



Why Jesus?

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Simple Ministries

Why Jesus?

INTRODUCTION

Why Jesus helps to disciple Christians to understand, not only *that* the Bible says Jesus is necessary for salvation, but *why* He is and how to share Christ with others using apologetics.

- Lesson 1 may be preached as a sermon or taught as a small group lesson and explains important issues such as:
 1. The reason why God does not use goodness as a standard for salvation: it is unjust even according to man's sense of justice.
 2. What the penalty for sin is and why the cross was necessary.
 3. What the purpose of life is and why this purpose requires faith in Christ for salvation.
- Once Christians gain a better understanding of why Jesus is necessary for salvation, they are better able to see the *need for* and *desire to* share Christ with others. Lesson 2 deals with the difficulties of sharing Jesus and how to overcome them.
- Lesson 3 builds upon Lesson 1. It explains how to share Jesus in a way that is simple, biblical, and effective in today's culture by not just proclaiming but explaining the Gospel using apologetics. The *Why Jesus Sharing Card*, which prints on the front and back of standard business cards, helps Christians to explain the Good News with minimal memorization.

A Little History

My first involvement with evangelism was in my church's visitation ministry. I noticed that when I'd visit with others who had been through the church's evangelism program, they had a knowledge and confidence to share the Gospel that I did not have. So I took the course and was involved as an evangelism trainer for six years. Due to this experience and my seminary studies, I realized there were several opportunities to improve upon the week-night approach to evangelism training:

1. Reach - Few church members will attend an evangelism program scheduled on a week night. Teaching during normally scheduled Bible study times and/or church services will disciple the greatest number of people.
2. Write It Down - We lose what we don't use. Because few Christians regularly share their faith, memorized evangelism presentations are easily forgotten. While knowing how to share from memory is preferred, a better training approach is to incorporate a written form of the Gospel in case one's memory fails.
3. Dialogue, Not Monologue - Christians often monopolize sharing conversations. A better approach is to make quick points and ask engaging questions, listening and helping a person to think through the Gospel as it is shared. This helps to avoid the claim that Christians are pushy or preachy when sharing their faith.
4. Apologetics - In a world that is increasingly un-Christian, it is important to be prepared in advance to answer the most common objections by the most effective means available.

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Upon graduating seminary, God called me to help churches disciple their members to share Jesus in a way that simple, biblical, and effective in today's culture. To share the Gospel, at a minimum, one needs knowledge, courage, and love. I knew that no 3-4 week study would be able to instill a love for the lost. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and the church often over many years. Truth be told, most Christians will not share their faith no matter how well or long they are discipled. But God has not called Christian leaders to follow the flock but to lead them. Christian leaders are to be faithful to disciple their members even when the people they disciple are not. If leaders are going to disciple people to be like Jesus, they will have to teach evangelism because that is what Jesus did. This led me to write an evangelism study called *Share Jesus Simply* to assist church leaders to disciple their members with the knowledge necessary to share Christ in a way that improved upon all the four areas previously mentioned.

But I discovered a huge blind spot when I read a survey from The Barna Group. They polled Christians with the question, "Is there one way to heaven or many?" Fifty-seven percent of evangelical Christians responded that there are many ways to heaven! I couldn't believe the results, so I started to survey evangelical Christians myself with the same question. While my surveying in the Southeast yielded a much lower percentage (10%), I discovered something else. When a person would respond correctly I'd ask, "Why is Jesus the only way?" Over 90% cannot explain why, other than maybe "the Bible says so." But this a claim and not an explanation. So I realized two things. First, those who think that Jesus is *not* necessary for salvation are very unlikely to share their faith. After all, why share Jesus if people can possess salvation with their current non-Christian beliefs? Second, for those who believe Jesus is the only way to heaven, there is a great opportunity to disciple them with a deeper understanding of the Gospel. Christians who understand God better are typically able to trust Him more and be more faithful followers of Christ. These realizations led me to rewrite *Share Jesus Simply* into this three-lesson study, *Why Jesus*.

Why Jesus is primarily written for pastors and small group leaders but is also advantageous for anyone to read. If you find the study helpful, please recommend it to others, especially to other pastors and small group leaders. The study is much more worthwhile if concerned Christians like yourself get the word out about it.

