

***Evangelism***  
**as**  
**Loving God**  
**and**  
**Loving Your Neighbor**

*Part of Hope Chapel's  
Discipling Series*



**Throwing Someone the Lifeline  
in the name of Christ**

*“We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us:  
we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2Co 5:20)*



## CONTENTS

Introduction – The Great Commission...	3
1. Building a Framework.....	7
Exercise: Explaining the Four Words.....	8
Exercise: Teaching the Gospel without jargon .....	9
Handling Questions and Interruptions.....	10
Apologetics: handling false statements.....	11
Exercise: Developing A Personal Testimony.....	12
2. Conversation Starters .....	13
Exercise: F.O.R.M.....	13
Exercise: Ask, Admire, Admit.....	14
44 Questions.....	14
Questions about Christianity .....	16
Questions about their life.....	17
3. Aiming to Persuade.....	19
Making it Personal .....	20
What about using Gospel Tracts? .....	20
Exercise: Keeping it simple .....	21
The Sinner’s Prayer .....	21
Going Deeper – Time to Grow .....	22
4. Distinctives: The Gospel... ..	23
Exercise: Expanding our understanding.....	29
5. Distinctives: Our Response to the Gospel.....	31
Exercise: Essentials and Non-essentials .....	33
6. Biblical Examples of Gospel Conversations.....	35
7. Biblical Examples of Gospel Proclamations .....	39
Elements of the Gospel .....	43
Exercise: Organizing the Elements of the Gospel .....	43
Exercise: The Gospel Call to Respond.....	43
8. Nurturing the Planted Seed .....	45
Evangelism: <i>to what end?</i> .....	46
Appendix 1: Nine Marks of a Healthy Church .....	47
Appendix 2: Scripture Passages for the Gospel Outline .....	49
Appendix 3: How to Memorize Scripture .....	53



## *Introduction – The Great Commission...*

### **Evangelism: Proclaiming the Good News about Christ**

#### **Who is this course for? Why do you want to evangelize?**

- Maybe you're a **NEW CHRISTIAN**, and you're so excited about it that you can't keep from telling everyone you know about it — but you don't really understand for yourself what just happened. Or you understand, but you don't know how to explain the good news of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
- Maybe you're a **SILENT CHRISTIAN**. Fear, doubt and unsureness keep you from sharing the Gospel, and telling others about Christ; maybe you've stopped growing spiritually. You've settled into a church routine, and you're content with that — but you know that a big part of what it means to be a Christian is missing.
- Maybe you're a **DISOBEDIENT CHRISTIAN**, like many of us. You may be too busy or too afraid to say anything to others. Your obedience is only partial. Oh, you're growing spiritually yourself — bible study, prayer, fellowship, worship — but you're not growing the *Church* with what you've learned. You're not *multiplying* the seed that Jesus entrusted to you (Mat 13.8). You know it's time to submit to Him in this area too. You need to dig up the talent you buried in the earth, and begin *investing* it (Mat 25.15ff).
- Maybe you're a **LONG-TIME CHRISTIAN**, and you've lost the joy of your salvation, the excitement and enthusiasm you knew at the start of your Christian walk: you want that joy back again. The fastest, easiest way to regain it is to believe and proclaim the Gospel!
- Maybe you've made evangelism part of your life. You're faithfully proclaiming the Gospel. This is your opportunity to encourage and teach others how to do that.

Whichever of these categories you're in, this course is for you. As you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as you gain experience living the Christian life, this knowledge and experience can add "texture, color, and form" to that simple framework — and you can do that without adding to, or taking away from, its elegant truth. Your Gospel testimony can grow with you as you grow spiritually, without cluttering the message of *Salvation: We are saved by God's Grace in Jesus Christ*.

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Mat 28:18-20)*

First, even before learning what the Gospel is, and how to proclaim it, we need to know what the Lord has commissioned us to do. UNDERLINE THE KEY WORDS IN THE VERSE ABOVE THAT TELL YOU WHAT TO DO. Evangelism is about God, for God, and through God, so He gets the glory.

These verses from Matthew, spoken by Christ himself, authorize and command us to MAKE DISCIPLES of all nations, by putting us under the authority of Jesus Christ. There were over 500 disciples commissioned by Jesus at the time (1Cor 15.6), not just the 11 apostles. So, it's not only church leaders that are commissioned, but every follower of Jesus. This says we're authorized to act in his name, as his representatives, or agents, or as Paul puts it, as his *ambassadors*. Listen to how Paul describes our role: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (2Co 5:20) Isn't that amazing?!

Jesus personally commands us to baptize these disciples as his followers. And to enable them to follow him faithfully, he commands us to TEACH THEM HIS COMMANDMENTS. And what were his commandments? He *told* us, and he *showed* us, how to love God, and love our neighbor:

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is *the* first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup> And *the* second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Mat 22:37 <sup>NKJ</sup>)

## DEFINING EVANGELISM

In Mack Stiles' book, *Evangelism*,<sup>1</sup> he offers this definition of evangelism:

"Evangelism is teaching the Gospel with the aim to persuade." (p. 26)

He provides this "amplified" version of it:

Evangelism is teaching (heralding, proclaiming, preaching) the gospel (the message from God that leads us to salvation) with the aim (hope, desire, goal) to persuade (convince, convert).

Jesus finished with a *promise*, so we can be confident, as his ambassadors and teachers in the world: He promised to be with us always, "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even to the end of the age."

We're commanded to "MAKE DISCIPLES." But Jesus explains this command first as baptizing, and then as teaching those who are baptized. To fulfill the first part, we need to *evangelize unbelievers* – we need to call them to believe in Christ – so they're converted to *believers*.

For the second part, we need to *disciple believers* so they become faithful *followers of Christ*.

In this course, for now, we're concerned with the first part, EVANGELISM. Since only believers can faithfully follow Christ, our entire focus is on *proclaiming to unbelievers*, inside and outside the Church, *the Gospel of God's Salvation by Grace through Jesus Christ*. Is that evangelism?

### ***Whose responsibility is it to "make disciples"?***

Is evangelism on *our* shoulders, or on *God's* shoulders? As we so often find, the answer is *yes*. "Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." (1Cor 3:7) This says that God causes the outcome – growth; but we still need to scatter seed and water it, so it takes root (Mat 13.18). Once the seed is **rooted** in the soil – which is *conversion* – we need to continue to feed and water it, so it becomes **fruitful** – which is *discipleship*. Yet,

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<sup>1</sup> Stiles, J. Mack, *Evangelism – How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Crossway, Wheaton Ill., 2014).

despite all our labor, it is God who powerfully works in us, and it is all His energy with which we struggle (Col 1.29).

*Why must that be true?* Because, “unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (Joh 3:3). *God* first acts to “rebirth” us (regenerate us), so *we* can act. “It is God who gives life to the dead” (Rom 4.17) And yet, *we* as the church – and *you* as an individual – must *act*. Why?

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?<sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ...Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Rom 10:13, 17<sup>ESV</sup>)

## WHO SHOULD PREACH THE GOSPEL?

Maybe you think that “PREACHING IS FOR PREACHERS,” as if it takes someone “special” to do it. Well, you’re right. It does take someone “special.” It takes someone who believes that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. So actually, “PREACHING IS FOR BELIEVERS.” *Read Acts 8.1-4.* Who was preaching there? Remember, the aim of evangelism is to persuade. Persuading is giving the reasons why *you* believe in Jesus yourself.

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1Pe 3:15<sup>NIV</sup>)

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” (2Tim 2:15<sup>NIV</sup>)

So, for every believer, preaching the Gospel is both an act of FAITH, and an act of FAITHFULNESS. Preaching is telling others what you believe about who Jesus is, why God sent him, and what he accomplished on the cross for *you* – and for *the other person* too. Preaching is telling someone the news of the day, as you heard it. It is the Bible’s testimony about Jesus, about what he did for fallen man, and what he continues to do. It’s also your personal testimony about what Jesus has done for you in particular. You’re giving that as supporting evidence of the power of the Gospel.

**Why** would Jesus have died for you, or for anyone else?

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Joh 3:16<sup>NKJ</sup>)

It’s when you can explain what that means, simply and completely, that you begin to “teach the Gospel with the aim to persuade.” And that’s what we aim to teach you, so that you can teach with the aim to persuade, and do that confidently – because it’s *your* testimony.

Let’s get started...



# 1. Building a Framework

## The Gospel Core

You don't have to "remember" the Gospel. *You already know it.* It's *what* you believe, and *why* you believe you're saved. What's troubling you, maybe, is how to present what you already know, in a logical, easy-to-remember format. You need something to help you tell someone else what you know. You need something simple, like 3x5 cards, to help you recall all that stuff, and keep it in order so the other person can follow you. Well, that's the *Framework of the Gospel*: a few core things that will trigger all those other things that are stored in your memory.

Telling the Gospel is telling *the Gospel Story*. We're STORY-TELLERS at heart. We need to give our listener the cast of characters, the plot, the drama, and the happy ending. Stories have facts; but they aren't just factual, or we'll bore our listeners to death. We want to present the facts in an engaging way. We want to become interesting story-tellers, because *this* story is *their* story. It's a tale of life and death, a tale they need to believe if they're going to be saved by it.

