

LENT
JOINING THE MISSION OF
GOD

A Citizens Church
Practice Guide

Citizens Church

MISSION: JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

Copyright © 2024 by CITIZENS CHURCH CHARLOTTE

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the author.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the English Standard Version (ESV), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Printed in the USA by 48 Hour Books (www.48HrBooks.com)

*“Whoever hears these words of mine
and puts them into practice
will be like a wise man
who built his house on the rock.”*

Jesus

CONTENTS

Introduction	9
Week One.....	13
Teaching Text	14
Teaching Notes	15
Weekly Practice.....	16
Community Group Guide	20
Week Two	23
Teaching Text	24
Teaching Notes	25
Weekly Practice.....	26
Community Group Guide	29
Week Three	31
Teaching Text	32
Teaching Notes	33
Weekly Practice.....	34
Community Group Guide	36
Week Four	39
Teaching Text	40
Teaching Notes	41
Weekly Practice.....	42
Community Group Guide	47
Week Five	49
Teaching Text	50
Teaching Notes	51

Weekly Practice.....	52
Community Group Guide	62
Week Six.....	65
Teaching Text.....	66
Teaching Notes	67
Weekly Practice.....	68
Community Group Guide	73
Additional Resources	74

Mission is more than and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is the alerting of people to the universal reign of God through Christ.

David Bosch

INTRODUCTION

So many of us want to change, but simply don't know how to kickstart the process. We are plagued by grand visions of the type of people we could be – the type of people we want to be – we just don't know how to get there.

That's where a little something called practice comes in. Practice helps us bridge the gap between who we want to be and who we are. Between what we know and who we become. Practice is what the Holy Spirit uses to make us into who we were supposed to be all along.

Following Jesus is a way of life: a means by which we learn to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and then do what Jesus did. This way of life doesn't come naturally, but it is possible. We can be formed into Christlikeness by the power of the Holy Spirit through intentional practices.

LENT

In addition to practicing personal spiritual formation for thousands of years, the church has also integrated corporate spiritual formation tools and seasons to remind us that we are not alone in our faith; we are a people who follow Jesus together.

One such season in which we can follow Jesus together is the season of Lent.

The purpose of Lent is to prepare our hearts as the people of God to remember and celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection on Good Friday and Easter.

It is a time for Christians to identify with the sufferings of our Savior, to remember His sacrifice for us, and to lament our sin, brokenness, and temporality before a holy God.

Historically, the church has done this through observing various special days, communal practices of fasting, and unceasing prayer, all pointing back to the life of Christ.

For example, the 40-day length of Lent points back to Jesus' fasting and testing in the wilderness for 40 days. Holy Week (the final week of Lent) remembers Jesus' final week of ministry before His crucifixion and resurrection.

MISSION

Our goal for this season and this guide is to give ourselves as individuals and as a community to the practice of sharing the gospel, what the church historically has called living "on mission" or "evangelism."

Each week will have a different practice which corresponds to that Sunday's teaching.

We encourage you to come eager to receive God's Word during our Sunday Gatherings, and then to step into the practices each week prior to or during your Community Group time.

HOLY DAYS WITHIN LENT

In addition to these practices, during this season we will be commemorating specific days as marker points in our history with God.

Those days include:

Ash Wednesday – A chance to remember our sin and temporality together before God.

Palm Sunday – A celebration of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Good Friday – A time for reflection on the nature of our sin and the crucifixion of our Savior.

Easter Sunday – A celebration of the resurrection of Christ!

For details about these occasions, visit citizenscharlotte.com.

The pursuit of holiness is a joint venture between God and the Christian. No one can attain any degree of holiness without God working in their life. But just as surely as no one will attain it without effort on their own part.

Jerry Bridges

WEEK ONE

WE ALL WANT TO CHANGE
(AND WE ALL ARE)

TEACHING TEXT

Luke 6:46-49

46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like:

48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

2 Corinthians 3:18

18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TEACHING NOTES

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Habit Audit

Instructions: The following chart is intended to help you examine and evaluate your habits, the stories you believe, and the relationships you inhabit.

