



personal evangelism

the MINISTRY PAPERS

on a mission...

Jesus commanded his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" [Matthew 28:19-20].

This 'Great Commission' sets out two goals for a church: to REACH people for Christ; and to TEACH them to follow him. These are the two key important goals of 'evangelism' (proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers) and 'edification' (teaching believers to live the gospel). Many church mission statements capture these two key goals, for example, "know Christ and make him known" or "present Christ to everyone, present everyone mature in Christ".

on a pathway...

Mission statements can be very useful in stating goals but on their own can be a bit *static*. The notion of a pathway that people step along can be a more *dynamic* way of thinking to fill out the picture. It's worth considering the pathway that people generally take as they move from not knowing Christ to being a mature follower of Christ.

The three simple words 'connect', 'grow', 'serve' can be very helpful for this pathway way of thinking. People need to **connect** to God through trusting in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to connect to a Christ-focussed church family. A key way to **grow** is through a bible study growth group. A key way to **serve** is through a ministry team. There's a lot more that can be said than that, of course, but it's a useful summary of the pathway to maturity in Christ.

One key focus of our growth groups is personal evangelism. Through growth groups we can get equipped, encourage each other, pray for each other and keep each other accountable in the area of personal evangelism.

LEADERS:...before taking someone through this paper, review the two key introductory MINISTRY PAPERS: 'the ministry training church' and 'meeting one to one'.

Connect. Grow. Serve. After **connecting** to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can **grow** is through a growth group and a vital way we can **serve** is through a ministry team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help your growth group leader encourage you to make the most of every opportunity to proclaim Christ.



read **Luke 24:13-27; 44-49**

1. What events have just taken place in Jerusalem?

2. What events does Jesus say the entire Old Testament pointed to (verses 26-27, 44-47)?

3. What events are the apostles witnesses to?

4. As a result, what message were they to preach?



5. *Why is it important to see that the death and resurrection of Jesus is the focus of the whole Bible?*

6. *Why is proclaiming Jesus' death and resurrection at the heart of following Jesus?*



In your context, what opportunities are there to proclaim Christ?

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know the gospel

The great event of his death and resurrection is the focus of the whole Bible. Everything that came before this event, pointed forward to it. And we who live after this event, are to proclaim it. Everyone's real problem is their rejection of God. The only solution is God's forgiveness through the death and resurrection of his Son. As Christians, this message demands not only our belief... it demands our witness! As 1 Peter 3:15 says, we need to "always be ready to speak of the hope we have in Christ".

Try working through the 'Two Ways to Live Bible Study'. When you're finished, use the boxes below to put into your own words each of the six points covered in the gospel outline. Go over it a few times until you can do it from memory.

1 God the loving ruler and creator Revelation 4:11

2 Humanity in rebellion Romans 3:10-12

3 God won't let people keep on rebelling forever Hebrews 9:27

4 Jesus, the man who dies for rebels 1 Peter 3:18

5 Jesus, the risen ruler Philippians 2:9-11

6 The Two Ways to Live John 3:36



"I don't know what to say..."

Knowing what to say comes down to being prepared: knowing the gospel. But even when we're clear in our heads what the gospel is – it's not always easy to put it into words when the opportunity arrives!...

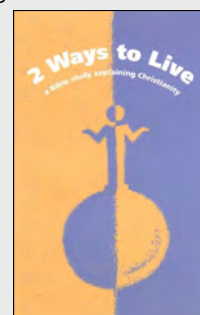
That's where gospel outlines like 'Two Ways to Live' are useful tools. It summarises the whole Bible message really well. It captures the Bible's focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus. It also leads to a clear statement of the choice people have to make in response to the gospel.

It's really worth your while getting to know an outline like this. You can put it into your own words and adapt the way you use it from person to person or situation to situation. But the great benefit it gives you is a few clear steps in your head that you can work through – and know that you've covered the essential points of the gospel.

The Bible Study format of 'Two Ways to Live' (pictured below – available from Matthias Media) is great to take people through. It has a few basic questions and takes only about half an hour to work through with someone.

Of course, there are some other good gospel outlines around you might prefer to use. In the end, these things are

only tools. But choose your tools well – make sure any outline you use has its focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus.





tell the gospel

I hate aerobics. There's a big difference between aerobics and soccer training, for example. The difference is this: Thursday night soccer training is put into practice on Saturday when you play the game. Aerobics, on the other hand, only leads to more aerobics... never ending practice! Learning gospel outlines must never be like aerobics: all sweat but no outworking. Evangelistic training must be preparation for the *real game*. As Christians, we must not only know the gospel, but tell the gospel. The passages below will help remind us why...

"I don't know when to say it ..."

Knowing when to share the gospel with someone is something many of us struggle with. We can be worried about rejection, or about seeming too pushy. However, while a few of us may err on the side of being too 'in your face', most of us err in the other direction! There are a few important things that can help us here:

- remember that sharing the gospel isn't doing something terrible to someone! Rather, it's doing them a favour, like giving them a gift – the greatest gift!
- try not to focus on your own fears but on the other person's needs – this is a message they need to hear.
- realise that most people are actually more willing to hear about Christ than we've guessed they might be.
- when you're getting to know someone, don't leave it too long to bring up your Christian faith. It can get harder to broach the subject the longer you leave it.
- often our conversations with friends about Jesus are very 'bits and pieces'. Ask them if they'd mind getting the 'big picture' - doing a short study like the Two Ways to Live Bible Study.
- remember that it's ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to change someone's heart towards God. So speak with confidence knowing that their response doesn't rest on your cleverness.
- especially in the light of the previous point, above all PRAY. It's our job to speak, but God's job to save people!



read **Romans 10:10-15**

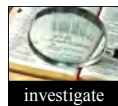
1. How is someone saved (verse 10)?

