

Sowing Broadly

1. Jesus' Example

- a. Mark 1:36-39
 - i. The whole city of Capernaum was gathered around Jesus. He could have planted there because they were listening, but he knew the gospel seed had to be sown more broadly.

2. Reaping and Sowing

- a. 2 Cor. 9:6
- b. Ecc. 11:6
- c. Prov. 20:4
- d. John 4:35
- e. Matt. 9:35-37
- f. Gal. 6:9

What happens if I don't exercise this principle?

If I don't sow broadly,

If I do sow broadly,

"Open Up the Funnel by Sowing Broadly" (pg. 113-118 in *The Fuel and The Flame* by Steve Shadrach and discuss the question at the end.

Open Up the Funnel by Sowing Broadly

Amber was a little shy at first, but she really wanted to represent Christ in her dormitory. She had just returned from a summer training program her ministry had sponsored and their "Back to Campus" emphasis helped give her the direction and boldness to plan her work, and then work her plan! She decided that she was going to try to meet every new freshman girl in her dorm as well as each student on her floor. Not only did she always keep her door open with a welcome sign on it, she made it a point to introduce herself to anyone in the dorm she had not met. She arrived early to help girls move in, made posters for each of the girls' doors with their names on it, sponsored a popcorn and movie night the first weekend and took three carloads of girls to her church that first Sunday.

Even though most of the other junior girls had moved out of the dorm into their own private apartments, Amber chose to stay put, and lay her life down for these young freshmen. It wasn't long until she was the ring leader of the entire dorm, every girl liking and respecting Amber, coming to her with questions and problems, wondering what it was that made her such a happy and sacrificial person. Amber started floating the idea of having a Bible study on each of the three floors of the dorm she lived in. Girl after girls responded enthusiastically, even though she did not know where many of them stood spiritually. She had identified the two most influential girls on each floor and went to them to ask them to host the study in one

of their rooms and to help recruit the girls from their floor. Feeling honored to be chosen by Amber, the “dorm mama,” they each went to work making posters, spreading the word, cooking up some munchies, and even starting competitions to see who could recruit the most girls to their floor study!

The Holy Spirit was Penetrating Hearts

By late September, Amber had three full-blown investigative Bible studies started, averaging eight to 12 girls in each one. Amber recruited Sara, a Christian friend from off campus, to help her round up the girls a few minutes before 9 P.M. each night, bring in a load of New Testaments to pass out and then launch everyone into a fascinating discussion from the next chapter of John, each week trying to answer these two questions: 1) Who is Jesus Christ?, and 2) What does He want with me? Amber and Sara worked hard on preparing lead-in questions, involving each girls in the discussion, and pouring out their love and attention on one and all. As she and Sara interceded for each girl, each morning, it was obvious the Holy Spirit was penetrating the hearts of many of the girls through His use of some powerful tools: (1) the truth of the Word; (2) prayers of Amber and Sara; (3) the girls observing the unconditional love Amber and Sara had for each other and for them.

Three or four times a week Amber and Sara would treat a different girl they sensed God was working in to a cup of coffee, some chit chat, and a chance to hear and understand the gospel message. Over the course of the semester, the two leaders had promised each girl the chance to get a customized presentation of how to have a personal relationship with God, and miraculously over thirty girls jumped at the opportunity. Amber had taken a step of faith, opened the funnel up very wide by meeting and serving over 100 girls in her dorm, had almost 40 of them join small group studies, then shared the gospel with over 30 of them, and now was seeing girl after girl open up her heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the most exciting, satisfying experience Amber and her young disciple, Sara, had ever had in their entire lives. The Lord was on His way to transforming that campus because a shy little college student decided to put her trust in a big God, walk toward her fears, and pray, share, and love a bunch of young freshmen into the Kingdom. Their work was just the beginning...

You might be saying, “But Steve, you don’t know me. I’m not a people person. I’d be uncomfortable doing what Amber and Sara did.” Well, join the club because we all are stretched when we have to outside of our comfort zone and meet and love and share with people that we don’t know. I am still nervous and scared to this day. Is it a matter of gifting or a decision to make? Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and observe that Paul became *whatever* he needed to in order to reach others. The bottom line is: Will I be selfish with my life or selfless?

Two things we can learn from Amber:

1. Don’t live in a holy huddle

It seems as if the longer people are Christians, the fewer non-believing friends they have. Christian students end up living with Christians, sitting with Christians in class, at meals, at the library, even praying for a job where there are all Christians working there! Their goal each day, after having a morning quiet time, is to attempt to scurry through the day, flying from one Christian friend and activity to the next, hoping to make it home that night *unscathed* by the world!

