

# GATHER TO SCATTER

## EVANGELISM TRAINING

### WEEK 8: START: QUESTIONS TO BEGIN A GOSPEL CONVERSATION

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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**Matthew 4:19** ~ And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

- Christians have a zeal for the lost and a desire that all would come to salvation (Psalm 40:3).
  - Yet many people find it difficult to start talking about the gospel (Acts 4:20).
  - Others don’t know how they will respond to objections or hard questions (Luke 6:3; 1 Pet 3:15).
  - Others just lack confidence (Acts 4:29).
- This monthly mini class will teach the foundation for evangelism and give you greater confidence to put it into practice (Philippians 4:9).
- The nature of the class will provide a Biblical foundation that shapes how and why we evangelize, provide opportunities to discuss real situations, and encourage us to share our faith with others.
- Schedule:
  - Fall 2024: Message, Barriers, Motivation, Methods, Action, Aim, Prayer
  - February 2: Hospitality, Christian Love, and Evangelism
  - March 2: Creating a Culture of Evangelism: The Gospel as Part of the Life of the Church
  - April 6: START: Questions to Begin a Gospel Conversation
  - May 4: Preparing for Possible Objections

#### EVANGELISM ESSENTIALS

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**Definition:** Essentially evangelism is explaining the gospel so that God would save sinners.

- God the Father has chosen the means: believers communicate His Word so that God the Spirit would convict the hearts of sinners to find their salvation in God the Son.
  - “Evangelism is **teaching** the **gospel** with the **aim** to **persuade**.”<sup>1</sup>

**We must pray:** Evangelism is “not only to preach, but also to pray; not only to talk to men about God, but also to talk to God about men.” -J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (page 124)

Ambassador Work

**We are ambassadors:** “We must deliver the message regardless of the discomfort produced, effort required, and shame endured. Ambassadors *exist* to deliver the message.” -J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism* (page 101)

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<sup>1</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 26.

## “WHAT AMAZES YOU ABOUT JESUS? TALK ABOUT THAT WITH PEOPLE.”<sup>2</sup>

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Our relationships with others can be broken down into these categories:<sup>3</sup>

- Long-term intimate: family, close friends, roommate
- Long-term acquaintance: some relatives, neighbors, peers, people at school or work
- Short-term intimate: friends, business associates, classmates
- Short-term acquaintance: people met in passing: in a store, on a bus, at the beach

We have opportunities with all of these relationships to talk with them about Jesus.

Don't let the short-term relationships become long-term relationships before they know you are a Christian and hear from you what that means!

Do you want to have a gospel conversation? All you have to do is ask.

- “Be curious, ask lots of questions, and listen. Read the Gospels and consider how Jesus engaged with other people. Jesus asked questions; 173 of them, in fact, are recorded in Scripture.<sup>3</sup> For instance, He asked, “What do you think?” (Matt. 21:28); “Why are you anxious?” (Luke 12:26); “Who is greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves?” (Luke 22:27); “What are you seeking?” (John 1:38); “Do you take offense at this?” (John 6:61).”<sup>4</sup>

### We Must Be Bold:

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- “Boldness isn't brashness. There ought to be a *gentle* boldness among Christians. Bold evangelism talks about hell, sin, judgment, and the supremacy and exclusivity of Christ. Boldness doesn't cut corners on the message. Jesus invites and demands all people to repent, believe, and receive his salvation... Boldness generates gospel conversations, and it seizes opportunities.”<sup>5</sup>
- Guiding the conversation toward deeper matters is more so a matter of intention than a matter of creativity.<sup>6</sup>

### Acts 16 examples of engaging the lost:

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Acts 16:13-15 Public Proclamation to spiritually interested people; Lydia's mind opened by the Lord.

Acts 16:16-21 Addressing the primary area of control over the slave-girl's heart.

Acts 16:22-34 Prayer and praise to God in distress. Comfort to the distressed and fearful jailer.

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<sup>2</sup> J.A. Medders and Doug Logan, Jr., *The Soul-Winning Church*, 92.

<sup>3</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/five-ways-to-start-gospel-conversations/>

<sup>5</sup> J.A. Medders and Doug Logan, Jr., *The Soul-Winning Church*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Josh Crawford, “How to Start a Conversation about Jesus”, <https://passionequip.com/articles/how-to-start-a-conversation-about-jesus>

## **Profound Answers to Their Basic Questions:<sup>7</sup>**

People ask us questions all the time about life (school, life, family, work) and expound on the answer with a little bit more.

