



LIVING WITH GOSPEL INTENTIONALITY IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Building Relationships

Here are some very practical suggestions as to how you can begin to live with gospel intentionality in the neighborhood where God has sovereignly placed you.

- **Be Outside**

- Work in your front yard (i.e., mow the yard, pull weeds, etc.)
- Wash your car
- Play with your kids in the front yard instead of the backyard
- Take a walk around your neighborhood and look to meet new people and strike up a conversation. (remember names and faces you have seen or meet before)
- Organize a garage sale (ask neighbors to join you)

- **Food**

- Invite neighbors over for dinner or dessert
- Have a cookout; throw a block party or bbq and invite everyone in the neighborhood
- Go out to eat with your neighbors
- Plan a neighborhood picnic at a neighborhood park
- Organize a neighborhood progressive dinner

- **Kids**

- Play sports/games with kids and families in the neighborhood
- Become a "fan" of the kids in your neighborhood by attending their sporting events
- Coach your kids little league sports teams
- Volunteer at the local school
- Get to know the other parents in your children's activities
- Host an Easter egg hunt for the kids in your neighborhood
- Be at home on Halloween and give out the best candy
- Encourage your kids to have neighborhood kids over
- Babysit for your neighbors
- Form moms' groups in your neighborhood. Schedule play dates with the neighbors' kids
- Host a Backyard Bible Club for kids in the neighborhood

- **Serve**

- Make cookies or other baked goods with a note for your neighbor
- Watch for special needs your neighbors might have and take the initiative in meeting those needs. Just be on the lookout for things your neighbors are working on and just jump in and help them. Also, as you talk with your neighbor listen for ways that you can serve them
- Find ways to serve your neighbors by celebrating with them
- Take elderly neighbors shopping
- Mow an elderly neighbors yard
- Sponsor a free neighborhood car wash
- Ask neighbors for advice or help on things (home repairs, auto mechanics, landscaping, etc.)

Becoming a Student of your Neighborhood

Before we just run out and implement any of the above suggestions/ideas in our neighborhoods we want to be wise/smart. Before we just run out all excited and do something, we first need to sit down, pause and think about what (and why) we should do it. It makes no sense to organize a neighborhood kick ball game for all the kids, if everyone in your neighborhood is over 60 years old. It makes no sense to organize a dessert party on Wednesday nights at 7pm if everyone in your neighborhood is busy during that time. Therefore, before we run and “do” it’s important that we “think” about where we live and who we live nearby. In other words, it’s important that we become a student of our neighbors and neighborhoods.

- **Learn who your neighbors are:**
 - What are their names?
 - Where do they live?
 - What are their stories?
 - What are their interests, passions and goals?
 - What are their needs and pains? (economic, emotional, educational, spiritual)
 - What are their idols? (comfort, success, appearance, family, football, money, pleasure, power, reputation, approval, etc.)
 - Who are they? (i.e., people groups; young hispanics, single moms, young white families, senior adults, etc.)
- **Learn how your neighborhood “works”:**
 - When are your neighbors outside?
 - Who knows who? What relationships are already established? How can you enter into those relationships?
 - Who seems to be neglected or disconnected? (example - children home alone because their single mom works until 7pm)
 - What’s the normal routine? (morning, afternoon, evenings, weekends)
 - What groups in the neighborhood get together? When do they gather? What do they do? (walk, jog, play at the park, etc.)
- **Make a map of your neighborhood**
 - Imagine you’re in a helicopter looking down on your neighborhood.
 - Draw a sketch of what you see in your mind.
 - Write the names of the people who live in what houses.
 - Write what you know about these people.
 - Continually update this map as you learn more about your neighbors
 - Put this map up and use it to pray for your neighbors
 - On the bottom of the map or on a separate sheet of paper write down 3 potential ideas for how you can begin to develop relationships within your neighborhood. Also write down the names of those you will seek to develop a meaningful relationship with.

Talking about the Gospel

- **Sew Gospel Threads** - In our natural conversations with others we want to intentionally seek to sew gospel threads. In other words, we want to bring up and talk about the different non-negotiable elements of the gospel in our normal everyday conversations with others. Here are some practical suggestions for doing that:
 - **God** - God is the Creator of all things and Lord of all.
 - Talk about God like He is Someone you know.
 - Talk about God like He is Someone you worship.
 - Talking about God as Creator...
 - Acknowledge the glory of God in creation every chance you have.
 - Acknowledge the presence of God in specific facets of life.
 - God is working in my life (in this way)...

