

Evangelism Toolbox

◆ Cultivating ◆ Planting ◆ Reaping ◆

Resources for seeking the lost

Worldwide Church of God

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Resources for seeking the lost

The mission of the church is to make disciples that make disciples (Matthew 28:19). That mission is pursued through a four-part strategy: build believers, equip workers, seek the lost and multiply leaders and ministries.

Seeking the lost (often referred to as winning the lost) involves personal evangelism. This toolbox advocates a process for personal evangelism summarized in the acronym **CPR** that stands for **cultivate** (friendships), **plant** (truth) and **reap** (commitment to Christ). This evangelism toolbox provides resources and teaching strategies to assist shepherd-leaders in modeling and teaching CPR in their congregations.

The author wishes to credit SonLife Ministries (<http://sonlife.com>) for the CPR framework that provides the basic outline to this document. In addition, the author wishes to credit one of his professors and friends, Jay Halley, for much of the material in this document. Jay is one of the pastors at the Chapel in Akron and Green, OH and taught the author in a class on evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Akron, OH extension campus.

A. WHERE DO I START?

1. Define evangelism biblically (from Packer). Evangelism means to so present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church. More simply put, the ultimate aim in evangelism is to convert the hearers to faith in Christ.

Evangelism occurs wherever or whenever the gospel is faithfully communicated with a view to the conversion of the hearer. The primary task in evangelism is to preach the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ as Christ's steward, herald and ambassador. The truth about Jesus is the good news of the cradle (incarnation), the cross (atonement) and the crown (kingdom).

The evangelistic message has four essential ingredients:

- God's holiness
- Our sin
- Christ's atonement
- Our response of faith/repentance.

2. Get a biblical conviction concerning personal evangelism. The historic pattern of the church is to reach out to the lost (1Thes 1:7-8; 2:14; Acts 2:42ff). Jesus promised that the "water" in us would spill out to others (John 7). The biblical example is for all believers to experience both the desire and the ability to tell others about the gospel.

Notice the pattern in **2Cor. 5:11-6:2**

- Fearing (reverencing) the Lord (5:11)...
- And compelled by Christ's love (5:14)...
- We clearly grasp both man's possibilities and predicament (5:16)...

(The goal of church leaders should be to see their members viewing neighbors no longer from a worldly perspective but as inhabitants of eternity in desperate need of reconciliation with God [Moore]).

- And so we seek to persuade men (5:11)...
- With the message about reconciliation with God through Christ (5:18-19)...
- We do this as Christ's Ambassadors—making an appeal on God's behalf (5:20)...
- In this we are God's fellow workers who take this charge seriously lest we hold God's grace in vain (6:1)...
- We do so with urgency—understanding that *now* is the day of salvation (6:2).

3. Bring a biblical, Christ-centered heart (mindset must precede method):

- **Humility:** get rid of us vs. them mentality—the unsaved are not the enemy, they are victims held captive by the enemy.
- **Patience:** understand that evangelism is a process.
- **Insight:** understand that you're not alone--evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Love:** the motive for evangelism must be, above all else, love--desire to serve.
- **Obedience:** evangelism is God's idea, not man's.
- **Optimism:** God uses the most unlikely (me) to evangelize.
- **Hope:** God saves the most unlikely (like me) and will save others equally unlikely/unworthy.

4. Adhere to a basic "code of ethics" concerning evangelism:

- Do no harm.
- Always tell the truth (don't exaggerate).
- Recognize the mysteries (allow for "I don't know").
- Don't force people to agree with you.
- Don't try to prove yourself at the other person's expense.

5. As a leader, be committed to evangelism as a personal and corporate practice:

- Start with prayer (and keep praying)—declare war (fueled by love).
- Own and model the value of personal evangelism: develop and then live by a personal philosophy of evangelism (Sonlife calls this a biblical ministry identity).
- Be intentional: "Everything church leaders do to equip members must contribute to them bearing testimony to the gospel in their daily lives" (Moore).
- Be expectant: Expect the Holy Spirit to prompt members to...
 - i. Pray daily that God will open doors of witnessing opportunity
 - ii. Proceed boldly in faith to share with others as God leads
 - iii. Seek additional equipping in areas where weakness in evangelism becomes apparent.

- Inspire members with a vision of their potential in evangelism. Help them understand the needs of people by keeping before them the issues of their community and world so they will begin to develop a burden for the lost.
- Use the pulpit, leadership training classes, social events, etc. as opportunities to equip members to share their faith with the lost. Such equipping is the central purpose of our ministry (Eph 4:11-15)—preparing people to “speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). That “truth” is about Christ’s love (the gospel) and it is Jesus’ love for the lost that compels us to speak the message of reconciliation (2Cor 5:14-21). Effective training happens when leaders are models, where the gospel is clearly taught and where lifestyle evangelism is embraced and taught.
- Install an effective structure for teaching and training lifestyle evangelism. Embrace Jesus’ discipling strategy: he was with the disciples, he took them with him, he gave them jobs so they could learn by doing and he was patient with them (see Luke 10). The structure we embrace in the WCG-USA is the one taught by Sonlife.
- Recruit a team to work with you in advancing evangelism in the congregation.
- Appoint a “point person” to own and lead the team.
- Train everyone you can find in personal/relational evangelism (feel free to use this toolbox and find other resources—your DS will help you).
- Hold CPR events in the congregation.
- Don’t give up (keep praying—remember it’s warfare).