“A ship in the harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.” - William Shedd, missionary to Iran, 1915

Amber’s story prods you to ask yourself a very important question: Why do you live where you live? Was it a decision made from strategy or comfort? Many believers I know want to find a place where they can

have their own bedroom, kitchen, stereo system, and entertainment center. They don't want any interruptions, curfew, or rules. When I see this, I can't help but think about Proverbs 18:1a (NASB) when it says, "He who separates himself seeks his own desire..." Now before you get mad at me for meddling, if you are ministering on a commuter campus or your whole target group lives in a certain apartment, it may be best that you live at home or off campus. The point is that if you and I really are Great Commission Christians we're going to live in *the most* strategic place in order to impact students for Jesus Christ in the broadest and deepest way possible.

If I was trying to reach students in Austin, Texas, I wouldn't want to live in Denver, right? If I'm trying to give my life and the gospel to a particular floor of guys or fraternity house, why am I stuck in some apartment miles from campus? I promise you'll never again get a chance to live in this close of proximity with such a large and receptive group of people. Take advantage of it! You'll be living in apartments and houses the rest of your life, and if you can learn *now* how to walk with Christ and impact others for Him in the midst of a horde of other students, you will have the raw materials to go and do it anywhere, anyplace the rest of your life!

I lived in my fraternity house during my college years, and once I finished with school, I moved into a house next to campus with several guys I was discipling. After seminary, I came back to be the Pastor of Students at my college town home church where we bought a nine bedroom, four bath house that backed up to Fraternity row. We would have from four to seven guys and gals living and co-laboring with us each year as we sought to reach the campus. We built a table that could seat sixteen comfortably and twenty-four if necessary, and it was *always* full of guests and us. Jim Peterson of the Navigators says, "The most effective evangelism tool you'll ever have is your dining room table." I have seen that truth replayed thousands of times as we have fed the body and then the soul with gospel sharing or Bible study sessions after almost every evening meal.

You would think I would mature out of that "commune living" stage of my life, and yet now we live in a different college town, once again next to the Greek houses, but this time in a nine bedroom, six bath house that accommodates our family, seven college students, and a constant flow of guests! I don't share all this to say you must have a giant house with a bunch of students living with you (that's definitely not prescribed for most!) but simply to live strategically! Whether you're single or married, a student or staff person, have a "kingdom reason" for living where you live. Do whatever you can do to stand in the gap and insert your life into the group of students God has called you to reach. The supreme model is Jesus, who didn't just shout from heaven or visit us on weekends; God became a man and lived among us for thirty-three years.

2. Meet People and Build Relationships

The second thing we can learn from Amber is that every person is a divine appointment, and it's important to take the first step in meeting others and extend warmth and kindness to other students. I like to use the acrostic "MIGS" (that's the name of the Russian military planes) to describe the process;

1. Meet someone
Introduce yourself, remember their name, and maintain good eye contact
2. Initiate conversation
Start with closed ended questions (yes/no questions) and then move to open-ended. Pick up on any area of interest they might have and begin to inquire.
3. Guide the conversation

As you get to know them, move from superficial to deeper, more personal areas of their life. Become a master at asking questions and listening with your eyes and heart.

4. Store and review information

It's a challenge, but after meeting each person write down everything you can remember about them. Review the contacts weekly and this becomes a prayer list. When you see them on campus, it will bond you to them as you remember details of their life. It helps you win the right to share the gospel.

Opening up the funnel means trying to meet as many students as you can in your target area(s) and going as deep as you can with each. As you build relationships, some ministries encourage their staff and students to keep a "Top 20" sheet that lists the closest 20 relationships they have with other students (Christian and non-Christian). Not a people person? Become one!

3. The Principle Applied to Fall Launch

a. Gospel

- i. If we sow broadly with the gospel, we have a better chance of reaping by seeing people saved!
- ii. Testimony, Gospel presentation (Biblical text or illustration), Gospel tract, Survey follow up, etc.

b. Relationally

- i. Relationships are key to a strong fall launch.
 1. Evangelism as a PROCESS, not just a CONVERSATION.
 2. Open up the funnel at the beginning of the year by focusing on BREADTH over DEPTH
- ii. A Unique Season
 1. People will settle in their ways within a few weeks of moving in and close off relationally.
 2. Don't put all of your energy into too few people (at the beginning of the year). It will be difficult to lead 5 people to Christ this year if you only know 3.
 3. Don't assume the people you are excited about meeting in week 1 are the people you'll be excited about pouring into come April.
 4. There is a unique opportunity with new relationships in the beginning of the school year. Your friends will be there when things slow down.
 5. Many students' college experience directly correlates to the first 10 people they meet on campus. We need to value that opportunity.
- iii. Key factors
 1. Presence
 2. Move-in
 3. Plug in to the greater movement

You are setting yourself up for an effective or ineffective year based on how you use the fall launch season of sowing broadly

Discuss:

- What can we learn from Amber's story?
- Read 1 Cor. 9:19-23 and talk about ways you can move from selfishness to selflessness in order to win others to the Lord.