

THE  
**POWER**  
OF  
**ONE-ON-ONE**

Discovering the Joy and Satisfaction  
of Mentoring Others

**JIM STUMP**  
WITH FRANK MARTIN



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To protect the privacy of those who have shared their stories with the author, some details and names have been changed.

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To my wife, Linda—thank you for loving me  
and traveling with me through life.

To my children, Ashley, Mike, and Jason—I am so proud  
of who you are becoming as you faithfully continue to  
walk with Jesus. Thank you for being willing to adjust  
your lives to God’s agenda to achieve his purposes.

To my father and mother, Don and Lorene Stump—  
thank you for modeling God’s love, faithfulness,  
and heart for those who have yet to find a relation-  
ship with Jesus. Your rewards are many in heaven!

To my siblings, Dave, Don, John, Priscilla Judge,  
Mary Lou Elliott, and Zona Wilson—  
those sibling reunions are a delicious taste  
of what awaits us when we leave this earth.

And finally to Bud Hinkson—it took the uniqueness of who  
you were and your amazing vision to attract me to explore  
what this journey entailed. And what a journey it has been!  
The principles you taught me are being passed on through  
generations of men I have mentored. Our loss is heaven’s gain!



# Contents

Foreword by John Ortberg	11
Acknowledgments	13
Note to the Reader	15
Introduction: One-on-One	17
1. Everyone Needs the Savior	27
<b>Part 1 The Mentoring Model of Sharing Your Faith</b>	<b>39</b>
2. The Accidental Evangelist	41
3. The Jesus Model	53
4. The Power of the Gospel	64
5. Effective Principles of Mentoring: Part 1	77
6. Effective Principles of Mentoring: Part 2	86
<b>Part 2 How Would Jesus Bring Your Friends to Faith?</b>	<b>97</b>
7. He Would Accept Them as They Are	99
8. He Would Show Them That He Cared	109
9. He Would Teach Them How to Pray	118
10. He Would Always Tell the Truth	129
11. He Would Be a Friend for Life	138

<b>Part 3 Simple Steps to Sharing Your Faith</b>	<b>149</b>
12. The Indescribable Gospel of Grace	151
13. Would You Like to Know God Personally?	160
14. It's All about Jesus	173
Afterword by Randy Alcorn	185
Notes	187

## Foreword

There is a unique power in a conversation that happens face-to-face, one-on-one, in private moments between two human beings. Many of our defining moments take place in this setting. Marriages get proposed, jobs get offered, counsel is given, confessions are whispered—our secrets get revealed and our life trajectories get altered in the sheltered atmosphere of two friends.

And this is supremely true of the soul. We see this in the life of Jesus all the time. The longest recorded conversation in the New Testament takes place between Jesus and (a big surprise in the ancient world) a Samaritan woman at a well. Jesus goes face-to-face with tax collectors and lepers and prostitutes and fishermen and politicians and, just before he dies, with a thief on the cross next to him.

But this is not just in the Bible. You know it in your own existence, as do I. It has been in the hushed privacy of one-on-one conversations that I have learned many of my deepest lessons about following Jesus. I first learned the power of confession there—the liberation and healing that came the first time I opened up all the secrets and shames of my life to another human being in the presence of Jesus. Some of my most helpful confrontations have happened there—confrontations that I used to dread and yet (while I

suppose I do still dread them) have learned to love because of the way they help me grow.

If you were to visit the town of Palo Alto, California, and perhaps wander around the campus of Stanford University, the most likely way that you'd run into Jim Stump would be to see him engaged in an earnest, quiet conversation with somebody over a cup of coffee about those issues in life that matter the most but are least talked about. Jim understands the sheer spiritual power of one life intersecting with another in an intentional, Spirit-filled way.

In a sense, in the chapters that follow, you'll actually get the gift of some one-on-one time with Jim. In this book, the low-key, highly approachable, listen-first style that opens the doors of so many hearts to Jim will become his gift to you. You'll get a sense for what a little creative spirituality can do to bring someone closer to God. I love the story of how Jim challenged a student to play Ping-Pong for some spiritual stakes and then revealed that he hadn't even begun to play with his good hand. Like a scene out of *The Princess Bride*.

But the best part of an encounter like this is the Guest who shows up. Jesus said a long time ago that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he's right there. Jim has probably pulled together more "gatherings of two" than just about anybody I know. And now the two are Jim and you.

And one more.

