

# Commit Your Church— And See What God Will Do!

MORE THAN two thousand years ago, Jesus himself introduced the perfect model for evangelism. He left the marvelous adoration of the angels and the perfection of heaven, and he chose to “walk” clear across the cosmos. He had no memorized script and no forced formulas. Instead, he was armed only with an offer of redemption to people just like you and me, many of whom were neck-deep in pain of our own making.



Today, the goal for every Christian is to reflect Christ's love and follow his example by taking simple walks across rooms—leaving our circles of comfort and extending hands of

care, compassion, and inclusiveness to people living far from God.

Building on the solid foundation laid nearly a decade ago in *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, *Just Walk Across the Room* signals the next era in personal evangelism. Author Bill Hybels' firm conviction is that the highest value in personal evangelism is being aware of and cooperative with the promptings of the Holy Spirit. This means playing the role you are intended to play—

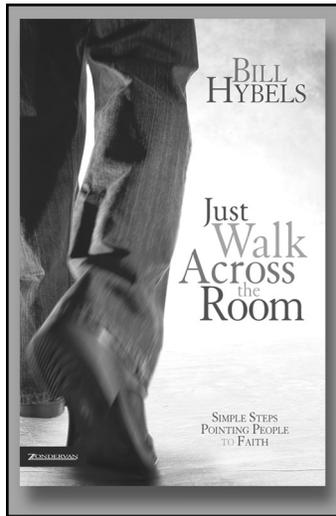
- Walking when the Spirit says to walk
- Talking when the Spirit says to talk
- Falling silent when the Spirit suggests that you've already said enough!

**The stakes are high.**

**The implications are eternal.**

**And you may be only a conversation away from pointing someone to faith—if you will just walk across the room.**

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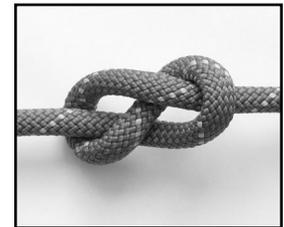
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## Just Walk Across the Room—Sample Excerpts

### **PART I: THE SINGLE GREATEST GIFT**

“As you love people, serve people, point people toward faith in Christ, redirect wayward people, restore broken people, and develop people into the peak of their spiritual potential, you reaffirm your understanding of your primary mission in the world...

If you really believe in the redeeming and transforming power of God’s presence in a person’s life, then the single greatest gift you can give someone is an explanation of how they can be rightly connected to him.”



**PART II: LIVING IN “3D”**

“Try a little experiment with me this week. As you pull into your driveway, fight the temptation to look *past* your neighbor. Perhaps for the first time, stop long enough to wonder why God chose to put the two of you on the same block to begin with. When you drop off your dry cleaning, take four seconds to smile, and ask the name of the person standing behind the counter. If he or she has served you well, then say so. You can do this type of thing! **You can become someone who gives grace away so freely** that when people far from God think of *you*, they immediately think of ‘grace’ next.”



**PART III: THE POWER OF STORY**

“Every person alive today has a story ... and possibly the greatest realization someone can make is this: *‘My story fits into God’s greater story—and that’s the greatest story ever told.’* When people grasp the magnificent truth that the gospel has direct implications on the meaning of their stories, all sorts of lightbulbs flicker to life!”



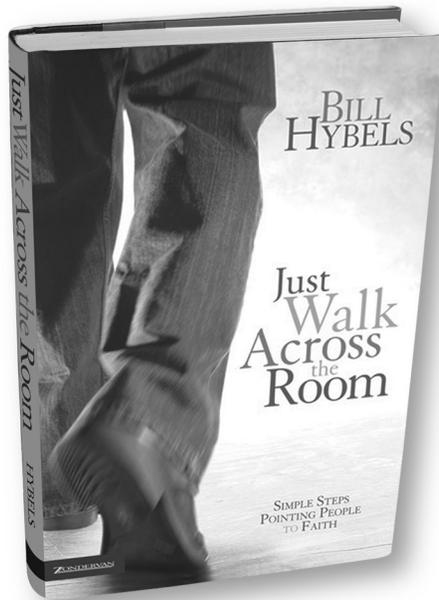
**PART IV: GRANDER VISION LIVING**

“Christ’s followers who choose to live the Grander Vision walk through their days with sixth-sense awareness for people—all people, regardless of where they are spiritually when they find them. Grander Vision Living adherents possess a supernatural ability to get past what our human senses pick up on and focus instead on the fact that every single person they meet is a child of God—and is worthy of being redeemed.”



