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EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH,  
HEBRON, KENTUCKY, FOR EVANGELISM  
THROUGH OUTREACH EVENTS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Shawn Franklin Dobbins  
December 2018

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH,  
HEBRON, KENTUCKY, FOR EVANGELISM  
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I dedicate this project to Sarah, Franklin, and Isabella,  
whose sacrifice, patience, and love for Daddy is a gift.

To Hebron Baptist Church, for your prayer and support to make this happen,  
may we see many come to be disciples who make disciples.

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## PREFACE

I am thankful that my life did not go the way that my finite and self-centered mind envisioned for myself. As a child, I dreamed of being a pediatrician because of the kindness of Dr. Duckwall, who patiently and lovingly treated me until I learned adults were not allowed to go to pediatricians. I later pursued athletic training to care for athletes and to be around sports. I thought it would be a great substitute for my lack of athletic talent but still give me the sense of belonging to a team. Thankfully, God, in his infinite wisdom, had a better plan than I could imagine. Out of his graciousness, God revealed that I was sinner separated from him and needed saving. Out of love, he helped me turn in faith to his Son, Jesus Christ, whose death, burial, and resurrection is the power of salvation. God then began to shape my life for ministry to pastor his church. I am still amazed that he called me, saved me, and is now using me to serve the church for his glory. This project was birthed out of the desire to be better equipped to serve the bride of Christ. All thanksgiving belongs to him because I would have never pursued or completed this project without his hand on my life.

I am thankful to be a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and to learn from the evangelism and church revitalization professors at the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry. My ministry is forever changed for both the instruction and relationships gained from Dr. Adam Greenway, Dr. Timothy Beougher, and Dr. William Henard. I am further thankful for Dr. Henard for his supervision and assistance throughout this project. Through the many revisions and communication, I have grown to admire his love for the church of Jesus and have been edified by his consistent leadership in evangelism. I am also thankful for the students in this program

from whom I gained such encouragement and wisdom. The greatest reward from them was a network of brothers that I know I can lean on in the days ahead. God has been gracious to me through this outstanding education.

This project and any degree or reward that I earn from it must be shared with my family: Sarah, Franklin, and Isabella. They sacrificed many “Family Fridays,” much attention, and presence while Dad worked on coursework and this project. To my wife, Sarah, your love and support got me through the work. Your selflessness reflects Christ, and my love has grown deeper for the prayer, encouragement, and love you have shown me. To Franklin and Isabella, thank you for your patience and unconditional love. I look forward to the time we will share making many memories.

I have deep gratitude for the members, staff, and leadership of Hebron Baptist Church. This project was the fruit of the generosity of Hebron Baptist Church and prayerfully will be for its benefit. The members’ faithful giving and the church’s stewardship graciously funded this level of my education. I am thankful that you believed in me that I would use this training to become a better pastor and to use it to make HBC a healthier church. The church also made sacrifices of giving me time for project deadlines and classes, but most importantly prayed for me and my family during this journey. The staff at HBC are both my friends and my support team. Many weeks they filled in and graciously served the congregation in my stead. I am grateful God has placed me at HBC as pastor for such a time as this, God placed our members and staff together in Hebron, Kentucky to be a gospel light in the darkness. May we continue to glorify him by being disciples who make disciples.

Shawn Dobbins

Hebron, Kentucky

December 2018

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The mission of Hebron Baptist Church is “to glorify God by being disciples who make disciples.” This purpose is in response to the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 to “go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”<sup>1</sup> Hebron Baptist Church (HBC) intentionally tries to disciple new believers “for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12). The ultimate goal of discipleship is to grow disciples who make disciples. As people mature in Christ, their desire and ability to share the gospel will increase and HBC members can impact Northern Kentucky and the nations.

#### **Context**

In the 1950s, Sand Run Baptist Church in Francisville, Kentucky, had a vision to start a church to minister to their expanding community. In 1958, Hebron Baptist Mission began in an old store in nearby Hebron, Kentucky. That mission became Hebron Baptist Church on December 3, 1961, and has been ministering to that community ever since. The community has gone through many changes over the years, and HBC has gone through many changes as well, but the church has kept its gospel focus.

As the community changed in the 1990s and 2000s, HBC stepped out on faith and made significant changes. Hebron, Kentucky, became the home of the Cincinnati/

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted all Scripture references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

Northern Kentucky International Airport. In the 1980s the airport became a Delta hub and brought significant growth to the area. The airport desired expansion and began a master plan of increasing its property. HBC bought property on a more visible and highly traveled area knowing that eventually the airport would take their original location. On August 29, 2004, HBC opened the doors to their new location centrally located in a community filled with young professionals and across the street from a school campus of kindergarten through twelfth grade. In 2013, I was called and brought a vision to become a gospel-centered church focusing on being disciples who make disciples. By the grace of God, the church has gained sure footing to become a church to reach and disciple families of Northern Kentucky.

### **Evangelism and Community Involvement**

Though HBC began as a mission church, it has been weak in evangelism. Though the people have a heart for missions and are faithful in their generosity for mission, the congregation has not moved to action. The result is a church located and primed for growth; instead, attendance has plateaued and there have been few baptisms.

HBC has had a history of serving the community. In the 1970s and 1980s, the church saw a need for a kindergarten program when the local schools did not offer one. The program began in the basement of the original church building as a way to serve the community. When HBC moved to the new location, it started a half-day preschool in the mornings and afternoons consisting of 120 students.

Thirty years ago, two women began a Thanksgiving feast for special needs adults and their weekly care-takers. This ministry has grown to nearly 100 people attending a luncheon the Monday before Thanksgiving. HBC also started a food pantry in 2012 to help those in need in Boone County. Every month the church provides food to an average of thirty families.

HBC also gives to the elementary school across the street, providing over 100 coats for Christmas. Recently, the church began a project called "Love in Action." One

day a year, the church goes into the community and does service projects to area families and businesses. HBC loves its community and takes time to serve the people there.

Though the church serves in its community, serving has had little impact on growth or baptisms. Over the last twenty years, the church has only grown by about 80 people. In 1996, the church averaged 190 in worship and today averages 269. Considering that Boone County went from 20,000 people in the 1990s to 110,000 people as of 2016, the church has not kept up with the population growth. In HBC's best years, 2004-2009, the church grew from 242 in average worship attendance to its height of 355. Even during that time, HBC did not reach people at the level of the population growth. In 11 out of the last 20 years, baptisms were in the single digits. The attendance dropped from 338 to 238 from 2011 to 2013 during a change in pastoral leadership. The church has been consistently in the community but its involvement has had little impact on attendance and baptisms.

Understanding the need to be more effective in reaching the community, in the fall of 2015 the church adopted a new strategy to disciple the lost of Northern Kentucky. HBC planned to focus on worship, small groups, and missions as the main areas of investment of time and money. The desire to build disciples who make disciples is the forefront of this strategy. The church believes that being a faithful disciple of Jesus means following him, just as Peter, Andrew, James, and John were called: "'Follow Me,' Jesus told them, 'and I will make you fish for people!'" (Mark 1:17). Disciples grow and tell others about Jesus—a disciple must evangelize. HBC's new emphasis is to intentionally grow disciples who evangelize so that many might be saved. HBC is seeing a new foundation built for effective ministry.

### **Challenges to Evangelism and Community Outreach at HBC**

One challenge to evangelism and community outreach at HBC is the lack of historical success in this area. During most years, HBC had baptisms in the single digits. Even during the height of attendance, from 2005 to 2010, baptisms were not at a healthy

level. Additions to the church during those six years were made up of 186 new members by transfer from another church with only 101 additions by baptism. HBC does not have a history that shows an intentional or effective evangelism ministry.

A second challenge to evangelism and community outreach is the confusion of activity and ministry. As mentioned, the church has had a history of serving in the community. From schools, to disabled, to the poor, the church has been generous and busy. These community projects have had little or nothing to do with sharing the gospel—they were mostly about philanthropy. Handing out clothes, food, and money to the poor in the community has had little impact on baptisms. Jesus clearly served the needs of others and commands believers to love their neighbors—HBC's community activities are not bad, but unfortunately there has been little evidence of sharing the gospel. A survey, completed in the fall of 2015, indicated that the weakest area of missions at HBC is that people are not regularly coming to faith in Christ as a result of the church serving. Though HBC desires to help its community, the evidence shows its members have not been sharing the gospel.

A third challenge is that the members are not comfortable sharing their faith with unbelievers. In the church survey, this was the second weakest indicator in the area of missions for HBC. There has been no formal training or activity for evangelism in the last 5 years of the church. When people are not equipped to share the gospel they will not participate. This finding revealed the history of unhealthy baptism numbers. The lack of sharing faith can be attributed to apathy, but it may be that people are willing but not prepared.

A fourth challenge is the lack of prayerful dependence in the congregation. The survey indicated that 3 of the top 10 unhealthy trends of the church were related to prayer. Spontaneous prayer that happens in groups, worship service, or in the life of the church was not observable. HBC members indicated they were not being taught to pray by leaders. They also perceived that members of the community were not asking them or the

church to pray for them. Since salvation is dependent on the work of a sovereign God, a lack of prayer would impact evangelism. John MacArthur proclaims,

God defines prayer for the lost as the noble and spiritually proper thing to do, and our consciences agree. The lost suffer the agony of sin, shame, and meaninglessness in this life, and the eternal hell of unrelenting agony in the life to come. Knowing that, our most excellent task is to pray for their salvation.<sup>2</sup>

An evangelistic church is a praying church, and it seems prayer is not essential to HBC.

A fifth challenge is that members rarely invite others to church. Absent is a culture of inviting others into a deeper relationship with God at HBC, which could be an indicator of other issues. When members are not sharing their faith or not inviting others to church, growth and opportunities to evangelize are lacking. People must hear the gospel to be saved. Romans 10:14 reminds, “But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?” HBC members must engage the community by evangelism and invitation.

The sixth challenge in evangelism and community involvement is the lack of relevance to the community. The demographics show that HBC is situated in an area that is filled with young, professional families. Eighty-two percent of the community is under the age of 54 with an average household income is \$77,000. Fifty-two percent of homes have children under the age of eighteen. However, the church is not indigenous enough to its culture. The nursery and youth areas are small and are not planned for the community around them. The worship style is a mix of traditional and contemporary, but not to the quality with which younger families would connect. The congregation is evenly divided between older and younger but is still having a hard time recovering from the decrease in attendance of six years back.

The final challenge is in the church not being entrepreneurial and creative in serving non-Christians outside the church. The church has not come up with a vision to

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<sup>2</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Alone with God* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1995), 75, Logos Bible Software.

reach a culture filled with young professionals. HBC does Easter and Fall outreach projects, but those that come are church people and preschool families, not really the un-saved and those not already connected in some way to the church. During Love in Action, the projects were geared toward older poor families, but that group does not make up the majority of the community. HBC must become more creative and indigenous with their outreach activities.

### **Rationale**

The desire of HBC is to see people come to Christ and to be on mission. The church wants to accomplish its task of discipling people to see them more engaged in sharing the gospel with the community. This project intends to better equip members to have gospel conversations during outreach ministries of the church in order to be more effective in reaching the lost and un-churched in its community. This project aims to address several challenges and help HBC become a disciple-making church for the glory of God!

This project intended to first look further into the successes and failures of HBC in the area of evangelism and outreach. It sought to understand the history of the outreach events and what has been helpful or hurtful to its success in reaching the lost. In many ways, I looked into the mindset of the event leaders and volunteers see what their desire was for outreach. This project helped them see that the purpose of any outreach is to lift up Jesus and ultimately see people come to Christ. If HBC are not intentional about intentional evangelism then it will not be achieved. An evangelistic mentality was developed through helping the volunteers see the need to prayer, intentional evangelism, and training in these areas. Identifying the intended desires of the current events helped inform how to move from just a community activity to evangelism opportunity.

Second, this project sought to address the lack of entrepreneurial mindset and creativity in reaching the community. Understanding the demographic of the community helped planning to be more specific. By understanding the community, HBC could



identify the needs to be met. With a better understanding of the demographic, an outreach event would target the community better. Using this information, a different and inventive event could be created, allowing the community to see the church as more relevant and would open the doors for more evangelism opportunities. The intention of these changes was that the church would see more visitors, more baptisms, and would teaching members how to reach their community more effectively.

Finally, the project intended to address the biggest need: evangelism training. Training addressed both the urgency for evangelism and instruct a practical way for evangelism. The project trained a team to be ready to share Jesus. With leaders, volunteers, and members trained for evangelism, the desired outcome is a church more faithful to the Great Commission. The curriculum equipped members to not just be trained for an event but equipped to share the gospel in all areas of their life. Training increased the desire for members of HBC to have the purpose of sharing the gospel. The first impressions ministry was able to see that they could pray and be open to share Christ as they welcome visitors. Sunday school teachers are be more comfortable working the gospel into their lessons. Evangelism training should not only help individual ministries in the church, but also help participants to be more comfortable sharing Jesus with family members, friends, and co-workers in their daily lives. Jesus said, “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few” (Matt 9:37). Training up a team for evangelism in the church has a great impact in the world. A trained church is necessary as HBC seeks to win people to Christ in Northern Kentucky and the nations.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to equip church members to participate in evangelism outreach events for Hebron Baptist Church in Hebron, Kentucky.

## **Goals**

Three goals reflect the necessary steps by which the purpose of this project was accomplished. The first goal addressed conceptual matters to HBC's doctrine and practice of outreach events. The second goal addressed the strategic development of a gospel-centered community outreach event at HBC. The third goal reflected how HBC would equip its members for outreach events. These goals are as follows:

1. The first goal was to assess the current practices of volunteers during outreach events at Hebron Baptist Church.
2. The second goal was to develop a four-session training course for starting gospel conversations.
3. The third goal was to equip members through a four-week training to be able to start gospel conversations.
4. The fourth goal was to train members to engage outreach guests more often.

## **Research Methodology**

Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the current evangelism activity of the members of HBC at outreach events. After the fall outreach event, a survey was used to determine how many volunteers had having gospel conversations or invited guests to church. This survey gauged each member's initial activity and comfort level in evangelism. This goal was considered successfully met when forty members complete the survey and the results have been compiled electronically in order to have a fuller analysis of the present evangelism activity.<sup>3</sup>

The second goal was to develop a four-session training course for starting gospel conversations. This course took place in a group format with one hour of interactive teaching, practice, and discussion per session. The course primarily focused on overcoming the transition of conversations to Christ and spiritual matters. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of one missions pastor, one colleague with a Ph.D., one

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<sup>3</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in this ministry project.

professor in the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry, and three local church pastors. This panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the course material to ensure it is biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and applicable to ministry practice. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level. If the initial feedback yielded less than 90 percent, the curriculum would be revised in accordance with the panel's evaluation until such time that the criterion meets or exceeds the sufficient level.

The third goal was to equip members through a four-week training to be able to start gospel conversations. The goal was measured by the participants attending at least three of the four classes. This goal was considered successful when at least 50 percent of the participants attend at this level.

The fourth goal was to train members to engage outreach guests more often by tracking the number of gospel conversations from one event in the fall pre-training to the next event in the spring post-training. The goal was measured by administering the same survey to volunteers after the spring outreach and compare the activity level of volunteers in having gospel conversations and inviting others to church. The goal was successfully met when volunteers' engagement in gospel conversations shows a statistically significant increase.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

*Gospel.* The gospel can mean different things to different people. According to Greg Gilbert, the gospel has four main parts that include "God. Man. Christ. Response."<sup>4</sup> These essential elements make up the good news that humanity can be saved from their sin through Jesus Christ. The one true God, who created the world and all within it, demands that humanity worship him and obey. Man, through Adam, chose to disobey,

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<sup>4</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 32.

and all of humanity is stained with sin and are separated from God (Rom 3:23, 6:23). Jesus Christ, who is fully God and man, came to earth, lived a perfect life, was killed on a cross, buried, and rose to life three days later. In this, Christ paid the penalty of sin and made peace with God for the sins of man (1 Cor 15:21-23; 1 John 4:10). To be saved, one must believe in the sacrifice of Christ and repent, turning from sin and making Christ Lord of his life (Rom 10:9-10; 2 Cor 7:10). The gospel is the power of salvation and the message delivered by the apostles so that sinners can be saved and the church is established (Rom 1:16; Jude 3).

*Gospel conversations.* A successful gospel conversation must include the proclamation of Jesus and his story. Though all elements of the gospel are essential to salvation, a gospel conversation must at least include a proclamation of Christ. J. I. Packer states, “For preaching the gospel, as we have just seen, means inviting sinners to come to Jesus Christ, the living Savior, who, by virtue of his atoning death, is able to forgive and save all those who put their trust in him.”<sup>5</sup> For this project, any conversation that shares Jesus and his work of salvation is considered a gospel conversation. Though a complete sharing of the gospel is desired, not every interaction will give opportunity to explain the whole gospel message. The essential element is to preach Christ, because without hearing the gospel no one can be saved (Rom 10:14). This project trained members of HBC to transition everyday conversations to talk about Jesus Christ’s atoning work.

Three limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre and post-series surveys was dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their having gospel conversations. To mitigate this limitation, the participants’ responses remained anonymous. The survey also included information gauging the effectiveness of the event to keep the participants from knowing what was actually being recorded for the project. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the consistency of

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<sup>5</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL, Intervarsity, 2008), 76.

attendance. If the participants did not attend all of the training sessions, it would be difficult to measure how beneficial the training has been. To mitigate this limitation, each session was emailed to participants unable to attend all of the classes. Third, the same volunteers might not serve at both events. To gather data, participants created a personal identification number based on their phone number to compare data and match information. The training could encourage more volunteers, so I delineated information gathered.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, this project only engaged two outreach events that are geared toward families, the Fall Festival and Easter Extravaganza. However, this training could apply to other community outreach events, such as the food pantry, Vacation Bible School Family Night, etc. The survey was taken after the fall and spring outreach events to assess the volunteers' practices. Second, the project was confined to a twenty-four-week timeframe. This gave adequate time to prepare and teach the four-week training sessions and conduct the post-series survey after each event is completed. Finally, this project was limited to members of HBC and was not conducted at other area church outreach events. The application of this training could be used by other churches and other community-focused events, but was limited to these two events and members of HBC.

### **Conclusion**

Evangelism is the command of Christ to every believer and a critical element of the mission of the church. The equipping of HBC members to leverage their opportunities to have gospel conversations at outreach events was a time of refocusing the church to provide events and activities that are purposeful with the gospel. This project was necessary to help members of HBC fulfill their mandate to reach Northern Kentucky and the nations.

CHAPTER 2  
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR  
HAVING GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

Teaching of the scriptures demands the obedience of followers of Jesus to be ready and urgent in sharing the gospel. The passages in this chapter are presented in order to show that Christ's stated mission leads to the individual's mission. The Bible reveals that disciples follow Christ's example to seek and save the lost when they intentionally have gospel conversations.

**Following the Mission of Jesus (Luke 19:1-10)**

Luke 19:1-10 presents an event from Jesus' life when he clarifies his mission to the world. The mission to "seek and save the lost" (v. 10) is displayed as Jesus finds one who is lost and engages in his life. This passage reveals that Jesus' Mission is one in which his followers should imitate.

**Jesus States His Mission**

Jesus' proclamation in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost," stands as a mission statement for Jesus' ministry. ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός also stands as a summary of the message of Luke's central section: Jesus has come to seek and save the lost.<sup>1</sup> Jesus's words points to Ezekiel 34:16, in which God says, "I will seek the lost [*Τὸ ἀπολωλός ζητήσω*], bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd

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<sup>1</sup> David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker; Apollos, 2007), 354, Logos Bible Software.

them with justice.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus seeking to heal the world links his mission to God’s mission to heal Israel. Darrel Bock observes, “What God was to do for the nation as its shepherd, because the nation of Ezekiel’s time was leaderless, Jesus does now.”<sup>3</sup> It is evident that Jesus’ mission included seeking for and saving those separated from him.

Carsten Colpe writes, “The end of the story of Zacchaeus in Lk. 19:10 is not the work of Luke but is pre-Lucan.”<sup>4</sup> However, Jesus’ mission is the same that can be read throughout Luke and the gospels. Bock states,

This passage again stresses Jesus’ initiative to seek the lost and to proclaim salvation for those who respond with faith. Like Luke 5:32, it emphasizes that one of the prerequisites of responding to Jesus is to realize that one stands in need of God. Like Luke 5:24, it emphasizes the Son of Man’s present ministry to forgive sin. Zacchaeus is like the prodigal, the lost coin, and the lost sheep (chap. 15). He is one who has been healed by the Great Physician.<sup>5</sup>

Luke 19:10 stresses Jesus’ initiative to seek the lost and to proclaim salvation for those who respond with faith that was evident in his entire ministry. Luke 19:10 was not an addition by the church after Luke’s writing, but a record of the entirety of Jesus’ mission.

“Jesus came” are words that note a cataclysmic shift in history that the Savior came to earth. In Luke 19:10, the stress of the sentence is on the word ἦλθεν, which is translated, “he came.”<sup>6</sup> The use of “he came” is significant because Jesus came to complete a mission from heaven to earth. From Jesus’ birth, his mission of seeking and saving the lost was evident. In Matthew’s birth narrative, his mission was obvious before he was

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<sup>2</sup> Pao and Schnabel, “Luke,” 354.

<sup>3</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51-24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1523, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup> Carsten Colpe, “Ο Υἱὸς Τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 453, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>5</sup> Bock, *Luke: 9:51-24:53*, 1523.

<sup>6</sup> Albert L. Lukaszewski, Mark Dubis, and J. Ted Blakley, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament*, SBL ed. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2011), Lk 19:10, Logos Bible Software.

born. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, “She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). Being part of the Triune God, Jesus clothed his goodness in humanity and took a mission to pay for the penalty of sins thereby giving humanity a way to salvation.

Michael Green exclaims,

So here, at the annunciation of Jesus’ birth, we are brought face to face with the central theme of the Gospel. God, who has been at work on his people since the times of Abraham, has come among them in person. And he has come for the specific purpose of rescuing them from the mess they have got themselves into. Christianity is not good advice about morals. It is good news about God and what he has done for us.<sup>7</sup>

“Seek and save the lost” has been his mission before there was time, and Jesus enacted a mission that would save the lost of humanity (Gal 4:4-7).

### **Jesus Engages the Lost**

Jesus ministry was centered on calling outcasts and sinners to salvation. In Matthew 9:13 he states, “For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Jesus came to call out to the deplorable and then in Luke 19:10, ἀπολωλός (the lost thing).<sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus represents the lost souls Jesus came to find and save. Followers of Jesus should identify “the lost” in their circle of influence and introduce them to Jesus.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost, including people who are far from him. The Greek word translated “lost” is ἀπολωλός, which is a perfect, active, participle.<sup>9</sup> ἀπολωλός literally means “one who is lost and continues to be lost.” The Bible uses the term “lost” to describe the condition of men and women’s relationship to God. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, “lost” is used as a descriptor to be separated from God. The

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 60, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Lukaszewski, Dubis, and Blakley, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament*, Lk 19:10.



father in the story, who represents God, states twice in Luke 15:24, 32, “Because this son of mine (vs. 32 brother of yours) was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” Because of sin, humanity is separated from God, hence, the need for a savior. “Lost” people are those who are unregenerate. Jesus said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 15:24). Jesus reveals that some in God’s family know God but are not born again through Jesus Christ, therefore, they are “lost” to God. Lost people have been blinded by Satan so they cannot see the goodness of God and the way to salvation. Paul states, “But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor 4:3-4). The lost are also defiled and have no access to God. Paul stresses that the condition of humanity being defiled is why they are lost: “To the pure, everything is pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; in fact, both their mind and conscience are defiled” (Titus 1:15). The condition of being “lost is the natural state of humanity” (Rom 3:23) and that is why Jesus set his mission to save humanity from their sin.

Those who are lost cannot help themselves, therefore, someone else is needed to save them. When Jesus speaks in Luke 15, he teaches using three parables about a lost coin, lost sheep, and a lost son. These parables remind Christians of the helplessness of the human spiritual condition due to sin. Phillip Graham Ryken observes, “This story also teaches that until God does find us, we are helplessly lost. A lost coin is certain to stay lost until it is found. We are in the same situation spiritually, for we cannot find ourselves. Once we are lost, we will stay lost until we are found by God.<sup>10</sup> Jesus’ mission was to engage the lost so they might know him as the Son of God. Through the cross, Jesus paid the penalty of sin so that someone could be saved by faith. Jesus engaged lives so they might see the glorious mercy and grace through faith in the cross.

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<sup>10</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, Reformed Expository Commentary, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 120, Logos Bible Software.

## Jesus Engaged in Life

Zacchaeus was indicative of people Jesus came to save because lost people are separated from God. Jesus' mission is to initiate relationships with those who do not know God and call to them to come to know him. Zacchaeus was an example of the lost, and Jesus engaged him so that he would be saved. This passage again stresses Jesus' initiative to seek the lost and proclaim salvation for those who respond with faith, which is underscored in Luke 15:4–6:

What man among you, who has 100 sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!"

Jesus' mission, which is also believers' mission, is to find those who are lost and introduce them to Jesus Christ.

Zacchaeus was an example of Jesus seeking and saving someone who was lost. Luke must have recorded this event thinking back to the illustration of what he had recorded a few verses back, in 18:18–30. There, Jesus had said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (18:24). Wilcock observes, "Zacchaeus was just such a rich man, for whom God had done the impossible, and brought him into the kingdom."<sup>11</sup> Zacchaeus was a wealthy man who had reaped the reward of being a tax collector. Jericho was one of three major centers for collecting Israel's taxes, which probably made Zacchaeus very wealthy.<sup>12</sup> The person who served as a tax collector did not receive a regular salary but instead would over tax the people and keep extra for his wages. Rome would bid territories to tax collectors who would bring in the most money.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Wilcock, *The Savior of the World: The Message of Luke's Gospel*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 172, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>12</sup> Ryken, *Luke*, 304-5.

<sup>13</sup> I. Howard Marshall, "Luke," in *New Bible Commentary*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 1009-10, Logos Bible Software.

Ryken writes, “As ‘chief tax collector’ he was the ultimate middleman, skimming the proceeds off the customs revenue on its way to Rome. Tax collectors were considered swindlers and cheats, and thus they were regarded as traitors to their own people.”<sup>14</sup>

Zacchaeus was not someone who most Jews or good Gentiles would associate. Zacchaeus needed salvation just like all humankind need saving from their sins.

Jesus entered Zacchaeus’ world to bring salvation to his heart and home. Jesus gave the example that believers must follow to engage in the lives of lost people by meeting them in a personal way. As Zacchaeus heard Jesus was coming, he put himself in a tree so he could get a good view of Jesus as he passed. Shockingly, Jesus stopped, commanded him to climb down, and then told him that he would be staying at Zacchaeus’ house. Jesus here engages in the life of a lost person when they do not merit his love. Jesus displays his love that while humankind were sinners he made way to salvation through the cross (Rom 5:8). With this truth in mind, believers must live like Jesus and reach out to others like he did in the life of Zacchaeus. Ryken observes,

This is the way Jesus saves lost sinners: he does it by walking right into our lives, even uninvited. J. C. Ryle said, “If ever there was a soul sought and saved, without having done anything to deserve it, that soul was the soul of Zacchaeus. . . . Unmasked, our Lord stops and speaks to Zacchaeus. Unmasked, He offers Himself to be a guest in the house of a sinner. Unmasked, He sends into the heart of a publican the renewing grace of the Spirit, and puts him that very day among the children of God.” Here is how the Puritan Matthew Henry explained the saving work of God in the sinner’s soul: Jesus “brings his own welcome; he opens the heart and inclines it to receive him.”<sup>15</sup>

The invitation of Zaccheus is an example Jesus calling a sinner to himself and the beauty of a conversation that is spiritual in nature. Jesus spent time with Zacchaeus, and the result was the tax collector’s salvation. Jesus modeled how an everyday conversation can be used in the kingdom of God.