**John Ortberg**

Senior pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church

Author of *Who Is This Man?*



# Acknowledgments

In the process of writing a book, there are so many people involved without whom it would have never come to fruition. Words are inadequate to express my thanks for your help in getting this done, but let me start by thanking Rick Christian, the founder of Alive Communications. If you had not picked up that phone and refused to hang up until I agreed to write this book, it may never have happened. Thanks to Tim MacDonald and Al Mueller for encouraging you to call.

Joel Kneeder, thanks for holding my hand and gently leading me through this process, both as my agent and as my new friend. Your relationships and credibility in the publishing industry opened the door to Baker Books when it probably would have been closed in the face of a new, no-name author.

Frank Martin, your gift with words and their proper flow has captured what I want to communicate. I could not have asked for a more professional collaborator for my first book.

Baker Books, you have fulfilled all the great things I heard about you in the publishing world. I am honored that you chose this book out of the many manuscripts that come your way.

Jon Wilcox, thanks to you and your team at Baker Books for taking a chance on a new author who has never done anything

but sit at a table hour after hour, meeting with athletes. You are a brave man. You kept the book well structured and did a superb job of editing.

Jeff Barton, you and I both know the role you played so unselfishly, without which this book might not have gotten off the ground in such a timely manner.

John Jenks, your constant encouragement to put down my experiences in book form was instrumental in this book becoming a reality. Thank you for being my mentor and friend.

Dwight Nyquist, you have been a dear friend to me and to the Stump family since I was in high school. You modeled important principles for me regarding how to relate to people and the importance of striving for excellence in everything I do. You have been invaluable to me as a coach, a friend, and a mentor.

Jeff Siemon and Dennis Sheehan, these wonderful four-plus decades began with your invitation to me to come to Stanford. Your credibility opened the doors for me there and laid the foundation for what God has accomplished on the Farm since then.

I have been gifted with wonderful board members who have encouraged me and prayed for me. I could not do this without your leadership. You are a blessing to me!

Andy Chan, thank you for being my “Stanford eyes.”

To all those individuals who have invested financially and prayerfully in Sports Challenge—your returns will be bountiful in eternity.

To the scholar-athletes and coaches I have had the joy of mentoring—you have made a huge impact on my life. I cannot thank you adequately for the relationships we enjoy together.

There are others too numerous to mention who have stood by me and encouraged me in so many ways. You know who you are and how much I love and appreciate you!

## Note to the Reader

**B**efore we begin our journey together, I want to take a minute to address an issue that is sure to cross your mind as you start to read. You'll notice that many of the stories and anecdotes I've included incorporate only the subject's first name, and a few of the facts surrounding these people may seem vague and incomplete. I've done this intentionally in order to protect the identities of many of the men I've mentored through the years. The stories I've written are real and factual, but a good number of the names and specifics are not.

As a spiritual mentor to a lot of high-profile students and athletes, I have an obligation to my mentorees to keep the things they share with me in the strictest confidence. Mentoring is a sacred trust, and it would be wrong of me to betray that trust for the sake of a book.

If I were to share actual names, you would likely recognize most of the men in these stories, since almost all have gone on to develop high-profile careers in sports, business, politics, or ministry. But that fact makes it even more critical in my eyes to keep their true identities hidden. So if you think you recognize someone from one of my stories, chances are you're wrong.

In some cases, I've used actual names that you're sure to recognize. In those cases, I was given direct permission to share both their names and their stories.

Thanks for understanding, and for taking the time to join me on this exciting journey!

# Introduction

## One-on-One

One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master.

—Robert Coleman

**B**ack in the late 1990s, I received a call from one of the Stanford Cardinal football recruiters. He told me that a young recruit would be visiting the campus that weekend, and he wanted me to meet him.

As a spiritual mentor, I'm often asked by coaches to speak to their teams or counsel a student who has been struggling with personal issues. This particular recruit was apparently an avid outdoorsman who loved to hunt and fish. Since I had grown up in the wilds of Alaska and used to hunt and fish for a living, the coach thought the two of us would have an immediate bond.

I wasn't naïve. I knew that this coach was more interested in getting this young man to play for Stanford than he was in providing him spiritual counsel, but I never miss an opportunity to meet a new player.

The young man's name was Andrew, and he was an All-American high school player from the Northwest. He was a nationally ranked tight end with a long list of athletic accomplishments, including being named "Best in the West" by the *Long Beach Press*. He had earned nine varsity letters in high school, had excelled at academics, and was a member of the National Honor Society. Almost every major college in the country was courting him, and Stanford was pulling out all the stops to sign him.