## Sample Chapter from *Just Walk Across the Room*—

**the next era of evangelism that says,  
“This is something YOU can do!”**



DURING THE SPAN of my adult life, I've witnessed dozens of evangelistic “fads.” Perhaps you can appreciate some of the eras I've seen rise and fall. Let's see, there was the Tract Era. The Televangelist Era. The Bus Ministry Era. There were eras revolving around saving professionals, saving women, saving men, saving the rich, the poor, homemakers, movie stars, you name it.

And to the extent that any of these approaches brought people to Christ, I am genuinely grateful.

But each time a new approach surfaced, I secretly wondered how long the wave would last, how long the movement could possibly be sustained. Sure, even I hopped on a few of them, but I knew they all lacked longevity.

In the next few decades, I'm quite certain there will be even more “new and exciting” approaches to evangelism. And I'll say it again: if people find faith as a result of them, who am I to criticize?

But as far as I'm concerned, there is only one paradigm that will not wear thin with the passing of time. These days, I'm more convinced than ever that the absolute *highest* value in personal evangelism is staying attuned to and cooperative with the Holy Spirit.

You read it right. The only thing you need in order to sustain an effective approach to evangelism year after year after

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year is a fine-tuned ear to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

I don't know about you, but when I am relating in a healthy manner with Jesus, there's vitality and openness in *my* spirit to the promptings of *his* Spirit. Staying attuned to the Spirit means I have a heightened awareness of the things going on around me. In the midst of a Circle of Comfort, I find

Staying attuned to the Spirit means I have a heightened awareness of the things going on around me. In the midst of a Circle of Comfort, I find myself able to keep one eye open and roving to watch for someone I'm supposed to see. I'm able to keep one ear open for the Spirit's whisper.

myself able to keep one eye open and roving to watch for someone I'm supposed to see. I'm able to keep one ear open for the Spirit's whisper. Even though my spiritual senses are far from perfect, in those "attuned" moments, I am incredibly alert to God pointing me toward someone across a room, his gentle voice saying, "just walk..."

Every time I hear those two words, I'm reminded of what it's like to excuse myself from a Circle of Comfort. Of how electrifying it feels to make that turn and begin to walk, imploring God with every step for his intervention, his words, and his wisdom. Of the sensation of entering the Zone of the Unknown, each time as if in slow motion, putting my hand out there,

and offering a few words of profundity: "Hi. I'm Bill. What's your name?"

And then of the sheer elation of watching God open a door in the other person's heart as the conversation meanders to spiritual matters.

Friends, although I have experienced a lot in life, been a lot of places, and engaged in my share of excitement, *that* is truly what life in all its fullness is to me. To this day, when I am prompted to walk across a room, explore this Zone of the Unknown, and enter into these initial conversations with someone whose eternity is hanging in the balance, I experience a buzz that never, ever grows old for me.



ON THE DAY of my conversion more than three decades ago, I was filled with an overwhelming hunger to share God's redemptive story with people who had never heard it. Unfortunately, I was committed to doing so with or without the accompanying direction and power of the Holy Spirit. (Details, details.)

But over the years, I trust that my increasing maturity has factored a little discernment into the equation. These days, I try to wake up each morning declaring, "My life is in *your* hands, God. Use me to point someone toward you today—I promise to cooperate in any way I can. If you want me to say a word for you today, I'll do that. If you want me to keep quiet but demonstrate love and servanthood, by your Spirit's power I will. I'm *fully* available to you today, so guide me by your Spirit."

Sometimes, the end result of praying this prayer is that the Spirit allows me to have a spiritual conversation that tells of a loving and righteous God who created all things, who has a purpose in mind for all people and who is actually hoping to relate with them as they walk through life. Other times, the Spirit simply prompts me to serve and love and listen to the needs of those who are far from God. The key is this: My objective is not to contrive ways to "get someone saved;" rather, my objective is to walk when he prompts me to walk, talk when he says to talk, fall silent when I'm at risk of saying too much, and stay put when he leads me to stay put. If I can put my head on the pillow at night knowing that I have cooperated with the promptings of the Spirit that day, I can sleep like a baby.

