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## Calvary Church: Coordinated Curriculum 2007-2008

### Romans: The Transforming Power of the Righteousness of God

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#### Interlude

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This interlude lesson is intended to:

- allow us to review—see the big picture after we have been focusing on the parts
  - this lesson provides a basic review, you may want to expand on it
- allow us to re-examine any issues, topics or doctrines we did not cover with sufficient depth
  - you may want to return to Romans 3:21-26 or Romans 5:1-11, two passages key to this section
- allow us to slow down and insure that we are applying the main point of the section
  - by way of application, this week we will focus on how do we share the wonderful truths of Romans 3-5, next week we will seek to overview the primary topic of chapters 6-8

#### Main idea

Understanding the wonder of our salvation—the totality with which God provides salvation to those who are sinners (1:18-3:21; 5:8), ungodly (5:6); enemies (5:10) by nature condemned (5:12-21) solely on the basis of Christ's cross work of justification, redemption and propitiation (3:21-31) provided by simple faith (chapter 4) allow us to have assurance of our reconciliation with God (5:1-11)—we should seek to honor God with our lives.

So how do we share Him?  
How do I share my story?  
How do I share His story?

What are some additional creative means we can use?

We have talked about sharing our faith. With this lesson, we want to ensure we know how.

#### Teaching ideas

Use this lesson to review any element that you don't feel you were able to cover well enough before. Seek to find ways of helping the class remember the main points.

It is highly recommended that this lesson be interactive (group activities) and very application driven.

Questions
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From Romans 3-5, what are the primary elements of the gospel?
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How can you share those truths in a natural way?
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#### Review: Romans 3:21–5:21

##### Romans 3:21-31

God has revealed His righteousness  
but mankind has rejected it and they find themselves enslaved to sin  
“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested. . .”  
in Jesus Christ  
through faith  
for all who believe  
it is a gift of God's grace which  
justifies (declared righteous in Christ)  
and redeems man (purchased through exchange)  
and satisfies God's righteousness (propitiation)  
so man can claim no personal accomplishment—it's all of God

## Romans 4

Paul uses Abraham as a test case of the main point of 3:27-31

—a right relationship with God—a righteous God—is only made possible by the substitutionary death of Christ which is obtained through faith

Abraham, in spite of his lofty status has nothing to boast about for he was justified by faith alone (4:1-8) not circumcision (4:9-12) nor the law (4:13-17)

Abraham's faith was firm, despite circumstantial evidence, allowing him to enjoy God's promises (4:18-21)

Christians receive Christ's righteousness through that same faith (4:22-25)

## Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV)

In light of what God has done through Christ, we can have assurance of a present and permanent relationship with Him.

Christ's payment on the cross for our sins (debt) has settled the claims against us and judicially declared us righteous, therefore without a barrier between us and God—we have full access.

The salvation God provides is permanent because of how it was provided and it is able to withstand trials. The Holy Spirit's presence is an assurance of the future and of God's love in the present.

## Romans 5:12-21

Sin's entrance into the world by Adam resulted in death for all men.

The entrance of the Law revealed the sinfulness of man's sin but this is surpassed by the sufficiency of God's grace and results in eternal life.

Sin affects everyone and everything

Justification is available to everyone, everywhere

## The Gospel

What we just reviewed is the gospel.

Mankind is alienated from God due to sin. Sin must be punished (death).

God provide a substitutionary sacrifice for man in the God-Man Jesus Christ, Whose death enables anyone, through faith to be declared righteous in God's eyes, to be credited with Christ's righteousness, to have full access to God based on the removal of sin's guilt—to be in a right relationship with God.

The gospel then, is Jesus

Who He is

What He did

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (ESV)

While we try to be as clear as possible and seek to declare the gospel in the irreducible minimum propositions—we must never forget that the gospel is Jesus, the good news about Jesus.

The gospel is a Person.

The point of the gospel to people is about a relationship with that Person.

A relationship with God through Christ now and into eternity.

So how do we share the gospel?

How do we share Jesus?

Well, Jesus was incarnated to show God

The gospel is God incarnate

Therefore the message must have an incarnational nature

We must live/demonstrate who Jesus is and talk about who Jesus is

*Question to ponder:* When we leave a room, do people feel Jesus left?

Why don't we share our faith?

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel (1:16-17)—are we?

Do we fear rejection?

Do we fear ridicule?

Do we fear . . . ?

Paul told Timothy that he was not ashamed of the gospel including the suffering produced by the gospel

2 Timothy 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, (ESV)



### Fear vs. Faith: The Head-On Collision

By Dwight Robertson with Mark A. Vermilion

Have you ever seen or been in a head-on auto collision? If so, you can attest to how violent one can be. Thousands of pounds of metal traveling in one direction collides with thousands of pounds of metal traveling in the opposite direction. In a matter of seconds, the travel direction of each car violently changes.