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<sup>14</sup> Ryken, *Luke*, 304-5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

The result of the spiritual conversation and meeting with Zacchaeus was that he was saved. In this story, Jesus was a walking illustration of his mission statement. He came into the city, he found a lost person, and Zacchaeus was saved. Leon Morris observes, “Jesus sought Zacchaeus, a man who was certainly among the lost. But Jesus did not leave him there. He saved him.”<sup>16</sup> Zacchaeus is an example of what is possible with God and how rich people can be saved (18:27).<sup>17</sup> The result was that his life changed immediately as he promised to pay back what he had stolen, which was more than what was required by the law.<sup>18</sup> This example from the life of Jesus reveals his mission to save the lost. This personal Savior demands that followers of Jesus should personally enter relationships with others so that they might be saved.

### **The Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20)**

The Great Commission teaches believers to make disciples “as you go,” by sharing Christ and teaching new converts his Word. As displayed in the life of Jesus when he engaged in a personal relationship with Zacchaeus for his salvation, he wants the church to go and do likewise. This command under Jesus’ authority to his followers is to baptize and disciple people in their sphere of influence.

### **Go with the Authority of Jesus**

In order to fulfill his mission, Jesus gave his authority to the disciples to seek and save the lost. In his Gospel, Matthew reaffirmed the authority and mission of Jesus to seek and to save; or the power to forgive sins and save (vv. 1:1, 17, 21; 2:2; 7:29; 8:9; 9:6–8; 10:1; 11:27; 21:23).<sup>19</sup> Based on that authority, Jesus now is sending his disciples

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<sup>16</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 290, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall, “Luke,” 1009.

<sup>18</sup> Pao and Schnabel, “Luke,” 354.

<sup>19</sup> David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New

to make disciples of all nations. To the disciples, then and now, this seems to be a task that they are inadequate to accomplish. David Turner reassures, “Their resources in Jesus’s power and presence are more than adequate for the task.”<sup>20</sup>

Jesus’ “coming to” his disciples is an act of royal decree and personal assurance to his troubled friends. The death of Jesus was seen by many a failure, and they were embarrassed by their lack of faith.<sup>21</sup> Jesus (προσελθὼν) came to them and spoke (ἐλάλησεν) to them to change their focus on the past and to focus them on their new mission.<sup>22</sup> R. T. France observes,

Jesus “speaks to” them to restore the broken relationship (as his words via the women have already indicated, v. 10), and the words he will now utter will leave their failure far behind, swallowed up in the much greater reality of the mission to which they are now called. The disciples themselves speak no words in this final scene, where the focus falls fully on Jesus himself; their role is to listen, to understand and to obey.<sup>23</sup>

Jesus spoke in a way that is clearly giving his followers a new directive from a powerful savior.

The Great Commission begins with Jesus giving his disciples his authority to complete the mission to seek and save the lost. Their mission was enormous, but armed with the authority of Jesus they have his power and his presence. Jesus coming and giving them authority helped them understand that they would not be alone. France writes, “The words *with you* powerfully echo the name Emmanuel. ‘God with us’ (1:23); that is who

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Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 689-92, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>20</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 689-92.

<sup>21</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 1112, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>22</sup> Lukaszewski, Dubis, and Blakley *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament*, Mt 28:18.

<sup>23</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1112.

Jesus really is.”<sup>24</sup> The same authority Jesus gives believers in Matthew 18:20, where Jesus promised “two or three come together in my name,” is this same promise extended now to those who carry the mission of Jesus.<sup>25</sup>

Jesus saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth,” echoes Daniel 7:14, which reads, “He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.”<sup>26</sup> Jesus has the authority over everything, and he is giving it to his disciples; therefore, the mission can and will be completed. France observes, “Satan offered him ‘*all* the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; now, by the way of suffering obedience, he has received far more than Satan could offer, all authority *in heaven and on earth*.”<sup>27</sup>

Leon Morris believes that Jesus’ power was limited on earth and he had obtained a new authority. He writes that Jesus gives “the fullest possible authority, for it is authority *in heaven and on earth*. He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him.”<sup>28</sup> This limitation of Jesus is overstated and diminishes the authority in which Jesus gives freely to his disciples. The disciples need the power of Jesus that overcame temptation, healed the sick, raised the dead, and spoke with power. John Nolland declares,

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<sup>24</sup> Richard T. France, “Matthew,” in *New Bible Commentary*, 944, emphasis original.

<sup>25</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 689-92.

<sup>26</sup> France, “Matthew,” 944.

<sup>27</sup> R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 419, Logos Bible Software, emphasis original.

<sup>28</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1992), 745-50, Logos Bible Software.

The allusion to Dn. 7:13-14 is, however, only the final of quite a set of allusions in Matthew to this text. And while the future role of the Son of Man is important in a number of these texts, Matthew's starting point is that Jesus is, and already functions as, the Son of Man during his earthly ministry (see Mt. 8:20 and notably, in connection with authority, 9:6).<sup>29</sup>

Instead, what authority Jesus says "has been given to me" is a reaffirmation of the power that was present throughout his entire ministry. The resurrection vindicated him of any doubt that he is the Christ and has complete authority over all things.<sup>30</sup>

The authority that Christ gives his church is his very own power to complete the mission to seek and save the lost. France concludes, "There is likely to be a specific echo of the authority given in 16:19 to Peter and in 18:18 to the community: authority in the church is grounded in the full authority of Jesus."<sup>31</sup> The followers of Jesus have been given the full authority of heaven to now "go and make disciples."

### **Go to All Nations**

With the authority of Jesus passed to his believers, Jesus calls his disciples to "Go, therefore" (Matt 28:19). This was a turning point where the mission is handed like a baton to his followers. This mission was to begin where they were in Jerusalem and extend to all nations (*ethne*). Nolland states,

In relation to Jesus and to his mission instructions to the Twelve such mission is based on the conviction that a fresh initiative of God is now underway and needs to be made known; indeed, the making known is to be seen as a key part of the new divine initiative.<sup>32</sup>

Blomberg writes, "Matthew frequently uses 'go' as an introductory circumstantial participle that is rightly translated as coordinate to the main verb—here

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<sup>29</sup> John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, PA: Paternoster, 2005), 1263-72, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> France, *Matthew*, 419-22.

<sup>32</sup> Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1266.

‘Go and make’ (cf. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7).”<sup>33</sup> There is a call to action for disciples to share the gospel. It is not a requirement to be “Super Christian” and mandate that everyone must go overseas. but it also does not mean to only reach your neighbor.<sup>34</sup> Blomberg concludes, “To ‘make disciples *of all nations*’ does require many people to leave their homelands, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be.”<sup>35</sup> Believers must be active in sharing the gospel right where they are. The goal of the Great Commission is not a mission confined to a zip code, but for the entire globe to worship Jesus as Lord. The phrase *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*, “all the nations,” occurred already in 24:9, 14; 25:32, to reveal the scope of the disciples’ mission and the kingdom of the Son of Man.<sup>36</sup> The same authority given to Jesus in Daniel 7, he now extends to his disciples who are to proclaim the good news to all nations. Whomever a disciple encounters should be the audience for the good news because Jesus came to seek and save the lost of all nations.

The mission to seek and save the lost is not one of exclusion or favoritism. The Great Commission includes Jews and Gentiles not one over the other. Michael Green writes that the mission is just to the gentile:

Verse 19 picks up the repeated stress to go to Galilee (7, 10, 16). Galilee was of course the region where Jesus met them: there is one Jerusalem appearance and one Galilee appearance in Matthew’s balanced account. But it has a deeper meaning, as 4:15 shows. It points to Galilee of the Gentiles, so that “the people living in darkness may see a great light.”<sup>37</sup>

The Great Commission would not be “great” if it is so narrow in application. The mission

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<sup>33</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 431, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1114-15.

<sup>37</sup> Green, *The Message of Matthew*, 322.



Jesus hands to his followers includes Jews and Gentiles; not just as specific region. R. T. France clarifies, “When *ta ethnē* is qualified by *panta*, ‘all,’ mission is *beyond* Israel, but that does not require that Israel be excluded. If the Jewish writer Matthew had intended to say that to his probably largely Jewish Christian readers he would surely have made it explicit.”<sup>38</sup> This great plan is to each person a disciple meets, no matter their ethnicity or address. Jesus has come to seek and save all nations.

Jesus said, “Make disciples of the nations” and “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), but in the beginning the church stayed in Jerusalem. They preached with power, healed many, and conducted themselves with great courage whenever the authorities threatened them (Acts 4). Daniel M. Doriani observes,

But the Lord had to raise up men like Stephen, Philip, and Paul to thrust the church out to the Gentiles (Acts 7–9). We are much the same—if not worse. We know about the Great Commission, but sometimes hesitate to share our faith even with close friends, let alone venturing more radical paths.<sup>39</sup>

Christ has given his followers and his church the mission to seek and save the lost, which should make true disciples.

### **Baptize and Make Disciples**

Jesus continues the Great Commission with a specific plan to seek and save the lost by baptizing and making disciples. France writes, “The disciples were to call not for a superficial response but for total commitment to the new community (symbolized in baptism), and to a life governed by *everything I have commanded you*.”<sup>40</sup> This plan included making disciples through going to the world, baptizing others, and teaching new

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<sup>38</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1114-15.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew*, Reformed Expository Commentary, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 532, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>40</sup> France, “Matthew,” 944-45.

believers everything Jesus had taught them. This movement of disciples making other disciples is the plan Christ wants to continue.

**Make disciples by going.** The disciples' central responsibility is to multiply themselves, which is accomplished by baptizing and discipling the lost. Leon Morris explains,

Jesus' disciples are people for whom a life has been given in ransom (20:28) and who are committed to the service of the Master, who not only took time to teach his disciples but who died for them and rose again. Those who are disciples of such a leader are committed people. And, of course, this is the kind of disciple that he looks for his followers to make.<sup>41</sup>

A disciple is one who replicates what he has seen from the teacher and leads others to do the same. Jesus commissioned a disciple-making initiative that even today's believers must participate.

**Make disciples by baptizing.** Baptism will be the key first step that initiates new disciples into the church. This baptism is a single act, distinct from repeated Jewish ritual washings. It is done with the trinitarian formula invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Rom 6). Matthew uses "baptize into the name" (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) as an identifier of those loyal to Jesus.<sup>42</sup> Nolland observes, "Matthew intends a comprehensive commitment, together, to Jesus and what he has brought and done and stands for. Loyalty, belonging to, submission to, and intention to act on behalf of may all be involved."<sup>43</sup> Baptism is a setting aside of life to follow Jesus.

Baptism also signifies a new life with Christ. A believer who has been saved by Christ has a new beginning and is dependent on the resurrected life of Jesus. Romans 6:3-5 reads,

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<sup>41</sup> Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 745-50.

<sup>42</sup> Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1268.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life. For if we have been joined with Him in the likeness of His death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of His resurrection.

Jesus commanded disciples to baptize new believers as they begin their walk to mature and multiply. This new life they received is dependent on Jesus, so it signifies not just *what* they are but *whose* they are as Children of God.

**Make disciples by teaching.** Those who are baptized are to be taught not only to know all of Jesus’s commands but also to obey all of them (28:20). In discipleship, the goal is spiritual formation (cf. John 13:17). The commands of the Great Commission imply the central role of the church as God’s primary agency for mission. Only in the community/family that is the church can disciples be baptized and taught to observe all that Jesus has commanded (cf. Matt 16:18–19; 18:17–20).<sup>44</sup>

Baptism is not the be-all and end-all; it is no more than the beginning. The new disciple is to be baptized, but he or she is also to be taught “to observe all the things I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20). Disciples multiply and raise up or mature other disciples. This pattern is not only for those known as the apostles. Nolland clarifies,

Matthew restricts his use of the noun “disciple” (μαθητής) to the Twelve, but by making a wider use of other language markers of discipleship and more pointedly by his wider use of the cognate verb “disciple” (μαθητεύειν) Matthew indicates that the discipleship of the Twelve, though unique and unrepeatably, embodies patterns of discipleship which are of a more general relevance.<sup>45</sup>

Discipleship in the church and by believers cannot be neglected, especially because it was a priority of Jesus. However, Jesus was not speaking about teaching for education’s sake but “observing” what he has commanded. Jesus was concerned about disciples who “took up their cross and followed him” (Matt 10:38) and obeyed the Father. Leon Morris agrees, writing, “As we have seen throughout this Gospel, he continually urges his

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<sup>44</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 689-92.

<sup>45</sup> Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1263-72.

followers to live in a manner pleasing to God.”<sup>46</sup> The work of discipleship is personal and must be done disciple to disciple. Jesus poured into his disciples and they led a movement of disciples making disciples that exists 2,000 years later.

The mission of the church is to “baptize and make disciples” (Matt 28:19) and follow the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). This universal mission also has eternal implications. David Turner proclaims,

When people from all nations are discipled, a new obedient humanity begins to be formed. Thus obedience to the mission mandate turns out to fulfill, as a by-product, the original creation mandate that God gave to humanity’s first parents in the garden of Eden. The renewal of the world (19:28) has begun.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Gospel Is a Message That Must Be Told and Heard (Rom 10:1-21)**

The gospel is a message that must be told by believers and heard for a response, as taught in Romans 10:1-21. Paul teaches that biblical salvation is when someone hears and responds in faith to the gospel message. Believers speaking and sharing the gospel is needed for people to respond and be saved. Disciples sharing with the lost reveals the urgency for believers to share the gospel.

### **Righteousness through Faith Alone**

With the desire for the salvation of all, Paul wrote in Romans 10:1-13 to clarify that salvation comes through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and not by works. Paul demonstrates by comparing “justification by the law” against the “justification by faith.” Colin Kruse writes,

In this passage Paul provides further support for his claim in 10:4 that the coming of Christ marks the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. He does so by using the law itself to make his point, contrasting “the righteousness that is by the law” with “the righteousness that is by faith.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 745-50.

<sup>47</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 689-92.

<sup>48</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Cambridge: Apollos; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 405-13,

Paul argued against righteousness that has its origin in the law. He quoted Moses in Leviticus 18:5, “The one who does these things will live by them,” defining a works-based righteousness where a person is able to perform all that the law requires.<sup>49</sup> The natural interpretation of these words is that the way to life (i.e., salvation) is obedience to the law.<sup>50</sup> Paul revealed a fuller meaning of the Mosaic legal system: obey to enjoy God’s covenant blessings.<sup>51</sup> Mounce clarifies,

The problem lies in the fact that no one is able to live up to the requirements of the law. Although law points us in the right direction, it provides no power to achieve its demands. It was never meant as a way to merit God’s favor. Its role was to reflect the character of God in terms of ethical goals. The Jewish legalists had perverted the divine intention of the law and made it into a way to gain God’s favor based on personal merit.<sup>52</sup>

The Law does not lead to righteousness—instead of bringing people life it brings people under its curse. Paul argues that Christ has redeemed mankind from the law’s curse by becoming a curse.<sup>53</sup>

Paul compared the Law to “the righteousness that is by faith” in Romans 10:8-13. He sets out to argue that salvation is not from the law but Christ, and assures that, unlike the law, Christ is readily accessible.<sup>54</sup> Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:14: “The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” Douglas Moo states, “Paul is therefore explaining the ‘nearness’ of the word of faith, the gospel, by emphasizing that it

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Logos Bible Software.

<sup>49</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 208-11, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>50</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 2001), 282-84, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>51</sup> Douglas J. Moo, “Romans,” in *New Bible Commentary*, 1146.

<sup>52</sup> Mounce, *Romans*, 208-11

<sup>53</sup> Stott, *The Message of Romans*, 282-84.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

demands only a simple response and that, when responded to, it mediates God's salvation."<sup>55</sup> The response needed for salvation through the gospel is light compared to the demands of the law.

Paul proceeds to speak on confessing and believing, which are the outward and the inward aspects of conversion. If one really believes in Christ, he will confess Christ; these are linked together. The verb translated "confess" is a solemn religious act.<sup>56</sup> The content of the confession is "Jesus is Lord," which clarifies in whom they are confessing and believing. A faith response involves a confession that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead.<sup>57</sup> Kruse explains,

Underlying the public confession "Jesus is Lord" there was to be a personal belief ("in your heart") that God raised Jesus from the dead. The death and resurrection of Christ are essential tenets of the Christian gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1–5). Genuine faith involves both confession with the mouth and belief in the heart.<sup>58</sup>

Romans 10: 1-10 concludes that only those who believe in their hearts and confess with their mouths are saved from the wrath of God and share in the glory that is to come.<sup>59</sup>

### **An Urgent Need for All**

If one must believe in Christ to be saved, then there is an urgent need for the gospel to be proclaimed to all peoples. The weight of Rom 10:11, is that, "Now the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on Him will not be put to shame." Paul quoted Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore the Lord God said: 'Look, I have laid a stone in Zion, a tested

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<sup>55</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 657, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>56</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1988), 381-88, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 559.

<sup>58</sup> Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 405-13.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; the one who believes will be unshakable.”<sup>60</sup> Paul replaces “the one” with “everyone” to see the scope of the promise of salvation through faith in Christ.<sup>61</sup> Mark A. Seifrid writes, “The individualism of the text bears an implicit universalism that Paul has already introduced: the work of the Creator in Christ comes by the word to the heart and mouth, which belongs to every human creature.”<sup>62</sup> There is a desperate need for people of all nations, tribes and tongues to hear the gospel for salvation.

In the next phrase in verse 11, Paul clarifies that the gospel shows no favoritism. Here the lordship of Christ over all people is presented as evidence that no distinction exists between Jews and Gentiles. Schreiner clarifies, “Since the same Lord is Lord of all, then, both Jews and Gentiles are equally beneficiaries of his lordship.”<sup>63</sup> Romans 10:11 encourages believers to share the gospel openly with all people. Some have argued that the intention is to emphasize that the Jews have heard the gospel.<sup>64</sup> Schreiner corrects this thinking: “Verse 12 includes specifically both Jews and Gentiles within the realm of the ‘all,’ and thus the vagueness of the third person verbal forms in verses 14-15 should be preserved so that the verbs are not limited to either Jews or Gentiles.”<sup>65</sup> The gospel is the glorious good news for all “Jews and Gentiles” who need salvation due to being dead in their sin. Paul argued that everyone had a need for salvation because all were sinners. Romans 3:9-10 reads, “What then? Are we any better? Not at all! For we have previously charged that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, as it is written: There is no one

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<sup>60</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 659.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 561.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 565.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 566.

righteous, not even one.” There is hope then for all people that Jesus is the answer and demands the sharing of the gospel to everyone.

### **A Messenger Must Go**

Romans 10:14-15 demands that the followers of Jesus proclaim the gospel for the sake of the lost. Building off the argument of salvation through faith in Christ, Paul argues that one cannot believe unless someone tells them about Jesus. John Stott summarizes, “The essence of Paul’s argument is seen if we put his six verbs in the opposite order: Christ sends heralds; heralds preach; people hear; hearers believe; believers call; and those who call are saved.”<sup>66</sup> Looking at the entire argument of Romans, one could conclude that someone cannot be saved apart from the preaching or sharing of the gospel.<sup>67</sup> “Hearing” was a necessity of first-century life. While some people could read, the message of God was going to need to be heard.<sup>68</sup> Paul reminds believers that they must go share the gospel with the lost them.

One may say that with the sovereignty of God in the work of salvation there is no need for evangelism. Paul argues that both human responsibility and God’s sovereignty is at work; therefore, God has ordained the proclaiming of the gospel. Schreiner states,

Human responsibility and divine sovereignty in Rom. 9 and 10 should not be played off against one another so that the former nullifies the latter. Instead, the former is subsidiary to the latter without thereby emptying human choices of their validity or responsibility. . . . God’s election of some for salvation does not exclude the notion that he genuinely invites all to be saved.”<sup>69</sup>

There is no biblical reason for believers to refrain from proclaiming the gospel to all people so they may be saved.

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<sup>66</sup> Stott, *The Message of Romans*, 286.

<sup>67</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 568.

<sup>68</sup> Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 390.

<sup>69</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 575.



The Greek word group in Romans 10:14-15 focuses the action on preaching the good news. Paul then quotes Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the herald, who proclaims peace, who brings news of good things,” to emphasize the importance of the sending messengers of the gospel into the world.<sup>70</sup> Mounce writes, “Although the prophet was speaking of the messengers who brought the news of Israel’s imminent release from Babylonian captivity (Isa 52:7), Paul applied the verse to the apostolic bearers of the good news of the gospel.”<sup>71</sup>

Faithful followers of Jesus Christ must make it a priority to share the gospel. Equipping and sending members, teachers, missionaries, and preachers to share the gospel in their lives and throughout the world. If everyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved, then it is important that everyone have the opportunity to hear. People do not believe in someone about whom they have never heard, someone, therefore, must come preaching the good news.<sup>72</sup> As R. C. Sproul prescribes,

The top priority enterprise for the Christian church is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because people cannot believe or even hear about Jesus unless Jesus is preached. So the church must be committed to the preaching of the gospel to all men. Jesus gave the Great Commission to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every living creature.<sup>73</sup>

The gospel is a powerful weapon in the hands of a believer, and the believer must be willing to proclaim it so that people can be saved.

### **Be Ready to Share Your Faith (1 Pet 3:13-18)**

Peter challenges every believer to be ready to share their faith in 1 Peter 3:13-18. As Peter speaks to people under persecution, he advises them to be prepared to answer

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<sup>70</sup> Moo, “Romans,” 1146-47.

<sup>71</sup> Mounce, *Romans*, 211.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1994), 180, Logos Bible Software.

for their faith because their actions will make them stand out. Believers must be ready to share the gospel when given the opportunity. Believers must be ready to turn conversations to Jesus and be able to share the hope that people have in him.

### **Always Be Ready**

Peter encourages believers to be able and willing to share the gospel in their lives. Christians are to be ready constantly to respond to those who ask about their faith. Peter would say that no scenario could keep a believer from sharing Jesus. Peter would say not even persecution should keep a person from sharing his faith.

Peter wrote his letter in a difficult time for those professing their faith in Christ. Roman Christians suffered tortuous deaths at the order of Emperor Nero in 64-67.<sup>74</sup> Though this event was localized, it would have influenced many leaders within the empire to be against Christians who had been defined as traitors and enemies of the state.<sup>75</sup> Therefore when Peter says in 1 Peter 3:14, “But even if you should suffer,” he is using present optative form, *πάσχοιτε* (*paschoite*, you may suffer), indicating that such suffering is a real threat.<sup>76</sup> Peter is saying to the first century and modern believer that even threats should not keep one from trusting God and sharing the gospel.

Peter reminds believers that they can have courage to share the gospel despite threats because they serve God. In 1 Peter 3:14, Peter quotes Isaiah 57:6-8 when he writes, “Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed.” He is encouraging believers to not be fearful of men but fear the Holy God, as Isaiah writes, “You are to regard only the LORD of Hosts as holy. Only He should be feared; only He should be held in awe” (8:13). D. A. Carson explains,

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<sup>74</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 227, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

In Isa. 8:12b, the “fear” that Isaiah and his followers are not to share is the fear that held their opponents captive, the fear of being taken over by foreign forces from the northeast, prompting the leaders to make an unwise coalition with Egypt. In 1 Pet. 3:14, however, the fear in which Peter’s readers are not to indulge is not the fear that their opponents feared but rather the opponents themselves. “Do not fear their fear” must now mean “Do not fear the fear they engender”: the expression is difficult enough that the TNIV paraphrases, “Do not fear their threats,” while the ESV paraphrases, “Have no fear of them.”<sup>77</sup>

Believers are not to be deterred from seeking to save the lost by threats by humans or of this world but to fear God and trust his plan. Believers may be concerned with threats and persecution in this world but are reminded of the future treasure of heaven. Schreiner reminds, “Those who have God’s promise of blessing realize that any pain in this life is short-lived.”<sup>78</sup>

Peter goes further to encourage believers to always be prepared to share the gospel despite persecution. Christians do not need to be afraid of the opposition; but remain faithful to Christ.<sup>79</sup> Peter writes, “Honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts.” Even though believers may be targets of accusations (2:12), ignorant talk (2:15), evil and insult (3:9; 4:14), threats (3:14), and malicious talk (3:16), they must trust in Christ and have courage.<sup>80</sup> David Wheaton states,

The positive antidote to fear is to be found in giving Christ the special place that is his due at the center of our lives. There he is to reign as Lord. Such true fear of the Lord, expressing itself both in upright behavior and with a well-thought-out statement of faith, will drive out all lesser fears and eventually shame the detractors.<sup>81</sup>

Fear should not prevent disciples from engaging the lost, as Jesus who saves is the source of courage to be on mission. Edmund Clowney concludes, “Peter shows us that our hope provides both the courage for our witness and the content of our witness. Our

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<sup>77</sup> D. A Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1038.

<sup>78</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 169.

<sup>79</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 228.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>81</sup> David H. Wheaton, “1 Peter,” in *New Bible Commentary*, 1379.

hope is in our risen Lord. We sanctify the Lord Christ in our hearts; there is the end of fear.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Share the Hope**

Peter Davids observes, “Rather than fear the unbelievers around them, Christians, out of reverence to Christ, should be prepared to respond fully to their often hostile questions about the faith.”<sup>83</sup> Believers must be ready to share their hope in Christ. Peter instructs, “Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (3:15). Followers of Christ are to know their hope is Jesus and be willing to share him with the lost. First Peter 3:13-18 is the guide for having gospel conversations with neighbors and family that believers might win them to Christ.

First, one must understand that the purpose of gospel conversations is to provide an answer to those searching for Christ. Peter writes, “Give a defense to anyone who asks” (3:15). The words “give a defense” are translated from *προς ἀπολογία*; in the old sense of *ἀπολογία*, an answer back, a defense not to apologize.<sup>84</sup> The word “defense” almost always has a sense of “reply to an accusation” (cf. Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor 9:3; Phil 1:7, 16).<sup>85</sup> Some interpreters assume that formal persecution was the historical background; rather, Paul is saying all Christians are in view.<sup>86</sup> Jobe argues,

While that is a legitimate application of this verse, the apostle Peter did not have in mind the professional or academic field of Christian apologetics. Peter is concerned

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<sup>82</sup> Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 148, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>83</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 131-32, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>84</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1933), 1 Pe 3:15, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>85</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 160-61, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

that Christian believers are humbly and respectfully able to defend their hope in Christ to anyone who might ask, even if legal charges are in view for some.<sup>87</sup>

It is the role of every believer to be able to stand for the foundations of their faith when called upon to explain their faith. Schreiner explains, “This does not mean, of course, that every Christian is to be a highly skilled apologist for the faith. It does mean that every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true.”<sup>88</sup> Believers, therefore, must know that when they have spiritual or gospel conversations the purpose is to give a defense of their faith in Christ.

