

# EQUIPPED

## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 01. GOSPEL

Your journey to being an Equipped Disciple starts here.

#### LEARN IT!

Choose one of the following primary resources to learn about sharing the gospel. Then feel free to take a look at the supplemental resources to go deeper and learn more.

#### PRIMARY RESOURCE

Revised Knowing God Personally

The Leader's Guide to Knowing God Personally (KGP)

Knowing God Personally (Available Online)

Revised Big 6 Questions (Available Online)

The Passage (Impact) (Available Online)

#### LIVE IT!

Now it is time to go out and share the gospel. We encourage you to take the following challenge before moving onto the next section of this resource.

**Share the gospel with one other person.**

It's always good to go to God's Word, the ultimate source. In addition to the resources listed, we have collected these Scripture passages on the message of Jesus for you to use, study and share as God leads.

Ephesians 2:1-10

Romans 6:23

Romans 3:23-24

John 3:16-17

1 Corinthians 15:3-6

Titus 3:3-7



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### 01. GOSPEL

#### REVISED KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY

**GOD LOVES YOU AND CREATED YOU IN HIS IMAGE. HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY, SO THAT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND FREEDOM HE OFFERS.**

##### **GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS**

"So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them."  
Genesis 1:27

An image gives a picture of someone or something. God has displayed His image in people, men and women of all ethnicities and cultures, and created them to give a picture of Himself and His love to the world. This gives each man and woman tremendous value and significance.

##### **GOD'S LOVE**

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

##### **GOD'S PLAN**

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." John 17:3

What prevents us from experiencing the love and freedom God offers? What keeps us from accurately displaying God's image to the world?

**WE ARE ALL SINNERS. SIN IS PART OF THE HUMAN CONDITION THAT KEEPS US FROM KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY AND EXPERIENCING HIS LOVE AND FREEDOM.**

##### **PEOPLE ARE SINFUL**

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."  
Romans 3:23

Sin is our innate desire to take the place of God, not just the actions we do. People were created to be in relationship with God, and to bear His image. But we are not God, and we have failed to portray His image accurately in the world.

##### **PEOPLE ARE SEPARATED**

"For the wages of sin is death."  
Romans 6:23

This is not just physical death; our sinful condition deserves eternal separation from God.

The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf.

**GOD**



**JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY PROVISION FOR OUR SIN SO WE CAN BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THE WAY WE WERE CREATED TO BE. JESUS NOT ONLY RESTORES US TO GOD, BUT HE IS RESTORING EVERYTHING IN CREATION.**

##### **JESUS WAS SINLESS**

"[Jesus] committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth." 1 Peter 2:22

Jesus Christ was able to pay the penalty for our sins because He is perfect and free from sin.

##### **JESUS DIED IN OUR PLACE**

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

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### JESUS' POWER

"Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred ..." 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

Jesus' resurrection from the dead shows that He has power over death so He can offer us eternal life with God.

### JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

John 14:6

What do you need to do in order to be in relationship with God and accept the love and freedom He offers?



**WE MUST INDIVIDUALLY RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND SURRENDER TO HIS LORDSHIP. ONLY THEN CAN WE BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE AND FREEDOM AS PART OF HIS FAMILY.**

### WE MUST RECEIVE CHRIST

"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

John 1:12

### WE RECEIVE CHRIST THROUGH FAITH

"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." Ephesians 2:8,9

There is nothing we can do to earn a relationship with God, but it is by grace (an undeserved, unearned

gift) because of faith (knowing God is real and trustworthy) that we can be saved (rescued from the penalty of our sin to relationship with God).

### WE EXPERIENCE LOVE AND FREEDOM WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST

[Jesus speaking] "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

### WE ENTER THE FAMILY OF GOD WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Ephesians 2:19

### RECEIVING CHRIST INVOLVES:

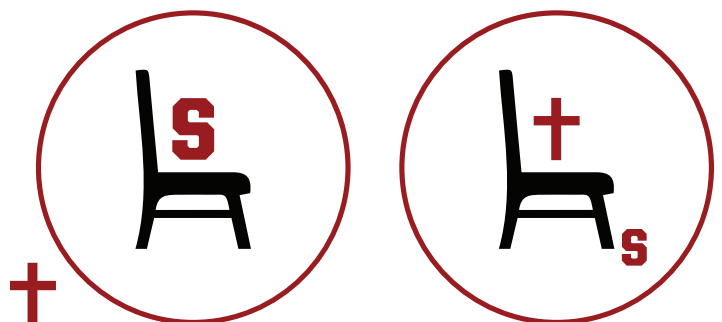
Recognizing you are a sinner and need a Savior.

Admitting that you cannot be in relationship with God by yourself.

Turning to God and give Him the right place in your life (repentance) and placing your faith in Jesus Christ alone.

When you trust in Christ, you receive complete forgiveness of your sin and an eternal relationship with God.

Knowing intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not enough. Having an emotional experience will not give you the love and freedom you seek. It requires complete surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord of your life.



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Which circle best describes your life — Christ outside your life or Christ on the throne of your life?

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

### **THE FOLLOWING EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST:**

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#### **YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST RIGHT NOW BY FAITH THROUGH PRAYER**

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Prayer is talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, then you can pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life as He promised.

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#### **DOES THIS PRAYER EXPRESS THE DESIRE OF YOUR HEART?**

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### 01. GOSPEL

#### THE LEADER'S GUIDE TO KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY (KGP)

The most effective way to share the revised “Would You Like To Know God Personally?” (KGP booklet) is to engage in meaningful dialogue with the person you are witnessing to. Maintain good eye contact, body language and listening skills as you read from the booklet, ask questions and listen for their answers. This will help to ensure an authentic experience between you and the person you are introducing to the living Savior, Jesus Christ. This is not an impersonal presentation of religious ideas and belief systems.

It's important to understand key points to each of the four principles outlined in the KGP. Questions and examples are listed below to help you make the truth of the gospel clear and more relatable. Committing them to memory will give you confidence in your presentation to weigh whether or not the people you're speaking with understand the gospel.

What follows is the word-for-word text of the revised “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” booklet. Each main point, question and example is inserted in this presentation at the exact point where you would ask it.

#### 1. GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

God loves you and created you in His image. He wants you to know Him personally, so that you may experience the love and freedom He offers.

##### GOD'S LOVE

**Read:** “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begot- ten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

**Main Point:** God's love for people isn't just a general truth floating out there in the universe, nor is it only measured by the “blessings” we experience in life. Many who have grown up in church have been told their whole lives that God loves them. Show them God's love is tangible, a specific action

that came at an immense cost. God's love can be measured in one word: sacrifice.

Jesus loves you enough to die for you in order to save your life. Ask, “Do you think someone would offer one of their children to die to save me?” (Answer: No.) That's exactly what God has done to save us. He loved us as individuals enough that He gave up Jesus, His only Son, to be in relationship with us.

**Question:** “How do you think God shows or proves His love to you?”

**Question:** “Share with me about one person in your life who loves you unconditionally. How has that person proven his or her love to you?”

**Question:** “Do you think ‘sacrifice’ is a good way to describe this person's love?”

##### GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS

**Main point:** God's image is reflected in people in men and women of all ethnicities and cultures, giving all people incredible value and worth. Due to global injustices (intentional and unintentional), the racial divides and prejudices that exist inside and outside the church, it is imperative to remind people that God created them and loves them – not in spite of their skin color or culture, but because they are exactly as He created them.

**Question:** What is the purpose of a picture?

It shows us what something or someone looks like. It is not the original person or place, but gives us a glimpse of what it/they are like. Similarly, we are not God, but God has created us to be a picture of Himself in the world. This gives us great purpose and responsibility.

**Question:** How does “being made in God's image” give us value and significance?

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It provides meaning to our very humanity. It answers the question, “Who am I?” We are not simply what we do (an athlete, a student, a musician, a businessman, a teacher, etc.) We are all God’s image bearers. It speaks to God’s love and value of us that He would make us in His own image and allow us to reflect Him.

**Question:** Have you ever struggled to believe that you (your personality, your ethnicity, your culture) are created by God and a reflection of who He is?

### GOD’S PLAN

**Read:** “Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

**Main Point:** Typically when people are asked what God’s plan is for their lives, they think about where they’ll be in five years (career, relationship status, etc.). It’s true, God cares about our lives, but those future plans are not relevant for this discussion. Focus on God’s plan to know us personally and for eternity, to be in intimate relationship with us.

**Question:** “According to this verse, how is eternity defined?”

**Example:** The use of a colon in a sentence signals that what comes next is directly related to the preceding statement. A sentence beginning with the statement “Now this is eternal life:” indicates that what comes next is connected to eternal life. “That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” shows that God’s plan is to be in relationship with us through Christ. Our eternal life starts when a relationship with Christ starts, and that will be in place for eternity.

**Summary:** God’s love is tangible and sacrificial. If anyone ever asks, “How do you know God loves you?” we can respond by saying that He sent Jesus to die for us.

**Transition - Question:** “Why hasn’t everyone experienced God’s love and plan?”

## 2. OUR CONDITION

**Read:** We are all sinners. Sin is part of the human condition that keeps us from knowing God personally and experiencing His love and freedom.

**Main Point:** Sin is not just a list of do’s and don’ts. Sin is a heart issue of rebellion that separates us from God that needs to be addressed. Sin matters.

**Question:** “How would you define sin? - See where they are in their understanding.

**Read:** People were created to have fellowship with God; but because of our own stubborn self-will, we chose to go our own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin. Sin, as defined in the original translations of the Bible, means “to miss the mark.” The mark, in this case, is the standard of perfection established by God and evidenced by Jesus. Viewed in that light, it is clear that we are all sinners.

**Question:** What is this description of sin saying it truly is? Do you see a list of do’s and don’t’s here?

**Example:** Sin didn’t enter the world because Adam and Eve took a bite of fruit, but because they willfully ignored God’s command and did their own thing.

**Question:** “What do you think a description or example of active rebellion toward God would be?”

**Question:** “What do you think a description or example of passive indifference toward God would be?”

**Example:** Active rebellion and passive indifference can be exemplified by interactions between athletes and coaches. Not showing up for practice, breaking team rules, or showing blatant disrespect with their words or actions demonstrates active rebellion. Athletes silently deciding that they don’t need to listen to the coach, ignoring their training program, or doing what they



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think is best are examples of passive indifference. We can interact with God the same ways.

### PEOPLE ARE SINFUL

**Read:** "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

**Question:** "Have you ever sinned?" - They need to realize their need for a redeemer. Without realizing the state of their own sin/separation from God, they won't realize the need for the gospel.

**Question:** "Who is on the list of people that fall short of the glory of God?" - Make the list of people diverse -- Michael Jordan, Ghandi, Hitler, Mother Teresa, me, etc.

Example: Sin is an old archery term -- missing the mark. God's "mark" is perfection for us (as He is perfect and holy). We chose imperfection/rebellion by doing our own thing, and there's a penalty for that.

### PEOPLE ARE SEPARATED

**Read:** "The wages of sin is death" [spiritual separation from God] (Romans 6:23).

**Question:** What does the word "wages" mean?

What have we earned for being sinners toward God? (Answer: Death)

**Question:** If we all fall short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death, what do we all deserve?

**Read:** This diagram illustrates that God is holy and people are sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that people are continually trying to reach God and establish the personal relationship with Him through our own efforts -- but we inevitably fail.

**Question:** Why do you think things like a good life (or being a good person), philosophy and even religion would fail in trying to reach God?

Example: Let's say we measure how good someone is based on their vertical leap. If that's the case, then obviously LeBron James would be a "better person" than me. However, if we were both trying to jump to the moon, which one of us would make it? It would be silly to try, right? The same could be said for people trying to be good enough for God. The distance (sin) between our goodness and a perfect God is insurmountable.

Example: Religion is man's self-focused, self-reliant, construct of traditions, rules, regulations and measurements to try and reach God. Religion as an institution is different than a relationship with Christ.

Transition: The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf.

### 3. GOD'S RESPONSE

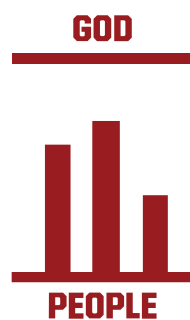
**Read:** Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin so we can be in relationship with God the way we were created to be. Jesus not only restores us to God, but He is restoring everything in creation.

Main Point: Nothing else makes sense for dealing with the penalty of sin (what's wrong with us) outside of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Show why each of those three aspects of Jesus is specific, intentional and significant in redemption. No other religion solves the problem the way God did with Jesus.

**Question:** "Tell me what you know about Jesus" - This is an assessment of what they know.

**Question:** "What do you think is important about the life of Jesus?" - He proved that He was sinless and perfect. His righteousness was earned over a measurable lifetime of 33 years. He set an example for believers in relationship and reliance on the Heavenly Father.

**Question:** "Why is the death of Jesus significant?" - Nothing less would be an acceptable payment when the penalty of sin is death (spiritual separation from God).



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Example: You're in a courtroom and a judge tells you that you owe \$500 to the court for you to be set free. If you offer \$300, will you go free? No. \$500 or no deal. Nothing less. Imagine that Jesus decided to pay your \$500 for you. Similarly, this is what God did to save our lives. God showed the depth of His love for us by having His Son, Jesus, pay the ultimate cost, die a physical, excruciating death, take on the sin of the world and experience God's wrath in our place.

**Question:** "Why is the resurrection of Christ significant?" - He proved He was the Son of God. Death is conquered and no longer a part of the equation. Jesus lives forever, and so do we.

He gave us His righteousness/perfection, like garments to put on and wear. We are now "hitting the mark" of perfection because Christ hit the mark for us.

**Read:** He Rose From The Dead

"Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred..." (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

This is historical verification. He showed up and proved His resurrection to individuals who were named, and to over 500 others.

### HE IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD

**Read:** "Jesus answered, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (John 14:6).

**Question:** Why is this verse so controversial? What makes you uncomfortable about what Jesus says here?"

Example: At first glance, this verse can appear exclusive, but in fact, it is actually inclusive. If Jesus said that only white males who believed in Him can come to the

Father, that would be exclusive. Why? It would exclude all women and all non-whites. Jesus does not say that.

It doesn't matter if you're male or female, what your ethnic background is, your physical presentation, who your parents are, what religion you were born into, or where you're from. All that matters is putting faith in Him. It's what makes the gospel beautiful and inclusive.

**Read:** This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins. Instead of leaving the impossible act of redemption up to us, God handled the problem Himself by sending Jesus. He came to us.

### IN CHRIST THERE IS RESTORATION

Jesus's death and resurrection brings us to a relationship with God. But that is not all Jesus came to do. His death and resurrection allows us to be reconciled with others to have restored relationships (Ephesians 2:14-18), and He intends to reconcile all things to Himself, restoring them to the way they were intended to be. (Colossians 1:19-20)

Transition: It is not enough just to know these truths.

### 4. OUR RESPONSE

**Read:** We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and surrender to His Lordship. Only then can we be in relationship with God and experience His love and freedom as part of His family.

**Main Point:** It's not enough to believe in God and/or understand conceptually what Jesus has accomplished by dying on the Cross for our sins. There needs to be a personal acceptance of what God says is true and an agreement to give your life to Him.

### WE MUST RECEIVE CHRIST

**Read:** "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). We have not just



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been saved from the penalty of sin, but we have been welcomed into the family of God as heirs. The adoption papers have been sealed and stamped with His promise, even as flawed and unworthy people.

### **WE ENTER THE FAMILY OF GOD WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST:**

“...Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” John 1:13

The family of God is defined not by biology or someone else’s decisions, but by our response to a relationship with God. God’s family is beautifully diverse and is intended to be a family of people from all ethnicities and cultures who are trusting in Jesus, experiencing God’s love together, and reflecting Him in the world.

### **WE RECEIVE CHRIST THROUGH FAITH**

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

**Question:** “How would you define the word grace?” - Grace is the giving of something valuable that is unmerited, unwarranted, unearned and free.

Example: Let’s say you don’t own a car, so you borrow a family member’s car to run to the grocery store. On the way, you crash the car. Instead of making you pay for the damages, your family member tells you that you owe them nothing. That is mercy, withholding the punishment you deserve. Next, your family member decides to buy you a new car. That is grace, getting a gift that you do not deserve.

**Question:** “It says we receive our salvation through faith, what is your definition or understanding of what faith is?”

The Bible contains a clear definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Simply put, the biblical definition of faith is “trusting in something you cannot explicitly prove.”

This definition of faith contains two aspects: intellectual assent and trust. Intellectual assent is believing something to be true. Trust is actually relying on the fact that the something is true. A chair is often used to help illustrate this. Intellectual assent is recognizing that a chair is a chair and agreeing that it is designed to support a person who sits on it. Trust is actually sitting in the chair.

Understanding these two aspects of faith is crucial. Many people believe certain facts about Jesus Christ. Many people will intellectually agree with the facts the Bible declares about Jesus. But knowing those facts to be true is not what the Bible means by “faith.” The biblical definition of faith requires intellectual assent to the facts and trust in the facts.

Reminder: Being saved does not come from ourselves.

Example: We do not get to walk around heaven holding a “good actions” resume that shows our qualifications for making it in. We all carry the same resume, that resume says “Jesus” on it. That’s it! We have done nothing to earn it.

### **WE RECEIVE CHRIST BY PERSONAL INVITATION**

**Read:** “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him” (Revelation 3:20). -- Jesus is ready and waiting to be in relationship with you.

**Read:** Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.

Example: Receiving Jesus Christ is an act of a person’s will. Similarly, when two people say their

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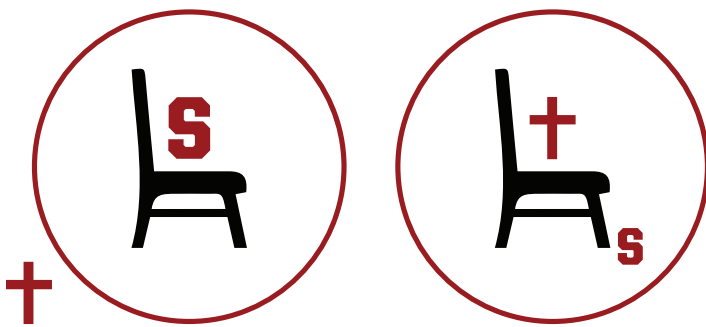
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wedding vows, it is an intentional relationship choice, an act of the will. It is a decision to love the other. But making a commitment to the marriage means that the two people will stay in the marriage and be committed to making it a good marriage, whether or not the love emotions are there. Emotions come and go and cannot be relied upon. The same principle holds true in committing to Christ.

**Read:** These two circles represent two kinds of lives (read circle descriptions).

**Question:** “What is the main difference between the circle on the left and the circle on the right?” – Christ on the outside, Christ on the throne.

Which circle best describes your life?



Clarify that the circles are not a measurement of how well a person is doing in his or her relationship with Christ. Sometimes, if someone already has a relationship with Christ, he or she might answer the question this way. However, that is a mistake. It's like asking someone “Are you married?” The circle on the left is no, the circle on the right is yes. It's not a question of, “How are things going in your marriage?”

The question using the circle diagrams is an assessment of whether or not a person has a relationship with Christ at all. Rather than a “how are you doing in your relationship with Christ” type of question, it is to help determine “are you in

a relationship with Christ or not?” Do you see the difference? To help clarify this, it can be helpful to ask a person “What percentage of your sins did Jesus forgive?” There are no 50%, 75%, or even 99% of sins forgiven options. Even when things are rough and we're struggling in an area of our life, we are 100% forgiven based on who He is and what He has done for us, not on how we're living the Christian life. The left circle represents a person without Christ, with 0% of their sins forgiven. The right circle represents a person in a relationship with Christ, whose sins are 100% forgiven based on Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Transition: “Which circle would you like to have represent your life?”

**Read:** The following explains how you can receive Christ.

You Can Receive Christ Right Now By Faith Through Prayer

(Prayer is talking with God)

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart.

Action: Have them read the prayer to themselves.

**Question:** “What is this prayer saying?” - Here's a chance to reflect back on steps 1-4 to see if the gospel is understood.

**Question:** “Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?”

If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

Reminder: Do not pressure them into doing something they do not want to do. Offer to pray with them in the moment if they're ready, but allow them the space they need to make the decision for themselves. Give them the booklet to take home. Make sure the commitment is real for them, not just for you.

Read through the rest of the content of the booklet, or have them read it later when they take it home with them.

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### 01. GOSPEL

#### KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY

**GOD LOVES YOU** AND OFFERS A WONDERFUL PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE.

##### GOD'S LOVE

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

##### GOD'S PLAN

[Christ speaking] "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" [that it might be full and meaningful]. John 10:10

WHY IS IT THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT EXPERIENCING THE ABUNDANT LIFE? BECAUSE ...

ALL OF US SIN, AND OUR **SIN HAS SEPARATED US FROM GOD.**

##### WE ARE SINFUL

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."  
Romans 3:23

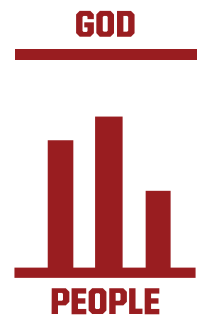
We were created to have fellowship with God; but because of our stubborn self-will, we chose to go our own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

##### WE ARE SEPARATED

People separated are from God

"The wages of sin is death" [spiritual separation from God].  
Romans 6:23

This diagram illustrates that God is holy, and people are sinful. A great gulf separates us. The arrows illustrate that we are continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through our own efforts -- such as being a good person, following a philosophy of good works or practicing religious mandates. But we inevitably fail.



THE THIRD LAW EXPLAINS THE ONLY WAY TO BRIDGE THIS GULF ...

**JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY PROVISION FOR OUR SIN.** THROUGH HIM WE CAN KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE AND PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.

##### HE DIED IN OUR PLACE

"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

##### HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD

"Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures ... He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred ..." 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

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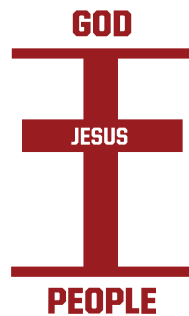
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### HE IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD

Jesus makes a way

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'" John 14:6

This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf which separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.



IT IS NOT ENOUGH JUST TO KNOW THESE THREE PRINCIPLES ...

**WE MUST INDIVIDUALLY RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD; THEN WE CAN KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE AND PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.**

### WE MUST RECEIVE CHRIST

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." John 1:12

### WE RECEIVE CHRIST THROUGH FAITH

"By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

### WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST, WE EXPERIENCE A NEW BIRTH

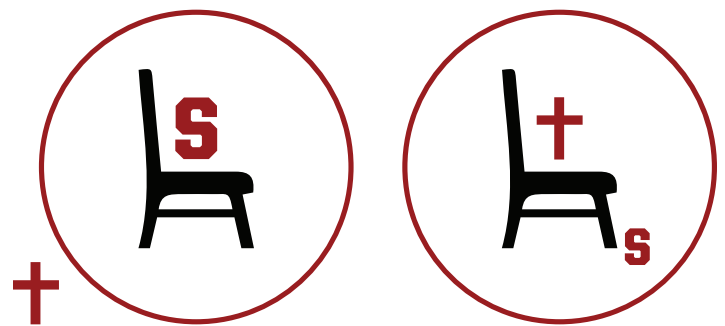
### WE RECEIVE CHRIST BY PERSONAL INVITATION

[Christ speaking] "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him." Revelation 3:20

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus

Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for your sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. You receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

### THESE TWO CIRCLES REPRESENT TWO KINDS OF LIVES:



Which circle best describes your life?

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

### THE FOLLOWING EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST:

### YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST RIGHT NOW BY FAITH THROUGH PRAYER

Prayer is talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, then you can pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life as He promised.

### DOES THIS PRAYER EXPRESS THE DESIRE OF YOUR HEART?

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 01. GOSPEL

#### REVISED BIG SIX QUESTIONS

The most effective way to share the “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” booklet is to engage in meaningful dialogue with the person you are witnessing to. Eye contact and engaged body language should be displayed, questions should be both asked and answered, participation in reading various segments of the booklet should be asked of the person you are sharing with.

The booklet should be used to guide the conversation toward an understanding of the gospel: introducing people to the living Savior, Jesus Christ. If it is only read word for word without engagement, the booklet becomes an impersonal presentation of religious ideas and belief systems and does not address with any depth some of the key truths of the gospel.

With this in mind, it is important to understand key points to each of the four categories. Questions for engagement and understanding along with examples to clarify the truth are needed to make your communication of the gospel even more effective. Memorizing questions and examples will give you confidence and freedom to weigh if they are understanding the gospel message or not.

What follows are the Big Six Questions with examples and explanations for each question. These would be inserted into your presentation of the “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” booklet.

#### **QUESTION 1. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE SIN?**

This can be answered 100 different ways. In fact, there is no wrong answer. Anything that is not pleasing to God or goes against His Word is sin. Everyone will get the answer to this question because there are many ways to sin. They're telling you in their own words what sin is by giving you one example.

Sin is our innate desire to take the place of God, not just the actions we do. People were created to be in relationship with God and to bear His image. But we are not God, and we have failed to portray His image accurately in the world.

#### **QUESTION 2: HAVE YOU EVER SINNED?**

This question on the surface sounds too simple, but it is perhaps the most significant in the booklet. To clearly and honestly admit that one has sinned, shows one's need for forgiveness. God's requirement to get into heaven is perfection. Nobody is perfect, so somehow we all need to find forgiveness in God's eyes. They will be in a dilemma after they've answered this question. Humanly speaking, there's no way to work back to perfection.

#### **QUESTION 3: WHY DID CHRIST DIE ON THE CROSS?**

Don't answer this question for them, let them tell you first. The answer is found in the first five words of the next verse you'll read in 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 “Christ died for our sins ...” That's the gospel message, the good news. You'll come back to review this point again.

#### **QUESTION 4: WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS VERSE IS SAYING? (REFERRING TO EPHESIANS 2:8,9)**

This is the big clarifying question in the booklet. It allows you to see if they fully understand the first three points in the booklet. The answer is, “We are saved by placing our trust in Christ's death on the cross to pay for our sins (by grace, gift of God), not by works (not from ourselves).” Go back and review pages 4-5 of the booklet by simply asking: “What is it that separates us

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

from God?” The answer is sin. Look at “We Are Separated” in the booklet and ask: “Once again, why did Christ die on the cross?” The answer is, “to pay for our sin.” Ask: “Is there anything in our own power that we can do to get rid of our sin?” Answer: no.

In essence, what you’ve just done is reviewed the key points of the booklet again. This repetition is good and clarifies the gospel to them. They are telling you what the gospel is! Basically, you don’t have to memorize this extra dialogue, just memorize the Big Six Questions and then repeat them using your own words.

### **QUESTION 5: WHAT IS THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CIRCLE ON THE LEFT AND THE CIRCLE ON THE RIGHT?**

Again, always give the person the opportunity to answer first and think about it. The answer is, “where the cross is located.” In the circle on the left, Christ is outside the life. In the circle on the right, Christ is in the life. Ask: “If Christ is in someone’s life, what is one of the most important things that He’ll do for that person? Answer: He will forgive that person’s sins.