That's how it can feel when your faith collides with fear. Often it's a fear of the unknown or a fear of the consequences if God doesn't show up. It may creep toward you at a slow speed, or it may hit you at full force, but it will always try to change your direction.

Don't let it hit you by surprise. Face your fear head on and relinquish it to God. For if you don't, it will inevitably move you toward the exit ramp of your faith journey.

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When fear and faith collide, don't allow fear to steal your confidence in God. As the writer of Hebrews says: "...do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (Hebrews 10:35-36).

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Fear is dangerous to your faith because it will always call you to play it safe. Faith, on the other hand, calls you to step away from what seems safe.

Here are some other ways that fear and faith collide in the internal battle of your heart:

- Fear calls you to place your trust in what you can see; faith calls you to place your trust in what's unseen.
- Fear calls you to trust in the world's logic; faith calls you to trust in the Lord with all your heart.
- Fear hugs the status quo; faith calls you to something new, fresh and life-changing.
- Fear requires a false sense of security; faith calls you to place your security in God and His Word.
- Fear causes you to base the possibilities on what you can do; faith calls you to imagine possibilities based on God's unlimited resources.
- Fear hesitates; faith calls you to make the most of every opportunity.
- Fear needs every answer in place; faith calls you to trust that God has all the answers.
- Fear reduces the ministry output and legacy of your life; faith increases your eternal impact and Kingdom legacy.
- And ultimately, fear is Satan's tool to slow the growth of God's Kingdom; faith is God's tool to advance His Kingdom.

If the gospel is about Jesus, about relationship—then it must transform our core values.  
That is where Paul will now take us in Romans 6-8 and 12-16.

And if it transforms our core values and therefore our lives, we need to share that with others.

## Telling My Story<sup>1</sup>

The Gospel: Trusting only in Christ's cross work to provide an eternal relationship with God.

**Overview:** This session you will—

1. Identify why your story is important
2. Write out your personal story
3. Practice telling your story in a safe environment

### Discovery



Illustration: Give feedback: Evaluate this Testimony

I received a blessing when I became a Christian.

I received deliverance through the sinner's prayer.

I was unsaved and needed to be saved.

My conversion happened when I put my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior who died for the sins of those who trust Him.

Praise the Lord, Hallelujah, Amen.

I received salvation when I believed the gospel and was washed in the blood of the Lamb.

I was born again when the Holy Spirit spoke to me at the altar of God.

I lost all my friends and my job. The devil has been after me ever since. Praise His name.

The trials and tests are unbearable. I just hope I can hold on until the end. Then maybe I'll be able to go to heaven.

### Evaluation

No statement of "prior" life

Too much Christian lingo (born again, saved, accepting Christ, being regenerated, being converted)

Negative - no assurance

Why should I want to be a Christian?

So we need to be clear in what it is that God is offering, what we call "salvation" is "**receiving the gift of eternal life.**" If you say born again, saved, accepting Christ, being regenerated, being converted it sounds like 10 different things.

☞ Don't mix your terms stick to one term—no "Christian lingo".

### Two Types of Testimonies

"Canned"

Prepared and planned

"Comfortable"

Personal, appropriate for a conversation

Both are useful. We will discuss the "canned" or planned testimony, with the hope that it will help you develop a more personal comfortable way of sharing your story.

### A Biblical Model -- Daniel 4; Mark 5:1-20; Acts 22:1-21; 26

*The scene:* Jesus and His disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee; almost a serene scene. But as soon as they beach the boat, a wild man comes running and screaming out, pleading to Jesus. With a word Jesus calms him. Jesus asks the name of the demon, and he responds "Legion" (6,000 or many). In a

<sup>1</sup> These material has been developed over a number of years and includes ideas from a number of resources particularly D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Exposition*, Bill Hybles and Mark Mittelber, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*.

contorted voice, he says “Don’t send us out of this area.” But with a word Jesus could command them to leave the man alone.

The scene shifts a few minutes later. The once wild man is now calm, dressed, and “in his right mind.” In others words he is no longer controlled by the demons.

The people who were tending the pigs run to the city to tell everyone what happens.

#### *Question*

What do you think the people’s reaction should be? What do you think they should think of Jesus? He is a hero; Jesus has freed this man, allowed the people to get to their boats without having to deal with this crazy man any longer who terrorized their families.

Why did they want Him to leave? (They didn’t understand, they were fearful, they lost money.) They were mad about their investment. They couldn’t see past their situations to the freedom the man had experience.

When Jesus began to leave, the man wanted to go with Him. We would think, great, get in, we will use you in the next evangelistic campaign (pro athlete). Jesus told him no, to go to his own family - cultivate those relationships and tell them all that Jesus has done.

☞ Jesus commanded him to go home and give a testimony to his family and all in his community. That is the biblical definition of a testimony.

#### *Three reasons why your story is important*

1. Friends will be **INTERESTED**

When you show interest in others, they will show interest in you.