B. WHAT IS THE BASIC PROCESS?

Relational evangelism is a **process** (see a chart on the next page). In this process our concern is the person being evangelized. We have the hopeful expectation that the person will advance along a continuum of opening up to Jesus:

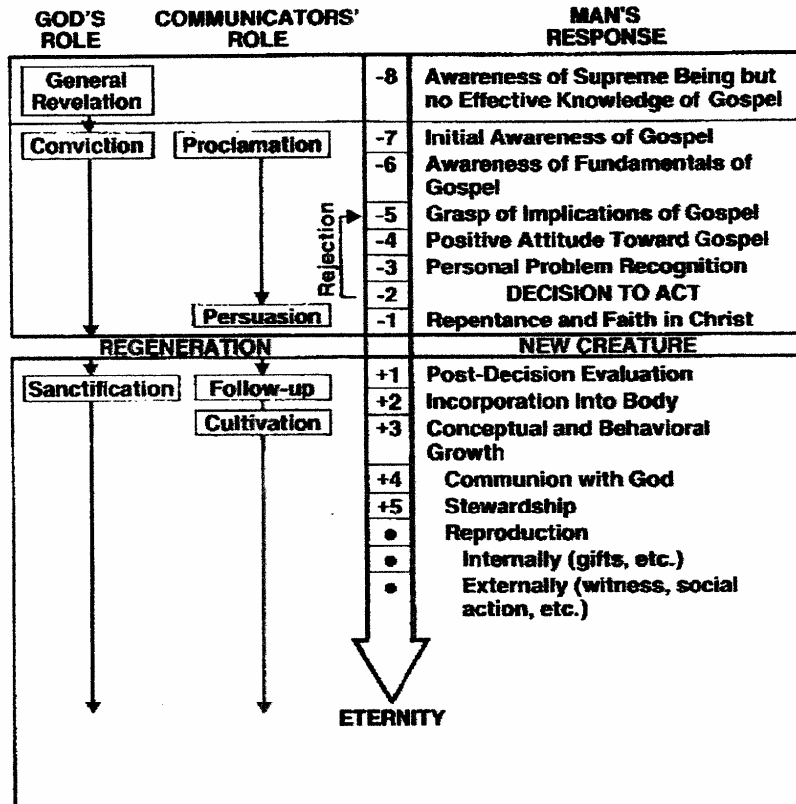
- *Interest* in Jesus
- *Insight* concerning Jesus
- *Conviction* toward Jesus

Our challenge and goal is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in helping a person move along this continuum. We do our part by administering eternal **CPR** that stands for:

- **Cultivate** (friendships with influence)
- **Plant** (spiritual truth)
- **Reap** (a commitment to Christ)

In the following sections we’ll look at strategies in each of these three areas.

EVANGELISM AS A PROCESS



This model as presented here has undergone an interesting history. In rudimentary forms, it was first suggested by Viggo Sogaard while he was a student in the Wheaton Graduate School. It later was revised by James F. Engel and published in such sources as *Church Growth Bulletin* and elsewhere during 1973. Since that time, modifications have been introduced as others have made suggestions. Particularly helpful comments have been advanced by Richard Senzig of the communications faculty at the Wheaton Graduate School and Professors C. Peter Wagner and Charles Kraft of the Fuller School of World Mission. (From *What's Gone Wrong With The Harvest*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1975, p. 45. Used by permission.)

(from McCloskey, "Tell it Often, Tell it Well," p. 224)

C. CPR: HOW DO I CULTIVATE?

1. Embrace the theology of “staying put.” Blossom where you’re planted. God places you strategically and sovereignly where you have the “inside track.” Stay there if at all possible. . No contact, no impact.

1Cor 7:17 (“each one should remain...”)

1Cor 5:9-10 (OK to associate with the immoral in the world)

1Thes 1:5 (“you know how we lived among you”)

2. Make contact. Multiply points of contact with pre-Christians (unbelievers). Multiply friendships that are close enough to earn the right to be heard and deep enough to exert influence in positive ways. **Examine your existing relational networks**—your “circles of influence” at work, home, play. Identify several for further development.

3. Then pray concerning the contacts in your networks (Col 4:2-4):

- Pray for open doors (v3):

Acts 14:27

1Cor 16:9

2Cor 2:12

- Pray for boldness to walk through those doors (v4a):

Eph 6:19

Acts 4:29-31

As you pray, be confident and expectant concerning God’s power and the contact’s response.

4. Develop the contact. Build redemptive relationships that are supportive and nourishing and that communicate empathy, humility and gentleness. Build bridges of caring and understanding.

5. Open your eyes: be an insider: understand your contact’s worldview. Seek to be like the “men of Issachar” (1Chron 12:32) who understood the times and what to do. Our goal, as Stephen Covey has written, is to seek to understand, and only then, to be understood.

And there is much to understand about people in our culture. Ours is an increasingly post-Christian and postmodern culture shifting increasingly from:

- God to humanity
- The group to the individual
- Responsibilities to rights
- Others to self
- Service to self-expression
- Blessings to needs

It is a culture that tends to embrace the following values:

- Relativism (no objective and singular truth; I construct my own truth)
- Pluralism (syncretism—choices—consensus)
- Skepticism (particularly concerning propositional/objective truth)
- Tolerance (all religions are created equal)
- Privatization (religion should not be public but mere personal preference)
- Biblical illiteracy (post-Christian culture)
- Community (relational—contextual)
- Negativism (despair)
- Results rather than truth (what works vs. what is true)
- Feelings/experience rather than rational propositions
- Authenticity (be real)

6. **Open your arms: be an identifier:** having understood, don't step away, step toward your pre-Christian contacts. Draw close to them and earn the right to be heard.

1Cor 9:19-23

- Identify with them
- Come alongside them—get on their turf
- Find common ground—appreciate and acknowledge what is true in their worldview (e.g. western culture is not progressing, racism and unfairness are rampant, ecology is a valid/big concern, artistic creativity is important, relationships are all important). Remember that all truth is God's truth.
- Accept them unconditionally (as they are) and respectfully
- We adjust, we accommodate with respect to customs, values, habits (as far as we can in good conscience)

Draw close to people, build bridges, and build trust. What builds relational trust?

