

A yellow balloon, inflated into a peace sign shape, is the central focus of the image. It is set against a background of red square tiles with dark grout. The balloon's string is visible, and it appears to be attached to a black object, possibly a pump or a weight, at the bottom. The lighting is bright, casting some shadows on the tiles.

FINDING A PERSON OF PEACE

*Who's Open to What You Have
to Say About God?*

Created by Phil Wiseman

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DiscipleshipPath.com provides an outcome-based pathway for one on one discipleship. This guided journey through the basics of the Christian faith is a mix of original and curated content created by the church for the church.

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Cover Photo: Jon Tyson

FINDING A PERSON OF PEACE

Who's Open to What You Have to Say About God?

In Luke 10, Jesus sends seventy of his followers out to proclaim the kingdom of God. He warns them that some people will not receive their message, while others will receive it. Jesus refers to those who accept the message as “sons of peace.” If they find such a “person of peace,” Jesus instructs them to stay and do ministry among them. However, if someone doesn't receive them, Jesus is clear that they should move on. After all, receiving the gospel is a work of the Holy Spirit, and it's not our job to force people to believe.

Finding your “person of peace,” therefore, is crucial. A person of peace is simply someone who is open to what you have to say about God. Mike Breen writes that “A Person of Peace is one who is prepared to hear the message of the kingdom and the King.” They are happy to talk to you about things that may lean toward the spiritual. They are someone who may not know God, yet doesn't have a wall up either. It seems that Jesus teaches his followers to simply go with those people instead of spinning our wheels trying to reach those who don't want to hear it.

This understanding of evangelism can be quite helpful. It makes it clear that our job is NOT to convert people—that's God's job. Rather, our job is to be aware of those who are already sensitive to God's stirring. In evangelism, God does the work *for* us! We just have to have eyes and ears that are open to what God is doing.

So how do we find a “person of peace?” We have a great example of this in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:25–40:

After testifying and preaching the word of the Lord in Samaria, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem. And they stopped in many Samaritan villages along the way to preach the Good News. As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage." Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?" So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they

came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

This story serves as a great model for evangelism. Notice the four steps that Philip takes in identifying and relating to this "person of peace:"

1. Philip is sensitive to God's leading (vv.26&29). Sure, in Philip's case, either an angel or God's Spirit appear to speak directly to him—which would certainly simplify things, wouldn't it? However, even if you don't hear an audible voice, that doesn't mean you can't also discern the voice of God. The more you pray about the people around you, the more attuned you'll become to the small promptings that can mean something big. Who is that person who repeatedly talks to you about God? Who is that person who comes to you when they are hurting? Who is that person who you are uniquely positioned to help, or whom God has laid on your heart? These are all indications that God may be prompting us to speak to them about Jesus.
2. Philip responds to an invitation (v.31). Once again, Philip seems to have it easy—after all, the eunuch literally asked him to explain the Bible to him! However, invitations can be more subtle than that too. Perhaps a coworker opens up to you about a difficulty, and you can offer to pray. Or perhaps a neighbor asks for your help with something, and it's a chance to speak into their life more. These invitations may be an indication of a person of peace—someone who wants to learn from you.
3. Philip is ready with biblical answers (v.35). Now, this doesn't mean that we all have to be Bible scholars. However, it's a good idea for every Christian to know some helpful verses that can be given to someone with questions about the faith. The four verses introduced in the last meeting as part of the evangelism tool are a great place to start (Romans 8:38, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:4-5, 2 Corinthians 5:15)!
4. Philip pointed him to Jesus(v.35). People today sometimes have (justifiable) problems with the church or with Christians. Our track record is far from spotless. However, numerous studies have shown that while people may have lost hope in the church, they've not lost interest in Jesus. Don't feel like you have to explain or defend everything about Christianity. Just share Jesus—and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

So start asking God to open your eyes to the people of peace in your life. These people are those who seem open to you and willing to hear what you have to say about God. Chances are, God is already at work in them. Our job is to simply be obedient.