I was scheduled to meet him at a reception for potential recruits at one of the nicest hotels in the area. Before walking into the banquet hall, we were all given name tags in the lobby. I entered the room and immediately spotted this enormous, powerfully built young man standing next to the punch table. Our eyes met, and without hesitation he came striding across the room toward me. He looked like a bear that had just spotted supper.

Without introducing himself, he planted himself right in front of me, poking his finger into my chest. "I know who you are," he bellowed, "and I know you play Ping-Pong. I want you to know that I've never been beaten in Ping-Pong, and if I come to Stanford I'm going to kick your butt!"

I took a step back, gathered my composure, and said, "If you decide to come to Stanford, I'd love to take you on in a match."

I've met a lot of competitive athletes in my day, but he was one of a kind.

## **Earning the Right to Be Heard**

The fall season rolled around, and sure enough, Andrew had accepted the scholarship that Stanford offered him. I was on the sidelines during the team's first day of practice, and he was every bit as good as they said he was.

When practice ended, he spotted me on his way to the locker room and immediately headed in my direction. Once again he

towered over me, this time his dirt-smeared face dripping sweat. “I want you at the Ping-Pong table tonight at eight o’clock!” he thundered.

I just smiled and nodded.

I was thirty minutes late meeting him at the players’ dorm that night, and he had already warmed up by easily beating several of the other students. I stood and watched for a few minutes as he finished a match, and I could see why he was so confident. He was as fast as lightning, with amazing hand-eye coordination.

He dominated the game, winning his last point with a powerful kill shot to the corner of the table, then glared over in my direction. “Okay, Stump,” he snarled. “Your turn!”

I shot him a quick grin, shook my head, and said, “No, Andrew, that’s not the way it works around here. Here’s what’s going to happen. If you beat me, I’ll admit you’re a better player and I’ll never bother you again. But if I beat you, you have to agree to meet with me one day a week for one hour. And you have to start going to church with me every Sunday.”

His mouth dropped open. He stood processing my challenge for a few seconds, then shot me a cocky smirk. “I’m not worried,” he said. “There’s no way you’re going to beat me!”

I reached into my bag and slowly pulled my paddle from its leather case with my left hand. As I lined up on my side of the table, we began warming up with a few practice shots. He won the first point, I won the next two, then he stepped up his game and won a couple more. It seemed that we were pretty evenly matched.

Finally he said, “Okay, Stump. Time to play.”

I nodded in agreement, but before setting up I said, “I just have one quick question. You don’t mind if I play with my good hand now, do you?”

With that I switched the paddle to my right hand and motioned for him to serve. His face turned white and his mouth dropped open.

I beat him 21–1.

I'm not sure if it was respect or humiliation that got him to our first meeting, but Andrew held true to his promise. He began meeting with me once a week for an hour, each time opening up the Bible and studying the claims of Jesus. Andrew wasn't a believer, but he was sincerely curious about the person of Jesus. So we studied him together. It was only a few short weeks into our meetings that he decided to surrender his life and heart to Jesus.

He started going to church with me every week and became a serious student of the Bible. Every time we met, he came with more questions about Jesus, and we'd explore those questions together. It was exciting to see him growing in his faith.

Andrew and I became the best of friends during his years at Stanford. I watched him become one of the team's most outspoken believers and a guest speaker at outreach events. He encouraged several of his teammates to start meeting with me, and most of them became believers as well.

Andrew went on to have a successful career in professional football, playing for three different NFL teams. Throughout his professional life he continued to be an outspoken believer and role model to young people.

## **The Joy of Mentoring**

The summer before his senior year, I invited Andrew and one of the other athletes I was mentoring to accompany me on a mission trip to Alaska. While there, we spoke at a number of youth camps, churches, and native Alaskan villages. We also used the time to get in some good fishing for king salmon on the Kenai River, close to where I was raised.

Each morning we would spend time in prayer and Bible study before heading out for the day. We also read a chapter each day from Randy Alcorn's great book *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, then spent a little time discussing what we'd read. It was a fruitful



trip. Not only did we get to spend quality time together, but a lot of young people were brought to the Lord through the testimonies of Andrew and the other athletes traveling with us.

I'll never forget the great time of worship and conversation we had one evening on the shores of Lake Iliamna as we watched the sun set over Alaska's largest body of fresh water. I planned to have a communion service right there on the lake, with magnificent, snow-capped mountains towering above us on every side. I remember reflecting on the first time I met Andrew, and how different a man he was today than he was that day at the Ping-Pong table nearly four years earlier. God had done an amazing work in his heart and life, and I was honored that he had allowed me to play a small mentoring role in Andrew's transformation. He was committed to the process of becoming a mature man of God.

