

GREG STIER

SHARING MY FAITH

# REACH OUT

DON'T FREAK OUT

*student devotional*



## **Reach Out**

...Don't Freak Out

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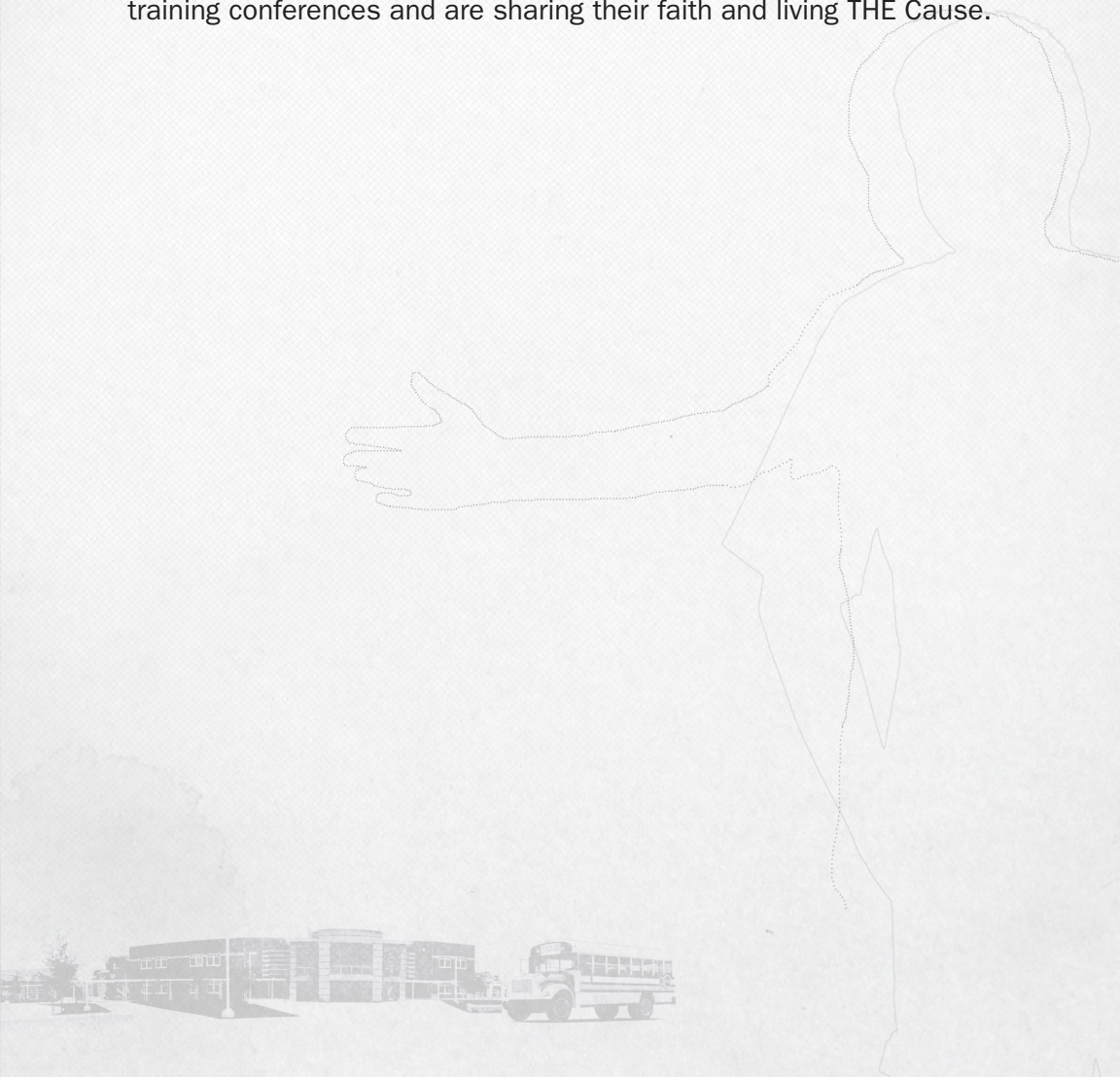
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# DEDICATION

To the thousands of students who've attended Dare 2 Share evangelism training conferences and are sharing their faith and living THE Cause.