The *Sharing Card* is not included in the initial download. The support of Christians like yourself is needed to continue this ministry. You are free to make a sharing card of your own or receive a PDF file of my *Sharing Card* for a donation of any amount.

May God bless you as you learn to better understand why Jesus is necessary for salvation and how to share the Good News with others.

Blessings,
Garrett Eckert

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Lesson One: Why Jesus

Introduction

Jesus states in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except by me.”

Why did Jesus say that He is the only way to heaven? After all, God does not want anyone to perish but all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Wouldn't many plans of salvation help more people get into heaven?



God's Purpose for Salvation

From God's perspective, His goal in salvation is not primarily to save sinners from hell. If that were His goal, then He could have made people without the freedom to sin which would keep everyone out of hell. But if He took away man's free will to sin then He'd also be taking away man's ability to love. Love requires choice. But programmed love is no love at all. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God (Matthew 22:37). The purpose of God creating man to raise up a body of free people who will freely love Him. Making mankind without the ability to love would defeat His purpose in creating man in the first place.

Two Issues

Romans 3:23 states, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Our sin creates two major problems which separate us from God.

First, it separates us from God relationally. When someone sins against you, what is required to restore the relationship? A genuine apology. In a similar way, to establish a relationship with God requires genuine contrition of sin. The Bible calls this repentance and Jesus said all will perish who do not repent (Luke 13:3).

Second, sin separates us from God legally. What do we call a person who murders only once? A murderer. But why do we call them a murderer when they committed such a crime only once? Because that is the nature of guilt - once committed, one is guilty and the offense can never be taken back. No amount of time or goodness ever erases guilt. This means that people who have told just one lie are liars and those who have stolen anything are thieves. Those who have used God's name in vain are blasphemers, which is a very serious offense to God (Exodus 20:7). We have looked at just three of God's laws but there are hundreds more listed in the Bible. In addition, God even judges people's thoughts and heart. Jesus said, “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' [worthless] is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell” (Matthew 5:22). In a court of law, people are declared guilty and sentenced to punishment based on just one infraction of the law. It is the same way with God, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (James 2:10). Whether

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one breaks all of God's laws or just one, the result will be the same: guilty. The sentence? Eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23). Will an apology get ones case dismissed in a criminal court of law? Not with a just judge. But some say that God is so good and loving that He'd never punish anyone - except maybe murderers. But it is precisely because He is good and loves justice that He punishes the guilty. "Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent - the LORD detests them both" (Proverbs 17:15). "Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished,..." (Proverbs 11:21).

Unworkable Options

God's plan of salvation requires both the relational and legal issues to be resolved. Let us look at the options to see why God only has one plan of salvation.

God Will Save All

Why doesn't God just save all people? Because this does not rectify either the relational or legal infractions against Him which is why the Bible speaks against it.

- Luke 13:3 ...unless you repent, you too will all perish. (*relational*)
- Romans 10:4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. (*legal*)

God Forgives Those Who Ask

Why doesn't God just forgive those who ask for it? This may meet the relational but not the legal requirement. Meeting only half the requirement yields the same result as meeting neither one. Picture guilty criminals in court. Can any of them be set free by simply apologizing for breaking the law? No. While they should be sorry, legal justice requires an appropriate punishment. It is the same with God.

God Forgives Those Who Ask and Have Good Works

What about those who ask for forgiveness and who's good works outweigh their bad works? This again may reconcile sinners relationally but not legally for several reasons. First, good deeds do not outweigh bad deeds. Picture a cheating husband who gets caught committing adultery. His defense is that there are 168 hours in a week and he only cheats on his wife for two hours on Tuesdays. Therefore, by weighing the number of hours he is faithful compared to those he is not, is he a good husband? Of course not. Second, God does not acquit the guilty nor let the guilty go unpunished (Proverbs 17:15; 11:21). Imagine a murderer using the following defense in court: "Judge, I confess to the murder, but I believe I'm a good person and that you are a good and loving judge who will let me go." However, it is precisely because the judge is good and loves justice that they will punish the murderer according to the law. For the judge to do otherwise would be evil. Third, Isaiah 64:6 states, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Righteousness apart from God is self-righteousness. In fact, self-righteousness just angers God all the more.



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The Gospel

God only has one plan of salvation, the Gospel, because only it fulfills both the relational and legal problems so we can be reconciled to God.