Ask: If Christ forgives someone’s sins, will anything then stand between (or separate) that person and God? Answer: No. Christ paid for everything.

Question five gives you a another opportunity to find out if they understand and can vocalize the gospel message as it is presented in the booklet.

### **QUESTION 6: WHAT IS THE MAIN THING THAT THIS PRAYER IS SAYING?**

Yes, this is the third opportunity to let them verbalize the message of the gospel. Answer: the third full line of the prayer, “I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord.”

Now you can re-ask the clarifying questions found under Questions Four and Five. By now they should know the message and will understand the commitment they’re making if they pray the prayer and decide to receive Christ.



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 01. GOSPEL

#### THE PASSAGE

In pre-Civil War America, thousands of African Americans escaped to freedom by way of the underground railroad, a secret network of relationships and safe houses. Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave herself, returned to conduct others to freedom 19 different times through this passage. Many of us today, while physically free, still experience various forms of bondage. There is still a need for spiritual and lasting freedom. This need exists because, in our search for freedom and personal fulfillment, we make choices that lead us away from, instead of toward a relationship with our creator, God. This resource will help you consider four principles that describe the passage to true freedom and a personal relationship with God.

#### 1: GOD'S DESIRE

God created you in His image. He wants you to know Him personally, so you may experience the love, peace and freedom He offers.

(References contained in this resource should be read in context from the Bible whenever possible.)

#### GOD'S DESIGN

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

#### GOD'S LOVE

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

#### GOD'S PLAN

"And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

**What prevents us from experiencing the life of love and freedom God desires for us?**

#### 2: OUR REFUSAL

People are sinful. Sin keeps us from knowing God personally and from experiencing His love, peace and freedom. Sin enslaves, blocks and separates us from God.

#### PEOPLE ARE SINFUL

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23).

Sin is our innate refusal to go God's way, and instead, we go our own way and do our own thing.

God is holy. That means He is perfect in who He is and all He does. Our sinful nature and actions offend God's holy nature and result in a broken relationship and separation from Him.

#### PEOPLE ARE ENSLAVED

"Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin'" (John 8:34).

#### PEOPLE ARE SEPARATED

"For the wages of sin is death ..." [spiritual separation from God and His life, Romans 6:23].

#### Wages = Penalty

People are sinful and separated from a holy God by a great gap. We may try to cross that gap by living a good life, not

**GOD**



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

harming anyone, attending church or other religious meetings, or by giving money to our favorite charities. All of these efforts fail because the sinful condition of the heart remains unchanged, enslaved to sin.

**The third principle explains the only way to cross this gap ...**

---

### 3:THE PASSAGE

Jesus Christ came to provide the passage back to God. Jesus Christ alone forgives and removes our sins so we can know God personally and experience His love, peace and freedom forever.

#### HE DIED ON THE CROSS IN OUR PLACE

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God ...” (1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus Christ was able to pay the penalty for our sins because He is free from sin. Even His enemies could not find Him guilty of any wrongdoing.

#### HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD

“Christ died for our sins ... He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures ... He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

Christ’s resurrection proved that He has the power over death to enable us to live eternally with God.

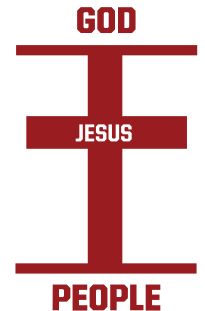
#### HE IS THE WAY TO GOD

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” (John 14:6).

#### HE SETS US FREE

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

This diagram shows that God has bridged the gap which separates us from Him. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins, in our place. In this way He paid the death penalty that we deserve.



**What would a person need to do in order to know God and experience the love and freedom from sin that He offers?**

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### 4:OUR RESPONSE

We must individually receive Jesus Christ, because only He provides the passage to God. Only then can we experience His love, and live in freedom for eternity.

#### YOU MUST RECEIVE CHRIST

“But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God,” (John 1:12).

#### WE RECEIVE CHRIST THROUGH FAITH

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

Faith = trust, dependence on God

#### WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST, WE EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE, FREEDOM AND ETERNAL LIFE.

[Jesus speaking] “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b).

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### TO RECEIVE CHRIST

Recognize and admit you need to be forgiven of your sins.

Admit you can do nothing on your own to free yourself from your sins.

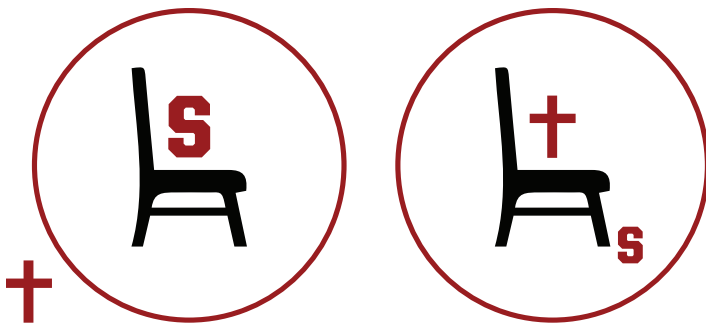
Turn away from your sins (repentance), and place your trust in Jesus Christ alone. When you can trust Christ, you receive His complete forgiveness and an eternal relationship with God.

Knowing intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not enough. Having an emotional experience will not free you to experience His love, peace and freedom.

**We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.**

### THINK ABOUT IT...

These two circles represent two kinds of lives or paths that people choose.



### SELF-DIRECTED LIFE

Christ is outside the life.

### CHRIST-DIRECTED LIFE

Christ is in the life. This person has received Christ and His forgiveness for his or her sins.

Which circle represents your life right now?

Which circle would you like to represent your life?

The following explains how you can change paths and receive Christ.

### YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST RIGHT NOW BY FAITH THROUGH PRAYER.

(Prayer is just talking with God)

God is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. You must mean what you pray, for God knows your heart and you cannot deceive Him.

Here is a suggested prayer:

Jesus Christ, I need You. I confess that I have been running my own life and have sinned against You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Please come into my life and forgive my sins and set me free. Begin directing my life. Make me into the person you created me to be. Thank You for answering my prayer by coming into my life and giving me eternal life. Amen.

**Does this prayer express your heart's desire?**

**If it does, pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life as He promised.**

### HOW TO KNOW ...

### HOW TO KNOW THAT CHRIST IS IN YOUR LIFE

Did you ask Christ to come into your life? How do you know He answered your prayer and came into your life? You can know that Christ is in your life because of the promise of 1 John 4:14,15:

“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

God and His Word are completely trustworthy.

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### THE BIBLE PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE TO ALL WHO RECEIVE CHRIST

“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. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13).

Thank God daily that Christ is in your life and He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you, and you have eternal life from the moment you invited Him in. He will not deceive you.

**What if you don't feel different?**

### DO NOT DEPEND ON FEELINGS

This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feelings (the result of our faith and obedience). Read John 14:21.



**The train will run with or without the caboose (feeling). In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions. We rely on the promises of God's Word, not our feelings. The Christian lives by faith in God and His Word.**

### ENJOYING GOD

The moment you received Christ by faith, as an act of your will, many things happened, including the following:

1. Christ came into your life (1 Corinthians 6:17; Colossians 1:27).

2. Christ set you free from your sins and forgave you (Romans 8:1,2; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1; Colossians 1:14).

3. You became a child of God (John 1:12).

4. God lavished His love on you (Romans 8:35-39; 1 John 3:1).

5. You received eternal life (John 5:24).

6. You began the new and satisfying life for which God created you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

**Being freed and loved by Christ is all good!**

**Would you like to thank God in prayer right now for what He has done for you?**

**By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.**

**To enjoy your new relationship with God to the fullest ...**

### SUGGESTION FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Our relationship with Christ grows as we trust God more and more with every details of our lives. “The righteous will live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). This trust develops as we:

**G** - Go to God in prayer daily (Colossians 4:2).

**R** - Read God's Word daily (Acts 17:11). Begin with the Gospel of John.

**O** - Obey God moment by moment (John 14:21).

**W** - Witness for Christ in your life and in speech (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).

**T** - Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).

**H** - Holy Spirit - He is in you now. Allow Him control and power over your daily life and witness (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:16,17).

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## **DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM**

### **GET INVOLVED IN A GOOD CHURCH**

God's Word admonishes us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together ..." (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42-47). Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside and its fire goes out. So it is with your relationship to other Christians. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be involved. Take the first step; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Start this week and make plans to attend regularly.



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 02. SPIRIT-FILLED

The next step to being an Equipped Disciple is learning about the Holy Spirit.

#### LEARN IT!

Complete the following primary resource to learn about the Holy Spirit! Then feel free to take a look at the supplemental resources to go deeper and learn more.

#### PRIMARY RESOURCE

Life Concept #3: Empowered

Life Concept #3: Empowered Leaders Guide

#### LIVE IT!

Now it is time to go out and share what you learned about the Holy Spirit with others. We encourage you to take the following challenge before moving onto the next section of this resource.

**Go through Life Concept #4: Equipped with one person.**

Life Concept #4: Equipped

Life Concept #4: Equipped Leaders Guide

It's always good to go to God's Word, the ultimate source. In addition to the resources listed, we have collected these Scripture passages on the Holy Spirit for you to use, study and share as God leads.

John 14:15-26

John 16:7-15

Galatians 5:16-25

Acts 1:8

Luke 14:25-33





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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

## 02. SPIRIT-FILLED

### LIFE CONCEPT #3: EMPOWERED

Suppose you did everything you could to imitate a world-class musician, a professional athlete, or another famous person. The level of frustration you would experience would be in direct proportion to the difference in ability between you and your hero. Jesus Christ is the only one who ever perfectly lived the Christian life. We are to imitate Him (Ephesians 5:1-2). How much difference is there between His ability and your ability to live the Christian life?

#### 01. COMPARING OUR STORIES

Because of our relationship with Christ, we have a genuine desire to live the Christian life. Yet we often find ourselves failing to do so. In fact, the Christian life often seems impossible to live.

MY EXPERIENCE . . .

YOUR EXPERIENCE . . .

Since receiving Christ, to what degree have you experienced frustration in your Christian life?

### STEPPING FROM BEING UNABLE TO EMPOWERED

#### 02. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

**WHAT** thoughts and emotions occur when you are unable to do something you want to do? Why?

**WHEN** we are frustrated with our inability to live the Christian life, we should consider four possible reasons:

We lack the necessary power or ability to live the Christian life.

We have the power and ability, but we don't know that we have it.

We know we have the power and ability, but we don't know how to use it.

We know how to use the power and ability, but we choose not to use it.

In what follows, we will discover the first reason isn't a possibility for a true believer, and we will begin to learn about the power we have been given and how we are to use it.

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-3:3** <sup>9</sup>However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" - <sup>10</sup>but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup>This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. <sup>14</sup>The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: <sup>16</sup>"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. <sup>3:1</sup>Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup>You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Read the passage again and take special notice each time the word Spirit is used.

### 03. EXPLORING THE SOLUTION

Paul is writing to a group of believers struggling to live consistent Christian lives. They have become divisive and even formed cliques, claiming to follow different leaders. In this section, Paul is discussing the power or ability needed to understand God's truth.

**WHO IS THE SPIRIT?** The Spirit works in many ways in the believer's life. What is one of His purposes according to 2:12?

Three spiritual conditions are described in this passage. Note how each spiritual condition influences the Spirit's ability to fulfill this purpose.

#### 1. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN 2:14?

How much spiritual truth does this person comprehend? Why?

#### 2. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN 2:15-16?

How much spiritual truth is this person able to comprehend? Why?

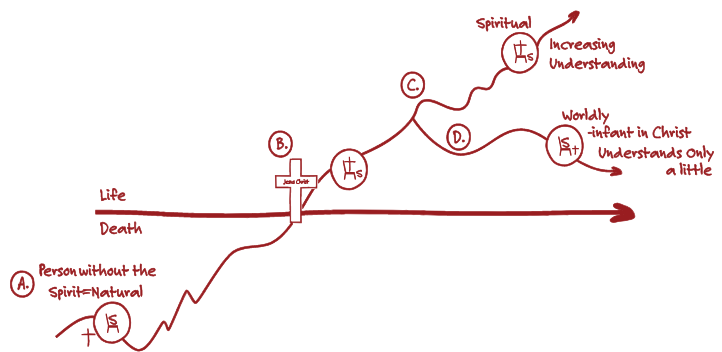
#### 3. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE IN 3:1-3?

How much spiritual truth are they able to comprehend? Why?

How would you summarize what Paul is saying about the Spirit and our spiritual condition?

### 04. EXAMINING THE SKETCH

THE ISSUE: WHAT IS GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?



- The lower circle represents my life before I received Christ. What was my spiritual condition? What was true of my ability to understand the things of God? Why?
- When I received Christ and He entered my life, I became spiritually alive and was given the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to every true believer. (John 7:37-39)
- God intends for me to continue growing in my relationship with Him, learning how to live the Christian life and relying on His Spirit to work within me to give me power and understanding. According to Galatians 5:22-23, what would be the result?
- But there is another possibility. I could fail to grow in my Christian life and never learn how to experience the power God has given me by His Spirit. What would my life be like then?

[It is important to note that there are individuals who may think they are Christians but who have made insincere decisions for Christ. The reason they fail to experience the Christian life or grow spiritually is that Christ is not in their lives.]

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### SUMMARY

When a person begins a relationship with Christ, it's important to grow in the experience of the Spirit in order to understand spiritual truth and have the power to live the Christian life. God's design is for us to be filled (that is, directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit as an ongoing experience.

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### 05. TAKING STEPS

Read Ephesians 5:18. What are we commanded to avoid? Why? What are we commanded to do?

The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life by which Christ lives His life in and through us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### WE ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT BY FAITH

Jesus pictured believers as coming to Him to drink from the living water, which is His Spirit (John 7:37-39). Are you thirsty?

**D - DESIRE** Do you desire to be filled (that is, directed and empowered) with the Spirit?

**R - REPENT** Are you turning from known sin and confessing it to God?

**Y - YIELD** Are you surrendering control of your life to Christ?

If so, pray in faith asking God to fill you with His Spirit as He commanded you to be. Thank Him that He will direct and empower your life as you continue to trust Him.



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 02. SPIRIT-FILLED

#### LIFE CONCEPT #3: EMPOWERED LEADER GUIDE

##### BIG IDEA

The new believer needs to understand the filling of the Holy Spirit to understand and experience the Christian life.

It might be a good idea to begin by reviewing the main concepts from the first two studies. This week the focus is the filling of the Holy Spirit. In this Life Concept, the new believer will learn it's impossible to live the Christian life in one's own strength. But God wants to give believers the power to do so. To start out your time together, share your story.

#### STEPPING FROM BEING UNPREPARED TO EQUIPPED

##### THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF THE TEMPLATE

The goal of your interaction is to effectively and relationally communicate key biblical concepts, and so each interaction contains the following elements: Comparing Our Stories; Considering Our Struggles; Exploring the Solution; Examining the Sketch; and Taking Steps.

##### COMPARING OUR STORIES

Share a story about your struggle in a time or season of spiritual weakness, including the emotions you experienced (such as anger, depression or frustration). Share enough about the struggle so the new believer can begin to identify with what you experienced. You want your story to convey how impossible it is to live the Christian life in your own strength. Keep it brief, no more than two minutes. Allow the person an opportunity to respond to your story.

##### CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

Today we want to explore a passage that will help us begin to understand the power and ability God has given us to live the Christian life. In fact, this idea is so important that the next Life Concept will explore it even further.

##### EXPLORING THE SOLUTION

Together read the whole passage aloud. Have the new believer circle the word Spirit each time it is used (nine instances). Explain that when a person reads the Bible, one of the clues to discovering what the author of a book meant to communicate is the "key words." In this passage, the key word is Spirit because it is repeated so often.

**WHO IS THE SPIRIT?** The Spirit is the Spirit of God (2:11). He is often referred to as the Holy Spirit in the Bible. The Bible speaks of God manifesting Himself in three distinct persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are already familiar with God, the heavenly Father who sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior and Lord. In the days ahead, we will learn more about the Spirit, who was given (by the Father and the Son) to be with us and enable us to live the Christian life.

##### THE SPIRIT WORKS IN MANY WAYS IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE. WHAT IS ONE OF HIS

**PURPOSES ACCORDING TO 2:12?** The Spirit enables us to understand what God has freely given us. Look back at verses 9-10. Do you have any idea of all that God has given you? It's exciting to learn about all He has given us.

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

**1. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN 2:14?** This verse describes the man without the Spirit. Many translations use the term natural man. Write this term in the space below the question. This is simply an ordinary person who doesn't know Christ and, thus, has never been given the gift of the Spirit.

**HOW MUCH SPIRITUAL TRUTH DOES THIS PERSON COMPREHEND? WHY?** None, because it is spiritually discerned or understood and only the Spirit gives that ability. This doesn't necessarily mean the person has no factual knowledge of spiritual truth. It means this person cannot truly understand and experience this truth.

**2. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN VERSES 15-16?** This person is called a spiritual man. Write this below the question. This is a man who has the Spirit of God and receives understanding from the Spirit.

**HOW MUCH SPIRITUAL TRUTH IS THIS PERSON ABLE TO COMPREHEND? WHY?** The passage says this person can discern all truth as a result of being given the mind of Christ. It doesn't mean such a person suddenly has complete knowledge of spiritual matters, but, through the Spirit, will grow in understanding over time.

**3. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE IN 3:1-3?** They are called worldly, mere infants in Christ. Write this below the question.

**HOW MUCH SPIRITUAL TRUTH ARE THEY ABLE TO COMPREHEND? WHY?** Only a little. They're just like babies who can only drink milk. Can you imagine feeding baby a T-bone steak, baked potatoes, salad and pie? Sounds good to me, but a baby could never eat all this food. Notice these believers were spiritual infants, not because they were young, but because they were worldly. What does that mean? They should have matured, but because of their lifestyle, the Spirit was unable to work freely in their lives. They were living "like mere men." They never grew up spiritually.

**HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARIZE WHAT PAUL IS SAYING ABOUT THE SPIRIT AND OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION?** Our ability to understand and experience the Christian life is a direct result of our experience of the Spirit in our lives.

### EXAMINING THE SKETCH

Walk your friend through the sketch to help in understanding these concepts.

#### THE ISSUE: WHAT IS GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

The line is a timeline. Let's say it represents your life. Above the line is spiritual life and below it is spiritual death.

**A. THE LOWER CIRCLE REPRESENTS MY LIFE BEFORE I RECEIVED CHRIST. WHAT WAS MY SPIRITUAL CONDITION? WHAT WAS TRUE OF MY ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE THINGS OF GOD? WHY?** Before I received Christ, I was a natural man, or a person without the Spirit of God within me. Since I had never received Christ as my Savior, I was really spiritually dead. I was unable to understand the things of God because I still did not have the Spirit to enable me to do so.

**B. WHEN I RECEIVED CHRIST AND HE ENTERED MY LIFE, I BECAME SPIRITUALLY ALIVE AND WAS GIVEN THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (JOHN 7:37-39). Read John 7:37-39. It is important to realize that resources needed to live the Christian life are not found in ourselves. Rather, they are found in God's Spirit. Therefore, the Christian life is a lifestyle of dependence. In myself, I am weak. In Him, I am strong. From there, my life could go in two possible directions.**

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**C. GOD INTENDS FOR ME TO CONTINUE GROWING IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, LEARNING HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND RELYING ON HIS SPIRIT TO WORK WITHIN ME TO GIVE ME POWER AND UNDERSTANDING.**

According to Galatians 5:22-23, what would be the result? Read Galatians 5:22-23. The Spirit will produce His fruit (love, joy, peace, etc.) in my life.

**D. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. I COULD FAIL TO GROW IN MY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND NEVER LEARN HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER GOD HAS GIVEN ME BY HIS SPIRIT. WHAT WOULD MY LIFE BE LIKE THEN? Though I had Christ in my life, I would be a mere infant, a worldly Christian. In some ways, my life wouldn't look much different than the lives of those who don't know Christ. After reading the summary, ask, "Does this make sense? Do you understand who the Spirit is and one way He helps us to live the Christian life?"**

### TAKING STEPS

So how do you help the new believer put this into practice? Discuss the following practical step that will help your friend experience the Spirit's work on a continual basis.

**READ EPHESIANS 5:18. WHAT ARE WE COMMANDED TO AVOID? WHY?**

What are we commanded to do? We are commanded to not be drunk with wine. The term debauchery communicates a lifestyle indulging in excessive physical pleasures that are wrong, wasteful and harmful to a person. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit means to let the Spirit of God direct and empower you. In contrast to alcohol in a drunken person, the Spirit becomes the primary influence in how you live. The result is the exact opposite of drunkenness. It is right (not wrong), worthwhile (not wasteful) and helpful (not harmful).

Read the explanation of the Spirit's filling and ask the three questions (DRY - Desire, Repent, Yield).

If your friend answered positively to the three "DRY" questions, suggest praying together to allow the Spirit to fill your lives. In your prayer, express your need for the Spirit's work to live the Christian life, ask Him to direct and empower you, and thank Him that He will do so as you rely on Him in faith.





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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 03. TESTIMONY

The next step to being an Equipped Disciple is knowing your story and how to share it.

#### LEARN IT!

Choose one of the following primary resources to learn to share your testimony. Then feel free to take a look at the supplemental resources to go deeper and learn more.

#### PRIMARY RESOURCE

How to Write Your Own Testimony

Telling Your Story

#### LIVE IT!

Now it is time to share your testimony with others. We encourage you to take the following challenge before moving onto the next section of this resource.

**Share your testimony with one other person.**

It's always good to go to God's Word, the ultimate source. In addition to the resources listed, we have collected these Scripture passages on sharing your testimony.

Acts 26:2-29

Acts 24:10-16; 24:24

Acts 21:37-22:21

John 4:39-42

John 9:24-34

Galatians 1:13-2:21

Titus 3:3-7



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 03. TESTIMONY

#### HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN TESTIMONY

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##### WHY ARE YOU QUALIFIED TO TESTIFY?

- A. In 1 Peter 3:15, the apostle Paul instructs us to always be ready “to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”
- B. Your personal testimony is one of the most effective means you have for making such a defense of your faith in Jesus Christ. There are times when an individual is not willing to sit down and go through a gospel tract or when doing so would be inappropriate. However, people are often more interested in knowing your story: how you came to put your faith in Christ and the difference that decision has made in your life.
- C. There are numerous examples of individuals sharing their testimony throughout the New Testament. Who is giving the following testimonies and who is listening to them?
1. John 4:39-42
  2. John 9:24-34
  3. Galatians 1:13-2:21
  4. Acts 21:40-22:21
  5. Acts 24:10-16; 24:24
- D. What are some situations where you might be able to share your personal testimony?

##### A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF A THREE-POINT TESTIMONY

The apostle Paul’s testimony serves as a good example. When he shared his story, he presented a logical and simple defense for the hope within him. Generally he spoke of his life before Christ, how

he came to know Christ, and his life since accepting Christ.

- A. Notice the outline in Acts 21:37-22:21:
1. Acts 22:1-5: Paul shares about his life before accepting Christ.
  2. Acts 22:6-11: Paul shares how he became a believer.
  3. Acts 22:12-22: Paul shares how his life changed after accepting Christ.
- B. Can you find a similar outline in Acts 26:2-29?

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##### HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN TESTIMONY

As shown above, your testimony can logically be divided into three parts: before accepting Christ, how you accepted Christ, and after accepting Christ.

- A. **Before:** This section covers what your life was like before you accepted Christ. The following questions may help you think through what you want to convey:
1. What were the unmet needs in your life? Some possibilities include: loneliness, lack of significance, lack of purpose, a sense of emptiness, fear of death, aimlessness, lack of peace, etc.
  2. How did you attempt to have these needs met? Some possibilities include: accomplishments, accumulation of wealth or things, drugs, alcohol, sex, finding fulfillment in work, education, athletics, etc.
  3. What is your ethnicity? What culture do you identify most with?
  4. During your life, how has your ethnicity and cultural context shaped your view of God, a relationship with God, and the church?

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**B. How:** This section describes the circumstances and events that caused you to consider Christ and the steps you took to become a Christian. Included in this section is a brief, but clear, presentation of the gospel.

**C. After:** This section explains the changes that have occurred in your life since receiving Christ. This should relate back to the specific issues you discussed in the “before” section.

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### IMPORTANT “DO’S AND DON’TS”

When writing and giving your personal testimony there are some basic “do’s and don’ts” which will make it more effective.

#### A. Do:

1. Keep your testimony concise. Three minutes is sufficient time to tell your story. (Read Paul’s testimonies out loud. You will notice that none of them are more than three minutes!)
2. Begin with an interesting attention-getting sentence.
3. Be realistic.
4. Be positive from start to finish.
5. Emphasize the difference that Christ has made in your life.
6. Consider using one Scripture verse in your testimony.

#### B. Don’t:

1. Use Christian terminology. For the most part, it will be meaningless to a non-Christian. For example, words like born-again, saved, etc.
2. Preach at people. Share your story with them.
3. Use negative statements about churches, specific denominations, other organizations or people.

4. Give the impression that the Christian life is without problems.

5. Be long-winded. Keep your testimony concise.

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### PRESENTING YOUR TESTIMONY

A. Remember, we are admonished to always be ready to give an account for the hope within us. Therefore, you should always be ready to share your testimony. The following suggestions will help you be prepared:

1. Memorize your testimony.
2. Rehearse your testimony until it becomes natural.
3. Practice your testimony with a friend.

B. When the opportunity arises to share your testimony, remember the following:

1. Share your testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to speak to the hearts of those listening.
2. Be relaxed. Smile.
3. Avoid nervous mannerisms.

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### GETTING STARTED

A. Print and use this worksheet to get your ideas on paper.

B. Write out your story.

C. Read this article “How to share your testimony.”

D. Look for opportunities to share your testimony with others.

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### HOW TO PREPARE AND COMMUNICATE YOUR TESTIMONY

As you begin your testimony consider:

A. The age of your audience.

B. The period of time right before your life really began to change.

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

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### BEFORE I ACCEPTED CHRIST (OR GAVE HIM COMPLETE CONTROL)

- A. What was my life like? How can I communicate this in a way that will relate to the non-Christian? [Don't focus on religious upbringing.]
- B. What did my life revolve around the most? From what did I get my security or happiness? The non-Christian is relying on something external to give him or her happiness.
- C. How did those areas begin to let me down?

---

### HOW I RECEIVED CHRIST (OR GAVE HIM COMPLETE CONTROL)

- A. When was the first time I heard the gospel? Or when was I exposed to the truth about Jesus?
- B. What were my initial responses?
- C. When did my attitude begin to turn around? Why?
- D. What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
- E. Why did I go ahead and accept Christ?

---

### AFTER I ACCEPTED CHRIST (OR GAVE HIM COMPLETE CONTROL)

- A. What are the specific changes Christ has made in my life?
- B. How am I motivated differently?

Helpful Hints:

- A. Write the way you speak - make the testimony yours.
- B. Practice this over and over until it becomes natural.
- C. Limit your time to between three and five minutes.
- D. Choose a theme.



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 03. TESTIMONY

#### TELLING YOUR STORY

“For in my tradition, as a Jew, I believe that whatever we receive we must share. When we endure an experience, the experience cannot stay with me alone. It must be opened, it must become an offering, it must be deepened and given and shared.”

- Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and author

Before and during the Olympics, we are often captivated by such personal interest stories about unique athletes. We are drawn in by their family backgrounds, their circumstances and decisions that allowed them to be high-level athletes. It places their sport experiences into a real-life dramas.

Story-telling is a predominate method of communication around the world, simply because people relate to stories. When the story is delivered well, people tend to judge it as authentic and believe it.

Your Christian testimony is just that — an authentic story of the circumstances, views, people and decisions surrounding your response to God’s work in your life. **The goal of this lesson is to learn how to effectively communicate how God has changed and continues to change your life.**

#### ENGAGE

Your testimony is living proof that God has and continues to work in your life. Whether you came to Christ when you were young or not until recently, God has given you a life story to encourage your own faith and the faith of others. Pick one word to describe your life before knowing Christ and one word to describe your life after trusting Him. Share your answers with someone.

Using the questions below, write down the thoughts that come to your mind when you consider your own spiritual journey. If you are in a group, it can be helpful to share your thoughts out loud with another person.

**What were you like before knowing God? How did you think about God, yourself, others? What were some of your “appetites” that you attempted to fulfill?**

**What did God do to open your heart to Him? What people and events have significantly affected your life, positively and negatively? What was it about God that attracted you? When did the gospel message start to make sense?**

**After trusting Christ for forgiveness and freedom, how did your “appetites” begin to change? Do you have different values, priorities or relationships?**

**What does it mean for you to walk with God today? How does He intersect your everyday activities?**

**Do you see a theme that might summarize your journey or thoughts?**

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#### EXPLORE

- Read the apostle Paul’s testimony in Acts 25:23-26:32.
- Describe the setting in which Paul finds himself in 25:23-27. How would you feel if you were in a similar situation?
  - What is Paul's attitude in 26:2? Why is this significant as you prepare to share your story with others?
  - In 26:4-11, record what you learn about Paul's past. How does he transition to his new life in Christ?
  - What are the elements of the gospel proclaimed in 26:22-23?

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E. After Festus accused Paul of being “crazy,” how did Paul demonstrate his confidence in the gospel and his new life (26:27-29)?

F. In general, what are the different responses to Paul’s testimony in 26:25-32?

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### EXAMPLE

Everyone’s spiritual journey looks different — we come to Christ from many different directions and in many different ways. However our stories unfold, whatever our theological understanding of what happened in our lives, we should strive to clearly communicate the elements of the gospel to people so that they understand how to trust Christ with their lives.

The gospel story involves an awareness of sin, God’s initiation toward us, a moment of surrender, and continued growth along the way. While we may all use different language to describe these parts and how we came to understand them, we need to help others understand the core of the gospel as clearly as possible. Each interaction with another human being is unique and may draw out different aspects of our spiritual story, but as God leads and circumstances allow, we want to make clear why a person needs Christ, how a person trusts Christ, and what it looks like to walk with Christ.

Read the following sample testimonies and identify where you see the ideas of sin, forgiveness, acceptance, and other aspects of the gospel. What drew you into their stories?

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### CRYSTAL’S TESTIMONY

I call myself a builder. Throughout my life I built many walls behind which I sought refuge. I had heard about God and Jesus, but experienced hypocrisy in

the church early on, causing me to believe it was a place where bad things happened. As a result I built a protective wall to keep people away from me. I saw God as someone who was supposed to be a good guy that I should pray to and hope He would answer in my favor, but did not seek to know Him personally. Growing up people called me “Tuff,” and I was being tough! My brother said I had to be stoic and strong to make it. We never shared hugs, emotions or “I love you”. I became a really good athlete that everyone saw as tough and emotionless. I was the MVP of whatever I played. No one knew about the wall I had built and why I disliked God and the church. I continued to orchestrate my life how I wanted and shut people out except my dad and brother.

My dad, who I was very close with, passed away from heart failure my senior year of high school. Immediately, I built another wall bigger than the first one. I questioned the existence and character of God. If there is a God, and He is supposed to be good, then why did He take my dad away at the age of 49? No one could tell me anything about Christianity at this point in my life. The very next year when I was a freshman in college, my brother, whom I also thought the world of, went to jail. As you can imagine, I built another wall to completely shield myself from the outside world. I talked to no one, and the comfort I had found in sports was no longer enough to make me happy. I knew I needed something bigger than competition. Though I had tried to mask my hurts with sports, people, video games and clubs, they did not fulfill me any longer. In my dorm room one night I fell to my knees and asked Jesus to come in and take over, breaking down all the walls I had built between us. Out of desperation, I told Him I could not live this way and go through life on my own any longer. I cried out for His help.



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Since then things have not been easy. But the difference is that I no longer build walls and shut people out of my life in order to protect myself. I have learned that Jesus is who He says He is: my protector and my comforter. Now when times are tough and I am faced with challenging situations, I trust that He has it all in control. I no longer try to protect myself from those things or worry when I pray. I trust Him to meet my needs, rather than relying on my self-effort.

With God as my protector, I live more freely and have less anxiety about the future. I feel different and worry-free when I trust and believe that God will take care of me. I lean on Him every day because He is my strength, and there is nothing He cannot do!

As I begin a pro basketball career overseas, I am reminded that I now play for an audience of One. I want to stay focused on my real purpose: to glorify God. I need Him to keep my sanity, because I am a long way from my family, friends and fiancé. Three things help me focus on God in the midst of competing: Praying for my performance on and off the court to glorify Him, that the basketball court will serve as a place I can worship through my talents, and praising God for helping me to play to the best of my ability. These reminders help me focus my heart and efforts on the fact that God is my audience — whether I am playing basketball or living life.

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### LORENZO ROMAR'S TESTIMONY

Points. That's all I cared about growing up — putting points on the scoreboard and earning points with God. Obeying my parents, that was good for two. Helping a friend, field goal. Going to church, slam dunk. My obsession with scoring points continued into the NBA. Lacking exceptional ability, I had to work twice

as hard as everyone else. But I didn't care; I was just happy to be there!

One day in the midst of this striving, I sat down with the Bible — a rare moment. Four hours later, I read a passage that startled me. It said that no matter how good I tried to be — no matter how many points I tried to score with God, His standard would always be out of reach. In that moment, I wanted to give up. If my best wasn't good enough for God, what was?

As I continued reading, my dejection turned to excitement. I learned that God knew I wasn't good enough, so He sent Jesus to die in my place. I didn't have to do anything to win God over. Jesus had taken care of that. All I had to do was believe.

Oddly enough, my life became harder, not easier, after I became a Christian. But I'm thankful to know that whether I experience failure or success, God always has my back. Furthermore, my win/loss record has zero bearing on my status with Him. God loves me for who I am, not what I do. And He loves you just the same.

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### EXPERIENCE

Do you find it hard to jump from general conversation to more meaningful, spiritual conversation? Most people find this hurdle too large to leap. However, if you become familiar with the S.H.A.R.E. acrostic below, you will not only express interest in the person with whom you are communicating, but also provide initiative and direction for the conversation.

Practice using the following acrostic S.H.A.R.E. as you interact with people. This acrostic is a useful way to move from initial conversation to more meaningful topics.

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- S** Secular ... talk about events/people, what's going on in community, world, etc.
- H** Home life ... ask where they are from, parents, siblings, etc.
- A** Attitudes ... see what they think or feel about something in the news or personal.
- R** Religious background ... worship or church, celebrations, traditions, etc.
- E** Experience with God ... spiritual experiences, retreats, enlightenment, etc.

Practice good communication skills using the S.H.A.R.E. acrostic on a daily basis.

Look for opportunities in conversations to share all or part of your testimony.

Ask the person you are talking with to share their journey. Listen as they share.

Memorize Acts 20:24.

---

### EXCEL

“The people who know their God will display strength and take action (Daniel 11:32 NASB).” Commit yourself to act on what God is prompting you to do.

#### PRAYER:

Thank God for who He is, and then bring your requests to Him.

Thank you that I can call you Abba, Father. You have shown me grace and have changed my life forever. Because of Your work in my life, I can now testify to others of Your great love and mercy. Please help me to be a positive witness in my own Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and everywhere You take me in this world. May Your light shine in my competition, my work place, my home, among my family and friends, and may the words You give me be kind, gracious, and seasoned with salt. Lord, like Paul, I desire to testify to the gospel of the grace of God through the leading and power of the Holy Spirit.

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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 04.DISCIPLE

The final step to being an Equipped Disciple is being challenged to disciple others.

#### LEARN IT!

Walk through both of the primary resources to learn about the call and command to disciple others. Then feel free to take a look at the supplemental resources to go deeper and learn more.

#### PRIMARY RESOURCE

How to Lead a Discipleship Group  
Invitation and Challenge

#### LIVE IT!

We suggest the following ministry approach as you move into discipling others and leave you with this final challenge.

**Suggested Ministry Training Approach/Philosophy:**

I lead, you watch

I lead, you help

You lead, I help

You lead, I watch

**Lead a section of your weekly group meeting. If you are not in a group, assist your mentor in a discipleship appointment with another individual.**

It's always good to go to God's Word, the ultimate source. In addition to the resources listed, we have collected these Scripture passages on discipleship for you to use, study and share as God leads.

Matthew 28:18-20

2 Timothy 2:2

Matthew 4:19

John 15:18-20

Luke 14:25-33



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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 04. DISCIPLE

#### HOW TO LEAD A DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

##### INTRO

A. The **AIM**: The purpose of a discipleship group is twofold:

1. To **know God**. We are not just to know about God, but we are to really know God. There are a lot of opinions on who God is. We have to know God as He says He is, not just who we “think” He is or “want” Him to be or even who He is rumored to be in our culture. We need to know God as He says He is in His Word, and how He wants to interact with us.
2. To create an environment for disciples to process and learn how Christ wants them to **be (character)** and what He wants them to **do (competency)**.

B. It is helpful to know some basic techniques for leading and facilitating a group; but the **most important** thing you can be doing now is **praying for your discipleship group** — for chemistry, for surrender, for God to be known. Be praying every week. Before your group meets, get there early, and pray for three to five minutes for the time together. This is the secret to leading a vibrant, fruitful discipleship group! You will have the best discussions if you pray!

1. **This is God’s work**. These are God’s people. He knows what He’s doing in each individual life, we don’t. We just get to be faithful in our roles that He has allowed us to have. So to be in prayer, **asking God for His help and for His wisdom and discernment, is the most effective way you can help and shepherd your discipleship group**. And it’s how you will see the most spiritual fruit!

##### FILLING YOUR TOOLBOX

*What are some things to have in my “toolbox” to be prepared to lead my discipleship group?*

##### 1. Invite and Challenge

- a. Effective leadership is based upon an **invitation** to relationship and a **challenge** to change. Create a culture where there’s an appropriate mix of invitation and challenge. Draw disciples closer, love them (invitation), but also give them the opportunity to accept the responsibilities of discipleship (challenge).

##### 2. Lead with Vision

- a. Regularly communicate the mission and vision.

##### 3. Know How to Ask Questions

- a. By asking good questions, you make a couple things happen.
  01. You help them to build confidence in knowing God and speaking about Him.
  02. You provide an environment for self-discovery. **Self-discovery** sticks; you remember what you share.
- b. What about when you ask a good question and it’s silent? What could be going on in your group?
  01. They could be processing the question.
  02. They could be processing what God is teaching them and how to articulate that.
  03. Be disciplined, and fight the urge to answer the questions for your group.

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c. What happens when you wait for 15 seconds and then share your own experience to answer the question?

01. It might stop the internal processing and what God is teaching them.
02. It might limit others in their sharing.
03. You are giving “the answer,” so why should they share? They may then feel that their answers aren’t as good as yours.
04. Sometimes it is helpful to jump in and share your experience. It is okay to share once or twice in your group meetings.
05. If the question seems hard to answer, before sharing your answer, try rewording the question to spur thoughts and sharing.
06. Awkward silence is only awkward for you.

#### 4. Create an Environment

- a. Create an environment that is a safe place to be honest, but one of accountability, learning, encouragement and challenge
- b. Be authentic and appropriately open, vulnerable, transparent and real to allow others to do so.

#### 5. Be a Good Listener

- a. Group leaders are good facilitators of discussion.
- b. What makes you feel heard or that someone has listened intently to you?
  01. Eye contact (not looking around at other people walking by, looking down at phone when it buzzes)
  02. Nodding along

03. Giving a response after someone shares (For example, “**Thank you, Jake,**” or “That is a helpful reminder that God’s love is unconditional. **Thanks for sharing that!**”)
04. Use eye contact, and say their name
05. Celebrate their responses! Use enthusiasm!

#### 6. Know When to Defer or Move On (Remember your AIM. Don’t have a discussion where it is not needed.)

- a. A question comes up; how do you know if you should answer it?
  01. Is it something that would benefit the whole group?
  02. Does time allow for it, or would it distract from the bigger picture?
  03. **Is it central to understanding the gospel?**
- b. How about when something is said in the group that is totally wrong — they are sharing or answering a question that totally misses the point. When do you, as the group leader, correct it and how?
  01. **Is it central to understanding the gospel? If yes, correct it.**
  02. Identify a “go-to person,” and ask if he or she agrees. Or ask, “Mary, how would you answer that?”
- c. If it’s a rabbit trail and not central to the gospel and doesn’t benefit the group to talk about, what could you say to move on?
  01. “That’s an interesting question, Matt. In light of time, let’s see if we have time to come back to that.” Or, “Let’s talk about that more afterward.”

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d. A question comes up that you don't know the answer to; what do I do?

01. Don't feel pressure to give the right answer or make one up just because you are the group leader.
02. Be willing to admit you don't know the answer. "That's a great question, I don't know. I'll look into it. You can do the same, and let's talk more at another time."
03. Point them back to **God's Word** and the **character of God**. "I don't know the answer to your question, but I know this to be true about God because His Word says so."

### 7. Watch for Things to Address One-on-One

- a. Listen for bits of their stories or misunderstandings they express in the group that need to be individually followed up with the salvation message or truth from the Word. It is good to get back with individuals if something was confusing in the group.

### 8. Be Intentional with Those in Your Group

They are your flock!

### 9. Maintain Confidentiality

- a. When it is appropriate to break confidentiality: self-harm, abuse, or anything you feel is "over your head" to address.
- b. Find a spiritual mentor or local pastor to address the issue. If a mentor or pastor is not available, feel free to contact the AIA Coaching Center for help.

### 10. Encourage Interaction

- a. There may be some in your group who are very comfortable talking about what they are learning about God. Others you may need to draw out initially, and help them build confidence in speaking about God. The facilitator keeps the time and pace and should encourage interaction from all group members. Kindly call on the quieter individuals to help keep everyone alert and involved. ("Jordan, I would love to hear your thoughts on this.")





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## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

### 04. DISCIPLE

#### INVITATION AND CHALLENGE TO DISCIPLE

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##### PRAY

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##### SOCIAL SPACE

A. Get to know each other. (You can use “Soularium™,” life updates, highlights and lowlights from the past week, etc.)

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##### CALIBRATION

A. Why are we here tonight? What are we all about? What’s the purpose?

1. The gospel: It’s all about Jesus. We are not considering what we can do for Him, but we are looking at what He has done for us.

2. Discipleship

a. What do you think the word “disciple” means? (Answer: learner, apprentice)

01. Scripture leads us to become lifelong learners of Jesus

b. What are discipleship groups?

01. A small group of men or women who want to be learners together

02. **Language creates culture:** this is a **discipleship group** - more serious and intimate than a **Bible study**

03. This group will be both organized (our meeting time) and organic (life on life)

B. Jesus model

1. Where did this plan of discipleship groups come from? (Answer: It’s the Jesus model for ministry)

a. In less than years time, Jesus disciplined a group of unlikely men and taught them to **DO** and **BE** like Him in a way that, when released in the power of the Holy Spirit, they would go on to change the course of human history forever. Jesus created a discipleship culture where there was an appropriate mix of **invitation** and **challenge** in the way they related to Him. He drew His disciples close and loved them, but also gave them the opportunity to accept the responsibilities of discipleship.

b. Jesus’ model of discipleship was life on life, but not everyone got equal access to Him. He chose a team of 12 men, but within that team He offered a deeper level of intimacy to Peter, James, and John.

c. Jesus calls every disciple to disciple others. (Matthew 28:18-20)

C. Practically, I want this group to be a place where you grow to become more like Christ and grow in your relationship with Him, with the **end goal** and **expectation** that one day you might lead a group like this. **In short, I want to help you become a disciple of Jesus, who makes disciples who makes disciples!**

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#### INVITATION AND CHALLENGE

##### A. Invitation

1. I am inviting you into a relationship where you have unique **access** to my life. I want to invite you to be a part of a community that seeks to grow in our walk with Jesus together. I want to pass along what I have been taught, and my hope is that you would join me in this awesome faith journey as we grow together as a group this semester.

# EQUIPPED

## DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

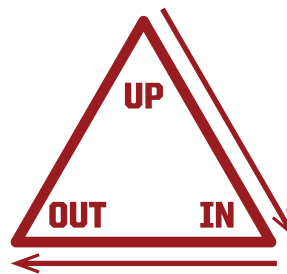
2. I will commit to giving you the best hours of my week to help you grow in the most important relationship of your life, your life with Christ. You will get my best time, energy, and planning to make the group worthwhile for you.
  3. **The invitation** for you this year is to enter this relationship with me, grow spiritually and be equipped to eventually lead others. It doesn't get much better than doing this with a small group of men/women.
- a. You will get out of this group what you put into it, and It will be most fun and beneficial if we are all here every week.
  - b. This can't be your only time in the Word and time in prayer all week. We will help you learn how to read the Bible for yourself and how to spend time with God each day.

### B. Challenge

1. We all have limited time and a long list of things needing our attention. **The reality is that you are sitting here because the God of the Universe is pursuing YOU.** Growing in your relationship with Him is the most effective use of your time. Learning how to model your life after the most influential man to ever live, Jesus, is worth your time and commitment.
2. I would love to work with you, but I don't want to assume that you all are in for discipleship group this year. There are a lot of places you can get plugged in to grow, this is one of them. After tonight, if you don't want to be a part of this group anymore, give me a call or text. If I don't hear from you, I will plan on seeing you at our first group next week.
3. If you are in, we are asking for you to consider this commitment a **top priority** after your classes and your sport. Don't miss this, don't schedule your tutor or study group or bail out because you didn't get your homework done in time. If we have given you an assignment, have it done before the group. I am going to be intentional in our time and will use it wisely, so please come prepared and ready to learn.

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### TRIANGLE



- A. Our group will focus on three key components of discipleship that Jesus modeled during His time on earth.
1. **UP:** growing in your relationship with God
  2. **IN:** growing in our relationships with each other
  3. **OUT:** growing in Christ-like character and reaching out to others

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### QUESTIONS

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### PRAY

# EQUIPPED

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

The Evangelism Model

Hurdle on Engaging Others

The Bridge (Navigators)

Basic Follow Up #3 "Your New Life in the Spirit"

Hurdle on the Holy Spirit (AIA)

Satisfied?

The Spirit-Filled Life

Theological Perspective on the Holy Spirit

Spiritual Breathing

Preparing Your Personal Testimony

2 Timothy 2:2 diagram

The Compass, A Tool for Disciplers



CRU PRESS

GREEN



# EVANGELISM DESIGN

A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK



## **Evangelism Design: A Comprehensive Framework for Missional Leaders** By Keith Davy

There is a heartbeat to evangelism. You hear it as you draw near to God. The veins of gospel outreach pulsate with the love of God. Love compelled the Father to send his beloved Son into this broken world to rescue fallen humanity (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9). In love's greatest display, Jesus laid down his life, dying upon a cross for the sins of the world (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16). Love issued the command that sent the disciples into the world as gospel-bearers and ambassadors of the King. True evangelism flows from the love of God.

But if there is a heartbeat to evangelism, there is also a design. The all-knowing, all-wise Creator God didn't leave this glorious enterprise for feeble men to figure out. Like a master designer, he provided the framework for his church throughout the ages and the nations to build upon—doctrines to instruct, commands to obey, principles to guide and examples to follow.

When one recognizes God as the ultimate source, it becomes clear that a discussion of evangelism isn't a mere discourse on ministry philosophy or effective

methodology. Rather it is engaging in a matter of supreme importance to God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. In like manner, it should be of highest priority to ministry leaders and laborers in the 21st century.

## THE EVANGELISM MODEL

Too often what is written, taught or discussed about evangelism misses the mark. It isn't that what is said is wrong; rather it is narrow. Biblical bases can be shallow, proof-texting one's position and practices. Unhelpful dichotomies are employed to make a case for one's own preference and style over another. Narrow aspects of the mission are over-emphasized leaving other important elements neglected. The fruitfulness of our efforts suffer as a result.

To address these issues, the U.S. Campus Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ has developed and employed the Evangelism Model. This model is deeply rooted in biblical studies on evangelism, yet has also been shaped by the realities of actual evangelistic ministry. It provides a framework that enables leaders to think well about evangelism—to understand its foundations and dynamics, to plan strategically, to evaluate effectiveness, to troubleshoot issues, and to innovate new solutions.

To think well about evangelism, we must begin by thinking **biblically**. Ministry philosophy moves from the biblical to the practical, from what is true to what works, and not in reverse. Theology and biblical principles provide the foundation upon which a sound ministry philosophy must be built. (See *The Evangelism Model: The Biblical Framework* below. For an inductive study utilizing the Evangelism Model's framework, see *Getting Biblical About Evangelism*, CruPress, 2004.)



If we think biblically, we will also think **comprehensively**. “All” and “every” are common in the language of the Bible, quantifying the evangelistic mission. This comprehensive scope provides an essential context, protecting us from a narrowness that limits our strategy and hampers our effectiveness. To reach a campus, community or country with the gospel requires comprehensive thinking and multi-faceted engagement.

But our thinking must also be **principle-based**. It has been said, “Methods are many, principles are few. Methods always change, principles never do.” Specific methods and approaches are limited in application, but biblical principles are applicable anytime and anywhere. The principles remain constant, but the application is contextualized, adapting to the setting or need. This has made the Evangelism Model useful in diverse settings, culturally and globally.

Finally, leaders must think **practically**. We must translate our thinking into effective outreach ministry and missional activity. The wisdom of leadership is to discern the best means to the best ends. Ultimately, only God knows both. But to the degree to which the Evangelism Model helps us think biblically, it aligns our ministries and efforts with the very work that God is already doing in the world around us.

## THE CHANGING FACE OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism is always changing, yet always remains the same. That may sound like a paradox, but it isn't. In fact, it is a key in understanding and leading evangelism—any time and any place, in any culture and with any generation. To unleash the power of the gospel with relevance, we must differentiate between what never changes and what is always changing.

Consider the divine drama of salvation. Evangelism always involves the interaction of three principal actors:

- **God—the Master**

Evangelism always begins with God. It is ultimately the work of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- **The Audience—the Masses**

God is at all times and in all places seeking the lost—the people of this world, alienated from his life and suffering the consequences of their sin. They are the context that shapes the form of evangelism.

- **Believers—the Messengers**

God chooses to send believers as his messengers to the world—ambassadors authorized by his command, empowered by his Spirit and constrained by his love. They are the primary initiators in evangelism.

There are two additional elements always involved:

- **The Gospel—the Message**

God has entrusted the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ—to his messengers to deliver to the intended audience. It is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).

- **The Communication—the Methods**

There is always an approach employed to communicate the gospel. The methods are contextualized, varying according to audience and the situation.

These five elements provide the framework of the **Evangelism Model**.

Now consider what never changes among these five. Certainly God doesn't change, nor does the gospel. Neither does the fundamental need of the masses for salvation, nor the calling and mission of the messengers.

But what does change? The masses change, at least in respect to their culture and felt-needs. Therefore, the messengers must also change, adapting to the culture and differences in setting, lest they become irrelevant and ineffective. The methods must also change according to the context or they will fail to communicate effectively.

Leading evangelism effectively involves understanding these five elements and the biblical principles that undergird their interaction. Effective leaders align to the unchanging elements and adapt the rest as needed.

## THE MASTER

Evangelism is, first and foremost, a work of God. He is the Master of evangelism, the Lord of the Harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). Evangelism begins and ends with him. Our English word *master* has two meanings. It can speak of one who has authority over another or it can identify an artist of consummate skill. Both definitions apply to God with regard to evangelism.



As Lord of the Harvest, God sends workers into his harvest field. They engage in their Master's work under his authority and according to his command. But God is also a Master artist who, with consummate skill, orchestrates each evangelistic encounter according to his plan and purposes. The unique testimonies of believers illustrate how brilliantly God's Spirit weaves together the circumstances and relational connections in life, along with the power of the gospel, to bring individuals to faith in Christ. First and foremost, from beginning to end, evangelism is a work of God.

But what happens when we lose our God-centeredness in evangelism? What symptoms appear when we shift our focus from the Master and his work? The list is long. We begin to feel pressure to witness. Legalism sets in—evangelism becomes a thing that we have to do to. It can become stressful. We often lose our desire to witness. People can become projects, objects that we are doing something to rather than people that we love. We may manipulate to get results. We feel like a failure when we don't see results and proud when we do. We judge others who are not involved in witness. We grow frustrated with ourselves or with others. We lose effectiveness and spiritual power. Competition, comparison, and performance set it. And the list goes on.

But if these are symptoms of a lack of God-centeredness in evangelism, then the cure follows. Re-center on God! If the root of the problem is a loss of focus on God, then the solution has to begin with re-focusing on his role. Like the hub of a wheel, all evangelism should revolve around God and draw its power from him. It is the task of the leader to ensure that it does. But how?

There are four biblical truths that Jesus modeled and taught that connect our efforts to his work. They can be summarized as:

- Christ's Purpose: The Glory of God
- Christ's Passion: His Love for the Lost
- Christ's Plan: The Great Commission
- Christ's Power: The Holy Spirit

To ensure that our witness is truly Christ-centered, we must weave these truths into the fabric of our lives and those that we lead.

## CHRIST'S PURPOSE: THE GLORY OF GOD

What is the ultimate aim of evangelism? It is the same as God's purpose in all of his works. It is his glory. On his last night with his disciples, just hours before his arrest and death on the cross, Jesus prayed. The prayer, recorded for us in John 17, unveils a window into our Lord's soul. In it, he expresses to the Father the desire for what was most important to him—glory. God's glory is laced throughout the prayer (17:1, 4, 5, 10, 22, 24). As he prays about his own life and ministry, as he prays for the disciples and their witness, and as he prays for us who would believe through it, it is all about the glory of God. The ultimate aim of evangelism is the glory of God.

But what is the glory of God? In theological terms, the glory of God is the manifestation of the divine excellencies. Or, in more common terms, it is God in all of his greatness on display. Of course, God is great in all that he is, all that he has, and all that he does. When that is on display, we see the glory of God. So to glorify God is to reveal him or make Him known. That is exactly what true evangelism does. Every time you share the gospel you reveal the glory of God. The gospel reveals his great and excellent attributes—his love, his righteousness, his holiness, his justice, his wrath, his mercy, his grace, his power, his wisdom. The gospel reveals his glorious act of salvation in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So every time you share the gospel you glorify God, whether anyone responds or not, because you are revealing the greatness of God through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

But this glorious display extends beyond initial proclamation. The work of salvation in the life of everyone who receives Christ through faith displays God's greatness. All the angels of heaven rejoice each time someone turns back in repentance (Luke 15:7, 10). What is more, the changed life of the new believer reflects the image of God displaying his glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Those individuals, who worship God now and in eternity, glorify him by declaring his praise (Romans 15:5-12). All this is the fruit of evangelism.