Right now you'll learn four words to help you tell the story, to organize what you know about the Gospel: GOD, MAN, CHRIST, RESPONSE.<sup>1</sup> Simple, right? But how do these words help you recall the main parts of the story? What does each word stand for?

1. **GOD** – *Who is he?* God is our creator. He is loving, holy, and just. One day he will execute perfect justice against all sin.

2. **MAN** – (i.e. *Mankind*) *Who are we?* People are made in the image of God. We are beautiful and amazing creatures with dignity, worth, and value. But through our willful, sinful rebellion against God, we have turned from being his children to being his enemies. Still, the Gospel summons *all people* to a restored and loving relationship with the living God.

3. **CHRIST** – *Who is he? What did he do?* Jesus Christ is the Son of God, whose sinless life perfectly fulfilled God's law, and made him the perfect sacrifice. Through his death on the cross he ransomed sinful people. Christ's death paid for the sins of all who come to him in faith. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the ultimate proof of the truth of these claims.

4. **RESPONSE** – *How must we respond to these "facts" in order to be saved from God's justice?* The response God requires from us is to acknowledge our sin, repent, and believe in Christ. So, we turn from sin, especially the sin of unbelief, and turn to God in faith, with the understanding that we will follow him the rest of our days.

There are lots of ways to tell the story, and lots of outlines to use. No matter which one you use, be sure to tell it in your own style, with your own words, because it's your testimony about Jesus Christ – a tale of your own understanding of the facts, and of your own thanksgiving and joy. For our purposes, we'll use these four trigger words as our framework. Are there some words you were expecting, that aren't used? But the ideas are there. You might wonder, for example, where are the words hell, law, church, or baptism?

**Some guidelines:** keep it simple. Use simple words, simple images and illustrations, simple ideas. Be honest, sincere, genuine, and interested in this person. Listen more than you speak. Be patient with any questions or objections. You may find that the questions or comments actually help you tell the tale, and in a way that this particular person can understand.

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<sup>1</sup> From J. Mack Stiles' book, *Evangelism*, pp. 33-34.

Know something about them before you begin, so you can tailor the story to their needs, interests, and circumstances. “Dialogue – don’t Monologue.” “Converse – don’t Lecture.” “Ask questions – don’t just make statements.” *Love on ‘em* because they matter to you, and they matter to you, because they matter to Christ.

**Exercise: Explaining the Four Words**

Now it’s your turn. Using the four key words to trigger your memory, tell the Gospel Story in your own words. Don’t try to remember what Mack Stiles said. Remember what *you know*:

1. **GOD** – *Who is he?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. **MAN** – (i.e. *Mankind*) *Who are we?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. **CHRIST** – *Who is he? What did he do?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. **RESPONSE** – *How must we respond to these “facts” in order to be saved from God’s justice?*

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**Note:** The *commitment* to repent and be baptized is part of conversion (Act 3.19), but the *acts* themselves are not pre-conditions to conversion (Act 8.38). Repentance and baptism follow conversion. Therefore, evangelism is for *justification* by faith alone (Joh 6.29; Act 16.31; Rom 3.28). Afterward, discipleship is for *sanctification* by obedience (2Joh 1.6), which includes active repentance and baptism (Act 2.37-38).

**Exercise: Teaching the Gospel without jargon**

*Mack Stiles used some "Christian jargon" in his version of the story. Try explaining these terms as best you can in your own words:*

**GOD –**

Creator: \_\_\_\_\_

Holy: \_\_\_\_\_

Just: \_\_\_\_\_

Execute perfect justice: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAN –**

Image of God: \_\_\_\_\_

Sinful rebellion: \_\_\_\_\_

Children of God: \_\_\_\_\_

Restored relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Living God: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHRIST –**

Son of God: \_\_\_\_\_

Sinless life: \_\_\_\_\_

Perfect sacrifice: \_\_\_\_\_

Death on the cross: \_\_\_\_\_

Ransom: \_\_\_\_\_

Paid for sins: \_\_\_\_\_

Faith: \_\_\_\_\_

Resurrection: \_\_\_\_\_

**RESPONSE –**

Repent: \_\_\_\_\_

Believe in Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

Turn from sin: \_\_\_\_\_

Unbelief: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow him: \_\_\_\_\_

Now think about your own GOSPEL STORY. Are there words or phrases you used that might be unclear to an atheist, Muslim, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Buddhist, Roman Catholic, or secular person? Could you say the same thing using simpler or clearer terms?

### ***Using Your Personal Testimony***

OK. You're getting a feel for the Bible's Testimony about Jesus Christ, but what difference will that make to this person you're talking to? It's all very interesting, but you're aiming to *persuade*, and not just to *inform*. If the Gospel has made no difference in your life, then it won't be compelling; it's just information; it's all theoretical. However, your testimony about *yourself* is no substitute for your testimony about *Christ*: "I'm a Christian. Boy is my life wonderful now! You should come to our church and meet some really nice folks!" *That's* not the Gospel. BUT, your testimony about the changes which occurred in you as a *result* of believing the Gospel, may persuade this person that the Gospel has the power to transform his life too. (see page 12)

### **Handling Questions and Interruptions**

In a small group of 2-4 people, present the gospel you've been working on. The first time through, you'll get to say it from memory without interruptions. But that never happens in real life. So the second time through, the others will ask you questions, give objections, and make accusations, trying to break your train of thought. This exercise is intended to teach you how to get back on track with the Gospel, using the four key words to organize your thoughts.

*That probably terrifies you.* It's understandable. Next to dying, speaking in public is the biggest fear most people have. Job's words seem fitting: "The very thing I feared has come upon me!" (Job 3:25) **Take a deep breath.** Unless you're in a Muslim country, you're *not* going to die, even though it might feel like it. What's the worst that could happen? This:

***There are only three responses you'll ever get to the Gospel:*** No! Yes! or, Not now!

(1) *Here's what NO! looks like, and how you should respond:*

They could say they don't want to hear it. Thank them for their time.

They could call you an idiot, hypocrite, bigoted, sanctimonious, etc. Thank them for their time.

They could say they don't believe it. Thank them for their time.

They could simply walk away. Thank them for their time, and wave.

When people reject the Gospel, they're *not* rejecting you — they're rejecting Jesus. That's the truth. "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me;" (Luk 10:16 <sup>NIV</sup>) So don't take it personally. As long as you weren't offensive, and it was the Gospel that offended them, you've done your job; you weren't ashamed of the Gospel. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." (Rom 1:16 <sup>NIV</sup>)

(2) *Here's what YES! looks like, and how you should respond:*

*If they tell you they believe the Gospel, and ask you how to receive Christ, show and tell them how to do that. They'll confess their sin, repent of it, and profess Christ as their Lord and Savior. We'll handle the mechanics of that later (the Sinner's Prayer).*

(3) *Here's what NOT NOW! looks like, and how you should respond:*

This is where most of us break into a cold sweat and begin shaking uncontrollably: *they start asking questions* that you don't know the answers to. Let's settle this up front: it's OK not to know all the answers! *Don't panic!* Honesty and humility are more effective than pat answers. Smile, let them know it's a *great* question, and then...

### ***Learn when to answer questions and objections, and when to move on.***

It takes discernment and experience to distinguish between someone who sincerely wants an answer to their questions, and someone who just wants to give you a hard time. As a general rule, if they repeatedly keep you from finishing a thought, or if they're becoming rude, or they appear visibly irritated by the conversation, it's probably time to stop. Be sensitive to that.

There are other times when they do the opposite. They keep prolonging the conversation, without answering your questions – it's all theoretical. They may just like to debate; or maybe they think it's interesting, but not important – kind of like discussing the best running shoes to wear, rather than something that may determine their eternal destiny. That's how it was for Paul at the Areopagus (Act 17.19-21). For many there, it was a form of entertainment.

**Either way, be courteous:** Always leave on good terms. Don't make hurdles for the next evangelist to overcome.

### ***Answering hard questions***

Maybe you see the person is sincere, but the questions go beyond the Gospel you know. Did Jesus really live? Is the Bible trustworthy? How does sacrificing an innocent man, clear a guilty man? What about the crusades? Do miracles still happen? If you know the answer, give it – just don't let it become a distraction. But if you don't, promise to get them the answer, or put them in touch with someone better able to deal with it.

*Being asked questions that you don't know the answer to, is an opportunity for you to grow in your knowledge of the Gospel.* That's what makes evangelism a God-ordained means of discipleship: You *learn* the Gospel, as you *teach* the Gospel! You don't know what you don't know, until someone helps you discover it. Therefore, look forward to those questions as a great way for you to grow in your faith, and to explore God's word. A number of books are available to help you.<sup>1</sup> Maybe they'll answer some of your own questions. If so, they're a good way for you to grow. Helpful websites:

<http://christiananswers.net/evangelism/responses/home.html>

<http://www.josh.org/resources/study-research/answers-to-skeptics-questions/>

### ***Apologetics: handling false statements.***

Some objections fall into a category of debate we call "apologetics" (a defense of the Faith). Maybe you've heard that Jesus was married with kids – Paul invented Christianity – Jesus never taught what you're saying – The Bible wasn't written until the second century – The Catholic Church rewrote the whole Bible – Jesus learned everything he knew in India, from Buddhists.