Relational Reconciliation

Because man is born in sin (Psalm 51:5), his fellowship with God is broken from birth. But not only are we born in sin but we willingly sin ourselves. So to establish a relationship with God requires genuine repentance of sin. Repent means “to turn away from.” We are to turn away from sin, have genuine contrition, and commit to stop sinning with God’s help. For example, what if a wife discovered her husband was having an affair and he pleaded for forgiveness, but after some time, he purposely resumed the affair? Is this repentance? No, this is anti-repentance. If he were truly repentant, he would have wished that the affair had never happened and would do everything possible to restore his relationship with his wife because of his love for her. So repenting to God is to be truly sorrowful for our sins, turn away from them, and live for God instead of our sinful appetites. This does not mean that we become perfectly sinless, but that we desire to and with the Holy Spirit’s help we try. Even the Apostle Paul struggled with sin.

- Romans 7:15-17 “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.”

Notice he *hated* sinning. This is the true kind of repentance God requires.

Legal Pardon

As previously stated, once committed, the guilt of sin sticks. But so what? What’s the big deal? Well, the big deal is that God has only one punishment for sin: death.

- Genesis 2:17 “...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
- Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death...”

The Bible refers to going to heaven as eternal life and going to hell as death. Our sins have earned us a death sentence, which is eternal separation from God. Because God is just, He cannot overlook sin or be bribed with good works. The penalty must be paid but no man has the power to conquer death. But God can offer a conditional pardon that allows His justice and wrath to be satisfied while also saving sinners.

The Cost of Our Pardon

Although the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22), the good news is that God loves us so much that He took upon Himself our punishment so we can live with Him.

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- John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his.”
- Ephesians 1:7 “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.”
- 1 John 4:10 “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”



Propitiation is a two part act that involves appeasing the anger of an offended person and being reconciled to them. God took the punishment we deserved upon himself and offers a conditional pardon for those who will repent and receive their pardon.

Love



But why is the punishment for sin eternal separation from God? Why cannot God just punish people in hell for a time and then allow them to graduate to heaven? The reason is that people either love God or they don't. This life is the perfect time according by a perfect God to determine who will love Him and who will not. Those who love God want to be with Him in a loving relationship forever. Those who do not love God, including those who love false gods in false religions, do not want to be in a loving relationship with the God of the Bible and He will not force them to. In fact, this is

something God cannot do because forced love is a contradiction in terms. Love has to be given freely, not forced. Forced love is no love at all.

Lord

God's pardon is available to all who ask for it. Romans 10:9 states, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Notice that the confession is not to just say that “Jesus is Savior,” but “Jesus is Lord.” Making Jesus our Lord means to live our lives for Him instead of ourselves. Obedience is a major means by which we show Jesus that we love Him. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).

Resurrection

While no man can overcome death, God can. We need a Savior with the power of resurrection.

- 1 Corinthians 15:17 “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”
- John 6:40 “For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

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Unless we have a Savior who has resurrected, we have no savior at all. We are all born spiritually dead and need a Savior with the power of resurrection to conquer death.

The Result

What is the result of repenting of our sins, confessing Jesus as Lord and believing in His resurrection? It is this promise, "...you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). We will be saved from the penalty of sin which is death and given new life in Christ.

Colonel Story



In ancient times in the Middle East, an army colonel was running a military base where things were being stolen from him and other soldiers. He ordered that if the thief was caught, they would receive 20 lashings with a whip. The next day the thief was caught and it turned out to be the colonel's own son! What was the colonel to do? If he did not fulfill his order, he would lose the respect and trust of his men because he would prove he does not always keep his word and uphold justice. But his son was a frail and sickly man. If he were to receive the punishment, he would die. What was he to do? The colonel did the only thing he could do: he stood in his son's place and received the lashings himself. He was strong enough to receive them and still live. Therefore, his son was spared the punishment and lived. The colonel showed his men that even when his own orders negatively effected him, he still kept his word and was just. Instead of the colonel losing the respect and trust of his men, he gained even more.

In many ways, this is what Christ did for us and more. We have broken God's law (as summarized in the Ten Commandments). We have earned a death sentence, which is eternal separation from God in hell (Romans 6:23). But Christ stood in our place on the cross and took the punishment that we cannot take. In this He demonstrated and fulfilled God's justice, mercy, and love (Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 3b, Proverbs 11:21, Hebrews 9:22, 1 Peter 3:18, John 3:16).