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# INTRODUCTION

Reaching out to your friends with Jesus' message is something God has called YOU to do! No matter who you are or how scared or unprepared you feel, sharing your faith is central to the purposes God has for you on this earth. Jesus lays it right out there for you in Acts 1:8 when he says, *"And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere."*

So why not learn how to share your faith with others effectively? After all, sharing Jesus' message is the **most important thing you'll ever do**, both now and for all eternity. Learning how to reach out without freaking out only makes sense.

And that's what this 30-day devo is all about. As you make your way through the following pages of this book, you'll find daily motivation, tips, strategies, and practical exercises that will help you reach your friends.

You'll also discover that you aren't alone on this faith-sharing journey. Jesus goes with you. And thousands of teenagers just like you are walking this road right alongside you. You'll get to "Listen In" on just a few of their true stories in the coming pages. You'll find encouragement and creative ideas in their stories that you can try for yourself as you reach out to your friends.

So face down your fears and step up to this great adventure of sharing your faith with your friends. It will change your life and have impact for all of eternity! Your generation is better connected than any generation in history. You are poised to rock the world for Jesus! But it all starts with learning how to reach out without freaking out.



—Greg Stier

Dare 2 Share



## CONNECTING

*And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)*

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus wants your friends to get to know him. Do you want that, too?

### LISTEN IN

*The pain inside me had been burning my heart into ashes for years. No one knew about this pain. Not my family or friends. I didn't dare let them realize how weak I was. I had many friends, yet every day, I lived a nightmare and I felt so alone. I usually put on a mask—one of great confidence and happiness—and tried to look like I didn't have a care in the world. I succeeded in fooling everyone. No one saw past my mask. That hurt. I used to cry myself to sleep. I felt really pathetic and useless...then I tried to commit suicide... —L*

### GOING DEEPER

Close your eyes and think about your friends who don't know Jesus. Could one of them have written the words above? Because L is a real person—a young girl who silently struggled to carry on without hope. Like each of the “Listen In” stories that appear in this book, L's story is a true story.

L's account in her own words shows us that we may be surprised by what's actually going on inside our friends who live without the hope Jesus brings. But whether their lives are full of pain or they're happily pursuing stuff that in the end will shrivel up and blow away, the spiritual reality is that they are distant from God. Either way, their lives will be difficult because they will be empty of the great joy that comes from knowing God. And their afterlife will be even more difficult—an eternity spent separated from God in a place the Bible describes as unbearable and unending.

They need to hear about Jesus' offer of salvation and his free gift of a close, personal relationship with God. You hold those words of life. Are you willing to help your friends get connected to God?

## **DO SOMETHING!**

Close your eyes and ask God to bring to mind the name of one friend who needs Jesus. Write that name down in today's journal entry. Then write a note to Jesus about this person and ask him to prepare the way for you to spend some time talking to this friend about Jesus.

*Note to Jesus about my friend...*

# FACING | YOUR FEARS

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. (2 Timothy 1:7-8)*

## THE BIG IDEA

God has provided truths in his Word that can help you overcome your fears about sharing your faith with your friends.

## LISTEN IN

When asked what they fear most about sharing their faith, most teenagers are brutally honest. “My biggest fear is getting rejected by people,” one student commented. “That my friends are gonna think I’m weird,” another guy chimed in. “That I won’t know what to say,” volunteered a third, as other heads nodded their agreement. But teenagers seem to agree that their fear of rejection tops the list.

## GO DEEPER

Does the idea of bringing God up make you want to throw up? You’re not alone. Most Christians seem to wrestle with some fears when it comes to sharing their faith. But God has provided truths in his Word to help you face down your fears!

