

# Pursuing Our *Outward* Purpose Together!

## **STEP 1: MAKE GENUINE FRIENDSHIPS**

- As ambassadors for Jesus to those who are yet to believe, reach out to neighbors, co-workers, and / or classmates where God has placed you (2 Cor 5.20, cf. Matt 28.18-20).
- Prioritize a few people who you might genuinely befriend and show the love of Christ (2 Cor 5.14).
- Pray for them, asking God to open doors for the good news of Jesus (Col 4.3).
- Lacking friends in this category? Get to know people in your *existing* rhythms of life...
  - a) At work, the gym, campus, hairdresser, people in the neighborhood, etc.
  - b) Through your hobbies: running club / walking / pets / kid's sports team

## **STEP 2: ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS**

- Let these friends know that you are a Christian in a natural, unforced way (Col 4.6), and live an attractive – though not perfect – Christian life as “salt and light” (Matt 5.13-14).
- Be honest about your struggles; don't hold out Christianity as a self-improvement scheme. Share how Jesus meets you in the midst of your weaknesses (2 Cor 12.9), struggles and sin.
- Listen to your friend's problems; offer to pray for them as a way of sincerely caring for them.
- Ask about their beliefs and listen. You might ask, “What are your spiritual beliefs?” Then ask follow up questions and listen with sincere interest and care. This is what friends do! It is also a way to express love and respect, and will help you understand them better. It may even mean that in due course they are more open to hearing about your own spiritual beliefs.

## **STEP 3: INVITE INTO YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY**

- Invite people to meet your church friends, since our love for one another testifies to others that we are Jesus' followers (John 13.35). “Love is the final apologetic.” (Francis Schaeffer)
- Invite people to informal social gatherings (e.g., a book club, sporting event, etc.), or more formal ones (e.g., your home group may be a good place for some friends to visit and meet others)

## **STEP 4: SHARE THE GOOD NEWS**

- **Personally:** Prepare and use...
  - a) Your personal testimony: share what Jesus has done for you (Mark 5.19)
  - b) Ways to communicate the gospel - especially: *God, mankind, Christ, response* (see below)
  - c) Resources like the “Two Ways to Live” tract and our “Simply Jesus” investigative Bible study (you can find both at our Information Table)
- **Publicly:** Invite to our Sunday morning services, upcoming Advent series, and future “Life Course”

## **GOALS**

- Invite at least one unbelieving friend to our Advent Series (Dec 2 – 23, plus Christmas Eve)
- Have a couple friendships developing by the Spring, that you might invite them to the Life Course

Recommended reading: *Friend of Sinners*, by Harvey Turner

## **GOD**

The first thing to know about the *good news* of Jesus is that “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Because God created everything—including us—he has the *right* to tell us how to live. You have to understand that in order to understand the *good news* about Jesus.

God describes himself as “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Then God adds, “but who will by no means clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:6-7). This loving God is also holy and righteous. That means He cannot ignore or tolerate sin.

## **MANKIND**

When God created the first human beings—Adam and Eve, he intended for them to live under his righteous rule in perfect joy—obeying him and living in fellowship with him. But Adam and Eve declared rebellion against God, and denied his authority over their lives. Yet, it is not just Adam and Eve who are guilty of sin. The Bible says “*all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...none is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:23, 10).

Once you understand sin in that light, you begin to understand why “the wages of sin is *death*” (Romans 6:23). That’s not just physical death, but spiritual death. The Bible teaches that the final destiny for unbelieving sinners is eternal, active judgment in a place called “hell.” But...

## **JESUS CHRIST**

When Jesus began his public ministry he said, “The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15) Centuries before God had promised that he would come as a great King to rescue his people from their sins. Here was Jesus saying, “The kingdom of God is *here... I am that great King!*”

Jesus came to die *in our place*, to take the punishment we deserve for our rebellion against God. As Jesus died on a cross, the awful weight of *all our sins* fell on *his* shoulders. The sentence of death God had pronounced against rebellious sinners struck. And Jesus died. *For you and me!* But Jesus the Crucified is no longer dead. The Bible tells us that he rose from the grave. Jesus’ rising from the grave was God’s way of saying, “What Jesus claimed about who he is and what he came to do is *true!*” (e.g., 1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

## **OUR RESPONSE**

God expects us to respond with repentance and faith (Acts 26:18-20). To repent of our sins means to turn away *from* our rebellion against God. Repentance doesn’t mean we’ll bring an immediate end to our sinning. It does mean, though, that we’ll never again live at peace with our sins.

We also turn *to* God in faith. Faith is *reliance*. It’s a promise-founded trust in the risen Jesus to save you from *your* sins. If God is ever to count us righteous before him, he’ll have to do it on the basis of someone else’s record - someone who is qualified to stand in as our substitute. That’s what happens when a person is saved by Jesus: all our sins are credited to Jesus who took the punishment for them, and the perfect righteousness of Jesus is then credited to us when we place our trust in what he has done for us! That’s what faith means—to *rely* on Jesus, to *trust* in him alone to stand in our place and win a righteous verdict for us before God!

(The above is adapted from *What is the Gospel!?*, by Greg Gilbert)