

Review: The Reluctant Witness

July 1, 2019

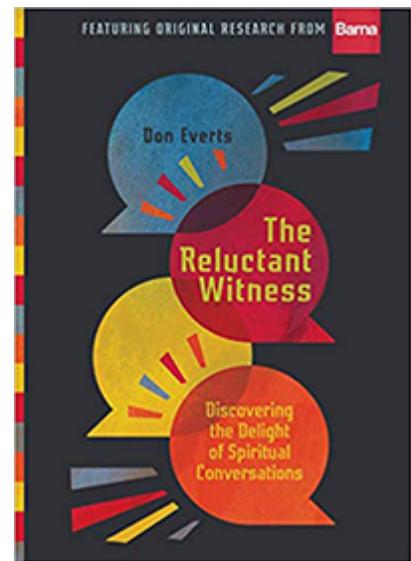
The Reluctant Witness

By Don Everts (InterVarsity Press)

It's like flossing. We know we should do it, but we don't.

We need to talk to people about our Christian faith. And we need to do so with preparation and purpose.

The Apostle Paul writes in Colossians 4:5-6: *“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone”* (NIV).



The contagion of Christianity has been passed through Jesus' followers since Acts 2. We know the good news about Jesus Christ because someone—a parent, preacher, friend or acquaintance—took the time to talk with us intentionally about matters of faith. I treasure those in my life who communicated spiritual matters to me with grace or forcefulness and with varying degrees of effectiveness. Someone leveraged human relationship to speak to you of the Divine.

In *The Reluctant Witness: Discovering the Delight of Spiritual Conversations*, Don Everts unpacks data from [Barna Group](#) and [Lutheran Hour Ministries](#). It is part of a three-year study on how American Christians communicate their faith both within and without the community of believers. According to the research, the number of Christians having spiritual conversations has declined dramatically, even though the consensus among respondents is that such conversations are necessary.

As a wake-up call, Everts writes, “Only 8 percent of Americans talk about God, faith, religion or spirituality even once a week.” The usual suspects—decline in personal discipleship and church attendance—are indicted.

You may assume this is intuitive information that most any regular church attender might know, but seeing the information in black and white charts and graphs emphasizes how important it is that we become more intentional in engaging others in conversations about spiritual matters. Helpfully, additional survey results give detail to the differences between those who rarely and those who frequently speak of their faith to others.

Everts translates the data into relatable explanations of how to personally move from *Reluctant Witnesses* to *Eager Conversationalists*. Hint: It isn’t as impossible as you may fear; just adopt four simple habits.

This book is deeply informative and challenging, and what is better, it’s motivational. Appreciably, it isn’t an appeal for more classes in memorizing evangelistic appeals. Rather, it challenges believers to be prepared and dependent upon the Holy Spirit as we enter conversations of eternal significance.

This book should be valuable for individual or group study. It provides impetus to share the information with others so we may change the trend. What is lacking is a more examined approach for the church to impact the

community. However, as this is the first of three books, that appears to be forthcoming in the next installment.

Got to go. I need to find someone to talk to.

Jay Abernathy, associate pastor for pastoral care

First Baptist Church, Lubbock