On the plane ride home, Andrew turned to me and said, "You know, Jim, I think I've learned more in the last ten days than I have in the last four years of college." I understood what he meant.

There are times when I have to pinch myself just to make sure I'm not dreaming. It's impossible to verbalize the joy and satisfaction that God continually brings into my life by having allowed me to be a spiritual mentor at Stanford for the last forty-plus years.

Andrew is just one of many, *many* students I've been privileged to meet and mentor in the Christian faith, and that thought thrills me beyond words. As a campus minister, I get to help people find their new life in Jesus. And as a spiritual mentor, I'm able to help people grow and flourish in their walk with the Lord. Those are two roles that I take very seriously.

More than that, they are two roles that I've learned to combine into an effective method of identifying and growing disciples of Jesus. The method is not one that is unique to me, and it's not rocket science. In fact, it's an idea that comes right from the pages of Scripture, directly from the life of Jesus. Yet I'm surprised how novel the idea seems to so many believers.

## **One Individual at a Time**

Billy Graham was once asked during an interview, “If you were a pastor of a large church in a principal city, what would be your plan of action?”

Without hesitation, Dr. Graham answered, “I think one of the first things I would do would be to get a small group of eight or ten or twelve people around me that would meet a few hours a week and pay the price! It would cost them something in time and effort. I would share with them everything I have, over a period of years. Then I would actually have twelve ministers among the laypeople who in turn could take eight or ten or twelve more and teach them. . . . Christ, I think, set the pattern. He spent most of his time with twelve men. He didn’t spend it with great crowds.”<sup>1</sup>

It was an interesting answer from a man who had spent much of his life and ministry speaking to large crowds. I can’t think of one person who has had a greater impact on the world for Jesus than Billy Graham—at least in the twentieth century. Countless thousands have come to Christ at his large group meetings. Yet even he understood that true disciples are built not from a pulpit but one-on-one, in small, intimate settings. I am convinced that if pastors of churches around the world would just take Billy Graham’s advice and begin mentoring assistant pastors and elders, who go on to mentor other leaders in their churches, then the first-century spiritual explosion would happen all over again in this age!

## **The Discipling Model**

When Jesus saw Peter and Andrew fishing in the Sea of Galilee, he said to them, “Come, follow me, . . . and I will send you out to fish for people” (Matt. 4:19). Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

The next day Jesus saw James and John in a boat, preparing their nets to fish, and he gave them the same invitation. They, too, immediately left their boats and their father and followed him (vv. 21–22). Soon afterward he saw Matthew sitting at a tax collector’s booth and said to him, “Follow me” (Matt. 9:9). Matthew left everything behind to become a disciple of Jesus.

I’m convinced that each of the men Jesus called understood the commitment they were making when they agreed to follow him. They knew that he wasn’t just asking for a few days or weeks of their time. And he wasn’t simply asking them to travel with him on his journeys.

Jesus was inviting them to become his disciples. His mentorees. He was welcoming them into his inner circle. He was agreeing to become their rabbi and inviting them to become his followers.

This was a staggering opportunity for working-class Jews. At the time, every Jewish boy grew up studying the Torah and was expected to have the Pentateuch memorized by the time he was twelve. But only the best and brightest students were allowed to continue their education. Young boys who showed promise would often seek out a rabbi to teach them further, and they would ask permission to become an intimate protégé of the rabbi they most respected.

If the rabbi agreed, he would ask the young boy to follow him and become his disciple. This was a huge honor, and those who were mentored by a rabbi would usually go on to become rabbis themselves. But only a small percentage of Jewish boys were chosen for such a privilege.

The men Jesus picked were obviously not among the best and brightest students, and they might even have been rejected by rabbis as young boys. That’s why they found themselves making a living as common laborers.

When Jesus, an up-and-coming young rabbi, came to them and said, “Follow me,” they jumped at the chance to become his

disciples. For some of them, it might have been their chance to recapture a dream they had left behind or to continue the education they were forced to abandon as children.

Jesus was asking them to leave behind everything they had worked for and to throw their entire lives into learning what he had to teach them. They weren't just giving up their careers for him; they were giving their lives over to his will for their future.

Becoming a disciple is no small commitment, and it's not for the faint of heart. It's an unwavering decision to change the direction of your life and look to your rabbi to teach and mentor you in his ways.