- In the first column, write down any habits/stories/relationships that you participate in on a regular basis (daily, weekly).
- In the second column, write down anything you think that reveals about what you love and value.
- In the third column, write down if you think that is making you more like Jesus or less like Jesus and how.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

Habit – Any activity you do on a regular basis.	What does it reveal about what I value?	Does it make me more or less like Jesus? How?

CITIZENS CHURCH

Stories – What are my main “inputs” during the week.	Is this a conscious or subconscious input?	Does it make me more or less like Jesus? How?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

Relationships – what are my most impactful relationships?	How would I describe my connection with this person?	Do they help me be more or less like Jesus? How?

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Read Luke 6:46-49.

Recap Sunday's teaching.

Q1: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through either the Scripture or Sunday's teaching?

Q2: Review your habit chart. Which bad habits are shaping you away from becoming like Jesus?

Q3: Review your stories chart. Which information inputs are shaping you away from becoming like Jesus?

Q4: Review your relationships chart. Which relationships are shaping you away from becoming like Jesus?

Q5: Spend some time looking at the rest of the guide. What are you eager/hopeful to step into over the next six weeks regarding mission?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

CITIZENS CHURCH

*Our faith becomes stronger as we express it;
a growing faith is a sharing faith.*

Billy Graham

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

WEEK TWO

OVERCOMING THE ANGST

TEACHING TEXT

Romans 10:10-15

10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TEACHING NOTES

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

What help or engagement do the Scriptures speak into that reason?

- For inability, spend some time exploring ways that the early followers of Jesus shared the truths of their faith and take note of their methods.
- For insecurity, take note of some of the ways the Holy Spirit gives us confidence in sharing our faith.
- For intimidation, take note of God's promises to be with us as we share our faith.
- For indifference, take note of the motivations and exhortations in Scripture for sharing our faith.
- For intolerance, look at examples from the life of Jesus of his willingness to say hard, direct, or exclusionary things to those who did not want to follow Him.

Write out what you find from Scripture below:

CITIZENS CHURCH

What would it look like to live in freedom from this hesitancy?

Write out a brief prayer (1-3 sentences) that addresses your hesitancy with the truths of Scripture. Consider committing it to memory so you can pray it before and during conversations you may have with people about Jesus.

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Read Romans 10:10-15.
Recap Sunday's teaching.

Q1: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through either the Scripture or Sunday's teaching?

Q2: Spend some time allowing people to share how they filled out the self-assessment. Use the following questions as a guide:

- How did you rate yourself on how freely you talk about Jesus with non-Christians?
- What did you say was your primary reason for hesitancy and why?
- What Scriptures did you find as encouragements to push back against your hesitancies?
- What does freedom look like in this area?
- How can we be praying for you as you push back against these hesitancies by the power of the Holy Spirit?

After someone shares, take some time to pray for that individual, asking the Lord to help them in whichever hesitancy they are working to fight against.

CITIZENS CHURCH

*Missions is not the end goal. Worship is.
Missions exists because worship doesn't.
Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is
ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the
countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces
before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It
is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.*

John Piper

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

WEEK THREE

YOU ARE WHERE YOU ARE
FOR A REASON

TEACHING TEXT

Acts 17:22-27

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, **25** nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TEACHING NOTES

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Neighboring Chart

Instructions: The following chart is a way of visualizing the relationships you build with other people in your life. It may help to envision it as the street you live on, your floor of your apartment building, or your network of cubicles at work. Or it may just help to view each box as a different person you know who doesn't follow Jesus.

However you approach it, this is where you can jot down things you learn through friendship with that person. As time goes on, the goal is to move from a more surface-level friendship with them, to a deeper one.

Here's how it works:

- In Section A, write down each person's name.
- In Section B, write down some surface-level details you've learned about that person (i.e. "works as a lawyer downtown," "Pittsburgh Steelers fan," "loves gardening").
- In Section C, write down anything you've gathered about that person's deeper aspirations in life (i.e. "wants to travel the world," "wants a big family," "wants to run for public office one day," "wants to reconnect with their birth mom").
- In Section D, write down anything about that person's worldview or belief system that you've learned (i.e. "agnostic," "indifferent towards religion," "burned by the Church," "grew up Catholic," etc.)