The content of the defense to the lost is faith in Christ, as argued previously; he is the only way for salvation. Peter used the word “hope” (*elpis*) rather than “faith.”<sup>89</sup> In 1 Peter, “hope” is a term referring to the future aspect of salvation, for it is into a living hope that Christians have been reborn through the resurrection of Christ (1:3). Davids explains,

This [hope] is one of Peter’s favorite words for their faith. It is most appropriate in that it looks forward to good. In a time in which the Christians were likely experiencing rejection and suffering from their fellow-countrymen, their hope would indeed be the mark of a faith that was triumphing over their circumstances.<sup>90</sup>

Using “Hope,” linked with the phrase “in your hearts,” Peter is emphasizing the internal and external faith it takes to live in troubled times that comes from hope in Jesus.<sup>91</sup> Peter encourages all believers to be prepared to share the hope of Jesus as they live faithfully for him. By sharing hope in Christ, believers proclaim the gospel message of a Savior who has come to bring forgiveness of sins.

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<sup>87</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 230-31.

<sup>88</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 175.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-75.

<sup>90</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 131-32.

<sup>91</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter and Jude*, 174-75.

By being prepared to share hope through gospel, conversations believers are emulating what Paul did throughout the book of Acts (22:1-21; 24:10-24; 26:1-23, 25b-29).<sup>92</sup> Paul's defense before Agrippa gives an example to believers in how to give a defense by bringing up the gospel through conversation in Acts 26:22–23:

To this very day, I have obtained help that comes from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing else than what the prophets and Moses said would take place that the Messiah must suffer, and that as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.

Peter and Paul both proclaim the resurrection to be the fulfilment of Scripture as the central message. In 1 Peter 1:3, Peter writes, "Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Believers can be reminded, as they have the opportunity to speak, that they must point to the resurrected Christ.

Schreiner concludes,

The truth of the gospel is a public truth that can be defended in the public arena. This does not mean, of course, that every Christian is to be a highly skilled apologist for the faith. It does mean that every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true.<sup>93</sup>

### **Gentleness and Respect**

As Christians engage with others through gospel conversations they must do so as ambassadors to Christ. Paul instructs, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God'" (2 Cor 5:20). Believers know that they represent him and must share the gospel with humility. Peter, therefore, guides Christians as they share the message of hope that they must do so with "gentleness and respect" (1 Pet 3:15).

How one gives an answer for his hope in Christ is just as important as just giving an answer. Christians are guided by Paul to share with gentleness and respect, or

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<sup>92</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 160-61.

<sup>93</sup> Schreiner, *1,2 Peter, and Jude*, 174.

rightly translated “with meekness and fear (ἀλλά μετα πραυτητος και φοβου [*alla meta prautētos kai phobou*]).”<sup>94</sup> The meekness is the attitude toward the listener. Grudem advises,

It indicates an unwillingness to establish one’s own justice, to defend oneself, and to attack an opponent, but instead a committing of one’s cause to God. Yet such witness must be given *with gentleness and reverence*, not attempting to overpower the unbeliever with the force of human personality or aggressiveness, but trusting the Holy Spirit himself quietly to persuade the listener.<sup>95</sup>

Peter is directing believers to have a humble attitude as they take time to listen and engage the lost, not wanting to win an argument but to win a heart for Christ.

Respect is not an attitude a believer has toward the lost, but of God himself, which is the way respect was used throughout 1 Peter (1:17; 2:18; 3:2).<sup>96</sup> Davids explains, “The Christian can answer gently or meekly because of his or her respect for God. Christians stand before God, who alone justifies them. Thus there is no need to defend or justify oneself before human opinion.”<sup>97</sup> Modern believers are fearful that they may offend an acquaintance in talking of religious matters, so they remain silent. Instead, there should be confidence in the God that is proclaimed and the message that saves.

Carson concludes,

“Fear God, and fear no other”: this oft-repeated slogan has bred courage in moral conflict and in Christian witness and has invested in Christian commitment an eternal perspective that is not easily seduced by opinion polls and social fads. This is precisely the kind of spiritual backbone that Peter is trying to build into his readers. At the end of the day, it depends utterly on a view of God that brooks no rivals.<sup>98</sup>

Believers must not make any excuse to share the gospel, but with gentleness and in respect speak about the God who saves.

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<sup>94</sup> Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 1 Pe 3:15.

<sup>95</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 161.

<sup>96</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 132.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Carson, “1 Peter,” 1038.

## **Conclusion**

With the space and scope allotted to this project, one cannot cover all of the Scripture and Bible teaching that applies to having gospel conversations with lost people. The four passages unpacked in in this chapter—Luke 19:1-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 10:1-21, and 1 Peter 3:13-18—reveal that Christians should engage the lost and share with them the hope of the gospel. In 1 Peter 3:13-18, along with the message of the Old Testament, Christians can attest God is concerned with redeeming a lost world. As Christ has come to seek and save the lost, it is now the mission of his church and followers of Christ to build relationships to share the gospel. This project seeks to train people to be more comfortable in engaging in conversations to share the gospel. As believers engage others to hear the gospel, believers are being part of the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost; this mission that Jesus began the church must continue.



CHAPTER 3  
THE PRACTICAL ISSUES OF HAVING  
GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

Much is written about evangelism that profits both Christians and the church. Included in this chapter are some practical implications that must be known to those who seek to share the gospel. A Sovereign God has given a message to his people so that they may share it without fear.

**God Is Sovereign in Salvation but Humanity  
Must Share Obediently**

A misunderstanding of God's and the Christian's role in evangelism can lead to ineffective gospel conversations. Those who prioritize God's sovereignty can be seduced to leaving evangelism all up to God and sitting on the sidelines. Those who stress human responsibility can be overly focused on results, which could lead to false conversions. Healthy gospel conversations occur when one understands both that God is sovereign and that Christians must share the gospel obediently.

**The Sovereignty of God in Evangelism**

The sovereignty of God is a biblical truth on which most evangelical Christians agree. God is controlling and moving time, history, and events to his perfect will for his own glory. J. I. Packer writes,

Divine sovereignty is a vast subject: it embraces everything that comes into the biblical picture of God as Lord and King in His world, the One who 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will' (Eph. 1:11), directing every process and ordering every event for the fulfilling of his own eternal plan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 12.

When it comes to God's role in evangelism, however, there is disagreement. The belief that God is sovereign should embolden the evangelist. God moves in the heart of sinners to draw them to salvation while using human instruments to bring the gospel message.

God brings a person to salvation through his sovereign will. John Piper explains the message of Romans 8:28-33: "He foreknows (that is elects) a people for himself before the foundation of the world, he predestines this people to be conformed to the image of his Son, he calls them to himself in faith, he justifies them through that faith alone, and he finally glorifies them."<sup>2</sup> The person who is born-again has been brought to life by the sweet gift of God. Time and again the Scriptures show that the decision to trust Christ was God's doing, not the Christian's:

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)

For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy. (Rom 9:15-16)

God exalted this man to his right hand as ruler and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31)

When they heard this they became silent. And they glorified God, saying, "So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles. (Acts 11:18)

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift. (Eph 2:8)

For it has been granted to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, (Phil 1:29)

God is writing the believer's story and he is the one bringing people out of the clutches of sin and death.

Saving people from an eternal destiny in Hell is the work of evangelism, and God is active in bringing people from sin to life in him. The very purpose of sharing the gospel is that someone will be born-again, being saved through the Spirit of God and brought to eternal life. When a believer shares the gospel, it is not the person or

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<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *Five Points: Towards a Deeper Experience of God's Grace* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013), 61.

presentation that moves the heart; it is God himself. “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1) is the status of every person according to Scripture. Upon conversion, the believer’s status has changed from death to life. Ephesians 2:4-5 says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!” The spiritual birth story of every Christian is that they were “dead” but now they are “alive with Christ.” Charles Spurgeon explains, “The Holy Ghost must work regeneration in the objects of our love, or they never can become possessors of eternal happiness. They must be quickened into a new life, and they must become new creatures in Christ Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> Conversion is an act of only someone who is powerful enough to perform the miracle, God himself. God is the power of salvation not the evangelist, the pastor, nor is it the believer’s presentation.

### **Human Responsibility in Light of God’s Sovereignty**

A proper understanding of God’s gracious work in salvation should never be used as an excuse to not evangelize. Packer warns of this mindset: “In their zeal to glorify God by acknowledging his sovereignty in grace, and by refusing to imagine that their own services are indispensable to him, they are tempted to lose sight of the church’s responsibility to evangelize.”<sup>4</sup> Instead, believers must realize that it is God’s right to rule and gives the Christians both the necessity and the command to share the gospel.

Christians must realize that God chose believers in his sovereign plan as the instruments to share the gospel. Since the beginning, God has been working to redeem the world back to himself. He sent Christ to redeem humankind and, in the same way, he sent Christians to share the message of his son. He has sent believers, commissioned

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<sup>3</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner: How to Lead Sinners to the Savior* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1895), 22, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 37.

them, and uses them to tell the gospel message. Orlando Saer remind Christians of their role in God's grand plan:

Once you realize that God's plan includes evangelism you submit yourself to him and join his plan to redeem the world. But remember: God's big plan is "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Eph 1:10, NIV 1984). And the way he has chosen to do that is not by pressing some huge divine remote control so that everyone suddenly bows the knee. No he's chosen to do it by employing people like you and me. He commissions us to be his ambassadors. He "gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18, NIV). Our lives and our words are the way his plan is fulfilled.<sup>5</sup>

Knowing that Christians play a part in God's plan should drive them to be faithful to share the gospel message.

Part of God's plan for spreading the gospel is using Christians as his messengers. As discussed in the previous chapter, Romans 10:1-21 reveals the truth that God has designed the gospel story to be told and heard. The God of the universe mandates in Romans 10:14b, "And how can they believe without hearing about him?" The gospel is a special revelation to humankind that "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9). Christians, therefore, must be generous in the sharing of the gospel. It is not the presenter of the message, it is the message that has been heard and ignited by the Holy Spirit that brings salvation. Believers cannot take sharing of the gospel out of the equation. Instead believers should see the privilege of being part of God's salvation mission and potentially part of someone else's testimony of how they came to faith. Christians must evangelize because it is a necessary part of God's mission.

God's sovereign work to bring salvation should not be misinterpreted by a believer to neglect evangelism and making disciples. Packer explains,

And the doctrine of divine sovereignty would be grossly misapplied if we should invoke it in such a way as to lessen the urgency, and immediacy, and priority, and binding constraint, of the evangelistic imperative. No revealed truth may be invoked

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<sup>5</sup> Orlando Saer, *Big God: How to Approach Suffering, Spread the Gospel, Make Decisions and Pray in the Light of a God Who Is Really in the Driving Seat of the World* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2014), 90.

to extenuate sin. God did not teach us the reality of his rule in order to give us an excuse for neglecting his orders.<sup>6</sup>

Since God is sovereign, the Christian must obey his commands to share the gospel.

God's rule over humanity is commissioning believers as ambassadors and messengers of the gospel. Christians must follow these commands that they are to 'Go' into the world with the gospel message. Saer observes,

He places the responsibility to speak squarely on our shoulders. And that takes bringing the gospel to the world around us firmly out of the "optional extra" box. No longer can we kid ourselves that evangelism is the "rear parking camera" of the Christian life. It's more like the steering wheel.<sup>7</sup>

Jesus commands, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20). Jesus also says, "And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Christians are to go make disciples because the sovereign Lord has told them to do so.

God's sovereignty should not keep believers from evangelism, it should compel them to share the gospel. Mark Dever writes,

Jonathan Edwards called one account of the Great Awakening *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions*. Of course, in one sense, all conversions are surprising: enemies are loved, the alienated are adopted, those who should be punished inherit eternal life instead. But it is exactly this radical, surprising nature of conversion that should encourage us in our evangelism. God may save anyone. And the more unlikely it appears, the more glory, we might even reason, he gets to himself when it happens!<sup>8</sup>

Christians cannot overlook the power of God at work in evangelism. God's power actually empowers believers to share more urgently and should give them confidence to share. The sovereignty of God gives practical help as Christians seek to have gospel conversations.

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<sup>6</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 38.

<sup>7</sup> Saer, *Big God*, 89.

<sup>8</sup> Mark E. Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 23, Logos Bible Software.

## The Confidence to Share the Gospel

The sovereignty of God practically impacts Christians when they evangelize. Sound doctrine leads to more evangelism and not less. The proper understanding of the power and plan of God should compel Christians to share the gospel more regularly and with confidence. This confidence can help Christians be free from the anxiety of sharing the gospel and lead them to pray for the salvation of the lost.

**Freed from fear.** Many Christians refrain from sharing the gospel because they feel intimidated and fear failure. They are concerned they will not say the correct words, fumble a presentation, or the person could be offended. This type of thinking can be cured by being reminded of a person's role in evangelism. God does the saving, believers are responsible for sharing. Evangelism is obedience to God and it is not based on the result. Only God can save someone, which should free Christians to know that they are not being evaluated by their performance. In *Share Jesus without Fear*, William Fay and Linda Shepherd explain,

God is sovereign! If he can take somebody like me and change him, he can take anybody in your life and change him as well. But be aware: you are not responsible for causing a person's heart to turn towards God. . . . You see, success is sharing your faith and living your life for Jesus Christ. It has nothing whatsoever to do with bringing anyone to the Lord. It has everything to do with obedience.<sup>9</sup>

When believers begin to see that God is the one bringing the harvest and it is not their performance, they begin to see evangelism as not results based but a matter of being a faithful disciple. Will Metzger offers this reminder: "We plant and water; God gives the increase (1 Cor 3:5-9). We may reap-but only when God has brought the grain to maturity. . . . Genuine witnessing involves persuading people to convert but stops short of evaluating the success only in terms of results."<sup>10</sup> Any anxiety should be alleviated

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<sup>9</sup> William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, rev. and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 28-29.

when the Christian is reminded of God’s power. The fear of messing up a presentation or not knowing what to say should melt away. God being the mover of people’s hearts does not mean new believers should neglect being disciplined and growing in their knowledge of God, but it should help Christians rely on God and not themselves. Believers should not be deterred to share the gospel because they are afraid they may mess up a presentation. God uses all types of people, imperfections and all, to bring people to faith in Christ. Believers should do what they can to know the basics of evangelism and then obediently share, whether they think they have the perfect presentation or not. Mack Stiles explains, “We must also recognize that when people develop good-hearted commitments to evangelism, God can produce true fruit. I, for one, will take people practicing evangelism as best they can over those who forgo evangelism until they have the perfect practice.”<sup>11</sup>

**Sharing in boldness.** Understanding that God’s plan is for Christians to share the gospel and that he is at work in and through them should result in boldness. Christians are part of the tapestry of history in which God is saving people to himself. God controls every detail, from the way someone hears the gospel to bringing the gospel harvest. Christians can be bold because they know they are working within God’s plan for their lives to “go make disciples” (Matt 28:19). Christians can know that their very lives are by no accident and that they are placed in their community, workplace, or school to share Jesus without fear. Rico Tice writes,

In God’s sovereignty, what is going on in human history is that God is reaching out to people, so that they will reach out to him. The reason your neighbor lives where she does is so that she will get reached for the gospel. Why did God want a Christian—you—to be in your workplace? Yes, so you can bless your boss and workers by working hard and honestly. But first and foremost, it’s so that others can hear the gospel.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus*, Building Healthy Churches Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 23.

<sup>12</sup> Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism: How to Talk about Jesus Even When It’s Tough* (Surrey, UK: Good Book, 2015), 49.

God's plan for humans to share the gospel also alleviates fear of rejection. If Christians are faithful in evangelism, then they are performing an act of worship to God and he is pleased. Being rejected by others should not concern Christians because, if they are faithfully sharing the gospel, they are only doing what their Heavenly Father has asked of them. Tice encourages believers in this way: "When we know that we are children of God, we don't fear the rejection of others—we're loved by our Creator! We don't hear their mockery—the Maker of the cosmos thinks well of us!"<sup>13</sup> Instead of being concerned with whether people will reject or mock them, Christians can plead with them to come to Christ. Believers can have confidence like Paul before Agrippa, and plead, "I wish before God . . . not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am" (Acts 26:29).

**Prayer.** Knowing God and his work in evangelism should drive Christians to rely more on his power. Christians who are seduced to believe that someone coming to Christ is based on their performance are missing the crucial ingredient of salvation: God's power. Jesus promised that his followers would not be sent on mission alone, but that they would have great power. Jesus said, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20), and, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses . . . to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Christians should be reminded that, since God is sovereignly bringing people to faith in him, they should tap into that power through prayer. Dever explains,

Remember the importance of prayer in your evangelism. When Jonah was saved from the fish, he said, "Salvation comes from the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). If the Bible teaches us that salvation is the work of God, then surely we should ask him to work among those we evangelize. Jesus did. His prayer in John 17 was for those who would believe in him through the disciples' preaching and witnessing. And God answered that prayer. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44). If this is God's work, we should ask him to do it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Tice, *Honest Evangelism*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, 60.



Believers should pray because, just as God’s sovereign plan includes them in bringing people to faith, he also has decided that prayers matter. Saer states, “We pray because prayers lead to God working.”<sup>15</sup> Christians concerned with the salvation of people in the world should be praying. They should pray for God to change hearts of the lost, pray for their inadequacies as evangelists, and pray for opportunities to share. God’s sovereignty reminds Christians to not be evangelists in their own power, but in his power. Stiles writes, “When we understand that it’s God’s work in people’s lives, we avoid the mistake of working hard on performance at the expense of prayer; it leads us to pray and trust in the One who can produce a converted heart.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Christians should cry out to God in prayer for God to move and work through them. Prayer becomes a vital tool for a Christian seeking to see lost people found. As Christians enter the world to share the gospel, prayer should be the first step to the mission.

God being the sovereign king should drive believers to share the gospel more, not less. The gospel working in the heart of humanity is a gift from God (Eph 2:2-9) and should lower the anxiety many Christians have in sharing the gospel. Stiles reminds, “People don’t come to faith because of our excellent presentation or because we provided the perfect circumstance. People come to genuine faith because God draws them.”<sup>17</sup> Knowing the Creator of the Cosmos is working with Christians in evangelism should drive them to be faithfully obedient and urgent in sharing the gospel.

### **The Message Should Be “Gospel-Centered” not “Me-Centered”**

In evangelism, it is important to get the content of the message correct and not just seek results. The Christian is sharing a truth that has eternal consequences, and

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<sup>15</sup> Saer, *Big God*, 134.

<sup>16</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Marks of a Messenger: Knowing Living, and Speaking the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 78.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

getting the message wrong can lead one to a false understanding of God and salvation. The message must be gospel-centered, as it is the only message with the power of salvation. Saer warns about changing the gospel message: “The only way to offer life to those around us is to leave the gospel we have inherited intact. No touching up. No remastering. No adaptation. Why? Because to modify God’s gospel is not to bring life; it’s to return to death.”<sup>18</sup> Christians must guard the gospel message and be clear as they share it with the lost.

### **Not about the Evangelist**

When sharing the gospel, Christians must be careful to not focus the message of salvation on themselves. Today, the danger is to be human-centered in the story of salvation, answering the felt-needs of individuals. The message believers share is one about a God who saves, and to take that spotlight from him misunderstands the gospel. Will McRaney cautions, “If we are not careful, we will remake God in our image, based on our needs, rather than recognize the totality of who He is in the Scriptures and the revelation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup> When sharing the gospel, the believer must be clear that it is not about “me,” or about the human experience, it is about the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Believers must guard against only speaking to changing the lost person’s experience. Some believers focus on trying to help someone change their morality as the goal of salvation. While the gospel produces life-change, it is not the gospel message. Morality is important, but there can be a confusion that salvation is only about changing behavior. Focusing on morality could lead someone to feel they can act good enough for God to accept them, which goes against the grace gift that the gospel is: “For you are

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<sup>18</sup> Saer, *Big God*, 86.

<sup>19</sup> Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in an Changing Culture* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 78.

saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift” (Eph 2:8). Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and mixing up this message with a morality-based outcome can confuse the way of salvation. Stiles warns against a morality based gospel presentation:

Good deeds without the gospel can fool us, in our pride, to think that our condition is acceptable to God. If people think that their own goodness gets them to God, they are rejecting the core message of the gospel of grace. The challenge for healthy evangelism is to stop trying to clean people up through rules rather than bring them to the cross.<sup>20</sup>

Gospel conversations should not major on morality, but should major on the cross of Christ. Morality is a “me-centered” approach that can lead people to think that changing behavior will get them to heaven, which is an anti-gospel message. Repentance is necessary for salvation, but changing behavior is not the way to salvation. The message the believer shares must not prioritize behavior modification alone.

The message of sharing the gospel is the story of salvation for those who believe in faith, not just the Christian’s own story. Some Christians shape their sharing of the gospel solely on their own testimony. While a testimony is helpful to show an example changed by the power of the gospel, it cannot be confused as the gospel itself. A “me-centered” testimony is concerning because the message of Jesus can get lost. Mark Dever shares the concern:

In telling people how we have seen God help us, we may not actually make clear his claim on our lives or explain what Christ did on the cross. It’s good to share a testimony of what God has done in our lives, but in sharing our testimonies we may not actually make clear what Christ’s claims are on other people. In order to evangelize, we must be clear about that.<sup>21</sup>

If a believer uses their testimony to share the gospel, they must be intentional about sharing the gospel truths. Believers must be careful to not shine the spotlight of salvation on themselves, but on the God who saves. Metzger encourages to make the message about God:

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<sup>20</sup> Stiles, *Marks of the Messenger*, 44.

<sup>21</sup> Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 73.

The content of our message is Christ and God, not our journey to faith. Our personal testimony may be included, but witnessing is more than reciting our spiritual autobiography. Specific truths about a specific person are the subject of our proclamation. A message has been committed to us- a word of reconciliation to the world.<sup>22</sup>

Gospel conversations must include the message of Christ's work on the cross and not just their own experience.

The message of an evangelist must be centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians must grow in their ability to saturate their conversations in gospel truths. The message must be clear on the elements of the gospel so that the hearer can come to genuine faith.

### **The Gospel Message**

Evangelists must make sure the content of their gospel presentation is correct. It is essential to get the message right because it is the message of salvation. Jeff Vanderstelt writes, "When we talk about the gospel, we are not just talking about a doctrine we write down and quote. We are talking about the very real, dynamic power of God to create, redeem, and save."<sup>23</sup> Such an important message must contain the correct content.

When a Christian is sharing the gospel, clarity of the content is important. In the current culture many do not have a Christian background, so an evangelist must be confident in the truth claims he makes. Ravi Zacharias states, "In a society that not only does not believe in a metanarrative or in the exclusivity but also rejects the notion of objective truth, ours is a monumental claim."<sup>24</sup> An evangelist that is unclear of the gospel will have a hard time keeping an audience. In this culture, however, there is a starvation

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<sup>22</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt, *Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 66.

<sup>24</sup> Ravi Zacharias, "The Touch of Truth," in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 38.

for truth and the gospel can fill that void. The content of a gospel presentation must be faithful to the teaching of the Bible.

To win people for Christ, the essential elements of the gospel must be included. A whole gospel creates a whole Christian and therefore the whole gospel must be presented. The gospel must include the truth about God, Christ, humanity's status and how to be saved. Packer states, "For preaching the gospel, as we have just seen, means inviting sinners to come to Jesus Christ, the living Savior, who, by virtue of his atoning death, is able to forgive and save all those who put their trust in him."<sup>25</sup> The evangelist must present all the elements of the gospel so that the hearer can respond in saving faith. According to Greg Gilbert, the gospel has four main parts: "God. Man. Christ. Response."<sup>26</sup> These elements must be included to present the whole gospel.

**God.** Alvin Reid writes, "The gospel message doesn't begin in the manger. It begins before the beginning, when God existed."<sup>27</sup> Every gospel story must begin with God because he is the entire message of the Bible. When the Gospel of John begins its message of salvation, it starts "in the Beginning." Paul begins the book of Romans talking about God's "eternal power and divine nature" (Rom 1:20).<sup>28</sup> The gospel is a story about God redeeming his creation to himself. Establishing God as Creator, the source of life, establishes his authority over humanity. This is foundational to the gospel as it determines not just why humans exist, but why humanity need saving and by whom are humans being saved. It is essential to know, as Stiles writes, "God is our Creator. He

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<sup>25</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 76.

<sup>26</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 32.

<sup>27</sup> Alvin L. Reid, *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out* (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 30.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

is loving, holy, and just. One day he will execute perfect justice against all sin.”<sup>29</sup> As the holy and righteous judge, God establishes who determines what is right and wrong; while also establishing who judges sinners. It also establishes that it is God who loves humanity and whom the believer should want to spend all of eternity.

**Man.** In light of knowing who God, is one can rightfully see the truth about mankind. Stiles explains, “People are made in the image of God. We are beautiful and amazing creatures with dignity, worth, and value. But through willful, sinful rebellion against God, we have turned from being his children to his enemies.”<sup>30</sup> The Bible lays out a tragic story about how humanity began and where it has gone. Humanity is created in his image and designed to worship God alone (Gen 1-2). The story is so bad because a Holy, loving God made humans “in his image” and they all have rebelled against him. Metzger writes, “To admit I am sinful in my nature (not just that I make mistakes or am imperfect), and by simply not loving God (vertical relationship) I have offended his holiness, making me liable for punishment.”<sup>31</sup> Because of rebellion, the only punishment deserved is death (Rom 6:23). Humans are bound to die once and face judgment, and due to sin, they will die again in a literal place called Hell—a place of punishment beyond what they can comprehend. Sin is serious and receives a serious punishment. Packer writes, “We never know what sin really is till we have learned to think of it in terms of God, and to measure it, not by human standards, but by the yardstick of his total demand on our lives.”<sup>32</sup> Helping someone to see the reality of his sin is a difficult conversation but a necessary one. If someone is not convinced he needs saving, then he will never look

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<sup>29</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34.

<sup>31</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 65.

<sup>32</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 62

for a Savior. The Spirit of God will bring about true conviction over sin, but the evangelist must engage their heart and show the truth about their sin.

**Jesus.** The gospel is “good news” because God did not leave humanity in their sinfulness but sent a Savior whose name is Jesus. Michael Green writes, “The one who came preaching the good news (Jesus) had become the content of the good news (Jesus).”<sup>33</sup> When sharing the gospel is essential to point people to Jesus, who is the only person that can save them from their sins. Jesus is the way of salvation and the only way (John 14:6). Gospel conversations require talking about Christ’s identity and his mission, including his death burial and resurrection.

Sharing the good news rises and falls on the introduction of Christ into the story of humanity. Evangelists must make clear that Jesus was fully God and Man and that God sacrificed him on behalf of the sin of mankind. Packer reminds,

For the truth is that you cannot make sense of the historic figure of Jesus till you know about the incarnation—that this Jesus was in fact God the Son, made man to save sinners according to God’s eternal purpose. Nor can you make sense of his life till you know about the atonement—that he lived as a man so that he might die as man for men, and that his passion, his judicial murder, was really his saving cation of bearing away the world’s sins.