- presence (time plus genuine interest)
- integrity
- caring-serving
- transparency-authenticity
- getting into their world

Opening our arms, in love, will contribute to pre-conversion discipleship as well as pave the way for opportunities to invite. Serve them through "random acts of kindness." Incarnate Jesus' love in their life.

7. **Discussion question:** How do I equip members to cultivate?

D. CPR: HOW DO I PLANT?

1. **Search for points of receptivity.** Having built a “trust-bridge” consider what “weight” of biblical truth it can withstand—look for opportunities to share.

2. **Ask questions:** one of the best ways to plant the seeds of biblical truth is by asking progressive questions in order to determine a contact’s “spiritual address” so that we may effectively “deliver the mail” (gospel message).

Following are some questions for determining a person’s spiritual address:

- a. If you could describe your life in one word, what word would you chose?
- b. What three things do you most desire out of life?
- c. Do individual lives have meaning and purpose?
- d. Are some things true, while other things are false?
- e. Do you have any spiritual interest?
- f. Where are you on your spiritual pilgrimage?
- g. In your opinion, who is Jesus Christ?
- h. If you were do die tonight, what would you say to God to let you into heaven?
- i. On a scale of 0 to 100% how sure are you that God will let you into heaven?
- j. Would you like to know how to have 100% assurance?

If the person is responsive, ask follow up questions:

- a. (Opportunity) Sometime may I have the opportunity to share about...?
- b. (Interest) Would you be interested in hearing about...?
- c. (Schedule) When would be the best time to share with you...?

Be patient: there are barriers to receptivity (McCloskey, p. 250):

- a. Spiritual blindness (2 Cor. 4:4)
- b. Bad experiences with Christians
- c. Misconceptions of the nature of the gospel or the character of God
- d. Commitment to an immoral lifestyle
- e. Unhealthy fear of God or fear of man

3. **If they respond negatively** don’t be argumentative or defensive. Rather, gently and respectfully help them deconstruct their presuppositions. Hold up a mirror by helping them ask the following questions concerning their worldview:

- a. Does it cohere? (make sense)
- b. Does it correspond? (line up with reality)
- c. Does it work? (produce good fruit)
- d. Have you actually experienced it?
- e. Does it give the best explanation for how things are?

4. **As they show receptivity**, share more—help them to consider Christ by sharing biblical content and values (see Paul’s example in Athens—Acts 17:16-34).

5. **Share personal faith stories.** These stories are about the difference Christ has made in your life. They are best when they are the have the following characteristics (Peterson):

- brief
- natural
- give insight into what Christians do
- and are open-ended (avoid drawing conclusions)

6. **Discussion question:** How do I equip members to plant?

Preparing Your Personal Testimony

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things become new." (2 Cor. 5:17)

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you." (1 Pet. 3:15)

Having A Testimony

A person who has been born again of the Spirit of God has a new story to tell, a story of God's saving and changing power. This story is called a testimony. Consider the stories of these New Testament people. Look for details of their testimonies. What were they like before they received eternal life? How did they receive eternal life? What are they like now that they have received eternal life?

Saul/Paul Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-30; Gal. 1:11-24; Acts 22:1-22; 26:1-29

1. Before _____
2. How _____
3. After _____

Woman at well John 4:7-42

1. Before _____
2. How _____
3. After _____

Philippian jailor Acts 16:22-34

1. Before _____
2. How _____
3. After _____

Using Your Testimony

Your story of salvation, your testimony, can be a tool for encouragement and evangelism. If Christians are to be effective witnesses for their Savior, they need a clear story. Your experience of salvation is the substance of your testimony.

Testifying is the first aspect of witnessing – simply telling what eternal life has meant to you – what difference it has made in your life. In order to do this, you need the assurance that you have salvation (eternal life) and that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord.

Three times in the Book of Acts, Paul gives his personal testimony. If you study these accounts you will discover that the three essential elements are:

1. What I was before I was saved.
2. How I was saved.
3. What salvation means to me.

It is important to understand the benefits that eternal life has brought to you. List some of those benefits:

Preparing A Personal Testimony

In his first letter, Peter challenges us, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you.” (I Pet. 3:15)

One of the most effective tools for ministry is to share your faith with others – to tell the story of how Jesus gave your eternal life and how he has enriched your life. John wrote, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard.” (1 John 1:3). John was testifying of his relationship with Jesus.

When Paul stood before King Agrippa in Acts 26, he told him simply, logically and clearly about his life before salvation, how he met Christ, and what his life was like after conversion. This takes about four minutes to read aloud.

Your testimony will not be like, and it does not have to be like any one else’s. While you will begin to develop your testimony by writing it, the purpose of doing so is not to memorize it and give it verbatim. The purpose is to help you express your experience with words so your hearer can understand what has happened to you.

As you begin, ask the Lord for wisdom and insight in how to share your story. Be open for suggestions from others (your pastor or district superintendent.) Give time, thought and prayer to preparing your personal testimony.

Tips For Preparing Your Testimony

Testimonies can be prepared on many subjects and tailored for various audiences. The testimony you prepare will be designed to give to a non-Christian and will be best suited for sharing one-to-one or in a small group. It will serve best as a “door-opener”, not a “convincing tool.”

Many people are not ready to be convinced that they need Christ, but can often be lead to talk about the Gospel after an inoffensive presentation of a personal testimony.

General Outline of a Testimony

1. Before – a short sketch of what your life was like before becoming a Christian.
2. How – how, specifically, you took the step of becoming a Christian (for many, this was a process.)
3. After – relating to the changes in your life.

