



# Sharing the Gospel In all of life



## 7 BIBLE STUDIES

1. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL
2. WHY DO WE NEED TO SHARE THE GOSPEL
3. SHARING THE GOSPEL OUT THERE
4. SHARING THE GOSPEL IN HERE
5. SHARING THE GOSPEL IN SUNDAY GATHERINGS
6. SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE
7. I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

# 1. What is the gospel?

**Warm up:** How confident would you say you are at explaining the gospel?

*The word 'gospel' appears over 90 times in the New Testament. It is the English translation of the Greek word 'euangelion' (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on). It simply means 'good news'. But it is not just used in the sense of 'Good news, we've got milk in the fridge'. Its tone is more like 'Good news! the war is finally over!' According to Rico Tice from Christianity Explored Ministries, if you don't think the gospel is the best news you've ever heard, you can be absolutely certain you've not understood it.<sup>1</sup>*

*This term as we think about evangelism, we are thinking about sharing the gospel. In order to do that we need to have a clear understanding of what the gospel is. To help us with this in our first study we will have a look at a well-known faithful gospel tract called 'Two Ways To Live'. The majority of this study (study 1) is Matthias Media's 'two ways to live Bible study'. You will receive a copy from your group leader.*



## 1. God the loving ruler and creator

***God is the loving ruler of the world. He made it. And he made us to rule and care for the world —under his authority.***

Find Revelation chapter 4, verse 11 in your Bible. (Revelation is right near the back.) Read it, and then try to write answers to the following questions from what you've read.

- Why should we honour and praise God?
- Is there anything in creation that does not depend on God's will?
- What attitude should people have to a God like this?



## 2. Humanity in Rebellion

***Clearly, when we look at the world, we can see that things are not the way they should be. This is because we all reject God as ruler by trying to run our lives without him.***

Have we done a good job of running ourselves, our society and our world? Give some examples.

Now read Romans 3, verses 10-12 from the Bible.

- From this passage, how many righteous people are there?

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<sup>1</sup> Tice, Rico, *Christianity Explored: Leader's Handbook*, The Good Book Company, (Surrey:2016), 132.

- b. From the passage, how many people seek God?
- c. From the passage, how many people have turned away from God's rule?

Note this carefully. Some people rebel quietly by just ignoring God. Others rebel more visibly by doing things that everyone recognizes as 'sinful'. But either way, it's just as much rebellion against God, whether we notice it or not. The real question is: What will God do about it? Let's find out.



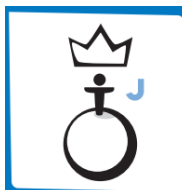
### 3. God won't let people keep on rebelling forever

***God cares enough about us to take our rebellion seriously, and to call us to account.***

Read Hebrews 9:27 from your Bible

- a. What two things does the future hold for every person?
  - i.
  - ii.
- b. What must every person face after death?

God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgment. This might sound hard, and some people don't like to believe that God could feel so strongly about the way we rebel against him. But justice isn't justice unless it brings sin to account. It's wrong simply to turn a blind eye. However, God has provided a way out—and it's free!



### 4. Jesus – the Man who dies for rebels

***God loved the world so much, that he sent us his Son; the man Jesus Christ. Jesus obeyed God completely—he was the one man who deserved no punishment. Yet by dying on the cross, he took our punishment, and brought us free forgiveness.***

Read 1 Peter 3:18 from your Bible.

- a. Why did Christ die?
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
- b. Who is the *righteous* person mentioned here? Who are the *unrighteous*?
 

righteous:

unrighteous:

c. Which of the two terms describes you?

d. What can Christ's death do for you?

The death of Jesus is not the end of the story. Before he died, Jesus claimed he would come back from the grave after three days. At the time, nobody believed him. But then ...



**5. Jesus – the risen ruler**

***God accepted Jesus' death as payment in full for our sins and raised him from the dead. Jesus has conquered death, and now gives new life. One day he will return to judge the world.***

Read Philippians 2:9-11

a. What place has God given to Jesus?

b. What attitude should we have to Jesus?

c. Whether by choice or otherwise, who will eventually *bow* down to the authority of Jesus?

By rising from the dead, Jesus proved once and for all that he did indeed have all the power and authority he claimed he had as the Son of God. That leaves us with only two options ...



**6. The two ways to live**

**A. Our way:**

- ***Reject the ruler—God***
- ***Try to run life our own way***

**Result:**

- ***Condemned by God***
- ***Facing death and judgement***

**B. God's new way:**

- ***Submit to Jesus as our ruler***
- ***Rely on Jesus' death and resurrection***

**Result:**

- ***Forgiven by God***
- ***Given eternal life***

Read John 3:16-18

a. What two types of people are described here?

b. What must you do to have eternal life?

- c. Why would God's anger ('wrath') remain on certain people?
- d. Which of these two options is the way you would want to live?