Jesus is the good news because he satisfied the two requirements needed for salvation as Green explains, humans’ “obligation to live a morally perfect life” and “the punishment we deserve for disobeying God’s holy law.”<sup>34</sup> Jesus was not another teacher, prophet, or religious leader, he is the Son of God. At every turn in the Bible, only one conclusion is possible: Jesus is God the Son. He is the eternal, all-powerful, all-loving, self-existent Creator God (Matt 3:17; John 1:14, 8:58, 10:3, 14:9-11; Col 2:9). When he lived on earth he lived a sinless and perfect life. His perfection is then imputed on believers so that on the day of judgment those who are saved will be welcomed into heaven. Jesus’ perfection

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 51.

<sup>34</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 73.

made him the perfect substitution to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind. God, being a holy God, must punish sins. He is also perfectly just so there must be a payment for sins. Humanity's sins were paid for when Jesus gave himself up to be crucified. Metzger writes, "The fire of God's wrath has touched down at one particular point in history. And when it did, it utterly consumed a man as he hung on the cross."<sup>35</sup> Jesus' death is the perfect and only payment that truly covers the sins of mankind. However, Jesus did not stay dead—he was resurrected. On Sunday morning, God opened the tomb of Jesus to reveal he was no longer dead but alive. This miracle proves that Jesus is the Savior and that his work accomplished the salvation of mankind. McRaney states the importance of the resurrection: "The resurrection is the single most important physical event in and spiritual reality that has ever occurred in history."<sup>36</sup> The resurrection of Jesus solidifies the claim of Jesus as the Son of God and that salvation comes from no other name. For those who seek salvation and eternal life, Jesus is the good news about which they need to hear and to whom they need to respond.

**Response.** When presented with the good news about Jesus, the demand becomes that one must respond. People may reject the message of Jesus and according to the Scriptures face a second death in hell. Those who are changed by the Holy Spirit and accept the message of Christ will respond in belief and repentance. Packer explains,

Faith is essentially the casting and resting of oneself and one's confidence on the promises and mercy which Christ has given to sinners, and on the Christ who gave those promises . . . repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as king in self's place.<sup>37</sup>

The response to be born again begins with belief or faith. The message of the Bible is that salvation is available to those who believe. Faith lays hold of the gift of salvation. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone

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<sup>35</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 75.

<sup>36</sup> McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 88.

<sup>37</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 71.



who believes” (Rom 1:16). Faith, belief, and trust are used interchangeably to express the saving faith of obtaining justification. It is more than knowledge but an expression of trusting in the work of Christ for salvation and trusting in Christ to direct the life of a believer through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Discussed earlier is that saving faith is brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit and true conversion happens through the power of God in the individual.

Repentance is the result of faith, meaning that a person turns from the life of sin to a new life in Christ. Calling people to respond to the gospel must include both the free gift of salvation but the reality of a costly decision. Jesus says, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). The reward of the gospel is that a believer gains life in close relationship with the God of the universe and gain heaven for eternity. Repentance is not a sacrifice to gain salvation, but a faith response to the free gift of grace which a believer would do willingly. Tice writes, “If you give your life to Jesus, he will give you life. The One who calls us to give him everything is the One who has given everything for us, and who will give everything to us.”<sup>38</sup> The gospel demands both to accept the gift but also to fully acknowledge that it will cost a Christian everything to gain everything.

Knowing the elements of the gospel, the evangelist can confidently know they are sharing the message of life. While the Christian who is sharing the gospel knows that God saves through his power and timing, he shares because he knows people must hear the gospel in order to respond and be saved. The gospel must be clear, and it must include the Savior.

### **Gospel Conversations Must Include Jesus**

The early church had a clear understanding that the gospel was essentially a message about Christ. Paul explains,

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<sup>38</sup> Tice, *Honest Evangelism*, 69.

Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor 15:1-4)

From the time that the disciples were first given the Great Commission until now, all believers are called to be on mission to share the about Jesus. As Green records about the first disciples,

The resurrection came to them as God’s vindication of the claims Jesus had made. They saw that he was “designated Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.” And they continued to announce these joyful tidings with tireless zeal and boundless enthusiasm.<sup>39</sup>

The resurrection of Jesus is the same message a Christian must share with urgency to the lost today. Christians’ gospel conversations must share Jesus.

True gospel conversations are conversations about Jesus. Many people claim they have shared the gospel, yet all they have done is talk about church, good morals, or a story of life change. A true conversation about the gospel, however, must always include Jesus. Though believers may feel pressure to leave him out the message, they must speak about Jesus. Sam Chan defines evangelism as “the essence of evangelism is the message that Jesus Christ is Lord. Evangelism is our human effort of proclaiming this message . . . and trusting and praying that God in his sovereign will, will supernaturally use our human and natural means to effect his divine purposes.”<sup>40</sup> In this project, a gospel conversation is defined by talking about Jesus and his life, death, and resurrection. The purpose of this project is to get people to feel more comfortable and be bolder in getting to Jesus. A gospel conversation, as this project defines it and as the Bible defines it, is all about Jesus.

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<sup>39</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 49.

<sup>40</sup> Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 24.

## **Many Ways to Share the Gospel**

The lost need to hear the gospel in order to respond and to be saved; therefore, Christians must be faithful to share the gospel. Christians need to be prepared and have a game plan so that they are always ready to share the good news. Over the years, many gospel presentations and strategies have been designed in order to be more successful and strategic. There is not enough space to go over every evangelistic model and method; however, four broad categories will be presented in this section. This project intends to address the last two categories and improve on HBC's Ministry Evangelism by improving members' ability to have gospel conversations.

### **Mass Evangelism**

Large scale evangelism can take many forms, from preaching to large groups in revival, to attractional-based ministry events. These events are used to draw a large net to cast out the gospel with the hope that people will respond. Billy Graham and Greg Laurie are proponents of this model and indeed God has blessed them to see people come to Christ. If done biblically, mass evangelism can be an effective mode of sharing the gospel.

Open air preaching and revivals were products of the First and Second Great Awakenings as a mode of evangelism. Whitefield and Wesley began in the British Isle's in the 1700s and saw many come to Christ, and then they moved to the Colonies. Though a great movement started with open-air preaching and evangelism, it was a second wave of faithful gospel preaching and evangelism that God brought many to salvation. John Mark Terry observes,

The second wave was the increased evangelistic activity of local pastors. The pastors intensified their efforts at personal evangelism and began to preach more fervently as Whitfield had done. The first wave attracted more notice, but the second wave had more lasting effect.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 124.

By the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, the Second Great Awakening swept across America seeing the birth of revivalism. Mass evangelism, which focused on a personal response, effected both evangelism and the pulpits of America going forward. People like Charles Finney used the mourner's bench and pleaded for people to come forward to the altar in response. These movements have shaped even modern mass evangelism in areas such as sports ministries, concerts, revivals, and even churches as they call for a response in a large group setting for people to respond to the gospel.

Mass evangelism is an effective and useful model for sharing the gospel. The danger in this model of emotional pleas, however, is that it leads to false conversions. Terry writes that, in the Second Great Awakening, "the evangelists institutionalized the revival and made it a planned event rather than a surprising outpouring of divine blessing."<sup>42</sup> This dependency on entertainment, emotion, or the focus on response can be a trap on which people rely more than the Spirit of God in bringing conversion of a lost soul. Reid agrees, explaining, "I have been in a few services where the evangelist seemed more interested in a large response than the work of the Spirit."<sup>43</sup> While this warning should not keep churches from doing mass evangelism, it should instruct them in guarding their practice and being focused on presenting the whole gospel and being dependent on the Holy Spirit.

### **Small Group Evangelism**

In recent years, there has been more of a focus on evangelism by investing in people through a small group of Christians. Small groups have their roots in the Pietists

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<sup>42</sup> Terry, *Evangelism*, 141.

<sup>43</sup> Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville: B & H, 2009),342.

of the 1600s, who used small groups to encourage godliness.<sup>44</sup> The “methods” used by the Wesley’s in the 1700s, which swept across Britain and America, used groups for evangelism and discipleship.<sup>45</sup> Today, many churches use some form of small group ministry that is designed to be a place to bring lost people for connection to Christ. Reid explains that the benefits of these groups are that “small groups can be an entry point for unchurched who may not be uncomfortable walking into our worship services. They provide a means for missional believers to engage with lost friends in a more personal manner.”<sup>46</sup> Andrea Buczynski, who works with college students, also believes small groups are effective for reaching today’s culture: “When a student does come to Christ in that context, he already has friends who can help him in a discipleship process.”<sup>47</sup>

This method of evangelism does depend on the individual and group to be faithful in inviting and sharing the gospel. In recent years, Sunday school and other small groups have not been the evangelistic tool they were intended to be. They have drifted into lecture-based knowledge centers or closed groups that are inward focused to those already in the group. These groups need to be revived by training leaders to be evangelistic and to lead their groups to do the same.<sup>48</sup> The church and Christians need to reclaim small groups as an evangelistic tool. As Thom Rainer found in his research, small groups are “indispensable in reaching the unchurched.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 66-67.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-26.

<sup>46</sup> Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 304.

<sup>47</sup> Andrea Buczynski, “Examples of Effective Evangelism,” in Carson, *Telling the Truth*, 316.

<sup>48</sup> Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 305.

<sup>49</sup> Thom Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 168.

## **Ministry-Based/ Servant Evangelism**

Evangelism that tries to meet a practical need in order to share the gospel is called ministry or servant evangelism. Servant evangelism includes someone sharing the gospel after they have provided a physical need, act of kindness, or intentionally serving the community. Jeff Iorg writes these ministries can include “cleaning a neighborhood, painting a school, or providing labor to refurbish homes owned by senior citizens. They can also include events like free car washes or food delivery to the homeless.”<sup>50</sup> Ministry evangelism can be an effective way to open relationships to share the gospel. Dave Wheeler explains,

Servant Evangelism is intentionally evangelistic, though by no means does it seek to coerce in a negative sense. When doing an act of kindness, the witness says, “I am doing this to show you the love of Jesus in a practical way.” Then, as the Holy Spirit opens the door, usually through the individual responding, “Why are you doing this or that?” the one performing the act of servanthood has a captive audience and proceeds to share their conversion experience coupled with the gospel presentation.<sup>51</sup>

Ministry evangelism can take through many different activities in which they can reach people for Jesus, but there are dangers with this method.

Servant Evangelism must be intentionally gospel centered to be effective for soul winning. In recent years, churches have tried servant evangelism projects but have lost the main point to share the gospel. Many service ministries have too focused on the service and not the evangelism. Some liberal Christians say things like, “Jesus served people that is what we should do.” These liberal Christians go on to serve social justice causes throughout the city, but little baptisms result. They forget that Jesus was always calling people to the kingdom and when he performed a miracle it was to open their eyes about him being the Savior of the World. Ministry and servant evangelism must be a vehicle to sharing the gospel presentation. The hope people need is the gospel and to care

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<sup>50</sup> Jeff Iorg, *Live Like a Missionary: Giving Your Life for What Matters Most* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 2011),159.

<sup>51</sup> Dave Wheeler, “Understanding Servant Evangelism,” in Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 276.

for them is presenting them with the truth. Christians and churches must make sure the gospel is central in all service ministries.

Part of this project is using the ministry of serving families in our community. HBC has had a history of serving its community through feeding adults with special needs, Vacation Bible School, service projects, and family outreach events. Family outreach events such as block parties, Easter egg hunts, and fall festivals are some of the recent events in which HBC has participated. The trend has been that these ministries have been events with little gospel witness. There have been gospel presentations, but there has been little involvement or training to make the most of heaving potentially lost people on church property. This project seeks to provide more intentionality to ministry projects by training members to have gospel conversations.

### **Personal Evangelism**

The basic biblical form of evangelism comes down to one person sharing with another person about Jesus. Jeff Iorg writes that personal evangelism can take many forms, such as “door-to-door visitation, census taking in public venues, and conversations with friends and acquaintances.”<sup>52</sup> Reid adds that personal evangelism is built on the belief that “every person saved by the power of God has a commission to invite others to join that movement, to become worshippers of the one true God.”<sup>53</sup> Personal evangelism is ultimately a way for someone to take advantage of an opportunity to share the gospel.

Christians should take advantage of every relationship to share the gospel. God in his sovereignty has placed Christians in families, neighborhoods, schools, work places, and communities in order to share the good news. When a conversation starts with an unexpected person, such as when a person gets seated next to an unbeliever on a plane, or

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<sup>52</sup> Iorg, *Live Like a Missionary*, 158.

<sup>53</sup> Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 285.

when a friend starts to talk about trials in their life, God has opened a door for evangelism.

These divine appointments are opportunities to share Jesus. Stiles writes,

We don't know the exact times, dates and places of our appointments. It's enough to know they will happen. They may not come easy, either. Your divine appointment may be different from what you expect, it may happen with people you wouldn't choose, and it may happen in a place that will surprise you. Your divine appointment may happen when you are tired, or when its inconvenient, or when you've got other things on your mind. But it will happen.<sup>54</sup>

Christians need to be ready and intentional with their conversations, so they can reveal Jesus.

Though there are many ways to share the gospel in personal evangelism, conversations need to be the focus of evangelism today. People need to be viewed as people and not projects. The evangelist needs to be reminded that they are talking with a person and not merely doing a presentation. Today especially people want to know that the evangelist is listening to get to know them, and not just talking at them. Rebecca Pippert reminds, "We don't take interest in people in order to trick them in to a conversation about Christ. We want to know and understand people because God loves them."<sup>55</sup> Conversations help the believer to know more about the person and how to help them best know more about Jesus. It also allows the Christian to build a long-term relationship so that if the person is hesitant to accept Christ more conversations can occur. In this project, the focus was on training people to have gospel conversations at outreach events.

### **Asking Questions That Bridge the Gap to Sharing Jesus**

Turning more conversations to gospel conversations is vital to fulfilling the Great Commission. Conversations were important to Jesus and are important in sharing

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<sup>54</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Speaking of Jesus: How to Tell Your Friends the Best News They Will Ever Hear* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 77.

<sup>55</sup> Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life*, rev. and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 144.



the gospel. Evangelists must learn to listen and get to know the person to whom they are sharing Christ. Christians must use questions to drive the conversation to deeper subjects.

### **Conversational Evangelism**

A study showed that people have “on average 27 conversations a day.”<sup>56</sup> Christians must be equipped to be more bold and comfortable in bringing up Christ in their conversations. These conversations can stay superficial, so a believer must learn how to move them to spiritual conversations. Christians can follow the way of Jesus to use everyday conversation to share the gospel.

The Bible shows that conversations are the starting point for evangelism. Throughout the Gospels and Acts are examples of conversations that get turned to the gospel:

1. Jesus went to a well in Samaria and turned a conversation about water to a conversation about eternal life (John 4:1-26).
2. The blind wanted physical sight and Jesus offered spiritual sight (Mark 10:51-52; John 9:1-12).
3. The men with leprosy wanted physical healing and Jesus offered spiritual healing (Matt 4:1-4; Luke 17:12-19).
4. Peter spoke to people confused at Pentecost to urge them to repent and believe (Acts 2:40).
5. Early believers shared the gospel and added to their number daily (Acts 2:47).
6. A beggar asked for money and John and Peter turned the conversation to the gospel (Acts 3).
7. When persecution came, Christians went out and shared the word of the Lord (Acts 8:4).
8. The angel of the Lord told Phillip to go south where he met an Ethiopian man who came to believe the gospel and was baptized (Acts 8:26-40).

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<sup>56</sup> Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 51.

Jesus demonstrated, and his disciples learned, that all conversations can be used to point people to Jesus. Reid writes that conversations can benefit Christians: “Many times others initiate a conversation directly aimed at spiritual things, but we, like Jesus at the well with the Samaritan woman, can turn the conversation to spiritual things.”<sup>57</sup>

The best thing about conversations is that a believer can have them with anyone. Conversations build the bridge to people so that the gospel can be presented. Malone and Cahill write, “The best way to show people our Christianity is to develop a conversational relationship with them. . . . If we want them to be interested in what we have to say, we must be interested in our neighbor.”<sup>58</sup> As Christians seek to have conversations, they rely on the Holy Spirit to give them opportunity and connection with that person so that they can turn the conversation to the gospel. This method is something everyone can do when they pray, prepare, and follow the principles of listening and asking questions. Keith Davy explains, “The key to conversational evangelism is the art of asking questions and listening.”<sup>59</sup>

## **Listening**

Listening is often the forgotten element of evangelism. Steve Sjogren and Dave Ping state, “In a world where talk is cheap, good listening is still pure gold. When it comes to showing the love of Jesus to those closest to you, using your ears effectively is always more powerful than running your mouth.”<sup>60</sup> Listening helps believers hear the

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<sup>57</sup> Reid, *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out*, 92.

<sup>58</sup> Josh Malone and Mark Cahill, “Neighbors: Taking the Gospel Next Door,” in *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ*, ed. Scott Dawson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 131.

<sup>59</sup> Keith A. Davy, “The Gospel for a New Generation,” in Carson, *Telling the Truth*, 362.

<sup>60</sup> Steve Sjogren and Dave Ping, *Outflow: Outward-Focused Living in a Self-Focused World* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2006), 112

heart of the person they are speaking to and helps them see when the person is receptive to the gospel.

Jesus listened to people and cared for them physically and spiritually. When talking, he always found a way point them to the gospel. Kevin Harney observes that Jesus “didn’t see people as projects. They were the object of his love.”<sup>61</sup> If all Christians do is talk or go into a gospel presentation, then they are not learning about the person. When speaking to the heart of people, believers need to must help the person believe that they really care about them. Jeff Vanderstelt reminds that when “we fail to listen. We fail to draw out the heart. And we miss opportunities to really love people and share the love of God with them.”<sup>62</sup> To share the truth of Jesus believers must make listening a priority.

Proverbs 20:5 states, “Counsel in a person’s heart is deep water; but a person of understanding draws it out.” The Word of God is reminding Christians to seek to understand others being active listeners. Kent and Davidene Humphreys write, “Listening is an active skill, rather than passive one. It gives the listener the discernment to know what the person means as well as hearing what the person says.”<sup>63</sup> Active listening involves asking clarifying questions, repeating back to them to gain understanding, praying for understanding, caring for the individual, and not thinking about what the evangelist is going to say next. As a Christian listens, he/she can seek clues and statements that might help to tailor the conversation to go deeper. Reid explains, “The goal in our conversations can never to be to communicate the gospel impersonally, but to share the truth of Jesus

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<sup>61</sup> Kevin G. Harney, *Organic Outreach of Ordinary People: Sharing Good News Naturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 134.

<sup>62</sup> Vanderstelt, *Gospel Fluency*, 173.

<sup>63</sup> Kent Humphreys and Davidene Humphreys, *Show and Then Tell: Presenting the Gospel through Daily Encounters* (Chicago: Moody, 2000), 124-25.

personally.”<sup>64</sup> Listening helps the evangelist personally answer concerns of the individual and gain trust to present life-changing news.

Listening is crucial in conversations. It helps believers get points of commonality to keep conversation going. It helps Christians break through the walls people put up to guard their hearts. Listening helps a believer identify the longing in a person’s life and the drive the gospel home into their hearts. Vanderstelt encourages, “We need to bring them to Jesus so he can meet their unique needs and fulfill their personal longings. In order to do this, we have to slow down, quiet our souls, ask good questions to draw out the hearts of others, and listen.”<sup>65</sup>

### **Questions for Conversation**

If evangelists want to guide their conversations to the gospel, then they must be proficient at asking questions. Asking questions helps one move beyond a surface level to the person’s true beliefs. Vanderstelt observes that Jesus “loved to ask questions so that the overflow of the heart (belief) would spill out of a person’s mouth (words).”<sup>66</sup> When beginning a conversation with someone, let the conversation go freely but use questions to peel back the layers to find opportunities for the gospel.

Questioning people is not just about asking as many questions as one can, but instead asking the right questions to move the conversation forward. Gregory Koukl uses a method named after the fictional detective Columbo in which he believes questioning gets to people’s hearts, which allows a Christian to lay out the truths of scripture. He writes, “The key to the Columbo tactic is to go on the offensive in an inoffensive way by using carefully selected questions to productively advance the conversation.”<sup>67</sup> Good

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<sup>64</sup> Reid, *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out*, 84.

<sup>65</sup> Vanderstelt, *Gospel Fluency*, 175.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>67</sup> Gregory Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing your Christian*

questions cannot be answered with a “yes” or a “no” because those types of questions end conversations. Open-ended questions allow the other person to talk but does not lead them either. A good conversation is two people sharing ideas, so there must be room for the other person to be free to answer. The questions also must work from easy points of interest to deeper convictions and beliefs.

Questions allow a Christian to move a conversation with a specific goal to share Jesus. Questions must keep the conversation alive and foster deeper discussions. Evangelism experts suggest that questions move from a lighter casual conversation to a deeper spiritual one. Rebecca Pippert suggests that conversations flow from Common Interests > Specific Interests > Underlying Issues > Theological Issues.<sup>68</sup> Metzger suggests a similar concentric circle approach: Common Interests > Values and Attitudes > Personal Beliefs.<sup>69</sup> Metzger gives good counsel as he suggests that Christians do not hit through each area or speedily jump to the gospel unless time is an issue; instead the Christian should walk slowly down the pathway for a good gospel conversation. He explains,

A better conversation model is to begin with common interests and seek to move deeper into values, attitudes, and beliefs. We move gradually yet directly, and with a purpose in mind. Our goal is to touch the conscience. One of the best ways to do this is by developing the art of questioning.<sup>70</sup>

As believers develop both questions and listening skills, they listen for responses that help to gauge the next question, comment, and when it is time to share the gospel.

**Suggested questions for gaining common interests.** In beginning a conversation, Christians want to build a beginning level of trust with a person. These

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*Convictions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 47.

<sup>68</sup> Pippert, *Out of the Salt Shaker*, 146.

<sup>69</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 188.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

questions are designed for a believer to start on easy ground in the conversation and identify common interests or connections. Ask questions like, What do you do for a living? Where have you traveled? What did you do this weekend?<sup>71</sup> Where did you grow up? Has your week been what you thought it would be? The goal of these conversations is to build a starting point to get to know the person with which a believer is sharing the gospel.

**Suggested questions for values and attitudes.** As the conversation progresses, a Christian should start dealing with the lost person's concerns. These questions will come from answers they have already given. For example, someone says, "I have been stressed at work this week," or "my kids are having trouble at school," then a believer would ask a probing question—something like, "What is causing the stress at work?" or "Is there an area they have been struggling in?" Other questions an evangelist could ask are, "Why does this situation concern you?" "Why do you think you feel this way?" "What is your biggest concern right now?" "How long has this issue been going on?" These questions help drive the conversation to the heart and press the listener to share things they do not normally talk about. Question help get to fertile ground for deeper questions ahead.

**Questions that turn to the gospel.** In the conversation, at the Holy Spirit's prompting, the Christian will want to ask questions that are spiritual in nature. These questions give the believer a jumping off point for the gospel. Some can be based on what the person says. If they share a concern, the Christian could ask, "I hate that is happening to you, how can I pray for you?" Other questions that help turn the conversation spiritually can include the following, suggested by Metzger:

What is your religious background?  
How have your ideas about God changes since(coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> This question opens the door for a believer to talk about church activities.

<sup>72</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 189.

Paul Little of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Suggest these questions:

By the way, are you interested in Spiritual things?  
What do you think a real Christian is?  
Have you ever personally trusted Christ, or are you still on the way?  
If so, how far on the way are you?<sup>73</sup>

James Kennedy suggests,

Have you come to place in your spiritual Life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?

Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and he were to say to you, “Why should I let you in my heaven?” What would you say?<sup>74</sup>

Mark Cahill suggests,

Where are you in your spiritual journey? What is happening spiritually in your life?

If you were to die tonight, are you 100 percent sure that you would go to heaven?

Do you want to go to heaven?

What is the most important thing in the world to you? On the day you die, what do you think will be the most important thing to you?<sup>75</sup>

McRaney’s additions include,

Who has had the greatest impact on your life?

What do you think is our purpose here on earth?

Has your spiritual journey helped you answer the deepest questions you are asking?

To you, who is Jesus Christ?<sup>76</sup>

William Faye offers these additional suggestions:

Do you think there is a heaven or a hell?

If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Paul Little, quoted in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 190-91.

<sup>74</sup> James Kennedy, quoted in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 191.

<sup>75</sup> Malone and Cahill, “Neighbors,” 132.

<sup>76</sup> McRaney, *Art of Personal Evangelism*, 180.

<sup>77</sup> Faye and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 33-35.

**The final transition question.** Depending on how the conversation is going in light of the previous spiritual questions, a vital question must be asked: “Can I share with you what I believe?” This question is the final link to share the gospel. This question helps a believer’s conversation because (1) it is a non-threatening question that gives the person a choice, (2) when Christians share the gospel, the person cannot be upset with them because he gave permission, (3) it establishes that it is the Christian’s belief and does not threaten the other person’s own views, (4) gives a believer a chance to extend the conversation if the person says “no.” If they say “no,” then you respond with “Do you think we can meet together and talk about this topic another time?” In all gospel conversations, make sure to avoid shutting down the relationship but extending the conversation. Another example of a final transition questions is, “May I share some Scriptures with you?”<sup>78</sup> If the conversation comes from them sharing about a tragedy, trial, or concern, “I haven’t been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?”<sup>79</sup> These questions get a Christian’s conversation to the best part: Jesus.

Questions have a way of allowing others to talk and to reveal their heart. A believer must be bold to go into conversation with lost people. Christians need to be bold and unashamed of the gospel they share. All Christians wanting to be more faithful in evangelism need to sharpen their skills in using questions to bring the good news.

### **Conclusion**

Though Christians often fear and fail at sharing the gospel, it is the highest privilege as a believer to bring the good news to people around them. Greene exclaims, “To help someone else discover Jesus Christ is the greatest joy on earth. We are told there

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<sup>78</sup> Faye and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 40.

<sup>79</sup> Scroggins and Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations*, 67-68.



is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Well there is joy on earth, too.”<sup>80</sup> Though there are many ways to do evangelism, the most effective and accessible way for believers to be part of God’s redemption plan is to share Jesus personally with someone else. Christians need to sharpen their conversation skills but not be overwhelmed because strategic questions will help guide to the gospel. The more a Christian practices, the more everyday conversations will become gospel conversations.

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<sup>80</sup> Michael Green, *Sharing your Faith with Friends and Family: Talking about Jesus without Offending* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 21.

CHAPTER 4  
DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

**Introduction**

This chapter is an overview of the project for equipping members of Hebron Baptist Church in Hebron, Kentucky, that began in October of 2017, and concluded in April of 2018, for a total of 24 weeks. The project evaluated the practices of members having gospel conversations at outreach events and improved their comfortability and frequency through training.

The success of this project was based on four goals. The first goal was to evaluate the current practices of volunteers during yearly outreach events. This goal was accomplished by creating and administering an Outreach Event Survey, and then assessing the results.<sup>1</sup> The surveys were distributed during week 1 and 2 of the project, in October of 2017.

The second goal was to create a gospel conversations training curriculum, and have it evaluated for revisions. The curriculum was written from December 2017 to February 2017, and was submitted for evaluation. An expert panel utilized a rubric to evaluate biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to train members on how to start a conversation about the gospel with people that attended HBC outreach events. Success was determined when 50

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 2.

percent or more of the participants attended three out of the four classes.