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

A	A
B	B
C	C
D	D
A	A
B	B
C	C
D	D

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Read Acts 17:22-27.

Recap Sunday's teaching.

Q1: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through either the Scripture or Sunday's teaching?

Q2: Who did the Lord put on your heart as you were working through your neighboring chart? What are some of the things you wrote down about them?

Q3: Did you struggle at all with coming up with names? If so, what is a next step you could take to start building some friendships for the sake of God's Kingdom?

Q4: As you consider these relationships, have you viewed them with gospel intentionality over the past 6 months? What would change about how you interacted with these individuals if you truly believed God put you in their life to introduce them to Jesus?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men or women but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus.

D. Elton Trueblood

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

WEEK FOUR

QUESTIONING PEOPLE'S ANSWERS

TEACHING TEXT

Luke 10:25-37

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"

27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back."

36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"

37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TEACHING NOTES

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Gospel Obstacles & Opportunities

Instructions: The following worksheet is a way to think through specific people you are in relationship with and consider what bridges and obstacles they may have to the gospel.

For each person you are building a relationship with, start by charting them somewhere on the Gray Matrix regarding their openness to the gospel and to you.

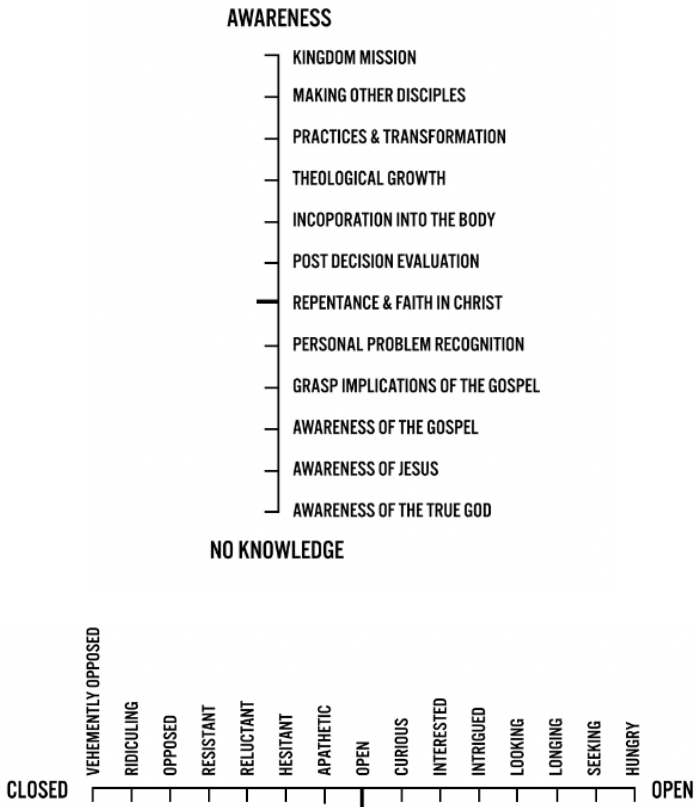
From there, consider what “obstacles” that person may have to the gospel. What are some of the barriers they might have to conversations about Jesus or even in trusting in Him for salvation?

Then, consider what “opportunities” that might present you for ways you can help that person take their next step towards Christ.

And lastly, spend some time thinking through what specific next steps and conversations might be helpful, based on the obstacles and opportunities you’ve noticed.

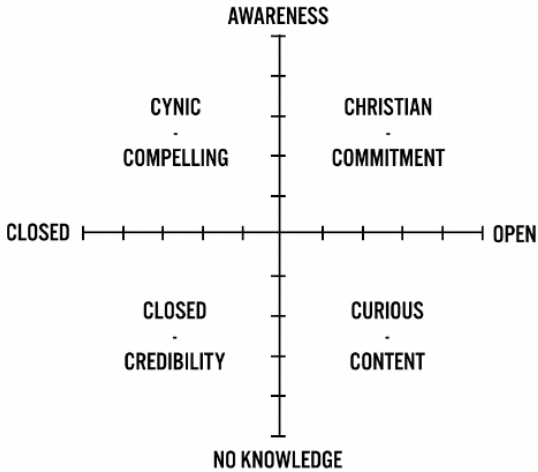
JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

A helpful tool in discerning the heart of your friends and neighbors is called “the Engel Scale” (developed by missionary James F. Engel). He developed this tool to help Christians make sense of how far people are away from God, how open they are to the gospel, and to know how to step in.

