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Shall I - shall I not?



I'll do it! I'm not doing it! Do I? I'm not doing it?

Going out, reaching out to others, takes overcoming. What will she/he think if I suddenly come and exemplify the faith or tell something about it?

I am not going to do it

This article is a Forum booklet article.

I'm not Billy Graham and I have inhibitions about approaching people ...

I remember well when I was 17 years old and went to youth group. Back then, outdoor outreaches were always done during Advent. In the youth program they were declared "evangelistic". This meant that we would drive to the nearest large gathering of people armed with our guitars, sing songs and perform a play. For the first few outreaches, that took some getting used to. Then it somehow got easier. And as time went on, it lost its appeal, so I stopped participating.

Some years later, I had graduated from Bible college and started my first preaching job, I was a youth group leader myself. There were some guys in the group who were evangelistic "overachievers." One evening they came up with the idea that we could do a survey in the village as to why they (those surveyed) did not believe in Jesus.

1. **How to respond?**

On one hand, you should go out. I wanted to win people to Jesus (and be an example to young people). On the other hand, I am not Billy Graham and have inhibitions about approaching people. Two or three of us went out. So it came to pass, as it had to. At the first door, the butcher was waiting for me. I asked him my questions from the survey questionnaire. One of them was: Why don't you believe in Jesus? A highly exciting conversation then took place in which he did not deviate from his point of view and I did not deviate from mine. Despite his rejection of Jesus, he shared an amazing amount about his life, what he had experienced, why he couldn't believe, and why Christians got on his nerves. With good wishes for the day, I went to the next address. Later in the evening we had scheduled a sharing and prayer time in the Jugi room. It was interesting to hear what everyone had experienced. For me it was very important to reflect in my own words how I experienced the survey, what joy, distress or fear I felt. It was also good for the others to hear how it was for a preacher.

2. **Breaking the Sound Barrier**

I had two problems to solve. First, I had to embark on the adventure even though I was a reluctant type (growing in faith myself first, fixing relationships, etc.). The second boundary I had to break through was the question: what does "going out" mean?

My previous image of it was linked to "planned outreach". Today, for me, there is a wider range, many faces. For me, going out today means no longer privatizing faith, but rather telling or modeling what it means to be a Christian to those around me in a natural and convincing way (appropriate to the situation). I'm moving from a consumer mindset to a production mindset. But then the next thought is already at the door.

3. **Why am I doing this to myself?**

In the editorial meeting, we asked ourselves where the healthy middle ground is between getting out and resting (doing nothing for once with a clear conscience). There are two sides to every coin. When we look at one side, the other is in the background. But it is still there. Now there are schools of thought that emphasize very strongly resting in the Spirit, being Mary at the feet of Jesus. To this the Martha people are sensitive : "O Lord, tell these Christians that I am struggling for you and that they should be of some help to me."

The healthy center is Jesus. But as soon as we fall off center, the comparing begins. Suddenly, others can do better and we wonder, why am I doing this to myself? Comparison has the great disadvantage that at that point we only see one side of the coin.

4. **What have I learned?**

In the last few years of being a Christian, I discovered the joy of Jesus. When I go out, reaching out to those around me, I rejoice as of all the Christians who need a time of rest. For to rest is to pray and watch for one's own life of faith (and that of others) so that one does not fall into contestation. When I have a rest, I pray for the Christians who are going out.

We can go out in the women's meeting, house group, youth group, Ameisli, etc. Going out is not a method, but a lifestyle.

The healthy center means to live a life with Jesus. If we do that where we have our talents, we will not overextend ourselves. On the contrary, we will complement each other and, most importantly, we will become doers of the word (Jas. 1). The sticking point is often that we don't know what we are capable of, where we have our gifts. Often we compare what we don't have

with what others have. Then it's Mary versus Marta. The result is that the center is not Jesus, but ourselves. It is no longer listening and doing that is the center, but our justification why we are this way or that way. Another consequence is that our environment notices how we treat each other. They lose interest in an encounter with Jesus. That is why it is important that we have Mary and Martha sides in us. We need both sides of the coin. Jesus is the center.

5. **In conclusion, this ...**

The experiences I have had with Jesus so far are motivating. Even if I had to overcome myself in some moments. In retrospect, I have to say: Wow, I did this or that...and a joy fills me. The experiences are then easier to "sell" in testimonies. I can motivate others instead of pressuring them.

I want to experience something with God. And I can only do that if I consciously live both sides of the coin. How do you experience these two sides?

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- **Author:** Thomas Gasser

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