When you have been in the process of building authentic relationships with people, listening to their needs, meeting their needs—they will reciprocate.

Real friends will want to know more about you: your background, thoughts, interests, and values

2. Friends can **RELATE** to it

Notice that it is in the context of a true relationship, not a relationship just for the sake of sharing your faith. People can sense authenticity.

We also tend to develop relationships with people who have similar interests and backgrounds. So they can understand and appreciate your story.

#### The “non-dramatic story”

If you were saved at a young age, or basically have been a “good”, “church” or “religious” person—

Don’t down play your story.

There are many people in the world who fit that profile who have never trusted Christ.

#### The “dramatic story”

What if you were saved out of a more graphically sinful past?

Don’t overdo the emphasis on the past or the sins.

Some people who haven’t had that kind of background may shield themselves from your influence with a thought like— “I’m glad *you* found religion, because you were so bad you *obviously* need it.”

3. It is **HARD TO ARGUE** with something personal

With the focus on what God has done for us, how God has changed us, it is hard for people to deny the evidence that Christianity is true.

“The skeptic may deny your doctrine or attack your church, but he cannot honestly ignore the fact that your life has been changed.”<sup>2</sup>

**How to Organize Your Story**

**A Definition:** A testimony is your personal experience of eternal life.

**How to Organize Your Story  
Paul’s Story—Acts 26: The Three Handles**

Handles	BC <i>Before Christ</i>	✝ <i>Conversion</i>	AD <i>After Christ</i>
Verses	4-11	12-18	19-23
Concluding Question	“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?” (Acts 26:27)		
Unifying Theme	<i>Paul’s zeal for serving God</i>		

Teachers, you may need to summarize Paul’s story and choose only a few verses to read due to time limitations.

**Acts 26: Paul’s Story**

In order to organize our stories, we will use Paul’s example in Acts 26. While he covers a number of details, we will look at the highlights in order to better understand how to organize our stories.

This speech has a number of parts:

- (1) complimentary remarks (26:2-3)
- (2) Paul’s early life in Judaism (vv. 4-8)
- (3) his zeal in opposing Christianity (vv. 9-11)
- (4) his conversion and commission (vv. 12-18)
- (5) his ministry (vv. 19-23)
- (6) his verbal jousts with Festus and Agrippa (vv. 24-29).<sup>3</sup>

Paul basically divides his story into three sections which we will call “handles”. We will use this very simple outline to outline our own stories. Therefore, instead of a memorized, canned presentation, we have a fluid story. This will give you flexibility (time and audience) in telling your story and give you confidence.

**First Handle: BC  
*Before Christ***

Before I received the gift of eternal life

**Acts 26:4-11** “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, 7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? 9 “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them

<sup>2</sup> Chuck Swindoll *Come Before Winter*

<sup>3</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary*

often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. (ESV)

Here Paul tells about his life growing up. He was a Pharisee, and he was convinced that he should do everything possible to oppose the teaching of Jesus, including putting Christians in prison and even condemning them to death.

**Second Handle:** †

**Conversion**

How I received the gift of eternal life

**Acts 26:12-18** “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ (ESV)

Here Paul relates how he came to Christ. He tells how he was in the process of persecuting Christians (on the road to Damascus, a road familiar to those he was speaking to at Caesarea), when Christ appeared to him and appointed him as His servant.

**Third Handle:** AD

**After Christ**

Since I received the gift of eternal life

While AD on the calendar means *Anno Domini*, in the year of our Lord, we are using it to refer to “After Christ.”

**Acts 26:19-23** “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.” (ESV)

Here we have Paul’s description of his life since trusting in Christ: how he preached that people should repent, turn to God, and prove their repentance by their deeds.

**Concluding Question**

**Question of Understanding and Commitment**

Would you like to have the gift of eternal life?

**Acts 26:27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” (ESV)

When Paul finished telling his story, which included the message of the gospel, he asks his listeners to respond or reply to what he just said. King Agrippa responds.

Now Agrippa was in a corner. If he accepted the prophets he would be forced to admit Christ Jesus fulfilled them. His only escape was to parry the question with an interrogative of his own.

**Acts 26:28** And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” (ESV)

This is probably a joking rebuttal.

Paul took his response seriously, for he loved people for the Lord's sake. Even if it took a long time to win Agrippa to Christ, Paul was willing to take the time. He replied that he prayed that Agrippa and all who were listening to him would become like him (i.e., a Christian), except for these chains. (This is the first mention of chains on Paul since 22:29.) So Paul's defense came to a conclusion.<sup>4</sup>

### **Unifying Theme**

What would you say was the unifying theme of Paul's story, as he told it to Agrippa?

**ZEAL FOR SERVING GOD**

BC Paul's had zeal, but it was misplaced and destructive. AD, his zeal was positive and directed toward building the church of Christ.

### **Writing your own story**

Now we can begin to work on our own stories.