## Here are three of the most common faith-sharing fears:

**1. My friends might reject me.** Nobody wants to lose friends—yuck! But if you approach your friends with love and concern as you share the gospel, you will reduce your fear of rejection. Still, there's a chance sharing your faith may cause some eye-rolling and strained relationships, because some people find the message of the gospel uncomfortable or even offensive. But take courage because 1 Thessalonians 2:4 tells us: *For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.* When it comes to a choice between pleasing God or pleasing people, which do you think should win out?

**2. I'm not a perfect Christian.** Do you need to be a “perfect” Christian before you try to talk about Jesus with others? While striving to become more like Jesus is important, 2 Corinthians 4:7 promises that the gospel can shine through us despite our weaknesses and imperfections. It says: *We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.* These words make it clear: it's SOOO not about you—it's about God. It's like someone once said, “Evangelism is just one beggar showing another where to find food.” We're far from perfect; we're just trying to help others by introducing them to Jesus.

**3. I won't know what to say.** Our God is immense. The message of his grace is awesome and mindbending—way beyond our puny brains. It's easy to feel overwhelmed at the prospect of trying to explain God to others. Still, 1 Peter 3:15 challenges you to do just that: *If someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.* So if not knowing what to say has you stressed, no worries—this book is designed to help you learn to share the gospel in a clear and compelling way.

## DO SOMETHING!

Think through your own personal fears about sharing your faith. Identify the one that looms largest for you. No matter your fear, God wants to help you face it down. Stand in front of a mirror and read the following passage out loud: *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord (2 Timothy 1:7-8).* Look yourself in the eye and decide whether you believe these verses. Journal today about how you're feeling about facing your fears. Throughout the day, ask God to give you the "power, love, and self-discipline" you need to overcome your fears and share your faith.

*How I'm feeling as I face my fears...*



# PRAYER

## *the best offense and defense*

*If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)*

### THE BIG IDEA

Prayer is mission critical as you share your faith, because you're entering into a spiritual battle for the hearts and souls of your friends.

### LISTEN IN

*I'm trying to get as many people as possible praying for my close friend who is struggling with the idea of letting Christ into her life. She wants to have a new start, but she is scared. She was in a bad car accident last weekend, and in the back of her head she knows she wouldn't be in heaven right now if she'd died. Please pray that she lets her guard down a bit more and accepts Christ.*  
—Zeke

### GOING DEEPER

When you share the gospel with your friends, you're entering spiritually dangerous territory. To put it bluntly, you're in a battle.

While the God of the universe is extending his offer of grace and salvation to your friends, the forces of darkness seek to keep them bound and blinded from the truth. Jesus defeated Satan by dying on the cross, but Satan and his dark forces haven't surrendered yet. They're still on a rampage to do as much damage as they can before Jesus returns to rule and reign forever.

Your best offensive *and* defensive weapon in this spiritual battle is prayer. Even the Apostle Paul, who you could safely say had his act together when it came to sharing his faith, asked for prayer so he could nail it: *Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers...And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan (Ephesians 6:18-19).*

This spiritual battle is not won through smooth talk or great debating skills; instead it's won in the heart and soul of each individual. That's why prayer is central.

So plug into the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer, ask God to prepare the hearts of your friends, and then move out into the spiritual battle with courage and conviction. Sharing the gospel is the most eternally impacting thing you'll ever do, so lay the groundwork first and pray, pray, pray!

## **DO SOMETHING!**

Think of that one friend God laid on your heart a couple days ago. Then ask God to expand your vision beyond that one friend—and ask him to call to mind two more friends who don't know Jesus. Write about these three friends in your journal entry today, describing where you think they are spiritually. Then pray specifically for these three friends. Ask God to give you courage and spiritual insight as you seek to reach them with the message of the gospel. Ask God to prepare their hearts for his message. Ask God to protect you from the evil one and guide you as you enter into this bold adventure of sharing your faith.

*Three friends who need Jesus...*



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