In Summary

God only has one plan of salvation because only the Gospel addresses both the relational and legal requirements. Relationally, true repentance is necessary to establish a relationship with God. Legally, God must punish sin and the punishment for sin according to His Law is death. Since no one can pay this penalty and conquer death, Jesus stood in our place and took the punishment upon Himself. Therefore, salvation is available to those who love God by repenting of their sin and trusting in Jesus as Lord to receive their legal pardon.

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Lesson One Outline: Why Jesus

Introduction

- Jesus stated in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except by me.”
- Why did God limit salvation to only trusting in Jesus?

I. God's Purpose for Salvation

- A. Not to save people from hell
 1. God could have made man without the ability to sin
 2. No ability to sin would also mean no ability to love
 3. Man's ability to love is a primary purpose in God creating us

II. Two Issues

- A. Relational
 1. Repentance is required to establish a relationship with God
 - Luke 13:3 ...unless you repent, you too will all perish.
- B. Legal
 1. One murderer makes one a murderer
 - The nature of guilt - once committed, it never goes away.
 2. One lie makes one a liar
 3. One theft makes one a thief
 4. Using God's name in vain is called blasphemy
 - Exodus 20:7 You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.
 5. Breaking just one law makes one guilty
 - James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.
 6. The sentence? Death - eternal separation from God
 - Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death,...
 7. God's goodness and love require Him to be just
 - Proverbs 17:15 Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent--the LORD detests them both.
 - Proverbs 11:21 Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished,...

III. Unworkable Options

- A. God will save all
 1. Does not rectify either the relational or legal issues
- B. God forgives those who ask
 1. This could reconcile the sinner relationally but without the legal requirement met, the result is the same.
- C. God forgives those who ask and have good works
 1. This too could reconcile the sinner relationally but not legally.
 2. Good deeds do not outweigh bad deeds
 - Cheating husband 'the good outweighs the bad' example
 - Remember Proverbs 17:15
 - Remember Proverbs 11:21
 3. Murder court example (good and loving judge)
 4. Self Righteousness just angers God all the more.
 - Isaiah 64:6 all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

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IV. Gospel

A. Relational reconciliation

1. Original sin and personal sin separate us from God
2. True repentance is required
3. Cheating husband who won't quit example
4. Repentance does not mean perfectly sinlessness
 - Romans 7:15-17 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

B. Legal pardon

1. Why is sin a big deal? Because the penalty is severe.
 - Genesis 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.
 - Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

C. The cost of our pardon

1. Jesus took upon Himself our punishment so that we can live
 - John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."
 - Ephesians 1:7 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."
 - 1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
2. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the anger of an offended person and being reconciled to them.

D. Love

1. Why is the punishment for sin eternal separation from God?
 - To separate those who love God from those who don't
2. Why can't people work off their sins and graduate to heaven?
 - They don't love God
 - Matthew 22:36-37 Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
3. Those who love God want to be with Him in a loving relationship forever. Those who do not love God do not want to be in a loving relationship with the God of the Bible and He cannot force them to do so.

E. Lord

- Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
1. 'Lord' means to give our lives to Jesus and live as He wants us to.

F. Resurrection

1. We need a living Savior who can conquer death.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:17 "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."
 - John 6:40 "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

G. The Result

- ...you will be saved (Romans 10:9)

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H. Colonel Story

V. Conclusion - Why is Jesus the Only Way?

- A. Relationally, true repentance is necessary to establish a relationship with God.
- B. Legally, God must punish sin and the punishment for sin according to God's Law is death.
- C. Jesus stood in our place and took our punishment upon Himself.
- D. Therefore, salvation is available to those who love God by repenting of their sin and trusting in Jesus as Lord to receive their legal pardon.

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Lesson Two: Why Share Jesus

Why Share Jesus?

God commands Christians to share the hope they have in Jesus Christ.

1. Christians should be able to explain and defend the Gospel. First Peter 3:15 states, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,....”
2. Christians are Christ’s representatives to reconcile others to God. Second Corinthians 5:20 states, “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”
3. Christians have been commissioned to make disciples. Matthew 28:18-19 states, “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,....’”

In addition, Christians desire to share Jesus. Consider the following based on love:

1. God loves us and Christians are to love others.
 - 1 John 4:11 “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”
2. Sharing Jesus with others is a loving act.
3. Therefore, Christians *desire* to share Jesus.