### What should I do next

You may wish to think more about the points mentioned in this study. You can get to know Jesus better by reading Mark's Gospel. If you're ready to submit your life to God's rule, you should pray a simple prayer in your own words. Ask God to forgive you for ignoring him and rebelling against him. Ask him to help you to submit to Jesus as your ruler and to rely on him for forgiveness and eternal life. From that point on, it's a matter of living out your new way of life day by day—but you won't be on your own. God will be with you all the way. He'll keep speaking to you (as you read the Bible); he'll keep listening to you and helping you (as you pray to him); he'll help you to change and to live his way (by his Spirit that lives within you); and he'll provide people to encourage you along the way (as you meet with other Christians).

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*This is a very clear explanation of the gospel, and a great challenge for those who work through it. We will return to this each week at the start of our studies. Our goal is to learn it off by heart over the course of this term.*

We may not have the opportunity to sit with someone and go step by step through this gospel outline, but how could learning this gospel outline equip us for answering people's questions about Christianity?

### Pray

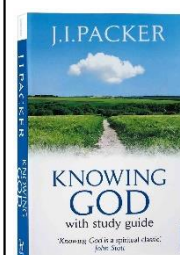
### Other helpful resources to consider

For most believers, clearly sharing the Christian gospel with someone is more of a dream than a reality. We feel inadequate and reluctant—but we absolutely want to see our friends come to know Jesus.

Filled with heart and humour, *Know and Tell the Gospel* deals with all the questions that quickly come to mind:

- Just what is the gospel anyway?
- Is it my job to explain it to people?
- What is God's role and what is mine?
- Where does church fit in?
- Why is evangelism so often hard?
- How can we train ourselves and others to be involved?

Every Christian who is keen to take the gospel to our lost world must read this encouragement from John Chapman, a man who had more than 50 years of experience with evangelism and Bible teaching. 240 pages

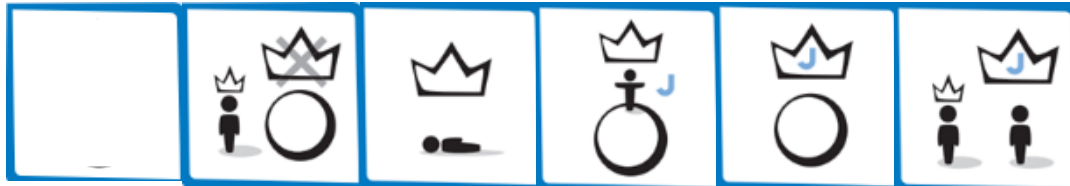


KNOWING GOD is one of the most significant and popular Christian books of our time.

J I Packer's life-changing book has deepened the faith and understanding of millions of people around the world. This edition includes a helpful study guide for individuals and groups.

## 2. Why do we need to share the gospel?

**Try to remember the gospel outline using these pictures to stimulate your memory** (feel free to return to study 1 for help!). Each week from here we will blank out a box for you to fill from memory.



In his book 'Honest Evangelism' Rico Tice says:

*"When it comes to evangelism, it can often seem the choice is like when the dentist tells you it's time for a check-up. You either make your excuses and put it off – I once avoided going for seven years – or you grit your teeth, get on with it and it over with – which is what I do now"<sup>2</sup>*

This may be the way we think about evangelism (I once put off going to the dentist for 20 years...). But the Bible thinks a little differently. Evangelism is not only something we are called to do as Christians, but it is the most loving thing we can do for our family, neighbours and friends.

**Read** Matthew 28:16-20

1. Jesus has just been crucified buried, and three day later raised from the dead (see 28:7). After this monumental act of service, what does this passage tell us he has now received from God?
2. Who and what has Jesus been given authority over (read Philippians 2:9-11 for clarification)?

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<sup>2</sup> Tice, Rico, *Honest Evangelism: How to talk about Jesus even when it's tough*, The Good Book Company (2015), 29.

3. In light of Jesus being declared the Lord and ruler of all things, what is the primary thing that Jesus tells his disciples go and make?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. To make disciples is to make followers of Jesus, the Lord of all things. This is a command from Jesus for his followers. Use your own words to describe what we need to be doing in order to obey this command.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What comfort does Jesus offer his followers as they undertake this task of making followers of him?

**Read** Revelation 21:1-7

6. What will the future be like for those who become followers of Jesus?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How does this future compare to the life we have here on earth today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. How can we help people to gain access to this future?

**Read** John 3:16-18

9. What does this passage say will happen to those who believe in the Son:

- They shall not \_\_\_\_\_

- But have \_\_\_\_\_

10. Why did God send his Son to save the world rather than condemn it?

11. What is the state of those who don't believe in Jesus?

12. Look at Mark 9:43-48. How does the Bible describe 'condemnation'?

13. Revelation 21 and Mark chapter 9 present two very different futures for believers and unbelievers. What do these pictures of heaven and hell tell us about evangelism and the importance of evangelism?

**Read** Romans 10:11-15

14. According to verses 11 to 13, who will be saved and how?



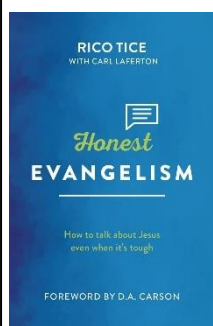
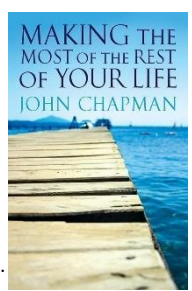
15. Verse 14 to 15a asks a series of questions. What are the answers to these questions?