Guidelines for Preparing the Specific Content

1. Make it sound conversational. Prepare it to be spoken. Avoid literary sounding statements like, “I viewed the crimson sunset and pondered” Use your informal vocabulary.
2. Say “I” and “me,” not “you” (share, don’t preach). People like to hear experiences of others told to them in the first person.
3. Avoid religious words, phrases and jargon. Consider the following substitutions:

“Religious word”

Believe
Went forward
Under the blood
Christian
Gave my heart
Born again
Saved

Possible Substitutions

Invited Christ to come into my life through prayer
Decided to turn my life over to God
God forgave me for my failures and disobedience
Committed Christian
Committed my life
Given a new lease on life
Became a Christian, delivered from the consequences of disobedience.

4. Generalize, so more people can identify with your story. Don't name specific churches, denominations, or groups. Avoid using dates and ages.
5. Include some humor and human interest.
6. Include word pictures to describe your background and experiences (without becoming too "flowery.")
7. In the "before" section, include both good and bad aspects of your life (without describing things that might make others uncomfortable.)
8. In the "how" section, communicate the Gospel clearly and briefly. Include:
 - The fact of sin (disobedience)
 - The penalty of sin
 - Christ's payment of the penalty
 - The requirement to receive Christ

Use the word "pray" when referring to receiving Christ. The word "pray" conveys the practical approach one needs to take when becoming a Christian.

For instance: "I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my life, live his life through me, and give me the gift of eternal life."

9. In the "after" section, conclude with two or three personal benefits of becoming a Christian. These may be current benefits. Such benefits ought not focus people on physical benefits alone. The greatest benefit is knowing Jesus and having eternal life. Listeners may be affected most by your final comments. This may open the door to present the Gospel to them more directly.
10. Avoid dogmatic statements which skeptics question and reject, such as:
 - "I prayed and I know Christ came in."
 - God has given me a wonderful husband (or wife, children, etc.)

Try, "I prayed and asked Christ into my life. Since then I have experienced peace ..."

11. Simplify – reduce clutter. Mention only a limited number of people you know and such things as moves, meetings, jobs you have had, etc. Use only first names when possible.

Personal Testimony Assignment

Write out your personal testimony using one or two pages using the following format:

1. What I was before I received eternal life.
2. How I received eternal life.
3. What eternal life has meant to me.

E. CPR: HOW DO I REAP?

1. **Open your mouth: be an inviter.** Having determined their “spiritual address” and arranged for a meeting, don’t fail to “deliver the mail”—clearly and positively present the gospel message (see the following pages for ways to do so—develop several approaches, some are more appropriate with some people than with others).

2. Be alert to open doors—go for it!

2Cor 5:19b-20 Don't sit on your grace

1Thes 2:13

Col 4:2-4 Talk to God/talk to people

1Cor 1:17-18; 2:1-5 It doesn't require eloquence to share

John 14:6 It's Jesus' idea

John 15:26-27; 16:9-11 God's spirit is in on it!

1Pet 2:11-12

Romans 1:16; 1Tim 1:8;

Mark 8:38 Deal with embarrassment

3. Pray for courage and for clarity in your gospel presentation (Col. 4:4)

4. As you open your mouth, invite your friend to:

- Hear your story (see share your testimony, below)
- Look at the Bible with you
- Come with you to an event/program
- Come to a home study (see p. 18 about hosting one)
- Come to a worship service

5. All presentations of the gospel should convey the four C's:

- Compassion (God loves you and so do I)
- Cross (sin and salvation)
- Confession (you have a need)
- Clarity (now is the time for decision)

6. Share your testimony (personal conversion story)

The bible tells us to “give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1Pet. 3:15). We must be able to share the story of how Jesus gave us eternal life and how he has enriched our lives. The basic outline for a testimony concerning coming to faith is as follows (note Paul’s outline in Acts 26:2-29):

- Lead in statement
- My life before Christ
- How I met Christ
- What my life is like after conversion
- Close

7. Be prepared to ask invitation/decision questions:

- Does this (the gospel) make sense to you?
- On the basis of this (gospel), have you ever committed your life to Christ?
- Is there any reason why you wouldn’t want to trust Christ now?

8. Discussion question: How do I equip members to reap?

F. TOOLS FOR PRESENTING THE GOSPEL

1. The gospel in one sentence:

God has done for us in Christ what we could not do for ourselves.

2. The gospel in 4 words (Mittelberg, Strobel and Hybels):

- **God:**
Is loving, holy and just.
- **Us**
We were created good, but became sinful; we deserve death (physical and spiritual); we are spiritually helpless (morally “bankrupt”) and have incurred a debt we cannot pay.
- **Christ:**
Is God who also became man; died as our substitute—he paid our debt; and offers his forgiveness as a gift.
- **You:**
Decide the outcome of our story line—we must make a decision—we must choose to respond by receiving the gift—we must ask Christ to be our personal forgiver and leader—the result being the Holy Spirit coming into our lives and transforming us.

3. The gospel in 4 phrases:

- **God has a *purpose***
Rev 4.1
- **Man has a *problem***
Mark 7:20-22; Rom 3:10-12; Heb 9:27
- **God has a *remedy***
1Pet 3:18; 2:24; Acts 17:31
- **Man has a *response***
John 1:12; 3:36; 3:16

4. *Do vs. Done*

- *Religion*

Is spelled "D-O"

Trying to do enough good things to please God

- *The Problem*

We can never know when we have done enough

The Bible says that we can never do enough (Romans 3:23)

- *Christianity*

Is spelled "D-O-N-E"

Christ did what we could never do

...Lived the perfect life we could not

...Died on the cross to pay for our wrongdoings

- *Our Response*

It's not enough just to know this

We have to receive what He has done for us

By asking for His forgiveness and leadership in our lives

- *Their Response*

Does this make sense to you?

What do you think about what I just said?