We will be asking 6 questions to walk us through this process. You can write your answers under the questions but don't write anything under the "outline" section yet.

At this point we are not worried about wording or getting things "just right." This is your rough draft. Concentrate on main ideas. Later you can refine it and add other details.

(Give about a minute to write something for each question)

### **First Handle: BC**

#### ***Before Christ***

Before I received the gift of eternal life

1. Where were you spiritually before you trusted in Christ and received the gift of eternal life, and how did that affect you—your feelings, attitudes, actions, and relationships?

Those of us who were saved at a young age, we won't have much to write here. You will move to the next question.

2. What caused you to begin considering God/Christ as a solution to your needs?  
Crisis, blessing, interactions with people, events, etc.

### **Second Handle: †**

#### ***Conversion***

How I received the gift of eternal life

3. What realization did you come to that finally motivated you to receive Christ?
4. Specifically, *how* did you trust in Christ?

### **Third Handle: AD**

#### ***After Christ***

Since I received the gift of eternal life

For those who were saved as children, the emphasis of the next two questions should be on the benefits of knowing Christ in comparison with what you think it might have been like without knowing Him.

This can be determined by reflecting on areas in you life when you weren't close to Him, by considering your areas of weakness and temptation, and/or by observing the lifestyle chosen by old friends or schoolmates who *didn't* follow Christ.

5. How did your life begin to change after you trusted Christ?

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<sup>4</sup>BKC

6. What other benefits have you experienced since becoming a Christian? (Especially think of those benefits that would best relate to the people on your *Impact list*.)  
Better relationships, security, etc.

Go ahead and write what your concluding question would be and list the unifying theme.

7. Concluding Question: *Can you relate to any of this?*  
*Does this make sense to you?*  
*Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life?*
8. Unifying them: (Guidance, Security)

**Teachers—here would be a good place to briefly share your story**

**SCK** (Two keys: Salvation and Guidance)

I received the gift of eternal life at the age of 4. Even though I had not been a bad kid, I knew I was a sinner. I had disobeyed my parents and knew I was not perfect. So in the fall of 1970 during vacation bible school, a children’s club, I had the privilege of receiving the gift of eternal life. I was also privileged to grow up in a home where the Bible was studied and to grow up in churches where the Bible was taught. I thank God for the gift of eternal life and for His direction throughout my life. I can’t imagine living without His guidance throughout my life in making major decisions like going to college and graduate school, getting married and having children. And I can’t imagine not having His guidance through the difficult times. And it is comforting to know that when my life on earth is over, that my eternal life with Christ will just be beginning.

**Story Tips**

These tips are related more to a “canned” testimony, but may be a good place to start.

**Theme**

A theme is the central issue in our lives that shows the CONTRAST in our spiritual outlook before and after trusting in Christ.

The theme needs to start with a problem in Handle 1 (BC) and get resolved or partially resolved in Handle 3 (AD) as we saw with Paul’s theme--his zeal for God.

Make sure your theme is authentic. Don’t try to copy or mimic someone else’s theme, or try to use a theme that sounds good—make it personal (*personal testimony*).

**Middle Handle**

We need to keep it simple, clear, and REPEATABLE.  
Be as specific as possible.

Our story should contain a specific account of how we received Christ, emphasizing the repeatable elements.

Mention the details of *when* and *where*—but concentrate on the *what*. Trusting in Christ as your only means of salvation, in order to receive the gift of eternal life.

The Gospel: Trusting only in Christ’s cross work to provide an eternal relationship with God.

This is important even if your friend is not ready to respond at the time. They need the correct information, the *what* they need to know and do.

Keep it clear: try to use only one phrase for *what you did*. Don’t confuse them with: “I said a prayer, I accepted Jesus into my life, I received forgiveness, I was born again, I accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord.”



## Telling His Story

There are many approaches to learning to share the gospel.

If you have never taken the time to learn, let me recommend at least one training session in our *LIFE Ministries*. The *Evangelism Explosion* material is very helpful and complete.

There are also very simple approaches<sup>5</sup>:

*Good News, Bad News*

*The Bridge to Life*

*One verse Evangelism*

I would encourage anyone to be familiar with all of these.

But more important than a “gospel presentation” is familiarity with the gospel. Our hope has been that the study of Romans has helped you get a better grasp on the truths of the gospel.

### **Romans Road**<sup>6</sup>(ESV)

The advantage to these seven verses is that they are all in the book of Romans. Sometimes this is an advantage when you don’t want to flip through a lot of pages.

#### **Because of our sin, we are separated from God**

Romans 3:10 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

#### **The Penalty for our sin is death**

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **The penalty for our sin was paid by Jesus Christ!**

Romans 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#### **If we acknowledge our sin, then confess and trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will be saved from our sins!**

Romans 10:9-10 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Romans 10:13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

I recommend you mark the *Roman Road* in your Bible.