16. In your own words, why are the feet of those who bring good news so beautiful?

*Evangelism is so important because Jesus is the loving ruler of everything, and he has a perfect future in store for all those who come to him in faith. If people don't hear and believe the good news that Jesus has come to save them, they stand condemned, and their future is horrible. We have a loving warning for our family, our friends and our neighbours. We have the message of a beautiful future for them through the good news/the gospel of the Lord Jesus.*

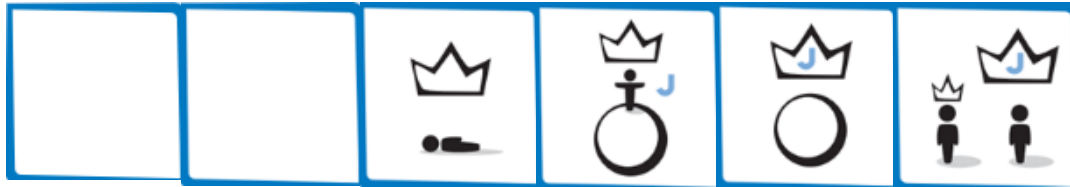
## Pray

## Other helpful resources to consider

	<p>Hostility and hunger - they're the responses to the message of Jesus. The first is painful, the second is wonderful, and Rico Tice is honest about both.</p> <p>Short, clear, realistic and humorous, this book will challenge you to be honest in your conversations about Jesus, help you to know how to talk about him, and thrill you that God can and will use ordinary people to change eternal destinies.</p> <p>128 pages</p>	<p>The Bible teaches that all people will die, and all will survive the grave and live either <i>with</i> Christ or <i>without</i> him in eternity. 76-year-old evangelist John Chapman explores how we can know if this is true, and, if so, how to prepare for that eternity. This is a warm-hearted, good-humoured and challenging evangelistic book for 'seniors'. It explains how we can know about life after death, what the new creation will be like, and whether we can be sure of being part of it. (Large print!)</p> <p>John Chapman writes: "I am 76 years old. You may think it strange that I am writing about making the most of the rest of our lives. Humanly speaking, I don't have all that much left. The average male lives for 79 years. That doesn't leave me much time. On the other hand, if there is life after death, if eternity is really eternity and I have the greater bulk of my life to look forward to, then that makes all the difference. If there is life after death, is it possible to make the most of it? Is it possible to prepare for that life, or is it totally a matter of chance? These are the questions I want to address in this short book.</p> 
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### 3. Sharing the gospel out there

**Try to remember the gospel outline using these pictures to stimulate your memory** (feel free to return to study 1 for help!). Fill in the blanks by drawing in the picture from memory.



In his book 'How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being THAT Guy)', Sam Chan talks about the need for Christians to 'merge our universes'. It's not okay for us to have two separate worlds of 'Christian' friends and 'non-Christian' friends. We need to bring them together. He tells the story about a middle aged friend of his who did exactly that:

*"Paul was married and had young children. He was successful in his work. He was financially independent. He was secure in his Christian faith. What was his next step? Paul did what any man in his position would do—he bought that loud, fast, expensive car he had been dreaming about ever since he was a little boy. But that still didn't seem to fill a hole in his life. Perhaps Paul could do more to tell his friends about Jesus. God seemed to have blessed Paul with a lot of non-Christian friends and contacts. So Paul went to the other men in his church. They were also in their midlife, financially successful, and owned nice cars. Together, they formed a car club. Next, they started inviting their non-Christian friends to the club. In just a few weeks, the car club had grown from eight to forty members. Now a typical Sunday for Paul and his friends looks like this. They meet at 6:00 a.m. and go for a drive on some twisty and hilly roads. Afterward they eat breakfast together at a café. Then, quite abruptly, at 9:00 a.m., half of the group gets up en masse and leaves for their church's morning worship service. Out of curiosity, many of the non-Christians started to ask if they could go with the Christians to their church. They wanted to check it out. For many of the men, this was a huge change of heart. One man's wife didn't believe her husband was going to a church until she checked the location tracker on his phone."*<sup>3</sup>

Think about your own Christian universe and your non-Christian universe. As we move through this study we can think together about how to merge the two.

**Read** Acts 2:42-47

1. As the early church met together daily in the temple courts their community grew in their love for one another. What impact did this deeply loving Christian community have on the world around them?

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<sup>3</sup> Chan, Sam, How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being THAT Guy): Personal Evangelism in a Skeptical World, Zondervan, (Grand Rapids:2020), 11.

2. The temple courts where the early believers met were a fairly public space in Jerusalem. They met together practicing their faith daily before the citizens of Jerusalem. Often as Christians we know the importance of meeting together with other Christians and we prioritise it. What will be a sign that our Christian relationships and regular meeting together are as healthy as the early church?
  
3. If we spend our time investing in relationship/friendship with other Christians and we don't see people coming to faith in Jesus, what might that indicate about our Christian community?
  
