

PROLOGUE

The Christian Church has proclaimed the Gospel since the first news of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. It has done so in countless ways to countless people. That proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ has transformed the hearts of millions who were lost in spiritual ignorance or misled by humanly developed schemes to please God through personal behavioral improvement.

From those first days following Christ's resurrection, Christians simply engaged their friends in spiritual conversations. They listened respectfully to their friends' views about God and how He works, and then shared what God had revealed through Christ to them. The message has transformed the world! Today over 1.5 billion people have been changed from unbelief to belief, precisely because Christians have spoken the Word of Life about Jesus Christ with those they knew.

Sharing Life – Sharing Faith is nothing new or unique in the annals of Gospel proclamation. It simply is another way of helping people to engage in those precious spiritual conversations with those they already know or those they meet. Sharing Life – Sharing Faith is grounded on the idea that Christian witness is best done in the context of existing, credible relationships. None of us have any shortage of unbelievers in our lives and God has graciously challenged us by placing such people in our lives in our places of work, in our neighborhoods, where we recreate, where we shop, and when we attend events in our communities; precisely so that we may engage them in conversations of grace.

In one sense, Sharing Life – Sharing Faith is NOT an evangelism program. Rather, it seeks simply to equip Christians with a deeper understanding of their own faith and to give a glimpse into the faith of others who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Thus armed, we share faith with those with whom we share life. It is as natural as breathing in and out. It is a part of who we are. Such sharing need not be eloquent in form, though it can be; nor require the advantage of seminary level education. It might be pointed out that none of the early Christians ever went to the seminary and God used them mightily to bring the light of the Gospel to those lost in darkness.

Julie Martinez has done a masterful job of putting together the Sharing Life – Sharing Faith materials in this book. Her own experience of conversion from Judaism is reflected in the respectful way in which people are encouraged to approach their non-Christian friends. Her depth of study in the Christian faith is reflected in her willingness to address the more difficult issues of the Christian faith, such as Christology and Eternal Election, in seeking to strengthen the Christian's walk of faith. Her accurate and clear explanations of non-Christian faiths speak to those who want to understand where others are coming from in their spiritual experience. But most of all, Julie has put forward a non-compromising, kind-hearted, and thorough means to share the Good News that God has provided a magnificent and singular solution to man's sin and estrangement from the Father in heaven. One finally needs look no further than to the cross on which our Lord hung. One needs no other payment for sin. One needs no other righteousness before the Living God than that which is given us through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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