Go to Romans 3:10, underline it and write Romans 3:23 next to it. Then go to Romans 3:28, underline it and write Romans 5:12 next to it, and so on. This way, all you need to do is memorize where to start: Romans 3:10.

If you have your Bible with you when you are sharing the gospel, you may even want to have the one you are sharing with read the verses.

#### **Salvation Prayer** - The Simple Steps:

1. Acknowledge in your heart that Jesus is Lord.
2. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.
3. Believe that Jesus died for your sins and was raised three days later.

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<sup>5</sup> Several resources are attached.

<sup>6</sup> There are many different presentation that have been labeled “The Romans Road” this is just one.

## Other creative means

### Current Issues

Rather than avoiding current issues, use them to turn a conversation to spiritual things.

### Movies and Media

Over the past several years there have been many movies and books that could have been used to generate discussions among friends, neighbors and co-workers.

While there are many negative aspects of many movies, periodically movies and books that are not necessary Christian can be used to spark dialogue.

### Children and School

One of the most fruitful means of engaging in spiritual conversations for us has been through our children's involvement.

### Neighborhood groups

Small groups living out Christianity in your neighborhood  
Evangelistic Bible Studies

### Church Functions

Different church events and functions can be used to assist you in sharing your faith. Remember that not all events will be appropriate for everyone you want to share the gospel with. Some events and functions are:

Attraction: Pre-evangelism—just exposing people to “church” or other believers in a non-threatening way

Many of our sports ministry events—such as men's basketball league

Bridge-building: Non-threatening Evangelistic means

Girlville Dinner

Parenting Seminar: *Parenting is Heart Work*

Communication: Proclamation evangelistic—purpose is for the gospel to be presented clearly and a challenge for a response (decision)

Often during a worship service

One key to remember, if you are inviting someone to a church event, you are key to the process. Your relationship with the individual may be as important, or more important, than what is actually communicated during the event.

Your follow-up discussion may lead to a fruitful conversation.

**Appendix:** What follows are several examples of “easy” ways to share your faith

**One Verse Method--Simple**

How do we share this truth?

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

Wages	Free gift
Sin	Eternal life
Death	In Christ Jesus

What is keeping you? Nothing—but not yet!

Below is fuller explanation

**One-Verse Evangelism<sup>7</sup>**

Here’s an uncomplicated new way to present the Bridge illustration, using only one verse.

We sat in the busy hamburger stand, explaining to Jeff how he could have a close, eternal relationship with God. Suddenly, tears welled up in his eyes. As he realized how he had been rejecting Christ’s love, years of resistance cracked and dissolved. We offered to find a more private place where he could pray if he wanted to turn his life over to Christ. “No, let’s pray right here,” he said. And so Jeff became a Christian that afternoon.

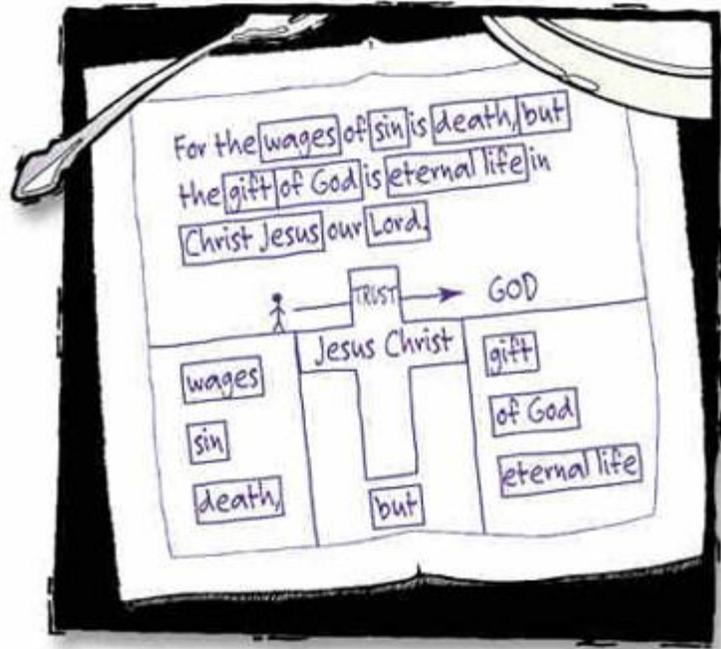
What was it that had helped Jeff to understand Christ’s love for him and his own need to surrender to that love? A simple illustration drawn on a piece of paper clearly communicated how a person who has chosen to live a life apart from Christ can be forgiven and become a child of God.

On another occasion I had watched in dismay as a friend attempted to explain his faith to an unbeliever. As he jumped back and forth from Old Testament to New Testament he used a multitude of verses, but never explained clearly how to become a Christian. Since then I have made a commitment that whatever I do in evangelism, I will never be fuzzy or unclear. I don’t have the right to take a simple message and make it difficult. As a result, I’ve found a simple way to communicate the gospel using just one Bible verse and the Bridge illustration.