4. Thinking about Sam Chan's idea of 'merging our universes' what are some practical ways our Christian community can be played out before the eyes of the world?

**Read** 1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

5. How does Paul describe his and his Christian friends attitude while they were living among the Thessalonian believers?
  
6. Paul and his friends were willing to share the gospel with the Thessalonians, but they didn't stop there. How much were Paul and his fellow Christians willing to invest in their friendship with the Thessalonians?
  
7. While they were willing to share their lives with the Thessalonians, they didn't compromise the way they lived in order to impress the Thessalonians. How does Paul describe the behaviour of his fellow workers and himself while they lived among the Thessalonians?

8. Think about the non-Christian people you live among. We have been talking about sharing the gospel with them. What would it look like in your personal circumstances for you to share more of your life with them as well?
  
9. Often our tendency when we are around non-Christians is to conform to their standards – for example we might drink more, speak more crassly, speak more highly of material things. How would you describe your behaviour around non-Christian friends/family? What would help you to be more holy, righteous and blameless around your non-Christian friends/family?

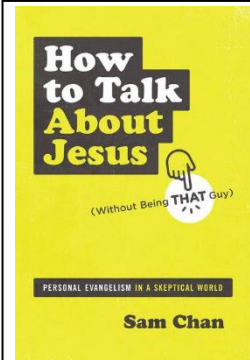
**Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

10. According to verse 19, what is Paul's main motivation?
  
11. In verses 20 to 22 Paul is very flexible with many things, but very fixed on one thing. What is he flexible with, and what is he fixed on?
  
12. Paul is willing to become all things to all people in order to save some. He says he does this for the gospel, in order that he may share in its blessings. What are some examples of the blessings that Paul may get to share in as he lives his life for the sake of the gospel?
  
13. Think back to the example of the bloke from Sam Chan's book at the start of this study. He started a car club with his church mates to grow his friendships with non-Christian mates in order to invite them along to church. What are some practical steps you could take in your life to become all things to all people in order to save some?

14. Have you ever shared in the blessing of seeing someone come to faith in Jesus? If you have, share your experience with the group.
15. When I lived in Sydney we had a Christian soccer competition, a Christian touch footy competition, we had a Christian oz-tag team, we had a Christian playgroup – there were so many Christians in Sydney you could do any activity you wanted and only engage with Christians! But this meant not investing your life in a friendship with anyone who was unsaved. Discuss how we can guard against keeping our activities exclusively Christian, and discuss how we can ensure that we always have that motivation of becoming all things to all people so that by all possible means we might save some.
16. In what areas of your life are you currently merging your Christian and your non-Christian friendships? What might you be able to change in order to save some?

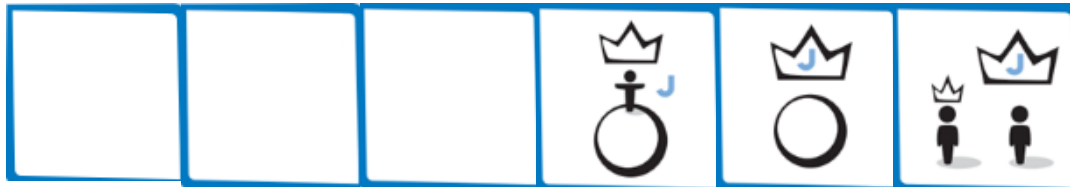
## Pray

## Other helpful resources to consider

	<p>Most Christians know they should be trying to tell their friends and family about Jesus. But in a post-Christendom world, personal evangelism is viewed negatively--it's offensive, inappropriate, and insensitive. Recent studies confirm that the majority of Christians rarely evangelize, worried they might offend their family or lose their friends. In <i>How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy)</i>, author Sam Chan equips everyday Christians who are reluctant and nervous to tell their friends about Jesus with practical, tested ways of sharing their faith in the least awkward ways possible.</p> <p>Drawing from over two decades of experience as an evangelist, teacher, and pastor, Chan explains why personal evangelism feels so awkward today. And utilizing recent insights from communication theory, cross-cultural ministry, and apologetics, he helps you build confidence in sharing your faith, and teaches you how to evangelize your friends and family in socially appropriate ways. 176 pages.</p>
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## 4. Sharing the gospel in here

Try to remember the gospel outline using these pictures to stimulate your memory (feel free to return to study 1 for help!). Fill in the blanks by drawing in the picture from memory!