Jesus ultimately handpicked twelve disciples to follow him, and they became the primary focus of his life and ministry. He taught large crowds when the opportunities arose and helped a lot of people along the way, but his primary attention was always on these twelve men.

Why he chose these twelve men is still a mystery to me. If I were a coach, I would have cut them all, based on how they're depicted in the Gospels prior to Jesus' resurrection. The fact that he kept them as disciples should give us all great assurance that he will never leave us or forsake us!

Often when the crowds got too large, Jesus would escape to a quieter place to be alone with his disciples. He wasn't overlooking those who needed him; he just refused to let anything get in the way of his primary mission—to mold and shape a handful of men who would eventually go on not only to change the world but to have an impact that would ring well into eternity.

## **Our Great Commission**

In the Gospels, Jesus modeled for his disciples—and for us—the perfect approach to mentoring people into a deep and meaningful

faith. He poured his entire life into the lives of these few men. At the end of his mission on earth, after he had suffered on the cross and risen from the grave to defeat death once and for all, just before ascending back to heaven to be with his Father for eternity, he gave his disciples one last charge: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20).

He didn’t say to them, “Go preach about me,” or “Go share the Good News,” or even “Go build a megachurch in every city.”

What he said was, “Go and make disciples.”

Jesus commissioned them to go into the world and replicate the model of mentoring that they had learned from him. He was saying to them, “Now you are the rabbis, so go and disciple others, just the way I disciplined you.”

His desire was to see the Good News about him spread throughout the entire world, and for his church to grow into an unstoppable force for God among the nations. He longed to see lives transformed by his message of salvation. His ultimate desire was for every person on earth to hear and accept the message that he loved them and wanted an ongoing love relationship with them.

The apostle Peter tells us, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Jesus longs to see every person accept his offer of salvation. But he knows that kind of thing doesn’t happen through great speeches or even great ideas.

You change the world by reshaping hearts and lives from the inside out. By walking with people on a daily basis, teaching them how to live by modeling a Christlike life.

You change the world one individual at a time.

This is the model of evangelism that Jesus taught, and it's the method I've given my life to pursuing. I've seen firsthand the power of the Good News when passed on to others, not through words or speeches but through reflecting the character of Jesus. Through living the gospel, not just preaching it. Through pouring my life into just a handful of people who need Jesus.

Stay with me while we explore this model together.

## Everyone Needs the Savior

God cannot give us happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.

—C. S. Lewis

**M**y “office” at Stanford University is a small table in the corner of Jimmy V’s Sports Café. For much of the past forty-two years, this has been where I meet students on a daily basis for food and conversation. It’s not a quiet office, but I love the view, and people always know where to find me.

One day recently I was gathering my things to leave when a freshman football player rushed up to my table and said, “I was just in the locker room having a conversation with some other teammates, and they were talking about having a personal relationship with Jesus. I don’t even know what that is, but I’m really interested in finding out.”

He went on to explain that he’d been to church before and even believed in God, but the idea of being in a personal relationship

with God was completely foreign to him. “If you can show me how to become a follower of Jesus without being a hypocrite, I’m very interested,” he said.

I put my things back on the table and invited him to sit down. That day marked the first of many conversations we had about Jesus. He is now a committed follower of Jesus and has also led others into a personal faith.

This scene may sound like a rare occurrence, but it’s actually far more common than you might expect. In my years of mentoring athletes at Stanford University, I’ve had thousands of conversations about Jesus with students, and I seldom run across anyone who isn’t interested in at least talking about him. Jesus is a fascinating historical figure, and even those who have given little thought to Jesus have many questions about who he was, what he taught, and why people are still talking about him two thousand years later.

I’ve run across numerous people who are turned off by Christians, but I can count on one hand those who aren’t at least curious about the person of Jesus.

## **People Long to Know**

The fact that most people are curious about Jesus is a truth I discovered during my first few months at Stanford. It was 1970, and Campus Crusade for Christ had assigned me to reach out to students at Stanford University. One of the first talks I gave, at the request of the coach, was to the freshman football players, which was a huge honor for me. My talk was brief and simple. I discussed what it means to become a follower of Jesus, and I gave examples of other athletes who had given up control of their lives to Christ and the positive impact that decision had made on their lives and careers. During the talk I remember wondering if anyone was even listening.



The very next day, while meeting with one of the school's tennis players, a young man approached me and asked, "Would you please help me? I'm really frustrated right now!"

I remembered his face from the previous afternoon's meeting. He was one of the freshman football players. "Absolutely," I told him. "What can I help you with?"