5.

THE BRIDGE TO LIFE

Step 1 - God's Love and His plan



God created us in His own image to be His friend and to experience a full life assured of his love, abundant and eternal.

Jesus said, "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
([John 10:10b](#))

"...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
([Romans 5:1](#))

Since God planned for us to have peace and abundant life right now, why are most people not having this experience?

Step 2 - Our Problem: Separation from God



God created us in His own image to have abundant (meaningful) life. He did not make us robots to automatically love and obey him, but he gave us a will and a freedom of choice.

We chose to disobey God and go our own willful way. We still make this choice today. This results in separation from God.

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

"...your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear." ([Isaiah 59:2](#))

On our own, there's no way we can attain the perfection needed to bridge the gap to God. Through the ages, individuals have tried many ways...without success.

Good works won't do it...or religion...or money...or morality...or philosophy...

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."
([Proverbs 14:12](#))

Step 3 - God's Remedy: The Cross



Jesus Christ is the only answer to this problem. He died on the cross and rose from the grave, paying the penalty for our sin and bridging the gap between God and people.

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you

to God..."

([1 Peter 3:18](#))

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ." ([1 Timothy 2:5](#))

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

([Romans 5:8](#))

Step 4 - Our Response



Believing means trust and commitment - acknowledging our sinfulness, trusting Christ's forgiveness and letting Him control our life. Eternal, abundant life is a gift for us to receive.

"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](#))

"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."

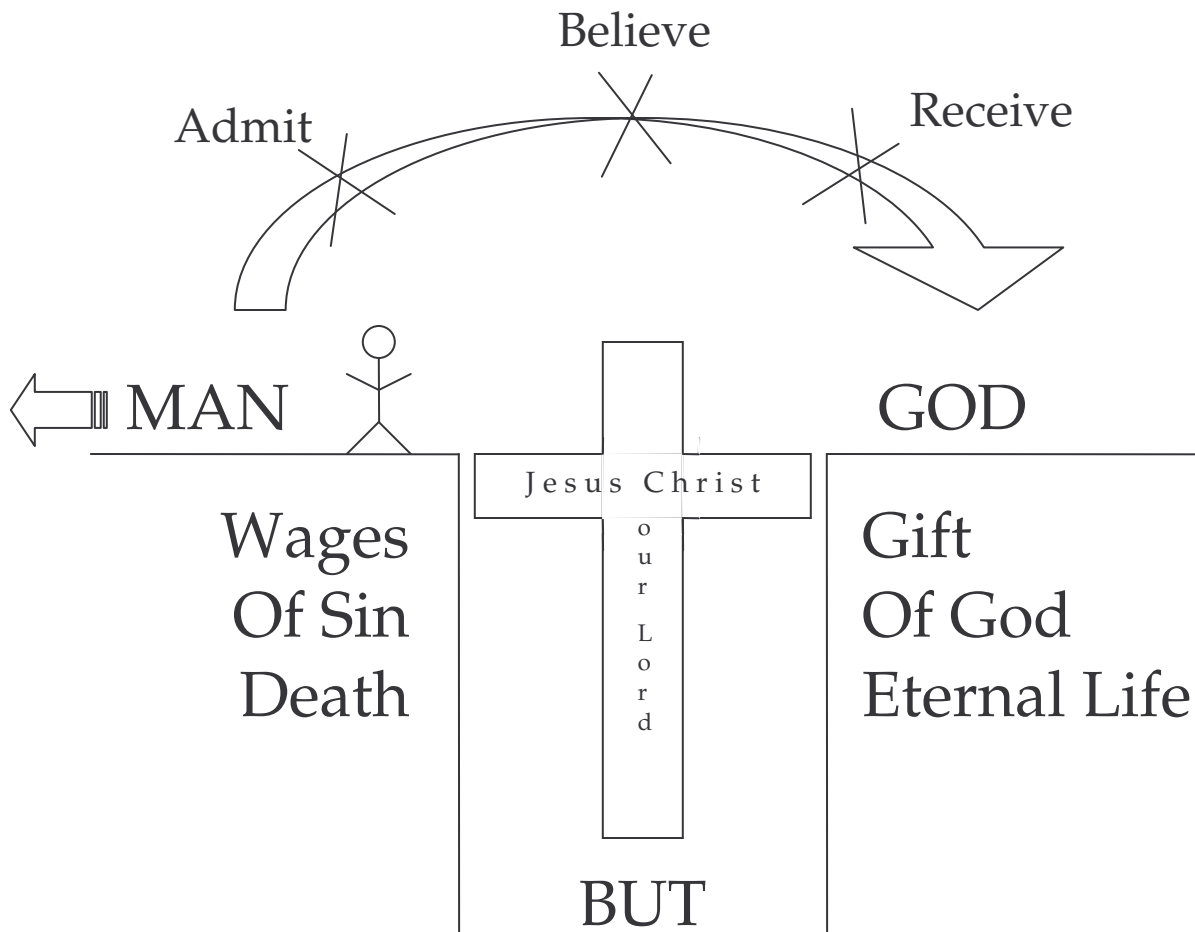
([John 5:24](#))

Question: Is there any reason why you shouldn't cross over to God's side and be certain of eternal life?

6. The gospel in one verse: Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Based on "One Verse Evangelism" by Randy Raysbrook)



The key to the "Bridge Diagram" is to draw the cliff first, with MAN and GOD, and then fill in the rest with the words, then the cross, and then the arrow as you go along.

The wages

How would you define wages?

How would you feel if your boss didn't pay you what you deserved?

We have earned wages from God for how we live our lives.

Of Sin

How would you define sin?

How would a person have to live in order to get to heaven?

Have you always lived a life as you just described?

Sin is an attitude of independence and ignoring God. Sin has separated us from God.