Often, when a conversation turns to spiritual topics I will ask the other person if he would like to understand the basic theme of the Bible. I tell him that if he is interested I can draw him a picture that will explain all sixty-six books of the Bible in a practical way that he can easily understand. I assure him that it will take only ten to fifteen minutes. People seldom resist the curiosity this approach arouses—few have ever had someone explain the whole Bible to them, let alone in ten minutes! If he agrees, I proceed with the following illustration.

Advantages to this type of presentation include:

- It is short. It can be used effectively when time is limited.
- It is expandable. Analogies are optional, and you can make the presentation as long or as short as you wish.
- It is easy to understand.
- It is easy to learn and use, since there is only one verse to memorize.
- There is no need to flip back and forth through the Old and New testaments, which can be confusing to the hearer who is unfamiliar with the Bible.



<sup>7</sup> Randy D. Raysbrook, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue #61 January/February 1991.

- It gives you an opportunity to find out if the hearer clearly understands the gospel by giving him two chances to tell you the steps necessary for salvation.

- Analogies indicated by a bullet (•) are optional.

### WAGES

Open your Bible to [Ro. 6:23](#) and ask the person to read the verse aloud to you while you write it at the top of a piece of paper.

Draw a box around the word WAGES, write it midway down the left side of the page, and box it there also.

“How would you define the term *wages*?” (Wages are the reward we receive for what we have done.)

- “How would you feel if your boss refused to pay you the wages that were due to you? Deep down, we all know that it is only right that a person gets what he deserves. We earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives.”

### SIN

Draw a box around SIN in the verse and then write it below WAGES. Draw a box around it there.

“What do you think of when you hear the word *sin*?”

“How would a person have to live in order to get into heaven? Have you always lived a life like you just described?” (This should help him to see that even by his own definition he falls short of living a good and perfect life.)

“Sin is more an attitude than an action—it can be a hostile or apathetic response to God. At any point in your life, has God seemed far away?”

When he answers yes, draw in the lines of the cliff on both sides and explain that sin has separated everyone from God.

- “Imagine that you agreed with your roommate on rules regarding how to use your stereo. What would happen if your roommate ignored the rules and broke your stereo? Would that create a separation or problem in your relationship? Our sin creates a distance between us and God.”

### DEATH

Draw a box around the word DEATH, write it down on the illustration, and box it there.

“What thoughts come to mind when you think of death? Death often means separation—when we die our soul is separated from our body. If a person chooses to reject God while he is alive, that separation will extend into eternity: the separation will ultimately result in eternal torment in hell. Not only will he experience separation from God today, but also forever.”

### BUT

Draw a box around BUT in the verse and write it in a box between the bases of the cliffs.

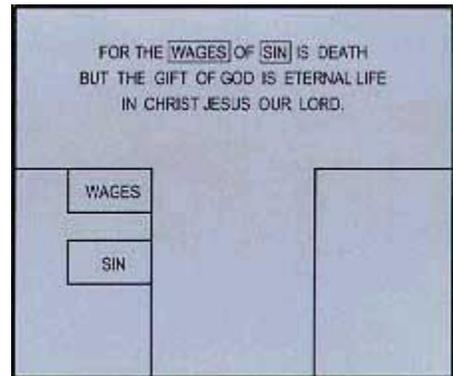
“This is the most important word in the verse because it indicates that there is hope for all of us. What we have talked about so far is bad news, but God has good news. What we’re going to talk about now is a contrast to what we just discussed.”

### GIFT

Draw a box around GIFT in the verse and write it on the right side of the cliff. Box it there.

“What is the difference between a gift and wages?”

(From now on, be sure to point back and forth to each side of the cliff to emphasize that the words contrast with each other.)



“A gift is not earned by the person who receives it, but someone else pays for it. How do you feel toward someone who gives you an expensive gift?”

“Some people try to earn God’s favor by doing good deeds, living moral lives, or taking part in religious activities. But it is impossible to earn something that has already been bought.”

- “Say you wanted to buy a special gift for a close friend to show how much that person means to you. How would you feel if the friend refused to accept it without first paying you for it?”

### OF GOD

*Draw a box around OF GOD and write it on the right side of the cliff, across from SIN. Box it.*

*Point to SIN on the left side and then back to GOD on the right and explain that all of us have sinned but God is perfect and has not.*

“God wants to give you a gift. I can’t give it to you; a church can’t give it to you; no one can give you this gift but God alone. Why do you think God would want to give you a gift? Why does anyone want to give someone a precious gift?”

### ETERNAL LIFE

*Draw a box around ETERNAL LIFE and write it on the right side of the cliff with a box around it.*

*“What do you think eternal life is?”*

*Point to DEATH on the left side and show that ETERNAL LIFE is the opposite.*

“Eternal life means a relationship with God in blissful harmony forever. Just as separation from God starts in this life and extends into eternity, eternal life starts now and goes on forever. No sin can end it.”