Or consider the following based on the Holy Spirit:

1. Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19a “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you,....”
2. The Holy Spirit desires to testify about Jesus.
 - John 15:26 “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”
3. Therefore, Christians desire to share Jesus because of the Holy Spirit within them.

Let us look at two examples to help us see this more clearly:

1. A person is having surgery and wants their Christian relative to explain how to go to heaven. What is the Christian’s response? “Sorry, but I don’t feel like it?” No.
2. A person is to have surgery and his Christian relative believes that he will not go to heaven if he were to die because he is not truly saved. What is the Christian’s response? “I don’t feel like it?” No, the Christian still *wants* to share. There may be some apprehension in sharing, but that does not eliminate the Christians *desire* to share Jesus.

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Difficulties

Let's face it – sharing Jesus is not easy. If it were, everyone would be doing it, but in reality, few are. If you are going to teach this lesson, you probably will not have enough time to review all the following points at one time. Simply choose the difficulties that are most relevant to your group.

Let's look at some of the difficulties that Christians face:

❖ *I don't know how to share the Gospel.*

1. Read First Peter 3:15. What does this mean?
 - “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”
2. This study will help you learn to share the Gospel.

❖ *It is not necessary for me to speak up - my life is my witness.*

1. Where did you get that idea from?
2. Read Romans 10:14 & 17. What do these verses mean?
 - Romans 10:14 “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”
 - Romans 10:17 “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”
3. Yes, our lives are a witness in at least two ways. First, the life witness of a Christian can effectively *push* people away from the Gospel but cannot *proclaim* it. Second, the life witness of a Christian can *earn* a hearing of the Gospel but cannot *explain* it. Therefore, Christians need to do both, to “walk the walk and talk the talk.”



❖ *I don't talk about my faith - it's a personal matter.*

1. Where did you get that idea from?
2. The biblical and logical evidence previously given in the introduction shows that God expects Christians to share *and* that they have the desire to do so.

❖ *Isn't claiming Jesus is the only way to heaven arrogant?*

1. Either Christians are sadly mistaken that Jesus is the only way to heaven or are indeed correct.
2. If correct, it is merely a truth statement.
3. If incorrect, then the appropriate response is not to call Christians arrogant but to show them the truth.

❖ *The Bible says not to judge.*

1. When taken in its full context, the passage that people claim says not to judge actually says *to* judge.
2. Read Matthew 7:1-5. (This passage is against hypocritical judging. Verse 5 encourages Christians to judge with the purpose of helping others).

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- “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”
- ❖ *Isn’t it intolerant to say that Jesus is necessary for salvation?*
 1. Many today define tolerance as “acceptance.” If this is true, are people who don’t accept the teachings of Jesus intolerant?
 2. Properly defined, tolerance is to tolerate, which means to put up with something that one does *not* accept.
 3. What is intolerant is not to allow Christians to share Jesus when done so with gentleness and respect.
- ❖ *I am not gifted to share. I am not able.*
 1. Read Philippians 4:13. What does this mean?
 - “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”
 2. While being gifted helps, it is not necessary. The Bible commands all Christians to share and would not do so if all are not able to or if being specially gifted were required. For example, not all Christians have the gift of mercy, but that does not mean they are not to show mercy to others?
 3. The next lesson will help teach you how to share.
- ❖ *It is not necessary for me to share - someone else will do it.*
 1. Read Luke 10:2. What does this mean?
 - “He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”
 2. Do you know what happens when everyone thinks someone else is doing something? Nothing. How often has someone shared the Gospel with your unbelieving relatives and friends? Probably never. Why? Because few Christians are doing it. It is necessary for you to share because you may be the only person that someone will ever get to hear the Gospel from.
- ❖ *I am not responsible. Sharing Jesus is the pastor’s job.*
 1. Where did you get that idea from?
 2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20. What does it mean?
 - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”
 3. All Christians are called to share – both pastors and lay people alike.



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❖ *I may be rejected.*

1. What is the worst that can happen?
2. What is the worst that can happen for an unbeliever?
3. Read Luke 6:22. What does this mean?
 - “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.”
4. Christians are blessed when they share Jesus because no matter what the outcome, they are obedient to God and have allowed His love to overcome their fears.
5. Love puts others first. It risks rejection for the benefit of others.