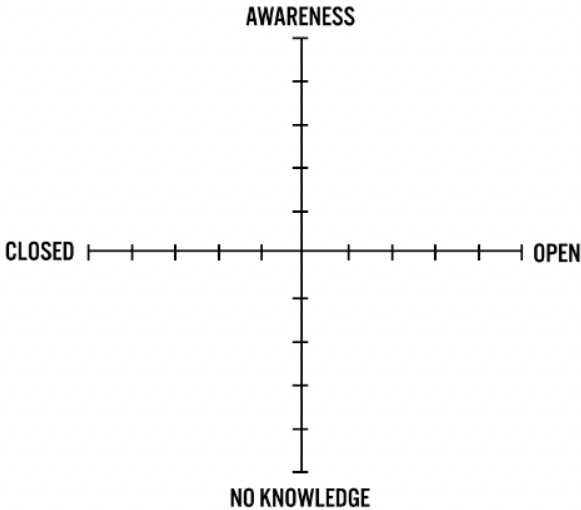


CITIZENS CHURCH

When you put these two scales together, you get what is called the Gray Matrix.



Take a few minutes, to graph out 3-5 people in your life on this chart.



JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

Person #1

Opportunities for the Gospel:

Obstacles to the Gospel:

Next Steps & Conversations:

Person #2

Opportunities for the Gospel:

Obstacles to the Gospel:

Next Steps & Conversations:

Person #3

Opportunities for the Gospel:

Obstacles to the Gospel:

Next Steps & Conversations:

Person #4

Opportunities for the Gospel:

Obstacles to the Gospel:

Next Steps & Conversations:

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Read Luke 10:25-37.

Recap Sunday's teaching.

Q1: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through either the Scripture or Sunday's teaching?

Q2: Spend some time allowing people to share how they filled out the Gray Matrix and Gospel Opportunities & Obstacles Chart. Use the following questions as a guide:

- Where did you put various individuals on the Gray Matrix?
- For one of those individuals, how did this help you better understand how to begin introducing them to Jesus?
- What is an opportunity for the gospel message that you see in your relationship with them right now?
- What is an obstacle to the gospel message that you see in them right now?
- What is a next step you are planning to take to engage this person with the gospel?

After someone shares, take some time to pray for that individual, asking the Lord to help them bring the good news of the gospel into someone else's life.

If you live by the same values and priorities [Jesus] had, you will find evangelism happening naturally. It becomes a lifestyle and not a project.

Rebecca Pippert

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

WEEK FIVE

DEMONSTRATING THE GOSPEL

TEACHING TEXT

1 Peter 3:14-15

14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,
15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

Colossians 4:5-6

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.
6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TEACHING NOTES

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Distinctiveness Inventory

Instructions: The following questionnaire is intended to help you evaluate the “distinctiveness” (or holiness) present in different areas of your life.

For each section, attempt to honestly consider how distinct you are from the average person, and use the results to prompt personal growth and repentance in that area.

The goal isn't to be legalistic, but rather to be honest and invite the Holy Spirit's transformation in.

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

MONEY & POSSESSIONS

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

WORDS & SPEECH

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

SEX & SEXUALITY

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TIME & SCHEDULE

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

WORK & CAREER

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

MARRIAGE (IF APPLICABLE)

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

CITIZENS CHURCH

SINGLENES (IF APPLICABLE)

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

PARENTING (IF APPLICABLE)

What should the differences be between a non-Christian and a Christian?

In what ways are you distinct in this area of life, currently?

What is the gospel motivation to become distinct in this area?

What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Read 1 Peter 3:14-15 + Colossians 4:5-6.

Recap Sunday's teaching.

Q1: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through either the Scripture or Sunday's teaching?

Q2: Spend some time allowing people to share how they filled out the specific parts of the Distinctiveness Inventory. Use the following questions as a guide.

- Was there a particular category of the Distinctiveness Inventory where the Lord convicted you of how you have been living similarly to the rest of the world?
- In what ways in this area of your life have you failed to live "distinctly" from those around you?
- What is the gospel motivation to live distinctly in this area?
- What are some practical steps of repentance for you in this area?