*(Ask if there is any part that you have explained so far that he does not understand or if he has any questions. Be sure that each point is clear before you proceed any further. If necessary, go back and explain each point that is not clear.)*

### CHRIST JESUS

*Draw a cross between the cliffs as a bridge. Box the words CHRIST JESUS in the verse. Write CHRIST JESUS inside the cross.*

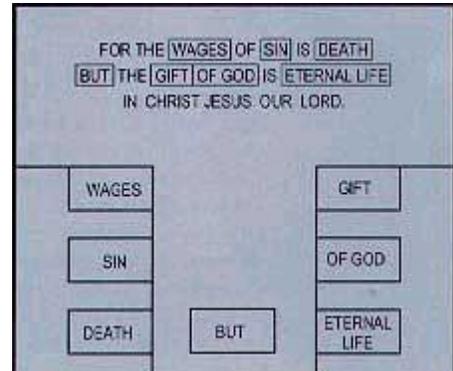
“Jesus is the means by which we can obtain the gift of eternal life. No one can offer a gift except the one who purchased it. He purchased it by paying for it with His life.”

- “Imagine that a police officer writes you a ticket for speeding and you go to court and the judge finds you guilty. But to your surprise, the policeman pays your fine out of his own pocket. In the same way, Jesus paid the fine for you—death.”
- *Hold out a pen to the person, and ask him to imagine that someone had bought it for him as a present. As you hand it to him, ask him at what point the pen becomes his (when he accepts it). Tell him that he can accept God’s gift to him by following two steps.*
- “A person is dying because his heart is diseased. Someone volunteers to donate his heart for a transplant, knowing that he will have to die in order to give it up. But first, in order to save his own life, the recipient must agree to accept the heart. It cannot be forced upon him. In order to accept God’s gift, you must do two things.”

### LORD

*Box LORD in the verse, and write it inside the cross on the illustration.*

“The gift is offered to everyone who makes Jesus Lord. For Jesus to be Lord, He has to have total control of a person’s life. He gains that control, or becomes Lord, when a person does two things.”



## CONFESS AND SURRENDER

Write **CONFESS** across the top of the cross on the left side and number it with a 1.

“Confessing means to agree with God that we are not perfect, that there are things in our lives that are wrong, and that we want Christ to forgive us as we turn away from our sin.”

Write **SURRENDER** across the top of the cross on the right side and number it 2.

“To surrender means to allow Christ to be the final authority in our lives and to live in order to please him and not ourselves. It doesn’t mean that we have to be perfect, but that we will try our best to please Christ.”

Draw a man on the left side of the bridge.

As a person confesses and surrenders, he passes across the bridge. He begins a relationship with God and starts to experience a new and eternal life.”

Draw an arrow across the bridge.

“On the basis of what I have just explained, what must a person do to have a relationship with God and eternal life?” (If he does not say “confess and surrender” and understand what that means, go back and explain it until it is clear.)

“If you were to place yourself on the bridge, where would you be? Are you far off to the left—far away from God—or close to the bridge and eager to learn more about God?”

“What two things does a person have to do to cross over the bridge in order to begin a relationship with God and have eternal life?”

“Is there any reason why you should not confess and surrender right now and begin to experience a close relationship with God and eternal life?”

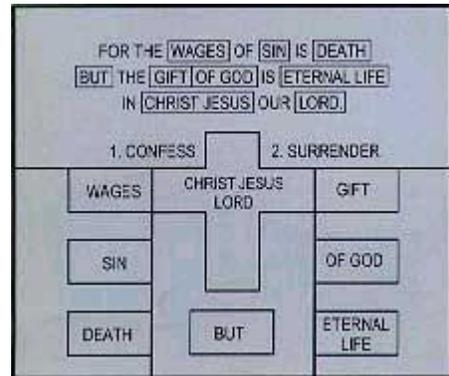
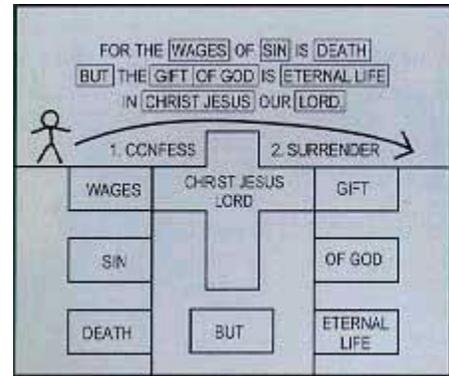
If the person is ready to repent of his sin and trust Christ for salvation, help him to pray, confessing his need for Christ and surrendering his life to Him. You may want to repeat a simple prayer similar to the one you prayed when you accepted Christ and ask him to repeat it after you, one phrase at a time.

Naturally, you will want to put the questions and explanations in this presentation into your own words. You might want to practice giving it to a Christian friend before you share it with an unbeliever.