So evangelism glorifies God, displaying his greatness. When you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and you want him to be glorified above all else, then evangelism will grip your heart, for it is all about his glory! Leaders of evangelism ministries must inspire a desire among their people for the glory of God.



## CHRIST'S PASSION: HIS LOVE FOR THE LOST

Compassion is true love focused on real need. It is always found at the intersection of love and need. Both must be present for compassion to be experienced. People can be exposed to real need, but if they lack love they will not express compassion. On the other hand, one can love, but if there is no evident need then there is no reason for compassion. Compassion is true love's response to genuine need.

When Jesus saw the multitudes, he saw their need—"they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). So he had compassion on them. But compassion is never passive; it is not mere pity. In the gospel records, every time that Jesus had compassion, he moved into action to meet the need. When he saw the blind and had compassion, he restored their sight (Matthew 20:34). When he saw the leper and was filled with compassion, he reached out, touched the man and healed him (Mark 1:41). When he saw a widow whose only son had died, he had compassion on her and raised her son from the dead (Luke 7:13). When he saw the hungry and had compassion, He fed them (Mark 8:1-8). So it is not surprising that when Jesus saw multitudes in their lost condition, that he had compassion upon them and set into action to meet the need. First, he enlisted his disciples to pray fervently for laborers to be sent into the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38) and then he sent them out to be the answer to their prayers (Matthew 10). Compassion spurs action. It did with the Master; it will with his followers.

Thus it is love that compels witness—a love for God and a love for others. Those who love God want to make him known and glorify him. Those who love people want to help them to know God, who meets their greatest need. The greatest thing we can do for another is to help them come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is also the most loving thing.

## CHRIST'S PLAN: THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Great Commission begins with the words of Jesus, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:18-19). Understanding "all authority" has a transforming influence on the messengers—it makes the witness unstoppable. It was true for the early believers and it will be true for us, as well.

In the book of Acts, when the authorities in Jerusalem were alarmed by the spread of the gospel, they brought in Peter and John for questioning (Acts 4:7). First, they commanded them to stop speaking and teaching in Jesus' name (4:18). When that failed to deter their witness (4:31), they arrested them (5:18), not once but twice (5:27), and had them beaten (5:40). The effect? The apostles continued to witness day after day. Luke writes, "they never stopped" (5:42). Why? In their own words, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (4:20), and again, "We must obey God rather than men!" (5:29). They understood Christ's authority.

There was one way the authorities could stop their witness. They could kill them, and they did. First it was Stephen (Acts 7:57-60); then it was James (Acts 12:2). They were followed by countless unnamed believers who gave their life in witness to Christ. It became so common for witnesses to lose their life for their faith that over time the Greek word for witness (*martus*) would take on meaning of martyr. That, of course, is how we use the word in English. If we, and those we lead, truly understood and aligned ourselves to the authority and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, we too would become unstoppable in our witness, except by death.

## CHRIST'S POWER: THE HOLY SPIRIT

An unstoppable witness requires more than human strength or fortitude to be faithful and effective. Fruitful witness requires power, the inner power of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 4:29, the disciples prayed in the face of persecution for the Lord to "enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness." Their prayer was answered when "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (4:31). It was as Jesus promised, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Like any of us, the Apostle Paul knew what it was like to witness in "weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3). But he also knew that it wasn't his words that would make the difference. It was the "demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (2:5). God-centered evangelism draws its power from God's Spirit.

So how do you align your heart and the hearts of those you lead with Christ's purpose, passion, plan





and power? The key is through prayer and God's word. Take time to pray through each of these four foundational truths, meditating on key passages and asking God to make them real in your life. Lead your ministry in seasons of prayer focused on evangelism and the lost. Don't assume prayer is happening; it probably isn't (or isn't enough). Word-filled prayer has the power to align our hearts with God's heart and obtain from him the answers that he has promised and delights to give.

#### Reflection or Discussion Questions:

- What symptoms in your life and witness suggest your evangelism is not fully God-centered? What symptoms are evident in those you lead?
- What has been most helpful for you in keeping God at the center of your evangelism?
- Brainstorm ways to impart these principles in your ministry. Which of these tactics would be most strategic and effective at this time?

## THE MASSES

Like Bible study, evangelism is best done in context. As a single verse needs to be understood in the context in which it is written, so an individual is best understood in the context in which he lives. Understanding your audience matters. It makes a difference who they are, what they believe, what they need, and how God has worked in their life. Most important is their awareness of the gospel and their attitude toward it.

Our ability to understand our audience and adapt to it is critical for enabling our communication to be relevant and effective. But it is also a complex challenge. There are layers of various influences, outlooks and experiences that affect receptivity—some are shared with others, some are unique and individual.

The term “masses”, when applied to people, refers to a large group who are somewhat loosely associated. There are, of course, masses of people all around us—on our campuses and in our communities. Most go unnoticed to us, but not to Jesus. When Jesus saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them, for he saw them in their true condition. They were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). On another occasion, he drew his disciples' attention to the crowds saying, “Open your eyes and

look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35).

But Jesus didn't just see the multitudes; he saw the individual. He saw the Pharisee, Nicodemus, as a misguided religious leader (John 3:1-21). He saw a young man with great wealth and stature, but impoverished in his spirit (Mark 10:17-31). He saw an immoral woman who thirsted for the satisfaction that only he could give (John 4:1-42). He saw a tax collector as a future apostolic leader (Mark 2:13-22). He saw four fishermen and saw the same. He saw the blind, lame, leprosy, sick and infirmed as individuals needing his healing touch. Jesus saw and understood the crowds. But he also saw and understood the individual.

Our ability to see and understand our audience, both the masses and the individuals who compose them, will be critical in shaping relevant communication of the gospel and approaches in evangelism. But where do you start?

First, recognize the complexity of the challenge. It is easy for us to project on others a shallow, simplistic perception of who they are and what they need. How often have we made assumptions about people based solely on their outward appearance? Those assumptions are rarely accurate, nor helpful. Empathetic engagement, or what has been termed in scholarship as “perspective taking,” enables us to better understand our audience by seeing the world through their eyes. We come to understand them as people, not projects, and their lives as stories—stories worth hearing. Through this deepening understanding, we discover how the gospel speaks to them individually and as a group. (For a practical guide to empathetic listening, see the “Explorer” role in *CoJourners: A Transferable Concept*, CruPress, 2007.)

When you peel back the layers of reality and examine what is beneath each, they yield insights that will make a significant difference in evangelism. Those insights include:

- The spiritual realities
- The cultural influences
- The social connections
- The personal pilgrimages

Together these dimensions will influence people's attitude and responsiveness to the gospel.



## SPIRITUAL REALITIES

There are spiritual realities that are true of every person apart from Christ. The Bible clearly articulates the human condition—that we are all under sin and unable to save ourselves (Rom 3:9-20). Our sin and the resulting death is the ultimate need that Jesus Christ alone can reverse through his atoning death on the cross (Romans 3:21-26). This salvation, accomplished by the risen and reigning Lord, is the reason evangelism is necessary (Romans 10:9-15).

But there are other realities related to the spiritual context of the masses. First, apart from Christ, they are in **spiritual bondage**:

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. (Ephesians 2:1-3)*

Apart from Christ, they are **spiritually blinded**:

*The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4)*

Apart from Christ, they are the objects of a **spiritual battle**, in which the enemy of their souls seeks to keep them in their fallen and broken condition.

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

But there is also a divine side to the spiritual realities. God created humanity in his image, He has worked providentially determining the time and places for all people to live, with the purpose that they would seek him, reach out and perhaps find him (Acts 17:26-27). As the Lord of the Harvest, the Master of Evangelism, he continues to orchestrate the circumstances that set the stage for men and women to seek him. He

has sent his Spirit into the world to convict of sin, righteousness and the coming judgment (John 16:8-9).

Evangelism, then, isn't merely an "intellectual" exercise, trying to convince people to recognize the truth. It is a spiritual power encounter. The gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16). God's Spirit brings its power against the opposition of the spirit of evil and into the experience of those who hear it (Acts 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). This is the spiritual context for evangelism. But there is more.

## CULTURAL INFLUENCES

While the spiritual realities are true for all, people live within a mosaic of different cultures and cultural influences. There are elements generally shared by large numbers of people (macro-cultures) and other aspects that are more narrowly shared with a few (micro-cultures). We might describe student culture in general (a macro-culture) or the characteristics of a specific fraternity or sorority house (a micro-culture).

These layers of culture will have a significant influence on evangelism. For instance, the culture of the audience will shape the message. Why are there four Gospels in the New Testament? Each conveys the same narrative—the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet each does so with its own distinctive elements. Why? Because the Gospels were written to four different audiences, with four different cultural characteristics. Matthew was written to a Jewish audience and so he relied heavily on the Old Testament prophecies to show that Jesus was the Messiah. Mark was written to a Roman (or largely Gentile) audience, so Mark had to explain more fully Jewish customs that Matthew took for granted. He emphasized Messianic action over teaching. Luke and John were to still other audiences. The cultures of each audience shaped the message of each Gospel.

The same principle can be demonstrated by comparing the gospel messages found throughout the book of Acts. Compare, for instance, Peter's message to the Jews (Acts 2:14-21) with his message to the Gentiles (10:34-43). Do the same for Paul's gospel message for Jews and God-fearers in Antioch (13:14-43) and the Greek philosophers in Athens (17:16-34). In each, the essence of the gospel remained constant—who Jesus is, what he has done and why. But in each, the gospel was contextualized according to the culture of the audience.



But Paul goes beyond merely adapting the message. He adapts his own lifestyle and approach according to the audience's culture. He even did so at the expense of his own cultural heritage and preferences:

*Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)*

For those who are insiders within culture, little adaptation is necessary. But for those who are cultural outsiders, effective evangelism requires more. The cultural distance can make it challenging to establish a positive environment of communication or relationships of trust. If there is “emotional baggage” from past negative experiences or cultural stereotypes, contextualization requires even greater sensitivity and adaptation. Leaders and laborers in evangelism must grow in understanding the audiences they seek to reach. The context of the audience will shape their message and methods.

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

While culture in general is important, relationships are even more crucial. People are relational beings and exist within a web of relational networks. These networks can be channels for the rapid spread of the gospel. They can also be barriers that impede it.

Relational networks create social boundaries making certain people insiders and leaving the rest as outsiders. When Paul entered a city on his missionary journeys, he would go first to the synagogues (for example, Acts 17:2-4). Among the Jews, Paul was an insider. He shared much of their culture and related as one of them. When the Jews resisted his message, Paul turned to the Gentiles. In the marketplace among the rest of the community, Paul was an outsider (Acts 18:5-8). Leading effective evangelism requires sensitivity to this insider-outsider dynamic.

But a social network not only affects the relational connection between the messenger and audience, it

also can be a critical factor in the spread of the gospel to others beyond that audience. Jesus' first disciples were all associates. Andrew and Peter were brothers, as were James and John. Philip and Nathaniel were friends from the same hometown. All or most of these six were disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:35-51). The good news was spreading within a social network.

When the Philippian jailer believed, so did his whole family (Acts 16:34). When the Samaritan woman believed, so did many from her village (John 4:39). Effective evangelism not only recognizes the importance of the relational connection between the messenger and the audience, it also considers the importance of the listeners' relational network to others. The gospel can, and often does, spread through these relational connections. Effective leaders in evangelism learn to maximize these relationships.

## PERSONAL PILGRIMAGES

As you continue to peel back the layers—the spiritual realities, cultural influences and social involvements—evangelism must still adapt to the individual. This involves both their worldview and spiritual journey.

The socio-cultural milieu in which a person lives imprints their lives with a way of thinking. Each individual develops a worldview—an overall perspective about life, the world, and one's place within it. But a worldview isn't merely cognitive beliefs. It is intertwined with deep-seated values that wield powerful influence over thoughts and behavior. Various worldviews can be categorized according to their shared beliefs. But each individual's worldview is unique as it blends a variety of ideas, influences, and values into a perspective about life that is rarely examined or explained, yet subconsciously influences everything. Each worldview has assumptions, but rarely are those assumptions questioned. Thus, most worldviews are inconsistent, embracing contradictory beliefs that can only be maintained by a general reluctance to think deeply. (For a conversational guide to explore a listener's worldview, see *Perspective Cards*, CruPress, 2010.)

But each individual also has a unique spiritual journey. They may be moving toward God or away from God. They may be near or far. They may be pursuing other so-called “gods” that aren't God at all. They may be stuck in a spiritual quagmire and not moving. But everyone is on a spiritual journey. They



can't help it, for they were created as spiritual beings. Their unique spiritual journey will significantly influence the shape that effective evangelism will take. (For help in adapting to the spiritual journeys of others in conversational evangelism, see the suite of *CoJourney* resources, from CruPress.com and at [www.crupress.com/green](http://www.crupress.com/green)).

For instance, a person's spiritual proximity (that is, where they are in their spiritual journey) can be marked by their openness to the gospel and readiness to respond. But the spiritual process by which one comes to faith in Christ is not linear. The journey to Christ is not the same for each individual. It can be helpful to consider three different dimensions in that journey: growth in understanding, awareness of need, and willingness to change (see diagram 1).

A person may be at a different stage on each of these three dimensions. Some know the truth about Jesus and are aware of their need for a Savior, but are resistant to change because of their entanglement in sin. There are others who know something is wrong with them and want to change but have no knowledge of the gospel. How you deal with the former will be different from how you help the latter. But neither is at the threshold of decision. When one agrees that the gospel is true (understanding), recognizes that he or she can not solve their sin and guilt apart from the Savior (need) and is willing to change (willingness), they are at the threshold of decision, ready to place their trust in Christ as their Savior.

Diagram 1

<b>Growth in Understanding</b> A person may progress across a spectrum from:	<b>Awareness of Need</b> A person may progress down a scale from:	<b>Willingness to change</b> A person may progress through a continuum from:
4. Complete ignorance of the truth regarding God or Christ	4. Complete unawareness of any need or being completely self-satisfied	4. Complete resistance to change
3. A general familiarity with basic truths about God and Jesus	3. A general awareness that there is something wrong	3. An openness to change
2. An understanding of the essential truth of the gospel and its implications	2. A consciousness that the problem is sin and guilt	2. A desire to change
1. An agreement that the gospel is true	1. An awareness that one is unable to solve the problem apart from the Savior.	1. A willingness to change
<b>Threshold of Decision</b>		

It is important to recognize that we cannot make assumptions about a person's spiritual proximity. We must discover this through communication and, ultimately, through their response to the gospel itself. The Pharisees were generally resistant to the gospel and hostile to Christ. But there were exceptions. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Christ seeking understanding (John 3:1-21; 19:39). Likewise, most would have assumed the Samaritan woman at the well to be an unlikely candidate for faith in Jesus Christ (John 4:1-30). But they would be wrong. Spiritual journeys must be explored; we cannot project our assumptions onto others.



Also, people can, and at times do, change rapidly when God is at work. Consider Saul. In Jerusalem, he is breathing threats against the Lord's disciples (Acts 9:1). Three days later, he is sitting blind in Damascus, seeking the Lord and waiting for a man named Ananias to come and complete his conversion (9:10-19). That is rapid change! We cannot assume that those who have been spiritually distant in the past are still the same in the present. They may have been drawn closer by the grace and power of God.

Leading evangelism is complex because people are complex. But that complexity need not create inaction. When believers are guided by God's Spirit and filled with his love, the power of the gospel can break through even in the most challenging contexts. Love compels us to understand our audience. Wisdom causes us to adapt to them. The context of the masses influences our evangelism. Leaders of missional teams and ministries plan and coach accordingly.

#### Reflection or Discussion Questions:

Identify the different groups of people (sub-cultures, micro-cultures, affinity groups, kinds of people, etc.) within your ministry context.

- Which groups are being effectively reached in your ministry context? Why?
- Which groups are not being effectively reached? Why?
- Which groups would be most strategic to reach at this time?

How would you profile the audience(s) in your evangelism context? What do you know about it spiritually, culturally, socially and personally?

How could the insights contained in your profile influence...

- You as messengers—how you relate to your audience?
- Your message—how you shape and communicate your message?
- Your methods—how you apply and adjust your methodology?

## THE MESSENGERS

Evangelism is, first and foremost, a work of God. But it is God's intent to work in and through his people to deliver the gospel message to a lost and dying world. His people are his plan; believers are his messengers. The question each leader must grapple with is, "Who is involved in the mission and in what way?" The task

of the leader is to maximize involvement.

Ask leaders what percentage of believers in their ministry are involved in effective witness and the vast majority will respond with answers closer to ten percent than to ninety. That is true with churches as well as campus ministries. On one hand, we believe that God wants to use all believers as witnesses. But on the other, we resign ourselves to the status quo: that a relatively small percentage of believers will be involved in evangelism and even fewer will be effective.

In the 1950's, Dr. Kenneth Strachan, along with other mission leaders, studied three rapidly growing movements in Latin America: Communism, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostalism. Their findings were intriguing.

*So as we examined groups like these: one anti-Christian, the other pseudo-Christian, and the third Christian but not in the conventional pattern, we wondered just what was the secret of the success of each one. Was it their doctrine? That could not be, because each was preaching a different message. Was it their emphasis? Was it their method? Was it their organization? The answer did not seem to lie with any of these. Finally we came to recognize that in spite of their many differences in doctrine, organization, emphasis and practice, they were alike in only one thing—they had one thing in common and that was the secret of their success. What they had in common was this: their success in mobilizing their total constituency in continuous evangelistic action. (Emphasis added.) And so we came to the conviction that the secret of expansion was to be found in this thesis: that the successful expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing and occupying its total membership in constant propagation of its beliefs. (Emphasis added.) (George W. Peters, *Saturation Evangelism*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970. pp. 52-53.)*

That is the power of mobilization in any movement. But it is important that the leader in an evangelistic movement ground the effort in sound biblical thinking and true Spirit-empowered action. The mobilization of the whole community of faith in Spirit-empowered witness is a leader's challenge.

Consider the example of the early church:

*One of the most striking features in evangelism*



*in the early days was the people who engaged in it. Communicating the faith was not regarded as the preserve of the very zealous or of the officially designated evangelist. Evangelism was the prerogative and the duty of every Church member. We have seen apostles and wandering prophets, nobles and paupers, intellectuals and fishermen all taking part enthusiastically in this the primary task committed by Christ to his Church. The ordinary people of the Church saw it as their job: Christianity was supremely a lay movement, spread by informal missionaries.* (Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans; Page 274.)

Mobilizing all doesn't mean that everyone is doing the same thing in the same way. Biblically, there is a spectrum of engagement. Failure to recognize this endangers the well-being and effectiveness of the messengers.

## THE SPECTRUM OF INVOLVEMENT

What does an effective witness look like? One thing is clear; witnessing is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. Effective witnesses do not all look alike or contribute on the same level. That was as true in the New Testament period as it is today.

Consider three different biblical examples: First, the Samaritan woman who encountered Jesus at the well and returned to witness to her village (John 4:28-30, 39-42). Second, the seventy-two whose mission was to go before Jesus to the towns and villages he was about to visit (Luke 10:1-24). Third, the apostles and their unstoppable witness in Jerusalem (Acts 5:41,42).

Which of the three proved to be effective witnesses? Certainly the Samaritan woman was an effective witness, as her whole village came out to encounter Jesus. John wrote that many "believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (John 4:39). The seventy-two came back from their mission with great joy and apparent success. Jesus encouraged their celebration as he spoke of seeing Satan falling from heaven like lightning (Luke 10:17,18). The apostles in the book of Acts were seeing great numbers being added daily to the believers through their witness (Acts 2:42; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7). All three were effective witnesses. God worked through all three. But how different they were.

They were different in maturity. The Samaritan woman had just encountered Jesus moments before; the seventy-two were active followers of Jesus; and

the apostles were, of course, leaders of the church in Jerusalem and beyond.

Their message was also different. The Samaritan woman's testimony was simple – a sentence and a question. "Come see a man who has told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (John 4:29). The seventy-two went proclaiming the message, "The kingdom of God is near" (Luke 10:8). The apostles filled Jerusalem with the name of Jesus and the message that he had risen from the dead and was now reigning as the Lord over all (Acts 5:30-32). Each bore witness to Jesus. But each shared the message differently.

Their motivation was different. The Samaritan woman overflowed in testimony regarding her encounter with Jesus. She was never told to be a witness. She wasn't choosing to witness out of obedience. It was her natural response to having met Jesus. But the seventy-two were different. They went because Jesus had sent them. It was not their idea. Nor was it their initiative. They witnessed because Jesus called them together, prepared them with instructions and sent them out on a specific assignment. The apostles were fully trained leaders, filled with the Spirit and commissioned for a lifetime of service. They were compelled to "obey God" (Acts 5:29) and could "not help speaking about what (they had) seen and heard" (Acts 4:19).

All three were effective witnesses, but different from each other in maturity, message, and motivation. Together they illustrate key points along a spectrum of involvement. A healthy community of believers should see individuals overflow in natural witness to the Lord (like the Samaritan woman). It should also see increasing numbers involved in intentional outreach efforts. A healthy evangelistic movement will also have active leadership who continue to share their faith and lead the way in expansion, despite obstacles or opposition. Recognizing this spectrum of involvement enables the leader to evaluate the missional health of the ministry.

### Spectrum of Involvement





### *Scriptural Prayers for Evangelism*

- For the lost to be saved. (Romans 10:1)
- For the witness of the body through unity. (John 17:23)
- For workers for the harvest to be sent. (Matthew 9:37-38)
- For opportunities to witness. (Colossians 4:3)
- For clarity in our presentation. (Colossians 4:4)
- For the words to say. (Ephesians 6:19)
- For the boldness to speak. (Ephesians 6:20)
- For the gospel to spread rapidly. (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

First, consider the level of engagement by the body in prayer for outreach. Jesus and Paul both modeled prayer for evangelism and commanded it in the lives of all believers. Cultivating intentional prayer for evangelism and missions is the first and most basic missional activity of a leader.

Second, evaluate if there is a body-wide culture of outreach. Like the Samaritan woman, some believers naturally overflow about their experience with Jesus. This was true for Saul, as well (Acts 9:20). But not everyone can be expected to witness without encouragement. Most need prompting, like the delivered demoniac of Mark 5:1-20. After encountering Christ and experiencing a life-change of the most dramatic kind, he begged to stay with Jesus. Instead, Jesus sent him back with the instruction, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed” (Mark 5:19,20). A healthy community of believers will have both—those who overflow in natural witness and those who need encouragement to do so. A leader must ensure that consistent encouragement and equipping for evangelism is present, spurring all to be engaged.

Third, consider if there are intentional, focused outreach opportunities with growing numbers participating. Jesus expanded the number of laborers when he sent the seventy-two after previously sending the twelve (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-12). Outreach opportunities provide believers a context for fruitful ministry, valuable experience, and application-oriented training. Too often our evangelism training is heavy on teaching and light on experience. Education with little application produces little growth or progress in the mission. The most effective evangelism training will focus on experience, while providing adequate preparation and equipping.

Fourth, are leaders being developed and entrusted with outreach responsibility? The growth potential of

a movement is directly related to the ability to build a growing number of leaders and laborers who are intrinsically motivated and taking responsibility for on-going strategic outreach. Expanding leadership will enable the body to reach more audiences effectively.

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

What was your experience in growing as a witness?

- When did you begin to share your faith? How did you learn?
- Who has been most influential in helping you share your faith? Why?
- What has been most effective for you in helping others learn to share their faith?

What percentage of believers in your ministry are involved in fruitful witness? Why?

Analyze the involvement of believers in your ministry regarding lifestyle witnesses, laborers in the harvest and leaders in evangelism.

- Of the three, which appears to be the strongest? Why?
- Which of the three appears to be the weakest? Why?

What strategic steps can you take to increase the level of involvement of believers in fruitful witness?

## THE MESSAGE

There is only one gospel and it is very important to get it right (Galatians 1:6-9.) But what is the gospel? In order to answer that question, it can be helpful to think in terms of the gospel essence and the gospel in its fullness.

On one hand, the gospel can be distilled down to its essence. We may not say it exactly the same every time, but the critical elements would always be there. What is that essence? Compare Jesus’ summary statement in Luke 24:45-49 with Paul’s in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. There are common elements in both:

- Who is Jesus? The Christ
- What has he done? Died and rose again.
- Why? For the forgiveness of sins
- How do we know? OT Scriptures and resurrection appearances
- How are we to respond? Repentance (in Luke) and faith/belief (in 1 Corinthians)



These same essential elements are found in the Four Gospels. Think of Mark, for example. The first eight chapters move thematically toward the answer of “Who is Jesus?” Peter declares, “You are the Christ” (Mark 8:27-30). From that point on, Mark moves toward the cross and his resurrection. Christ’s death and resurrection are predicted three times in chapters 8-10, followed by the actual events in the remaining chapters. Thus, Mark is a narrative declaring who Jesus is, what he has done, and why – the essence of the gospel. So also, Matthew, Luke and John. Or consider the “gospel messages” recorded in Acts – whether to Jews (say in Acts 2) or Gentiles (like Acts 17:22-32). They declare who Jesus is, what he has done and why. The gospel, at its core, is a message about Jesus. Even Paul’s introductory summary in his letter to the Romans (his exposition of the gospel) centers on these elements (Romans 1:1-4).

But to speak of the “essence” of the gospel is not to say everything about the gospel. We may also speak of the “fullness” of the gospel. Its truths, themes and implications are so vast that it will take a lifetime to explore and experience. Indeed, we never master the gospel and move on to some other deeper truth. The gospel is not the *initial* message for the follower of Christ; it is the *only* message. We are gospel people. And so, like a vein of gold, we dig deeper and deeper and become richer and richer, always growing in our understanding. So Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are fuller narrative presentations of the same gospel truth as Paul proclaimed. The book of Romans is gospel truth, unpacked in its theological implications, as is Galatians and the other epistles. Jesus enabled the disciples to see that the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms (that is, all the OT Scriptures) spoke of him in Luke 24:44-49. It is all gospel truth!

## ONE MESSAGE, VARIETY OF FORMS

Our mastery of the gospel’s essence ensures we communicate the gospel accurately, while our growing understanding of the gospel’s fullness enables us to communicate it relevantly. We get the message right if we understand and communicate clearly the essence. But we can share it effectively in a wide variety of ways because of its fullness. Thus you can tell the story of redemption, emphasizing critical junctures along the biblical storyline. (See *Backstory*, CruPress 2010.) Or you can explain the gospel thematically. Peter explained the gospel utilizing the theme of the promised Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Countless individuals have been led into a relationship with Jesus Christ

through the theme of God’s love and plan as found in *The Four Spiritual Laws*. You may share the gospel in a testimony like the Samaritan woman, whose witness pointed to Jesus as the Christ. Or explain it theologically as Paul does in Romans. Think of how many have come to faith through hearing the truths of Romans—leaders like Augustine, Luther, and Wesley. You may declare the good news of the Kingdom, expressing the essence of who Jesus is and what he does within the context of the coming of God’s glorious reign! You might even tell it in story form, using parables like Jesus did. But it is always the same message in essence. By understanding the audience and their context we are able to determine what form of presentation will be most appropriate and relevant.

