



How Do I Witness To My Grown-up Kid?

By Kurt von Schleicher

*We can help our grown-up kids to follow in God's way,
Living out our faith with gladness, praying hard every day.*
—Anon.

Sharing our faith with others may be intimidating at times, but in our American culture it's more than likely not going to be life threatening, as in other countries. Maybe one day it will be that way. There is a spiritual battle in our land, that's for sure. A Christian involved in fishing for souls could still be totally cut off by family members who are deceived and living in denial just like in other countries, but that might happen in a different way if it happens at all.

Jesus talked about the peril of the last days saying, ***"Brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved"*** (Matt. 10:21).

He said, ***"Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law"*** (Lk. 12:52).

We do everything we can to share the truth without ruffling feathers. But the Lord Jesus commanded us Christians in Matthew 28 to go and make disciples of all nations and sometimes it can't be helped. That's fishing cross-culturally and on your own turf. In this same passage, we find the assurance that as we go, the Lord will be with us. Evangelism should always start at home and then work it's way outward, so the Lord will be with you as you go to those on your

block and to those in your family as well. And there will come the time when He prompts you to open your mouth, or write a letter for Him ...to reach them.

Jesus said, ***"If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And you cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me"***(Lk. 14:26-27 nlt).

A Christian couple that I know was deeply distressed because their now married son and his family were not going to church anymore and they were giving God absolutely no place in their lives. As that husband's friend, I advised them to continue showing love, to pray daily, and to avoid starting arguments. Listen, I have unintentionally started arguments with family members and friends before and I know that this just leads nowhere fast. Why win an argument only to find that you lose a soul?

But at that family's home on more than one occasion, while there was a small gathering of their son's friends, the father gave his son a belittling lecture in the presence of the other siblings and peers. It was devastating. He was attempting to reform this so called "rebellious son," trusting that the son's listening friends would learn what he is really like and then chime in to provide the needed pressure for lasting change. The frustrated father's intentions might have even been right. I know he really loves his son. He merely wanted to wake his son up to the reality of his greatest need. By pointing out the periphery bad habits of his son's life, maybe this son would get a clue and see that there existed a more significant root problem under the surface. But the son became so embarrassed by this disrespectful act that he soon grew to hate his so called Christian father. The son's family left that home and rarely comes by to visit the parents any more. The son has pretty much broken off all contact with his own parents and has no desire to return to the church that he grew up in, or to any church. He has understandably become a mocker of everything Christian and now drinks and does drugs. It is so sad! Hopefully the father will learn in time and God will intervene to bring restoration about in this relationship. My point? A lot is at stake in witnessing to your offspring! We must do it right and many parents have, even though they are not perfect. Witnessing right is wonderful, but even that is no guarantee that a person will get saved. We must trust the Lord to do His work in their hearts. Doing my best I commit the rest.

*"Praying, resting, waiting, trusting—these are words that tell a story;
As we wait for God to lead us, he responds, 'Just seek My glory.'"*
—Hess

It's hard to rely on prayer and witnessing when you want something to happen right now. But that is what Nehemiah did. He felt distraught by the bad news that the Israelites in Jerusalem were living in grave danger (Neh. 1:3-4). He was

a man with great leadership ability and he was in a favorable position too ...to receive help from the king that he served. So Nehemiah was eager to help his people get out of danger's way. But he knew that he could be literally executed for coming into the presence of a Persian king without being invited. Therefore, though he had asked God to give him the opportunity immediately, he also trusted God enough to wait. Four months later, the king opened the door for him to open his mouth and make his appeal (2:1, 4).

Whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe. —Proverbs 29:25

*Delay is not denial—don't stop praying for your kids!
Our grown kids need a place where love provides security,
Where truth is not compromised and what they feel is not despised.
A place where what is taught is not confused by what they see and hear,
Where what is foggy will eventually become clear.
They need a place where parents are filled with God's love
So they won't be smeared. —KvS*

***He who plants and he who waters are one,
and each one will receive his own reward.*** —1 Corinthians 3:8

It's not always easy to be patient, but God and His Word can be trusted. Wait patiently for the Lord to show you when and how to witness to your son or daughter and then don't be afraid to open your mouth.

Why is it so hard to break the silence and tell someone that was close to me that I really love them and about the most important event that has ever happened to in my life. Why is it difficult to talk about the Person who has changed my life forever? We don't want to flub it. I've carefully written loving letters to my kids that I mailed to a drawer for days as I prayed, and they stayed in that drawer quite a while before I actually tweaked the letter and mailed it off. I learned this from my wise dad. Why do I hesitate in explaining the best news that I have ever heard to someone I really care about? I feel it just well up inside me at times, and I want to tell them so bad that it hurts. Hey, I have found a way to survive death, to actively retire forever with cool things to do, to be totally forgiven of all my sins, and to explore the vast goodness of God for ever. Is that not exciting or what?

In witnessing to one of your own offspring that has now grown up into an adult, it can often be a little tricky to broach the subject of their eternal destiny ... especially if they have moved out, married or are now living with someone ...especially if their "significant other" wants them to have as little to do with those relatives who are "Jesus Freaks" and like to talk with their son or daughter for the purpose of "relationship building," or "edification."

