

How to Reach the People Hardest to Reach: Lessons from Paul in Acts 22

Some of the hardest people to share your faith with are the ones closest to you. Family knows your past, your failures, and your struggles. They are watching. And yet, reaching them matters deeply. Paul's experience in Acts 22 offers a practical and honest look at how to share your faith with people who may not want to hear it, and how to keep your peace when they push back.

Why Is It So Hard to Reach Family with the Gospel?

Even Jesus faced this. His own brothers thought He was out of His mind. It wasn't until after the resurrection that they believed He was the Messiah. So if you are struggling to reach someone in your family, know that Jesus understands exactly what you are facing.

Paul experienced this firsthand. He traveled to Jerusalem wanting to bless his Jewish family and share the Gospel with them. What he found instead was a mob that wanted him dead. He had to be rescued by a Roman soldier just to survive.

The question worth sitting with is this: how do you reach people who want nothing to do with what you have to say?

Lesson 1: Speak Their Language

Are You Building a Bridge or a Wall?

When Paul stood before the crowd in Acts 22, he did something intentional. He spoke to them in Hebrew, their own language. The response was immediate. The crowd grew quiet and listened.

As Christians, it is easy to slip into language that only makes sense inside the church. Phrases like "washed in the blood" or "do you have your fire insurance" can confuse or even offend someone who has no church background. The goal is connection, not confusion.

Paul opened with, "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense." He called them brothers. He showed respect. Even though they wanted to kill him, he found common ground first. That posture opened the door.

The loudest voice does not always win. Sometimes the most effective thing you can do is ask someone their story and then listen. People are far more open to hearing your story when they feel heard first.

Lesson 2: Share Your Personal Testimony

Why Your Story Is One of the Most Powerful Witnessing Tools You Have

Paul did not launch into a theological argument. He told his story. And it followed a clear pattern that anyone can use.

- His past: He was a Pharisee, trained under Gamaliel, zealous for the law, and ruthless in persecuting Christians. He dragged men and women to prison. He even traveled 135 miles to Damascus just to arrest more followers of Jesus.
- His conversion: On the road to Damascus, a blinding light knocked him to the ground. He heard the voice of Jesus asking, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" That one encounter changed everything.
- His life since then: God sent Ananias to restore his sight and confirm His calling. Paul was commissioned to be a witness to all people.

Your testimony does not need to be dramatic or lengthy. It simply needs to be honest. This is who I was. This is how I came to know Jesus. This is what God has done in my life since then. That is your story, and it is worth sharing.

What If Someone Seems Too Far Gone?

Paul was once the person everyone would have written off. He was not just indifferent to the Gospel. He was actively destroying it. And yet God reached Him in a single moment on a single road.

Do not give up on the people in your life who seem unreachable. All it takes is one moment where God intervenes. You may not be the voice that leads them to Christ, but you can be the one who keeps praying. They are not too far gone as long as they are still breathing.

Lesson 3: Peace with Others Starts with Peace with God

What Does It Mean to Make Peace with God First?

Ananias told Paul, "Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The invitation was clear. God had already done the work. The next step was Paul's to take.

Lasting peace in relationships cannot be manufactured. It flows from a heart that has first been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. That is the foundation Paul kept returning to, and it is the same foundation worth pointing others toward.

When people see a genuine change in your life, it raises questions. That curiosity is an open door. The work of God through your life is often the most compelling argument you can make.

What Happens When They Still Reject the Message?

Paul Said "Gentiles" and Everything Fell Apart

Paul had the crowd's attention. He was connecting. And then he said one word: Gentiles. The crowd erupted. They tore their clothes, threw dust in the air, and called for his death.

Paul knew that word would provoke them. He said it anyway, because the Gospel is for everyone. Jews and Gentiles stand on equal ground before God. That truth was offensive to his audience, but it was not something Paul was willing to leave out.

There will be moments when speaking the truth costs you the room. Paul did not misspeak. He was intentional. And the rejection that followed did not mean he had failed.

Lesson 4: You Can Keep Your Peace Even When Family Won't

How Do You Stay Steady When Relationships Fall Apart?

Romans 12:18 says, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." The key phrase is "as much as depends on you." Reconciliation requires both sides. You cannot force it. But you can keep your own heart soft and ready.

Paul used his Roman citizenship to protect himself from an illegal scourging. He was wise, calm, and strategic even in the middle of chaos. He did not panic. He did not retaliate. He kept moving forward.

Jesus promised in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

That peace is available to you right now, even if your family situation feels impossible.

Two Things to Remember When Sharing Your Faith with Family

- Even Paul was rejected. He had the right words, the right approach, and the right heart. They still wanted to kill him. Salvation is God's work. Your job is to be faithful, be clear, and share what He has done in your life. God is responsible for the rest.
- Jesus has not left you. Family may turn their backs. The world may misunderstand you. Suffering may come. But He said, "I will be with you always, even to the end of the age." His presence is not conditional on how your family responds.

Life Application

This week, take one step toward someone in your life who feels hard to reach. It does not have to be a full Gospel presentation. Start by asking them their story and genuinely listening. Then, when the moment is right, share a piece of your own. Keep it simple: who you were, how you came to know Jesus, and what has changed since then.

Commit to praying for that person every day this week, even if they have pushed back before. Trust that God is working in ways you cannot see.

Ask yourself these questions as you reflect:

- Am I speaking in a way that builds a bridge, or am I using language that creates distance?
- Have I taken the time to write out or think through my own testimony so I am ready to share it clearly?
- Is there someone I have given up on that God may be calling me to keep praying for?
- Am I holding onto the peace that God offers, or am I letting fear and frustration drive how I engage with difficult relationships?