

Evangelism Equipping Course

Practical Equipping for Sharing
the Good News of Jesus Christ

grace church
SAN DIEGO | EAST COUNTY

Introduction

On behalf of all the elders of Grace Church, thank you for studying these materials to become further equipped in evangelism. Your equipping to reach out and share the good news of Jesus is vital to our overall mission.

Our evangelism strategy could be summarized under the following headings:

ENVISION >> EQUIP >> ENABLE

“ENVISION” speaks to our role as elders to give you a biblical vision for how God wants to use you in his great mission in the earth. You’ll get a little of this envisioning in Session 1, though admittedly not a lot. But read the book of Acts, review our sermons from Acts, or read a book like *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer. Then see if the desires of your heart are not kindled for God to use you in wonderful ways to spread the good news of Jesus!

“ENABLE” speaks to how we want to provide help for each other as we seek to engage the lost around us. As we move forward as a church, we hope to provide more and more “corporate” vehicles for helping you to share the good news of Jesus in a variety of ways.

However, it’s the middle piece that we’re focused on with this brief course – **“EQUIP”**. While we want to do more to “enable” us to reach out with the good news of Jesus, our conviction is that God wants to use you *personally*. In other words, our priority right now is to see people used *personally* in their network of relationships. In our opinion, that’s the vital foundation for us being used by God *corporately*.

There are many ways to equip for evangelism. We’ve provided an entire addendum listing some helpful resources to equip you further. But we acknowledge that there’s a lot that this brief course doesn’t even attempt to address. What it does address could be summed up in three simple points:

- Why reach out with the gospel?
- How to engage people relationally in outreach?
- How to initiate conversations that might lead to the gospel?

Our simple goal for this course is to provide you with essential steps that will equip you to engage people around you with the good news of Jesus. That’s all we’re seeking to address in this course. But if that much happens, we’ll be well on our way as a church in outreach and evangelism.

May God help us powerfully, by His Spirit, and for His glory!

Session 1:

KEY CONVICTIONS

This course is designed to help you pursue faithfulness in evangelism. But first, consider: what comes into your mind when you think about evangelism?

Put a checkmark next to any of these thoughts that you may have had about evangelism:

- I don't know what to say, so I can't evangelize.
- God will save them if he wants to - he doesn't need me.
- I don't know what they'll think of me if I share about Jesus.
- It's not my responsibility to reach out to others.
- I'm concerned what this will do to our relationship if I evangelize them.
- I don't have the spiritual gift of evangelism.
- I'm not mature enough; I need to change more before evangelizing.
- I don't have time to evangelize.

Which of the above responses are fear-driven? Which responses deflect our call to faithfulness in evangelism?

What we need *first* is not a new technique, but a new way of thinking. We act and live out of what we believe. In very practical ways, our convictions shape our conduct.

Conviction #1: God Has Commissioned Us to Go

Consider the storyline of the bible...

What is God's plan to spread this good news to all peoples?

- **Our Gospel Commission**

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:18-20)

- The focus:
- The duration:

Even in the face of persecution, the early Christians took this commission as their own:

there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ...Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. (Acts 8:1-4)

...even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 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... (1 Pet 3:13-15)

>>> How might these passages help build or strengthen this conviction for you?

Conviction #2: God Calls Us to Share His Heart

In the person of God the Son, we see God's heart for the lost on full display. It's been said that the dominant emotion ascribed to Jesus in the gospels is *compassion*.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14:14)

Jesus even seemed heart-broken over those who would reject him, uttering this deeply felt lament just prior to his execution:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37)

In fact, Jesus seemed most disgusted by religious hypocrisy borne out of self-righteousness:

Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." (Luke 7:47)

“(Jesus is) more disgusted by what he sees in Simon’s heart than by what he sees in the woman’s heart.” - Tim Chester

>>> Consider: would “sinners” feel as comfortable coming to us as they felt in coming to Jesus? If not, why not?

- **The reality of hell**

Sharing God's heart involves recognizing that God is infinitely holy, so all sin must be punished and that punishment is eternal.

So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:49-50)

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)

"The doctrine of hell, however unpopular it may be and however much we may wish to soften its hard edges, is essential for faithful Christian witness." - Kevin DeYoung & Greg Gilbert

- **The love of God**

God, in his great love, has made a way for hell-bound sinners to be put into perfectly right standing with him - by his grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16)

"God's love is amazing, not because the world is so big, but because the world is so bad." - D.A. Carson

...God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Cor 5:14-15)

I know that the reason so few conversions are happening through my church is not because we lack a program or staff. It is because we do not love the lost and yearn for their salvation the way we should. And the reason we do not love them as we ought is because such love is a miracle that overcomes our selfish bent. It cannot be managed or maneuvered into existence. It is an astonishing miracle. Examine yourself: Does it lie within your power right now to weep over the spiritual destruction of the people on your street? Such tears come only through a profound work of God. If we want this work of God in our lives and in our churches, there will be agonizing prayer: 'God, break my heart!'" - John Piper

Conviction #3: God is Ultimately Sovereign in Salvation

An understanding of the sovereignty of God is critical to sustain our faith for the task of evangelism. This was the apostle Paul's experience:

"Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. (Acts 18:9-10)

In evangelism we are called to faithfulness – not results. The results are in our sovereign Lord's hands; he simply calls us to be his faithful instruments.

“...far from making evangelism pointless, the sovereignty of God in grace is the one thing that prevents evangelism from being pointless. For it creates the possibility – indeed, the certainty – that evangelism will be fruitful. Apart from it, there is not even a possibility of evangelism being fruitful.” - J.I. Packer

>>> What should be the effect on you in light of God's ultimate sovereignty in salvation?

HOMEWORK:

We need to transfer these convictions from the abstract into in our real lives, and there's no better way to do that than by praying for people. Praying regularly for someone is a sure way to share more of embracing God's commission, sharing God's heart, and trusting God's ultimate sovereignty.

- Make a prayer card with the three names of people you interact with regularly: neighbors, friends, co-workers, someone you do business, etc.
 - Pray “God break my heart” for those people
 - Pray they would come to know the Savior.
- Consider putting that card where you'll see it regularly - bathroom mirror, refrigerator, car dashboard, in your bible, etc – so you can pray for them regularly, if not daily.