For most of us, it is drastically easier to witness to a stranger than to someone we know. An effective way to soften the message without compromise is to speak in the "first person" or in testimonial form. Yes, even your own kids who have grown up will be able to relate to you a little better ...like you are actually a normal human being, if you properly explain to them your own story. Tell them what you thought before meeting Christ, what was said to you or what you experienced that changed your thinking. Wait for questions and explain what you felt like before meeting Christ and what it was like after you met Him. Explain what you have learned since being born again and what you think now about the Christian life. Explain the joy, peace and love, but never use those things as the draw card for them to be saved. Go after their conscience. It should be grace to the humble, law to the proud and love accompanied with respect to all people all the time! Hate sin, but love the sinner. Love must be tough and direct at times, but many fathers don't know how to be tender and hug their own kids or tell them how delighted you are that God made them. Express to them in a new way how much you love them and hope to spend eternity in heaven with God and them together. Let them know how radically important this is to you.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

—Romans 1:16

Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. —2 Timothy 1:8

*Go, labor on, spend, and be spent, thy joy to do Thy Father's will;
It is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still?*

—Bonar

Is your grown up son or daughter one who believes that they are a Christian headed to heaven, one who believes that they are a sinner headed for hell ...or one who believes that they are neither and merely headed for the grave?

Sometimes things are not the way they appear to be, so be slow to judge. The Bible teaches us to judge righteously. Ask key diagnostic questions in a courteous gentle manner to find out why they believe the way they do and if there is error then take them to the Scriptures if they will go there with you. They might try to turn your good questions into hypocritical accusations leveled at them or maybe they'll feel like you're pointing the finger, but let your son or daughter know that is just not the case—those words are simply a lame copout defense mechanism in order for them to avoid any feelings of conviction. Innocent people never mind questions of accountability.

Remember, it must be a dialogue rather than a monologue! If they always want a power struggle and won't hardly ever talk with you, or return your voicemail or mail it might be due to them wanting to train you through their neglect, and there is not much you can do about that. But God knows how to deal with

disloyal traitors, rebels and prodigals who want to be in charge and maintain some form of paternal superiority complex. Unfortunately God (their authority now) has had lots of experience in this.

Let the Spirit lead you at all times and never return evil for evil. You might say something like, *"It took me a while to realize that the Bible warns people that for every idle word we have spoken, we will have to give an account on Judgment Day. I personally thought that as long as I believed in God, attended my traditional church from time to time, and tried to live a good life, that I would go to heaven when I died. Man, I was so wrong. Jesus said that if I as much as looked with lust at another person, I had committed adultery in my heart, and that there was nothing I could do to wash away my sins. He taught that if I even got angry with one of my brothers—and we got in fist fights all the time—that I would be guilty of murder in my heart. At 18, I knew that if God judged me by the Ten Commandments on Judgment Day, I would end up guilty, and go to hell. It was when I acknowledged my sins specifically before God, that I began to understand why Jesus died and rose again. It was to take the full punishment for my sins upon Himself—that I deserved—and the sins of the world."*

Then, depending on your son or daughter's openness to dialogue, you may ask them with all due respect, *"How do you think you will do on Judgment Day, if God judges you by the Ten Commandments?"* or *"what exactly are you trusting in to get you past God the righteous Judge, and into His holy heaven?"*

Remember to use Bible verses to show them what God says regarding what they believe or what they are trusting in for salvation, if they will listen. Do your homework well and find the verses beforehand that specifically deal with their specific idols, but not for the purpose of you condemning him to hell. Many already know that that are living a lie and are currently damned. Be ready to lead them in a prayer of repentance right on the spot. You might just be there to plant seeds or to listen to them. If they remain closed and say they don't want to talk with you about it. You must honor their choices, even if they want to keep breaking the command that says they should honor their parents. Check out their attitude and be patient. You too had your time when you became ready to hear the Message.

If their answer is *"Not right now!"* Then simply back off, because it is time for you to continue to live the life of love in a humble way and just pray for them. Their spouse might enjoy blowing everything up out of proportion by calling you a Christian stocker or something, but you must be wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove. Sure your grown kid might still act like a kid, but they just need some time to consider what you have taught them in their younger years and also time to consider what you've said to them as of late. You are responsible for your attitude, behavior, and spiritual condition not theirs any more. Leave them in God's hands—they are ultimately His problem, not yours. Let what you leave behind (other than people and pets) go towards sound Gospel ministry—towards

people with a real relationship with Christ and His church. Be other worldly but down to earth. Don't be faked out by selfish family members or off-based TV ministers.

God will show you other unbelievers in the location where you live that are open to hearing the Gospel, and your ongoing non-pushy evangelistic salty lifestyle in relating to these people will only make you better prepared to reach your own relatives when or if they become ready to hear.

*Lord, lay some soul upon my heart, and love that soul through me;
There are so many that do not know, so please show me to whom I should go.
If my relative will not hear, I will trust you to steer;
And may I nobly do my part, without hurting anyone's heart.
Help me be the one to see, how to win another soul for Thee! —KvS*

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