The fourth goal was accomplished in weeks 21 and 22 when after the spring outreach event the volunteers were surveyed using the Outreach Evaluation Form. The data was collected and analyzed to find out if volunteers' engagement in gospel conversations showed a statistically significant increase.

### **Evaluation of Current Practices of Volunteers at Outreach Events**

The project officially began when the volunteers and members of Hebron Baptist Church were given a survey following the Fall Festival Outreach Event in October 2017. The Outreach Event Survey asked respondents to identify their practice of engaging strangers, talking about Jesus, inviting people to church, and their overall understanding of the purpose of outreach events.<sup>3</sup> The responses to questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17 in the Outreach Event Survey were for use in the project, all other responses were for the event planning team. The design of the survey was intended to mix both needs for the event and results for this project. The participants also took the survey anonymously, only including the last four digits of their phone number for research purposes.

The surveys produced 29 respondents of the volunteers and participants. This response was a low number of the total attendance and volunteers. The total of 29 surveys received did not meet the requirements for this goal and this failure will be discussed in chapter 5. The Outreach Event Survey also took more than the prescribed two weeks as many took the surveys home and did not return them.

### **Analysis of the Outreach Evaluations**

The results of the survey confirmed that volunteers and members were not using the opportunity to have gospel conversations. Of the 29 respondents, only 3 mentioned Jesus throughout the night to someone they did not know. Only 5 respondents invited

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 3.

people to come back and be their guest at church during the event. This evaluation confirmed that the training was a necessary step for outreach events to be successful in reaching lost people with the gospel.

### **Developing the Gospel Conversation Training Curriculum**

To address the deficit of gospel conversations at Hebron Baptist Church, a curriculum was designed for training members to have gospel conversations. After some informal discussion with church members and staff, and the research, the goal was to have four sessions on gospel conversations that focused heavily on having conversations with strangers and transitions to the gospel. Members reported their fears were not saying a gospel presentation but how to get over the fear of engaging other people. The curriculum was designed to address people's fears with talking to strangers. The training emphasized having opportunities for repetition of conversations. The curriculum was designed to put emphasis on transitioning conversation to the gospel. Each lesson was based on four steps of gospel conversation: engage, listen and ask questions, transition, and the gospel.<sup>4</sup> The lessons were developed using the research done in chapters 2 and 3 of this project. The curriculum was sent to an expert panel and was reviewed for improvements.

#### **Lesson 1: Engage**

The first lesson taught the biblical mandate of evangelism by clarifying God's role and the Christian's role in salvation, which leads to engaging others through prayer and conversation. This lesson introduced the biblical foundation of God's work in salvation through his son Jesus and his sovereignty in conversion. Understanding the gift of salvation, the students were shown the necessity of evangelism from the Scriptures. The intent was to show that the Bible gives Christians clear motivation and mandate for

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 4.

evangelism. The first step of having gospel conversations was introduced in the lesson: engage. The students were taught that prayer is God's people seeking God's presence, and asking for God's power to transform their lives and the lives of others for His glory. There were 5-7 minutes given for the class to pray about evangelism. Members of the class were challenged to pray for opportunities to speak to lost people, for the salvation of specific people, and for God's favor as they shared the gospel. Finally, the students were taught a list of several ways to *engage* or begin conversations with people they barely knew or with whom they were unacquainted. The students were given a list of scenarios and "conversation starters" so they might begin talking with someone they do not know well. Scenarios given for examples included having opportunities at work, church, school, and generic places. The students spent time practicing 2-3 conversation starters with a partner.

## **Lesson 2: Listen and Ask Questions**

Lesson 2 was intended to prioritize listening and asking questions in order to transition to the gospel. The lesson began by repetitions of the material from lesson 1. The lesson began by giving time for members to pray for evangelism opportunities and courage to share the gospel. The students practiced several ways to begin a conversation with someone they do not know. Next, the lesson examined the vital role conversations play in evangelism. A list of examples was given from the Bible where Jesus and his disciples used conversations that resulted in salvation of others. One lesson was on Jesus engaging the woman at the well in John 4. The lesson argued that the biblical examples for conversations that led to evangelism presented two skills to learn: listening and asking questions. It was stated in the lesson that listening is an underdeveloped skill. Listening helps one to learn more about an unsaved person and ensures the evangelizer is engaging in conversation. The students were taught keys to improve listening and introduced to the qualities of a good listener. The lesson taught that asking questions helps move the conversation to spiritual topics. The lesson argues that gospel conversations must move from the superficial to the spiritual. The students were taught a variety of ways of taking

the conversation from common interests > values and attitudes > personal beliefs. The lesson presented questions to help the evangelizer move from superficial knowledge of a person to their personal beliefs. The lesson ended with students getting repetitions on asking the questions that were presented.

### **Lesson 3: Transitioning the Conversation to the Gospel**

The aim of lesson 3 was to learn transitioning questions that would move the conversation to presenting the gospel. The lesson began by giving time for members to practice “engage” questions with 2-3 different people through repetitions. The participants reviewed the questions for deepening conversation. Following the review, members were given two scenarios to choose from to apply the principles of lessons 1 and 2. The students were given ten minutes to try out the scenarios with another person. The lesson transitioned to the biblical understanding of urgency with the gospel. A lesson from Romans 10:1:15 showed that Christians are sent by God to tell the gospel and, therefore, they have a mandate to go. The lesson explained that conversations must eventually turn to spiritual matters because a person’s salvation is an urgent matter. Students were instructed to use questions as the primary method to transition to the gospel. Questions give a natural transition in conversation and allow the hearer to give the evangelist permission to share the gospel. The lesson presented several transition questions that were mined from the research in chapter 3. The students were told to memorize one question in order to get familiar with a method of transitioning conversation. The class was given time to rehearse this question with others. Next, the lesson gave instructions on how to handle a gospel conversation in which a person rejects them or the gospel. This part was designed to prepare the class for difficult conversations. Following the presentation of material, the students had time to practice a conversation using principles from all three lessons. They were given a choice of two scenarios to role play with a partner. The lesson concluded with a challenge to get the group to commit to a number of gospel conversation to have the

following week. In session 4, the members would report back on how many conversations they had, for accountability purposes.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Lesson 4: The Gospel**

Lesson 4 was designed to equip the members of HBC to give a gospel presentation when the opportunity arrives in a conversation. The lesson began with review repetitions of the transition questions to a gospel presentation and how to respond to a rejection. They went through the transition questions with three different people. The lesson presented another scenario for the students to rehearse with a partner putting together all conversation points from lessons 1 to 3. Following the repetitions, the lesson presented the necessity of being able to share their faith using 1 Peter 3:13-18. The lesson challenged to always be prepared to share the gospel and to do so with gentleness and respect. The lesson then walked through the “3 Circles Training” designed by Jimmy Scroggins and produced through the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The members were taught and did repetitions of how to explain God’s design, why brokenness occurs, the gospel, and how to respond for salvation. The class was given several opportunities to practice each element. The lesson presented information to help clarify how to define a true gospel conversations. Finally, the class rehearsed several times going through engaging someone, listening and asking questions, and presenting the gospel using the 3 Circle Method. The class concluded with a challenge to get the group to commit to a number of gospel conversation to have the following week.

#### **Curriculum Evaluation**

The written curriculum was evaluated by an expert panel comprised of Bill Henard, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Evangelism and Church Revitalization at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Jim Woolums, Ph.D., Director of Missions of

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<sup>5</sup> This idea was suggested after a conversation with Todd Gray, Team Leader of Evangelism with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

the Northern Kentucky Baptist Association; Mark Whitaker, Pastor of Worship and Missions at Hebron Baptist Church in Hebron, Kentucky; Bill Clark, Pastor at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Independence, Kentucky; Mark Baldauff, Pastor at Piner Baptist Church in Piner, Kentucky; and David Wiggins, Pastor at First Baptist Church in Walton, Kentucky. These men were chosen because of their expertise in the area of church revitalization and evangelism. The panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.<sup>6</sup> On week 13 of the project, the first three lessons were submitted to the panel for review.

This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level. The feedback received in changes were minimal and mostly pointed out were spelling and formatting questions. These issues were resolved having no impact on the content. The feedback received was determined to be preferential and nothing that required major re-writing. All five lessons met 100 percent of the evaluation criteria. The expert panel finished reviewing the lessons during week 13 of the project.<sup>7</sup>

### **Leading the Training Course**

The four lessons were taught at Hebron Baptist Church on four consecutive Sundays in March 2018. HBC has two services and two small group hours at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The Training Course was taught at both hours for each of the four weeks. Seventy-one people attended with a mixture of members, attenders, adults, and youth. Each class was video recorded and put on the church website after editing. The classes were challenged to interact with the material and to practice with each other during the repetition/practice times. At the end of lessons 3 and 4, the participants committed to look for opportunities to share the gospel during the following week. The class committed to

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> See completed rubric and comments in appendix 2.



having a number of gospel conversations as a group and reported back the next week. Those who missed the class were emailed the training notes to be caught up when they returned the following week. I was able to complete all the material in the allotted time for completion of the training.

This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 50 percent of the participants attended at least three of the four classes. Forty-one of the 71 participants attended three out of the four classes. The goal in attendance of the training was successfully met at a percentage of 57.7 percent.

### **Evaluation of Post-Training Practices of Members at Outreach Events**

On week 23, the project came to its conclusion as volunteers and members of Hebron Baptist Church were given a survey following the Easter Celebration Outreach Event on March 30, 2018. The Outreach Event Survey asked respondents to identify their actual practice of engaging strangers, talking about Jesus, inviting people to church, and overall understanding of the purpose of outreach events.<sup>8</sup> Survey questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, and 19b were for the use of the project all other questions were for the event planning team. The design of the survey was intended to evaluate the outreach event itself and gather results for this project. The participants filled out the survey anonymously only including the last four digits of their phone number for research purposes.

The surveys produced 18 respondents of the volunteers and participants. This response was a low number of the total attendance and volunteers. The lack of responses resulted in only 18 surveys that matched identification numbers from pre-training and post-training surveys. This event had less volunteers but had a large attendance and I had a hard time obtaining the surveys. Collecting the information lasted more than the prescribed time to receive the surveys.

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<sup>8</sup> See appendix 3.

## Analyzing the Effects of the Gospel Conversation Training

Since the training class was given the same questions before and after the training course, a *t*-test for dependent samples was performed to check for changes in the responses. The test results were tabulated using the six-point Likert scale. Responses of “strongly disagree” were given a value of 1, “disagree” carried the value of 2, “disagree somewhat” equaled 3, “agree somewhat” meant 4, “agree” was given a 5, and “strongly agree” carried the value of a 6. Each question on the survey was analyzed by looking at the pair of responses given by each student—pre-test and post-test. The *t*-test explored the null hypothesis that differences in the pre-test and post-test scores were not due to chance. The *t*-test was set up with the value of  $p=.05$ . *T*-tests with this *p*-value indicate that it is more than 95 percent likely that differences in responses were not due to chance, but are due to an actual increase in knowledge of the training group participants.

Of the four measurable questions on the test, all four demonstrated a statistically significant change between the pre-test and post-test scores.<sup>9</sup> The data indicates that this statistically significant difference resulted from the increase in learning and not by chance. The most important result came the result of question 5, “I was able to mention Jesus in a conversation with someone.” The teaching of having gospel conversations made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of the number of people who had gospel conversations ( $t(9) = -4.181, p < .0003$ ). Overall, there was significant change before and after in the amount of gospel conversations.<sup>10</sup> See table 1.

Table 1. P values by question

Question	2	5	7	9
p-value	0.0439	.0003	0.003	0.003523643

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 6 for raw data of pre-training and post-training data.

<sup>10</sup> Raw data can be found in appendix 6.

There were other results of a successful change in practices of evangelism after the gospel conversations training. Though less surveys were filled out more gospel conversations were reported post-training. Using data from question 17 on all returned forms, there were a total of nine gospel conversations at the Easter Egg Hunt and eight at the Fall Festival. The increase of gospel conversations was significant because less surveys were returned after the training. Another significant increase to the number of invitations to church occurred post-training. Pre-training, 4 members invited others back to church; post-training ,12 members invited someone back to church. See table 2.

Table 2. Changes in practice

	Total Gospel Conversations	Number of Participants that Invited someone back to church
Pre-Training	8	1
Post-Training	9	12

These results revealed that church members were more active having spiritual conversations during the Easter Celebration than the Fall Festival. The training had its intended effect on mobilizing members of HBC to have gospel conversations.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the training showed an improvement of the gospel conversations taking place in the outreach event immediately following the training. Hebron Baptist Church was better from having both the training and the encouragement right before an event that brought many people onto the church campus. If the church is to reach its community more, then members will need to take opportunities not just at outreach events but also through their weekly activities. This training made available to members of Hebron Baptist Church that were present in the training and those who will take it in the future through the website should be better equipped for gospel conversations.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS AND REFLECTIONS

#### **Introduction**

This project was a benefit to the ministry of Hebron Baptist Church. Though there had been talk of mission and helping the community at HBC, evangelism had not been the priority of the church. A training on having gospel conversations was needed to get the church back on track in the area of evangelism. The project resulted in a gospel conversations training tool that can be used at HBC for many years to come. Research yielded the scriptural framework to help equip Christians to be more comfortable in sharing their faith. This training helped members of HBC take advantage of witnessing opportunities that occur during outreach events. Tests indicated the curriculum successfully increased the practice of the members speaking about Jesus. The training resulted in a tool that can be used to encourage evangelism in all areas of life and for ministry of the church. Future members will benefit from this tool being available to raise up a new generation equipped to include the gospel in their conversations.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to equip church members to participate in evangelism outreach events for Hebron Baptist Church in Hebron, Kentucky. This purpose was successfully accomplished through the creation and teaching of a training curriculum to a group of church members who showed a statistically significant change in having gospel conversations at church outreach events.

## **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

This project was measured by four goals. All but one goal was reached to the satisfaction of the original project design. This project was effective in the overall purpose, though one of the goals could have been clarified and better executed.

### **Goal 1**

The first goal was to assess the current evangelism activity of the members of HBC at outreach events. After the fall outreach event, a survey was used to determine how many volunteers were having gospel conversations or inviting guests to church. The survey gauged each member's initial activity and comfort level in evangelism at the Fall Festival Outreach in October 2017. This goal was considered successfully met when forty members completed the survey and the results were compiled electronically in order to have a fuller analysis of the evangelism activity. This goal was not completed as only 29 respondents turned in a survey. This step was more difficult and could have been better executed on my part. Taking into account the number of volunteers and the different types of events, a smaller number of responses should have been expected. Though the numeric value did not reach the goal, the project had enough data to proceed. Reflections on what could be done differently will come later in this chapter.

### **Goal 2**

The second goal was to develop a four-session training course for starting gospel conversations. This course took place in a group format with one hour of interactive teaching, practice, and discussion per session. The course primarily focused on overcoming the transition of conversations to Jesus Christ. This goal was measured by an expert panel that utilized a rubric to evaluate the course material to ensure it was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and applicable to ministry practice. This goal was considered successfully met as a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion exceeded the sufficient level. The panel gave constructive feedback for the finished project and made the training a better product in the end.

### **Goal 3**

The third goal was to equip members through a four-week training to be able to start gospel conversations. This was accomplished during four consecutive months in March of 2018, that led up to the Easter Outreach Event. The goal was measured by the participants attending at least three of the four classes. This goal was considered successful as 57.7 percent of the participants attended at this level, which exceeded the 50 percent of needed. They were asked to role play scenarios and practice with partners, which can cause anxiety among some people. The participants, however, were enthusiastic and active in all elements of the training. The students were attentive and left with tools to turn their conversations toward talking about Jesus.

### **Goal 4**

The fourth goal was to train members to engage outreach guests more often by tracking the number of gospel conversations from one event in the fall pre-training to the next event in the spring post-training. The goal was measured by administering the same survey to volunteers after the Easter Celebration outreach and compare the activity level of volunteers in having gospel conversations and inviting others to church. The goal was met as volunteers' engagement in gospel conversations showed a statistically significant increase.

## **Strengths of the Project**

While no project is perfect, some strengths were identified in the evaluation of the project. Several elements stood out upon reflection of the completed work: the use of repetitions, the focus on starting conversations, multiple applications of the training, and the expert panel that provided feedback.

### **Use of Repetition in Training**

The first strength of the project was the use of repetitions in the training curriculum. Each session gave at least fifteen minutes of the hour to the students to rehearse

the material. Chip Kelly is Head Coach of UCLA football. In coaching football, Kelly emphasizes repetitions: “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand. You can talk and show tape as much as you want, but if they don’t get reps(repetitions), they’re not going to get better.”<sup>1</sup> Basketball players spend hours practicing their free-throws. The players’ repetitions develop muscle-memory in shooting the basketball so the action becomes second nature to them. The goal of the training was for people to become more comfortable in having gospel conversations—so it is necessary to get repetitions. Many times in teaching church members to share the gospel, it becomes a focus on information and not practice. This training took each new skill and gave time for the students to practice.

The repetitions were also built in order to rehearse an entire gospel conversation. The outline of a gospel conversation presented was: engage in prayer and conversations, listen and ask questions, transition question, and gospel presentations. Each skill was built on the previous skill and the repetitions were designed to help the church member gain confidence. In session 2, for example, the students got repetitions for review from session 1 on how to start a conversation with some they do not know or know very little. Then, they were presented the new material and given time to practice the new skill of asking questions and listening for opportunities to transition to spiritual matters. At the end of the session, the students were given time to rehearse putting both skills together through a role-playing a scenario. The pattern of repetitions to review and build toward a conversation were present in all lessons. Though this project did not review the lessons from the students’ perspective, the students voiced their appreciation for being trained with repetitions. One lady in her seventies responded, “I have never been trained to have gospel conversations and I have been in church my whole life. I really appreciated the

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<sup>1</sup> The Coach’s Journal, Twitter Post, August 5, 2018, accessed August 5, 2018, <https://twitter.com/TheCoachJournal/status/1026153190293692416>.

practice time, so I could get better.”<sup>2</sup> The students finished the training comfortable with at least one conversation outline that they could apply at HBC outreach events and in their daily lives.

### **Focus on Starting Conversations**

The next strength was that the training focused on helping reduce fear of starting conversations with strangers. One element that seems to be associated with evangelism is overcoming fear of sharing the gospel. This training was designed to give Christians tools to begin a conversation with strangers with the purpose of sharing the gospel. The training pulled together information from several resources found in research of chapter 3 of this project. The students were given the scenarios and ways to begin a conversation with a stranger.<sup>3</sup> Using conversation starters allows for a believer to engage the person they are not familiar with in their life, at an outreach event, or even at church. This project sought to remove the fear of engaging people with the gospel and the training scenarios helped students learn methods of overcoming the fear of engaging the lost.

This training, if applied, should help Christians be better prepared for witnessing opportunities. When given repetitions, the church member should get more familiar with the material and be less fearful to initiate a conversation about Jesus.

### **Broad Application for the Training**

Another strength of the project is the multiple applications of the training for different uses and different churches. The training was designed with the intended use of training for an outreach event; however, gospel conversations should take place all the time. As learned in chapter 2, 1 Peter 3:15 reminds that Christians should be “ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in

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<sup>2</sup> Conversation with church member after session 4 on March 25, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 4, lesson 1.



you.” The curriculum was developed with several applications in mind. The training used a wide-range of scenarios for starting a gospel conversation and asked different questions for transition to spiritual conversations. The training gave students different scenarios to apply gospel conversations from work, school, restaurants, and church. At least four experts commented on the many ways this training could benefit the body of Christ.

The training would also be able to be used in churches of different contexts. One expert said, “Someone from any church could pick up this material and insert their own illustrations and personality and present this information.” The material is easy to present and can be used in both urban and rural contexts. The questions and scenarios used could also be edited or selectively used to train specific groups of Christians, such as students or professionals. The material could also be edited to present one conversation and scenario, like talking to people at a church outreach event or general evangelism training. This curriculum can be modified to be used by Christians in many contexts to share the gospel for the glory of God.

### **The Expert Panel**

The final strength of this project is the expert panel. There is a shortage of words to describe the caliber of individuals who made up the panel of experts who critiqued this project. Of those who reviewed the project, two reviewers had Ph.D.s, one was a trained missionary, and three were revitalization pastors. They all gave valuable insight toward the final training class and on how this training could be better. They affirmed that the curriculum could be used in multiple situations and congregations. One suggested spreading the gospel presentation to two weeks instead of one. Initially this feedback was rejected because the training met the stated goals, but post-project reflections have pointed to giving his advice more consideration. These men were picked for their love of the church and their expertise in revitalization and evangelism. It was helpful to have a missionary trained in cross cultural evangelism to review the project and to talk through

implementation and training ideas. This panel assisted in making the training clear and gospel-centered.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

While most of the project went according to plan, not all of it did. The project could have been stronger and was limited by two weaknesses that point to flaws in the design of the project.

#### **Inability to Test after Like Events**

The first weakness was that the training's effectiveness could not be measured after two identical events. Due to the time constraints of the project, the pre-training surveys were completed after HBC's Fall Festival in October 2017, and the post-training survey was completed after the Easter Celebration in April of 2018. These events fit the outreach event goals because they are both highly attended outreach events in the Hebron community. The weakness lies in that the two events themselves are structured differently. The Fall Festival is structured as a Trunk or Treat with most people standing in lines and volunteers serving them candy. The Fall Festival does not have much room for mingling to start a gospel conversation. Guests stand in line with their children to receive candy, which does not allow for natural conversation to take place unless a believer is in line with the lost person. The event does not have natural gathering spots for volunteers to engage people in a purposeful conversation. The Easter Celebration had less structure to allow time for gospel conversations to take place. The guests had opportunity to sit around and the volunteers had time to engage.

The difference in these events also meant the difference in number of volunteers at each event. The initial estimate of forty surveys were probably too high of an estimation because the outreach event did not require that many volunteers. These outreach events are yearly, and it would have been difficult to wait a whole year for results. Waiting a year could have also affected the outcomes because the church members and membership

changes year over year. Though, testing the gospel conversation training would have been more accurate after the same event a year later.

### **Lack of Feedback from Surveys**

The biggest weakness was the lack of surveys returned. Only 29 pre-training surveys were returned, and only 21 post-training surveys were returned. Of the returned surveys, only 18 matched for data analysis. This lack of returned surveys resulted in the failure of goal 1, to have 40 surveys completed. Lack of coordination both before and after resulted in this failure. The surveys were also done anonymously, which made it impossible to know who had filled out the surveys. It took longer to receive these surveys than estimated as well. The lack of surveys led to a lower than expected amount of data to compare. Though the project still gave insight to the training's success, it would have been statistically better to have more data.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

Having the opportunity to reflect on the project, I would do differently three things if I were to restart this project. I would organize the survey collection differently, received feedback from participants of the training, and I would alter the training content to spread out the gospel presentation.

### **Change Data Collection Methods**

The first alteration to the project would be to be more organized to give out and receive the surveys. At the beginning of the project I waited until the night of the Outreach Event to hand out the surveys. I asked for them to be returned that night or the following Sunday. Since the surveys were anonymous, it was impossible to know who had a survey turned in or not. Since the surveys were a vital part of the project, I should have had a meeting of all volunteers before the event and handed out the pre-training surveys. I also would have handed out the post-training survey at the last training day and again stressed the need for the survey to be completed. I would also have asked volunteers

to turn both sets of surveys on the night of each event instead of waiting. Once they left the church it was difficult to get them back. I would have also gone individually to volunteers and asked if they had turned in their surveys or not. If they had not, then I would have asked them to complete it immediately. These changes would have resulted in a higher number of surveys to be used for this project.

### **Received Feedback from Participants on Training**

Another change I would make if I completed the project again would be to get feedback on the gospel conversations training. Everything can be improved upon, and it would have been valuable to receive participant feedback to see how the material or presentation could be improved. While the experts are a strength of the project, they did not sit in on the lessons, and it would have also been valuable to have a lay-person's perspective on the training. In the intent to disciple members of HBC, I forgot to consider the feedback of the very people I was trying to help.

It would also have been helpful if I had a poll a few weeks after the training to see if they had utilized their training in their lives. The intent to revitalize HBC hinges on its members being active in obedience of the Great Commission. It would have been helpful to gauge the practice of the members after the training.

### **Divide Gospel Presentation over Two Lessons**

The final change I would make would be to split the gospel presentation over lesson 3 and 4 to give it more time and practice. Lesson 3 was spent reviewing lesson 1 and 2 and introducing the transition question. Upon reflection, I would give more time to the gospel presentation because many members have not been trained to share the gospel. I would move the transition question to lesson 4 and introduce the first two circles from the "3 Circle Training." This change would give more focus on the gospel and time to practice. The results of the training were successful and met the goal of helping

members start gospel conversations. With that said, it could have more lasting results if members would have had more training on the gospel presentation.

### **Theological Reflections**

Reflecting on this project, some theological lessons became clear through the Scriptures as well as the project itself. Through the biblical research, practical research, and project, certain themes challenged me and should challenge all Christians. These themes were dependence on God, the urgency of evangelism, and the necessity of discipling.

#### **Dependence on God**

Conversion is an act of the only One who is powerful enough to perform the miracle: God himself. It is not the evangelist, not the pastor, nor is it the believer's presentation that brings conversion only God is the power of salvation. When having gospel conversations, the Christian must depend on the work of God. Evangelists must depend on God for their own ability and opportunity to present the gospel. The believer must also trust God's will to do the work of salvation in the listener. This project reminded me of the necessity of the Christian's dependence on God.

The dependence of God in evangelism should drive the Christian to pray.

MacArthur agrees, writing,

God defines prayer for the lost as the noble and spiritually proper thing to do, and our consciences agree. The lost suffer the agony of sin, shame, and meaninglessness in this life, and the eternal hell of unrelenting agony in the life to come. Knowing that, our most excellent task is to pray for their salvation.<sup>4</sup>

Evangelism fueled by prayer must be at the heart of every Christian and at the heart of every church in need of revitalization. Believers know that salvation is 100 percent dependent on God and they should be calling out for his work among the church.

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<sup>4</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Alone with God, MacArthur Study Series* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1995), 140, Logos Bible Software.

Prayer is essential to affecting the heart of the lost and the evangelist. When praying, the disciple is more sensitive to the lost and the lost are moved by the Spirit of God when they pray. For churches to return to their purpose of seeking and saving the lost they must make prayer a priority. Prayer must become a priority at HBC as it seeks to make disciples in northern Kentucky.

The proper understanding of the power and plan of God should compel Christians to share the gospel more regularly and with confidence. This confidence in God's power for salvation can help Christians be free from the anxiety of sharing the gospel. Many believers report they are intimidated when sharing the gospel. Christians think they will make a mistake that would lead to the person being confused or not getting saved. The clear reminder is that God does the saving—believers are responsible for sharing. Evangelism is obedience to God and it is not based on the result. Only God can save someone, thus freeing Christians to know that they are not being evaluated by their performance. Depending on God for salvation of others should fuel confidence and lead more evangelism.