He told me that my talk had made such an impact on him that after the meeting he went looking for a friend he knew to be a Christian. He and this friend lived in the same dorm, just down the hall from each other. He told his friend about my talk and said, "I'm very interested in becoming a follower of Jesus. Would you show me how?"

He said his friend seemed startled but encouraged him in his quest. Yet he wasn't much help. "He told me that becoming a Christian was the best thing he had ever done and that it really helped him. But then he just turned and walked away."

I could see why he was frustrated.

After that incident he decided to take a walk on campus and soon ran into a girl from one of his classes. He had once heard her talk about a regular Bible study on campus that she attended, so he asked her the same question. "I'm interested in becoming a follower of Jesus," he said, "but I don't know how. Could you help me?"

Once again, the response he got was vague and noncommittal. She told him how much her faith had meant to her, encouraged him to start reading the Bible, and then hurried off to meet a friend for dinner.

His shoulders drooped in frustration as he relayed the story. "I really want to do this," he told me, "but no one seems to be able to tell me how."

That afternoon, he and I got together for our first meeting. At the end of the hour we prayed together as he invited Jesus into his life and began the incredible journey of being a follower of Jesus.

## Two Universal Truths

In my many years of mentoring, I've discovered two truths that appear to be universal, and together they are reflective of one of the greatest ironies of the human condition.

The first truth is that, given the right circumstances, every person on the planet is open to hearing the story of Jesus. It is the most compelling story in the universe, and his message of hope is as fascinating as it is life-altering. Even those who say they are angry with God, when approached by someone who is genuinely interested in them, will at least listen.

And the second truth I've learned is that every sincere follower of Jesus has a deep desire to share their faith with others. They are quick to say that developing a personal relationship with Jesus is the best thing that has ever happened to them. They understand that Jesus, through his death on the cross, is the only road to salvation, and they've experienced the joy of knowing him firsthand, so they truly want to share Christ with their friends. They simply don't know how.

The irony would be laughable if it weren't so sad.

As Christians we hold in our hearts the answer to the most gut-wrenching, soul-searching questions in the universe. We know things that every human soul is longing to discover. Through the life and teachings of Jesus, we know things about life and death and eternity that have confounded philosophers since the beginning of time.

Because of our faith in Jesus, you and I know the truth of creation, the purpose of our existence, the fate of humanity, and the one and only true meaning of life. Not only do we know who we are and why we were made, but we also know what's going to happen after we die. Because of Jesus, our eternal fate is sealed and certain and exciting beyond comprehension!

Who wouldn't want to know that?

We should be excited to share Jesus with everyone. But instead we find ourselves keeping silent, afraid to bring up our faith for fear of sounding judgmental or making others feel awkward.

Statistics show that 95 percent of all Christians have never helped another person find a relationship with Jesus. It's a sobering statistic, and many might chalk it up to apathy, but I don't think that's true. I'm convinced it's because most of those 95 percent simply don't know what to say or how to say it.

### **God's *Real* Business**

Because of my role on campus, I get invited to a lot of Christian functions, and often the conversation will turn to the subject of sharing your faith. When people learn that I do that for a living, they will say things like, "I really admire what you do," or "I wish I knew how to effectively share my faith with others." Sometimes they'll ask for pointers or wonder if I have some secret formula or process. They all seem curious about my methods and fascinated by the idea of regularly leading people to Jesus.

I'm always happy to share what I know, and I'm encouraged that so many Christians seem truly interested in knowing how to bring others to Christ. But a huge part of me is sad that what I do seems like such an anomaly among believers. I'm only doing what Jesus commanded every believer to do.

The hard reality is, sharing our faith with others is not a choice or a special "gift" that some Christians happen to have. It's what God expects of every follower of Jesus.

After Jesus conquered death and rose from the grave, he made several appearances to his disciples and followers, and he used that time to impart his final wishes before ascending back to heaven.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and

teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matt. 28:19–20)

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” (Mark 16:15)

He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:46–47)

You and I know these statements as the Great Commission, and they are far more than a few passing words of encouragement from Jesus. They are also not suggestions—they are direct commands. They are specific instructions to believers about what it means to be a follower of Christ. Jesus left little doubt about his expectations of those who choose to believe. And his words should reflect the burden we have in our hearts for those who are lost.

C. S. Lewis once said, “The salvation of human souls . . . is the real business of life.”<sup>2</sup> Sadly, most Christians have never taken God’s “real business” to heart.

