

The Unexpected Adventure

In *The Unexpected Adventure: Taking Everyday Risks to Talk with People about Jesus*, Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg challenge both new believers and mature Christians to make the most of every opportunity to share Christ.

The forty-two chapters can be used as daily readings. Each contains a true story of evangelism, a principle, and practical steps. With personal stories from Strobel's and Mittelberg's experiences, the authors address fears, hesitations, and insecurities. *The Unexpected Adventure* is practical and encouraging. It answers fears Christians have without dismissing them. Strobel and Mittelberg acknowledge that we all have fears and insecurities and that's okay. But they also leave Christians with no reason why they shouldn't share Christ in some way with the people around them. The authors hone in on evangelism as an adventurous lifestyle rather than another item on the Christian checklist.

The book balances action and reliance on God's power to work. It also shows how apologetics and actions work together in order to faithfully address questions seekers have. They present both apologetics and actions as founded on love (contra those who see apologetics as empty arrogance).

The stories and principles demonstrate different approaches in evangelism and help Christians discern when to listen and when to answer questions. The application brings in Scripture as well as more stories of evangelism.

In their desire to cover numerous approaches, the authors become repetitive. Several stories emphasize the same or similar points. Also, on occasion, the stories seem to be leading toward one point but the "action principle" develops another point.

While Mittelberg and Strobel make it clear that they believe our Christianity affects our everyday actions, they focus on saving the soul for heaven to the exclusion of God working to bring his kingdom to earth. Their suggestions for acts of service, while undergirded in love, can be understood as tools for the real work of saving souls. The emphasis on evangelism is needed in today's culture, but we should also be willing to love and serve for the sake of love and service. Their approach neglects God's victorious work on earth.

The Unexpected Adventure emphasizes the conversion experience. While this may be necessary for some who think that merely growing up in a church is equivalent to being a follower of Christ, the stress on praying to receive God's gift to "seal that decision" (p. 241) oversteps biblical examples.

This book encouraged me to daily pray for the ability to see opportunities to share Christ and the courage to take them. Since reading it, I've been able to share God's love with a couple of people I might have otherwise not noticed.

Review by Heather A. Goodman