### **The Urgency of Evangelism**

As discussed in the previous chapter, Romans 10:1-21 reveals the truth that God has designed the gospel story to be told and heard. The God of the universe mandates, “And how can they believe without hearing about him?” (Rom 10:14b). The gospel is a special revelation to humankind that “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9). Christians, therefore, must be urgent in the sharing of the gospel. People are either far from God and heading to hell, or they are born again and on the road to heaven. This truth should remind all Christians of the urgency to have gospel conversations whenever opportunities arise.

Being reminded of the seriousness of salvation should motivate Christians to be urgent with gospel conversations. When a conversation starts with an unexpected

person, such as when a person gets seated next to an unbeliever on a plane, or when a friend starts to talk about trials in their life, God has opened a door for evangelism. Faithful believers use these divine appointments as opportunities to share Jesus. Armed with the knowledge of the gospel, Christians must answer the urgent call of Jesus to “go make disciples” (Matt 28:19).

### **The Necessity of Discipling**

This project reinforced to me that generations of church members and attenders have not been trained to share the gospel. Faithful churches of Jesus Christ must make it a priority to equip believers to share the gospel. The commands of the Great Commission imply the central role of the church as God’s primary agency for mission. The church should be equipping and sending members, teachers, missionaries, and preachers to share the gospel in their lives and throughout the world. In discipleship, the intellectual component is secondary, the goal is spiritual formation (cf. John 13:17). Only in the community/family that is the church can disciples be baptized and taught to observe all that Jesus has commanded.

Churches that desire to be faithful to the Great Commission must train Christians on how to have gospel conversations. Many churches have failed in training believers on how to share their faith. They assume believers will learn to do this on their own. I submit that just as Jesus told the disciples he would train them to “fish for people,” the church needs to train their members to share the gospel (Matt 4:19). If believers are not shown how to have basic gospel conversations, then how will they learn to evangelize? The church must reclaim its role to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” by discipling their members to share the gospel (Eph 4:12).

HBC must develop a culture of discipling its members in evangelism. The gospel conversations training was a good start, but it must be reinforced in other areas of ministries. Life Group members need to be trained to have gospel conversations in their homes, neighborhoods, and work places. Gospel conversations must be reinforced from

the pulpit where the biblical text applies evangelism. There must be more training opportunities for new members and in other ministries through the life of the church. HBC must be good stewards of their members and the generations to come by faithfully training them for evangelism.

### **Personal Reflections**

Reflecting on the project to train members for gospel conversations has revealed as much about myself as it has HBC. As I considered the results and the current state of evangelism in HBC, as pastor I must consider my own life and leadership. As I considered the Scriptures, research, and project, I realized the need for personal accountability in having gospel conversations.

### **Personal Accountability**

As the pastor of HBC, God has stationed me as the under-shepherd of his church. The church is in many ways the reflection of its leadership. This may not be true in all cases, as one cannot determine the effects of sin of church members and congregation as a whole, but a leader must lead by example and lead the congregation to value certain things. Al Mohler observes about leadership, “Convictional leaders propel action precisely because they are driven by deep convictions, and their passion for these convictions is transferred to followers who join in concerted action to do what they know to be right.”<sup>5</sup> As the pastor of HBC, I have come to realize that I need to be more accountable for my own gospel conversations.

It is hard for church members to desire to do something or duplicate something they cannot see in their leaders. As pastor, I need to prioritize gospel conversations in my own life. Excuses could be easily made, such as pastors are around Christians most of the time, the demands of a 24/7 job, and the need to invest in one’s own family, just to name

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<sup>5</sup>Albert R. Mohler, Jr., *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2012), 26.



a few. These excuses mean little when comparing them to the commands of Scripture. Pastors are not exempt from evangelism; instead, they are to be leaders in evangelism. I have determined to give other pastors and deacons permission to hold me accountable for gospel conversations. I need to prioritize opportunities throughout my day and week and plan to be among people who are far from God. Reminders and rebukes from others to be faithful in evangelism will remind me to set an example by looking for opportunities to have gospel conversations.

As leader of HBC, I set the standard for other leaders. If other leaders are not held accountable for evangelism, then there cannot be an expectation it is happening. Staff and pastors must not be exempt from accountability, but instead be setting an example. As pastor, I will be setting a time of accountability in staff meetings to report on gospel conversations. I will be setting goals and standards for pastors and staff people to have gospel conversations in order to disciple them toward greater obedience in evangelism. I must be better as a leader of communicating these expectations in evangelism and helping them achieve it. My prayer will be that together the pastors and staff will set an example to the congregation in having gospel conversations when the Lord gives the opportunity.

Only the individual can determine their desire to have gospel conversations. The blood-bought salvation Christians have received as a gift from God should drive them to live in thankfulness to God. This thankfulness should result in obedience to Christ's commands, especially in evangelism. My prayer is that as I have been challenged through this project that the Spirit and other believers will hold me accountable to be a more faithful evangelist.

### **Conclusion**

This project addressed the lack of evangelism at HBC and sought to change the habits of its members. The issue at hand was two decades of members not being active evangelists, as the church's baptism numbers indicated. Preaching alone was not changing behavior and it was identified that special training could help. This project resulted in a

gospel conversations training curriculum to help volunteers and members to have gospel conversations at outreach events. This project helped members take advantage of a prime opportunities of having community members that visit church campus for outreach events by sharing the gospel with them. As members look for opportunities to have gospel conversations, the church will begin to impact the community with the gospel.

The focus of this project could have a long-term impact on the outward focus of the church. As the initial trainees improve in having gospel conversations, future members of HBC will be challenged in the same way. Being accessible and reproducible, these lessons could result in many Christians impacting northern Kentucky and Cincinnati with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The future is bright for Hebron Baptist Church. The Lord continues to bless Boone County with population growth, and Hebron, Kentucky, is expected to have many new homes under construction in the years ahead. Christ has placed HBC as a strategic church, in a growing area, with the purpose to “Be Disciples who Make Disciples.” HBC members who make a regular habit of having gospel conversations can impact their neighborhoods and the nations for the glory of God!

APPENDIX 1

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Evangelism Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Curriculum Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of evangelism.					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on evangelism.					
The curriculum has opportunities for practice and observation.					
The curriculum defines the gospel.					
The curriculum defines gospel conversations.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
The curriculum strikes a balance of theology and practice.					
The curriculum can be used for many opportunities to share the gospel.					
The curriculum could be replicated in other churches.					

APPENDIX 2

COMPLETED CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Table A1. Curriculum evaluation rubric for training

<b>Evangelism Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Curriculum Evaluation</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of evangelism.			F	A,B,C,D, E	F- Include Personal Quiet Time Emphasis
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on evangelism.				A,B,C,D, E, F	
The curriculum has opportunities for practice and observation.				A,B,C,D, E, F	D-Could have been earlier
The curriculum defines the gospel.			D	A,B,C, E, F	
The curriculum defines gospel conversations.			C	A,B,C,D, E, F	C- include a tool to help define
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.			A,D, E, F	B,C	D- Cut Lesson 3 Expand 4 into two sessions. F- Motive for Evangelism
The curriculum strikes a balance of theology and practice.			A,E	B,C,D,F	
The curriculum can be used for many opportunities to share the gospel.			D,E	A,B,C,F	
The curriculum could be replicated in other churches.			E	A,B,C,D, F	

## APPENDIX 3

### OUTREACH EVENT SURVEY

This outreach survey will be used after each outreach event. Questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 20 are for the use of the project, all other questions are for the event planning team. Question 20 will only be included for the Post-Class Outreach Event.

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. This research is being conducted by Shawn Dobbins for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Personal Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please use a 4 digit number that you can remember, i.e., Last four digits of cell phone number)

#### **Part 1**

Directions: Based on the following scale, respond to the statements with your opinion

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. \_ I had the information I needed to do my position.
2. I spoke to many people that I did not already know.
3. There seemed to be enough for families to do to keep them engaged.
4. There were enough food options.
5. I was able to mention Jesus in a conversation with someone.
6. There were enough game options for families.
7. I was able to invite someone to church.

8. I enjoyed volunteering at this event.
9. The purpose of this event was to have opportunities to share Christ.
10. This event was effective in reaching our community.

**Part 2**

11. In which area did you serve at the event?
12. Have you served at an outreach event before? (Yes or No)
13. Did you speak to any people you did not know today? (Yes or No)  
If yes, did you invite anyone to church on Sunday? (Yes or No)
14. Which area(s) seemed most attractive to families?
15. Which area(s) seemed least attractive to families tonight?
16. Did you invite someone to today's event? (Yes or No)
  - a. If yes, did they come? (Yes or No)
  - b. If yes, were you able to invite them to church on Sunday? (Yes or No)
17. Were you able talk about Jesus with someone tonight? (Yes or No)
  - a. If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
18. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the worst and 10 is the best, how would you rate today's event? \_\_\_\_\_
19. What ways can we improve the event in the future?

Did you participate in the Gospel Conversations classes in February? (Yes or No)  
a. If yes, how many classes were you able to attend? \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR SERVING GOD AND HIS CHURCH TODAY!!

## APPENDIX 4

### GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS TRAINING LESSON

#### Lesson 1

Churches that need revitalization have often lost their passion and purpose in reaching the lost. Thom Rainer found many characteristics, but one was prominent in all of their findings. “Our autopsy revealed that at some point in its history, the church stopped reaching and caring for the community.” Therefore, Churches seeking to be healthy again must seek to purposefully share the Gospel in their community.

Lifeway research finds that healthy growing churches baptize 10% of their Sunday School Attendance a year. Hebron Baptist since 1995 has only reached this number 3 times.

Even during the highest attended years there was 62% of additions were transfers from another church.

#### **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

- **Engage**- Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation
- **Listen**- Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.
- **Transition**- Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.
- **Jesus**- A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

*I first want us to see our Role in Evangelism. Why should we be sharing at all?*

#### **I. Our Role in Evangelism**

##### **A. God’s Work- Salvation**

The person who is born-again has been brought to life by the sweet gift of God. Time and again the Scriptures show that the decision to trust Christ was God’s doing not the Christian’s.

##### **1. God Provides Salvation**

**Romans 5:8 (CSB) — 8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

##### **2. God Calls Us**

**John 6:44 (CSB) — 44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.

##### **3. God Transforms Us**

**Ephesians 2:1–5 (CSB) — 1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins **2** in which you previously lived according to the ways of this world, according to the

ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. **3** We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, **5** made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

#### **4. God Saves us by Grace through Faith**

**Ephesians 2:8 (CSB)** — **8** For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—

Evangelism is dependent on the work of God. God reveals sin and through His Spirit saves the lost. (Rom 8:30) We must remember that it is not us that saves people but the work of God in their lives. We are called to share the Gospel in obedience then allow God to do the work of salvation. (Rom 10:1-15) Will McRaney states, "God is involved in evangelism at every point and level. Regeneration/Conversion is 100 percent God. However, He chooses to use various instruments to draw people to himself."<sup>1</sup>

### B. Our Work- Obedience

#### **1. Share the Gospel**

*Romans 10:14–15 (CSB)* — *14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*

#### **2. Make Disciples**

*Matthew 28:18–20 (CSB)* — *18 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Many Christians refrain from sharing the gospel because they feel intimidated and fear failure. They are concerned they will not say the correct words, fumble a presentation, or the person could be offended. This type of thinking can be cured by being reminded of a person's role in evangelism. God does the saving, believers are responsible for sharing. Evangelism is obedience to God and it is not based on the result. Only God can save someone, which should free Christians to know that they are not being evaluated by their performance. In *Share Jesus Without Fear*, William Fay and Linda Shepherd explain,

God is sovereign! If he can take somebody like me and change him, he can take anybody in your life and change him as well. But be aware: you are not responsible for causing a person's heart to turn towards God. . . . You see, success is sharing

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<sup>1</sup> Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 35



your faith and living your life for Jesus Christ. It has nothing whatsoever to do with bringing anyone to the Lord. It has everything to do with obedience.<sup>2</sup>

## **II. Engage in Prayer**

<b>Church Praying Evangelistically in Acts</b>	<b>Scripture</b>
The disciples were praying and after the Holy Spirit fell upon them they began to preach boldly, and people were saved	Acts 1:24
As the church was committed to God’s Word, prayer, and fellowship people were saved daily.	Acts 2:47
After Peter and John were arrested, the church prayed for boldness in sharing the Gospel despite the threat on their lives.	Acts 4:31
The church prayed that Samaria might receive the Holy Spirit and be saved.	Acts 8:15
Cornelius, a Roman soldier, prayed to God and not only did God answer in a vision but sent Peter to him to share the Gospel and his whole family was saved.	Acts 10
When Paul and Silas went for prayer by the river in Philippi, they shared Christ with the women there and Lydia and her household were saved.	Acts 16:13
Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns all night while in jail and the jailer and his house were saved.	Acts 16:25-34

“God defines prayer for the lost as the noble and spiritually proper thing to do, and our consciences agree. The lost suffer the agony of sin, shame, and meaninglessness in this life, and the eternal hell of unrelenting agony in the life to come. Knowing that, our most excellent task is to pray for their salvation.” John MacArthur<sup>3</sup>

Christians concerned with the salvation of people in the world should be praying. They should pray for God to change hearts of the lost, pray for their inadequacies as evangelists, and pray for opportunities to share. God’s sovereignty reminds Christians to not be evangelists in their own power, but in his power. Stiles writes, “When we understand that it’s God’s work in people’s lives, we avoid the mistake of working hard on performance at the expense of prayer; it leads us to pray and trust in the One who can produce a converted heart.”<sup>4</sup>

Prayer is God’s People Seeking God’s Presence, Asking for God’s Power to transform our lives and the lives of others for His Glory.

Colossians 4:2–4 (CSB) — 2 Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, 4 so that I may make it known as I should.

God, thank you for the gift of salvation through your Son, Jesus. Thank you for making

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<sup>2</sup> William Faye and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: Broadman & Homan, 1999), 3.

<sup>3</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Alone with God*, MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 140, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Marks of a Messenger: Knowing Living, and Speaking the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 78.

known to me the truth of the Gospel that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again for my sins. Thank you that you sent someone to tell me about Christ. Today give me opportunities for me to share the gospel. May I play a part of you redeeming someone who is far from you. Help me to be bold. Help me to be clear. Help me to be compassionate. Lord help me not to pass the opportunity up when it arises. God, May I be a light in the darkness for you in all I do but specifically in the life of someone who is lost. In the name of your precious Son, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Write your own Prayer Below and Ask God to help you have opportunities to share the Gospel and that you would be prepare and bold to speak.

### **III. Engage People**

#### **Luke 19:1-10**

##### **1. Jesus Engaged Zacchaeus**

Jesus entered Zacchaeus' world to bring salvation to his heart and home. Jesus gave the example that believers must follow to engage in the lives of lost people by meeting them in a personal way. As Zacchaeus heard Jesus was coming, he put himself in a tree, so he could get a good view of Jesus as he passed. Shockingly, Jesus stopped, commanded him to climb down, and then told him that he would be staying at Zacchaeus' house.

##### **2. Jesus Engaged in Hospitality**

Jesus here engages in the life of a lost person when they do not merit his love. Jesus displays his love that while humankind were sinners he made way to salvation through the cross (Rom 5:8). Jesus engaged with a stranger to speak to his heart. Christians are called to do the same

##### **3. Jesus's Mission is our Mission**

With this truth in mind, believers must live like Jesus and reach out to others like he did in the life of Zacchaeus. Ryken observes,

This is the way Jesus saves lost sinners: he does it by walking right into our lives, even uninvited. J. C. Ryle said, "If ever there was a soul sought and saved, without having done anything to deserve it, that soul was the soul of Zacchaeus. . . Unasked, our Lord stops and speaks to Zacchaeus. Unasked, He offers Himself to be a guest in the house of a sinner. Unasked, He sends into the heart of a publican the renewing grace of the Spirit and puts him that very day among the children of God." Here is how the Puritan Matthew Henry explained the saving work of God in the sinner's soul: Jesus "brings his own welcome; he opens the heart and inclines it to receive him."<sup>5</sup>

The invitation of Zacchaeus is an example Jesus calling a sinner to himself and the beauty of a conversation that is spiritual in nature. Jesus spent time with Zacchaeus, and the result was the tax collector's salvation. Jesus modeled how an everyday conversation can be used in the kingdom of God.

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<sup>5</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, Reformed Expository Commentary, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 304-5, Logos Bible Software.

## Places to Engage People

- Our Family
- Where we Work/School
- Where we Live
- Where we Play
- Church Events
- Divine Appointments

## Ways to Engage People

### Someone You Know Very Little

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Have I met you before?”
  - You may not remember my name, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Remind Me again your name?
  - I wanted to say, I’m sorry. I should have introduced myself to you before. I’m \_\_\_\_\_.
- Look to Serve someone.
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. May I help you with that?”
- Let them Serve you.
  - “I’m new here can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_? (Listen) Thank you my name is\_\_\_\_\_.
  - “Have you been to this place before? What would you recommend?”
- Common Interest (Book, food, team, activity, etc.).
  - “Hey, I’m \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed you like \_\_\_\_\_ too. What is your favorite part?”
- Offer Prayer
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. I’m about to pray before I eat my meal. Is there anything I can pray for you about?”
  - “Hello \_\_\_\_\_, I am going to be praying at lunch today is there anything I can pray for you about?”

### Outreach Event

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “I know we have two services and it’s hard to keep track of names, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Are you one of our guests today?”
  - “I hope you are having a great time. I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Remind me again your name.”
- Serve Them
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Do you need help finding anything? (Refreshment, Childcare, restroom)

## Church

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “I know we have two services and it’s hard to keep track of names, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Are you new here today or attend a different service?”
  - “We may have met before, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Remind me again your name.”
- Serve Them
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Do you need help finding anything? (Refreshment, Childcare, restroom)

*Are there some others that have worked for you to Engage Someone in Conversation?*

## Keep it Going

- **ALWAYS KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING OR OPEN FOR ANOTHER TIME**
- NEXT Step- Questions and Listening
- “You may not have time right now; can I contact you and we can get together this/next week. I would love to continue our conversation.”

## Handling Rejection

- Attitude of Joy- Your attitude will plant a seed of how Christians respond. Handle rejection with joy as we are commanded to “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4 (CSB)
- Attitude of Gratitude- Say “Thank you!” Chick-fil-a says “My Pleasure” to communicate their willingness to serve. Make sure that person would feel comfortable coming back to you.
- Keep Going- Don’t stop. It takes an unbeliever 7.6 times to hear the gospel to respond. But remember our scorecard If you shared the gospel 100 times and one got saved how many times have you been successful? 100!

**Practice Three different people using three different Introductions we discussed.**

## **Session 2**

Understanding that God’s plan is for the Christian to share the gospel and that he is at work in and through them should result in boldness. Christians are part of the tapestry of history in which God is saving people to himself. God controls every detail, from the way someone hears the gospel to bringing the gospel harvest. Christians can be bold because they know they are working within God’s plan for their lives to “go make disciples” (Matt 28:19). Christians can know that their very lives are by no accident and that they are placed in their community, workplace, or school to share Jesus without fear.

*Rico Tice writes, In God's sovereignty, what is going on in human history is that God is reaching out to people, so that they will reach out to him. The reason your neighbor lives where she does is so that she will get reached for the gospel. Why did God want a Christian—you—to be in your workplace? Yes, so you can bless your boss and workers by working hard and honestly. But first and foremost, it's so that others can hear the gospel.<sup>6</sup>*

## **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

**Engage**- Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation

**Listen and Ask Questions**- Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.

**Transition**- Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.

**Jesus**- A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

### **A. Engage in Prayer**

*God of Salvation, open my eyes to see the world through your eternal perspective. You see people as lost sheep in need of a Shepherd. Help me to have a heart that loves people. Help me have a heart for people who are far from you. Help me to speak boldly when you give me an opportunity. Raise the temperature of my heart that I might have the same passion that sent Jesus to this world and to the cross. For your glory, Amen.*

***Write your own.***

### **B. Engage People**

- Let them Serve you.
  - “I’m new here can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_? (Listen) Thank you my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “I know we have two services and it’s hard to keep track of names, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Are you one of our guests today?”
  - “I hope you are having a great time. I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Remind me again your name.”
- Common Interest (Book, food, team, activity, etc.).
  - “Hey, I’m \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed you like \_\_\_\_\_ too. What is your favorite part?”

***Talk to 3 different people using each of these.***

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<sup>6</sup> Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism: How to Talk about Jesus Even When It's Tough* (Surrey, UK: Good Book, 2015), 49.

## II. Conversations

A study showed that people have “on average 27 conversations a day.”<sup>7</sup> Christians must be equipped to be more bold and comfortable in bringing up Christ in their conversations. These conversations can stay superficial, so a believer must learn how to move them to spiritual conversations. Christians can follow the way of Jesus to use everyday conversation to share the gospel.

<b>Conversations Turned to the Gospel</b>	<b>Scripture</b>
Jesus went to a well in Samaria and turned a conversation about water to a conversation about eternal life	John 4:1-26
The blind wanted physical sight and Jesus offered spiritual sight	Mark 10:51-52; John 9:1-12
The men with leprosy wanted physical healing and Jesus offered spiritual healing	Matt 4:1-4; Luke 17:12-19
Peter spoke to people confused at Pentecost to urge them to repent and believe	Acts 2:14-40
Early believers shared the gospel and added to their number daily	Acts 2:47
A beggar asked for money and John and Peter turned the conversation to the gospel	Acts 3
When persecution came, Christians went out and shared the word of the Lord	Acts 8:4
The angel of the Lord told Phillip to go south where he met an Ethiopian man who came to believe the gospel and was baptized	Acts 8:26-40

### John 4:1-26

- **Jesus Engaged the Woman (vs. 7-9)**

Jesus used an everyday opportunity to Engage someone he doesn't know to share the gospel. ASK: Which method did Jesus use that we have discussed to Engage someone? Answer: Let them serve you.

- **Jesus Asked Questions to Reveal Her Needs (vs. 10-18)**

Jesus patiently engages her questions and ultimately asks a cut to the heart question: Go get your husband. This revealed the whole in her heart and the loneliness and pain she was suffering from.

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<sup>7</sup> Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 51.

- **Jesus Listened and Answered Her Questions (vs. 19-22)**

She tried to distract with a question about Worship. He answered her not dismissing her but biblically.

- **Jesus Transitioned the Conversation (vs. 23-24)**

Jesus uses a transition to bring up the point of worship: How can you worship God in Spirit and Truth. In other words, You must be born again and you must know the truth of worship. There is only one way to God.

- **Jesus Revealed the Truth about Himself. (vs. 25-26)**

Jesus took her question and revealed he was the Messiah. This is the question we want everyone to get to. Who is your Savior? Jesus listened to people and cared for them physically and spiritually. When talking, he always found a way point them to the gospel. The ultimate goal of our conversations is Jesus.

The best thing about conversations is that a believer can have them with anyone. Conversations build the bridge to people so that the gospel can be presented.

*Malone and Cahill write, “The best way to show people our Christianity is to develop a conversational relationship with them. . . . If we want them to be interested in what we have to say, we must be interested in our neighbor.”<sup>8</sup>*

As Christians seek to have conversations, they rely on the Holy Spirit to give them opportunity and connection with that person so that they can turn the conversation to the gospel. This method is something everyone can do when they pray, prepare, and follow the principles of listening and asking questions. *Keith Davy explains, “The key to conversational evangelism is the art of asking questions and listening.”<sup>9</sup>*

### **III. Listen**

Listening is often the forgotten element of evangelism. *Proverbs 20:5 (CSB) — 5 Counsel in a person’s heart is deep water; but a person of understanding draws it out.*

*Steve Sjogren and Dave Ping state, “In a world where talk is cheap, good listening is still pure gold. When it comes to showing the love of Jesus to those closest to you, using your ears effectively is always*

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<sup>8</sup> Josh Malone and Mark Cahill, “Neighbors: Taking the Gospel Next Door,” in *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ*, ed. Scott Dawson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 131.

<sup>9</sup> Keith A Davy, “The Gospel for a New Generation,” in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000,) 362.

*more powerful than running your mouth.”<sup>10</sup> Listening helps believers hear the heart of the person they are speaking to and helps them see when the person is receptive to the gospel.*

- Listening is Hard Work
- Listening Is Active Not Passive
- Listening is Not something to try to Fake
- Listening is the way to Love others

Active listening involves asking clarifying questions, repeating back to them to gain understanding, praying for understanding, caring for the individual, and not thinking about what the evangelist is going to say next.

### **Qualities of a Good Listener**

1. Finds something interesting in what is said and asks questions.
2. Listens rationally and is unshockable; suspending judgement.
3. Listens for feelings
4. Shows disciplined attention through brief comments and reactions.
5. Thinks about what is being said, the advice being sought, and responds biblically.<sup>11</sup>

### **III. Questions to Guide Conversation**

As a believer develop both questions and listening skills, they listen for responses that help to gauge the next question, comment, and when it is time to share the gospel.

Christians should not speedily jump to the gospel unless time is an issue; instead the Christian should walk slowly down the pathway for a good gospel conversation. Will Metzger explains,

**A better conversation model is to begin with common interests and seek to move deeper into values, attitudes, and beliefs. We move gradually yet directly, and with a**

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<sup>10</sup> Steve Sjogren and Dave Ping, *Outflow: Outward-Focused Living in a Self-Focused World* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2006), 112

<sup>11</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, rev. and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 212-13.



**purpose in mind. Our goal is to touch the conscience. One of the best ways to do this is by developing the art of questioning. - Will Metzger<sup>12</sup>**

The conversation must move from the superficial to the spiritual. Consider taking the conversation from Common Interests > Values and Attitudes > Personal Beliefs.<sup>13</sup>

### **Level 1- Finding Common Interests**

These questions are designed for a believer to start on easy ground in the conversation and identify common interests or connections.

- What do you do for a living?
- Where do you live?
- Where have you traveled?
- What did you do this weekend?
- Where did you grow up?
- Has your week been what you thought it would be?

### **Sample Conversation:**

C- “Hey, I’m Frank, I noticed you like The Reds too. What player are you looking forward to seeing this year?”

NC- I’m Greg... I am really looking forward to seeing, Mesoraco.

C- Yeah, he’s important for their line up and I hear he may get traded. How often do you get to see them play?

NC- I try to watch at least a game a week and we might go over a few times. I’m going to probably go over this weekend.

C- That’s great! You have any other weekend plans?

NC- A few things around the house not much. What about you?

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<sup>12</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 187.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

C- Well I have a basketball game on Saturday to take the kids to. I can't wait for Sunday, I am going to church at Hebron Baptist, then we are going to take the kids to the park for the afternoon. Hey, do you go to church anywhere?

NC- Nah. We do that sort of thing.

C- Have you ever thought about why people go to church? Why would someone want to give up their weekend?

NC- No. It doesn't make sense to me I'm not a religious guy.

C- Would you mind if I told you why I go to church?

*Identify the Engage and the Questions that went deeper.*

### **Level 2- Questions that Reveal Values and Attitudes**

These questions help drive the conversation to the heart and press the listener to share things they do not normally talk about.

For example, someone says, "I have been stressed at work this week," or "my kids are having trouble at school." You might say,

- "Is there an area they have been struggling in?"
- "Why does this situation concern you?"

Other Questions

- "What is causing the stress at work?"
- "Why do you think you feel this way?"
- "What is your biggest concern right now?"
- "How long has this issue been going on?"
- "Why do you think people do such terrible things?"
- "What do you think made you that way?"