Maybe you've met a Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, or Muslim who challenges what you're saying. You're not familiar enough with cults or other religions to refute their misconceptions and lies.

Answering such fabrications is not part of evangelism, strictly speaking, even though it often results from evangelism. *Indeed, it's a separate course from this one.* At this point, rather than debate with someone, or offend them unnecessarily, or get flustered yourself, acknowledge their objection, thank them for their time (and the lively discussion), and move on.

You might offer to meet them later, or to loan them a book, or to introduce them to someone who can provide insights. Usually that's enough to end the conversation. Many people, sadly, have little interest in being "corrected." If you try to give a rational answer to an irrational argument, it may lead to quarreling, which it is best to avoid (Col 4.6; 2Tim 2.23-26).

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<sup>1</sup> **Recommended books:** Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christianity: Answer Book*; Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*; **For deeper questions about the Bible:** Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*; Norman Geisler & Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*.

### ***Exercise: Developing A Personal Testimony***

Our "testimony" tells other people *why* we believe Jesus is our Savior and our Lord. Here are some questions to ask yourself, that may help you to give that testimony – things that might help you explain to someone else, who Jesus is, and what He has done for you.

#### **My life before Christ,**

What made me *know* that I needed Jesus Christ?

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What did it *mean* that he would "save me," and be my Lord?

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#### **How I Came to Christ:**

What do I *believe* about who he is, and what he did to save me?

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When did I hear the gospel? How did it affect me? Why is it important to me?

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Why did I finally accept Christ and give my life to Him?

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#### **My Life After Coming to Christ**

How is my life any different now?

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What are some changes I'm beginning to see in myself?

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What do I live for now? What's most important to me?

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How does knowing Christ help me deal with sin?

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You don't have to answer *all* those questions when you give your testimony! But you should be able to briefly describe – a half-page or less, 2-3 minutes – your life without Christ; what you believed when you accepted Christ; and something about what Christ means to you *now*.

It may be that you didn't believe in God, or you didn't know who He is, or how much He loves you. Maybe you didn't understand about sin, and how harmful it is, and what it did to your relationship with God and everyone else. Maybe you did something you couldn't forgive yourself for. But the Gospel made you realize that *because of Christ*, ALL your sins are forgiven, and you're perfectly acceptable in God's sight. You *have* eternal life, and the life you have in *this* world is purposeful and joyful now – because you belong to God. Your life is a gift from Him, that you can use to glorify Him.

These are all typical of Christian testimonies. But your testimony is *personal*; it's like no other. So be open and honest. Only *you* know what Jesus Christ means to you. *Tell us*. Tell the whole world!

## 2. Conversation Starters

[www.knowthegospel.org](http://www.knowthegospel.org)

<http://www.evangelismcoach.org/2008/44-conversation-questions/>

One of the greatest fears we all have is speaking to strangers. How do we START a conversation? But when we're evangelizing, we also want to know how to MOVE that conversation to the Gospel, and not just discuss the weather, news, and sports. We're going to learn and practice a couple of techniques for starting a conversation, and moving it to the Gospel.

### **FORM: Family, Occupation, Recreation, Message.**

If this is a stranger, give them your name and then ask for theirs. Don't forget the person's name! Ask them to spell it. Repeat it right away. Visualize spelling it in your mind. Associate it with something to help you remember it. A person's name is the most precious thing they have. Use their first name as you speak to them. Maintain eye contact, but don't be intense about it. Relax. Smile. Enjoy the time. You aren't shaking hands because they're your project for today. You're shaking hands because you are genuinely interested in them. You have a precious gift to give to them, and you need to know if this person is looking for that gift.

What I'm saying is this: you must have conviction, but you also need sincerity. Ask more than you say. Listen more than you talk. Who is this person? What are his needs? What are his motivations? We need to obtain his permission to ask personal questions. There's a way to do that. We call it FORM: *family, occupation, recreation, and message*. We ask him about his family, what he does for a living, and what he enjoys as a hobby or does for fun. These are not casual questions. We're obtaining the information we need to tailor the Gospel to who this is as a person. He has an identity. We need to find out what it is. What currently defines him in his own mind? And as we ask, we're listening for the MESSAGE that inevitably arises: what is important to this person? What's on his heart today? And then we're going to introduce him to Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things. And we're going to share with him what Christ intends for him, personally, particularly, and lovingly.

### **Exercise: F.O.R.M.**

Break into small groups, and practice this method of starting and turning a conversation.

### **Ask, Admire, Admit**

Jesus asked about 300 questions throughout the Gospels. When he asked questions, he listened closely, and then he allowed others to wrestle through their answers.

What kinds of questions should we ASK? Here's a variation on FORM, called the **four F's**: ask questions about **F**amily, **F**riends, **F**un, and **F**aith. What's their family like? What do they enjoy most about their friends? What do they do for fun? Where are they from? And then the **faith** questions: "Do you go to church anywhere?" or "What's your religious background?" It can be as basic as, "If there's a God, what you suppose he, she, or it is like?" And if the answer is, "I don't believe in God," you might ask, "THE God, or ANY god?" Listen closely, and then maybe ask "Why not?" or "That's great. Would you mind if I asked you something I've always wondered about myself. Without God, how do we choose right from wrong? What's moral or immoral? And who gets to decide between us when we disagree on that kind of stuff?" Then wait.

Be sincere and kind. Watch the tone of your voice. Smile and nod as you're talking. You're *not* trying to engage in a debate. You honestly want to know what this creature of God believes about such things. Let them tell you. That's what gains you the right to share what you believe too.

As they share their answers, **ADMIRE** everything you possibly can about their beliefs. Just like Paul complemented the Athenians for their religious fervor, admire what you can about other people's spiritual beliefs. As you do, walls of pride will come tumbling down, and you will start having an actual conversation.

Don't ask questions to trick or trap them. *Ask questions that get them talking and you listening.*

And, finally, **ADMIT** that the reason you are a Christian is that you are a filthy rotten sinner in desperate need of the gospel. Just like Paul admitted that he was "the chief of sinners" we can do the same. This admission puts us in a position of humility, not arrogance. It lifts Jesus up and puts our own "goodness" down. This admission can take others off guard and help them to begin to realize the way of grace and faith is infinitely unique from the way of works and law.

**Exercise: Ask, Admire, Admit**

Break into small groups, and practice this method of starting and turning a conversation.

There are lots of questions you *could* ask; but *good* questions will open good conversations about the deeper things of life. Ask these sorts of questions **in your own words**. Don't try to remember how they're worded here. Ask questions that interest *you*, ones you may have asked yourself, or ones that someone asked you that got you to thinking...

## 44 Questions

1. Where are you in your spiritual pilgrimage?
2. In your opinion, how does someone become a Christian?
3. What single thing would you like to make absolutely certain you do (if at all possible) during your lifetime?
4. How do you think a person can keep from becoming a workaholic?
5. What character can you imagine yourself to be? (any period of history)
6. What are you reading that is not an assignment or required by your work?
7. How do you know you'll go to heaven when you die?
8. How are you growing personally?
9. In a conversation with someone who has never heard about God, what would you say about Him from your experience?
10. In your opinion, what does being a Christian mean?
11. How would you describe your father and his impact on your life?
12. Tell me about your mentor and his/her impact on your life.
13. What do you think would probably surprise most people about you? Why?
14. What is your greatest strength, and what are you doing to develop it?
15. Why do people do what they do? What are the assumptions you make about people?
16. How do you handle pressure? When the pressure is really on, what do you need from your friends?
17. Has anything ever happened to you that was dramatic, personal or spectacular enough to cause you to be certain there is a God who is both infinite and personally caring?

18. What do you consider to be two major turning points in your life?
19. What is something you consider to be a great personal success? Why was it so significant?
20. What is the key to maintaining balance in your life?
21. What are 2 or 3 major truths upon which you have based your decision-making?
22. Tell me about two of your life-long friends and why they have such an impact on your life. What made you choose them?
23. Have you dealt with the questions? “How much money is enough, and what do I do with the rest?”
24. How would you describe your mother and the impact she has had on your life?
25. In your opinion, who was/is Jesus Christ?
26. If you could know God personally, would you be interested?
27. How would you define materialism, and how do you deal with it in your life?
28. What have you found to be the best way of absorbing disappointment, rejection, distress and discouragement?
29. When you get to heaven, what will be the first three questions you will ask God?
30. If you were to inherit a million dollars today, and couldn't spend it on your own enterprise or keep it for yourself, what would you do with it and why?
31. What do you find most attractive about Christianity/the person of Christ? What do you find least attractive about Christianity/the person of Christ?
32. Do you consider yourself a seeker of the truth?
33. What is your spiritual background?
34. Have you ever read the Bible?
35. Have your views on religion changed since you started college? How?
36. Have you ever discussed what Biblical Christianity is?
37. Why do you think you feel the way you do toward Jesus Christ and his message of love and forgiveness?
38. What is your philosophy of life based on?
39. Do you believe what you've been brought up with?
40. Why do you think Christianity isn't relevant to your life?
41. If Christ was who He claimed to be, how would that affect your life?
42. What are you living for? What do you value most?
43. If your questions could be answered in a way that would satisfy you, would you then believe in Christ?
44. The Evangelism Explosion questions: *First* ask – “If you died today, do you know for sure you'd go to heaven?” *Then* ask – “If you died and stood before God and He asked you ‘Why should I let you into Heaven?’ What would you say?”

The key here is simply to begin conversations and then to listen to the heart of the one we are talking with. Sometimes it is hardest bringing up the gospel with our friends. We just need to keep asking questions that will reveal who they are.

## **Questions about Christianity**

Here are some questions to help you **MOVE** the conversation from personal things, to spiritual things. Again, listen carefully to their answers. Be prepared to share your own answers to these questions. You're opening up an opportunity to testify about Jesus Christ: about who he is, and what he has done, and what difference it makes: "*Teach the Gospel with the aim to persuade.*" The conversation can begin as simply as this: "*I'm a Christian. Do you know what that is?*"

### **Questions about CHRIST:**

- Who is/was Jesus Christ (i.e., his identity)? What do you think was significant about his life? What was he trying to accomplish (i.e., his purpose)?
- What do you think was significant about his death?
- A lot of people claim that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today. What do you think?
- How do you see Christ fitting into Christianity? (Try to separate religion from relationship.)
- Jesus said a lot of interesting things like, I am the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by me. What do you think he meant by these statements?

### **Questions about MANKIND:**

- What is mankind's reason for being? What is your purpose in life?
- What do you think mankind's basic problem is? Do you believe we are good or evil or both? What kind of solutions to this do you see?
- What kind of needs do you see in the people around you? What is your deepest need?

### **Questions about CHRISTIANITY:**

- How would you describe a real Christian? What exactly is it that makes one a Christian?
- What's been your experience with Christianity? What's your church background?
- What do you think it means to believe in Jesus?

### **Questions about BELIEF IN GOD:**

- Why do you (or don't you) believe in God?
- When did God first become real to you?
- How has your view of God changed since coming to college?
- What do you think God is like and where are those ideas from? Is he concerned about us? What do you think God expects of us?

### **Questions about their VIEW OF THE WORLD:**

- Many people say that if there is no afterlife, then life is meaningless. What do you think of life after death? How about the idea of heaven and hell? How would we get into heaven?
- What is your basis for ethics? What absolute truths are there?

- Why is there evil in the world?
- What do you think sin is? (Or, how would you define sin?)
- Would you be interested in getting together to discuss what the Bible says about the issues we've been talking about?

Source: Communication Skills for Evangelism – Evangelism – InterVarsity.org. The point of questions is not to have a litmus test, but to create and continue conversation. These questions can help that process.

## **Questions about their life**

Here are some questions that could move your conversations with nonbelievers to deeper levels of spiritual interaction:

### **1. What are some joys you are experiencing in this season of your life?**

Most people would love to share about the good things in their lives, but they are afraid that others won't care. Just by asking and listening, you open the door for great interaction. Also, if there are clear signs that God is blessing their life, you could open the door for conversation about the source of all good things.

### **2. What challenges and struggles are you facing?**

People will share their pains and hurts with someone who truly cares about them and takes the time to listen. As they share, you may find that it becomes an opportunity to minister the grace of Jesus. Sharing struggles can also create space for you to pray for or with them.

### **3. What is your personal history when it comes to faith and God?**

This question is not so much about what people believe as it is about their personal histories.

A person might say, "I have no history when it comes to religion," or "I grew up going to Mass every week and my parents are quite devout," or "I have always been very spiritual, and I still read my horoscope daily and do a lot of meditation."

No matter what answer they give, you end up learning something about their journey that may allow you to move the conversation to a deeper level.

### **4. What do you believe about God?**

With this question, we move into more personal convictions and beliefs.

Again, no matter how they answer, remember that you are learning and already going deeper than a typical conversation.

Some Christians feel pressured to correct "wrong thinking" or "errant theology" in their conversations with nonbelievers. Try not to do this.

Just listen and learn where they are; then you'll gain a sense of where they still need to go on their journey toward Jesus.

### **5. What is your perception of Christians?**

Or put a different way, "What is your perception of Christianity or of the Christian church?" It takes courage to ask this question, listen, and not get defensive. But I have found that it can be an open door to deeper conversations.

Taken from Harney, Kevin G. (2009-09-29). Organic Outreach for Ordinary People: Sharing Good News Naturally (pp. 191-192).

### **And then what?**

*That's a simple three-word question that can help you lead someone to consider eternal things and open the door to the Gospel. The conversation might go like this:*

So, what are doing right now to prepare for your future?

Well, I'm going to school to learn electrical engineering.

Wow. That's impressive. And then what?

Well, I'm hoping to do well enough to land a job with a large firm to gain some expertise.

That's ambitious. And then what?

I'd like to get married, have kids, get a house maybe.

Sounds picture-perfect. And then what?

I have some ideas about a new way to handle motors for electric cars.

That would be wonderful! And then what?

I'd like to patent my ideas, and then branch out into other areas.

I see. And then what?

Retirement is an issue, so I'm trying to plan for those years while I'm still young.

That's a good idea. And then what?

I guess I'd like to travel and see the world.

It's a big place, and exciting. And then what?

Excuse me? I'm not sure what you mean...

And then what, after retirement?

Well, ...I suppose I die.

Everyone does. *And then what?*

**Good question.**

### 3. Aiming to Persuade

When we proclaim the Gospel, because we are “aiming to persuade” someone of the truth of what we proclaim, we necessarily become story-tellers and teachers. Evangelizing is not merely reciting the truth. We can recite “one plus one equals two,” but that won’t persuade anyone of its truth, or that it does not equal three, or that one plus three cannot equal two. We want to show them why the Gospel is true, why it must be true to the exclusion of other possibilities, and why everything of importance, to that particular person, depends on it being true.

OK. But how, and why? You might object, “Doesn’t the Bible say that the Gospel – which contains the things of God – is foolishness to the natural man, because they lack spiritual discernment? (1Cor 2.14) So how can I possibly persuade *anyone* of its truth? Isn’t that up to God?” We make two mistakes in our attitude towards the Gospel: the first is that we think it’s entirely up to us to convince people of its truth; the second is that it’s all up to God, and it really doesn’t matter what we say. Neither one is entirely true; but each has a part of the answer.

God ordains the *ends*: **John 6:37** “All that the Father gives me will come to me;” **6:44** “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” But God also ordains the *means*. **Matthew 28:19** “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” <sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 10:14** “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”

Our attempt to persuade doesn’t deny the work of God. But *how* do we persuade? Is it the logic of our argument, the preparation of God’s Spirit in us and in the other person, the Scriptures we quote, or the prayer we offer, that makes our proclamation effective? *Yes!* All of those. Jesus was a master story-teller; he typically spoke in parables that the people could understand, if God enabled them to understand. He used everyday activities to help convey the truth.

**Mat 13:10-11, 16-18** Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given... <sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear... <sup>17</sup> For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. <sup>18</sup> “Hear then the parable of the sower: “

And then Jesus went on to explain the meaning of the parable. A parable is an illustration of the truth. It’s more than just a story or a moral tale; it helps to explain the truth of God to those whom God has given eyes to see, and ears to hear. Jesus told them parables to persuade them of the truth they represented, about him, about God, and about the kingdom. Sometimes he used similes and metaphors. In Matthew 13 we hear repeatedly, the Kingdom is like \_\_\_\_\_. These are all snapshots to help us see the truth in our mind’s eye, pictures of the kingdom and of the King, of grace and the Judgment to come. Take the parable of the tenants in Matthew 21.33-41.

Times may have changed, but our need to have things explained to us in memorable stories and characters, and in a style of language that’s familiar to us, hasn’t changed. The Gospel hasn’t changed, but the illustrations we use must. They must use words, ideas, and images that are familiar to the person we’re speaking to. This is where the information we gathered from the person when we introduced ourselves comes into play. If this is an engineer, we can speak in engineering terms; if a parent, then in parental terms; if a soldier, then in military terms. We adjust the vehicle of the Gospel, the illustrations we use, but never the Gospel itself.

## Making it Personal

What about using “The Bridge” or some other pre-constructed presentation? <sup>1</sup> It may work, but it’s not as effective as giving your personal witness to the work of Christ. Here’s what one pastor/evangelist had to say about proclaiming the Gospel. Before reading this, keep in mind that we never substitute our personal testimony of a changed life, for the bible’s testimony about Jesus Christ. That’s describing the effect without the cause. It’s like showing someone where a cannon ball landed, without mentioning the cannon that shot it there.

I used to teach and promote a class on witnessing where people would learn to do one of those little bridge illustrations where there’s a chasm representing sin and their life, but then a bridge – through the form of a cross – comes down and people can get to the other side. Here’s the question: do people really come to faith in that way? Do people come to faith because a stranger, whom they’ve never had a conversation with, quotes a few Scriptures to them? I’m not convinced that this is the right way. In fact, in my years of pastoral ministry I’ve only used the bridge illustration once, and that was a week after I taught the evangelism class.

***Have a conversation with someone about their story and your story.*** This I’ve done dozens and dozens of times. On airplanes, buses, classrooms, restaurants: sometimes the topic of Christianity or faith comes up, and they ask me the *why* question – why are you a Christian or a pastor? It’s actually very rare that a stranger will ask you “how can *I* be saved?” But it’s quite common that people will ask you why *you’re* a Christian. In those cases, I simply and briefly tell them my story:

*“I was biology pre-med in college because I wanted to make money and have the admiration of people. I began to think, though, that maybe there was more to life than this, and I began to read the Bible for the first time. I started in the book of Matthew. But as I read, I began to sense that God was doing something inside of me. He began to change me. He became more than just some myth; God became real to me for the first time. And God made it really clear to me that He wanted me to prepare for the ministry.”*

That’s the shorter version. If people follow-up with more questions I give them more details. For example, some people will ask, “well how did God make it clear to you... what is it that happened?” Then I share a little bit more of the details. I might preface it by saying that “some of this might sound a little strange to you, but this is what happened to me.”

After I finish sharing my story, I ask them about theirs: *Have you ever read the Bible before? What brought you to the position of being an atheist?* I’m not there to show them my apologetic expertise. I genuinely want to understand their position. I want to learn. I want to understand.

Is this THE method for personal evangelism and witnessing? I’m not sure. Will people be in heaven because a stranger shocked them with some Scriptures? I’m sure some will. I’m just not convinced it’s the best or the most biblical way. It places way too much pressure on people to memorize certain things and get a presentation the right way. It diminishes people into targets and objects. Instead, you can relax. *Tell people what God has done for you.* The Spirit will be guiding. He is at work. The best evangelist is the testimony of a transformed life.

Note the story of this man in Luke 8:38-39: *“The man who has been freed from the demons begged to go with Him. But Jesus sent him home saying, “No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you.” So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him” (NLT).*<sup>2</sup>

## What about using Gospel Tracts?

Gospel tracts, on their own, are not as effective as personally witnessing to someone. Why? Because tracts, by their very nature, are *impersonal*. We’re inviting someone into fellowship

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<sup>1</sup> The Bridge Illustration is used in *Evangelism Explosion*, *The Navigators evangelistic materials*, and others.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.modernekklesia.com/2013/03/why-you-should-never-give-a-gospel-presentation.html>

with God and with us (1Joh 1.3). Should we not be willing to fellowship *before* they come to Christ? What would that say about the relationship they can expect *after* they come to Christ?

Using tracts to introduce yourself to someone, as **ice-breakers** and **conversation starters**, are just fine. But they should never be used as a substitute for your personal testimony about Jesus Christ – who he is, and what he did *for you*.

As mentioned earlier, we don't want a *monologue*, which is what a tract is – it's a one-way lecture. We're after a *dialogue* with others – a two-way interaction with someone, during which we can demonstrate the truth and the love of Jesus Christ to them. They may know nothing about either one. We want them to see Christ, and not just hear about him. They want to know that you care about them, personally, as a pledge that Christ cares about them too, and that he will do for them what he has done for you. That can't be done *by* a tract; but it may be done *with* a tract. It's that old adage, "They won't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." To proclaim the Gospel in love, we ought to show it, as we tell it.

### **Exercise: Keeping it simple**

*To help you think through what the essential Gospel contains, try reducing the four-part gospel you wrote on page 6 to just four sentences, one sentence for each word:*

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*Now reduce that to just two sentences:*

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*Now reduce that to just one sentence – as if telling it to someone in a passing car:*

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## **The Sinner's Prayer**

Having presented the facts and truth of the gospel in a relevant manner, we ask the same question that Christ asked of his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" A decision must be made, and now is as good a time as any to ask our seeker for one. The answer will be yes, no, or not now. If it is *yes*, then his confession of Christ will be a point by point response to the gospel. This is what we refer to as the *Sinner's Prayer*. The sinner will respond by agreeing with these same points of the Gospel:

- An admission of his guilt under the Law
- A confession of Christ, acknowledging that He is **his** Lord, and **his** Savior, trusting only in what Christ has done on the cross to save **him**. It's personal, not theoretical.
- A declaration that he repents of his sins by turning from them to God
- A pledge to publicly identify with Christ through baptism
- A commitment to do what is right in God's sight, by the power of his Spirit

*This is a good place to repeat that this prayer is not what saves him – it is a thankful response to what Christ has already done on his behalf, a demonstration that he belongs to Christ, and that he desires to honor Christ by his obedience.*

## Going Deeper – Time to Grow

We said earlier that evangelism is both an act of FAITH, and an act of FAITHFULNESS. For the person who comes to Christ through the Gospel, it is the *event* of their conversion, and the *beginning* of their discipleship. By an act of Faith, they have been made completely righteous in Christ – they were “justified” (declared righteous) because of his atoning sacrifice on their behalf (he paid for their sins).

*Afterwards*, in thankful response, they will become visibly godly through Christ. They will be progressively sanctified (made holy) by God’s Spirit who was given to them at their conversion, their new birth (Act 2.38). He is their Helper, to teach them all things (Joh 14.26).

We’re learning what someone needs to *know and believe* in order to be saved (converted) – not what they need to *know and do* in order to be sanctified. *Evangelism is about conversion, not sanctification*. And yet, there are things we believers ought to know about each, because a new convert will often ask, “What’s next?”

To give you a fuller understanding of the four components of the gospel: GOD, MAN, CHRIST, and the RESPONSE, the next two lessons are taken from Hope Chapel’s *Distinctives Course*. Keep in mind that the course was written for *believers*, not *unbelievers*. Again, we may not need to know and believe *all* the things contained in those lessons in order to be saved. Sharing the “extras” can create confusion – an unnecessary rabbit-trail. We’re going deeper to learn the difference between the essentials and non-essentials of the Gospel call – not the whole Christian faith.

We’re teaching you the *essentials* – no more and no less – so that you’ll feel competent and confident as you proclaim the good news to lost sinners. But Spurgeon challenges us to learn those essentials well, so that we can teach others.

### ***Evangelism and Ignorance***

“There have been many men in the world who have not been at all adapted for this work; and, first, let me say that an ignoramus is not likely to be much of a soul-winner. A man who only knows that he’s a sinner, and that Christ is a Savior, may be very useful to others in the same condition as himself, and it is his duty to do the best he can with what little knowledge he possesses; but on the whole, I should not expect such a man to be very largely used in the service of God. If he had enjoyed a wider and deeper experience of the things of God, if he had been in the highest sense a learned man because he was taught of God, he could have used his knowledge for the good of others; but being to a great extent ignorant of the things of God himself, I do not see how he can make them known to other people.

“Truly, there must be some light in that candle which is to lighten men's darkness, and there must be some information in that man who is to be a teacher of his fellows. The man who is almost or altogether ignorant, whatever will he has to do good, must be left out of the race of great soul-winners; he is disqualified from even entering the lists; and therefore, let us all ask, brethren, that we may be well-instructed in the truth of God, that we may be able to teach others also.”<sup>1</sup> — Charles Spurgeon

Despite Spurgeon’s admonition, to proclaim the gospel clearly and effectively, *you don’t need to know more than you’re learning in this course*.

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<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, Charles, **Soul Winner** (Christian Digital Library Foundation <http://www.cdlf.org>), Chapter 3.

## 4. *Distinctives: The Gospel...*

Now that we have the basics, the essential *Framework of the Gospel*, let's fill it in further.

It comes as a surprise to many, to learn how very different Christianity is from other religions. At its core, it isn't about morality, or philosophy, or self-fulfillment. Rather, it's about news – good news: the greatest news that the world has ever heard. In fact, the word “gospel” literally means “good news,” and it is this news that stands at the center of the Christian faith, and should be the informing core of the Christian life. It is what the apostle Paul called a matter “of first importance” (1Cor. 15:3). At Hope Chapel, we are striving to keep it at the center of everything we do.

The gospel stands at the beginning of our journey, for it is truly the beginning of any Christian's journey. What exactly is the gospel – this good news? In this session, we will seek to understand and better appreciate the wonderful news of the gospel.

### **Man's Dilemma Before God...**

No one can gain an understanding of the gospel without first recognizing his own rebellion against a perfect, holy God, and the severe consequences justly deserved as a result. In short, we must understand some very serious “bad news” before we can adequately appreciate the “good news.” There are two key elements to the dilemma we all face: our sinfulness and God's holiness.

- **Man's Sinfulness**

“A person must confront his own sinfulness in all its ravaging depths before he can enjoy the comforts of salvation.” – *Martin Luther*

- 1. What is sin?**

*Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature*<sup>1</sup>

- a. Not just actions, but attitudes

*ESV Mat. 5:27-28 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*

- b. Not just acting wrongly, but also failing to act

*NIV Jas. 4:17 “Anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.”*

- c. Not just actions and attitudes, but our *nature* – who we are at the core of our being

*ESV Gen. 6:5 “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

“A sin consists in doing, saying, thinking, or imagining anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God.” – *J.C. Ryle*

- 2. Sin's true nature.** Defining sin in relationship to God reveals its true nature: sin is essentially rebellion against God.

- a. Sin is the willful and selfish rejection of God's rule while choosing to live independently of Him.

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is taken from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, p. 490.

- b. Sin is always fundamentally and primarily against God

*ESV Psa. 51:4* “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.”