2. Who is this salvation for (verses 11-13)?

3. What is needed for people to have the opportunity to be saved (verses 14-15)?

4. *Who played a key part in your salvation? How?*

5. *Could God use you in this way? Why/why not?*



read **Colossians 4:2-6**

1. What does Paul want the Colossians to pray for (verses 2-3)?

2. Why is he concerned that his preaching be clear (verse 4)?

3. What does he mean by 'making the most of every opportunity' (verse 5)?

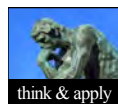
4. Why does he want our conversation to be dominated by grace (verse 6)?

5. *What should fill our prayers in relation to non-Christians?*

6. *How can we make our message as clear as possible?*

7. *How can we make the most of every opportunity we have?*

8. *How can our conversation be dominated by God's grace?*





keeping the main thing the main thing...

In this study we've seen how vital it is to share the gospel with others. This is something that needs to be part of every aspect of our lives. We need to think about making sure evangelism is a top priority in everything we do as a church family: our Sunday meetings, our growth groups, and our lives through the week. The main thing, the gospel message of the death and resurrection of Jesus, must always be the main thing!

idiot-proof church

In 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 Apostle Paul makes it clear that church meetings aren't just for Christians. He talks about the "unbeliever who does not understand" - who may come along to one of our meetings. In the Greek the word is 'idiotes', meaning unskilled, a layman. Paul is very concerned that the meeting be clear to this outsider: idiot-proof, so they may understand the gospel, turn and be saved. The gospel must always be clear and central to our meetings. But what else would we focus on anyway? After all, it's being reminded of the great gospel of Christ that encourages Christians as well - so everyone benefits from keeping the main thing, the main thing! We all grow in the same soil - gospel soil. We need to work hard at making sure our church meetings are user-friendly welcoming to outsiders: (clearly explaining things, avoiding jargon, etc). Our hard work in personal evangelism can be undone if church isn't inviting.

invest and invite

Speaking of inviting, remember that simply inviting people to outreach events or church any Sunday is a great way to put people in a situation where they'll hear the gospel. Although we should all be prepared to share the gospel ourselves, evangelism is also a team thing. If there's a gifted evangelist speaking at an event, invite your friend along. But remember, the likelihood of them accepting your invitation is often connected to how much you've invested in them: time, energy, genuine friendship. That means building relationships so you can "invest & invite". Have a look at the hospitality ministry paper for more thoughts on this.

words or actions?

Some people think that living a good Christian life is the same as telling someone the gospel. This is not true. But the two things are connected. We need to avoid *two errors*:

1. **living but not speaking**: this won't save anyone. People will just think you're a nice person.
2. **speaking but not living**: people might be saved but it will be despite you! More often than not you will do harm to their understanding of the gospel.

We need to do both things: live a good Christian life so that our life doesn't detract from the message; and also *tell* the Christian message. Think of your life as like a signpost: your **ACTIONS** are the signpost, pointing to Jesus and the fact that he is Lord of your life; your **WORDS** add writing on to the signpost. This means people can now actually see where your life is pointing - and why. Rather than leaving it to people to guess why your life is different, you need to tell them. So, words AND actions are needed - working together to point to Christ.

all of life

We need to make it our goal to be making friends for life. This means that in all our relationships, we allow *the greatest* relationship - the one we have with God through Christ - to have its influence. We want our friends to have this great relationship with God too! Most Christians know lots of non-Christians, but for a variety of reasons we've stopped seeing them as such. What we need to do is stop and think and pray - and try to make them "Friends for Life"! We need to share with them the message of forgiveness through Jesus as clearly as possible. If we don't stop and think and pray like this ... it tends not to happen at all. Why not finish this study by talking and praying about who you can share the life-giving gospel of Christ with?

plan to share the gospel with someone this week... pray about it... do it...share with your growth group how you went...pray some more... do it...

growth groups and accountability

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." **Heb 10:24-25**

The table below shows a number of key goals that our growth groups are aiming for as we seek to encourage each other. It's all about relationships. The growth group is a context in which we can be accountable for all the important relationships in our lives.

Evangelism is about the vital importance of our relationships with unbelievers. This needs to be kept on the top of the agenda in our growth groups. We need to regularly talk together about how we're going sharing the gospel. We need others to keep us accountable about how we're going at taking gospel opportunities. Most of all, we need to pray for each other in standing up for Jesus. Growth groups provide the opportunity to pray specifically in this way.

Our growth group meetings are not usually the best place for direct evangelism. But it's a good idea for your group to do social activities together that you can ask non-Christian friends along to. It's about relationships building other relationships... for the ultimate: a relationship with God.



a growing relationship with **God**, especially through personal Bible reading and prayer

growing relationships with **other believers**, especially through the growth group

growing relationships with those in their **family/household**, as servants

growing relationships with **unbelievers**, especially through personal evangelism

growing relationships with the **whole church** in mission, serving in a ministry team