

GOSPEL FLUENCY CASE STUDIES

Work case study #1

Bob has a pretty demanding job with a pretty demanding boss. Bob puts in 50-60 hours a week office time, which doesn't account for the amount of time he's checking email or working periodically on the weekend. Bob's boss isn't what you'd call an empowerer. He routinely hears what Bob has done and how well he has done, and without affirming him or congratulating him, he simply raises expectations going forward - rewarding Bob's hard work with more hard work.

Bob has begun feeling like he is underappreciated by his company - he isn't getting the recognition company wide he feels like he deserves - he isn't getting the recognition from his team that he feels he deserves. He feels undervalued and under-respected. Bob has begun complaining about his boss to co-workers and has found it hard to remain positive about his role in the company. Going into the office has become a chore. The routine tasks that use to not tax him, now seem like a chore. The furthest thing from Bob's mind is 'whether he eats, drinks of whatever he does, doing it all for the glory of God.'

What questions would you ask Bob to draw out what he is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Bob? How might you counsel Bob were he a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Bob were he not yet a Christ-follower?

Work case study #2

Mark is a hard working, committed employees for his company. He puts his nose to the grind and once he is at work, is focused. Mark has many co-workers and even those who report to him. Mark doesn't really value building relationships with his peers or employees; he wants work to be work and not to blur the lines into possible friendships or relationships with those he works with - this only complicates matters in his mind. People find Mark aloof at best and maybe even rude at worst.

Mark has a secular/sacred divide in his mind and thus his work. For Mark, there are times where Christ impacts his life, and times where Christ doesn't impact his life. There are times when his faith impacts his life, and times where faith is kind of put on the shelf, so to speak. Work is one of those times where he's being paid to be productive, not to be an example of Christ.

What questions would you ask Mark to draw out what he is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Mark? How might you counsel Mark were he a Christ-follower? Were he not yet a Christ-follower?

Work case study #3

Susan is a very talented, up and coming employee at her company. She has a winsomeness that easily gains her a hearing with others, and the ability to influence others. Susan doesn't believe you lead people as a dictator, but as an empowerer. Susan also has a very demanding job that asks much of her.

Susan will often find it hard to 'break' from her work - whether that be being physically present, but emotionally absent, whether that be continuously checking her email, whether that be taking her work home with her often in order to get or stay ahead (or, not be as far behind). Susan is a driven personality, but, she also knows that she needs rest. The trouble is, when Susan has down-time, she really doesn't know what to do with herself. She has trouble navigating life when she's not 'busy.'

What questions would you ask Susan to draw out what she is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Susan? How might you counsel Susan were she a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Susan were she not yet a Christ-follower?

Worry case study

Michelle finds that she is anxious most of the time. She worries about her kids. She worries about finances. She worries about health. She worries about friendships and family and marriage. Michelle finds herself stuck in what seems like a continual prison of worry. It affects her decision-making and what she'll allow her children to try or do. It affects her spending and worrying about what the future might hold. It affects even her willingness to travel to certain parts of the country or world for fear of what might happen. It affects her relationships; she's continually wondering if she offended someone, is very careful with what she says and how she says it, and is constantly double-checking that all her relationships are ok. If her world is not at peace, she is not at peace.

Michelle's worry has gotten to the point it's starting to affect her physical health, and has been affecting her relationships for some time.

What questions would you ask Michelle to draw out what she is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Michelle? How might you counsel Michelle were she a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Michelle were she not yet a Christ-follower?

Materialism case study

Phil is a man with his toys. Fishing, hunting, racing, sports, home, car, boat, clothes - you name it, Phil has it, and the best of it all. Phil lives by the motto 'he who dies with the most toys wins.' In a recent conversation where Phil took you for a spin around the block in his brand new sports car, he stated, 'you know, you only live once, you'd better have fun with it.'

Phil works hard and plays hard - his free time is spent recreating in various ways with various people. Whenever you are around Phil, it feels like he's competing with you in some way - and it feels like he thinks he's continually winning. Phil's toys/hobbies/recreation often keep him away from his family rather than with it.

What questions would you ask Phil to draw out what he is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Phil? How might you counsel Phil were he a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Phil were he not yet a Christ-follower?

Workout case study

Wendy isn't just in good shape, she's in great shape. Wendy works out daily, sometimes twice daily. She watches what she eats, sometimes to the point of eating really low calorie counts too low for a person her size. Wendy schedules her life around her working out. She schedules her job around her working out. She schedules her family around her working out. She schedules everything around working out.

Wendy prioritizes her physical health above all else.

What questions would you ask Wendy to draw out what she is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Wendy? How might you counsel Wendy were she a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Wendy were she not yet a Christ-follower?

Sex and sexuality case study

Sam is a guy who is really interested in sex and all things sexuality. You share an office with Sam. On Monday mornings when you come into the office, you're usually going to hear about the previous weekend, and what did or didn't happen. Sam is continually talking about female co-workers and how they look. He's also continually cracking jokes about being with this person or that person. Marriage is silliness in Sam's mind; while you're young, you need to have fun and not be 'tied down.'

You can't seem to have a very serious or deep conversation with Sam before it gets back to sex and/or sexuality in some way or another. Whether it be in the articles Sam

reads, the conversations Sam has, or even the way Sam carries himself, it's mostly about sexuality.