After someone shares, take some time to pray for that individual, asking the Lord to help them live more like Jesus and more countercultural in that area.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

CITIZENS CHURCH

*Successful evangelism involves not only harvesting, but
sowing and watering, too.*

*We must never think that because a nonbeliever
remained unconvinced by our case that our apologetic
has failed.*

For one encounter is not the end of the story.

William Lane Craig

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

WEEK SIX

ARTICULATING THE GOSPEL

TEACHING TEXT

Colossians 1:15-23

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,

22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

TEACHING NOTES

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Gospel Fluency

Instructions: Each scenario listed below is an imagined person whom you are friends with. Use the space below each scenario to process through how you might explain the gospel to them over time, using the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration framework covered in this week’s teaching.

In this practice, we are learning to become more and more “gospel fluent,” that is – able to speak the gospel into a variety of lives and circumstances.”

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

SCENARIO #1: GREGG

Gregg is a stereotypical all-American male. He made the all-star team in baseball and football in high school. He then went to a great university and became the president of his fraternity. In college, he was the guy that all the girls had a crush on. His college experience was one great weekend party after another. Now, he's been married three years and works a very mid-level job in banking. He makes some money, but not a ton. And inside of him is an increasing disappointment that all of a sudden life doesn't seem anywhere near as fun and exciting as it once was. He feels directionless and disillusioned.

How would you articulate the good news of Jesus to Gregg?

Creation:

Fall:

Redemption:

Restoration:

CITIZENS CHURCH

SCENARIO #2: ALICIA

Alicia grew up in poverty. But when she was seventeen, she started a company that blew up fast and made her a very successful entrepreneur. She wants for nothing and lives a life that many of us only dream of, but behind the scenes in her life is a crippling anxiety. She is mildly terrified that her good fortune is eventually going to run out. She feels like she has to work 24/7 and be “on” constantly, or else everything she worked so hard to build could come crumbling down. Her operating understanding is “it could all be gone in an instant.”

How would you articulate the good news of Jesus to Alicia?

Creation:

Fall:

Redemption:

Restoration:

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

SCENARIO #3: DARRELL

Darrell is the nicest, and simultaneously quietest, person you've ever met. Darrell mostly keeps to himself and spends a lot of time on various hobbies on his own. He works for a small engineering firm and tends to get steamrolled by other people there, because he doesn't put up much of a fight and says yes to mostly anything they ask. He knows this is happening but doesn't feel like he knows how to bring it up with his coworkers. And if he's honest, doesn't feel like it's completely necessary to bring it up; it could risk rocking the boat with those around him. So, he just puts up with it.

How would you articulate the good news of Jesus to Darrell?

Creation:

Fall:

Redemption:

Restoration:

CITIZENS CHURCH

SCENARIO #4: BRITTANY

Brittany grew up in a very broken family. Her dad was out of the picture from a very early age. Her mom couldn't manage much more than putting food on the table, and sometimes struggled to do even that. Now, as an adult, Brittany has a hard time holding down a job, due in large part to her struggle with depression. Some days, its nearly impossible to just get out of bed. Her relationships with men are generally short and dysfunctional and end with break-ups that are emotionally devastating for her.

How would you articulate the good news of Jesus to Brittany?

Creation:

Fall:

Redemption:

Restoration:

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Read Colossians 1:15-23.

Recap Sunday's teaching.

Q1: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through either the Scripture or Sunday's teaching?

Q2: What parts of the gospel Paul writes about in Colossians 1 do you tend to minimize, avoid, or simply not know enough about to share with others?

Q3: Take some time to work through each of the proposed scenarios above, letting the group share their various answers of how to apply the gospel into everyone's lives.

Q4: Are there any other scenarios you are currently facing from folks you have been sharing about in which the group could help you speak and apply the gospel into their lives?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

The Art of Neighboring by Jay Pathak

The Simplest Way to Change the World by Brandon Clements

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God by JI Packer

Gospel Fluency by Jeff Vanderstelt

ONLINE

Rhythmsandformation.com

Saturatetheworld.com