### **Sample Conversation:**

C- "Hello, may have met before my name is Sally. I know there is a lot of people who work here."

NC- "I'm June."

C- “Nice to meet you! What was the best part of your week?”

NC- “I haven’t had a great week. I am struggling with my kids this week. A lot of obedience issues.”

C- “What is your biggest concern right now?”

NC- “I just really feel overwhelmed. Too many issues and I just don’t know where to start.”

C- “You know I felt that way one time and I got comfort from the Bible. I read a scripture that said, ‘No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out so that you may be able to bear it.’ 1 Corinthians 10:13 (CSB). Have you ever read the Bible?”

NC- Ho I am not religious.

C- Do you mind if I tell you why I go to the Bible when I am overwhelmed?

*Identify the Engage and the Questions that went deeper.*

### **Level 3- Questions that Reveal Personal Beliefs**

In the conversation, at the Holy Spirit’s prompting, the Christian will want to ask questions that are spiritual in nature. These questions give the believer a jumping off point for the gospel.

- I hate to hear that is happening, may I pray for you?
- What is your religious background?
- How have your ideas about God changes since (coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?<sup>14</sup>
- By the way, are you interested in Spiritual things?
- What do you think a real Christian is?
- Have you ever personally trusted Christ, or are you still on the way?
- If so, how far on the way are you?<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 189.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Little, quoted in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 190-91.

- Where are you in your spiritual journey? What is happening spiritually in your life?
- If you were to die tonight, are you 100 percent sure that you would go to heaven?
- Do you want to go to heaven?
- What is the most important thing in the world to you? On the day you die, what do you think will be the most important thing to you? <sup>16</sup>
- Who has had the greatest impact on your life?
- What do you think is our purpose here on earth?
- Has your spiritual journey helped you answer the deepest questions you are asking?
- To you, who is Jesus Christ? <sup>17</sup>
- Do you think there is a heaven or a hell?
- If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know? <sup>18</sup>

**Sample Conversation:**

C- “Hey, I’m Sophia, I am new here, would you mind telling me where the snack machine is.”

NC- “Sure, I’m Ray, its right around the corner.”

C- “Boy, it was an awful drive in today, where did you have to drive in from?”

NC- “I came in off 75 North today..”

C- “Of wow I heard it was bad up there. Did you pass those accidents?”

NC- “Yes, I heard two people died.”

C- “Isn’t that awful my son and I prayed as we were driving for those who were injured. Can you imagine if that was a family member or friend? How would you feel?”

NC- “Incredibly sad.”

C- “Have you ever thought about what happens when we die?”

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<sup>16</sup> Malone and Cahill, “Neighbors,” 132.

<sup>17</sup> McRaney, *Art of Personal Evangelism*, 180.

<sup>18</sup> Faye and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 33-35.

NC- “No. I think this is all there is. That is why I work so I can take my boat out on the lake as much as I can.”

C- “I know many people who hold that perspective. Would you mind if I told you what I think? “

*Identify the Engage and the Questions that went deeper.*

*Practice Going through Engage and Questions with someone.*

- 1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend*
- 2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.*

*Examples- Common interest, Person reveals a problem/issue, Concerned about world events*

- 3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to getting to a spiritual question.*

### **Lesson 3**

#### **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

**Engage**- Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation

**Listen and Ask Questions**- Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.

**Transition**- Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.

**Jesus**- A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

#### **I. Review and Reps**

**A. Engage in Prayer**- Pray right now for God to give you opportunities to share the gospel and boldness to share. Pray for opportunities for THIS WEEK!

## B. Engage People

### Someone You know Very Little

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - You may not remember my name, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Remind Me again your name?
- Look to Serve someone.
  - "Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. May I help you with that?"
- Let them Serve you.
  - "Hello I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I'm new here. Can you help me \_\_\_\_\_."
- Common Interest (Book, food, team, activity, etc.).
  - "Hey, I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed you like \_\_\_\_\_ too. What is your favorite part?"
- Offer Prayer
  - "Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I'm about to pray before I eat my meal. Is there anything I can pray for you about?"

### Church

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - "I know we have two services and it's hard to keep track of names, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Are you new here today or attend a different service?"

*Find 3 new people you have not done this with and practice 3 different Engage questions*

## C. Listen and Ask Questions

The conversation must move from the superficial to the spiritual. Consider taking the conversation from Common Interests > Values and Attitudes > Personal Beliefs.<sup>19</sup>

### **Level 1- Finding Common Interests**

These questions are designed for a believer to start on easy ground in the conversation and identify common interests or connections.

- What do you do for a living?
- Where do you live?
- Where have you traveled?
- What did you do this weekend?

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<sup>19</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 188.

- Where did you grow up?

### **Level 2- Questions that Reveal Values and Attitudes**

These questions help drive the conversation to the heart and press the listener to share things they do not normally talk about.

- “What is causing the stress at work?”
- “Why do you think you feel this way?”
- “What is your biggest concern right now?”
- “How long has this issue been going on?”
- “Why do you think people do such terrible things?”
- “What do you think made you that way?”

### **Level 3- Questions that Reveal Personal Beliefs**

In the conversation, at the Holy Spirit’s prompting, the Christian will want to ask questions that are spiritual in nature. These questions give the believer a jumping off point for the gospel.

- I hate to hear that is happening, may I pray for you?
- What is your religious background?
- How have your ideas about God changes since (coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?<sup>20</sup>
- By the way, are you interested in Spiritual things?
- What do you think a real Christian is?
- Have you ever personally trusted Christ, or are you still on the way?
- If so, how far on the way are you?<sup>21</sup>
- Where are you in your spiritual journey? What is happening spiritually in your life?
- If you were to die tonight, are you 100 percent sure that you would go to heaven?

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<sup>20</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 189.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Little, quoted in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 190-91.

- Do you want to go to heaven?
- What is the most important thing in the world to you? On the day you die, what do you think will be the most important thing to you? <sup>22</sup>
- Who has had the greatest impact on your life?
- What do you think is our purpose here on earth?
- Has your spiritual journey helped you answer the deepest questions you are asking?
- To you, who is Jesus Christ? <sup>23</sup>
- Do you think there is a heaven or a hell?
- If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know? <sup>24</sup>
- 

**Someone Demonstrate- New Neighbor Concern over National events**

*Practice Going through Engage and Questions with someone.*

**1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend**

**2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.**

*Scenario #1- You are new to school/work/ the area so you engage with someone to get help. In the conversation you learn they are struggling with school/work/homelife and you take the conversation to a spiritual question.*

*Scenario #2- You are at the Easter Egg hunt and you strike up a conversation with someone. In the conversation you turn the conversation to their weekend plans and drive the conversation to church/Jesus.*

**3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to getting to a spiritual question.**

## **II. Urgency to Transition our Conversations to the Gospel**

God's rule over humanity is commissioning believers as ambassadors and

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<sup>22</sup> Malone and Cahill, "Neighbors," 132.

<sup>23</sup> McRaney, *Art of Personal Evangelism*, 180.

<sup>24</sup> Faye and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 33-35.



messengers of the gospel. Christians must follow these commands that they are to ‘Go’ into the world with the gospel message.

*He places the responsibility to speak squarely on our shoulders. And that takes bringing the gospel to the world around us firmly out of the “optional extra” box. No longer can we kid ourselves that evangelism is the “rear parking camera” of the Christian life. It’s more like the steering wheel. -Orlando Saer <sup>25</sup>*

## **Romans 10:1-15**

**We must Share the Gospel because...**

### **1. Urgent need for All (vs. 9-13)**

All who calls on God are Saved—All Who Do Not are Not Saved

No distinction

All Nations

The consequences are devastating

### **2. People Must Hear to Respond to the Gospel (vs. 14-15)**

R. C. Sproul prescribes,

*The top priority enterprise for the Christian church is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because people cannot believe or even hear about Jesus unless Jesus is preached. So the church must be committed to the preaching of the gospel to all men. Jesus gave the Great Commission to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every living creature.<sup>26</sup>*

## **III. Transition Question to the Gospel**

Depending on how the conversation is going in light of the previous spiritual questions, a vital question must be asked this Transition Question is the final link to share the gospel.

**A Transition question helps a believer’s conversation because**

(1) it is a non-threatening question that gives the person a choice.

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<sup>25</sup> Orlando Saer, *Big God: How to Approach Suffering, Spread the Gospel, Make Decisions and Pray in the Light of a God Who Is Really in the Driving Seat of the World* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2014), 89.

<sup>26</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1994), 180, Logos Bible Software.

- (2) when the Christian shares the gospel the person cannot be upset with them because he gave permission.
- (3) it establishes that it is the Christian's belief and does not threaten the other person's own views.
- (4) gives a believer a chance to extend the conversation if the person says "no."

**These Transition questions get a Christian's conversation to the best part: Jesus.**

- "Can I share with you what I believe?"
- "Do you mind if I share with you something very important in my life?"
- "May I share some Scriptures with you?"<sup>27</sup>
- If the conversation comes from them sharing about a tragedy, trial, or concern,
  - "I haven't been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?"<sup>28</sup>

**If they say "no," then you respond**

***"Do you think we can meet together and talk about this topic another time?"***

In all of gospel conversations, make sure to avoid shutting down the relationship but extending the conversation.

**Repetitions**

**Practice with three people**

- "I haven't been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?"

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<sup>27</sup> Sproul, *The Gospel of God*, 40.

<sup>28</sup> Scroggins and Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations*, 67-68.

**Someone Demonstrate- Your out to eat and you ask your waiter/waitress to pray for them and they reveal they are looking for a new job they are frustrated about life. You get to a place to transition statement.**

**Put it all together.**

*Practice Going through Engage, Questions, and Transition with someone.*

- 1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend*
- 2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.*

*Choose 1 scenario-*

- Christian notices that the other person likes the same \_\_\_\_\_, you find out they live near you drive the conversation to spiritual things such as church, faith, and then get to transition question.*
  - Christian engages someone new at church, and they reveal they have a concern \_\_\_\_\_; you drive the conversation to spiritual things and then a transition statement.*
- 3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to getting to a spiritual question.*
    - Engage using one of our methods to start a conversation.*
    - Use questions to take the conversation from superficial to spiritual beliefs.*
    - Use a Transition statement in order to share the gospel.*

If time someone else demonstrate

**Let's see how many conversations we can try this week.**

## Lesson 4

### **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

**Engage-** Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation

**Listen and Ask Questions-** Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.

**Transition**- Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.

**Jesus**- A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

## **I. Review and Reps**

**Transition questions get a Christian’s conversation to the best part: Jesus.**

- “Can I share with you what I believe?”
- “Do you mind if I share with you something very important in my life?”
- “May I share some Scriptures with you?”<sup>29</sup>
- If the conversation comes from them sharing about a tragedy, trial, or concern,
  - “I haven’t been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?”<sup>30</sup>

### **If they say “no,” then you respond**

*“Do you think we can meet together and talk about this topic another time?”*

### **Repetitions**

- A. Practice with 3 people **WHEN YOU GET TO YOUR LAST PERSON STOP**
- “I haven’t been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?”

### **Put it all together.**

*Practice Going through Engage, Questions, and Transition with someone at another table.*

- 1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend*
- 2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.*

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<sup>29</sup> Faye, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 40.

<sup>30</sup> Scroggins and Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations*, 67-68.

- Choose 1 scenario-*
- *Christian notices that the other person likes the same \_\_\_\_\_, you find out they live near you drive the conversation to spiritual things such as church, faith, and then get to transition question.*
  - *Christian engages someone new at church, and they reveal they have a concern \_\_\_\_\_; you drive the conversation to spiritual things and then a transition question.*
3. *Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to Transition Question.*
- *Engage using one of our methods to start a conversation.*
  - *Use questions to take the conversation from superficial to spiritual beliefs.*
  - *Use a Transition question in order to share the gospel.*

## **II . Be Ready to Share Your Faith-1 Pet 3:13-18**

Peter challenges every believer to be ready to share their faith in 1 Peter 3:13-18. As Peter speaks to people under persecution, he advises them to be prepared to answer for their faith because their actions will make them stand out. Believers must be ready to share the gospel when given the opportunity. Believers must be ready to turn conversations to Jesus and be able to share the hope that people have in him.

### **1. Always Be Ready**

Peter encourages believers to be able and willing to share the gospel in their lives. Christians are to be ready constantly to respond to those who ask about their faith. Peter would say that no scenario could keep a believer from sharing Jesus. Peter would say not even persecution should keep a person from sharing their faith. Jeff Vanderstelt writes, “When we talk about the gospel, we are not just talking about a doctrine we write down and quote. We are talking about the very real, dynamic power of God to create, redeem, and save.”<sup>31</sup>

### **2 .Share the Hope**

Believers must be ready to share their hope in Christ. Peter instructs, “Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (3:15). Followers of Christ are to know their hope is Jesus and be willing to share him with the lost. First Peter 3:13-18 is the guide for having gospel conversations with neighbors and family that believers might win them to Christ.

Using “Hope,” linked with the phrase “in your hearts,” Peter is emphasizing the internal and external faith it takes to live in troubled times that comes from hope in Jesus. Peter encourages all believers to be prepared to share the hope of Jesus as they live faithfully for him. By sharing hope in Christ, believers proclaim the gospel message of a Savior who has come to bring forgiveness of sins.

### **3. Gentleness and Respect**

As Christians engage with others through gospel conversations they must do so as ambassadors to Christ. Paul instructs, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, ‘Be reconciled to God’” (2 Cor 5:20). Believers know that they represent him and must share the gospel with

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<sup>31</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt, *Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 66.

humility. Peter, therefore, guides Christians as they share the message of hope that they must do so with “gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15).

### **III. Gospel Presentation**

To win people for Christ, the essential elements of the gospel must be included. A whole gospel creates a whole Christian and therefore the whole gospel must be presented. The gospel must include the truth about God, Christ, humanity’s status and how to be saved. Packer states, “For preaching the gospel, as we have just seen, means inviting sinners to come to Jesus Christ, the living Savior, who, by virtue of his atoning death, is able to forgive and save all those who put their trust in him.”<sup>32</sup>

The gospel is “good news” because God did not leave humanity in their sinfulness but sent a Savior whose name is Jesus. Michael Green writes, “The one who came preaching the good news (Jesus) had become the content of the good news (Jesus).”<sup>33</sup> When sharing the gospel is essential to point people to Jesus, who is the only person that can save them from their sins.

#### **3 Circles Gospel Presentation**

**3 Circles Script: Brokenness is easy for most of us to understand.** It feels like broken relationships, addiction, depression, discouragement, guilt and shame. We all want out of brokenness, so we try to fix it (squiggly lines out of brokenness). We medicate it with drugs or numb it with alcohol. We strive to be better people, hoping that somehow, someday, our good will outweigh our bad. We look for ways to alleviate our pain. When we do that, we just get more and more broken. When we feel broken on the inside and everything’s all messed up, we know something needs to change. **THE REASON WE FEEL BROKEN IS WE HAVE LEFT GOD’S DESIGN FOR US. God has a design for every area of our lives**—our families, marriages, money, sex life, work life and just plain life. God designed us to be in relationship with Him, but we have all departed from that design. The Bible calls this sin. We’re born with a sinful nature so sin comes naturally to us. There is no one who gets it right all of the time. We all sin and fall short of God’s perfect design (Rom. 3:23). **This sin leaves us in brokenness.** Brokenness is what gets us ready to try God’s solution, which is to repent and believe the gospel. The change we really need comes from Jesus. **God sent Jesus to live a perfect life, die the death we deserve, and be raised to life again, proving He is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do.** Jesus came to forgive our sins. When we repent and believe in Him, He gives us His Spirit who helps us **recover and pursue God’s design.** Then Jesus sends us right back out into a broken world to tell others how to find their way out of brokenness.

Conclusion and application: **Where do you see yourself in this diagram?** If you’re in **brokenness is there anything that would keep you from repenting and believing the gospel right now?** Lead in a salvation prayer.

**Draw the 3 Circles 3 TIMES**

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<sup>32</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008), 76.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 51.

## 1. Brokenness

### 1. We choose to depart from God's design.

- »» This has been true from the very beginning.
- »» Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God (Gen. 3:1-7).
- »» The Bible word for departing from God's design and going our own way is sin.
- »» We all do it (Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23).

### 2. When we depart from God's design, it always leads to brokenness.

- »» We know when our communion with God is broken. It feels like fear, shame, guilt, loneliness... (Gen. 3:8-10).
- »» We try to hide from God (Gen. 3:8).

### 3. Brokenness disrupts God's design.

- »» Disrupts our spiritual life (Gen. 3:14-15 - We have an enemy—the serpent, Satan.).
- »» Disrupts our family life (Gen. 3:16 - pain in childbearing—from birth on).
- »» Disrupts our married life (Gen. 3:16 - desire husband and he will rule over).
- »» Disrupts our work life (Gen. 3:17-19a - toil to work the earth).
- »» Disrupts our physical life (Gen. 3:19b - death).

### 4. Brokenness helps us see our need for change.

- »» We try to cover our own sin, but it doesn't work (Genesis 3:7).
- »» We do what we can to fix our own brokenness (relationships, drugs, alcohol, strive for a "better me"), but it doesn't work.
- »» Brokenness seems like a bad thing, but in many ways it's good because it's how God gets our attention.
- »» God has made way out of our brokenness: the gospel.

## 2. God's Design

### 1. God created us and He loves us.

- »» God designed the world and everything in it. He created everything as it was meant to be and it was good (Genesis 1:1-25).
- »» He created humans in His image—the pinnacle of His creation. He called us very good (Genesis 1:26-2:24)

### 2. God has a design for every aspect of our lives.

- »» Our gender identity (Genesis 1:27 - created us male and female)
- »» Our families (Gen. 1:28 - be fruitful and multiply)
- »» Our work life (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15-17 - dominion over the earth and work the garden)
- »» Our rest life (Gen. 2:1-3 - He rested on the seventh day)
- »» Our marriages (Gen. 2:24 - leave and cleave)

### 3. God designed us for relationship with Him.

- »» He created us to have unbroken communion with Him (Genesis 3:8 walking in the garden looking for Adam and Eve). He "walked with us and talked with us."
- »» This unbroken communion can be restored through the gospel.

## Practice with someone Brokenness through God's Design

### 3. The Gospel

#### 1. God made a way out of our brokenness.

»» God promised that a man would “bruise” the enemy’s head (Genesis 3:15).

»» God sacrificed an animal—shed its blood—to make coverings for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). This is the protoevangelium or “first gospel.”

»» God loves us and sent His one and only Son to shed His blood and cover sin once and for all (John 3:16, Hebrews 10:10-14).

#### 2. The gospel is simply: Jesus died for our sins, was buried and God raised Him from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

»» Unpack the gospel and the importance of every aspect—death, burial and resurrection.

»» The gospel saves us from our sins (Romans 1:16).

#### 3. We just have to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

»» Repent means to change—to turn from our sins and turn to Jesus.

»» God doesn’t condemn us—we’re already condemned because of Genesis 3.

»» God wants to save us (John 3:17-21).

#### 4. God helps us recover and pursue His design for our lives.

»» He removes the heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26)

»» His Spirit indwells and empowers us

## Practice with someone Gospel Circle

### IV. Gospel Conversations

1. Present the Gospel

2. Share your Testimony

Before- How God Saved you (Gospel)- After

3. Address Spiritual Topics- Bible, Prayer, God, Jesus, church

4. Prayer

5. Invite to Church

## Put it all together.

*Practice Going through Engage, Questions, and Transition with someone at another table.*

1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend

2. Use the following scenario to go through 3 Circles Presentation.

- Christian engages someone at the Easter Egg Hunt, and they reveal they have a concern \_\_\_\_\_; you drive the conversation to spiritual things and then a transition question.

3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to 3 Circles.

- Engage using one of our methods to start a conversation.
- Use questions to take the conversation from superficial to spiritual beliefs.
- Use a Transition question in order to share the gospel.
- Use 3 Circles to share the Gospel



## APPENDIX 5

### GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS TRAINING HANDOUT

#### Lesson 1

#### Starting Gospel Conversations Training

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Our Role in Evangelism

##### A. God's Work- Salvation

1. **God Provides** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Romans 5:8 (CSB) — 8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
2. **God** \_\_\_\_\_ **Us**  
*John 6:44 (CSB) — 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.*
3. **God** \_\_\_\_\_ **Us**  
*Ephesians 2:1–5 (CSB): And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously lived according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!*
4. **God** \_\_\_\_\_ **us by Grace through Faith**  
*Ephesians 2:8 (CSB) — 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—*

***“God is involved in evangelism at every point and level. Regeneration/Conversion is 100 percent God. However, He chooses to use various instruments to draw people to himself.”***  
***-Will McRaney<sup>1</sup>***

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<sup>1</sup> Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a*

## **B. Our Work- Obedience**

### **1. Share the \_\_\_\_\_**

*Romans 10:14–15 (CSB) — 14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*

### **2. Make \_\_\_\_\_**

*Matthew 28:18–20 (CSB) — 18 Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

***God is sovereign! If he can take somebody like me and change him, he can take anybody in your life and change him as well. But be aware: you are not responsible for causing a person’s heart to turn towards God. . . . You see, success is sharing your faith and living your life for Jesus Christ. It has nothing whatsoever to do with bringing anyone to the Lord. It has everything to do with obedience***

***- Share Jesus Without Fear, William Fay and Linda Shepherd<sup>2</sup>***

## **II. Engage in Prayer**

<b>Church Praying Evangelistically in Acts</b>	<b>Scripture</b>
The disciples were praying and after the Holy Spirit fell upon them they began to preach boldly, and people were saved	Acts 1:24
As the church was committed to God’s Word, prayer, and fellowship people were saved daily.	Acts 2:47
After Peter and John were arrested, the church prayed for boldness in sharing the Gospel despite the threat on their lives.	Acts 4:31
The church prayed that Samaria might receive the Holy Spirit and be saved.	Acts 8:15
Cornelius, a Roman soldier, prayed to God and not only did God answer in a vision but sent Peter to him to share the Gospel and his whole family was saved.	Acts 10
When Paul and Silas went for prayer by the river in Philippi, they shared Christ with the women there and Lydia and her household were saved.	Acts 16:13
Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns all night while in jail and the jailer and his house were saved.	Acts 16:25-34

***“When we understand that it’s God’s work in people’s lives, we avoid the mistake of working hard on performance at the expense of prayer; it leads us to pray and trust in the One who can produce a converted heart.” – Mack Stiles<sup>3</sup>***

*Changing Culture* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 35

<sup>2</sup> William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: Broadman & Homan, 1999), 3.

<sup>3</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Marks of a Messenger: Knowing Living, and Speaking the*

Prayer is God's \_\_\_\_\_ Seeking God's \_\_\_\_\_,  
Asking for God's \_\_\_\_\_ to transform our lives and the  
lives of others for His \_\_\_\_\_.

*Colossians 4:2–4 (CSB) — 2 Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, 4 so that I may make it known as I should.*

### **We should Pray**

God, thank you for the gift of salvation through your Son, Jesus. Thank you for making known to me the truth of the Gospel that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again for my sins. Thank you that you sent someone to tell me about Christ. Today give me opportunities for me to share the gospel. May I play a part of you redeeming someone who is far from you. Help me to be bold. Help me to be clear. Help me to be compassionate. Lord help me not to pass the opportunity up when it arises. God, May I be a light in the darkness for you in all I do but specifically in the life of someone who is lost. In the name of your precious Son, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Write your own Prayer Below and Ask God to help you have opportunities to share the Gospel and that you would be prepare and bold to speak.

### **III. Engage People**

#### **Luke 19:1-10**

1. Jesus Engaged \_\_\_\_\_
2. Jesus Engaged in \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jesus's Mission is our \_\_\_\_\_

*This is the way Jesus saves lost sinners: he does it by walking right into our lives, even uninvited. J. C. Ryle said, "If ever there was a soul sought and saved, without having done anything to deserve it, that soul was the soul of Zacchaeus. . . Unasked, our Lord stops and speaks to Zacchaeus. Unasked, He offers Himself to be a guest in the house of a sinner. Unasked, He sends into the heart of a publican the renewing grace of the Spirit and puts him that very day among the children of God." Here is how the Puritan Matthew Henry explained the saving work of God in the sinner's soul: Jesus "brings his own welcome; he opens the heart and inclines it to receive him." -Phillip Ryken<sup>4</sup>*

#### **A. Places to Engage People**

- Our Family
  - Where we Work/School
- 

*Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 78.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, Reformed Expository Commentary, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 304-5, Logos Bible Software.

- Where we Live
- Where we Play
- Church Events
- Divine Appointments

## **B. Ways to Engage People**

### Someone You know Very Little

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Have I met you before?”
  - You may not remember my name, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Remind Me again your name?
  - I wanted to say, I’m sorry. I should have introduced myself to you before. I’m \_\_\_\_\_.
- Look to Serve someone.
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. May I help you with that?”
- Let them Serve you.
  - “I’m new here can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_? (Listen) Thank you my name is \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “Have you been to this place before? What would you recommend?”
- Common Interest (Book, food, team, activity, etc.).
  - “Hey, I’m \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed you like \_\_\_\_\_ too. What is your favorite part?”
- Offer Prayer
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. I’m about to pray before I eat my meal. Is there anything I can pray for you about?”
  - “Hello \_\_\_\_\_, I am going to be praying at lunch today is there anything I can pray for you about?”

### Outreach Event

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “I know we have two services and it’s hard to keep track of names, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Are you one of our guests today?”
  - “I hope you are having a great time. I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Remind me again your name.”
- Serve Them
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Do you need help finding anything? (Refreshment, Childcare, restroom)

### Church

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “I know we have two services and it’s hard to keep track of names, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Are you new here today or attend a different service?”
  - “We may have met before, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Remind me again your name.”
- Serve Them
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Do you need help finding anything? (Refreshment, Childcare, restroom)

*Are there some others that have worked for you to Engage Someone in Conversation?*

### **C. Keep it Going**

- **ALWAYS KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING OR OPEN FOR ANOTHER TIME**
- NEXT Step- Questions and Listening
- “You may not have time right now; can I contact you and we can get together this/next week. I would love to continue our conversation.”

### **D. Handling Rejection**

- Attitude of \_\_\_\_\_
- Attitude of \_\_\_\_\_
- Keep \_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Three different people using three different Introductions we discussed.**

## **Session 2**

*In God’s sovereignty, what is going on in human history is that God is reaching out to people, so that they will reach out to him. The reason your neighbor lives where she does is so that she will get reached for the gospel. Why did God want a Christian—you—to be in your workplace? Yes, so you can bless your boss and workers by working hard and honestly. But first and foremost, it’s so that others can hear the gospel.<sup>5</sup> -*

*Rico Tice*

### **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

**Engage-** Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation

**Listen and Ask Questions-** Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.

**Transition-** Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.

**Jesus-** A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

### **A. Engage in Prayer**

*God of Salvation, open my eyes to see the world through your eternal perspective. You see people as lost sheep in need of a Shepherd. Help me to have a heart that loves people. Help me have a*

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<sup>5</sup> Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism: How to Talk about Jesus Even When It’s Tough* (Surrey, UK: Good Book, 2015), 49.