What questions would you ask Sam to draw out what he is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Sam? How might you counsel Sam were he a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Sam were he not yet a Christ-follower?

Time case study

To say Tina is a disciplined planner would be an understatement. Tina lives by the motto, 'make a plan, work the plan.' Tina, and thus her family, are very structured. If it's not in Tina's calendar, forget it; it isn't happening. This discipline has helped Tina excel in her career. People know if Tina says something, she'll do it. Tina's whole life is structured from eating to exercise, from spending to religion, from relationships to recreation. There is a time for everything, or, it doesn't happen.

Tina also is pretty inflexible. She isn't willing to bend on her schedule because she views life through the lens of time and time slots and things have to fit into a time slot, or, they don't fit into Tina's life. Tina, from the outside looking in, seems to be enslaved by her calendar.

What questions would you ask Tina to draw out what she is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Tina? How might you counsel Tina were she a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Tina were she not yet a Christ-follower?

Marriage case study #1

Peter and Mary have been married for 25 years. Their youngest just went away to college and they are slowly but surely realizing that they built their lives on their kids lives, not their marriage. They don't know what to do with each other now that their kids are out of the house. They try to eat together, but, oftentimes one of them will get home later than the other only to find the other has grabbed something from the fridge. A usual night for them involves Peter spending 3 hours in front of the television and Mary grabbing a book and reading in the other room. They can't remember the last time they've been on a date together.

Every now and then, they'll each wonder, how did it get to this, but, they won't stay there long enough to do anything about it. The 'flame' has long since went out and they don't know how to get it back. They wonder 'where do we even begin?'

What questions would you ask Peter and Mary to draw out what they are really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Peter and Mary? How might you counsel Peter and Mary were they Christ-followers? How might you counsel Peter and Mary were they not yet Christ-followers?

Marriage case study #2

Randy and Diane are continuously fighting, to the point that they don't even enjoy each others company. They have 3 children at home - 14, 12, and 6 (oops) - their kids have noticed that mom and dad are continually at each other and have even started to try playing referee. Randy and Diane can't agree on much besides that the other is basically the problem. If the other were just to change, things would improve. They are tired of being tired and don't know what to do to change their situation - in fact, they are past the point of really even wanting it to.

What questions would you ask Randy and Diane to draw out what they are really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Randy and Diane? How might you counsel Randy and Diane were they Christ-followers? How might you counsel Randy and Diane were they not yet Christ-followers?

Marriage case study #3

Ben and April are young parents with 3 young kids. They care about one another, but, are simply exhausted. Whether it be pooppy diapers, sleepless nights or even trying to connect physically with each other to only fall asleep on the couch first, they are taxed. Both work outside of the home. Their kids are in daycare and by the time they pick them up at 6pm and make and have dinner, it's almost time to start getting them ready for bed. Their oldest has just started U6 soccer this year too.

They want to be good parents - they want to raise successful, happy, moral, well-adjusted kids. They care about each other, but, from looking at their lives, one would think their number one priority is their children.

What questions would you ask Ben and April to draw out what they are really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Ben and April? How might you counsel Ben and April were they Christ-followers? How might you counsel Ben and April were they not yet Christ-followers?

Forgiveness case study

Brad is a former marine. He grew up in a blue-collar family. His dad drove semi for a living and was gone most weekdays. When he returned home from a trip, he was pretty tired and distant. He was physically present, but, emotionally was absent. His dad had a quick temper, and you were afraid to say or do something that would set him off. Brad grew up harboring a lot of anger and resentment with him because of his father.

Unexpectedly, Brad's father was killed while out on the road when Brad was 14. Brad in a sense never got to make peace with his dad before it was too late and never got to confront him either as an adult. Brad has carried this pent up anger and lack of forgiveness into his marriage, into his parenting, into his relationships in general. If you cross Brad, you know it, he'll let you know it, and he won't let you forget it either.

Whether a look, something that is said, something that is done, you know you are in Brad's doghouse. Brad struggles to forgive period, but, especially struggles to forgive quickly and often. He harbors anger and bitterness and if you cross him, writes you off in a sense.

What questions would you ask Brad to draw out what he is really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Brad? How might you counsel Brad were he a Christ-follower? How might you counsel Brad were he not yet a Christ-follower?

Parenting case study

Josh and Isabella are parents of 3 children: 12, 8, and 4 years old. They are good parents who care about their kids. The last thing they want in life is for their kids to fail. Whether it be a spelling test, a dance recital or baseball game, or, in relationships in the neighborhood or at school, they want their kids to excel. They also think it's probably their responsibility to ensure that their kids succeed. They want their kids to succeed in life and want their kids to reflect well on them. There is a lot of pressure in their home and Josh and Isabella tend to micro-manage their kids. Their kids don't know how to function outside of Josh and Isabella telling them what to do and how to do it.

Josh and Isabella continually fear that they will fail as parents and thus their kids will be failures. This would be their worst nightmare come true.

What questions would you ask Josh and Isabella to draw out what they are really believing in this situation? What part of your story could you share to relate to them in this issue? What would the gospel say to Josh and Isabella? How might you counsel Josh and Isabella were they Christ-followers? How might you counsel Bob were they not yet Christ-followers?