**3. Sin’s universality.** All people are sinners and stand guilty before God.

- a. Adam’s sin brought sin and death to all men. All people sin because all are by nature sinners.

*ESV Rom. 5:12* “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

- b. All people confirm this through their actions: *all* are sinners

*ESV Rom. 3:22-23* “For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**4. Sin’s pervasiveness.** Man’s sinfulness extends to every part of his being; nothing in him has been unaffected by sin.

- a. Theologians call this “**pervasive depravity.**” This does not mean that man is as bad as he could possibly be. It simply means that sin’s corrupting effects have touched every part of his being: mind, will, emotions, and body.

*ESV Rom. 3:10-12* “as it is written, ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’”

- b. This means that man in his sinful state apart from God is incapable of pleasing or obeying God. Even seemingly “good” works are tainted by sin.

*ESV Rom. 8:7-8* “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

*ESV Isa. 64:6* “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.” [KJV: filthy rags]

- c. Not only are we therefore enslaved to sin, but we are completely responsible before God for our sin.

*ESV Rom. 14:12* “So then each of us will give an account of himself to God”

● **God’s Holiness and Wrath**

The other facet of mankind’s grave dilemma is the character of God. Indeed, man’s sinful plight can’t be fully grasped until it is viewed through the lens of God’s infinite purity and holiness.

1. The Bible portrays God as **HOLY**. This idea has two main components:

- a. **God is transcendent:** He is infinitely higher than man – separate, different – He is wholly *other than us*.

*ESV Isa. 46:9* “... for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me”

- b. God is **morally perfect** and **infinitely pure** – untainted by evil desire, motive, thought, word, or deed.

*ESV Deu. 32:3-4* "...ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."

*ESV Isa. 6:1-5* "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "**Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!**" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips **for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!**"

2. Because God is holy, He must respond with **fierce opposition to sin**. This is the meaning of God's **WRATH**.

a. Wrath is God's holy response to sin: His personal, active antagonism to sin that derives from His settled opposition to every evil thing. It is therefore right and necessary for God to hate sin and all who practice it.

*NIV Hab. 1:13* "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."

"The wrath of God is his steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil in all its forms and manifestations." – *John Stott*

b. Some think that the idea of wrath is unjust or unbecoming to a God of love. This is largely because we underestimate both the extent and seriousness of sin and the holiness of God. Not only is God perfectly justified in His wrath, but without it His very character would be compromised.

3. In light of God's holiness, sin has grave and inevitable consequences:

**a. A broken relationship with God.**

*NIV Isa. 59:2* "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

**b. Enslavement (bondage) to sin and Satan.** Sin places us under the dominion of sin and Satan, unable to break free from their control.

*NIV Col. 1:13* "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves."

**c. Consequences in life.** All the sorrow, pain, suffering, sweat, tears, strife, sickness, and death we experience were not part of God's original good creation. They resulted from the entrance of sin into the world.

**d. Eternal punishment.** The ultimate, final, and irrevocable punishment for all who die in sinful rebellion against God is separation in hell from God's beneficent presence.

*NIV 2The. 1:8-10* "He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed."

## God's Answer to Man's Dilemma: The Gospel

How can we be saved from our sins and the righteous wrath of God? The answer is the gospel: the "good news" of God's saving work on our behalf through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

"The gospel is not only the *most important* message in all of history; it is the only *essential* message in all of history." - *Jerry Bridges*

- The motive for the gospel: God's love and mercy

1. The holiness of God demanded that sin be punished. If God failed to punish sin, He would cease to be just. If He ceased to be just, He would cease to be God.
2. But the Bible teaches that, not only is God holy, He is also loving – love is essential to His very nature.

*ESV 1Joh. 4:7-8* "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**"

3. Even though we were deserving of eternal punishment, God, motivated by His infinite love, chose to take upon Himself in the person of His Son the full measure of divine wrath.

*ESV 1Joh. 4:9-10* "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. [a "propitiation" is an offering that appeases wrath.]

4. This is the glory of the cross: God saved us in such a way that, in one and the same act, He preserved His uncompromising holiness and expressed His fathomless love and mercy.

*NIV Rom. 3:25-26* "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, **so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.**"

"How then could God express simultaneously his holiness in judgment and his love in pardon? Only by providing a divine substitute for the sinner, so that the substitute would receive the judgment and the sinner the pardon." – *John Stott*

- The nature of the gospel: Grace

It is often said that "we are saved by grace;" and so we are. Perhaps the best one-word summary we could use for what God has done for us through Christ's work on the cross is "grace."

1. Grace refers to "God's free and unmerited favor." It is God freely bestowing His goodness to people who deserve only punishment. Notice the components of this idea:
  - a. GOD is in **no way obligated** to show *kindness* and *mercy* to anyone – least of all those who have rebelled against His rule.
  - b. WE are completely **unable** to earn any favor from God; we stand condemned in the courtroom of God's justice.

- c. **And yet**, God resolves to extend mercy and favor to us in spite of our guilt.
- 2. It is this **GRACE** – this “merciful resolve” – that is the source of our salvation and characterizes what Christ has done for us.

*ESV Rom. 3:23-24: ‘for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...’*

- 3. Because we are saved “by grace” alone, **we can never earn our salvation** or contribute anything to it. For all eternity, God alone will receive the glory and credit for graciously giving to us what we could never merit on our own.

*NIV Eph. 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

- **The substance of the gospel: the person and work of Jesus Christ**

As stated earlier, the gospel is the “good news” of God’s saving work on our behalf through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the gospel; it is His holy history, the news of who He is and what He has done for us. The gospel includes Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming return.

- 1. **Jesus’ birth.**

Jesus is fully God, yet He was born into this world as a man, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin named Mary. Jesus is therefore fully God and fully man.

*NIV Joh. 1:1,14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh, and made His dwelling among us.”*

*NIV Mat. 1:20-21 “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (See also Heb. 2:17; Phi. 2:5-8)*

- 2. **Jesus’ perfect, sinless life.**

Even though Jesus was subject to all the temptations to which we are all subject, He never once sinned in any way.

*NIV Heb. 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”*

- 3. **Jesus’ death on the cross.**

At the heart of Christ’s life and ministry stands the cross. All His life prepared him for and led to that moment. At the cross, Christ provided the ground of our salvation – the basis upon which God saves us.

- i. Jesus’ death was substitutionary in nature. He died on our behalf, receiving the legal penalty for our sins and satisfying God’s wrath towards us.

*NIV Isa. 53:4-6 “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

*NIV 2Cor. 5:21* “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

- ii. Because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, God no longer holds us responsible to pay for them. All of our sins are forgiven: past, present, and future.

*NAS Col. 2:13-14* And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- iii. Not only are our sins forgiven, but we are also “justified” – that is, we are *declared* righteous by God.

- Righteousness is a legal term: it speaks of a “right standing” before God
- God considers the righteousness that Christ achieved as belonging to us
- This declaration is a once-for-all, permanent event in our lives that nothing can change.

“The Lord Jesus Christ did not come into the world to meet with his friends. He came to die for his enemies... This is the biblical portrait of the people for whom Christ died. We were objects of wrath, rightly facing the unmitigated, everlasting fury of an incensed God, but now in Christ we have found mercy. We have been brought from death to life, from corruption to glory.” – S. Jeffrey, M Ovey & A. Sach

#### 4. **Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.**

The resurrection demonstrates that Jesus’ death was an acceptable and effective sacrifice on our behalf. Death is the penalty for sin, and Jesus’ conquest over death in the resurrection shows that sin has also been overcome.

*NIV Rom. 4:25:* ‘He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.’

*NIV 1Cor. 15:17* “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

#### 5. **Jesus’ ascension and return.**

The ascension marks the beginning of Jesus’ reign. He now has all rule and authority and He reigns in heaven with the Father, building His church, defeating its enemies, and interceding for His people. At the time that God has determined, He will return to consummate His work and initiate a new heaven and a new earth. Then we’ll reign with Him for eternity, worshipping God and experiencing the full fruits of His saving work.

*NIV Mat. 24:30-31* “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other.”

*NIV Rev. 21:3-4* “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”

**Exercise: Expanding our understanding**

Now it's your turn. With the additional information you now have, let's go back to those four key words to trigger your memory. Tell the Gospel Story in your own words:

1. **GOD** – *Who is he?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. **MAN** – (i.e. *Mankind*) *Who are we?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. **CHRIST** – *Who is he? What did he do?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Keeping the Thing the Thing**

Was anything unnecessary in these “facts” in order to be saved? Was anything missing? (e.g., the Trinity, deity of Christ, election, predestination, perseverance, extent of atonement.)

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## 5. *Distinctives: Our Response to the Gospel*

The gospel tells us that God has acted through the person and work of Christ to save us from our sins and remove the barrier that exists between God and ourselves. The gospel is therefore *objective*; it is a matter of history. It is what Christ did *for* us; no matter how we *feel*, the ground of our salvation never changes. We are therefore not to look inward for the reason why God saves us, but upward and outward – to the Savior who died for us. He is the object of our faith.