- God is blessing me (in this way)...
 - God is leading me (in this direction)...
 - God is guiding me (to make this decision)...
 - God is teaching me (this truth)...
 - God is showing me (this realization)...
- Talking about God as Lord...
 - Express confidence in God even when things go wrong.
 - Express humility before God (and others) when you do something wrong.
- Talking about God as Savior...
 - Constantly point out evidences of God's grace in and around you.
 - Consistently credit God as the source of everything good in and around you.
- **Man** – We have rebelled against our Lord God and therefore under His wrath and deserving of His just punishment
 - Speak respectfully to and about people as individuals created in the image of God.
 - Look intentionally for opportunities to encourage others.
 - Talking about our rebellion...
 - Speak humbly about the seriousness of sin.
 - Speak honestly about our propensity to sin.
 - Talking about our separation...
 - Acknowledge the root of sin in and around you.
 - Acknowledge the consequences of sin in and around you.
 - Talking about our deadness...
 - Constantly point to our dependence on God.
 - Constantly point to our desperation for God.
- **Christ** – Jesus is our substitute who bore the punishment that we deserve by dying on the cross.
 - Take advantage of every opportunity you have to tell His story.
 - Talking about Jesus' life...
 - Look for opportunities to highlight Jesus' example for us.
 - Look for opportunities to point out Jesus' identification with us.
 - Talking about Jesus' death...
 - Never stop emphasizing the gravity of sin.
 - Never stop talking about your gratitude for Christ.
 - Talking about Jesus' resurrection...
 - Speak about difficulties with hope.
 - Speak about death with joy.
- **Response** – Through faith and repentance in Jesus alone we can be reconciled to God and rescued from the punishment we justly deserve.
 - Take advantage of every opportunity you have to tell your story.
 - Talking about turning...
 - Point to the forgiveness of Christ when people around you see their sin.
 - Point to the presence of Christ when people around you come to the end of themselves.
 - Talking about trusting...
 - Encourage people around you to see the Lordship of Christ.
 - Urge people around you to receive the love of Christ.
- **Apply the gospel to the different situations which comes up in conversation** – In our conversations with others a plethora of topics come up, such as work, sports, kids, marriage, struggles, successes, joys, fears, politics, etc. As these topics arise in conversation think through and share how the gospel applies to and impacts these different situations.

- **Read the Bible together** – This can look a number of different ways: 1) invite people to read the Bible, on their own, and then offer to get together with them to talk about what they are reading or 2) sit down and literally read through the Bible together discussing what you're reading.
- **Share and discuss a gospel sermon together** – Share with them a sermon in which the gospel is clearly communicated, then follow up with them and discuss the message.
- **Share your story** – Share your personal story of how God opened your heart to the glorious truths of the gospel. Make sure to include the gospel in your story!
- **Meditate deeply on the gospel** – In other words, saturate your mind and heart in the truths of the gospel. Preach the gospel to yourself everyday. Don't go beyond the gospel to evangelism presentations, instead go deeper and deeper into the truths of the gospel. As a result talking about the gospel will be the natural overflow of your heart, rather than some artificial exercise or mechanical/forced presentation.
- **Helpful questions to build a bridge to the gospel** – One of the biggest difficulties in evangelism is transitioning from a normal conversation to the gospel. Here are some possible questions you may want to ask to help transition to the gospel. As you can tell some of the questions can be used together or build off each other.
 - Do you go to church anywhere? What made you choose to go there?
 - What are you doing this weekend? What did you do last weekend?
 - Do you have any spiritual beliefs? How did you come to these beliefs?
 - What's your spiritual background?
 - In your opinion, who is Jesus?
 - Have you ever read much of the Bible? Would you like to?
 - What's your understanding of what it means to be a Christian? Do you feel like you have a good understanding of what Christians believe?
- **Share the gospel** – Hang everything on the four elements of the gospel. With these four elements you can share the gospel in 30 seconds or 30 minutes.
 - **God** – God is the Creator of all things and Lord of all.
 - **Man** – We have rebelled against our Lord God and are therefore under His wrath and deserving of His just punishment.
 - **Christ** – Jesus is our substitute and bore the punishment that we deserve by dying on the cross.
 - **Response** – Through faith and repentance in Jesus alone we will be reconciled to God and rescued from the punishment we justly deserve.

Further Helps...

- *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever
- *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* by Will Metzger
- *Marks of the Messenger: Knowing, Living and Speaking the Gospel* by J. Mack Stiles
- *Questioning Evangelism* by Randy Newman
- *Bringing the Gospel Home: Witnessing to Family Members, Close Friends and Others Who Know You Well* by Randy Newman
- *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer