

## How to Share the Gospel of the Grace of God

This material is being presented to those who are interested in sharing Christ in a non-offensive manner using the authoritative Word of God without being dogmatic. A great deal of thanks goes to Bill Fay, who has shared the gospel with over 10,000 persons one-on-one, and has given hundreds of seminars on "How to Share Your Faith without an Argument." This method gets self out of the way and allows God's Word to penetrate the heart of the individual who is open to the Holy Spirit's prompting. Up front, let us understand that faith is a gift from the Word of God. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." All of the dialogue we think a person should hear from us often impresses the person with our knowledge—to the detriment of the Holy Spirit's ministry, which is "to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come." The Scriptures used in this presentation address these three areas—sin, righteousness, and judgment.

A person is a spiritual being with an eternal soul. Sin is a result of their flawed spiritual nature. To find out where a person is spiritually is best determined by asking questions and listening carefully without disagreeing with their answer.

In the spiritual realm of a person, everyone has something or someone they believe. Most people believe in a supreme being or a code of ethics that may include unethical behavior. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Their attitudes (beliefs) determine their actions, which through repetition form habits that reflect on their character. All of us humans have good habits and bad habits, but unfortunately more often than not, we have cultivated more bad habits than good (which generally no one wants to admit).

In leading up to the first question to be asked, there is an approach that can be used that I find opens the door with people who are incarcerated.

Inmates get out of prison and keep coming back. National statistics of all jails and prisons indicate that over 80% of all inmates that were incarcerated and released come back within three years. Reflecting upon this with an inmate, you can ask, "What do you suppose is the reason this happens?" Many times the inmate will say, "It's because they didn't learn their lesson." I reply, "That's interesting and undoubtedly true; however, I am convinced the problem is deeper than that. It's a spiritual problem. I have spent time one-on-one with many men like you and have come to the conclusion that the reason men come to prison and keep coming back is due to a spiritual problem, and spiritual problems require a spiritual solution.

"When a person gets out of prison, they are determined they are not coming back, but after a while they go back to the same lifestyle that brought them to prison originally. Lifestyle is a result of our belief system—what we believe deep down inside our spiritual being. If nothing changes deep down inside while in prison, when we get out we will continue down the same pathway of hopelessness. Is this what you want?"

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Now we are in a position to ask the first of five initial questions.

1. "I'm curious, do you have some kind of spiritual belief?"

Listen to their answer without comment, unless you are trying to clarify what they have said. Otherwise go to the next question.

2. "To you, who is Jesus?"

Listen very closely to the answer to this question. It often reveals whether they know about Jesus or know Jesus. Again, listen generally without comment. Sometimes the person will say, "He's the Son of God." To that answer, I will ask them, "Is He God?" If they say no, don't become defensive or offensive. The best comment is "That's interesting."

3. "Do you believe there is a heaven and a hell?"

If they say yes, go to the next question. If they say No, or they believe in heaven but hell is here on earth, I would rephrase the question and say, "Suppose there is a real heaven and a real hell, and you were to die today, where do you think you would go?" Invariably they will answer this question more often than not by saying, "Hell." At which point I ask them, "Is that where you want to go?" They will generally say "No" and I will ask them where do you think we will find the answers to avoid hell and go to heaven when we die physically? Most generally they say, "the Bible." And I will ask them, "Why the Bible?" The object of which is to have them understand that the Bible is the Word of God. If a person doesn't accept the Bible as the Word of God, there is no basis for absolute authority and they become subjective to believe whatever they like. At this point get into the Scripture. I will get into later how to do that.

4. "If you were to die today, where do you think you would go?"

This question is asked when a person says they believe in a heaven and a hell. If they answer heaven, ask "Why?" and listen carefully to their answer and then go to the next question. If they answered "hell," ask them the same line of questioning pointed out with Question 3.

5. "Suppose what you believe in how to get to heaven is not the way, would you want to know the way?" If they say yes, then ask them, "Where do you think we will find the answer?" Refer to Question 3 material.

Rarely will you receive a "No" answer to Question 5. But if you do, the person is not ready to go any further; however, ask them why and go from there.

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Once we get to the point that they are willing to look into God's Word, the Bible, for the answers, then I will make this comment. "Having sat down with many men one-on-one I have discovered that so many have either a dim understanding or a confused understanding of who Jesus Christ really is. Let's see what the Bible, God's Word, has to say about this." The whole purpose of the above 5 questions is to find out where a person is spiritually and to get into the Word of God. It is the "Living Word" revealed in the "written Word" that transforms lives. God brings about regeneration and transformation. The trouble with most rehab programs is that they are trying to reform rather than transform. You can't reform someone who is spiritually dead in God's sight. God uses His Word to impart faith (Romans 10:17). Faith is a gift (Ephesians 2:8,9). Once that seed of faith is planted, belief sprouts, and blossoms into trust. This is why we need to get into the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. We are only planters and waterers. It's not the amount of dialogue that changes a person—it is God's Word. To find out who Jesus is, I start with John 1:1-3. Always allow the individual to read the Scriptures to you out loud. After they read, ask questions or ask them, "What does it say?" With this Scripture portion I like to ask them, "Who is the Word?" The answer is obviously God, but they may or may not give you that answer. If not, ask them to read it again, until you get the answer, the Word is God. Then ask, "What did He do?"—same procedure until they answer you that the Word created everything. Now ask, "How did He create everything?" Most will not know the answer to this. Ask them, "Would you like to know?"

Turn to Genesis 1:3 and have them read: "And God said, Let there be light and there was light." Frequently you will have to help them with the answer after you ask them, "So how did God create light?" The answer is obviously, "God said." He spoke and light came into existence. You can highlight all of the "And God said" and "Then God said" in Genesis 1. I'll often comment, "Isn't God's Word awesome and powerful? When God says something—it happens." And that's what the Bible is all about. It is God's Word to you and me; all about you and me and God. Go back to John 1:14. Have them read and ask them, who is this talking about? If they give you any answer other than Jesus, you may have to give them some clues. (Additional Scriptures that may be helpful at this point are: Colossians 2:9 and Colossians 1:15,19. Always let them read it until they understand.

At this point, the conclusion should be that God became a "human being," whose name is Jesus. Why? To accomplish something for you and me that we could never accomplish for ourselves. Let's look at Romans 3:23. Let them read it and ask "What is this saying?" The important fact of this portion is for the individual to understand who this is talking about and what the problems are. All are sinners, not one person measures up to God's standard of perfection. Only Jesus was sinless, and met the standards of perfection. After the person understands, a transition comment at this time would be appropriate, such as: "Sin has its consequences." Go to Romans 6:23. Ask them to read and ask, "What is this first part saying?" If you don't get the right answer ask them to read it again. The wages (payment) for sin is death, i.e. if you sin, the pay you get is death. More frequently than not, I will turn to Revelation 20:11-15. But before I do that, I ask them, "What do you suppose happens to a person who dies physically and they haven't been made right with God? The answer is, of course, they go to hell. Generally I will comment at this point that the body is put in the grave, and the spirit and soul go to hell where they are kept until the final judgment day spoken about in Revelation 20:11. Ask them to start at verse 11 and read to the end of the chapter. Once the record book of that person's life and deeds is opened, and since the person is being judged by their works or deeds, they fall short. The Word of God tells us that by the works of the law no one will be made right with God. The test is not passed and the only payment that can be made is eternal death, the lake of fire. There is every reason to believe that the body will be raised at the judgment throne, along with

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their soul and spirit and will be cast into the lake of fire. The body will undoubtedly burn up, but the soul and spirit, which is eternal, will be tormented day and night forever.

Now go back to the rest of verse 23 of Romans 6 and have them reread the verse. Ask them, "What do you have to do for a gift?" The only answer you are looking for is "Nothing." Now say, "Notice I have underlined the word through (or in depending on the translation). The reason I have underlined that word is to remind me that free gift comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ and not in a religion. True Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship."

Next, share the story about someone who was religious by turning to John 3:1-3. Give a very brief comment on who Nicodemus was. A very religious man, who was hoping his religious deeds were going to get him to heaven, but he wasn't sure, and went to Jesus. Then tell the person to read verse 3. I don't ask them what this verse is saying, but ask them, "What does this verse say is necessary to get into the kingdom of God, which is heaven?" You're looking for the answer—born again. Once that answer has been given, I will briefly mention that the reason I need to be born again is the fact that I am spiritually dead in God's sight due to sin and the need to be born from above. Christ needs to enter our life to have a relationship with God. God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross. Why? Get the right answer, He died for our sins! You can't proceed if they don't know this answer. It's the focal point of the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for lost sinners.

Next, go to John 14:6. Ask them to read it aloud. Ask, "What is this saying?" After their comments, it's appropriate to emphasize the importance of this verse by asking, "Is there any other way?" Notice that Jesus Christ is not one of the ways, but the only way; not part of the truth, but the ultimate truth; not one of the ways of life, but the only true life.

Next, go to Romans 10:9. Ask them if they notice there are three parts to this verse, confession, believing with the heart, and salvation. Ask them what they must confess, what they must believe with all of their heart being, and if they do this, what will happen? Then refer to verse 10. Ask them what this verse is saying. The importance of this verse is believing verse 9 with all of their heart. God accepts nothing but faith; believing Him that He will do what He says He will do. If we believe, we are made right with God. We are declared not guilty, we are declared righteous; not that we are righteous, but through faith we receive the righteousness of Christ.

Go to verse 13. Ask them to read it and ask, "Does the word anyone include you and me?" Next go to I John 5:11,12. Ask, what is this saying to you? Confirm his comments by saying, "Notice God has a gift for you. It is eternal life through His Son. If you have His Son, you have this life, if you don't have His Son, you don't have this life." Use an illustration by holding up a pen or pencil and let them know it is free. If they wanted it, how would they get it? The only answer you should accept is, "Take it," or "I receive it."

Next Scripture is Revelation 3:20. Ask them to read it and then ask them, "Who's doing the knocking?" Jesus and He says, "If anyone hears My voice." How do we hear God's voice? Here I'll answer the question by saying, "through God's Word, the Bible." Quote Romans 10:17. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" and Hebrews 11:6. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Notice Jesus knocks on the door of our heart and calls us through His Word, but that's where He stops. He didn't make us robots, He's not going to force His way in. God gave you and me a sovereign will and we can choose to open the door or keep the door shut. If we open the door of our heart and life to Him, He promises to come in. You see, if you've never invited Jesus into your heart and life, He's still on the outside. We need Him in our life, not outside. Now we come to the part where the Holy Spirit's work becomes evident by

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asking some closing questions. Each "Yes" answer allows you to go to the next question. "No" answers are handled best by asking, "Why"? Listen for answers and judge which Scripture is appropriate to go to for further understanding at this time. It might be good to ask if they believe the Bible is God's Word. If not, there is no basis for proceeding. You must deal with this issue. Many good materials are available to deal with this problem. Of course, a silent prayer for the Holy Spirit to work and give wisdom is necessary.

1. Ask, "Are you a sinner?" If the answer is yes, go to the next question. If the answer is No, ask them, "Why"? You need to go back over the appropriate Scripture. If the answer is still No, obviously the Holy Spirit has some more work to do. Ask them to read the first 3 chapters of Romans or some other appropriate Scripture and tell them you will get back to them.

2. Ask, "Do you want God to forgive you for all of your sins of the past, present, and future"? If you get to this question, I've never had anyone say, no.

3. Ask, "Do you believe Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried, and rose from the dead?" If No, ask why. Go to I Corinthians 15:3 or other appropriate Scriptures.

4. Ask, "Are you willing to open the door of your heart and life to Christ and surrender your life to Him for His life?" If No, ask "Why?" Also, you can ask if there's something they didn't understand.

5. Ask, "Are you ready to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?" If No, "Why?" God's Word says, "Behold now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2) Because of the X factor of death you and I are not promised tomorrow. This is the greatest offer ever made, by the greatest Person who ever lived, and to delay is to reject the offer and the Person. Ask the 5th question again.

If the answer is Yes, ask them if they would like to pray to ask Christ into their life or if they would like you to pray and they can repeat after you.

Here's a suggested prayer:

Heavenly Father, I come to You through Jesus Christ Your Son because there is no other way. I am a sinner and cannot save myself. I depend upon His death, burial, and resurrection for the payment of my sins. I believe in Him today and that He died for my sins as my personal Lord and Savior. Today, I open the door of my heart and life to Christ and ask Him to come in. Thank You for saving me, giving me eternal life, and forgiving me of all my sins. In Christ's name, Amen.

After the prayer, ask them, "What just happened?" and "If you died today, where would you go?" Sometimes the answers will be negative and some further explanation from God's Word about assurance of salvation will be necessary. We are saved by faith, not feelings. But in most cases the answers will be positive and often with a change in countenance.

Now spend time explaining the need to study God's Word, pray, tell others (especially family) about their new relationship with Christ and the need to fellowship with other Christians. They are a new person inside (II Corinthians 5:17).

Keep a list of those with whom you shared the good news and pray for them.

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First 5 questions:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you think there is a heaven and a hell?
4. If you were to die today, where would you go?
5. Suppose what you believe in how to get to heaven is not the way, would you want to know the way?

Scriptures Recommended (verses for additional help and understanding if needed):

1. John 1:1-3; Genesis 1:3; John 1:14; Colossians 2:9; 1:15,19
2. Romans 3:23; 5:20
3. Romans 6:23; Revelation. 20:11-18
4. John 3:1-3; Ephesians 2:1-3
5. John 14:6; Romans 4:12
6. Romans 10:9,10,13; I Corinthians 15:1-9
7. I John 5:11,12; I John 4:1-3; 5:13
8. Revelation 3:20; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; II Corinthians 6:2

Closing Questions:

1. Are you a sinner?
2. Do you want God's forgiveness for all your sins of the past, present and future?
3. Do you believe Christ died on the Cross for your sins, was buried and rose from the dead?
4. Are you willing to open the door of your heart and surrender your life to Christ for His life?
5. Are you ready to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? (If you are, then let us pray: that means, call upon the Lord, Romans 10:13).

Suggested Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I come to You through Jesus Christ Your Son because there is no other way. I am a sinner and cannot save myself. I depend upon His death, burial, and resurrection for the payment of my sins. I believe in Him today and that He died for my sins as my personal Lord and Savior. Today, I open the door of my heart and life to Christ and ask Him to come in. Thank You for saving me, giving me eternal life, and forgiving me of all my sins. In Christ's name, Amen.