*heart for people who are far from you. Help me to speak boldly when you give me an opportunity. Raise the temperature of my heart that I might have the same passion that sent Jesus to this world and to the cross. For your glory, Amen.*

**Write your own.**

## B. Engage People

- Let them Serve you.
  - “I’m new here can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_? (Listen) Thank you my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Low Pressure Introduction
  - “I know we have two services and it’s hard to keep track of names, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Are you one of our guests today?”
  - “I hope you are having a great time. I’m \_\_\_\_\_ . Remind me again your name.”
- Common Interest (Book, food, team, activity, etc.).
  - “Hey, I’m \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed you like \_\_\_\_\_ too. What is your favorite part?”

**Talk to 3 different people using each of these.**

## II. Conversations

A study showed that people have “on average \_\_\_\_\_ conversations a day.”<sup>6</sup>

These conversations can stay superficial, so a believer must learn how to move them to spiritual conversations. Christians can follow the way of Jesus to use everyday conversation to share the gospel.

<b>Conversations Turned to the Gospel</b>	<b>Scripture</b>
Jesus went to a well in Samaria and turned a conversation about water to a conversation about eternal life	John 4:1-26
The blind wanted physical sight and Jesus offered spiritual sight	Mark 10:51-52; John 9:1-12
The men with leprosy wanted physical healing and Jesus offered spiritual healing	Matt 4:1-4; Luke 17:12-19
Peter spoke to people confused at Pentecost to urge them to repent and believe	Acts 2:14-40
Early believers shared the gospel and added to their number daily	Acts 2:47
A beggar asked for money and John and Peter turned the conversation to the gospel	Acts 3
When persecution came, Christians went out and shared the word of the Lord	Acts 8:4
The angel of the Lord told Phillip to go south where he met an Ethiopian man who came to believe the gospel and was baptized	Acts 8:26-40

<sup>6</sup> Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 51.

## John 4:1-26

- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the Woman (vs. 7-9)
- Jesus Asked \_\_\_\_\_ to Reveal Her Needs (vs. 10-18)
- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ and Answered Her Questions (vs. 19-22)
- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the Conversation (vs. 23-24)
- Jesus Revealed the \_\_\_\_\_ about Himself. (vs. 25-26)

The best thing about conversations is that a believer can have them with anyone. Conversations build the bridge to people so that the gospel can be presented.

*Malone and Cahill write, "The best way to show people our Christianity is to develop a conversational relationship with them. . . . If we want them to be interested in what we have to say, we must be interested in our neighbor."<sup>7</sup>*

### III. Listen

Listening is often the forgotten element of evangelism.

*Counsel in a person's heart is deep water; but a person of understanding draws it out.  
Proverbs 20:5 (CSB)*

*Steve Sjogren and Dave Ping state, "In a world where talk is cheap, good listening is still pure gold. When it comes to showing the love of Jesus to those closest to you, using your ears effectively is always more powerful than running your mouth."<sup>8</sup> Listening helps believers hear the heart of the person they are speaking to and helps them see when the person is receptive to the gospel.*

- Listening is \_\_\_\_\_
- Listening Is \_\_\_\_\_ Not Passive
- Listening is Not something to try to \_\_\_\_\_
- Listening is the way to \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>7</sup> Josh Malone and Mark Cahill, "Neighbors: Taking the Gospel Next Door," in *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ*, ed. Scott Dawson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 131.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Sjogren and Dave Ping, *Outflow: Outward-Focused Living in a Self-Focused World* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2006), 112

Active listening involves asking clarifying questions, repeating back to them to gain understanding, praying for understanding, caring for the individual, and not thinking about what the evangelist is going to say next.

### **Qualities of a Good Listener**

1. Finds something interesting in what is said and asks questions.
2. Listens rationally and is unshockable; suspending judgement.
3. Listens for feelings
4. Shows disciplined attention through brief comments and reactions.
5. Thinks about what is being said, the advice being sought, and responds biblically.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. Questions to Guide Conversation**

As a believer develop both questions and listening skills, they listen for responses that help to gauge the next question, comment, and when it is time to share the gospel.

Christians should not speedily jump to the gospel unless time is an issue; instead the Christian should walk slowly down the pathway for a good gospel conversation. Will Metzger explains,

A better conversation model is to begin with common interests and seek to move deeper into values, attitudes, and beliefs. We move gradually yet directly, and with a purpose in mind. Our goal is to touch the conscience. One of the best ways to do this is by developing the art of questioning. - Will Metzger<sup>10</sup>

The conversation must move from the superficial to the spiritual. Consider taking the conversation from Common Interests > Values and Attitudes > Personal Beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Level 1- Finding Common Interests**

These questions are designed for a believer to start on easy ground in the conversation and identify common interests or connections.

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<sup>9</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, rev. and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 212-13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 188.



- What do you do for a living?
- Where do you live?
- Where have you traveled?
- What did you do this weekend?
- Where did you grow up?
- Has your week been what you thought it would be?

**Sample Conversation:**

C- “Hey, I’m Frank, I noticed you like The Reds too. What player are you looking forward to seeing this year?”

NC- I’m Greg... I am really looking forward to seeing, Mesoraco.

C- Yeah, he’s important for their line up and I hear he may get traded. How often do you get to see them play?

NC- I try to watch at least a game a week and we might go over a few times. I’m going to probably go over this weekend.

C- That’s great! You have any other weekend plans?

NC- A few things around the house not much. What about you?

C- Well I have a basketball game on Saturday to take the kids to. I can’t wait for Sunday, I am going to church at Hebron Baptist, then we are going to take the kids to the park for the afternoon. Hey, do you go to church anywhere?

NC- Nah. We do that sort of thing.

C- Have you ever thought about why people go to church? Why would someone want to give up their weekend?

NC- No. It doesn’t make sense to me I’m not a religious guy.

C- Would you mind if I told you why I go to church?

*Identify the Engage and the Questions that went deeper.*

## Level 2- Questions that Reveal Values and Attitudes

These questions help drive the conversation to the heart and press the listener to share things they do not normally talk about.

For example, someone says, “I have been stressed at work this week,” or “my kids are having trouble at school.” You might say,

- “Is there an area they have been struggling in?”
- “Why does this situation concern you?”

### Other Questions

- “What is causing the stress at work?”
- “Why do you think you feel this way?”
- “What is your biggest concern right now?”
- “How long has this issue been going on?”
- “Why do you think people do such terrible things?”
- “What do you think made you that way?”

### **Sample Conversation:**

C- “Hello, may have met before my name is Sally. I know there is a lot of people who work here.”

NC- “I’m June.”

C- “Nice to meet you! What was the best part of your week?”

NC- “I haven’t had a great week. I am struggling with my kids this week. A lot of obedience issues.”

C- “What is your biggest concern right now?”

NC- “I just really feel overwhelmed. Too many issues and I just don’t know where to start.”

C- “You know I felt that way one time and I got comfort from the Bible. I read a scripture that said, ‘No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out so that you may be able to bear it.’ 1 Corinthians 10:13 (CSB). Have you ever read the Bible?”

NC- Ho I am not religious.

C- Do you mind if I tell you why I go to the Bible when I am overwhelmed?

*Identify the Engage and the Questions that went deeper.*

### Level 3- Questions that Reveal Personal Beliefs

In the conversation, at the Holy Spirit's prompting, the Christian will want to ask questions that are spiritual in nature. These questions give the believer a jumping off point for the gospel.

- I hate to hear that is happening, may I pray for you?
- What is your religious background?
- How have your ideas about God changes since (coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?<sup>12</sup>
- By the way, are you interested in Spiritual things?
- What do you think a real Christian is?
- Have you ever personally trusted Christ, or are you still on the way?
- If so, how far on the way are you?<sup>13</sup>
- Where are you in your spiritual journey? What is happening spiritually in your life?
- If you were to die tonight, are you 100 percent sure that you would go to heaven?
- Do you want to go to heaven?
- What is the most important thing in the world to you? On the day you die, what do you think will be the most important thing to you?<sup>14</sup>
- Who has had the greatest impact on your life?
- What do you think is our purpose here on earth?
- Has your spiritual journey helped you answer the deepest questions you are asking?
- To you, who is Jesus Christ?<sup>15</sup>
- Do you think there is a heaven or a hell?
- If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 189.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Little, quoted in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 190-91.

<sup>14</sup> Malone and Cahill, "Neighbors," 132.

<sup>15</sup> McRaney, *Art of Personal Evangelism*, 180.

<sup>16</sup> Faye and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 33-35.

### **Sample Conversation:**

C- “Hey, I’m Sophia, I am new here, would you mind telling me where the snack machine is.”

NC- “Sure, I’m Ray, its right around the corner.”

C- “Boy, it was an awful drive in today, where did you have to drive in from?”

NC- “I came in off 75 North today..”

C- “Of wow I heard it was bad up there. Did you pass those accidents?”

NC- “Yes, I heard two people died.”

C- “Isn’t that awful my son and I prayed as we were driving for those who were injured. Can you imagine if that was a family member or friend? How would you feel?”

NC- “Incredibly sad.”

C- “Have you ever thought about what happens when we die?”

NC- “No. I think this is all there is. That is why I work so I can take my boat out on the lake as much as I can.”

C- “I know many people who hold that perspective. Would you mind if I told you what I think? “

*Identify the Engage and the Questions that went deeper.*

*Practice Going through Engage and Questions with someone.*

- 1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend*
- 2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.*

*Examples- Common interest, Person reveals a problem/issue, Concerned about world events*

- 3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to getting to a spiritual question.*

## **Lesson 3**

### **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

**Engage-** Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation

**Listen and Ask Questions**- Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.

**Transition**- Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.

**Jesus**- A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

## **I. Review and Reps**

**A. Engage in \_\_\_\_\_** - Pray right now for God to give you opportunities to share the gospel and boldness to share. Pray for opportunities for THIS WEEK!

**B. Engage \_\_\_\_\_**

### Someone You know Very Little

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - You may not remember my name, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Remind Me again your name?
- Look to Serve someone.
  - "Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. May I help you with that?"
- Let them Serve you.
  - "Hello I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I'm new here. Can you help me \_\_\_\_\_."
- Common Interest (Book, food, team, activity, etc.).
  - "Hey, I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed you like \_\_\_\_\_ too. What is your favorite part?"
- Offer Prayer
  - "Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I'm about to pray before I eat my meal. Is there anything I can pray for you about?"

### Church

- Low Pressure Introduction
  - "I know we have two services and it's hard to keep track of names, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Are you new here today or attend a different service?"

***Find 3 new people you have not done this with and practice 3 different Engage questions***

## C. Listen and Ask Questions

The conversation must move from the superficial to the spiritual. Consider taking the conversation from Common Interests > Values and Attitudes > Personal Beliefs.<sup>17</sup>

### Level 1- Finding

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These questions are designed for a believer to start on easy ground in the conversation and identify common interests or connections.

- What do you do for a living?
- Where do you live?
- Where have you traveled?
- What did you do this weekend?
- Where did you grow up?

### Level 2- Questions that Reveal

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These questions help drive the conversation to the heart and press the listener to share things they do not normally talk about.

- “What is causing the stress at work?”
- “Why do you think you feel this way?”
- “What is your biggest concern right now?”
- “How long has this issue been going on?”
- “Why do you think people do such terrible things?”
- “What do you think made you that way?”

### Level 3- Questions that Reveal

---

In the conversation, at the Holy Spirit’s prompting, the Christian will want to ask questions that are spiritual in nature. These questions give the believer a jumping off point for the gospel.

- I hate to hear that is happening, may I pray for you?
- What is your religious background?

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<sup>17</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 188.

- How have your ideas about God changes since (coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?<sup>18</sup>
- By the way, are you interested in Spiritual things?
- What do you think a real Christian is?
- Have you ever personally trusted Christ, or are you still on the way?
- If so, how far on the way are you?<sup>19</sup>
- Where are you in your spiritual journey? What is happening spiritually in your life?
- If you were to die tonight, are you 100 percent sure that you would go to heaven?
- Do you want to go to heaven?
- What is the most important thing in the world to you? On the day you die, what do you think will be the most important thing to you?<sup>20</sup>
- Who has had the greatest impact on your life?
- What do you think is our purpose here on earth?
- Has your spiritual journey helped you answer the deepest questions you are asking?
- To you, who is Jesus Christ?<sup>21</sup>
- Do you think there is a heaven or a hell?
- If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 189.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Little, quoted in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 190-91.

<sup>20</sup> Malone and Cahill, "Neighbors," 132.

<sup>21</sup> McRaney, *Art of Personal Evangelism*, 180.

<sup>22</sup> Faye and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 33-35.

**Practice Going through Engage and Questions with someone.**

1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend
2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.

*Scenario #1- You are new to school/work/ the area so you engage with someone to get help. In the conversation you learn they are struggling with school/work/homelife and you take the conversation to a spiritual question.*

*Scenario #2- You are at the Easter Egg hunt and you strike up a conversation with someone. In the conversation you turn the conversation to their weekend plans and drive the conversation to church/Jesus.*

*Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to getting to a spiritual question.*

## **II. Urgency to Transition our Conversations to the Gospel**

*He places the responsibility to speak squarely on our shoulders. And that takes bringing the gospel to the world around us firmly out of the “optional extra” box. No longer can we kid ourselves that evangelism is the “rear parking camera” of the Christian life. It’s more like the steering wheel. -Orlando Saer<sup>23</sup>*

### **Romans 10:1-15**

#### **We must Share the Gospel because...**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ need for All (vs. 9-13)
2. People Must \_\_\_\_\_ to Respond to the Gospel (vs. 14-15)

*The top priority enterprise for the Christian church is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because people cannot believe or even hear about Jesus unless Jesus is preached. So the church must be committed to the preaching of the gospel to all men. Jesus gave the Great Commission to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every living creature - R. C. Sproul.<sup>24</sup>*

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<sup>23</sup> Orlando Saer, *Big God: How to Approach Suffering, Spread the Gospel, Make Decisions and Pray in the Light of a God Who Is Really in the Driving Seat of the World* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2014), 89.

<sup>24</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1994), 180, Logos Bible Software.



### III. Transition Question to the Gospel

Depending on how the conversation is going in light of the previous spiritual questions, a vital question must be asked this Transition Question is the final link to share the gospel.

#### A Transition question helps a believer's conversation because

- (1) it is a non-threatening question that gives the person a \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) when the Christian shares the gospel the person cannot be upset with them because he gave \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) it establishes that it is the Christian's belief and does not \_\_\_\_\_ the other person's own views.
- (4) gives a believer a chance to \_\_\_\_\_ the conversation if the person says "no."

#### These Transition questions get a Christian's conversation to the best part: Jesus.

- "Can I share with you what I believe?"
- "Do you mind if I share with you something very important in my life?"
- "May I share some Scriptures with you?"<sup>25</sup>
- If the conversation comes from them sharing about a tragedy, trial, or concern,
  - "I haven't been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?"<sup>26</sup>

#### **If they say "no," then you respond**

*"Do you think we can meet together and talk about this topic another time?"*

- In all of gospel conversations, make sure to avoid shutting down the relationship but extending the conversation.

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<sup>25</sup> Sproul, *The Gospel of God*, 40.

<sup>26</sup> Scroggins and Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations*, 67-68.

## **Repetitions**

### A. Practice with 3 people

- “I haven’t been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?”

### Put it all together.

*Practice Going through Engage, Questions, and Transition with someone.*

*1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend*

*2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.*

*Choose 1 scenario-*

- *Christian notices that the other person likes the same \_\_\_\_\_, you find out they live near you drive the conversation to spiritual things such as church, faith, and then get to transition question.*
  - *Christian engages someone new at church, and they reveal they have a concern \_\_\_\_\_; you drive the conversation to spiritual things and then a transition statement.*
- 3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to getting to a spiritual question.*
- *Engage using one of our methods to start a conversation.*
  - *Use questions to take the conversation from superficial to spiritual beliefs.*
  - *Use a Transition question in order to share the gospel.*

If time someone else demonstrate

**Let’s see how many conversations we can try this week.**

## **Lesson 4**

### **Starting Gospel Conversations Training**

**Engage-** Engage God in Prayer and People in Conversation

**Listen and Ask Questions-** Ask questions intended to further discussion and to develop listening skills for common point and transition.

**Transition-** Questions and statements to transition to Jesus, invitation to church, or Further conversation.

**Jesus-** A short gospel presentation to be used in context of conversation.

## **I. Review and Reps**

### **Transition questions get a Christian's conversation to the best part: Jesus.**

- “Can I share with you what I believe?”
- “Do you mind if I share with you something very important in my life?”
- “May I share some Scriptures with you?”<sup>27</sup>
- If the conversation comes from them sharing about a tragedy, trial, or concern,
  - “I haven’t been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?”<sup>28</sup>

### **If they say “no,” then you respond**

*“Do you think we can meet together and talk about this topic another time?”*

### **Repetitions**

#### **A. Practice with 3 people**

- “I haven’t been through the exact situation that you just mentioned, but I have had similar problems (issues or concerns). Can I share something with you that has really helped me?”

### **Put it all together.**

*Practice Going through Engage, Questions, and Transition with someone at another table.*

1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend
2. Choose together a scenario that will allow you to go through to a spiritual question.

*Choose 1 scenario-*

- *Christian notices that the other person likes the same \_\_\_\_\_, you find out they live near you drive the conversation to spiritual things such as church, faith, and then get to transition question.*

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<sup>27</sup> Faye, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 40.

<sup>28</sup> Scroggins and Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations*, 67-68.

- *Christian engages someone new at church, and they reveal they have a concern \_\_\_\_\_; you drive the conversation to spiritual things and then a transition question.*
3. *Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to Transition Question.*
- *Engage using one of our methods to start a conversation.*
  - *Use questions to take the conversation from superficial to spiritual beliefs.*
  - *Use a Transition question in order to share the gospel.*

## II . Be Ready to Share Your Faith-1 Pet 3:13-18

### 1. Always Be \_\_\_\_\_

“When we talk about the gospel, we are not just talking about a doctrine we write down and quote. We are talking about the very real, dynamic power of God to create, redeem, and save.” -Jeff Vanderstelt<sup>29</sup>

### 2 . Share the \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Gentleness and \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Gospel Presentation

“For preaching the gospel, as we have just seen, means inviting sinners to come to Jesus Christ, the living Savior, who, by virtue of his atoning death, is able to forgive and save all those who put their trust in him.”

- J.I. Packer<sup>30</sup>

### 3 Circles Gospel Presentation

**3 Circles Script: Brokenness is easy for most of us to understand.** It feels like broken relationships, addiction, depression, discouragement, guilt and shame. We all want out of brokenness, so we try to fix it (squiggly lines out of brokenness). We medicate it with drugs or numb it with alcohol. We strive to be better people, hoping that somehow, someday, our good will outweigh our bad. We look for ways to alleviate our pain. When we do that, we just get more and more broken. When we feel broken on the inside and everything’s all messed up, we know something needs to change. **THE REASON WE FEEL BROKEN IS WE HAVE LEFT GOD’S DESIGN FOR US. God has a design for every area of our lives**—our families, marriages, money, sex life, work life and just plain life. God designed us to be in relationship with Him, but we have all departed from that design. The Bible calls this sin. We’re born with a sinful nature so sin comes naturally to us. There is no one who gets it right all of the time. We all sin and fall short of God’s perfect design (Rom. 3:23). **This sin leaves us in brokenness.** Brokenness is what gets us ready to try God’s solution, which is to repent and believe the gospel. The change we really need comes from Jesus. **God sent Jesus to live a perfect life, die the death we deserve, and be raised to life again, proving He is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do.** Jesus came to forgive our sins. When we repent and

<sup>29</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt, *Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 66.

<sup>30</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008), 76.

believe in Him, He gives us His Spirit who helps us **recover and pursue God's design**. Then Jesus sends us right back out into a broken world to tell others how to find their way out of brokenness.

Conclusion and application: **Where do you see yourself in this diagram?** If you're in **brokenness is there anything that would keep you from repenting and believing the gospel right now?** Lead in a salvation prayer.

*Draw the 3 Circles 3 TIMES*

## 1. Brokenness

### 1. We choose to depart from God's design.

- »» This has been true from the very beginning.
- »» Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God (Gen. 3:1-7).
- »» The Bible word for departing from God's design and going our own way is sin.
- »» We all do it (Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23).

### 2. When we depart from God's design, it always leads to brokenness.

- »» We know when our communion with God is broken. It feels like fear, shame, guilt, loneliness... (Gen. 3:8-10).
- »» We try to hide from God (Gen. 3:8).

### 3. Brokenness disrupts God's design.

- »» Disrupts our spiritual life (Gen. 3:14-15 - We have an enemy—the serpent, Satan.).
- »» Disrupts our family life (Gen. 3:16 - pain in childbearing—from birth on).
- »» Disrupts our married life (Gen. 3:16 - desire husband and he will rule over).
- »» Disrupts our work life (Gen. 3:17-19a - toil to work the earth).
- »» Disrupts our physical life (Gen. 3:19b - death).

### 4. Brokenness helps us see our need for change.

- »» We try to cover our own sin, but it doesn't work (Genesis 3:7).
- »» We do what we can to fix our own brokenness (relationships, drugs, alcohol, strive for a "better me"), but it doesn't work.
- »» Brokenness seems like a bad thing, but in many ways it's good because it's how God gets our attention.
- »» God has made way out of our brokenness: the gospel.

## 2. God's Design

### 1. God created us and He loves us.

- »» God designed the world and everything in it. He created everything as it was meant to be and it was good (Genesis 1:1-25).
- »» He created humans in His image—the pinnacle of His creation. He called us very good (Genesis 1:26-2:24)

### 2. God has a design for every aspect of our lives.

- »» Our gender identity (Genesis 1:27 - created us male and female)
- »» Our families (Gen. 1:28 - be fruitful and multiply)
- »» Our work life (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15-17 - dominion over the earth and work the garden)

- »» Our rest life (Gen. 2:1-3 - He rested on the seventh day)
- »» Our marriages (Gen. 2:24 - leave and cleave)

**3. God designed us for relationship with Him.**

- »» He created us to have unbroken communion with Him (Genesis 3:8 walking in the garden looking for Adam and Eve). He “walked with us and talked with us.”
- »» This unbroken communion can be restored through the gospel.

*Practice with someone Brokenness through God’s Design*

**3. The Gospel**

**1. God made a way out of our brokenness.**

- »» God promised that a man would “bruise” the enemy’s head (Genesis 3:15).
- »» God sacrificed an animal—shed its blood—to make coverings for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). This is the protoevangelium or “first gospel.”
- »» God loves us and sent His one and only Son to shed His blood and cover sin once and for all (John 3:16, Hebrews 10:10-14).

**2. The gospel is simply: Jesus died for our sins, was buried and God raised Him from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).**

- »» Unpack the gospel and the importance of every aspect—death, burial and resurrection.
- »» The gospel saves us from our sins (Romans 1:16).

**3. We just have to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).**

- »» Repent means to change—to turn from our sins and turn to Jesus.
- »» God doesn’t condemn us—we’re already condemned because of Genesis 3.
- »» God wants to save us (John 3:17-21).

**4. God helps us recover and pursue His design for our lives.**

- »» He removes the heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26)
- »» His Spirit indwells and empowers us

*Practice with someone Gospel Circle*

**IV. Gospel Conversations**

1. Present the Gospel
2. Share your Testimony  
Before- How God Saved you (Gospel)- After
3. Address Spiritual Topics- Bible, Prayer, God, Jesus, church
4. Prayer
5. Invite to Church

**Put it all together.**

*Practice Going through Engage, Questions, and Transition with someone at another table.*

- 1. Choose a role- Evangelist and New Friend*
- 2. Use the following scenario to go through 3 Circles Presentation.*
  - Christian engages someone at the Easter Egg Hunt, and they reveal they have a concern \_\_\_\_\_; you drive the conversation to spiritual things and then a transition question.*
- 3. Take turns going from Engaging for the first time to 3 Circles.*
  - Engage using one of our methods to start a conversation.*
  - Use questions to take the conversation from superficial to spiritual beliefs.*
  - Use a Transition question in order to share the gospel.*
  - Use 3 Circles to share the Gospel*

APPENDIX 6

RAW DATA FROM PRE- AND POST-TRAINING  
SURVEY RESULTS

Table A2. Raw data from survey results, questions 2, 5, 7, 9

Respondent	Question 2		Question 5		Question 7		Question 9	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
1	6	6	1	1	4	4	2	2
2	6	5	1	5	6	6	5	6
3	2	5	1	4	3	6	6	6
4	5	6	1	6	5	6	5	6
5	4	5	1	2	2	5	4	5
6	6	6	1	1	3	3	3	3
7	6	6	1	1	1	1	6	6
8	5	5	3	5	3	6	5	6
9	6	6	1	1	6	6	6	6
10	4	4	1	1	4	4	5	6
11	5	6	1	6	1	6	6	6
12	5	6	1	6	1	6	6	6
13	2	4	1	1	2	1	4	6
14	5	6	1	1	3	6	4	5
15	4	4	1	5	2	6	5	5
16	5	4	1	2	2	2	5	5
17	6	5	1	5	6	6	6	6
18	4	5	1	3	2	2	6	6
P Value	0.043		0.0003		0.003		0.003524	



Table A3. Raw data from survey results, questions 13, 13B, 16, 17

Respondent	Question 13		Question 13B		Question 16		Question 17	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
1	y	y	n	n	n	n	n	n
2	y	y	n	y	y	y	n	y
3	y	y	y	n	y	y	n	y
4	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	y
5	y	y	n	n	n	n	n	n
6	y	y	n	y	n	y	n	n
7	y	y	n	y	n	n	n	n
8	y	y	n	y	y	y	y	y
9	y	y	n	y	y	y	n	n
10	y	y	n	n	n	n	n	n
11	y	y	n	y	n	y	n	y
12	y	y	n	y	n	y	n	y
13	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n
14	y	y	y	y	n	y	n	n
15	y	y	n	y	y	y	n	y
16	y	y	n	n	n	n	n	n
17	y	y	n	y	y	y	n	y
18	y	y	n	n	y	y	n	n
Total Affirmative	18	18	4	12	9	13	1	8

Table A4. Raw data from survey results, question 19B

Respondent	Question 19b	
	Before	After
1	--	y
2	--	y
3	--	y
4	--	y
5	--	n
6	--	y
7	--	y
8	--	y
9	--	y
10	--	n
11	--	y
12	--	n
13	--	y
14	--	y
15	--	n
16	--	y
17	--	y
18	--	n
Total		13

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## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH, HEBRON, KENTUCKY, FOR EVANGELISM THROUGH OUTREACH EVENTS

Shawn Franklin Dobbins, D.Min.  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. William D. Henard III

This project was designed to train members of Hebron Baptist Church, Hebron, Kentucky (HBC), to have gospel conversations at outreach events. The training process involved assessing and increasing the ability of volunteers to transition conversations with guests to salvation in Christ alone. This included comparing the amount of gospel conversations before and after the training to assess the training, which could be used in other ministries in the church.

Chapter 1 introduces the ministry context of HBC, along with the rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for evangelism. Foundational to the design of the training curriculum are four biblical passages: Luke 9:2-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 10:1-21, and 1 Peter 3:13-22. Together, these passages serve as the basis for obedience and urgency for evangelism. Chapter 3 addresses the views and practice of evangelism. This chapter concludes giving several options for transitioning conversations to the gospel. Chapter 4 details the curriculum and lesson plans. Chapter 5 gives an overall evaluation of the project and offers suggestions for improvement and further development.

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