become part of the community by adopting the local culture and language. This is well and good, but can also become an endless pursuit of acceptance as a prerequisite to gospel witness.

Jesus lived incarnationally, but He accomplished His mission relationally and exponentially. Jesus went beyond his community to reach disciples and accomplish His mission. He trained first-generation believers to reach their *oikos*. The first generation must do second-generation evangelism and so forth until multiplying generations are reached.

Be-e Sting: The incarnational life becomes the goal; sharing the gospel becomes secondary.

Antidote: Witness broadly inside and outside your community to find persons of peace, then train them to reach their own *oikos* and communities with the gospel.

Be-e Really Busy!

Lazy people aren’t likely to lead many to faith. But neither are extremely busy people unless they set aside time to share the gospel.

Busyness doing good things can take time and energy away from doing the best things. Because witnessing doesn’t come naturally for most of us, we must prioritize and schedule times to be where people are and share the gospel.

For many busyness is a “way out” of evangelism. We make time for things we enjoy and procrastinate on those we dread. We fill our time in our strengths and perceived giftedness, while neglecting what is perhaps Christ’s most urgent command for all believers, “You shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8b).

Be-e Sting: Doing good things crowds out doing the ‘main thing’ (evangelism).

Antidote: Replace less important activity with practicing and training others in Any-3.

BURN DOWN THE BE-E HIVE

In nature, once a bee stings a person, the bee dies. In missions, these *be-e stings* can go on for years. The solution is to burn down the hive! The following tips will help you get over your bee stings and move on.

The Hearing Has Already Been Earned

Each of the *be-e stings* assumes Christians must earn a hearing for the gospel. Christ has already earned that right, and has given us authority to “proclaim the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15).

The gospel saves, not because of perfect messengers, but because of the worthy Lord who accomplished it.

Why They’re Professing Faith

We surveyed Muslim-background believers, asking them, “What did God use to bring you to faith in Christ?”

We expected to hear a variety of reasons. But the most common answer was that, for the first time, someone had told them the gospel message that Jesus died as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins. These Muslims gave their lives to Christ because they heard the gospel and were invited to surrender themselves to Him.

People come to faith because they *hear* the gospel and are invited to respond to it. There is no substitute for direct mouth-to-ear evangelism.

The Gospel Is the Filter

The only way to know who is open to the gospel is to share it and see who responds. Then you will know within minutes, rather than days or months, who is open and responsive.

After we share the gospel using the *First and Last Sacrifice Story*, we ask two questions: “Does this make sense?” and “Do you believe it?” You will never really know if someone believes the gospel until you ask them.

Do Evangelism, Not Pre-Evangelism

We try to share the gospel with a Muslim in our first meeting with them. We have found them much more likely to say yes to Jesus than when we used to wait to share later in the relationship.

Before coming to faith in Christ, Jamaal was a jihadi militant. A recently baptized believer set aside his fears to approach Jamaal with the gospel, and Jamaal surrendered himself to Christ. These two men plus another friend formed a team that led 200 people to faith and started 12 new house churches in six months.

Jesus and His apostles routinely did evangelism in their first meeting with someone, and so can we. The first three steps of Any-3 set the stage for the gospel, but within 10-15 minutes after saying “Hello,” you can be sharing the gospel.