(point out the "cliff" in the picture)

Is death

What thoughts come to mind when you think about death?

The sin that separates us from God will extend even into eternity if unaltered.

This is eternal death or what the Bible describes as hell.

But

Up until this point the message is bad news.

Would you like to hear some good news?

The Gift

(From this phrase forward point out the contrast between the words opposite each other in the diagram, i.e., wages and gift, sin and God, etc.)

While some people try to earn God's favor with religious deeds, good morals, ethics, etc, it's impossible to earn the gift that God has already purchased for us.

Of God

All of us have sinned, but God alone is perfect. It is this sin, which makes a relationship with God impossible on our own. The good news is this: God wants to give you a gift!

Is Eternal Life

In contrast to the wages of death, which we deserve, the free gift of God is eternal life. It can only come from God...we cannot earn it; we do not deserve it.

Through Jesus Christ

(At this point, draw a cross between the two cliffs. This is the "bridge to life")

Jesus is the bridge of life—the means by which we obtain eternal life. By dying on the cross he bore the penalty for the sins, which we should have received. Thus, He has purchased eternal life for us.

Our Lord

Jesus is not only our Savior who died for our sins, but the Lord and Master of our life whom we obey when we:

Admit our sin. We confess that we have ignored God and offended Him in thought, word, and deed.

Believe that Jesus Christ died to forgive us completely of our sins so that God treats us as if we were perfect, just like Christ.

Receive Jesus Christ personally into your life. Just as a gift is not truly yours until you receive it, so Christ must be received by us to have a relationship with Him. (Note: a word that can be used in place of receive is commit. Same meaning, but it creates the acronym "ABC").

7. The gospel revealed in the story-line of the Bible (Pollard, p. 105):

- Genesis 1 & 2: **God set it up.** God
- Genesis 3: **We mucked it up.** Us
- Genesis 4 to Malachi: **God called us back.** God
- Matthew to John: **God came himself.** God
- Acts to Jude: **God grows relationships.** What if I do?
- Revelation: **God is going to sort it out.** What if I don't?

8. The ABCD's of the gospel (a presentation of the gospel by Alistair Begg)

A. There is something to **Admit**

First of all we have to admit that we are all sinners: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Romans 3:23

Each of us has failed miserably when it comes to keeping His commandments. We haven't honored our parents as we should, we have tolerated untruthfulness, we have been envious of our neighbors and while we may not have actually committed murder, we have tolerated murderous thoughts.

Our natural tendency is not to acknowledge our sin. We are prone to blame our circumstances or our genes. We are keen to gain comfort in the assurance that we are not as bad as some people.

So what brings us to the place where we know that we must admit we are sinners? This is something God does. Jesus explained to His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit, *"When He comes, He will convince the world of the meaning of sin, of true goodness and of judgment."* John 16:8

B. There is something to **Believe**

Jesus is the only Savior from the sin to which we have just admitted. We may have begun our journey fairly convinced Jesus was a "good man", but as we considered the evidence we were forced in a different direction. We certainly did not set out predisposed to believe. So we find ourselves agreeing with this statement: "Faith is forced consent. That is to say, when evidence is judged by the mind to be sufficient, the state of mind we call 'faith' is the inevitable effect....whenever the reasons are judged sufficient, faith or belief is induced." (*Collected Writings II p237*). So we come to believe that God has made provision for our sin in the person of His Son. *"We see real love, not in the fact that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to make personal atonement for our sins."* 1 John 4:10 JBP.

C. There is something to Consider

We need to come to terms with the cost of following Christ. He said, *"If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, carry his cross every day and keep close behind me. For the man who wants to save his life will lose it, but the man who loses his life for my sake will save it."* Luke 9:23,4.

Now be careful not to misunderstand this. The only thing we 'contribute' to our salvation is the sin from which we need to be saved. One way to learn the important distinction is to remember that while entrance to the Christian life is free, the annual subscription is everything we have!

There is a cost involved in Saying No to Sin. Jesus said, *"The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!... Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Notice that His first call is to 'repentance' This means to turn from sin to God. There are certain characteristics which Sinclair Ferguson points out are commonly present in repentance.

1. A sense of shame, such as when David cries to the Lord after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

"For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight..." Psalm 51:3,4.

2. This leads to humbling. Instead of jumping to our defense or trying to blame our actions on people or circumstances, we acknowledge our accountability.

3. There is an accompanying sense of sorrow and regret. If we had been in the corner of the bedroom of the prodigal son on his first night at home, I think we would have heard the sobs and seen the tears and watched in wonder as he knelt by his bed and mourned the wasted years and the squandered privileges. The memory of sin is distasteful to the truly penitent.

4. There is also a recognition of God's pardon. It is the kindness of God which leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). While we are emphasizing the need for repentance at the gateway of faith, this is something which continues through our entire life.

There is a cost involved in Saying No to Self.

What we mean by this is simply that Christ comes first, before everything and everyone else. This has a peculiarly challenging ring in the midst of a culture that has gone to great lengths to bolster self-esteem and make much of the individual. It means that my time and my talents and my relationships and my career will all be brought under His jurisdiction.

There is a cost involved in Saying No to Secrecy. When a man or woman discovers the freedom Jesus brings, they will be ready and willing to let others know. The Bible confirms this in a number of places. *"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* Romans 10:9

While coming to trust in Christ is undoubtedly a personal matter, it is not private.

