

The "E" Word

"Going Public with My Faith"

Pastor Rick Shelton

Sunday, April 5, 2009

- This word today is leading up to the message for Easter Sunday; the last message in the series, The "E" Word, which stands for Evangelism. This is about reaching friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others with the Love of God. We are Evangelist. We need to be practical and relevant in our lives, sharing our faith.
- **James 1:22 (NIV)** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
- **James 1:22 (TLB)** And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. So don't fool yourselves.
- You will never live a fulfilled life of what God has for you if you just listen and do not obey.
- **James 2:17 (NIV)** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
- **James 2:17 (TLB)** So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all - it is dead and useless.
- Super powerful verse! Book of James deals with your faith being lived out in 'action'.
- If you are saying God is not answering my prayers, and I have no joy, James teaches your faith is dead because you are not living out your faith. Live out your faith with actions. "My actions complete my faith!"
- You may have a disconnect between your faith and other areas of your life. We say we have a 'God space' on Sunday morning. (See pie chart #1: equal parts for God, work, relationships, finances, recreation.) God doesn't 'fit' in the mix. He's a 'piece' of the pie. When we are at work, or with neighbors, etc., we don't share our faith.

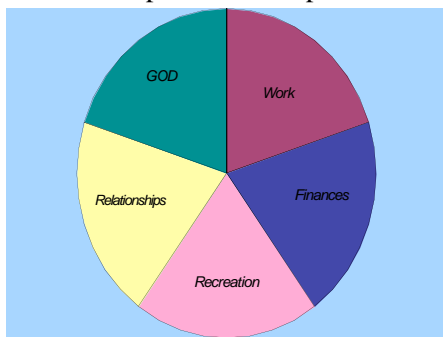
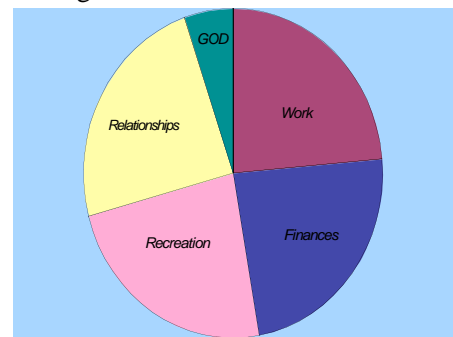


Chart 1



Chart

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- (See pie chart #2: smallest slice of pie equals God, with larger equal parts given to work, relationships, finances, recreation.) The problem is God doesn't fit in a piece of the pie, because **He made the pie! He owns the pie! He is the pie!**
- God made everything - He made us - so wherever we go, God goes because He made us! He's our strength, He's our everything! He infuses everything, because **He is the pie!**
- We have been led to believe to keep our faith to ourselves and not share it publicly.
- Pastor shared that he and Pastor Donna have been married 36 years, and their relationship is very private. It's a healthy relationship so it bubbles over into wherever he goes by him talking about her, holding her hand in public, etc. Their relationship isn't lived one way at home, and another way in the public arena.
- Faith is a private relationship, but it must be lived out in the public life. *How do we do this?*
- **Colossians 3:17 (NKJV)** And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
- Everything we do should imitate Jesus Christ. *How do we do this?*
- **I John 3:18 (TLB)** Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.
- A lot of Christians say they 'believe' one thing and do another.

- Take your faith to the workplace. Don't live in a closet, but share with people you are a Christian, and have faith in Jesus Christ. He has done so much for you, how can you keep quiet! You will struggle spiritually if you don't live your faith out publicly.
- Pastor shared years ago he worked in a warehouse with two Christian guys. One was obnoxious, getting on somebody if they would tell a dirty joke, etc. Some Christians are like 'bug repellent'! PLEASE BE NORMAL!
- Opportunities will come to share your faith, like when somebody shares they are having a difficult time, or are afraid, etc. Share you are 'not afraid', because you love God and believe the Bible. You can share God says He will take care of our needs. They may respond they don't believe in God. And you answer, "How's that working for you, and have you studied to come to that conclusion, because this is a big issue that you don't want to 'guess' on?"
- Don't condemn people or act disgusted if they sin, because that's what sinners do - 'sinners *sin*'! God will open an opportunity for you to share your faith with them. You have the answer, the Pearl of Great Price!
- Don't go to McD and say, "as a Christian I'll have a biggie fry!" DON'T force it! 'Love' people to Christ!
- Live with integrity!
- **Proverbs 11:3 (NIV)** The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.
- More than anything we need to live with integrity, not with duplicity.
- Hypocrite: Somebody who complains about all the sex and violence on their TiVo.
- We are not perfect; we're just forgiven, and have Christ living in us. We all mess up. Owe up to your mistakes, ask forgiveness.
- Pastor shared how he no longer shakes his fist at somebody that cuts him off in traffic, but recently honked at somebody that cut him off. But, he rolled down his window and apologized to the driver.
- Be a 'normal' person who has a supernatural God living on the inside, living with integrity, not duplicity.
- *How do we live to share love of Christ?* "Invest and invite" strategy. Invest in the lives of those around you by giving a pat on someone's back, smile, assisting them, etc. (acts of kindness!). This is showing love of Christ by showing kindness to them.
- **Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV)** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
- Speak positively about your church. People are hearing negative things about churches. Let's change that. Speak good things. The church is the bride of Christ, preparing for her wedding day. Would you speak badly about your bride, or allow somebody else to? Then don't speak negatively about God's bride. . . the church!
- Pastor said he wouldn't allow anybody to speak badly about his wife. He would 'deal' with you. In the past there was somebody who 'flirted' with Pastor Donna, and Pastor approached him, telling him to leave her alone. . . in no uncertain terms! Don't mess with her! She's my bride!
- This is the same relationship God has with His bride!
- Sermon series starting next week, "Extreme Life Makeover," is designed to reach the lost, and today's sermon is preparing us to do that. We are believing God that by Christmas our two services will be full with people who presently are not Christians, but will be!
- Be 'warm' to our guest. Cater to those who are new. We are all the 'welcoming committee', expecting guest. Love someone. Smile at someone. Greet someone. Help them connect if they need directions, etc. God uses us; He moves through us!
- This message is about becoming fruitful and impactful, putting our 'faith in action' so we can expand the numbers that will go to Heaven!