After you have become familiar with this method, be sure to personalize it—use your own stories or analogies so that the presentation becomes a natural part of you. It is also a good idea to know at least one verse that backs up each step in the illustration in case the hearer needs further explanation.

Be sure to listen carefully as the person you are talking with answers the questions. Try to understand where he stands in relation to the gospel and adjust your presentation to suit his personality and needs. Be alert to signs of confusion as you explain.

Most important, remember that the power to change lives is not in having an effective, smooth-flowing illustration. It is the Spirit of God who opens people’s hearts to hear the message of salvation ([Jn. 6:63–65](#)). But what a privilege we have in being able to co-labor with God Himself in reaching out to others! Let us sharpen our tools and be ready always to give the answer that every person needs to hear with clarity and simplicity.



### About the author:

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## Good News, Bad News

### NT

There are several versions; this one has been adapted from Larry Moyer at EvanTell<sup>8</sup>

There are 4 points to remember and 4 Scripture verses to support them.

1. **Bad News #1** – We are all sinners. (Romans 3:23)
2. **Bad News #2** – The penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23)
3. **Good News #1** – Christ died for you. (Romans 5:8)
4. **Good News #2** – You can be saved through faith in Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“May I Ask You a Question?” and unfolds the Gospel as follows:

- (1) The question asked is: “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how you can know you’re going to heaven?”
- (2) According to the Bible, there is some bad news and some good news. The bad news is about you, the good news is about God.
- (3) Bad News:
  - (a) You are a sinner, indeed, all have sinned and fallen short of God’s standard of perfection (Romans 3:23); sin means “missing the mark” of God’s righteousness, His glory. No matter how good you are, you are not as righteous as God.
  - (b) The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23); death means eternal separation from God and is the just penalty for our sins in light of a perfect, holy God.
- (4) Good News:
  - (a) Jesus Christ, while we were still sinners, paid the penalty (death) for your sins by dying on the cross (Romans 5:8). Three days later Christ rose from the dead, proving that sin and death had been conquered and that His claims to be God were true.
  - (b) If you will trust in Jesus Christ (trust means to depend upon, to have faith in) and not your own good works (Ephesians 2:8-9) you will receive the gift of eternal life, which means that you are saved from the penalty of sin (death).
- (5) If you have trusted in Christ for eternal life, according to John 5:24 you know that you have eternal life, which means that you know that you will go to heaven. If you want to, you can pray the following prayer to God (but remember that this prayer does not save you, only your decision to trust in Christ alone saves you): “Dear God, I know I’m a sinner. I know my sins deserved to be punished. I believe Christ died for me and rose from the grave. I trust Jesus Christ alone as my Savior. Thank you for the forgiveness and everlasting life I now have. In Jesus’ name, amen.”
- (6) Now you should start reading your Bible, going to church and telling others about Jesus. Undoubtedly this is fairly simple to remember and to communicate to others.

### OT

Gospel Presentation from the Old Testament<sup>9</sup>

#### A. The Bad News

1. Jeremiah 17:9
2. Isaiah 64:6
3. Isaiah 59:1-2

#### B. Transition

Isaiah 1:18

#### C. The Good News

1. Isaiah 53:3-8
2. Daniel 9:25-27

#### D. The Promise of God—Faith

1. Genesis 15:6
2. Habakkuk 2:4

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<sup>8</sup> Evantell.org you can also read the whole approach at <http://www.mansfieldbible.org/destined.htm>

<sup>9</sup> From a Jewish Missionary, Mitch Triestman, *Friends of Israel*.

## Sharing Jesus without Fear by Bill Fay<sup>10</sup>

### *The Five Questions*

When I'm asking these questions, no matter what the responder says, I never answer. All you get from me is "hmmmm." As many husbands and wives know, it's difficult to have an argument with someone who is just "hmmmming."

Even so, there is a principle at work here. This principle reminds us that if you really care — really love someone — you will listen, attentively. As you listen to what your friend is saying, through the power of the Holy Spirit you may be able to hear if your friend is dealing with problems like loneliness, emptiness, pain, or anger. You will then be able to discern how close his heart is to God.

The five "Share Jesus Questions" you can ask are:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs?
2. To you, who is Jesus Christ?
3. Do you think there is a heaven or hell?
4. If you died, where would you go? If heaven, why?
5. If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?

These questions act as a funnel. You can start these questions anywhere on the list, as you feel led.

### *Let the Bible Speak*

Romans 3:23	The issue is sin
Romans 6:23	The penalty of sin
John 3:3	How to enter a relationship with Christ
John 14:6	The narrowness of the gospel (Exclusivity)
Romans 10:9-11	Anyone can be saved
2 Corinthians 5:15	We must turn from/turn to (surrender)
John 1:12 or 5:24	A choice to accept or reject

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<sup>10</sup> William Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, (B&H Publishing Group 1999).