D. There is something to **Do**

Genuine Christian faith is more than saying, *"I believe Jesus is who He claimed to be."* After all even demons are orthodox when it comes to this, but clearly they are not Christians! (James 2:19)

Faith means accepting the facts can be trusted, and acting upon what you believe to be true. Alister McGrath uses an analogy which you may find helpful. Imagine I am suffering from blood poisoning and there is a bottle of penicillin sitting on my bedside table. What are my options?

a. I may accept that this bottle of penicillin exists.

b. I may trust that it is capable of curing my illness, but I shall never cure my blood poisoning, unless -

c. I act upon that trust and take the penicillin. Acceptance and trust prepare the way for the final component of faith - entering into the promise, and receiving what it offers. Mere mental assent to these facts without any corresponding action no more brings us to personal faith than memorizing a menu allows us to enjoy a meal. True faith means moving beyond the awareness of the existence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to a living personal relationship with Him.

If God has shown you your need and given you this desire, then you must forsake everything and trust Christ, NOW! There's a time coming when it will be too late. *So here is the most crucial question you will ever face? "Do you take this Savior?"* If your answer is 'yes' then let me encourage you to deal with the matter immediately. You may want to find a quiet place to seal your commitment. God is not so concerned with your ability to articulate your thoughts as He is aware of the sincerity of the response of your heart. A simple prayer such as this may be of help to you in marking the moment. Depending on the kind of person you are, you may want to write this in your journal or the fly leaf of your Bible. This is a unique occasion.

"Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that I am a guilty, lost and helpless sinner. I want you to save me, to take your rightful place as Lord of my life. I want to turn from my sin and trust only in your atoning sacrifice. I give my life to you. Take charge of it all and help me by the power of the Holy Spirit to follow after you."

It is important for us to recognize the mystery which surrounds this. Jesus referred to this when he was talking with Nicodemus about being born again. He said, *"The wind blows where it likes, you can hear the sound if it but you have no idea where it comes from and where it goes. Nor can you tell how a man is born by the wind of the Spirit."* John 3:8 JBP.

This recognizes the amazing wonder of God's grace whereby Jesus comes to where I am, calls me by my name and changes me. So this life-changing encounter takes place both mysteriously and individually.

Faith is the gift of God, and we may be confident that having given it. He will not take it back.

Allow me to offer you the same encouragement Paul gave to the believers in Philippi:
"I am confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil.1:6

So What Should I Do Now?

There are two very important things you should now do.

1. Get yourself a Bible and start reading it. The gospel of John is a good place to start. The Bible is the Word of God and He gave it to us that we might learn more about following Him. Set aside a time each day for reading your Bible and talking to God in prayer.

2. Find other Christians and tell them what you've done. If you know other Christians you could go to church with them, if not find a bible teaching church that you can attend. It is important now that you grow in your walk with God. Spiritual food, that is fellowship and teaching, as well as your own Bible study, will help you grow.

"Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is no other." Isaiah 45 : 22

9. For other gospel presentation tools see:

<http://www.evangelismtoolbox.com/>

<http://www.evangelismtoolbox.com/go.php?type=page&resource=2>

<http://www.gospelcom.net/navs/navinfo/resources/bridge/bridge.htm>

<http://www.hillsong.org/GotGod.shtml>

<http://www.ivcf.org/witness/circles.html>

<http://web2.iadfw.net/wwbc1/questions/One%20Verse%20Presentation.PPT>

G. LEADING A HOME BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP

1. **The purpose** of home Bible discussion groups is to develop in non-believers:
 - **Interest:** Incarnate the gospel through relationships.
 - **Insight:** Facilitate discovery. Let God do the talking. Create a safe place to discover the truth of the scriptures. Allow discussion/dialogue. The facilitator is there to launch (with questions), guide and summarize.
 - **Conviction:** proclamation.
2. **Process for launching/continuing:**
 - Pray
 - Strengthen friendships
 - Ask God for courage
 - Pick a time
 - Invite
 - Create a warm environment
 - Start
 - Have an excellent discussion—focus on Jesus' biographies
 - Invite people back
 - Develop friendship during the week

Conducting a home Bible discussion group

There are three common ways to conduct in-home, evangelistic, Bible discussion groups. All three have as their primary purpose outreach to unchurched people. Thus everything that is done in these gatherings is for the benefit of the non-Christian (or non-churched Christian) visitors. These studies are hosted in homes that have good public access. A weekly or every-other week meeting is best. You will need at least three or four members who are committed to attending every meeting. The primary function of these members is to work hard at bringing non-churched visitors to the meeting. If no visitors show up, the class is canceled for that evening; and the time is spent in talking about each member's contacts and praying. The point is that such meetings are for outreach to unchurched, not for a Bible study for the members.

Holding such meetings in homes provides a neutral (non-threatening/inviting) atmosphere in which unchurched people can fellowship with believers and can discuss the Bible and biblical issues. Typically, the unchurched are more willing to attend a home group than a church service and are more likely to return for a second visit.

One of the advantages of these home studies is that every member, regardless of Bible knowledge, can be evangelistic. In John 1:40-42, Andrew, a new disciple, brought Peter to Jesus. New Christians can immediately bring their family and friends to the weekly home studies. This is very important because statistics prove that new Christians have a great potential for influencing others to come to Christ even though they are the least equipped to actually teach.

If a non-Christian has attended a group study and is eventually baptized, he has already developed those important personal relationships with at least four other Christians. This accomplishes two things: it makes for a smooth and natural bridge to regular assembly attendance, and it decreases the chances of them falling away at the most critical time. The small-group studies have another important benefit. They provide an ideal training ground for members to gain valuable experience for evangelistic work. The leader of the group must prepare a weekly lesson (many such lessons are available at Bible book stores), work effectively with other Christians, make specific efforts to be evangelistic, motivate the Christians working with him to bring visitors, etc. Leadership of an in-home bible discussion group is a wonderful training ground for leadership in the larger church.