Our witness then is always, in essence, who Jesus is, what he has done, and why. This gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). But we have an unending array of possibilities as to how we communicate and apply this one message. Messengers must master the gospel in order to understand, experience and communicate it with faithfulness and relevance. The leader must help the messengers do so through sound Christ-centered teaching and practical equipping.

### Reflection or Discussion Questions:

- Mentally open your toolbox of evangelism resources. What gospel presentations do you have?
- What have been the one or two most effective gospel presentations for you? In what context have these been effective? Why?
- What is missing? If you could have a gospel presentation that communicated effectively with some group within your ministry context, what would it be? Why?

## THE METHODS

How do the messengers communicate this life-changing message to the masses? Reading biblical examples reinforces the fact that it is with great variety. It may be an invitation to a family member or friend to come and meet Jesus (John 1:40-51). It could entail pairing up to visit homes on a mission trip (Matthew 10:5-13). It might involve open-air speaking (Acts 2:14-41), house-to-house visitation (Acts 5:42), or even a jail ministry as an insider (Acts 16:25-40). There are conversations on roadways (Acts 8:26-40), at riverside prayer gatherings (Acts





16:13-15), and in the marketplace (Acts 17:17). There may be presentations at a religious gathering (Acts 17:17) or a gospel-bearing message to some group of philosophers (Acts 17:22-31). In the 21st century, it can involve communicating through technology or a creative media. The methods can be as diverse as the settings for gospel encounters. (See for example, *The 250: Evangelism Ideas For Your Campus*, CruPress, 2003.)

But what principles underlie the methodology?

### DIFFERENTIATING THE ESSENTIAL FROM THE HELPFUL

Evangelism is by definition the communication of the gospel with a view of calling others to respond in faith. Two elements are essential: proclamation and persuasion. But when it comes to effectiveness, there is more that can be helpful to the process.

To grow a crop, a farmer must plant the seed and harvest its fruit at maturity. Those are the two essentials. But there is a great deal more that can be done to increase the yield. Before planting, the ground is prepared. Hard soil is plowed; weedy soil is cultivated. After the seed is planted, it is watered and fertilized to nourish the growth. The work before and after planting have one end in view—to create the best environment for seed to grow, mature and produce the highest yield.

This agricultural metaphor has an analogy to evangelism. Biblically, sowing is the proclamation of the word (Mark 4:14). Calling for others to believe and follow (that is, persuasion) is often associated with the harvest (John 4:35-38). Any discussion of evangelism methodology must keep the main thing – sowing and reaping, or proclamation and persuasion. But because those are essential and because we seek the greatest yield for our efforts, we must also give attention to the preparation of the audience (or, cultivation in the agricultural analogy) and the nourishment of the gospel seed once it is sown.

As in agriculture, the levels of cultivation are determined by the condition of the soil. A hardened or resistant audience will generally require more relationship, presence, love and care, and pre-gospel dialogue. Yet a softened, prepared heart may respond quickly and immediately to a gospel presentation. While the messengers seek to carefully work with the seed and the soil (1 Corinthians 3:6-8), ultimately

the response is a function of the soil's condition (Mark 4:13-20) and God who causes the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6).

This discussion underscores the dynamic relationship between the life and deeds of the witness and the words of the gospel. There are, of course, many examples where the testimony of the messenger's life and some prior interaction prepares the listener for the hearing of the gospel. Jesus said, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Many came to listen to Jesus, having learned of his works of compassion and power (Matthew 4:23-25). In a similar manner, the favor the early church experienced with the people of Jerusalem was connected to their responsiveness to the gospel message, as "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47; 5:13-14). So our lives and deeds can prepare the listener for the gospel message.

But it is important to observe that often, the life of the messenger can also reinforce the message after, not just before, the gospel presentation. Proclaiming the message often precedes the testimony of the life. Paul demonstrated this type post-proclamation involvement throughout his ministry. For example, Paul began his ministry in Thessalonica proclaiming the gospel in the synagogue, but remained engaged with those responded, lovingly caring for them like a father or mother (compare Acts 17:1-9 with 1 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

At times there is no opportunity for the listener to be exposed to the life of the messenger beyond the gospel interaction. So it was with Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). But whatever the situation, the witness of one's life can never replace the words of the gospel. The gospel message must be proclaimed:

*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? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:14-15)*

### THE MODES OF EVANGELISM

But how does a leader determine what methods to employ? How does one develop a comprehensive



strategy, aligned to God but adapting to the context, while mobilizing the whole body? It begins with God, for (as has been emphasized) evangelism is always first and foremost a work of God.

Imagine joining our Lord at the right hand of the throne of God to watch him work through his people as he seeks to save the lost. Suppose you could see his work throughout the centuries and in all different cultures. Are there common methods? Would there be consistent patterns? Are there ways that God always works? The number of distinct methods would be far too numerous to count. Nor would it be that helpful to list, as some worked well at one time and place, but others in a different context. Yet in the midst of them all, there would be a pattern—three consistent relational connections through which God has always worked. These are what we call the relational modes of evangelism.

A mode is by definition a customary or preferred way of doing something (such as an “MO” or “mode of operation” in business). When we speak of the modes of evangelism, we are speaking of the primary relational contexts in which God always works through the body of Christ. Knowing these modes enables us to align ourselves with God’s work in any context. Together they provide the framework for a comprehensive strategy of evangelism that adapts to the audience and mobilizes the whole body.

Each mode is distinctive. Each has its effectiveness and presents unique opportunities. Each is limited by itself. But when working together, the three create a powerful synergy. They create evangelistic momentum. Together they provide the contours of an evangelistic movement.

## BODY WITNESS

The body of Christ can have a powerful witness when it is gathered together and functioning in a healthy manner. A healthy community of believers grows in Christ through speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 16). This experience of authentic love and truth is what people genuinely desire. As they experience the fellowship of the body, they have opportunity to hear gospel truth explained and applied to life. They also see gospel love lived out in relationship. God often uses this experience of gospel love and truth to draw people to himself. This may happen in formal gatherings; it may also occur in informal settings. But the love and truth of a healthy body of believers will

have a profound witness to those who experience it.

Jesus underscored the importance of the witness of the body. He indicated that our love for one another would be the evidence to all men that we are his disciples (John 13:34-35). He prayed for our unity, knowing that through it the world would recognize that he was sent as the Messiah (John 17:22-23). So when the early church devoted itself to one another in healthy Christian community, it enjoyed “the favor of all the people and there was added to their numbers daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42-47).

How does a leader expand the body witness? Two things are necessary. First, one must tend to the quality of fellowship, ensuring that it is a healthy environment for seekers to experience the gospel. This doesn’t mean everything must be oriented around the seeker. But it does mean that there is intentionality in creating an environment full of grace and truth, appropriate for anyone. Second, the leader must increase the opportunity for those who are open and seeking to be exposed to the body. This will normally happen through relationships, as believers invite others into body activities. But it is not limited to personal invitations. A public presence and outward communication strategies have been vehicles God has used to usher many into body experiences.

As the witness of the body expands, many come to faith through it. The community of believers provides an environment for spiritual process and growth to take place. People have time and relational support to process new insights into the gospel and its implications. When they come to Christ, they are already involved and relationally connected. They have already passed through a barrier that those reached outside the body will have to later cross. Belonging before believing is a powerful pathway to the gospel.

But it is limited, as well. Body witness can only impact those who are close enough to see the body in action or brave enough to enter. Thus, body witness normally reaches only those who are spiritually seeking or relationally connected. Generally, that is a small percentage of the people in need. Large, diverse populations (such as a campus or community) cannot be fully reached through body witness alone. The other two modes must also be employed.



## NATURAL WITNESS

As believers leave their fellowship to reengage in everyday living, their lives naturally intersect countless people. Some of these intersections involve intimate and long-term relationships, such as family and close friends. But most will be casual and brief. And while the number of intimate relationships may be relatively few, the total web of natural connections can be substantial. We have classmates, coworkers, and neighbors. We briefly relate to store clerks, waitresses, hairdressers and others in the marketplace. We talk with doctors, lawyers, teachers, plumbers, and repairmen. Entertainment, sports and recreational opportunities expose us to more people in casual settings. Even fellow travelers on planes can become temporary conversational partners. This is not to suggest that every time we are near someone, God intends for us to speak of Jesus. But we must recognize that our lives do intersect those of countless others and be ready at all times (2 Timothy 4:2).

Among this group of natural relational connections, God is already at work and may want to use us. If we are available and alert, if we show genuine care and concern, if we ask good questions and listen, we will often discover opportunities for gospel conversations. Paul exhorted us to be ready for such. “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:5,6). The key in natural witness is not the duration of the relationship, depth of its intimacy or the length of the conversation. Rather it is wisdom to make the most of each opportunity.

Witness among natural relationships was common in the New Testament. Among the first disciples, Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus and Philip brought his friend, Nathaniel (John 1:40-51). Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman was in a brief, but natural (albeit unusual) setting—at the watering hole. The Samaritan woman’s subsequent witness to her village was among those with whom she had natural relationships, though not particularly positive ones (John 4:1-42). The delivered demoniac was a witness to his people back home (Luke 8:38, 39). All of these examples underscore the importance of natural witness. God delights to work through his people within their web of natural relationships.

How does a leader help expand the natural witness

of the believers they lead? It requires casting a compelling vision for the needs of others and the opportunities to be used by God. The leader must raise awareness, helping believers to be alert for divine appointments and opportunities to engage with others. It also requires motivation. Many influences work against believers’ natural witness, and probably none more than fear and busyness. The leader must cultivate the heart desire for God’s glory and the ultimate good of others. (See the Master principles, above.) But there is also the need for believers to be equipped in conversational evangelism, increasing their confidence and competence. Finally, they need practical ways to engage conversationally. It may be as simple as everyday conversation, guided by genuine interest. Or it may involve specialized outreach tools and resources (like *Soularium*, CruPress, 2008, or the *Perspective Cards*, CruPress, 2010). But believers need a plan, steps they can follow and methods they can employ.

## MINISTRY WITNESS

There are many people who lack both connections to a healthy community of believers for body witness and personal relationships with individual believers who will engage in natural witness. The only way for these individuals to be reached with the gospel is through intentional outreach ministry—the ministry mode of evangelism.

It is important to recognize that ministry witness is also a relational mode. But it is a different kind of relational connection than natural witness, because it occurs through the intentional ministry activity of the believer. This context has a profound influence on the style of witness, requiring openness and transparency coupled with genuine love and care. But when a ministry witness is empowered by God’s Spirit, it can have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and communities. Event-based and media outreaches can be considered subsets of ministry mode evangelism. Though the relational element is less personal, the communication of the gospel occurs because someone is engaged in intentional ministry outreach.

Jesus is, of course, the model of ministry witness, *par excellence*. Fulfilling his mission involved going “to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (Mark 1:38, 39). He sent the twelve and then the 72 on ministry mode assignments, declaring the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-17). After his ascension, the apostles led the expansion



of the gospel through this type of ministry witness. (See for example, Acts 5:41-42). Philip engaged in a ministry mode of witness in a city in Samaria (Acts 8:5) and on a desert road with the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). Barnabas did so in Antioch (Acts 11:22-24) and then joined efforts with the Apostle Paul, as they engaged in ministry witness throughout their missionary journeys (Acts 13 and beyond). Ministry witness is the leading edge of gospel expansion. Through it, new audiences are penetrated and new communities of believers are established.

How do leaders expand the mode of ministry witness? First, they must identify the audiences in need of gospel witness. Time and energy must be invested in understanding the audience and their context. This determines the approaches that will be fruitful and effective. They will also need to identify and involve believers and teams who will lead in the outreach efforts. These will, of course, need preparation, training, and resources, as well as a clear plan of action.

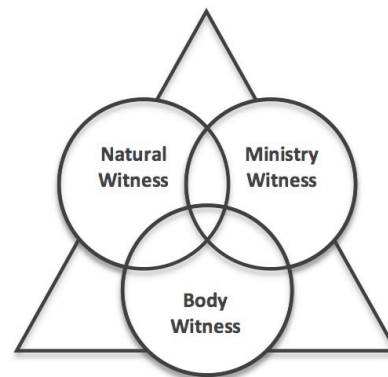
There are challenges to effective ministry witness. Often the ministry mode requires some degree of cross-cultural involvement. Whether the cultural gap is narrow or wide, there is a need to understand and adapt on the part of the witnesses. Since those engaged in ministry witness are often outsiders socially, it is important they connect in a caring and transparent way with the audience. Caution must be exercised to not mislead others, appearing to be interested in friendship while primarily seeking ministry opportunity. Ministry witness requires genuine love, while being appropriate in relationship and honest regarding our purpose and intentions. Also, while body witness and natural witness can involve every believer, ministry witness will normally require a level of maturity and training. But that process is part of the power of ministry witness. For as individuals and teams are equipped and developed, the number of lifetime laborers for the gospel expands. And with it, so does the overall impact for Christ.

### CREATING SYNERGY

It is common to see a ministry emphasize one or two modes of witness. In fact, too much discussion has occurred debating which is more biblical or effective. Yet God delights in working through all three. He always has. He always will. The leader's task is not in deciding which is better; it is in expanding the witness of all three.

The most powerful evangelistic movements and

churches are those that experience the synergy of all three modes. The modes don't work independently. Many come to Christ through the influence of multiple modes. And as believers experience fruitfulness in one, they often become involved in outreach through the others.



But the greatest benefit from understanding the three modes is that together they provide the framework for a comprehensive evangelism plan. As leaders and teams build plans based on prayer and aimed at expanding the witness of all three modes, equipping and engaging believers in each, they set direction for a movement of evangelism.

What does a movement of evangelism look like? The two-year old church in Ephesus provides a clear picture (Acts 19:1-20). Paul initiated with ministry witness, as he “entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8). After a community of disciples was formed (and opposition built), the disciples met together, having “discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (19:9). This gathering, no doubt, provided a center of body witness. As the number of disciples grew and as they continued to share Christ in everyday life over a period of two-years (overflowing in their natural witness), “all...who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (19:10). Luke summarizes the evangelistic momentum that built with the words, “In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20).

The phrase, “spread widely” suggests the expansive nature of gospel communication (working through the **Methods**). “Grew in power” describes the qualitative impact of the gospel as it transforms lives (the **Message**). Together they portray the effect the leader seeks as he aligns with the work of God (the **Master**), adapts to the audience's context (the **Masses**) and mobilizes the believers for involvement (the **Messengers**). This is the design of evangelism.



### Reflection or Discussion Questions:

- What are your most effective evangelistic methods or strategies? Why?
- Which of the three relational modes of witness does your ministry emphasize? Which appears to be the most effective? Why?
- How can you more fully expand each relational mode of witness?

## EVANGELISM MODEL: THE BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

The Evangelism Model is built upon a theology of evangelism. The following passages are illustrative of its principles.

### God: The Master

- Christ's Purpose: God's Glory (John 17)
- Christ's Passion: Love for the Lost (Matthew 9:35-38)
- Christ's Plan: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Christ's Power: The Holy Spirit (Acts, the whole book, particularly 1:8; 4)
- Our Prayers: Our Dependence (Ephesians 6:19-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Colossians 4:2-4; Matthew 9:37-38)

### The World: The Masses

- The Spiritual Context (Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4)
- The Cultural Context (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Compare the cultural context and messages of Acts 10:34-43 with 17:16-34)
- The Social Context (John 1:40-51; Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17; John 4:39-42; Acts 10:24)
- The Personal Context
  - » Spiritual Proximity
    - The Pharisees (contrast Mark 12:34 with Matthew 23, particularly 15, 27)
    - The Crowds (compare Acts 2:40-41 with Acts 17:16-34)
  - » Spiritual Process
    - Consider Paul's life-story
      - His upbringing and education (Phil. 3:5)
      - His life as a Pharisee (Phil. 3:6; Acts 9:1,2)
      - His encounter on the road (Acts 9:37)
      - His three days in Damascus (Acts 9:8)
      - His visit by Ananias (Acts 9:10-19)
    - Or consider Timothy's life-story (or others)

### Believers: The Messengers

- Compare and contrast each of these witnesses (consider their maturity, impact, motivation, message, relationship to audience, etc.)
  - » Lifestyle Witness: The Samaritan Woman (John 4:28-30)
  - » Laborers: The Twelve & the 72 Disciples (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-20)
  - » Leaders: The Apostles (Acts 5:41-42)

### The Gospel: The Message

- The Essence of the Gospel
  - » Compare 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 with Luke 24:45-48
- The Essence of the Gospel
  - » Matthew, Mark, Luke, John,
  - » Luke 24:44 [Old Testament writings]
  - » Romans [and New Testament Epistles]
- Various Gospel Messages
  - » Theologically framed presentations (Acts 2:14-39; Book of Romans)
  - » Life-story or testimonial presentations (John 4:28-30, 39-42; Acts 26)
  - » Historical narratives (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts 7; Acts 13:16-44)
  - » Philosophical arguments (Acts 17:22-31)
  - » Non-historical stories (The Parables; Mark 4:33-34)
  - » Guided conversations (John 3:1-21; John 4:7-26)

### Effective Communication: The Methods

- The use of the agricultural cycle as a witnessing analogy: Cultivating – Planting – Watering – Reaping Cultivating
  - » While plowing is not used biblically in witnessing contexts, preparing the land for planting was an assumed agricultural practice (see Luke 9:62)
  - » Planting & watering (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)
  - » Planting & reaping (John 4:35-38)
  - » Reaping (Matthew 9:37, 38)
- The Relational Modes of Witness
  - » The Body Witness (Acts 2:42ff; John 13:34-35; 17:22-23; 1 Corinthians 11:26)
  - » The Natural Witness (John 1:40-51; 4:28-42; Luke 8:38-39; Colossians 4:5,6; 1 Pet. 3:15)
  - » The Ministry Witness (Mark 1:38, 39; Luke 9:1-66; 10:1-17, Acts 5:41-42; 8:5ff, 26ff; 11:19-21; 11:22-24; ch. 13 to the end)
  - » The synergy of all three working together (Acts 19:1-20)





# IN-GAME INTERVIEWS

ENGAGING OTHERS [AM I WILLING TO STEP INTO YOUR WORLD?]

## THE HURDLE

*I want to move into my teammate's lives but it seems our worlds are so different since I committed my life to Christ. I'm not sure how to stay connected without compromising my own faith. When we're together and issues come up, I'm afraid I'll come across too harsh and judgmental or that I won't know what to say at all. How can I stand up for Christ and Christian values without being a jerk? How do I appropriately get around to talking about spiritual things with my teammates and others without being seen as weird? And if I don't say what I really think, am I just endorsing what they're doing? What if I get pulled into my old lifestyle? I know I'm on God's team now, but I'm not always sure how to relate to my "old" team...*

Do you find yourself being one who is too pushy (aggressive, debating, judging) with what you believe about Christ and Christian values or rarely sharing what you believe at all (avoiding, paralyzed, stuck)? Why do you lean in this direction? Would your friends or family agree with your answer?

What challenges do you experience trying to relate as a Christian when interacting with someone who:

- Parties?
- Has a terminal disease?
- Is a family member?
- Is living a sexually immoral life?
- Is a Hindu or Muslim?
- Is an injured teammate out for the season?

How comfortable or uncomfortable are you initiating these types of conversations? Why?

“

***People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.***

Howard Hendricks  
Professor/Author

”

## I HEAR YA

The Bible shows us people struggling with their engagement of others who embrace different views and values...

**James/John's Judgment:** When his disciples James and John saw this (the Samaritan's rejection of Jesus), they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. (Luke 9:54,55)

**Peter's Passivity:** Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." (John 18:25-27)

**Paul's Exhortation:** "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness." (II Timothy 2:24,25)

**Peter's Growth:** "... but set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and respect..." (I Peter 3:15)

## LISTEN UP

Relating to others with love and respect without compromise happens as a work of the Spirit in us. As we begin to see people as God does, we'll grow in our ability to meaningfully engage them. Paul describes building blocks that the Spirit uses in his letter to the Colossians.

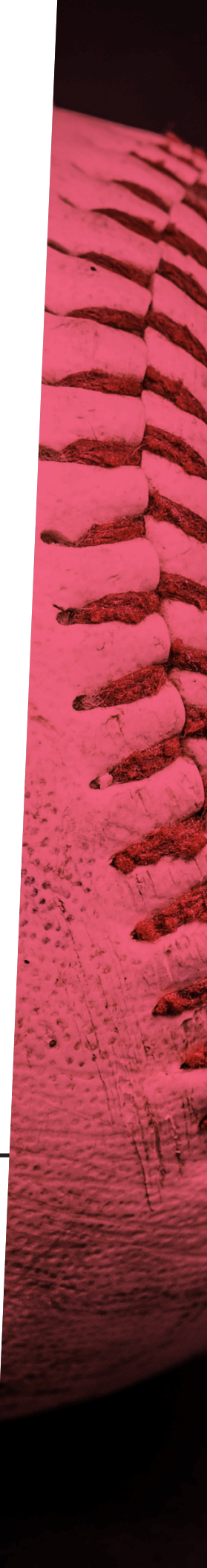
Read Colossians 4:2-6.

1. The apostle Paul encourages believers toward three foundational but ongoing actions among others who have a different worldview: 1) devoted prayer v2, 2) wise conduct v5, and 3) gracious speech v6. How would you define each of these phrases?
2. Consider: "We should always talk to God about men before talking to men about God." Why is prayer so critical before we hang out with others? What might we pray about? What is Paul's specific prayer request in v3,4?
3. What does Paul mean by wisdom in v5 and what role does it play in how we carry ourselves with others? Explain this quote: "There is a difference between being right and being righteous." How might this idea flavor both our immediate interactions with people but also the way we conduct our lives in general?
4. Paul exhorts us to season our communication with "saltiness." Salt can create thirst, add flavor, and slow down decay. Give an example of how "salty speech" does each of these in real-life situations.
5. After considering each of the three, how are devoted prayer, wise conduct, and gracious speech interrelated with one another?

## FOR THE RECORD

God gives us opportunities everyday to be His hands and feet in the world. Before others will see Christ in us, we have to love people, and the best way to show our love for people is to take a genuine interest in them. By His Spirit, God puts a supernatural love for people inside us, one that manifests itself through our curiosity about others, a willingness to listen before speaking, working to understand how God's truth intersects the everyday

happenings of life and being willing to speak about it. Our job isn't to condemn, nor is it to passively participate. Rather, as we improve our communication skills and make ourselves available for the Spirit to engage through us, God provides opportunities to move meaningfully into uncomfortable situations with people, providing wisdom about when to inquire, when to proclaim, and when to be silent.





## YOUR MOVE

As Christians, we need to love people enough to respect their current spiritual status while being open to show them what God might have for them. Good communication, comprised of both timely words and silences, forms the bridge between these separate positions. Remember that people are not projects—they are fellow travelers on a journey we all share in common! Becoming a Christian should make us more human, not less!

1. How much you care for people is often reflected in how you work at communication with others. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 (1 being “poor,” 5 being “excellent”) on these “good communicator” necessities:
  - a. Taking a genuine interest in others by asking good questions \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Seeking to understand before being understood \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Responding with clarity and confidence yet without judgment \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Pointing out destructive habits with compassion and humility \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Willingness to understand a different point of view \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Listening more than talking \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Celebrating and affirming other people as they are \_\_\_\_\_

What practical steps can you take to improve in your weakest areas?

2. Communication expert Tim Muehlhoff suggests using these four questions as a mental “understanding” grid whenever we interact with someone:

- What does this person believe?
- Why do these beliefs seem right to this person?
- Where do we agree?
- Based on this knowledge how should I proceed?

**“** Good question asking is a skill everyone can acquire. Listening to people’s answers with a genuine interest and a curiosity to ask secondary questions almost naturally opens doors to explain the “mystery of Christ,” even when that’s not your primary objective. **”**

*Tim Muehlhoff  
Communication Expert/Author*

3. When you interact with non-Christ followers, are you more afraid of what others might think if you take a stand for Christ or of falling back into your old lifestyle because of negative influences? Pray for courage in either case.

For additional work on your own, visit **The Training Room** for exercises in Godly communication.

# AS YOU ENTER

“LET EVERYONE BE QUICK TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK AND SLOW TO ANGER...”  
(JAMES 1:19)

## Tips on the Tongue

Reflect on each verse in Proverbs and record what God says to you.

- 10:17
- 10:19
- 11:13
- 12:15
- 12:18
- 13:18
- 15:1
- 16:24
- 17:27
- 27:2
- 27:6

## Wisdom for the Wise

Read James 3:1-18 and contrast the two types of people.

Natural Tendency

Wisdom from Above

## Prayer for Protection

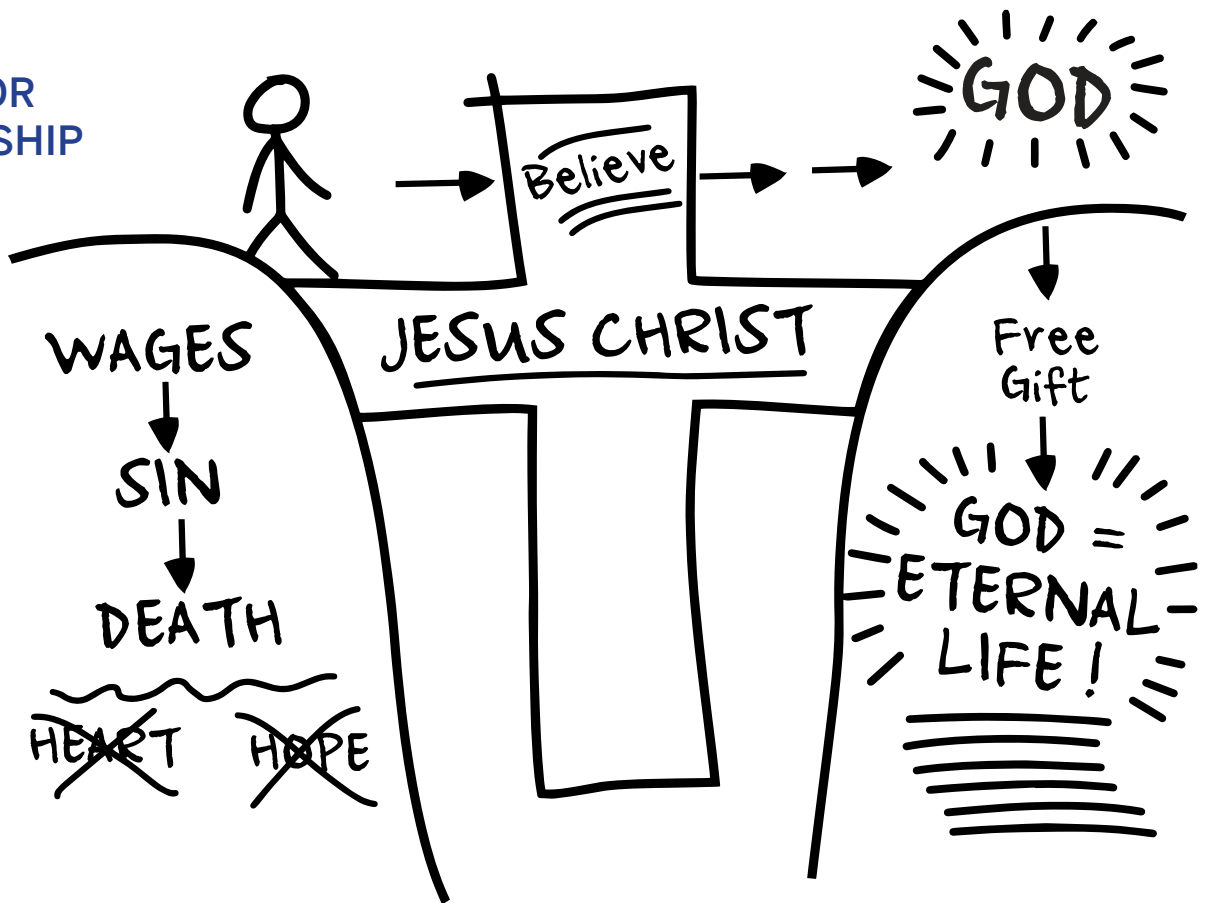
“Keep yourself in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy...”  
(Jude 21-24)

# AS YOU LEAVE

- » PRAY WITH A BELIEVING HEART THAT GOD WILL GIVE WISDOM FOR THE MOMENT.
- » SEE OTHERS AS GOD DOES—LOVED AND IN NEED OF HIS GRACE AND MERCY.
- » USE YOUR TONGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT TO BLESS OTHERS.