*“Thanks for asking. I don’t know yet where I am going to college, but my main goal in life is ... ”*

*“School is going well. One thing I’ve learned recently is ... ”*

*“Our family is doing well. God answered prayer for us in a really encouraging way recently ... ”*

Every question we are asked is an opportunity to seize.

## **Use a Prop or Secondary Element to Introduce the Gospel:**

**-Books.** While reading a book about evangelism or Jesus or church life, someone asks you what you are reading. “It’s a book about how the story of Jesus spread worldwide....”<sup>8</sup>

**-Service.** Offer a service to people and be sure to tell them why you want to serve.

**-Help me.** Many people ask for financial or practical help. Do help and talk about the true help they need.

**-Tracts.** Tracts are a conversation starter.

In public: “What is the best news you could receive this week?” “What would you ask God today?”

Known relationship: Use a tract about hope or joy to encourage a cousin and explain eternal joy.

**-Block party.** They won’t be rude, so get their attention, start with a story, and then share the gospel!

**-Your week.** Talk with your coworker about your week’s events- include the sermon, class, small group discussion, or your bible reading. Lead into your testimony or how you have grown. Ask them about their life.

**-Business.** Baristas and retail salespeople can’t really walk away. Ask them what they do when they aren’t working for fun, and then tell them about your greatest interests.

**-Story,** Use a word picture as you introduce the good news. Talk about a cure for cancer, a friend in a burning house, saving your son from drowning or paying a parking ticket for a friend.

## **Topics to Turn to the Truth:**

**-Kids.** Tell them about how you raise them in the Lord and teach them the gospel.

**-Aging parents.** Tell them about the certainty, the assurance of salvation.

**-Politics.** “If only there were a perfect government... It’s too bad Jesus wouldn’t return right now...”

**-Holidays.** “What is your favorite holiday... mine is definitely Christmas (or Easter)...”

**-Pain.** Share a story of someone you know who has persevered and how the Psalms were encouraging, and share the source of pain, the comfort through it, and the ultimate relief. OR “What do you think God thinks about the suffering in the world he created?”

**-Books.** Booklovers are always ready to share what they enjoy reading.

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<sup>7</sup> Taken from “17 Ways to Start Conversations”, <https://livingwaters.com/seventeen-ways-to-start-conversations/>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 57-58.

**-Vacation.** Talk about the weather... no seriously, talk about the wonders of creation and the joy of having more than just creation that shows the God of all creation.

**-Leisure.** “What do you do in your free time?” This gets people talking about what they really value.

**-Other religions.** “Ruth, I would really like to have a spiritual conversation with you over lunch, would that offend you?” OR “How have your ideas about God changed since... (coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?”<sup>9</sup>

**-Hurt.** “Len, relationships have been broken and for thousands of years and I gotta tell you, I I know why.”

**-Luck.** “I used to believe in luck, but the more I have come to understand the way God designed life, I just can’t see things happening randomly for good. Do you think God has a reason for allowing you to experience good things in your life?”

**-Gratitude.** “Thanks for your help...” “Oh you are welcome. It’s not often people are thankful. My perspective on life changed years ago when Someone I met gave an incredible gift to me!...”  
Elevators. “How much do you trust this elevator? What does it take to trust someone?”

### **Out of the Blue:**

“So Michael, have you ever been evangelized?” “What’s that?” he asked. “You know,” I said, “when someone who is a Christian starts talking to you about God and Jesus and asking if you’re saved.”<sup>10</sup>

“Did you know that the Bible says...”

“I was thinking the other day how whether I live till 35 or 105, I won’t think about it much in eternity.”

“Joe, I’m sure you know I am a Christian, but I was wondering, do you ever read the Bible?”

“Sue, I just gotta tell you something because I care about you... Do you mind if I share something with you?”

“Ron, did I ever tell you about what I learned back in college that was way better than my classes?”

“What do you think a real Christian is?”

“Do you ever go to church, or did you ever go to church growing up?”

### **Where do I Start?:**

1. Pray.
2. Say Something.
  - “Hello,” if you don’t know them.
  - “Do you think we could talk?” if you do know them.
3. Keep Going. You have a great message to share.

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<sup>9</sup> Several examples in Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 189-190.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 62.