It can be very hard to open your home up to people, and harder still to open your life to people. It's one thing to let them in the front door of your house to see all the things you can conceal from your neighbours, but to expose your family, your secrets, your down-time to others. It can feel incredibly costly. Listen to this story Elliot Clark tells about sharing his family for the sake of the gospel in his book 'Evangelism as Exiles':

*"But one particular day I remember receiving a WhatsApp message from Aisha. Her husband had been released from jail, and she wanted us to meet him. So Aisha suggested we bring the whole family, kids and all, and stay with her over the weekend. As parents, we didn't know what to do. What are the appropriate risks to your family when trying to bring the gospel to a city—or just one person? At this point we hardly knew Aisha, and Metin was a convicted criminal. Do you take your young girls to sleep in the home of a felon? We also suspected that Aisha didn't have beds for all of us. This clearly wasn't going to be a relaxing getaway. But we accepted. That first evening our introduction to Metin went smoothly. He was anything but shy, his chattiness perhaps owing to extended time in prison. We talked at length about everything: the weather, his work, politics, religion, even art. He showed us multiple oil paintings he'd completed during his incarceration. The portraits showed some real skill, though they were more valuable as a window into his past. The next morning Aisha made us all breakfast. Later we walked around town. Then we picnicked at the park. Metin grilled up our kids' favorite: succulent lamb and spicy chicken wings, plus eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes. We spent hours together but never really broached his run-in with the law. We just did our best to treat him as a person, someone we were happy to meet as the husband of our dear sister in Christ. And, of course, we were praying all along—for our safety and his salvation."<sup>4</sup>*

There is much in our life we like to keep to ourselves and keep safe from others. It's challenging to consider inviting people into all that's precious in our life in order to love them and help them come to faith.

**Read** Romans 8:31-32

1. What is the basis of Paul's claim that God is for us?

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<sup>4</sup> Clark, Elliot, *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in Our Own Land*, The Gospel Coalition, (Denmark: 2019), 66-67.

2. In what way did God completely expose himself and those he loved in order to bring us to salvation?
  
3. What parts of your life are you reluctant to open to others?
  
4. Consider this question in light of how God has been toward us and in light of Elliot Clark's story above. Those of us with children are charged with the responsibility of looking after them. The apostle Paul says that anyone who does not provide for their own family is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8). Yet, at the same time we want to model confidence in the Lord to our children, a genuine faith, a willingness to deny ourselves, and a zeal to give everything up for the sake of the gospel. What might this mean for the kind of people we invite into our homes and the risks we expose our children to, or even just ourselves, in order to share the gospel and our lives as well?

**Read 1 Peter 4:8-11**

5. Above all, what are we called to do and why?
  
6. The word hospitality is literally 'love of outsiders' in Greek. What does Peter mean when he commands us to offer hospitality to one another without grumbling?
  
7. How has God shown hospitality to us?

8. According to verse 10, how should we use all the gifts God has given us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Why should we use *all things* to serve others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Consider all the things God has given you. What are you using to serve others? What are you keeping from others? What changes do you need to make to use all things in your life to help others come to faith in Jesus?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. How can we be less precious about how fancy our hospitality is and more precious about opening up our homes and our lives to others?

**Read** Luke 10:30-37

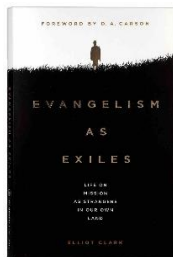
12. The Jews and the Samaritans were traditionally enemies. In this story we have a seemingly Jewish man who needs care and comfort. Who is it that loves the man?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Jesus challenges us to be like the man who loved and cared for his enemy – in fact, this is the neighbour we are to 'love as ourselves'. Consider the people you invite into your home and into your life. How can your hospitality be more like that of the good Samaritan?



14. Consider Sam Chan's idea from our last study of 'merging our universes', i.e., merging our Christian and non-Christian friends. What practical things could you do to open your home/life to merge your Christian and non-Christian friends together?

## Pray

### Other helpful resources to consider

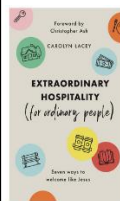


Suffering and exclusion are normal in a believer's life. At least they should be. This was certainly Jesus's experience. And it's the experience of countless Christians around the world today.

No matter your social location or set of experiences, the biblical letter of 1 Peter wants to redefine your expectations and reinvigorate your hope.

Drawing on years of ministry in a Muslim-majority nation,

Elliot Clark guides us through Peter's letter with striking insights for today. Whether we're in positions of power or weakness, influence or marginalization, all of us are called to live and witness as exiles in a world that's not our home. This is our job description. This is our mission. This is our opportunity. A church in exile doesn't have to be a church in retreat. 176 pages.



Generous hospitality is a significant way in which God works through our lives to bring life to others, yet many of us feel ill-equipped and overwhelmed at the prospect, especially if we don't have big houses and we are not wonderful cooks!

Carolyn Lacey encourages us to focus on the goal of hospitality, which is to reflect God's

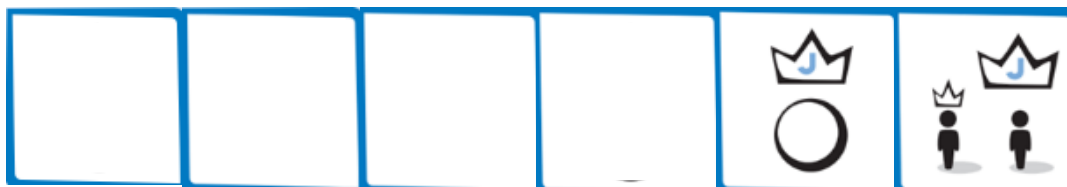
welcoming heart, and shows us how we can all do that, regardless of our bank balance or living situation.