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If I'm serious about being transformed by God's Spirit, then I can't shy away from the discomfort and awkwardness and ambiguity that exist when

I abandon my safe Circle of Comfort. The upside is too great to do that! Because when I feel a Spirit-led “prompting” to walk across a room for the first time, it’s like voltage coursing through my veins. As I put one foot in front of another to reach out to someone who may be twenty feet away from me but who’s living light years away from God, I’m part of something immeasurably greater than myself.

This is what it’s like to experience God’s supernatural power at work in an otherwise ordinary day. And the Bible says that this is what real living is all about—walking through every moment plugged into the Holy Spirit.

## A DIFFERENT SPIN ON EVANGELISM

“BUT BILL,” you might be saying, “how can you possibly claim that the highest value in evangelism is something *other* than walking down the Roman Road or reciting the Four Spiritual Laws verbatim? Aren’t we supposed to get a seeker to cross the finish line, seal the deal and check the ‘salvation’ box? Isn’t the whole goal here to see people, uh, *come to faith in Christ?*”

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formulas every time.**

I realize some of you believe that unless the plan of salvation gets explained, it’s been an unsuccessful conversation, spiritually speaking. And some of you probably put yourselves through an exhaustive self-deprecation routine unless you extend an invitation to your church each time God opens an evangelistic door. Still

others might say that everything is A-OK on your evangelistic value-meter as long as you give your personal testimony—all four volumes of it—at every opportunity.

And I feel your pain! I can run myself through all these wringers with the best of them. But here’s the reality: the Holy Spirit will bust out of your nice, neat evangelism formulas every time.

To be perfectly honest I would love it if the work of evangelism were predictable. It would be marvelous if every single conversation I had with someone far from God led to a profession of faith. I would be the happiest person on the planet if every interaction I had with a seeker yielded a falling-on-the-knees experience. But you know as well as I do that real life paints a far different picture.

I’ve had to learn the hard way that on some occasions, the Spirit asks me to be an opener. I have a hoe, and I’m supposed to bust up some really hard soil in someone’s heart so that the next person to come along might have some influence in planting a seed or two along those rows.

On other occasions, the Spirit asks me to play the middle guy, carrying around a watering can and helping quench a few thirsty souls. Still other times, I’m supposed to pick really ripe fruit off the vine. I might describe it this way: I believe many people begin their spiritual quest at a negative ten and that my role is to facilitate their movement to a negative eight. That’s it. Two points on the spectrum, and a result that is still in negative territory! It used to discourage me, but at some point I began to accept the fact that the role I am supposed to play is ... well, the role I’m supposed to play.

Likewise, the Spirit might prompt you to take someone who is standing at negative ten a few ticks forward to a whopping negative four. Or, you might have the privilege of taking someone who is teetering right on the edge all the way to a positive one, right across the supernatural line of faith.

The thrill of it all exists in the fact that as we walk into a spiritual exchange, you and I have no idea what role that the Spirit has ordained for us to play.

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## ***Just Walk Across the Room—Living the 3D Life***

In *Just Walk Across the Room*, author Bill Hybels encourages Christ-followers to “live in 3D,”

- Developing friendships
- Discovering stories
- Discerning appropriate next steps

as a means of learning to understand the Spirit’s promptings. With fresh perspectives from his own reflections and experiences collected during his most recent decade of ministry, Hybels shows with undeniable clarity the unparalleled power of this approach to evangelism.

Most Christ-followers can name at least one person in their lives who is living far from God. And although they desperately want to see that person steered toward faith, they get tripped up on how to get it done.

Walk-across-the-room people, by definition, live in “3D.”

- Instead of refereeing people’s lifestyle choices, they love with a radical form of inclusiveness, treating all people as prized possessions of the most high God
- Instead of hurrying about their day with one eye on the clock and the other on their to-do list, they instead take a few minutes to intentionally develop friendships with the people God places in their path
- Instead of staying in a self-focused bubble, they reach out and learn the life stories of the people around them
- Instead of determining who’s “worthy” to be redeemed, they live out, day in and day out, Jesus’ mantra that all things are possible when God is involved!

## ***Just Walk Across the Room—Walking Is Believing***

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, we invite you to practice the 3D life. Have your staff, elders, deacons, and key volunteers practice the simple but effective 3D lifestyle. Get together every week and share stories of how God did big things through your simple steps of faith.

Then, commit your church to the four-week campaign. Your personal experience will inspire your church to join with you on this great journey of pointing other people to faith.