## NAVIGATOR DISCIPLESHIP TOOL



# THE BRIDGE to LIFE

**Some of the oldest questions humankind has been asking are, “How can I know God?” What is He like? What can we do to please Him? How can we get to Heaven? If we work hard enough to be a good enough person will He accept us then? If we do enough religious activities to get His attention, will that do it?**

**Fortunately for us, the answer is surprisingly simple. The “Gospel” that the Bible talks about literally means, “the Good News,” and the news is good indeed!**

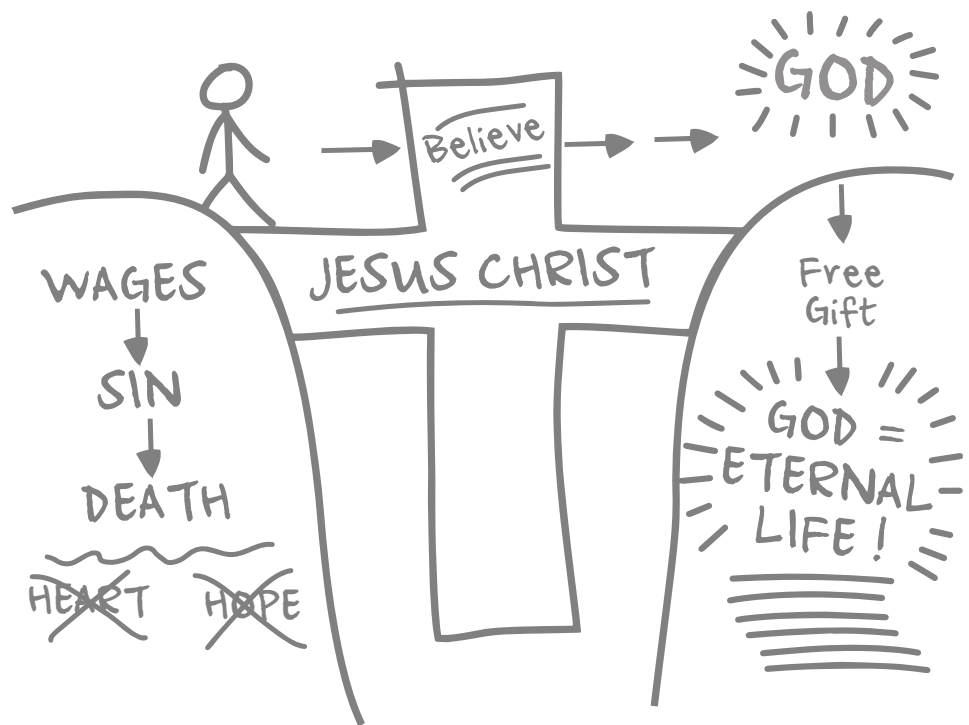
**We have to start at the beginning.** In *Genesis 1:26*, when God created the first humans, He said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness”, then God blessed them and spent the days walking and talking with the people He had created. In short, **life was good.**

But why isn't life like that anymore? What happened to mess everything up? This brings us to the second point: when we (humankind) chose to do the opposite of what God told us, sin poisoned the world.

**Sin separated us from God, and everything changed.** *Romans 3:23* says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” and in *Isaiah 59:2* we're told, “your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear.”

This is especially bad news because there is no way for us to get across that gap on our own. We (humankind) have tried to find our way back to God and a perfect world on our own ever since then, and without any luck. We try to get there by being good people, or through religion, money, morality, philosophy, education, or any number of other ways, but eventually we find out that none of it works. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (*Proverbs 14:12*).

**There is only one way to find peace with God, and the Bible says it is through Jesus Christ.** We were stranded without any way of getting back to our Creator, and we needed a way to pay for our sins and be clean again so that



we could be welcomed back to be with Him. **Romans 5:8** says, “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **So this is the Good News**—that even though we were still enemies of God (as one translation says), **Jesus came to die on the cross and pay the price for our sins so that we could have a relationship with Him again.** **John 3:16** says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

This brings us to the last and most important part. **John 5:24** says, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; **he has crossed over from death to life.**” Jesus Christ himself even says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (**John 10:10**), and **Romans 5:1** says, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**So how can I have peace with God, life to the full, and be confident of eternal life like these verses say?** First, through an honest prayer to God, I have to admit that I’m not perfect—that I can’t escape my sins, and I can’t save myself. I follow this admission by believing that Jesus Christ died for me on the cross and rose from the grave, conquering death and sin. Then I invite Jesus Christ to live in me and be the Lord of my life, accepting His free gift of eternal life with Him.

The prayer can go something like this: *“Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I need You to forgive me. I know that You died a painful death so that my sins could be washed clean. Thank you. I want to make You the Lord of my life, and I will trust and follow You. Everything I have is Yours now. In Your name, Lord. Amen.”*

There is nothing magical about these words. It’s not the words themselves that make things right between you and God—it’s whether or not your heart really means it. We know this because in **1 Samuel 16:7**, the Bible says, “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

The best part of this whole process is that it doesn’t matter how badly we’ve messed up, Jesus is powerful enough to save anyone from their sins—even the worst of us. **Romans 10:13** says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” That’s fantastic news—no matter how badly we’ve messed up, we can place our complete trust in Jesus, and He will wipe all of our sins off the face of the earth. **Jesus is the bridge to life.**

**THIS TOOL IS MEANT TO BE SHARED.**

**To download the Bridge to Life illustration visit [navlink.org/bridge](http://navlink.org/bridge)**

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# Your New Life in the Spirit

by Usdm



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1. Your New Life in Christ
2. Your New Life in God's Love
3. Your New Life in the Spirit
4. Growing in Your New Life
5. Your New Life in Relationships
6. Leader's Guide

**Remember:** In order to experience God's love and forgiveness you must confess your sin as you become aware of it, and turn again to your heavenly Father.

An amazing transformation has begun to take place since you received Christ as your Lord and Savior.

You are now beginning to live the Christian life, which isn't a standard of performance nor a code of ethics, but a vital, personal relationship with a loving God.

Read John 7:37-39.

Unfortunately, not every believer experiences the power to live his life as God intended.

Just as our relationship with God is totally dependent on what God has done through Jesus Christ, so the power to live a dynamic Christian life also comes totally from God.

This computer has all the potential to do what it was created to do, but it has no power of its own.



Similarly, through your new identity in Christ, you have all the potential you need to live as a new creation in Christ. But, you must continually draw from the proper source of power.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE POWER SOURCE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

*Who is He?*

Read 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18.

*Why did He come?*

1. To glorify Christ (John 16:14)
2. To lead you into all truth (John 16:13)
3. To dwell in you (Romans 8:9)
4. To convict the world of sin and justice (John 16:8)

*What part does the Holy Spirit play in your relationship with God?*

Read Romans 8:14-16.

- *What does He desire to produce in your life?*

Read Galatians 5:22, 23.

- *How do you think these qualities of God's character (fruit of the Spirit) will grow in your life?*

Read John 15:4, 5.

- *What does Jesus say we are to do in order to see this fruit produced in us?*
- *Which of these qualities would you most like God to begin developing within you?*
- *What does He desire to equip you to do?*

Read Acts 1:8.

- *What is a witness?*
- *What does it mean to you to be a witness for Christ?*
- *Why do you think the Holy Spirit's power is needed to be a witness?*



### **Summary**

The degree to which these traits are manifested in one's life depends upon the extent to which the Christian trusts the Lord with every detail of his life, and upon his maturity in Christ.

One who is only beginning to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit should not be discouraged if he is not as fruitful as more mature Christians who have known and

experienced this truth for a longer period.

# **MANY CHRISTIANS ARE NOT EXPERIENCING THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER**

You became a Christian through the Holy Spirit's work (John 3:1-8).

From that moment you have been indwelt by the Spirit (John 14:16, 17).

Though all Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, not all Christians are filled with (directed and empowered by) the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us there are three kinds of people:



### Natural.

(1 Corinthians 2:14)  
Those who have not trusted Christ's death to pay for their sins and thus the Holy Spirit does not indwell their lives.



### Self-Directed

S—Self is in control  
+ — Christ does not indwell the unbeliever

### Carnal.

(1 Corinthians 3:1,  
2) Those who have trusted Christ to pay for their sins, but who are trusting their own efforts to live the Christian life (*Carnal* refers to "flesh" as opposed to Spirit."). When you trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of your sin, all your sins were forgiven... past, present, and future.



### Self-Directed

S—Self is still in control  
+ — Christ indwells the believer, but is not allowed to direct the life

### Spiritual.

(1 Corinthians 2:15)  
Those who have trusted Christ as their Savior and are trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life.



### Christ-Directed

+ — Christ has been placed in control  
S — Self is yielding to Christ's direction

The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life by which Christ lives His life in and through you in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## YOU CAN BE FILLED WITH (DIRECTED AND EMPOWERED BY) THE HOLY SPIRIT

You can be filled with the Holy Spirit only by faith, by trusting God to produce in you the fruitful life He promised.

You must prepare your heart in three ways.

1. **Desire** sincerely to be filled (Matthew 5:6).

*Why do you think it is important to God that you desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit?*

*How would you express your level of desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit?*

2. **Confess** all known sin (1 John 1:9; Psalms 66:18).

*Why do you think it is important to confess all known sin in order to be filled with the Spirit?*

3. **Yield** your total life to Christ (Romans 12:1, 2). (Yielding involves your willingness to obey God in anything He has shown you to do.)

*What do you think yielding every area of your life to Christ would involve?*

**You must respond by faith, trusting the Holy Spirit to empower your life for Christ.**

God has *commanded* you to be filled with His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

God has *promised* to answer all your requests which are in accord with His will (1 John 5:14, 15).

You can be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone. This prayer is a good way to express that faith:

*“Dear Father, I acknowledge that I have sinned against You. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ’s death on the cross. I now invite Christ to take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. As an expression of my faith, I now thank You for directing my life and filling me with the Holy Spirit.”*

*How accurately does this prayer reflect the desire of your heart?*

If this is the desire of your heart, you can pray this prayer and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

## **YOU CAN BE CONTINUALLY EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (SPIRITUAL BREATHING)**

This week, if you find that you have retaken control of your life through sin – any definite act of disobedience – simply breathe spiritually (exhale the impure and inhale the pure). This important exercise will enable you to continue to experience Christ’s loving control in your life.

Exhale-Confess your sin (1 John 1:9; Hebrews 10:1-25).

*What are the three factors involved in confession?*

1.

2.

3.

**Inhale-Yield control of your life to Christ** (Romans 12:1, 2).

**Claim**, by faith, the fullness of the Spirit in your life (Ephesians 5:18).

**Trust** that He now directs and empowers you (1 John 5:14, 15).

Continue to spend 15 minutes alone each day in Bible reading and prayer.

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# POWER PLAY

HOLY SPIRIT [HOW DO I LIVE DIFFERENTLY?]

## THE HURDLE

*I was so excited the day I asked Christ into my life, but now I'd say it's harder to live for God than I imagined. Sometimes my teammates have more influence on how I act than God does. I still find myself getting angry or worrying more about what others think than God. I read my Bible but I don't always do what it says.*

*My Christian friends remind me that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," but frankly, I don't always feel like it. I don't seem to feel the same passion for Jesus that they do and sometimes I wonder if I didn't get the whole package when I trusted Christ. Some people get emotional when they talk about the Holy Spirit, but that's not my personality. I want to learn but I just don't know how to put the pieces together.*

In what ways can you relate?

Have you ever felt:

- Apathy about the things of God?
- Powerless to do the right thing?
- Confused about why many Christians live like non-Christians?
- Your 'lived' behavior doesn't match your verbal commitment?

It's been said that "The Christian life isn't difficult to live—it's impossible to live." What do you think about this statement?

**“** \_\_\_\_\_  
**To deny we need and want power is to deny that we hope to be effective.**

Liz Smith  
Columnist

**”**

## I HEAR YA

The Bible is full of people who were trying to figure out how to live in the Spirit's power...

**Paul speaking about himself:** "I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate ... for the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish." (Romans 7:15-19 NASB)

**Jesus speaking to Nicodemus:** "...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3,5)

**King David after sinning:** "... do not take the Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:126)

**Paul speaking to the believers in Corinth:** "I had to talk as though you belonged to this world... for you are still controlled by your own sinful desires... You are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord." (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NLT)

## LISTEN UP

Like an encouraging teammate or coach who helps us do more than we could on our own, the Holy Spirit enables us to live a life impossible to live on our own. The gospel according to John has much to say about the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was preparing His disciples to live and love in a totally different way, He knew they would need the person and power of the Spirit to do it.

Read John 14:16,17, 26.

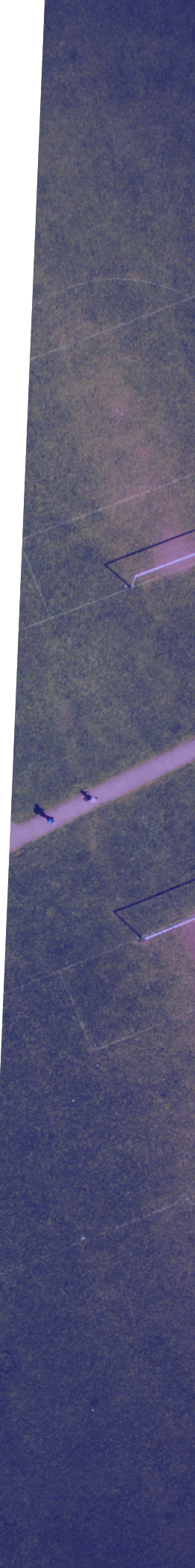
1. Identify the words and phrases that describe the role and relationship that the Holy Spirit would have in our lives.
2. In some Bibles, translators use the word comforter or advocate instead of helper. The word is taken from a Greek word meaning “to come alongside to give courage.” What does this say about God and His commitment to you?
3. List some characteristics of an influential teacher or coach in your life. Why would it be important to have a constant teacher and guide within you for your new life in Christ?
4. What aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work in your life are described here? We not only need guidance to the truth but also correction when we’re heading in the wrong direction. How might the Holy Spirit communicate these to you?
5. Romans 8:11 tell us that the Spirit lives in all true believers. If this is so, why do you think most believers don’t experience the life that God offers?

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## FOR THE RECORD

Christ forgave us, made us spiritually alive, and wants to empower our lives—but we still have the capacity to sin. We naturally want to do things our way, in our time, under our control, and for our gain. If we want to experience the Spirit’s power in our lives, we must willingly submit ourselves moment by moment to God, yielding ourselves to Him as a conscious

decision. When we ask the Spirit to control us, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead gives us new affections and strength to follow through on them. Jesus wants to live in the world through us, but we must purposely allow him constant access to our lives so He can!



## YOUR MOVE

The word filled in the Bible means controlled and empowered: filled with fear, filled with rage, filled with joy. Being filled describes what takes control or dominates your life. Ephesians 5:17,18 talks about not being drunk with wine, but instead being filled with the Spirit. The writer is not using this occasion to speak against drunkenness; he is using drunkenness as an illustration to help us understand the influence of the Holy Spirit.

1. How do you describe a person under the influence of alcohol? How might being under the influence of the Spirit be similar? Different?
2. You can know the Holy Spirit is in control of your life when you meet 3 conditions:

a. **Yield to God.** Relinquish control of your life—step back and allow the Holy Spirit to run the show! *Are there any areas of your life you are unwilling to yield to God? What? Why?*

b. **Confess Sin He Reveals.** Confess means to agree with the Holy Spirit that the sin He shows us is wrong (1 John 1:9). When we ignore sin brought to our mind, we short-circuit His power and grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). *Are there sins He is bringing to your attention that you are trying to hide?*

c. **Depend on God.** Galatians 5:16 encourages us to walk by the Spirit, turning our attention to Him with moment by moment trust. *What are you afraid God will do if you surrender these areas to him?*

3. Memorize 1 John. 1:9. Allow the truth of His grace to wash you of guilt and discouragement, and ask Him to give you courage and strength to live in the freedom His Spirit promises.

4. *Spiritual breathing* is an exercise you can do every moment the Spirit prompts you.

**Exhale** the impurities (sin) that poison you and others through confession. Identify the specific attitude or action that is impure, destructive, or selfish and agree with God that it's wrong.

**Inhale** the fresh air of His forgiveness by depending on the Word and Spirit of God to give you truth and power to live as He intends.

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**“**

***I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of (them), there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled.***

D. L. Moodyz  
Evangelist

**”**

For additional work on your own, visit **The Training Room** on the next page for extra exercises on living in the Spirit's power.

## AS YOU ENTER

“YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU AND YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES.” (ACTS 1:8)

Compare the different aspects the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

Aspect of Work	Primary Passages	Purpose	Explanation
Filling of the Spirit	Ephesians 5:18	Empowerment to live for Christ	We are filled when we meet His conditions; a repeated experience.
Baptism of the Spirit	1 Corinthians 12:13	Identifies us with the Body of Christ	True of all believers; a one-time event at salvation; a non-experiential truth; greatly misused term today.
Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:22-23 John 15	Makes us more Christ-like	Character building; the production of godly qualities into our everyday life; grows over time and dependence.
Gifts of the Spirit	1 Corinthians 12-14 Ephesians 4:7-16	Equips us for ministry	Every believer is given one or more (never all) spiritual gifts to serve. None are more spiritual than others.
Ministries of the Spirit	John 16:7-15 Romans 8:14-16, 26-27	Convict, lead, teach, assure, pray for us	Everyday involvement in our lives to help us know and follow Christ.

### Abiding in Christ Produces Fruit

Read John 15:1-11 and answer the following questions:

1. What is necessary in order for the branch to bear fruit?
2. Look up the word “abide” or “remain”. How is this related to your spiritual life?
3. What happens to the branches that are not connected to the vine?
4. Ways to stay connected to the vine: Study God’s Word, Pray, and Fellowship with other Christians. Which ones do you need to spend more time doing?

### FYI about “Being Filled with the Spirit”

- Though all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, not all Christians are filled with the Spirit.
- This is a command, meaning we have to act on it. God put the Holy Spirit in us, but we have to allow Him to work.
- The Holy Spirit came in once to stay. Being filled is a repeated action. When we take charge of our lives and walk under our own power, we are not filled with the Spirit.
- Filled does not mean we get more of the Spirit, it means He gets more of us.

## AS YOU LEAVE

- » TELL GOD EACH MORNING THAT YOU WANT TO LIVE FOR HIM.
- » PRACTICE YOUR SPIRITUAL BREATHING EXERCISES EVERY DAY.
- » BE THANKFUL FOR THE FRUIT HE IS PRODUCING IN YOUR LIFE.



# Satisfied?

by Keith Davy



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**Satisfaction: (n.) fulfillment of one's needs, longing or desires.**

What words would you use to describe your current experience as a Christian?

*Growing Frustrated Disappointing Fulfilled Forgiven Stuck Struggling Joyful Defeated Exciting  
Up and down Empty Discouraged Duty Intimate Mediocre Painful Dynamic Guilty Vital So-so  
Others?*

Do you desire more? Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:37-38).

What did Jesus mean? John, the biblical author, went on to explain, "By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John 7:39).

Jesus promised that God's Holy Spirit would satisfy the thirst, or deepest longings, of all who believe in Jesus Christ. However, many Christians do not understand the Holy Spirit or how to experience Him in their daily lives.

**The following principles will help you understand and enjoy God's Holy Spirit. . .**

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**Divine: (adj.) given by God.**

God has given us His Spirit so that we can experience intimacy with Him and enjoy all He has for us. The Holy Spirit is the source of our deepest satisfaction.

*The Holy Spirit is God's permanent presence with us.*

“Jesus said, ‘And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth’” (John 14:16,17).

*The Holy Spirit enables us to understand and experience all God has given us.*

“ We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

*The Holy Spirit enables us to experience many things:*

1. A genuine new spiritual life (John 3:1-8)
2. The assurance of being a child of God (Rom. 8:15-16)
3. The infinite love of God (Rom. 5:5; Ephesians 3:18-19)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things...We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15, 16).

But those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit (Rom. 8:5, NLT).

**Why are many Christians not satisfied in their experience with God?**

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## THE PRESENT DANGER

**Danger: (n.) a thing that may cause injury, loss or pain.**

We cannot experience intimacy with God and enjoy all he has for us if we fail to depend on His Spirit.

People who trust in their own efforts and strength to live the Christian life will experience failure and frustration, as will those who live to please themselves rather than God.

*We cannot live the Christian life in our own strength.*

“Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” (Galatians 3:3)

*We cannot enjoy all God desires for us if we live by our self-centered desires.*

“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want” (Galatians 5:17).

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

**How can we develop a lifestyle of depending on the Spirit?**

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## THE INTIMATE JOURNEY

## **Journey: (n.) any course from one experience to another.**

By walking in the Spirit, we increasingly experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.

*As we walk in the Spirit, we have the ability to live a life pleasing to God.*

“ So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 25).

*As we walk in the Spirit, we experience intimacy with God and all he has for us.*

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self- control” (Galatians 5:22,23).

Faith (trust in God and His promises) is the only way a Christian can live by the Spirit.

### ***Spiritual Breathing***

Spiritual breathing is a powerful word picture which can help you experience moment-by-moment dependence upon the Spirit.

*Exhale* : Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it - agree with God concerning it and thank Him for His forgiveness, according to 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1-25. Confession requires repentance - a change in attitude and action.

*Inhale* : Surrender control of your life to Christ, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power by faith, according to His command (Ephesians 5:18) and promise (1 John 5:14-15).

### **How does the Holy Spirit fill us with His power?**

## **Empower: (v.) to give ability to.**

We are filled with the Spirit by faith, enabling us to experience intimacy with God and enjoy all he has for us.

The essence of the Christian life is what God does in and through us, not what we do for God. Christ's life is reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be directed and empowered by Him.

*By faith, we experience God's power through the Spirit.*

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:16,17).

*Three important questions to ask yourself:*

1. Am I ready to surrender control of my life to our Lord Jesus Christ?
  2. Am I ready now to confess my sins? (1 John 1:9) Sin grieves God's Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). But God in His love has forgiven all of your sins - past, present, and future - because Christ died for you.
  3. Do I sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (John 7:37-39)
- By faith claim the fullness of the Spirit according to

*His Command and Promise:*

God **commands** us to be filled with the Spirit. "... be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)

God **promised** He will always answer when we pray according to His will.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we ask of him" (1 John 5:14-15).

## How to pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit . . .

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### THE TURNING POINT

#### **Turning point: time when a decisive change occurs.**

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone.

Sincere prayer is one way of expressing our faith. The following is a suggested prayer:

*Dear Father, I need you. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as you commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this is the name of Jesus. I now thank you for filling me with the Holy Spirit and directing my life.*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If so, you can pray right now and trust God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

#### *How to know that you are filled by the Holy Spirit*

1. Did you ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit?
2. Do you know that you are now filled with Holy Spirit?
3. On what authority? (On the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word: Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:22- 23.)

As you continue to depend on God's Spirit moment by moment you will experience and enjoy intimacy with God all He has for you - a truly rich and satisfying life.

## **An important reminder ...**

### *Do Not Depend on Feelings*

The promise of God's Word, the Bible - not our feelings - is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. Flying a jet can illustrate the relationship among fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (The result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).

To be transported by a jet, we must place our faith in the trustworthiness of the aircraft and the pilot who flies it. Our feelings of confidence or fear do not affect the ability of the jet to transport us, they do affect how much we enjoy the trip. In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

### *Now That You are Filled With the Holy Spirit*

Thank God that the Spirit will enable you:

- To glorify Christ with your life (John 16:14).
- To grow in your understanding of God and His Word (1 Corinthians 2:14,15).
- To live a life pleasing to God (Galatians 5:16-23)

Remember the promise of Jesus: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth: (Acts 1:8).

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# THE COMPASS

A TOOL FOR DISCIPLERS

## The Spirit-Filled Life

### Conversation On the Journey

#### Who is the Holy Spirit?

While the focus of the lesson is on how to be filled, or empowered, by the Holy Spirit, there are a few foundational points concerning the Holy Spirit that need to be clarified before you can proceed. The first is a basic understanding of who the Holy Spirit is. What you want to ascertain is how much they already understand. If they don't have the faintest idea, you may want to spend the whole appointment simply discussing this, and save this lesson for the next week.

So how do you find out how much they know? Simple. Ask them a question like: How would you describe or define the Holy Spirit? If they answer, "A Marvel comic character," you're going to need to pause here and look at some passages that speak of the identity and role of the Spirit.

The basic fact you want to make sure they know is that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. They need to know He is a person. He can be grieved (Eph 4:30); lied to (Acts 5:3); teach us (Luke 12:12); lead and direct us (Acts 20:28). Thus, He has volition, emotion, and intellect. He is a person distinct from the Father and the Son. He came to glorify Christ and He works in Christians to conform them to the image of Christ.

#### Where is the Holy Spirit?

The second foundational teaching is that all Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment they trust Christ (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor 12:13). So here you might want to ask your disciple, "Where is the Holy Spirit?" Again, an answer like "Chicago" is an indicator you'll have to repair their foundation before you can build further. Remind your disciple that the moment they trusted Christ, the Holy Spirit entered their lives and will never leave them.

These things should already be understood coming into this lesson. If not, take the lesson and teach these basic truths. If they know these basic truths you're ready to help them to better understand how they can enjoy the empowerment of the Spirit.

[Continued >>](#)

### This Week's Excursion

After becoming a Christian, many believers feel that it is now up to them and their willpower to live a holy and pleasing life before God. Yet, as good as our intentions may be, we are incapable of living a life pleasing to God without His help. That help is found through the person of the Holy Spirit. Your disciple needs to understand the four most basic concepts that increase, or limit, the empowerment or influence of the Holy Spirit. They are: submitting to Christ's lordship of our lives, confessing sin, relying moment by moment on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and abiding in Christ.

# The Spirit-Filled Life

## Conversation On the Journey

### How to be filled with the Holy Spirit

While all believers are indwelt by the Spirit, not all are empowered by the Spirit, and not all are empowered equally.

The concept of being empowered by the Spirit is often called, “being filled with the Spirit.” The terminology is fine as long as your disciple knows that he is indwelt by the Spirit no matter what, and that what you are talking about is how the Holy Spirit can greater influence his life.

### Surface the Desire

Sometimes it’s a good idea to create a need before looking at the solution. You might look at the passage in Galatians (5:22) where the passage elaborates on the character, or fruit, that the Spirit produces in our lives. You can read through the list and ask, “Which of these traits do you lack, or want to be true of you?”

Another way to surface the need is to read Romans 7:7-25. This seems to express the frustration of trying to live out the Christian life without the Spirit’s empowerment, by sheer willpower. You might want to ask: Can you identify with this struggle? How? In what way?

You may come up with better ways to surface the need. Give it some thought.

### How to be Filled

Ephesians 5:18-20 says:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a contrast being made between being filled with alcohol and being filled with the Spirit. There is also a similarity, which is the idea of influence. You might want to ask, “In what ways do you see these ideas as contrasting; in what ways are they similar?”

The metaphor of drinking can be a helpful one, in that it brings out the idea of influence. Under the influence of alcohol, people are emboldened to speak, express love, and become reflective. They also turn to alcohol for empowerment, comfort, courage, and companionship. These are helpful pictures of influence. Of course alcohol is the short-term counterfeit, while the reality is found in being filled with the Spirit.

So what causes a person to get more drunk, and to come more under the influence of alcohol? They drink more. The difference with the Christian is not that he or she needs more of the Spirit, but influence increases when the Spirit has more of them. While there are many things that affect the Spirit’s control of our life, there are four primary means by which the Spirit gains greater control, or influence, over our lives – where He consumes more of us.

## Next Steps

Ask your disciple in which of these areas they can take some action to increase the influence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Ask what they think might be the greatest hindrance to the Spirit’s control of their life. Close in prayer about this, or these, issues.

# The Spirit-Filled Life

## Conversation On the Journey

### Lordship

Romans 12:1 says, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

You might want to ask a question like, “What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?” The question you want to get at with your disciple is, “Does God have control of every area of your life?” This concept is often referred to as “lordship.”

One way you can bring out this idea is to draw out the floor plan of a house. Make the rooms correspond to different areas in their lives. Make the reading room what they watch or listen to. Make the bedroom symbolize their relationships. The rec room, their social life. You get the picture. You might ask, “What room would Jesus feel most at home in?” Though you would not want to end the question with a preposition like I just did. Or you might ask, “Which room do you keep to yourself?”

You want to emphasize that critical to being fully empowered by the Spirit is seeking to live each of these areas under the control or guidance of the Holy Spirit. Withholding rooms, areas of their lives, will severely impact the influence the Holy Spirit has. Nothing will bring home this idea better than examples from your own life. So give some thought in advance to a few examples, and describe how you turned these areas of your life over to the Lord.

### Confession

When we sin, we take control of our lives. By definition, then, the Holy Spirit is not in control we are. The importance of confessing sin whenever we become aware of it is critical to keeping the Holy Spirit in control of our life. You might ask your disciple how often they are confessing sin? When they become aware of sin do they immediately confess and give back control to God? You should probably share some examples from your own life. Examples your disciple can relate to, or you suspect might be issues in his or her life.

### Reliance

The third concept is “reliance,” which is turning to God throughout the day for enablement and empowerment. A good example you might point out is a cigarette smoker. Every time they sense a need, they “light-up.” If they feel lonely, they “light-up.” If they feel scared or nervous, they “light-up.” If they need confidence, they “light-up.”

We can find ourselves doing the same thing with food, music, TV, even coffee. Did you ever eat when you weren’t hungry—only lonely? Throughout each day we sense the need for empowerment, comfort, enablement, wisdom, companionship. We often turn to substitutes like food, film, sleep, caffeine, or even nicotine to meet these needs. God wants us to reflexively turn to Him throughout the day and ask for comfort, empowerment, wisdom, direction, etc. This constant reliance on the Spirit keeps us intimately connected to the Lord throughout the day, and allows our thirsts to be met by His “living water.”

## Side Trails

Transferable Concept 3: How you can walk in the Spirit. Bill Bright. New Life publications.

Thirsty. (Booklet)

Living Supernaturally in Christ. Bill Bright. New Life publications.

Order at [crustore.org](http://crustore.org)

The Mystery of the Holy Spirit. R.C. Sproul. Tyndale House.

Baptism and Fullness: the work of the Holy Spirit Today. John Stott. IV press.

Order at [christianbook.com](http://christianbook.com)

# The Spirit-Filled Life

## Conversation On the Journey

You might want to ask your disciple in what ways he or she meets their thirsts? You might explain what this idea of reliance looks like in your life. You also should remind them that this is a process and not something that changes over night. They should be turning to the Lord increasingly with their needs throughout the day. Just like a cigarette smoker takes puffs all day long, they should be turning to the Lord all day long. A life of abiding and reliance.

### Abiding

The rest of our Ephesians passage says, “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” For lack of a better word, it is the picture of abiding, which means making ourselves at home with God. In John 15:5 it says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

You might want to share this illustration. Have you ever been to a party where the atmosphere is such that it inclines you to want to sin? The music, the lighting, how people are dressed, the conversations: they all set a mood or an atmosphere that can cultivate our flesh.

The passage mentions activities like singing spiritual songs, praising, and giving thanks. Engaging in activities such as these throughout the day sets an atmosphere in our hearts that cultivate the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit. You might share some of the things you do in your day to cultivate that intimacy with the Lord that sets an atmosphere in your mind and heart and thus maximizes the Spirit’s influence in your life.

### Summary

There are four main things (there are others) which are critical to living a life controlled by the Spirit: lordship, confession, reliance, and abiding. The Christian strives to maximize the control of the Spirit in their lives through engaging in these activities and processes.

†End

## Notes to Self



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# Theological Perspective on the Holy Spirit

by Scott Crocker

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There's a story told of the famous tenors Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, and Jose Carreras performing together in Los Angeles. A reporter tried to get the men to admit to competitiveness among the three gifted singers. Domingo's calm reply was, "You have to put all of your concentration into opening your heart to the music. You can't be rivals when you're making music together." <sup>1</sup> The three tenors recognized that in order to be able to make music together that others would want to listen to, they had to put their egos aside and focus on the task at hand. If one tried to prove that their voice was better or tried to take over another's part, the end result would not be a display of musical brilliance, but rather of selfish immaturity.

It seems that among Christians today we can sometimes have difficulty working together in harmony. Many times it is our differing views on theology and doctrine that can be what divides us and causes discord among us. Certainly, the Bible teaches us that proper doctrine is important and that we should not take our beliefs lightly (1 Tim. 4:16). However, if we are considering breaking fellowship with someone over a particular issue, we need to be certain that the issue deals with something that the Bible is not only clear on, but is of primary importance (such as the deity of Christ or salvation by grace through faith).

An area that has the potential to cause much division among Christians is our view of the Holy Spirit. Though an incorrect view of the Holy Spirit and His workings is a cause for concern, many times there is disunity within the Body of Christ over issues that are not at the conviction level. Such areas could include an overemphasis on speaking in tongues, a misunderstanding of Holy Spirit baptism or an incorrect view of what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

Within the coming paragraphs, I hope to bring some clarity as to who the Holy Spirit is and suggest an appropriate perspective on some issues that frequently arise when discussing the Holy Spirit. It is my prayer that we would have a proper biblical perspective on the Holy Spirit, yet allow for differences in points of view when it comes to non-critical areas. For “God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

## WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Though often mistakenly assumed to be like “The Force” from the classic Star Wars films, The Holy Spirit is not just some mysterious force or “It.” The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity, God the Spirit. II Corinthians 3:17-18 refers to the Spirit as the Lord. He is just as much God as the Father or the Son and is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Son. He possesses intellect (John 14:26), will (1 Corin. 12:11) and emotions (Eph. 4:30).

To most Christians, there is much that remains a mystery about the Holy Spirit. Because God is truly unique, our efforts to explain or fully comprehend Him will inevitably fall short. Some have even bought into wrong views of the Holy Spirit and, specifically, the Trinity as a result of bad

pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit. A widespread false view of the Trinity that has been around for centuries is known as Modalism or Sabellianism. The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry says the following about Modalism:

Modalism is probably the most common theological error concerning the nature of God. It is a denial of the Trinity which states that God is a single person who, throughout biblical history, has revealed Himself in three consecutive modes, or forms. Thus, God is a single person who first manifested himself in the mode of the Father in Old Testament times. At the incarnation, the mode was the Son. After Jesus' ascension, the mode is the Holy Spirit. These modes are consecutive and never simultaneous. In other words, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit never all exist at the same time, only one after another. Modalism denies the distinctiveness of the three persons in the Trinity even though it retains the divinity of Christ. <sup>2</sup>

Dr. James White (director of Alpha and Omega Ministries) offers the following definition for the Trinity:

*“Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally co-equal and co-eternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>*

A proper understanding of the Holy Spirit is needed in order to understand His role in our lives. To assume that the Holy Spirit is not God or to take all attention off of the Father and the Son in order to focus on certain workings of the Spirit are both incorrect and unscriptural points of view.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT \*

One of the great books of our time on the ministry of the Holy Spirit is Gordon Fee's *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*. In one of his chapters, Fee provides the Old Testament context for the anticipated fulfillment of God's promise to send His Spirit.

I think without this context, the full impact of the notion that God's presence indwells us will always evade us. Here is a brief summary of that history:

## **OUT OF EGYPT**

It's about 1446 B.C. and as the Israelites venture out of Egypt to find the land God has promised to them, they stop at Mount Sinai where God's presence dwells. This fact was impressed upon the people by rumblings, smoke, and fire that came from the mountain. At Mount Sinai, God tells Moses, the Israelites' leader, His presence will leave the mountain and He will go with them to the Promised Land. God reveals to Moses that a portable temple known as the Tabernacle, or the Tent of Meeting, will house His presence on the journey. Chapter upon painful chapter describes the exact instructions for making this Tabernacle.

What distinguishes this wandering nation from all nations of the world is that the presence of God goes with them everywhere. They will be known as the "People of His Presence." Equally symbolic, as they camp along the journey, the Tabernacle is always erected in the midst of the tribes and clans of Israel-God's presence is in their midst.

When they first erect the Tabernacle, they know immediately that God's presence is in their midst. In Exodus 40:34-35, we read:

*Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

Was it always that smoky in the Tabernacle? No, this happened only at the inaugural erection of the Tabernacle. God gave them a visual aid that His presence was truly among them. It was quite a thing to conceive that the God of the universe tabernacled or dwelled among men.

## **THE TEMPLE**

Remember that the Tabernacle was like a portable Temple. It was constructed like an enormous tent—God under the big top. God's place of dwelling among the Israelites would remain in this portable housing for about 450 years until King David's son, Solomon, built the actual Temple—a more permanent structure.



It's now about 980 B.C. God tells Solomon to build the Temple in Jerusalem as the permanent dwelling place for the Lord's presence among His people. Solomon builds it, and on Inauguration Day, or the day of dedication for the Temple, the same amazing phenomenon happens again. Once again, there is no doubt that God's presence has filled the Temple.

When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever" (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

The Temple was the hub of Israel. It was the symbol of God's presence dwelling among them. Everyone traveled to the Temple several times of year, because this is where the presence of God dwelled.

Here's where the story could get confusing. Several hundred years later (about 600 B.C.), due to continued disobedience to God, the Israelites are exiled from their land by the invading Babylonians. Jerusalem is ransacked and Solomon's Temple is demolished.

In their exile, preachers, called prophets, tell the Israelites that they will once again be restored to their land and that they will again enjoy the presence of God in their midst. Sure enough, 70 years later, through God's miraculous provision, the Israelites are enabled to return to their homeland, Israel. Their first order of business is to rebuild the Temple, the symbol of God's presence.

## **THE REBUILT TEMPLE**

So, they rebuild the Temple (now about 520 B.C.), but with little resources. It's a pretty scrawny looking Temple. It looks more like a movie theatre than a house of worship. Still, they dedicate their new Temple just as Solomon did. But, low and behold ... nothing. No sparks. No smoke. Nothing.

This disappointment, along with more messages from the prophets, inspired a national expectation that there was another Temple yet to come. A future Temple, more glorious than even Solomon had constructed would eventually be built. When the Messiah came, He would be the one to rebuild the Temple and God's Spirit would be poured out in an abundance that they had never experienced or could imagine (Haggai 2).

## **THE COMING OF CHRIST**

We now fast forward to 32 A.D. Israel is once more dominated by a foreign power, the Roman Empire. Jesus, the Messiah, had come. He was crucified and resurrected. Many probably wondered if he had been the Messiah, why was there no new Temple? Why were the Israelites not liberated? Why was God's Spirit not poured out in overflowing measure like the prophets had foretold? But then we read in the second chapter of Acts:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4).

Throughout the rest of Acts there is a new dynamic. We read "and the Spirit told them to go here," and "the Spirit led them there," and the disciples were "filled with the Spirit," and "spoke in the Spirit." People were being healed, the disciples preached powerful messages, and people believed in Christ. It was apparent that God's presence was once again in the midst of His people. His protection, wisdom, direction, and power were all back, and in ways more dramatic than ever experienced in the history of God's people.

Now, if you're a Jewish Christian—like the disciples—you'd be ecstatic. The anticipation of the powerful coming of the Holy Spirit throughout the Old Testament is a hallmark of the Messiah's reign. You would finally be able to tell your neighbors, "Hah! Told you so! Jesus is the Messiah." But you would also have one big question: Where in the world is the new glorious Temple the

Messiah was going to build to house His Presence? Then, it dawns on you-you are the new temple. God's presence dwells within you. His Holy Spirit is inside of you! And, well, you freak out. How could you ever sin again with His Holy presence within you?

Now, I know that was a terribly long story. But, you simply must appreciate this amazing truth: God dwells in you. And, if we need to drudge up 1500 years of Jewish history to appreciate it, it is well worth it.

Go through these passages with your disciples so they can grasp this ungraspable truth. It also makes it clear why Paul, in dealing with sexual morality, sees as the greatest scandal that we would bring such impurity into the new house of the Lord.

## HOLY SPIRIT TERMINOLOGY

Much of the confusion that results when referring to issues regarding the Holy Spirit could be eliminated if we all had a correct, workable understanding of biblical terms pertaining to the Holy Spirit. Some of the terms frequently misunderstood are the baptism of the Spirit (or Holy Spirit baptism), filling, and gifts of the Spirit. An improper understanding of these terms can lead to confusion, misunderstandings and misrepresentations.

### **BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the act by which the Holy Spirit places someone into the Body of Christ.

Though confused oftentimes with the filling of the Spirit, Holy Spirit baptism is an occurrence that has happened in the life of every believer at the point of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9,11). There are some that would argue that salvation and the baptism of the Spirit do not happen simultaneously. At first glance, this argument has some credibility because there are several instances within the book of Acts where this happens. This may lead some to believe that this is normative for all Christians today.

However, the Book of Acts was written during a transitory time in the history of the early church. Followers of God were transitioning from the Old Testament law to the New Testament commands of Jesus. To assume that everything that happened in the Book of Acts is what is normative now is not consistent with the teachings in the Epistles letters in the New Testament. Rather than being a historical account (such as the book of Acts), the Epistles deal specifically with doctrine.

The cases in which the Holy Spirit “came upon” individuals separately from receiving Christ appear to be among those that have not received the full gospel message. It is also notable that each of these instances happened among four distinct groups of people – Jews (Acts 2:1-5), Samaritans (Acts 8:14- 17), Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48) and John’s disciples (Acts 19:1-7). Respected theologian Millard Erickson explains these instances:

*“It is my interpretation that these cases did indeed involve people who were regenerated before they received the Holy Spirit. They were the last of the Old Testament believers. They were regenerate because they believed in the revelation they had received and feared God. They had not received the Spirit, however, for the promise of His coming could not be fulfilled until Jesus had ascended.” 4*

Furthermore, it is not biblically accurate to use the terms filling and baptism interchangeably. For instance, in I Corinthians 12:13 it says that “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” The word baptized ( baptizo) is in the ‘Aorist, Indicative, Passive’ Greek grammatical construction. It is emphasizing something that has already happened and is a single statement of fact. We are never commanded to be baptized in the Spirit or to seek a baptism in the Spirit because Scripture tells us we have already been baptized in the Spirit. However, we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

## **FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Unlike the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Spirit is not something that is a current reality for all believers in Christ. In Ephesians 5:18, we are commanded to “be filled ( pleroo) with the Spirit.” Unlike baptism, which is a one-time occurrence (Ephesians 4:5), filling is something that can happen over and over, time and time again. In the Greek language, it is in the ‘Present,

Imperative, Passive’ tense. This emphasizes a continuous action and is a command. It literally means to ‘keep on being filled.’ The filling of the Spirit is what empowers and directs the Christian to see spiritual fruit produced and power for Christian service. Just as we become Christians by faith, we are filled with the Spirit by faith. Subsequent to receiving Christ, an individual may have a very dramatic encounter with the Holy Spirit which could be accompanied by a certain spiritual gift manifesting itself. To avoid confusion, though, it is more biblically appropriate to refer to this as a dramatic filling of the Spirit rather than a baptism of the Spirit. In addition, whether one is filled with the Spirit should not be judged based on whether one has spoken in tongues or “felt something.” The filling of the Spirit is not to be validated or invalidated by an outward display of emotion or certain spiritual gifts. Our confidence that we are filled with the Spirit is that God has commanded it in His Word (Ephesians 5:18) and He has promised to answer anything that we ask that is in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14,15).

In one of the most beautiful chapters in Holy Scripture, the Apostle Paul shares about the most important evidence of being filled with the Spirit. After writing about spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul begins to transition in 1 Corin. 12:31 by stating, “But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.” He then goes on to explain that we can possess any kind of miraculous gift that we want, but if we do not have love, then it does not matter (1 Corin. 13:1-3). He proceeds to talk about the attributes of love and concludes chapter 13 in v. 13 with “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” After explaining what true love looks like, Paul then picks up his discussion of spiritual gifts, specifically the gift of speaking in tongues.

## **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

Author William McRae defines a spiritual gift as:

*“An ability to function effectively and significantly in a particular service as a member of Christ’s body, the Church.”<sup>5</sup>*

Spiritual gifts are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in which God demonstrates His power through an individual. In addition, spiritual gifts are for the common good of the Body, they are not for selfgratification (I Corin. 12:7). Gifts of the Spirit are given to us so that we can be effective in service to others as we play the unique role within the Body of Christ that God has for us (Hebrews 2:4). There are three specific places in Scripture where spiritual gifts are listed: Romans 12, I Corinthians 12 & 14, and Ephesians 4. Among the gifts listed in the passages mentioned are three distinct groupings of gifts:

- Equipping gifts: Prophecy, evangelism, pastor, teacher
- Service gifts: Administration, exhortation, faith, giving, service, mercy, leadership
- Sign gifts: Miracles, healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues

Typically when there are disagreements over spiritual gifts, it usually involves the sign gifts. There are those that claim that the sign gifts are more important than some of the other gifts. Some go so far as to even claim that if certain individuals don't possess these gifts, then they aren't really a Christian. Apparently the church at Corinth dealt with this very issue because Paul addresses this subject in I Corinthians 12 when he says:

*“The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable are treated with special modesty.” “(I Corinthians 12:21-23) ”*

Paul says that we all need each other and that none of the gifts are more important than the others (I Corin. 12:4-6) and that we don't all possess all of the gifts (I Corin. 12:27-30). He even claims that God has brought us together as a Body so that there would be no division among us, but that we should all share concern for one another (I Corin. 12:24--25). Isn't it sad that the very reason that God gave us spiritual gifts is oftentimes neglected because we get caught up with focusing on the gifts themselves?

## **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

Galatians 5:22,23 says, “but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Just as a branch on an apple tree receives its nourishment from the roots of the tree in order to produce apples, we cannot produce fruit on our own. The fruit of the Spirit is produced in our lives when we abide in Christ (John 15:5). Frankly, it is impossible to have the fruit of the Spirit produced in our lives when we rely on our own efforts to do it. Things like patience, self-control and kindness do not come naturally to us as sinful human beings. It is by the fruit of the Spirit that Jesus said His followers would be recognized – not whether people displayed a specific spiritual gift. Jesus even went so far as to say that there would be some that would perform great works in His name, even when they did not know Him personally. Christ emphasized the aspect of a personal relationship with Him – not the outward gifts. Look at this passage from Matthew 7:

*“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:15-23) ”*

It is clear from Scripture that God desires for all nine of the fruit of the Spirit to be displayed in our lives. However, this can not necessarily be said about each of the gifts of the Spirit. I Corinthians 12:11 says that the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts “as He wills.” So the true indicator of one’s spiritual maturity is not whether one has a gift of tongues, interpretation, or prophecy, but rather if that person possesses love, joy, peace, patience, etc.

## SPEAKING IN TONGUES

What is the gift of tongues or speaking in tongues? Speaking in tongues is:

*“The act of speaking in a language either unknown to the speaker or incomprehensible to the speaker.”<sup>6</sup>*

It is referred to in Greek as glossolalia, which is taken from two words – glossa and lalia. Glossa refers to: 1) the physical organ of the tongue; 2) Something shaped like a tongue; or 3) A language or dialect. Lalia refers to speech. Thus, glossolalia refers to speaking in languages or tongues.

It does need to be mentioned here that there is a wide spectrum of belief on the issue of speaking in tongues. There are some that would say that the existence of this gift has ceased since its purpose was completed when the biblical canon was established. There are others that claim that speaking in tongues is THE evidence that one is actually a Christian. For our purposes here, I will attempt to take a more middle of the road approach on this matter and provide a biblical framework for the matter of speaking in tongues.

## **THE PURPOSE OF TONGUES**

I Corinthians 14 clearly states that the gift of tongues is unprofitable if they are not interpreted and, therefore, not understood. Also, the fact that those that possessed this gift could be commanded to control their speaking (vv. 27-28) indicates that this gift was not one that was an uncontrollable ecstatic utterance. Rather, when the term glossa is used biblically, it refers to a known human language. The Apostle Paul encourages believers to not be immature in their thinking when it comes to spiritual gifts and, thus, it is important to understand what the Bible does and does not teach about the purpose of speaking in tongues.

According to I Corinthians 14:22, tongues are not for believers, but for unbelievers as a sign from God. Tongues were used as a sign to authenticate God’s message and activity in unbelieving people groups. They were also used as a sign to unbelievers who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah (see I Corinthians 14:21). In the early church, God used the gift of tongues to demonstrate to unbelieving Jews that He was, in fact, identifying Himself through this gospel message. There are some who would argue that tongues are good for self-edification and use I Corinthians 14:4 to back up that



claim. However, it is clear from the context of that passage that Paul is downplaying the significance of this gift. He does not put utmost importance on it and is essentially saying, “What good does it do to speak in tongues when no one else knows what you’re saying? It doesn’t help anybody, but just makes you feel better about yourself.”

For those that would argue that tongues are proof of one’s salvation or evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence in one’s life, it is important to note that speaking in tongues is not unique to Christian cultures. Look at what author William Fitch has to say,

*“In many parts of the world, glossolalia is a well-known fact of life. Buddhist and Shintoist priests speak in alien tongues while in a trance. Speaking in tongues exists as much in South America as it does in India or Australia...Whatever else we may say about glossolalia, we cannot escape the fact that it is not a phenomenon unique to Christianity.”<sup>7</sup>*

Since it is known that non-Christians can speak in tongues or even that this can be an easily learned behavior among Christians, isn’t it unwise to base the judgment of one’s relationship with God on such a faulty foundation? In fact, this gift has often been used by immature individuals as a weapon to demonstrate their deeper spirituality over someone else’s. If, in fact, this gift demonstrates that one has a deeper relationship with God than others, couldn’t we logically conclude that this spiritual depth would result in greater Christ likeness and not harsh judgmentalness and impatience with others?

It is a tragedy that some have been made to feel that their salvation should be questioned, that their walk with God is not sincere or even that they are not as special in God’s eyes as others that have exhibited this gift. Those that turn the Christian life into the “haves” and the “have nots” do a great disservice to the gospel and can be a hindrance to others experiencing the abundant life that Jesus talked about in John 10:10. Since Jesus (or even the Apostle Paul) never indicated that the gift of tongues is the measurement for one’s spirituality, we would be wise to not emphasize this gift either.

## **CRU’S STANCE ON SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

As an interdenominational movement which seeks to minister to all segments of the Body of Christ, the leadership of Cru realizes that there is division within the Body of Christ over the matter of speaking in tongues. Just as we deal with any doctrinal issue not central to the major thrust to which God has called us, we ask our staff, fellows, volunteers, and student leaders to avoid division or confusion by not emphasizing the gift of tongues or using this gift publicly.

Cru takes a biblical stance on speaking in tongues, arising from the framework laid out in I Corinthians 12-14; and we, as a movement, neither condemn nor condone its use. In allowing the private use of tongues we are not endorsing or promoting tongues. Rather, we are giving freedom to spiritually mature leaders within Cru – who believe they have the gift – to choose whether God would have them exercise the gift of tongues privately.

The person being considered for leadership within Cru who privately speaks in tongues must demonstrate strong spiritual maturity, and trustworthiness that they will not promote tongues. The bottom line is that any Cru staff, volunteer, or student leader who feels that he/she has the gift of tongues must refrain from:

a) promoting the public or private use of that gift; and b) using the gift of tongues publicly – restricting any practice of tongues to his/her private devotional life.

## **HOW TO RESPOND**

As has already been mentioned, there are varying perspectives on this matter within the Body of Christ. So how should we deal with this issue when it arises? There are several principles that can be followed: 8

1. We should understand clearly what the Bible teaches about this subject. We should listen to God's Word on this matter and not just our pastor or favorite televangelist. Familiarize yourself with the books of 1st and 2nd Corinthians as these matters are addressed thoroughly.

2. No matter what our opinion on the matter is, we should always speak the truth in love. If a discussion on speaking in tongues can not be entered into without there being an argument, then it is unnecessary to have the discussion.
3. We must not attack those that disagree with us on this issue. No matter what our perspective is, we should recognize that this is not a matter that is worth breaking fellowship with someone. If an individual feels that strongly about it and can't co-exist with you because you don't agree with them, then they have the problem and not you.
4. If our church practices this gift, it is reasonable that it be done according to Scriptural guidelines:
  - a. The gift is not for everyone (I Cor. 12:30)
  - b. Without a translation, the practice of this gift has no value (I Cor. 14:1-5)
  - c. It is more important to speak in your own language (I Cor. 14:18-19)
  - d. No more than two or three are to speak in tongues in one service (I Cor. 14:27)
  - e. There should be one speaker and interpreter at a time (I Cor. 14:27)
  - f. If there is no interpreter, the person who has the gift of tongues should remain silent (I Cor. 14:28)
  - g. The gift of tongues is not uncontrollable (I Co. 14:32,33)

## CONCLUSION

As a mature believer in Christ, it is vitally important to not only understand what the Bible teaches in regard to the Holy Spirit, but it is of primary importance that our lives are a reflection of Jesus in us. Understanding who the Holy Spirit is and the role that He plays in our life should result in spiritual fruit being produced in our lives – both in our lives and the lives that are touched by our walk with Christ.