She explores seven ways in which we can reflect God's character in the way we welcome others into our homes and into our lives, and so point people ultimately to Christ.

This practical and realistic book explores how to make generous hospitality part of everyday life without becoming exhausted and overburdened. 128 pages.

## 5. Sharing the gospel in Sunday gatherings

Try to remember the gospel outline using these pictures to stimulate your memory (feel free to return to study 1 for help!). Fill in the blank pictures from memory!



Welcoming people into our homes and our lives is a little daunting. Merging our universes is a little daunting. But you would think out of all the places where we should be especially hospitable and welcoming to strangers, church would be it. Surely this is the place, if anywhere, they will hear the gospel and see it lived out. Unfortunately, that's not always the case. Listen to this story about Ryan from Thom S Rainer's book *Becoming a Welcoming Church*:

*"Ryan had almost no church background. But I could tell he was really searching. So he did something bold, if not audacious, from his perspective. He asked his wife, Bethany, if she and their two young daughters would go to church with him. Bethany had a nominal church background, but she was not really interested in going back to a church. She found the world outside the church more pleasant than church life. She nevertheless agreed to go with Ryan 'just one time.' And there won't be a second time at the church they visited. To begin, the church website was terrible. It had not been updated with the new time of the worship service. So the family of four was late, even though they thought they would arrive on time. Because they arrived late, church members occupied all of the closer parking spots. Supposedly, there were guest parking spots, but Ryan could not find any directional signs to them. When they arrived late, a couple of front door greeters spoke to them for at least two seconds. The two greeters then resumed their private conversation, oblivious to the world and people around them. And when they went to the children's area to check in their two young daughters, disaster struck. The place was dirty. Security was weak. And the person that met them complained because they were late! Bethany gave Ryan 'the look.' It was not a happy moment. [...]"*

*By the way, when we interviewed members of this church, they consistently proclaimed a similar message: Our church is very friendly! And their church is friendly—as long as you know people. As long as you are on the inside. As long as you are not a guest."<sup>5</sup>*

We dearly want church to be a place that people are confident of bringing their friends to. Confident that they will hear the gospel clearly and see the gospel at work in the lives of the congregation.

**Read** 1 Corinthians 14:22-25

1. Tongues in this context seems to be some unintelligible Spiritual utterance (except in the presence of an interpreter). Whereas prophecy seems to be a Spiritually lead application of

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<sup>5</sup> Rainer, T.S., *Becoming a Welcoming Church*, Broadman and Holdman, (Nashville: 2018), 10-11.

the scriptures. What is the basis of Paul's concern over whether or not the church uses either of these gifts?

2. What do we want unbelievers to exclaim when they come into our gatherings?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Church is for believers (it is an assembly of believers). But it is still of utmost importance that when unbelievers come in, they can understand clearly what is going on. Why is it important for unbelievers to understand what is going on when they come to church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What practices at our church, both during the service, in the congregation before the service, and over morning tea after the service, do you think unbelievers may find hard to understand?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What behaviour might you need to change to make things clearer to unbelievers that come to church?

**Read** Romans 3:22-24

6. According to this passage, who is in need of God's grace?

7. Consider the different ages, financial circumstances, ethnicities, backgrounds of people who come along to church. Which people are able to access God's grace according to this passage? What does this tell us about God's attitude to people of different backgrounds and circumstances?

**Read** James 2:1-4

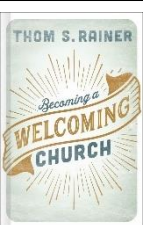
8. Why do you think James is so adamant that believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism?
9. To contextualise this passage for us we might say, 'suppose someone comes in wearing a Ralph Lauren shirt, Birkenstock sandals and an Apple watch, and someone with visible dandruff and a slight tobacco smell also comes in'. Do you think you've ever shown favouritism to people as they've come into church?
10. Do you think there are people at church who get talked to regularly by members of the congregation and others who get overlooked by everyone? What things can you do on a Sunday to help everyone feel like church is a place for them and they are welcome here?
11. What do you think we are communicating about the gospel when we welcome people well? What about when we welcome them poorly?
12. If someone brings a family member, work mate or friend to church, what do you think they are hoping for them to experience? How can you help with this?

13. Often after church people will come up and have important pastoral conversations with the minister. Often when these conversations are happening the minister might notice a newcomer or someone relatively new to church sitting by themselves with no one talking to them while everyone else at church is catching up with their friends. On the one hand the minister is invested in the pastoral conversation, on the other hand they know this person sitting by themselves may walk out and never walk back in again. What can you do to help in this situation?

It's essential that the Bible is opened, and the gospel is preached from the front whenever we gather together as believers at church. But the gospel can be so evident in the way we do or don't welcome others as a church family in a way that can overpower whatever is spoken from the pulpit. Spend some time praying that we would be a gospel welcoming church.