❖ *I cannot speak up – I am afraid.*

1. What is the worst that could happen?
2. Fortunately in most countries today the fear of death for sharing Jesus is nearly zero. But we all die and what happens to those who die without Christ? What about fearing for the eternal penalty for people who will die without Jesus?
3. Read Philippians 4:13. Can God give us the ability to speak up?
 - “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”
4. Read 1 John 4:18. What does this mean?
 - “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”
5. Read Second Timothy 1:7. What does this mean?
 - “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”
6. Most Christians deal with fear by remaining silent, but the problems are fourfold.
 - God hates it. God’s desire is for the Gospel to be shared, not silenced.
 - The devil loves it. The devil’s will is fulfilled when Christians remain silent.
 - Unbelievers like it. They do not understand their need for the Savior and often do not want to hear about Him.
 - Christians dislike it. They *desire* to share but instead they yield to their fears.
7. We have a choice: to let the devil have his way with us in fear or let God have His way with us in love. We can step forward in faith to share Jesus, knowing that God will never let us down.
8. Overcoming fear is a challenge and opportunity to show our love for God and others as well as to become more like Jesus.

❖ *I am afraid I will say the wrong things and push people away from Christ.*

1. What will happen if all Christians think this way? (Nobody will hear the Gospel)
2. Silence is never the solution (read Romans 10:14).
 - “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”
3. Christians are to share from a motivation of love with gentleness and respect (1 John 4:18; 1 Peter 3:15).



Why Jesus?

4. Do not be pushy and you will not push people away.
 5. What is the worst that can happen if you share with gentleness and respect?
- ❖ *I am not a perfect Christian. I don't feel worthy.*
1. Who is perfect? Read Romans 3:23. What does this mean?
 - “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”
 2. It is precisely because we are imperfect that we all need a Savior.
 3. It is easiest to share Jesus when our lives match the message of the Gospel.
 4. If there is something specific in your life which is preventing you from sharing Jesus, ask God and others to help you overcome it.
- ❖ *Despite all that has been said, I still don't have any desire to share Jesus.*
1. While the desire to share Jesus is not part of the Gospel:
 - The greatest commandments for a Christian is to love God and others (Matthew 22:37-39). Sharing Jesus is a loving act towards God and others.
 - When a person becomes a Christian, they receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers Christians to obey God's commands, one of which is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19).
 - Matthew 7:16 states, “By their fruit you will recognize them.” People talk about what they love. Sport fans talk about their sports and parents talk about their children. Should not Christians have at least a minimal *desire* to talk about their Savior?
 - Second Corinthians 13:5 states, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?” What does it mean?
 2. If you are leading a small group, invite your members to talk with you privately concerning their salvation if they have any doubts or questions.

Conclusion

There is a saying, “Nothing worthwhile comes easy.” Sharing Jesus is not easy but very worthwhile. Grab hold of your desire and love for God and others to overcome that which inhibits you from sharing Jesus. Many of the difficulties will disappear after the next lesson which teaches how to share Jesus in a way which is simple, biblical, and effective.



Why Jesus?

Lesson Three: How to Share Jesus

Many Christians fail to share their faith because they simply do not know how. The following approach to sharing the Gospel was born out of many years of learning and training others in popular evangelism methods. The problems were:

1. Proclaiming the Gospel is great but *explaining* the Gospel is even better. Many non-Christians will not receive Christ unless they adequately understand *why* they need the Savior.
2. Many methods require memorizing a long presentation, which has its drawbacks:
 - We lose what we don't use. Methods which require lengthy memorization are ineffective because most people will begin forgetting parts of the presentation and bible verses soon after training ends.
 - Long presentations which involve the Christian doing most of the talking come across as "preachy."
3. Presentations tend to be persuasive. Christians should not try to persuade people into the faith because someone else can come along afterward and persuade them out of their faith. It is better to explain the Gospel using God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to convict and convert.



All we need to learn to share Jesus is to basically take what we have already learned in lesson one and add the *Why Jesus Sharing Card* (you can make one yourself or receive one via a PDF file that easily prints for a donation of any amount) so that memorization is minimized and sharing becomes more effective.

Getting Started

Getting started is often the hardest part. But the following question has served very well to beginning a Gospel conversation with Christians, false-Christians, and unbelievers alike.