I trust that this brief examination of the Holy Spirit will not only help you in your spiritual development, but will also help you as you lead others. May a proper understanding of the Holy Spirit, His gifts and, most importantly, the fruit He produces draw you closer to Him. I pray that this

will help lessen the division that is so often caused within the Body of Christ over matters pertaining to the Holy Spirit and I hope that this will help you to live in greater harmony with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

*Rev. Scott M. Crocker is a ten-year veteran staff member of Cru and The Impact Movement. He is the author of Finding Key Leaders and Building Impact Movements and is a graduate of Central Michigan University. He currently resides in Orlando, Florida with his wife, Lori, and their three children.*

#### NOTES

1 Edward K. Rowell, *Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching*. Baker Books, 1997. p. 106

2 The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, [www.carm.org/heresy/modalism.htm](http://www.carm.org/heresy/modalism.htm).

3 James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity: Recovering the Heart of Christian Belief*. Bethany House Publishers, 1998. p. 26.

4 Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, Second Edition*. Grand Rapids, 1998. p. 895.

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6 Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. Harper's Row, 1985. p. 1081.

7 William Fitch, *The Ministry of the Holy Spirit*. Zondervan, 1974. pp. 65-66.

8 Paul Sartarelli, *The Gift of Tongues* (1 Cor. 12-14; Acts 2).

# Experiencing the Adventure

The Christian life is so simple that we stumble over the very simplicity of it, and yet it is so difficult that no one can live it.

by Bill Bright -



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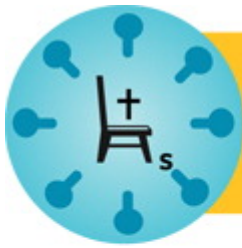
## Walk in the Spirit

1. Experiencing the Adventure
2. Be Prepared for Spiritual Conflict
3. Know Your Resources as a Child of God
4. Live By Faith
5. Self-Study Guide and Group Discussion Questions

A medical doctor approached me with great excitement at the conclusion of our training conference. He was overflowing with joy and excitement.

“Since I have learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in His power, the Christian life has become a great adventure for me!” he exclaimed. “Now, I want to experience this same adventure with Christ.”

Would you like to know how to enjoy what this man and millions of other Christians have experienced? You too can know the adventure of a full, abundant, purposeful and fruitful life in Christ!



## FRUITFULNESS ABUNDANCE

- † Christ is in the life and on the throne
- S Self is yielding to Christ
- Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in Harmony with God's plan

If you have been living in spiritual defeat -- powerless and fruitless, wondering if there is any validity to the Christian life -- there is hope for you! What greater promise could Christ offer to the Christian than the assurance that he can walk daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and experience an abundant and fruitful life of purpose and adventure? Here is His promise:

*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

*And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.*

*You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Certain basic spiritual truths, when understood and experienced by faith, bring revolutionary spiritual benefits. These proven principles can help you to be more consistent in your walk with God and be more effective in your witness for our dear Savior.

The Christian life, properly understood, is not complex nor difficult. As a matter of fact, the Christian life is very simple. It is so simple that we stumble over the very simplicity of it, and yet it is so difficult that no one can live it! This paradox occurs because the Christian life is a supernatural life. The only one who can help us live this abundant life is the Lord Jesus Christ who empowers us with His Holy Spirit.

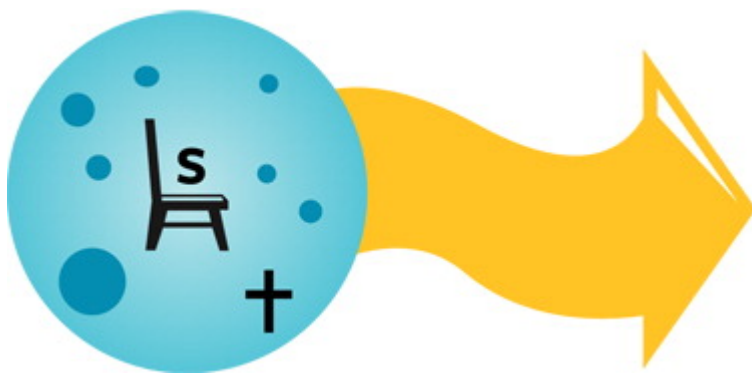
# The Secret is Something Called "Spiritual Breathing"

One of the most important truths of Scripture, the understanding and application of which has enriched my life as has no other truth, is a concept which I like to call "Spiritual Breathing." This concept has been shared with millions - with revolutionary results - through our literature and various training conferences and seminars.

As you walk in the Spirit by faith, practicing Spiritual Breathing, you need never again live in spiritual defeat. Spiritual Breathing, like physical breathing, is a process of exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure, an exercise in faith that enables you to experience God's love and forgiveness and walk in the Spirit as a way of life.

The moment you invited Christ into your life as Savior and Lord, you experienced a spiritual birth. You became a child of God and you were filled with the Holy Spirit. God forgave your sins - past, present and future - making you righteous, holy and acceptable in His sight because of Christ's sacrifice for you on the cross. You were given the power to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for God.

But the average Christian does not understand this concept of Spiritual Breathing as an exercise of faith and, as a result, lives on a spiritual roller coaster. He goes from one emotional experience to another living most of his life as a worldly Christian, controlling his own life -- frustrated and fruitless.



## Self-Directed Life

- S** Self is on the throne
- +** Christ is outside the life
- Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

If this is your experience, Spiritual Breathing will enable you to get off this emotional roller coaster and enjoy the Christian life that the Lord Jesus promised to you when He said, "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly." As an exercise in faith, Spiritual Breathing will make it

possible for you to continue to experience God's love, forgiveness, and the power and control of the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

If you sin by committing a deliberate act of disobedience, breathe spiritually. *Exhale by confession.* God's Word promises in John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word "confess" (*homologeō*) means to "agree with" or to "say along with." Such agreement involves at least three considerations.

**First**, you acknowledge that your sin or sins -- which should be named to God specifically -- are wrong and are therefore grievous to Him.

**Second**, you acknowledge that God has already forgiven you through Christ's death on the cross for your sins.

**Third**, you repent, which means that you change your attitude toward your sin. The power of the Holy Spirit will enable you to change both your attitude and conduct. Instead of doing what your old sinful nature -- your flesh -- wants to do, you can do what God wants you to do.



Now *inhale* by appropriating the fullness of God's Spirit by faith. Trust him to control and empower you according to his command to "be filled with the Spirit" which actually means to be constantly and continually controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit.



According to His *promise*, God hears you and grants your request because you pray according to His will. I encourage you to continue to claim his love, forgiveness and power by faith and continue to have fellowship with Him moment by moment.

You can get off your spiritual roller coaster, cease to be a worldly or carnal Christian, and become a Spirit-filled believer by practicing Spiritual Breathing. If you are breathing and inhaling by appropriating the fullness of the holy Spirit by faith - you are a Spirit-filled Christian.

You become a worldly Christian again when you develop (over time) an attitude of unbelief - when you set your heart against believing the promises of 1 John 1:9 and 1 Corinthians 10:13:

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

You do not become carnal simply by committing one sin or a dozen or a hundred sins provided that you *sincerely* continue to breathe spiritually. You will become worldly only when *you develop an attitude of unbelief* and refuse to breathe spiritually.

You can know right now that you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Through the concept of Spiritual Breathing, you can go through life assured of his fullness. Simply keep short accounts with God. Do not let sins accumulate.

If you try to live the Christian life by your own fleshly effort, it becomes complex, difficult and even impossible to live. But when you invite the Lord Jesus to direct your life; when you know the reality of having been crucified with Christ and raised with Him by faith as a way of life; when you walk in the light as God is in the light in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus simply lives his abundant life within you in all of His resurrection power.

I'm not suggesting that the Christian who walks in the fullness of the Spirit will have no difficulties. Problems of poor health, loss of loved ones, financial needs and other such experiences are common to all people. However, many of our misfortunes are self-imposed because of our own

worldly, selfish actions. The spiritual person is spared most of these self-imposed hardships. But when the problems do come, the spiritual person can face them with a calm, confident attitude because he is aware of God's resources which are available to him to deal with adversity.

This is not simply a matter of positive thinking. We are instructed to cast our cares upon the Lord Jesus because He cares for us. The spiritual person knows the trustworthiness of God from experience. The Lord becomes the problem-solver, and the trials and burdens of this world are no longer too great for us when He is carrying the load.

This was at the heart of the apostle Paul's moment-by-moment experience:

*I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

There is a throne, a control center -- the intersection of one's intellect, will and emotion -- in every life. And either self or Christ is on that throne. Let me illustrate.

I like to plan as far in advance as possible, especially for key events. But occasionally I get so busy with the many details of our worldwide ministry that an important item slips through.

With a key conference just a couple of weeks away, I had just realized the need for a set of printed materials that would be a tremendous benefit to the conferees.

As I shared the urgency with the department director responsible for this need, he responded, "Bill, we're full up already. Two weeks just isn't enough time."

I became impatient. Couldn't my associate see that we are in a war for men's souls, that we must seize opportunities when they arise and not limit our efforts to 8-to-5 workdays? I made my point clear to him.

"But if we had more notice..." he protested, "There just is no way we can squeeze in such a huge job with so little time. There's the writing, then the design and typesetting and artwork, then the printing."

It seemed obvious that he did not share my burden for the upcoming event. I pressed my point. "Look, this is an important international conference," I said firmly, my voice rising, "and this is no time for 'business as usual.' Please find a way to finish this project in time for the conference, even if you have to work around the clock."

I could tell my colleague was frustrated. But I reasoned, *We need those printed materials. Whatever it takes, we need them.*

Within a few moments after our conversation, I sensed the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Yes, even in our well-intended service to the Lord, we can stumble - and in the name of godliness I had offended a dear brother in Christ. I had failed to give him and his staff the benefit of the doubt - failed to take into account the tough workload they already were facing each day. Instead of asking him to think through the possibilities with me and helping him rearrange his priorities to accommodate the new task, I had virtually ordered him to get the project done and shown little appreciation for the many late evenings his team was already devoting to their work. I had reacted impatiently rather than in a spirit of love, understanding and teamwork.

At this point I had a choice to make.

On the one hand, I could let it go. After all, doesn't the head of a large organization have the right to ramrod projects through when necessary? Didn't the end (the strategic international conference) justify the means (get the job done no matter what it takes)? And didn't my associate's hesitant attitude warrant a stern talking-to about the urgency of the hour?

By all human standards, I probably could have justified letting the incident go. But deep inside I would have been restless and uncomfortable as the Holy Spirit continued to point out the sin to me, and God would not have blessed my efforts on His behalf as long as this sin remained

unconfessed. On top of that, several of my dear co-workers would have continued to hurt as a result of my calloused attitude.

On the other hand, I could deal with the problem by taking scriptural action to clear the slate. The unrest in my conscience was the Holy Spirit cross-examining me as I tried to rationalize my behavior. What I had thought was forceful leadership, He was identifying as the sins of impatience and unjustifiable anger.

I knew that taking scriptural action was the only choice I could make that would please my Lord. I confessed my sin to Him and appropriated his forgiveness.

Then came the toughest part.

I drove down to the office complex where my associate and his team were located and asked their forgiveness. We cried and laughed and prayed together, sensing a fresh outpouring of God's love in our midst. Then we talked through our mutual needs and found a way -- as teammates -- to rearrange priorities and accomplish the task -- on time!

That is what the Christian life is all about - just keeping Christ on the throne. You do this when you understand how to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit came for the express purpose of glorifying Christ by enabling the believer to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for our dear Savior.

As I have said previously, to be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you need to remember two important words: *command* and *promise*. The command is found in Ephesians 5:18,

*Be filled...with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by him.* (Living Bible)

And the promise is found in 1 John 5:14,15:

*Ask him for anything in line with his (God's) will. And ... we can be sure that he will answer us.*  
(Living Bible)

On the authority of God's command you know that you are praying according to His will when you ask Him to fill you - to control and empower you. Therefore, you can expect him to fill and empower you on the basis of His command and promise provided that you genuinely desire to be filled and trust him to fill you.

Remember that the Holy Spirit already dwells within you if you are a believer. You do not have to ask him to come into your life; he is already indwelling you. Your body was a temple of God from the moment you became a Christian. So you simply say to Him, "I surrender my life to You, and by faith I claim Your fullness and power."

Then continue to breathe spiritually, exhaling whenever the Holy Spirit reveals sin that you need to confess and inhaling as you go on walking in the fullness and control of the Spirit by faith. Some Christians breathe spiritually faster and more often than others.

## Feelings are Not Reliable

Do not depend upon feelings. Tied as they are to your ever-changing circumstances, feelings are unreliable in evaluating your relationship with God. The unchanging promises of God's Word, not your feelings, are your authority. The Christian is to live by faith, trusting in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. A train is a good illustration of the relationship between fact, faith and feeling.



Let us call the train engine "fact" -- the fact of God's promises found in His Word. The fuel car we will call "faith" -- your trust in God and His Word. The caboose we will call "feelings."

As fuel flows into the engine, the train runs. It would be futile and, of course, ridiculous to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way you, as a Christian, should not depend upon feelings or emotion live a Spirit-filled life. Rather, God wants you to simply place your faith in his

trustworthiness and the promises of His Word.

Feelings are like the caboose - they are important but are designed to follow a life of faith and obedience. Jesus promised all who obey Him, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." So, you can expect to have a valid emotional relationship with our Lord when you trust and obey Him. But you should never depend on feelings or seek after an emotional experience. The very act of looking for an emotional experience is a denial of the concept of faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin.

To summarize then, you can know that you are filled with the Holy Spirit by trusting in God - His command and promise -- and you can go through life with that assurance.

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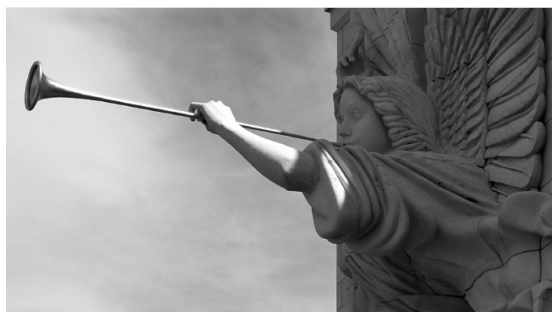
Adapted from the *Transferable Concept: How You Can Walk In The Spirit*, by Dr. Bill Bright, co-founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. © Cru. All rights reserved.

Next



# PREPARING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

U.S. CAMPUS MINISTRY



Every time we tell our story (our testimony) we give honor and glory to God, and He is pleased with that. Why? Well, our story is actually the story of how God rescued us . . . saved us. It's our eye-witness (or "I-witness") account of how our lives have changed. It's the story of His pursuit of a lost soul (you!) and the dramatic rescue to tear you from the clutches of your mortal enemy and bring you safely into His eternal kingdom. It's the stuff movies are made of. And that retelling of your redemption highlights His character. That's what we call "glorifying God." It's giving Him the credit and acknowledging His work.

We like to think that because it's our story, we don't have to put any effort into telling it. We were there when it happened, and we're living it now. But it's easy to get jumbled up, flustered, off the point, and onto a tangent that can distract, bore, annoy, or confuse your listener. We want to glorify God and be listener-friendly. That's why a little planning and practice are so valuable.

There are five basic parts to "Your Story:" the opening, your life before Christ, how you came to Christ, your life after Christ, and the closing. You should be able to talk through all five parts clearly and succinctly within 3-5 minutes. Let's take a look at how to put it together.

**The Opening. Identify a theme.** What did your

life revolve around that God used to help bring you to Him? Try to illustrate your theme with a word picture that your audience can identify with.

**Your Life Before Christ.** You want to paint a picture of what your life was like before you came to Christ, but don't dwell on how bad you used to be or glory in past sin. Share only the details that relate to your theme, and give enough detail to show your need for Christ. This is not the time to give your resume.

**How You Came to Christ.** Ah, this is it. Make sure you speak in such a way that the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how you became a Christian, and how they can become a Christian, too. Give only the details that are important to communicate why and how you became a Christian. As you begin to work on it, consider what your life was like before you trusted Christ or you really began to see change. This is an educational aspect to your story, so that even if your listener is not interested right now, s/he'll be able to make that decision down the road because you've equipped them with the right information.

**Your Life After Christ.** Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life as they relate to your theme. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude, and perspective, not just the mere changes in behavior. And be realistic. We will struggle as Christians. Life is far from perfect, isn't it? But what makes it different for you now? Be honest, and God will use your personal experience regardless of how "unspectacular" you may think it is.

**The Closing.** Close it out with a summary statement that ties your story together according to your theme. You could close with a verse, but only if it's meaningful and relates to the story you've just told.

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**1. The Opening**

A. Identify a theme.

**2. Your Life Before Christ** (or gave Him complete control)

A. What was your life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?

B. How did those things let you down? Why were you open to change?

**3. How you came to Christ** (or gave Him complete control)

A. When was the first time you heard the gospel? (Or were exposed to dynamic Christianity?)

B. What were your initial reactions?





C. When did your attitude begin to change? Why?

D. What were the doubts or struggles that went through your mind just before you accepted Christ?

E. Why did you accept Christ?

#### **4. Your Life After Christ** (or gave Him complete control)

A. What are the specific changes Christ has made in my life? Are there any illustrations that would be helpful? Why am I motivated differently?

#### **5. Closing**

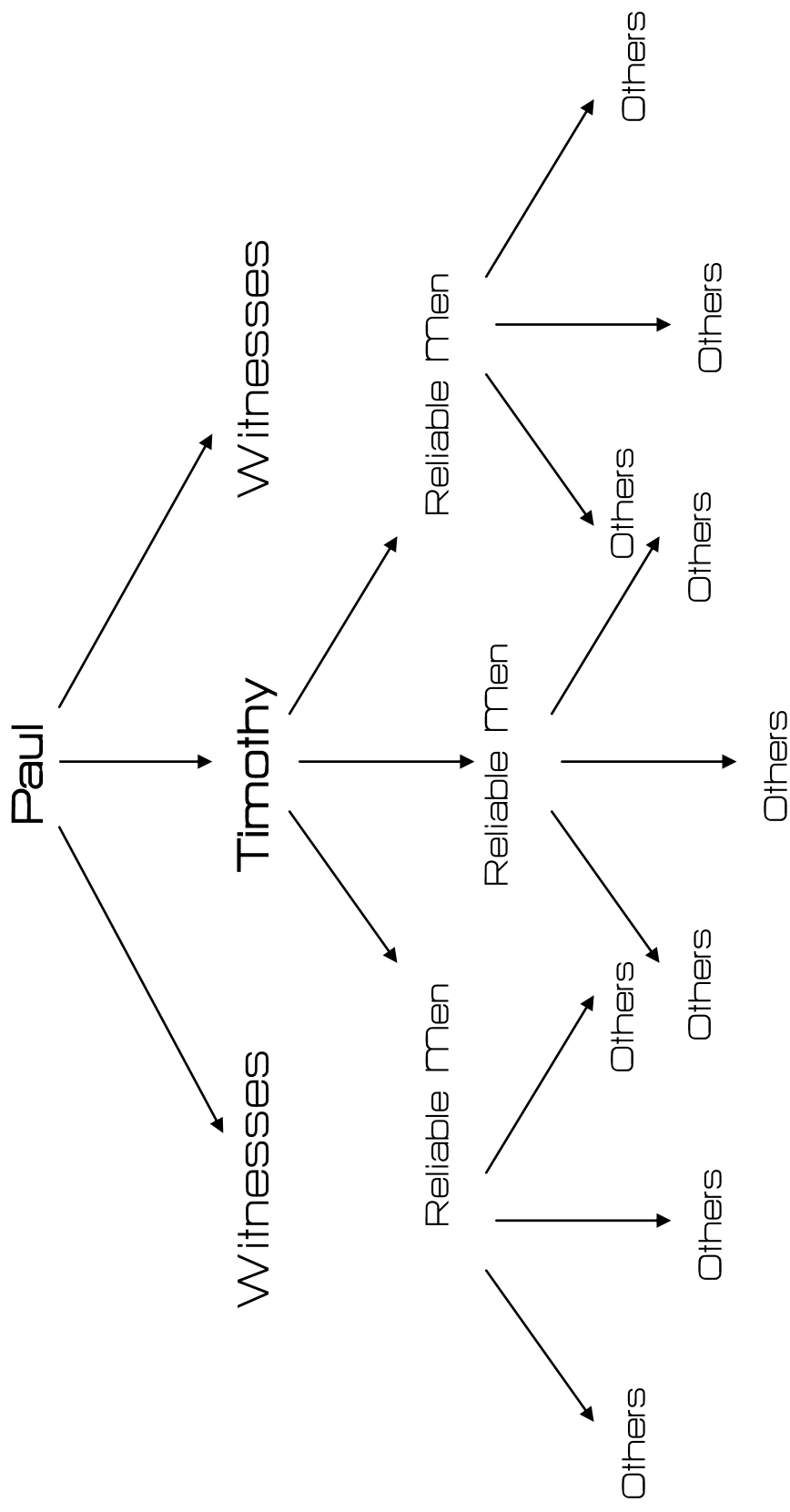
##### **Helpful Hints**

- Write the way you speak—make the testimony yours.
- Choose a theme and carry it throughout the testimony.
- Don't be overly negative or positive. Be truthful.
- Don't criticize or name any church, denomination, organization, etc.
- Time limit should be 3 minutes.
- Practice it over and over until it becomes natural.



“ And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. ”

2 Timothy 2:2







# THE COMPASS

A TOOL FOR DISCIPLERS

## A Primer on Discipleship

### Conversation On the Journey

#### Ask your disciple:

1. In your own experience of being disciplined, what are a few of the best things a previous discipler has done that helped you grow?
2. As you think about the life of Jesus, what did He do to disciple the 12 apostles? Try to make a list of several ways He built them.

#### Look up Mark 3:13-14

This passage teaches the most important first step in discipleship – selection (choosing wisely who you disciple). Jesus didn't disciple everyone. He selected 12 out of a multitude of disciples (see Luke 6:12-19). You can't disciple everyone, either. In fact, probably as a full time student only two or three, so choose who you disciple wisely. For perspective on this, read the lesson on spiritual multiplication and listen to the audio by Roger Hershey in The Compass entitled "The Right People." Choose disciples who will be faithful and able to teach others (II Tim. 2:2).

#### What to Do When You Disciple

Discipleship is more than being friends more than hanging out. It is building into someone so that you are taking her somewhere. Where are you taking her? Toward becoming a Christ-centered laborer. That is our mission– to develop disciples into Christ-centered laborers who will walk with Christ and serve Him for a lifetime. Someone who can walk, communicate, and multiply their faith.

#### Read Mark 3:14. Jesus selected the 12 for two things:

1. That they might be "with Him."
2. That He might "send them out to preach."

Jesus spent time with them. They learned by being around Him and observing His life. They observed His relationship with the Father, and prayer life. He modeled both the heart, and how to, of ministry to others. Discipleship is caught not taught. To keep

[Continued >>](#)

### This Week's Excursion

In this lesson, you want to help your disciple learn to disciple someone else. You can help them understand and embrace the key components of good discipleship, and to talk through with them where, and how to get started.

# A Primer on Discipleship

It's simple and easy to remember, below are the five components to good, balanced discipleship.

## Five Things to Do with Your Disciples

### 1. Build a relationship

Read about Paul's relationship with the believers in I Thessalonians 2:8. Spend time with them, not only in Bible study or on a discipleship appointment, but informally as well. Possible ways are to study together, eat together, go to church together, go on creative dates, shopping, sports events, etc. "People don't care what you know until they know that you care." Does your disciple know you love him and care about him as a whole person? There are many aspects to a good relationship, but here are a few to consider:

- a. Learn to listen, not just give out pat answers.
- b. Be an encourager, build others up.
- c. Be loving enough to confront.
- d. Have fun together.
- e. Do ministry together.
- f. Offer accountability in areas of growth.

### 2. Renew a disciple's mind with the Word

Read Romans 12:2. The key to a transformed life is the Word of God renewing the mind, replacing the world's perspective with God's perspective, so you are seeing life from God's perspective. This happens on discipleship appointments, in Bible study, but also when just hanging out and talking about life together. It happens through other movement events also community activities, parties, retreats, conferences, summer project, prayer events, etc.

As a discipler you can't impart everything your disciple needs you don't have all knowledge nor all the spiritual gifts. You must remember this. "You are discipling someone in the context of a whole movement." He or she will learn from many others besides you, as you expose him/her to a whole body of believers.

### 3. Train and involve them in ministry

Paul trained Timothy by taking him along on his missionary journeys. Jesus' disciples learned how to minister by watching Him. Your disciples will develop compassion for the lost, and a heart to build others, as they see you minister.

Take them with you on appointments to share your faith, or as you do follow-up-They will learn from your model of faith and obedience. They will grow in faith as you lead them to take steps of faith and see God work.

Decide together with your disciple what steps of ministry are appropriate for where he is in his walk, and where and how on campus would be the best way for him to reach out to others. Then, lead him into that ministry with whatever practical steps are needed to get started.

### 4. Involve him in the larger movement

"Involvement breeds commitment" Involve disciples in some movement responsibility, giving them opportunities to serve and contribute. Get them connected with other believers besides you and your Bible

## Next Steps

1. Who am I going to begin to disciple?
2. Evaluate the five aspects of discipleship
  - a. In which of the five will you be strongest?
  - b. Which one will be the most difficult for you, and how can I help you in that?

It is important to be reminded that no one does all five in perfect balance. You will grow as a discipler and get better over time. Just get started and you will develop as a discipler as your disciple also grows.

[Continued >>](#)

# A Primer on Discipleship

study. As said earlier, you can't give them all they need, so use the whole body to help them grow. Take them with you to your weekly meeting, to community events, and retreats or conferences. You are inviting them into an environment of growth like a plant in a greenhouse which flourishes because it is in an environment of the right elements that produce growth.

## 5. Pray for them

Paul prayed continually for his disciples ( Phil. 1, Eph. 1 and Colossians 1). Pray for their growth, that they would live out of their position in Christ. Pray often. Why? I Cor. 3 says that God causes the growth. He uses us and all of our efforts to disciple someone, but it is a partnership between us and God. These five things mentioned above are our part. God does His part in their hearts, including ordaining circumstances to bring about growth. We can't control that God can and does. Our part is to pray and ask Him to cause growth.

†End

## Side Trails

The Master Plan of Evangelism.  
Robert Coleman. Baker.

Order at [christianbook.com](http://christianbook.com)

“The Right Components of Discipleship.”  
Roger Hershey.

Available at [centerfieldproductions.com](http://centerfieldproductions.com)



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