## Pray

## Other helpful resources to consider

	<p>Most church members don't see their churches clearly.</p> <p>In almost all of Thom S. Rainer's consultations, church members perceive their church to be friendly. But as he surveyed guests, he found that the guests typically saw church members as unfriendly. The perception chasm existed because the members were indeed friendly . . . to one another.</p> <p><i>The guests felt like they crashed a private party.</i></p> <p>Bestselling author Thom Rainer (<i>I Am a Church Member, Autopsy of a Deceased Church</i>) has a game plan for churches to become more hospitable. In a format that is suitable for church members to read individually or study together, Rainer guides readers toward a practical framework for making a difference for those who visit their church. Churches may use <i>Becoming a Welcoming Church</i> to assess and audit where they are on a spectrum between welcoming and wanting. Additionally, churches can use the companion book <i>We Want You Here</i> to send guests home with a compelling vision for what pastors want every guest to know when they visit. 128 pages</p>
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## 6. Speaking the truth in love

Try to remember the gospel outline using these pictures to stimulate your memory (feel free to return to study 1 for help!). Fill in the pictures that have been left blank from memory!



It seems like we are often afraid of speaking to people about Jesus because we worry that we will offend them or perhaps that we may lose favour with them. Christians often stress the importance of speaking the truth 'in love' because we don't want to be insensitive and insulting. I can say my overwhelming experience is that we are more at risk of not speaking the truth at all, rather than doing so in an unloving way. The term 'speaking the truth in love' comes from Ephesians 4 and it is in a passage explaining how God has left 'word' gifts to the church that we can use to build one another up in the body of Christ. The passage is basically about 'the truth' building up the church. We do need to speak in love, but as we saw in our second study to speak in love we need to speak the truth about Jesus. That is the most loving thing to do. Elliot Clarke reflects on what blocks us from speaking the truth in his book *Evangelism as Exiles*:

*"We're fundamentally committed to keeping people happy and having them like us, having them think we're smart, contemporary, hip, tolerant, progressive, fun, approving—and the list goes on. We want to please them, and we want them to approve of us. As was the case for me with Hasan, we can fear losing a friendship more than we fear losing a friend. We withhold the truth for the sake of acceptance. We polish our social media persona to remove the rough edges of religiosity. And we nurture relationships with unbelievers for years without broaching the subject of Christ. Why? To please people. In our twisted understanding, we reason such people-pleasing efforts are for the sake of future gospel opportunities. But in reality, we're often just fearing others instead of God."*<sup>6</sup>

It is unloving to withhold the truth. Christians need to speak the truth in love.

**Read** 1 Peter 3:13-16

1. Who does Peter say we should not fear in this passage?

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<sup>6</sup> Clark, Elliot, *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in Our Own Land*, The Gospel Coalition, (Denmark: 2019), 59-60.

2. Rather than fearing others, who does Peter say we are to fear/revere?
3. Discuss how your reluctance to share the gospel might stem from fearing people more than God.
4. As we revere Christ as Lord in our hearts, what does Peter say we ought always be prepared to give?
5. Could you give a reason for the hope that you have? Imagine if someone asked you why you have so much peace despite the bad things that have happened to you. How would you answer their question?
6. According to this passage, why is it so important that when we speak about the hope we have that we do it with gentleness and respect?

7. Often our reluctance to speak about Jesus stems from a sense of shame to admit what we believe – we are ashamed of the Lord. Our desire to feel socially comfortable overwhelms the clear conviction we have to speak the truth in love. How can we give ourselves a bigger view of the Lord, a greater reverence, so that we might be willing to endure social discomfort for his sake? What do you think you can do to get better at embracing social discomfort?

**Read Acts 17:16-34**

8. Thinking about the gospel outline we have been trying to learn each week from study 1, which bits does Paul refer to as he engages with the Greeks in the Areopagus?
9. Paul is speaking the truth in love here. How has he shaped his presentation of the truth in a way that shows he understands the people that he is talking to?
10. What kind of response did Paul get from speaking the truth in love? Do you think this means his efforts were sufficient or insufficient? Discuss.

**Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17**

11. How does God use Paul and his fellow workers?


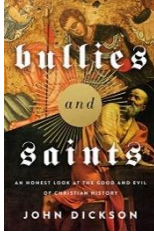


12. I love that Paul says in verse 17 that he and his fellow workers speak with sincerity. They sincerely want people to cross over from death to life, they sincerely speak the truth in love. What do we learn here about the different ways sincere speaking of the truth in love will be received?