Three Popular Formats

1. Cottage Meetings

Cottage Meetings are only five to eight weeks long. The subjects tend to be doctrinal in nature. The CCBT "Discovery" series is excellent for this approach. Cottage meetings are very similar to one-on-one studies where the teacher is discipling one person. The difference between the two is like the difference between a private skiing lesson and group skiing lesson. Rather than a one-on-one study between two individuals, a cottage meeting has four or five Christians attending along with a variety of visitors. The cottage meeting method could be loosely described as a group one-on-one conversion study. Many people have been converted by this approach.

2. Group Bible Readings

Group Bible Readings have been used successfully to reach the lost. Originally designed for one-on-one studies, they are also an effective method for small-group studies. With this method, a book of the Bible is chosen (Luke or Acts are excellent), and the readings are divided so that it is completed in about eight to ten weeks. Each person present is invited to read a predetermined portion and then paraphrase the basic message of the text. The teacher is especially interested in challenging the readers to give their personal evaluation of the text. Everyone present is encouraged to ask the leader for clarification of any question relating directly to the text. Reading the Gospel of John is a very good place to start with this format. One alternative approach to reading John would be to watch it on video (or DVD). One could use the Visual Bible's Gospel of John--it goes through John verse by verse.

3. Bible Discussion Groups

Bible Discussion Groups are weekly (or every other week) topical studies. These studies are ongoing. The main objective is to introduce non-Christians to the Bible and to show them how it provides practical solutions to the problems of the 20th century. This method is not intended to baptize them as a result of the study but to increase their interest for further study. The teacher's goal is to promote as much discussion as possible. Topics like low self esteem, dealing with anger, when you feel like giving up, and overcoming bad habits will show them how the Bible provides answers to life's problems. Hard-hitting lessons on sin, obedience, and commitment are also excellent topics. Examining the strengths and weaknesses of Bible characters is always a winner. However, strictly doctrinal topics like baptism, the New Testament church, a variety of false doctrines, and general church bashing are not recommended for two reasons. First, these topics do not easily lend themselves to group

discussions. Second, they tend to be controversial and the teacher may never get a chance to teach them the gospel. As one person put it, Non-Christians do not respond to a better doctrine as much as they respond to an opportunity to have their basic human needs (belonging, family, purpose, destiny, etc.) met. Once they have attended from three to five weeks, you can invite them to study one-on-one. The one-on-one study is the proper time to give them an in-depth teaching about the gospel and their obedience to it.

The group leader should not lecture or sermonize he/she should talk as little as possible. Also the other Christian members of the group should not dominate the discussion. Remember, this is a group Bible discussion to target the unchurched--not a Bible study for the members! The church members work hard at making meaningful comments, but not dominating. The teacher's role is to ask leading questions that directly relate to the Bible topic being discussed. For example, if the topic is Anger Without Sin, questions like How do you react when someone cuts you off while driving? generate excellent discussion as a foundation to the main topic. If you are discussing Materialism, then questions like If your house was on fire, what one possession would you run in and save? are excellent. If the topic is Salvation, questions like Describe a time when you were totally lost and how you felt, will bring the Bible to life. In fact, the entire study is a whole series of leading questions that relate to the topic. The kind of questions asked in the study are not, What must I do to be saved, but rather, Do I need to be saved? The end result is a lively, active discussion that brings the Bible alive and makes it relevant to the visitors immediate needs. The study will have been successful if all your first-time visitors have freely participated.

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Cottage Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you get a person to attend all sessions, you have a high chance of converting them. • Teaches doctrinal truth in fine detail. • Short term commitment required of members. • Once material prepared, little preparation time required thereafter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Lecture style with minimum of visitor involvement. ☐ Leans toward the controversial. ☐ Visitors need to attend every class or possibly miss continuity. ☐ Commitment to attend every class might be too much for nonChristians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Ideal if members have good quality prospects with whom they have developed a personal relationship and consider them ready for conversion.
Bible Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of visitor participation. • Little preparation time for leader. • If visitor misses a session, little loss of continuity. • Bible is primary focus of study. • Builds person's confidence to understand the Bible. • The average member can lead the study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Limited flexibility in the short term because of individual readings. ☐ People might hesitate to commit to reading a whole book ☐ Concept of Bible reading may not be challenging or interesting enough for people to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ The ideal program for the average member to lead on his own initiative.
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of visitor participation • Visitors can miss with no loss of continuity. • High flexibility to pick specific topic for visitors. • Studies are upbeat, fun, exciting. • People relate personal experiences to illustrate Bible principles which brings the Bible alive. • Non-controversial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Much preparation time required by leader. ☐ Long-term commitment required by the members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Best method for developing trust, credibility, and friendship with "cold" contacts on an ongoing basis.

H. ASSIMILATING PEOPLE INTO COMMUNITY

Our goal is not only a profession of faith in Christ but participation in Christ's community where the disciple that has been won to Christ will be built in Christ and equipped to work for Christ. The goal is not to simply get people to visit church but to assimilate them into community.

Barriers to effective assimilation include:

1. Failure to turn our eyes outward (see Lev. 19:33-34—don't "mistreat an alien in your land")
2. Failure to look at the church through the eyes of the guest (see 1Cor 9:19-23)
3. Forgetting that we don't have a second chance to make a good impression (what is our "grade" concerning convenience, comfort and content? Are we improving? Remember that Maxwell says that one person who has a bad experience will tell 11 others)
4. Failure to provide ways to connect (honor their anonymity but provide multiple ways to connect [food, pew cards, prayer room, etc]—Do we have lots of "side doors"—optional ways beyond the main worship service to come into contact?)
5. Failure to allow people to use their abilities, passions and talents.

6. Failure to understand and then address the culture as it is.
7. Failure to provide small steps from visiting to membership (provide ways to both push them and pull them from step to step)
8. Failure to be intentional about creating community and getting people into community
9. Failure to challenge/release members to invite
10. Failure to follow up with visitors
11. Failure to provide links to other critical ministries

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