## **Good News!**

My goal here is not to cause believers to hang their heads in shame but to mobilize God’s people to action. If you’ve found yourself identifying with the 95 percent who have never led a friend to Jesus, please know that my intent is not to shame or discourage you. In fact, it’s the exact opposite.

I have good news about sharing the Good News! It’s not as hard or frightening as you’ve been led to believe. And most people are far more receptive to Jesus than you probably expect. They may not be interested in religion, Christianity, the Bible, or church, but they want to know about Jesus.

Sharing your faith is like riding a bike. If you've never done it, the idea sounds terrifying. And your mind tends to focus on all the negative things that might happen. *What if I fall off? What if I can't go fast enough? What if I go too fast and can't stop?*

Fear of the unknown causes unnecessary anxiety. Once we get started and actually find our balance, we discover how exhilarating riding a bike can be. With the wind in our hair and our feet safely on the pedals, we suddenly find ourselves enjoying the view and wondering why it took us so long to try and seemed so scary.

The same is true about sharing our faith. Most believers haven't led a friend to Jesus simply because they haven't taken the first step. Their mind races with all the negative things that might happen. *What if they think I'm weird? What if I say the wrong thing? What if I can't answer their questions? What if they say no?*

Fear of the unknown causes anxiety in our spirit. And we give up before ever putting our feet on the pedals.

I'm here to tell you that the exhilaration of the ride is worth overcoming even your greatest fears. That if you can just move beyond your anxiety and take the first step, you'll soon find yourself wondering why it took you so long to try.

The apostle Paul wrote, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord" (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

There is no greater experience on earth than leading another person to faith. There's nothing more rewarding than introducing a friend to Jesus and then seeing that friend accept him as their personal Lord and Savior. To pray with them for the very first time and then walk with them as they grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus.

If there's a greater rush on the planet, I certainly haven't found it. And trust me, you won't either!

## Fishing for Souls

I was raised in a log cabin that my father built in the wilds of Alaska. My parents were missionaries, but in high school and college I spent most summers working as a commercial fisherman. I learned early in life the allure of fighting the ocean elements, hauling in huge nets full of sockeye salmon onto a small fishing boat, and struggling against gale-force winds and white-capped waves to transport the haul back to market. It was a grueling and exhausting job, but deeply rewarding.

One of the greatest lessons I learned during those years is that fishing is a learned skill. There are some techniques that work and others that don't. Some boats return to shore bursting at the seams with fresh fish, while others come back empty. Sometimes that result is due to unavoidable circumstances, but often it's simply a lack of acquired skill or poor planning that makes the difference. It's a harsh reality of life on the Alaskan docks. Some fishermen eat well, while others go home hungry.

That same dynamic holds true when sharing your faith. Again, there are some techniques that work and others that don't. It's easy to find yourself coming back empty-handed if you haven't taken the time to develop the right skills or methods.

Whether fishing for salmon or bringing people to Jesus, you have to learn where to cast your net and how quickly to bring it in. It's a skill that anyone can learn. But like any skill, it takes willingness, time, diligence, and patience in order to be consistently successful.

I love that Jesus used the analogy of fishing when teaching his disciples how to reach others. "Follow me," he told them, "and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matt. 4:19). It's a comparison that rings true to me, because I've experienced both of those fishing careers firsthand.

In my years as a mentor, I have always been open to looking at more effective ways to communicate the message. Anytime a new

book or DVD series on how to share your faith hits the market, I'm one of the first to check it out and see what it has to say. When it comes to leading others to Jesus, I want to be as effective as possible, so I glean what I can from others. And what I've learned is that not all techniques are created equal. Some will bring you joy and success, while others will leave you feeling frustrated and insecure.

I don't like being frustrated, and as a man who stands just five feet three inches tall—with the last name of Stump, no less—I have had many people try to make me feel insecure. I want to spend my time and energy on something that works, and I'm sure you do too.

### **Knowing What Works**

The nonprofit ministry I oversee at Stanford is called Sports Challenge, and our primary focus is reaching out to student athletes on campus. I left Campus Crusade for Christ in 1974 in order to form Sports Challenge, an independent 501(c)(3) organization, because I wanted to focus my ministry specifically on mentoring student athletes on the Stanford campus. The reason I chose student athletes is that I grew up playing sports and played several sports in college, so athletes are the people I most easily relate to as a group.

The success I have had helping student athletes begin a relationship with Jesus has gotten a lot of attention from other ministries. (When I say *success*, I simply mean sharing with another person how they can begin a relationship with Jesus, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God.) My success is not because I happen to be some superevangelist or silver-tongued salesman. I am not the most charismatic individual on campus by a long shot. Yet God has blessed me beyond belief with fruit for the kingdom.