13. How might this passage give us confidence to share the gospel?

## Pray

## Other helpful resources to consider

 <p>This book does not try to sound clever, or win an argument. It does aim to introduce people to Jesus and the answers he gives to the hard questions we ask.</p> <p>Many Christian young adults and teenagers have hard questions about their faith. Many non-Christians do, too. Michael and Carl take nine of the hardest, such as "Doesn't Jesus ruin your fun?" "Why is there so much suffering?" and "What does Jesus really think about being gay?" These aren't questions with easy answers; but, as they show, they are questions that have good answers. Written for people of all backgrounds and beliefs, it's a book that is short but not simplistic, and clear but not condescending.</p> <p>If you are a Christian struggling with these issues... if you want to have confidence to talk to your friends about these things... or if you are a non-Christian who wants answers to the hardest questions you can ask... grab this book. 96 pages.</p>	 <p><b>Is the world better off without Christianity?</b></p> <p>Combining narrative with keen critique of contemporary debates, author and historian John Dickson gives an honest account of 2,000 years of Christian history that helps us understand what Christianity is and what it's meant to be.</p> <p>To say that the Christian Church has an "image problem" doesn't quite capture it. From the Crusades and the Inquisition to the racism and abuse present in today's Church--both in Catholic and Protestant traditions--the institution that Christ established on earth has a lot to answer for. But the Church has also had moments throughout history when it has been in tune with Jesus' teachings--from the rise of charity to the invention of hospitals. For defenders of the faith, it's important to be able to recognize the good and bad in the church's history and be inspired to live aligned with Christ. For skeptics, this book is a thought-provoking introduction to the idea that Christianity is, despite all, an essential foundation of our civilization.</p> <p><i>Bullies and Saints</i> will take you on a big-picture journey from the Sermon on the Mount to the modern church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving contextual accounts of infamous chapters of Christian history, such as the Crusades, and acknowledging their darkness.</li> <li>• Outlining the great movements of the faith and defending its heroes and saints, some of whom are not commonly recognized.</li> <li>• Examining the Church beside the teachings and life of Jesus and how it has succeeded in its mission to imitate Christ. 352 pages.</li> </ul>
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## 7. I am with you always

**Try to remember the gospel outline using these pictures to stimulate your memory** (feel free to return to study 1 for help!). Fill in all the blank pictures from memory!



A really great way to make Christians feel like they're not quite Christian enough is to ask them how they are going with evangelism – or more pointedly ask if they have ever led anyone to the Lord. Feelings of inadequacy can overwhelm us. In his book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* J.I. Packer has these sobering words to offer on the effectiveness of Christian evangelism:

*"Were it not for the sovereign grace of God, evangelism would be the most futile and useless enterprise that the world has ever seen, and there would be no more complete waste of time under the sun than to preach the Christian gospel."<sup>7</sup>*

The truth is, the effectiveness of our evangelism does not rest on our shoulders. As we undertake this responsibility of lovingly pointing people to the good news about Jesus, we are not alone in this. We are absolutely subject to God's plans, his purposes, his sovereign rule.

**Read** Matthew 28:16-20

1. You may remember we read this passage in our second study on why we share the gospel. What very important and very comforting words does Jesus leave his followers with here as they commence their work of disciple making?
2. How is this a comfort to us in our work of disciple making?

**Read** 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

3. Christians aren't absolved of all responsibility in working in God's harvest field. How does this passage show us we're still called to work in God's field?

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<sup>7</sup> Packer, J.I., *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, Intervarsity Press, (Nottingham:2010), 115.

4. What does Paul mean when he says 'neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything'?
5. The Corinthians are enamoured with the power and wisdom of their different leaders. But, in this section Paul calls out that way of thinking out. Who is essentially behind people growing in God's field?
6. The fact that anyone comes to know Christ is a miraculous work of God. God gives us a part to play in his work, but all effectiveness is due to him. How can this help us as we think about our own effectiveness at evangelism? How can it give us confidence?

**Read Acts 13:44-48**

7. As Paul and Barnabas speak the word of God to the crowd, who is it that believed their message?
8. The Bible is very clear that we have a responsibility to make disciples, that God has given us work to do. But how does this passage show us the work of evangelism is far bigger than our efforts?

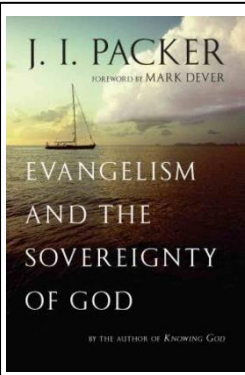
**Read Ephesians 6:18-20**

9. What role does Paul give to the Ephesians in the work of sharing the gospel here?

10. What specifically does Paul ask them to pray for?
  
11. Why do you think it is so important to pray for our work of sharing the gospel?
  
12. What can you do to help yourself get into the practice of praying for yourself and others as you/they share the gospel?
  
13. What practices can you develop to help yourself pray for people who you are, or want to be, sharing the gospel with?

## Pray

## Other helpful resources to consider

 <p><b>J. I. PACKER</b> FOREWORD BY MARK DEVER</p> <p><b>EVANGELISM AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD</b></p> <p>BY THE AUTHOR OF KNOWING GOD</p>	<p>If God is in control of everything, can Christians sit back and not bother to evangelise? Or does active evangelism imply that God is not really sovereign at all?</p> <p>In this classic study, J. I. Packer shows how false both these attitudes are. In a careful review of the biblical evidence, he demonstrates how a right understanding of God's sovereignty is not so much a barrier to evangelism as an incentive and powerful support for it.</p> <p>"This book is for anyone who is beginning to wrestle with questions of how God's sovereignty can fit with any area of human responsibility. I've often recommended this book to faithful Christians who are confused about how they are to think about prayer, missions, giving - any area in which our efforts could be wrongly pitted against God's own necessary action."</p> <p>- Mark Dever, Senior Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington D.C. 122 pages.</p>
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