Ask: "*Can I get your opinion? Do you think there is one way or many ways to heaven? Why?*"

Possible Responses

1. The person believes Jesus is the only way to heaven but cannot explain why other than 'the Bible says so'. But this still does not answer the question because the biblical authors could have been inspired to write that there are many ways to heaven. So press the point and ask: "*Why doesn't God just forgive sinners without Jesus?*" Very few Christians can adequately answer this question. Since they have already pointed to Jesus and not themselves for salvation, they do not need to review the headings and Scriptures from the *Sharing Card* that show what they already know: they are sinners and need a Savior. So jump to the heading, "What is the penalty for sin" and explain.

Why Jesus?

Why explain the Gospel to Christians? First, anyone can call themselves a Christian. You don't know if they are truly saved or need to hear the Gospel. Second, Christians need to be able to explain the Gospel to be like Jesus but most cannot. You need to do it and help others to do the same. Third, practice makes perfect. Any sharing of the Gospel helps you gain experience. Fourth, explaining the Gospel helps to strengthen another person's faith.

2. The person claims to be a Christian and says there are many ways to heaven. Ask why Jesus said He is the only way to heaven in John 14:6. Continue to explain the Gospel using the headings and Scripture verses on the *Sharing Card*. It may be that the person thinks they are a Christian when in actuality they are not. If they are a true believer, your explanation will help them understand the biblical position and why.
3. A non-Christian claims their own way or that there are many ways to heaven. Explain the Gospel to show the necessity of Jesus for salvation.

How to Use the Sharing Card

The *Sharing Card* is designed to be shared with another person. It can be used extensively or not at all, based on the situation and one's memory. The following is an example of how things might go while sharing with an unbeliever named Pat.

Do you think there is one way to heaven or many?

I think there are many ways.

Why?

Well, God is loving and good and as long as one's good deeds outweigh their bad deeds, God allow them into heaven.

Jesus said He was the only way to heaven? Do you know why He would say that?

No. But I thought Jesus accepted everyone. Where did He say that?

In John 14:6. Would you like to read it (pointing at Sharing Card).

No, that's ok.

Jesus does not accept unrepentant lawbreakers. The Bible says in James 2:10 that if we've broken just one of God's laws it is the same if we broke all of them because our verdict on judgment day will be the same - guilty. Have you kept the Ten Commandments?

Uh, I'm not sure.



Why Jesus?

Well, let us review a few of them and see. But first a preliminary question - what would you call a person who murdered one of your family members?

A murderer.

For just one murder?

Yes.

What if the murderer went before the judge and his defense was, "Judge, I believe you are loving and good and will just let me go." The judge does so and for the next 30 years the person is a perfect model citizen. Are they still a murderer?



Yes.

(Note: the "God is loving and good" is a very popular view . By stating the judge would let the murderer of their family member go free based on this defense exposes how unjust and ridiculous it is).

Once a person is guilty, not amount of time or goodness will erase their guilt. So, have you ever told a lie?

Yes.

What does that make you?

Mmmm? I don't know.

It rhymes with fire?

Uh, a liar?

(This kind of response typically signals that Pat does not realize the seriousness of his sin. When this kind of response is received, based on your discretion, have the person read out loud the verses from the front of the *Sharing Card* or quote them).

Would you read this verse out loud? (finger pointing to Revelation 21:8)

All liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

Have you ever stolen or cheated? What does that make you?

Human.

Why Jesus?

If I stole from you, I'd be a ... thief.

(Have Pat read out loud or quote 1 Corinthians 6:10).

Have you ever used God's name in vain?

Yeah.

This is called blasphemy which is a very serious offense to God. You have used the name of the Judge, whose mercy you need, like a four-letter curse word. God will not hold anyone guiltless who takes His name in vain (quoting Exodus 20:7).

Do you think God punishes the guilty?

Only really bad people like murderers.

Would you read this last verse? (pointing to Proverbs 11:21)

Be sure of this, God will not let the guilty go unpunished.

Do you know what is the penalty for sin?

I don't know.

The Bible says the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (quoting Romans 6:23). In this verse 'eternal life' means being with God and 'death' means being separated from Him.

Who paid our penalty and overcame death?

Jesus?

Yes, Jesus died for our sins to pay our legal penalty and conquered death by rising again (paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

(Many people wrestle with the concept of hell. They do not understand how a good and loving God can send people to hell. Therefore, many reject the idea all together. The following only needs to be explained if the issue arises).