In fact, just over a year ago, I was approached by the director of a major sports ministry at Stanford, and he asked if he could attend our next board meeting at Sports Challenge. “I have some information I think your board of directors needs to know,” he told me.

I wasn’t sure what he meant or whether I should be worried, but I invited him to come. At the meeting, he explained to our board that for some time he had been tracking the results of all the evangelical groups on campus, and what he found was surprising. “There are around twenty evangelical campus ministries here at Stanford,” he said, “and we’ve discovered that Jim Stump leads more students to Christ each year than all those other campus ministries combined.”

You could have knocked me over with a feather. I’m familiar with a lot of the other campus ministries, and many of them have great programs and outreach events for students. They’re making a huge impact for the kingdom in their own way, and I thank God for the work they do and the fact that I can be in the trenches with them. They encourage me with their faithfulness, so I don’t give this fact to boast or to downplay the efforts of others. Sharing the Good News is not a competitive sport. I bring it up only to show that we’re clearly doing something right. Even though we’re one of the smallest outreach ministries on campus, we’ve been able to see great things happen to expand the kingdom. I’m excited to see God use our faithful efforts in such a powerful way.

And it confirms for me what I’ve always believed: no matter how godless our society becomes, no matter how far our country drifts from godly principles, no matter how many young people stray from the truth, the gospel message is still the most compelling, life-changing story in the universe. And God’s principles, when communicated in the right way, with the right spirit, can stir even the coldest and darkest heart to turn from the direction they are going and follow him.



## Living the Gospel

So what makes the difference? What method or program are we using at Sports Challenge to bring about such surprising results when it comes to helping students begin a relationship with Jesus?

Quite frankly, I wish I had a fancy name for it. Maybe then I could package and patent it. But the truth is, what we do is not that unique or complicated. It's a principle of sharing your faith that is so simple and effective that I'm surprised it isn't taught and practiced by every follower of Jesus!

My approach to evangelism is the same approach that Jesus used two thousand years ago. I call it simply *mentoring people to Jesus*.

When Jesus walked the earth, ministering to the sick and bringing hope to the lost, his life and his message were indistinguishable. In fact, his life *was* his message. He shared the truth by sharing himself.

Jesus made no distinction between evangelizing and discipling. They were one and the same. He brought people to himself through mentoring.

Too often we see the Good News as a block of information that we're supposed to share with others. We try to win people for Jesus by relaying words and principles from the Bible. Our focus is on convincing people that they need God and then leading them through the sinner's prayer. Then we make a check by their name and move on to the next person who might be looking for answers in their life.

But the Good News isn't a principle or a concept. It's a lifestyle. It's a living, breathing entity of hope and salvation. And the most effective way to relay the Good News of Jesus is to live it. To *be* the message, not just preach it. That's what Jesus did. And that's what I try to do.

When Jesus set out to choose his twelve disciples—twelve men who would one day be the leaders of those who would spread his

message throughout the entire earth—he approached them with one simple request: “Follow me.”

“Walk with me,” he was telling them. “Watch me. Learn from me. Let me show you how to live.”

Jesus understood that the only way to truly gain someone’s heart is by first gaining their trust. And that’s what mentoring is all about. It’s about sharing God’s message of hope by sharing yourself.

## **Evangelism through Mentoring**

This book is my attempt to further explore this concept of sharing your faith through mentoring and to relay the principles I’ve learned. I don’t believe in simply leading others to Jesus; I believe in mentoring them to Jesus and then helping them fall in love with him.

The ideas and concepts we’ll discuss are the culmination of nearly a half century of learning and listening, of trial and error, of success and failure along the way. It’s my humble attempt to pass on to others what God has graciously imparted to me.

And the fact that you’ve found yourself on this page indicates volumes about your heart and spirit. It tells me that you are not an apathetic believer. That you are not taking your salvation lightly. That you care deeply about those who don’t yet know Jesus personally, and you possess a powerful burden in your spirit to share the gospel message with others.

It tells me that you have a friend who needs to find that personal relationship with Jesus, and that you want to be the conduit through which the Holy Spirit brings them to a place where they desire to become a follower of Jesus.

It appears that we have a common bond, you and I, so let’s begin this journey together.

➡ PART 1 ⬅

# The Mentoring Model of Sharing Your Faith

What we want is to win souls. They are not won by flowery speeches.

—Charles Spurgeon

It is not primarily out of compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God.

—John Piper

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 11:1