However, salvation is not somehow “automatic.” The gospel comes to us as news, and it is news to which we must respond. After Christ died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to a group of believers in Jerusalem, thus giving birth to the church. On that day, in response to the preaching of the gospel by Peter, the hearers were pierced to the heart and asked the perceptive question, “What shall we do?” All who come to Christ must face this same question. And our answer to that question will determine whether we truly embark upon the journey of faith in Christ.

### **Our Response to the Gospel...**

The appropriate response to the gospel has two components, repentance and faith, which are often summarized under the term “conversion.” Although repentance and faith are spoken of separately, they always work together in conversion. There is no true repentance without faith, and no genuine faith without repentance.

“Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.” – *Wayne Grudem*

#### ● **Repentance**

The Biblical words for repentance have at their core the idea of turning around or changing direction. To sin is to rebel against God and His rule over our life. To repent is to turn back to God and to embrace Him and His rule and authority over our life.

1. **Repentance is a command of God.** All people are commanded to repent and believe the gospel.

*NAS Act. 17:30* “God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.”

This repentance has three primary aspects:

- a. **Mind:** an awareness of the holiness and majesty of God, of our sin and guilt, and of God’s mercy and readiness to forgive.
- b. **Emotions:** a heartfelt sorrow for sin and joy at the prospect of forgiveness.
- c. **Will:** a willingness and steadfast purposing to turn away from all sin and to turn to God in obedience.

“The New Testament word for repentance means changing one’s mind so that one’s views, values, goals, and ways are changed, and one’s whole life is lived differently. The change is radical, both inwardly and outwardly. Repentance means starting to live a new life.”

– *J.I. Packer*

2. **Repentance is a *gift* from God.** It is the grace of God that enables us to repent.

*NIV 2Tim. 2:25* “Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.”

## ● Faith

Faith is the instrument through which the saving benefits of the cross come to us. Salvation is “by grace” – grace is its ground or basis – but it is “through faith” – faith must be exercised before salvation is received (Eph. 2:8). It is both a gift of God and an act of our will. God gives us faith, but we are responsible for exercising it.

*NIV Rom. 1:17* “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous shall live by faith.”

### 1. What is faith?

The New Testament word for faith, when used in the context of salvation, means a true commitment of oneself to God, an unwavering trust in His promises, and a persistent loyalty and obedience.

Saving faith has three elements:

#### a. **Knowledge:** We must have certain information – the gospel – revealed to us.

*NIV Rom. 10:14,17* “How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ...Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

#### b. **Assent:** We must believe that what is revealed is true.

*NIV Heb. 4:2* “For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did, but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”

#### c. **Trust:** We must place trust in what is revealed, being willing to stake our life on it. This will find expression in our obedience and commitment.

*NIV Jas. 2:17, 22* “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead... You see that **his faith and his actions were working together**, and his faith was made complete by what he did.”

### 2. We are saved by faith alone, but true saving faith will be evidenced by a lifestyle that testifies to the reality of faith. True saving faith will always lead to obedience.

*NIV Jas. 2:17* “...**faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**”

### 3. **Faith is a gift from God**, not a work that earns us favor with God.

*NIV Act. 16:14* “The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.”

## ● Water Baptism

### 1. We respond to the gospel with repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ. Having been converted, believers also respond by obeying the command to be baptized.

*ESV Act. 2:38* “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

### 2. Baptism is an **obedient** response of someone saved by grace. In baptism, we identify with the Lord who has saved us. Baptism cannot contribute to or bring about salvation. Baptism doesn’t save us – Jesus saves us through faith.

*ESV Act. 8:12* “when they believed ... they were baptized, both men and women”

3. Baptism is an **outward sign** of an *inward work* which has already taken place. Therefore, only those who have believed the gospel and repented from their sins should be baptized. For this reason, we do not baptize infants.
4. Water baptism is a **sign** and **symbol** of the believer's union with the Lord in His death, burial, and resurrection.

*NIV Rom. 6:4 "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so too we may live a new life."*

We practice baptism by immersion, which vividly illustrates the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

5. Baptism is a landmark moment in a believer's life, clearly marking one's identification with Christ and entrance into His body, the church. It is therefore our wonderful privilege as a church to celebrate these times together. We set aside specific times for the baptism of new believers (or those who haven't yet been baptized), enabling us to rejoice together and to welcome new believers into the life of the church.

***Exercise: Essentials and Non-essentials***

Does conversion require you to know that your ability to confess Christ as Lord is God-given? Or does it only require you to confess Him as your Lord? Why?

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Does conversion require you to know the spiritual meaning of baptism as union with Christ, or only that it represents your cleansing from sin, and that Christ commands it? Why?

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Are these for YOU to know, or must the CONVERT know them? Why should *you* know them?

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HINT: *how would the convert know what "faith" or "trust" is if you don't explain it? What sort of faith is saving faith, as distinct from intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel?*



## 6. Biblical Examples of Gospel Conversations

### What does the Bible Say?

The Bible provides us with a number of examples of how Jesus and his disciples engaged others in a conversation with eternal consequences – how they introduced others to Jesus. But in each example, here is the motivating and governing principle:

**Connect with their *soul*** (who they are, where they're at), **and not just with their *mind*.**

*For each example below, write a brief description of who, what, where, and when and how these people were engaged in conversation – consider how GOD prepared them to be engaged.*

**Mat 16:15-19** He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

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**Joh 4:7-10** A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

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**Luk 10:25-28** And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

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**Act 3:3-6** Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. <sup>4</sup> And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup> And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

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**Act 8:27-31, 35** And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup> and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup> And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup> And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him... <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

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**Act 9:10-15** Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." <sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, **he is praying**, <sup>12</sup> and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." <sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, "Go, for **he is a chosen instrument of mine** to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

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**Act 10:22, 28** And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." ... <sup>28</sup> And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean."

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**Act 16:13-15** And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. <sup>14</sup> One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay..."

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**Act 17:21-23** Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. <sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

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## 7. Biblical Examples of Gospel Proclamations

### What does the Bible Say?

When people were engaged in conversation, and it turned to the nature and means of salvation, there was a very specific summons that was issued – something they had to believe if they were going to be saved. Some believed, and some didn't. And on occasion, they were told why they were not ready to be saved. The following verses contain truths that inform our understanding of the four words we're using to trigger our memory.

Write down for each verse, what it says or implies about each of the four gospel components.

**Mar 7:20-23** And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mat 5:27-28** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Rom 3:19-26** Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rom 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Joh 3:16-18** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**1Jo 5:11-12** And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**1Co 15:1** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,<sup>1 4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,<sup>2 5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.<sup>3 6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers

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<sup>1</sup> **Luke 4:18** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." <sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." **Isa 53:5** But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa 26:19** Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. **Eze 37:5-6** Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD." **Hos 6:2** After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

<sup>3</sup> **1 John 1:1-3** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- <sup>2</sup> the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-- <sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.<sup>1</sup>

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Eph. 2:8-9** “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 17:30** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

GOD: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN: \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> **1Cor 15:9** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. <sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. <sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

## Elements of the Gospel

1. God as Sovereign over everything	7. Jesus' life as fulfilling the Law
2. The Bible as our Authority	8. Jesus' Resurrection as Proof
3. The Law as a "sin-revealer"	9. Grace as the Cause of salvation
4. Man as a Law-breaker	10. Faith as the means of salvation
5. Jesus as our Savior from God's Judgment	11. Repentance as the response to it
6. Jesus' death as payment for sin's debt	12. Baptism as the sign of it

### ***Exercise: Organizing the Elements of the Gospel***

Organize these twelve elements of the Gospel, into the four memory words. Which elements (enter the number) belong with which word?

GOD \_\_\_\_\_

MAN \_\_\_\_\_

CHRIST \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Exercise: The Gospel Call to Respond***

*For each verse below, underline or highlight the response(s) made to the Gospel Call.*

**Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Act 8:36** And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" <sup>37</sup> Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." <sup>38</sup> And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

**Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**Galatians 2:19-20** For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**1Jo 1:5-10** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.



## 8. *Nurturing the Planted Seed*

### THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE GOSPEL

A seedling, left on its own, without food and water, will wither. The Gospel Call summons us to FELLOWSHIP with God, and with other believers, because of Christ.

That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1Jo 1:3)

And so we are exhorted to gather together purposefully, as followers of Christ:

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:24 <sup>NKJ</sup>)

So, assembling together is for purposes of fellowship with God (to worship Him together) and fellowship with one another. We fellowship for purposes of stirring up to love and good works, and of exhorting one another: to put away sin and put on godliness, to stay the course, to proclaim Christ, and to live to God. Jesus told us the parable of the sower, which reveals how the Gospel Seed is spread, and how it grows or doesn't grow. What things did Jesus say would cause a seed not to take root, or to take root only to wither afterwards?

#### *The Parable*

<sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup> but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Mat 13:3-8 <sup>ESV</sup>)

#### *The Explanation*

<sup>18</sup> "Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Mat 13:18-23 <sup>ESV</sup>)

*Considering this parable, what should the Church provide a seedling, to help it grow and not fall away or wither? Or what has God provided the Church, to help it grow and not wither? For each of the verses below, write down what God has provided, and why.*

**Ephesians 1:22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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**Ephesians 5:23** For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

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**Colossians 1:18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

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**Ephesians 4:11** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

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What then is our closing instruction to a new believer? Repent? Read the Bible? Pray? Tell others? Or is it to join a God-fearing, Bible-teaching, Love-filled, Gospel-abiding church? Like *yours*? And what is the purpose of that? To grow your Church, or to grow this new believer?

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In the Appendix is a guide to finding a good church: *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*.

### **Evangelism: to what end?**

The Great Commission commands us to “make disciples”, not just “make converts.” So our duty does not end with proclaiming the Gospel, which scatters the seed. Our duty extends to nurturing the seed that God has planted in rich soil. And that’s called DISCIPLING. Discipling is the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel, even though it’s not part of the Gospel proclamation. But since “the aim of evangelism is to persuade,” we should consider what we are to persuade everyone about. There are *three basic needs* that all believers should recognize. Their need,

1. to trust in Christ alone for salvation (Joh 14.6)
2. to repent and be baptized (Act 2.38; 22.16), and
3. to be instructed about Christ (Eph 4.20-22)

The first is *converting*; the second is *admitting*; the third is *following* – that third one is what we call “discipleship,” but without those first two, it’s a fruitless and frustrating endeavor. Discipleship is a life-long course of learning to submit to Christ, more and more, because of what he did, and continues to do, by His word and Spirit.

## Appendix 1: Nine Marks of a Healthy Church

<http://www.9marks.org/what-are-the-9marks/>

*Say you're heading to another city, speaking to someone you may never meet again. You faithfully proclaimed the Gospel, they accepted Christ – now what? Now you encourage them to attend and serve a Gospel-believing, Gospel-teaching church. What is it they should be looking for in such a church?*

- 1. EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING** – This is preaching which expounds what Scripture says in a particular passage, carefully explaining its meaning and applying it to the congregation. It is a commitment to hearing God's Word and to recovering the centrality of it in our worship.
- 2. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY** – Paul charges Titus to "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Our concern should be not only with *how* we are taught, but with *what* we are taught. Biblical theology is a commitment to know the God of the Bible as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.
- 3. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOOD NEWS** – The gospel is the heart of Christianity. But the good news is not that God wants to meet people's felt needs or help them develop a healthier self-image. We have sinfully rebelled against our Creator and Judge. Yet He has graciously sent His Son to die the death we deserved for our sin, and He has credited Christ's acquittal to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus' death and resurrection. *That* is the good news.
- 4. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF CONVERSION** – The spiritual change each person needs is so radical, so near the root of us, that only God can do it. We need God to convert us. Conversion need not be an emotionally heated experience, but it must evidence itself in godly fruit if it is to be what the Bible regards as a true conversion.
- 5. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF EVANGELISM** – How someone shares the gospel is closely related to how he understands the gospel. To present it as an additive that gives non-Christians something they naturally want (i.e. joy or peace) is to present a half-truth, which elicits false conversions. The whole truth is that our deepest need is spiritual life, and that new life only comes by repenting of our sins and believing in Jesus. We present the gospel openly, and leave the converting to God.
- 6. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MEMBERSHIP** – Membership should reflect a living commitment to a local church in attendance, giving, prayer and service; otherwise it is meaningless, worthless, and even dangerous. We should not allow people to keep their membership in our churches for sentimental reasons or lack of attention. To be a member is knowingly to be traveling together as aliens and strangers in this world as we head to our heavenly home.
- 7. BIBLICAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE** – Church discipline gives parameters to church membership. The idea seems negative to people today – "didn't our Lord forbid judging?" But if we cannot say how a Christian should *not* live, how can we say how he or she *should* live? Each local church actually has a biblical responsibility to judge the life and teaching of its leaders, and even of its members, particularly insofar as either could compromise the church's witness to the gospel.
- 8. PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP AND GROWTH** – A pervasive concern with church growth exists today – not simply with growing numbers, but with growing members. Though many Christians measure other things, the only certain observable sign of growth is a life of *increasing holiness*, rooted in Christian *self-denial*. These concepts are nearly extinct in the modern church. Recovering true discipleship for today would build the church and promote a clearer witness to the world.
- 9. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP** – What eighteenth-century Baptists and Presbyterians often agreed upon was that there should be a plurality of elders in each local church. This plurality of elders is not only biblical, but practical – it has the immense benefit of rounding out the pastor's gifts to ensure the proper shepherding of God's church.



## *Appendix 2: Scripture Passages for the Gospel Outline*

### **GOD**

God is Holy

**Isaiah 6:1** In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

God is the Creator

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

**Colossians 1:16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**Psalms 8:1** O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. <sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

God created man in His own image

**Genesis 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him.

God hates sin

**Genesis 6:5** The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

God is loving

**Jeremiah 31:3** ...I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

### **MAN**

We are made in God's image

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

We are all sinners

**Romans 3:9** What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, <sup>10</sup> as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

We are all dead in our transgressions

**Ephesians 2:1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our

flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

We are in rebellion against God

**Isaiah 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-- every one-- to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

We are separated from God

**Isaiah 59:2** but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Death is the penalty for our rebellion

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## CHRIST

Jesus is the way to God [*because he is the Son of God*]

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**Joh 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Jesus died for us [*Why? To pay for your sins in your place*]

**Romans 5:6** For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 John 2:2** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

God's gift of eternal life is through Christ

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God gives grace to us in Christ

**Ephesians 2:4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved-- <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

God reconciles us to Himself in Christ

**Colossians 1:19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Christ lived a perfect life [Why? To fulfill the law on your behalf]

**Matthew 5:17** "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

**1 Peter 2:22** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

Christ rose from the dead [Why? To prove his authority over sin and death]

**Joh 2:18-22** So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."<sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"<sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body.<sup>22</sup> When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

**1 Corinthians 15:3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Christ came to give life

**John 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

## RESPONSE

We must confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts

**Romans 10:9** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

We must repent

**Matthew 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

**Luke 13:5** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

**Acts 3:19** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,

We must follow Jesus

**John 8:12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

**Matthew 10:38** And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

We must hear Jesus' word

**John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.<sup>25</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

We must believe in Jesus' name [Son of God, Christ/Messiah/Savior, Teacher, Lord, Word, etc.]

**John 1:12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

**Philippians 2:9** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## THE COST

Christ redeemed us by his blood

**1Peter 1:18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

God saved us by His grace

**Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

We must deny ourselves and take up the cross

**Luke 9:23** "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

## Appendix 3: How to Memorize Scripture

Surprisingly, we have a number of separate but linked memories in us: visual, auditory, muscle tissue, cognitive (understanding), emotional (responsive), imaginative, and associative. We want to trigger as many of these memory banks as possible so that they reinforce each other, and turn our short-term memory into long-term memory, quickly and efficiently.

1. **Get excited.** You *cannot* learn something unless you *want* to learn it. Consider how you will use it, and what you'll get out of it. Get pumped; be determined! Adrenalin is a key chemical to make our memory strong and lasting. Make it *fun* and *enjoyable*! That's part of *wanting* it.
2. **Warm up.** As if warming up before exercising, begin with a recitation of something that you have already memorized. This triggers the memory portions of the brain, preparing them to receive new information. *Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow...*
3. **Stand up.** Don't try to memorize while sitting down or lying down. There's something about being up and moving that helps us to memorize. At the very least, it keeps us awake. You may want silence, or you may want quiet instrumental music in the background – your choice.
4. **Read it.** Take the time to read it, over and over again, until the general content becomes *familiar* to you, and the words are *available* for recall, even if not in the right order.
5. **Restate it.** Summarize it in your own words – it's easier to learn things *you* have said than to remember what someone else has said. So, make it your own and demonstrate that you understand it. If you can't restate it, then you don't really understand it.
6. **Analyze it.** Find and fix in your mind *no more than 7 key words* or ideas in the text that you can use to recall the rest of the text.
7. **Visualize it.** Use your imagination to create a vivid picture of the content of it. The more vivid the picture, the more likely you will remember it. Diagram it if you can.
8. **Recite it aloud.** By saying it aloud, you're actually *hearing* it. And by hearing it, you are creating another memory of what you want to learn. Now you've not only read it, and seen it, but you've heard it, and reinforced it in your mind.
9. **Write it down.**
  - First, *copy* it. This is helpful in itself. It triggers the muscle memory. But more importantly, it associates and reinforces what you have seen and read, with what you have heard, with what you have imagined, with your assessment of it, with what you are physically writing.
  - Then try to *write it entirely from memory*. Get as much down as you can without looking at the original text, even if you have to leave blanks.
  - Then go back to the original and use it to *fill in only the blanks*.
  - Now put away the original and *read aloud what you have written*.
  - Finally, try to *recite it from memory* again, just once. Don't worry if you can't recite it all.

**Repetition.** Repeat these steps, and keep repeating them, until you can write the whole thing down from memory without referring back to the original. Now it's yours for the asking. **Review** what you have memorized once a week. Otherwise, you will recall only 25% of it within one month.

**The Source.** It is crucial that we remember where we got the text we are memorizing. That would be *author, book, chapter, and verse*. Repeat the source **3 times** for every time you recite the text. For example, John 11:5, "Jesus wept." John 11:5; John 11:5. Why? Because the source is harder to visualize and remember than the text. And we want to be able to tell others where to find it for themselves. This adds **credibility** to what we have recounted to them.