But I don't understand how you can say that God will send good people to hell.

Well, a couple of things. First, I didn't come up with the penalty for sin - God did. Second, God does not send good people to hell - only bad people. Guilty criminals in our society are deemed bad citizens and people guilty of breaking God's laws are deemed bad citizens for heaven. Third, the greatest commandment is to love God (Matthew 22:37).

Why Jesus?

Heaven is where people go who love God. For those who do not love God, they must be separated from Him and pay the penalty for their sins themselves. True love for God is more than mere lip service but true love obeys His commands (1 John 5:3). Do you love God?

Uh, sure, I guess.

Let me quickly explain two essential things people do who love God. First, they genuinely repent, or turn away from, their sins (Luke 13:3). How do you feel when someone apologizes to you but does not really mean it?

Angry.

Yes, because an empty, false apology is typically manipulative, making matters worse than before. Therefore, repentance must be genuinely. The second thing people do to show God they love Him is to make Jesus their Lord. Would you read this last verse?



That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).

What does that mean?

I have to trust in Jesus and believe in His resurrection to be saved.

That is correct. What do you want to do about what you have just learned?

Possible Outcomes

1. **Jesus is Lord** - Receiving Christ is much more than just saying a prayer. First, it is about repentance: confessing sin, being remorseful, and turning away from it to live a godly life. Second, it is about trusting in Christ: that His sacrifice is sufficient to save a person from their sins. Prayer alone does not save but is a good way of communicating to God of a person's desire to be saved.

God, I confess I'm a sinner. Please forgive me of my sins. I confess Jesus as Lord of my life. I believe that He died for my sins and was raised from the dead. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus name, Amen.

2. **Think about it** - Following Christ is a life-changing experience and should be considered carefully. Jesus commanded people to count the cost before following Him (Luke 14:25-35). Determine what issues a person might have and how you can be of help. Encourage them to read about Jesus in the Gospel of John and invite them to your small group, church, coffee or a meal.

Why Jesus?

Some Christians think that a person with reservations should still be pressed to pray the sinner's prayer. This is the view of many well-intentioned Christians but is unbiblical. Luke 14:25-35 should be read and reread until its meaning is understood. Why did Jesus not just say "follow Me"? Search for other passages in the Bible where Jesus was calling people to believe in Him. Does Jesus ever beg, plead, or say "just pray this prayer"? Is it a 'prayer' that saves a person or repentance and trust in Jesus? If a person is talked into a decision for Christ, someone else can come along afterward and talk them out of it. The Gospel is not a product to be pitched. The Gospel is about a love relationship with God.

3. **I'll clean up my life before receiving Christ** - This could mean two things:

- First, they want to be acceptable to God when they receive Him. This is admirable but misguided. God is not asking us to do the impossible. People cannot clean themselves up from their sins. The issue is not just about being clean but "criminal." No amount of self-cleaning nor self-righteousness will ever take away the guilt of sin and make one acceptable to God. In fact, it could make matters worse because God hates self-righteousness. He wants sinners to come to Him, humbled and broken, allowing Him to give them righteousness (justification) and to assist them in becoming more righteous (sanctification).
- Second, this could mean also that there are sins in their life that they are not willing to give up at the current time, which implies that they love their sin more than God. Loving God above all else is the point of making Jesus Lord. If this is how they feel, then they should wait until they can truly love the Savior by sincerely repenting of their sins.

4. **Reject the Gospel** - Determine the reason for the rejection. It may be an objection/issue that can be dealt with. However, it may be that they have a hard heart and are not ready to commit their lives to God at this time.

What do we say when someone receives Christ? "God did it." What do we say when someone rejects Christ? "What did we do wrong?" Perhaps we did not do anything wrong. Christians are not called to talk people into professing Christ. We are called to be faithful to simply share the Gospel. Whether a person says yes, no, or wait to God, we are always successful in His eyes because we have done exactly what He has called us to do – to be faithful in sharing the Good News.

Conclusion

Why Jesus prepares Christians to share their faith while answering the major objections to the Gospel. That:

1. There are many ways to heaven. (Jesus is the only way because only He is able to pay the penalty of the Law and conquer death).
2. Forgiveness is available by just repenting. (There is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood ~ Heb. 9:22 . Jesus shed His blood so that we can be forgiven).



Why Jesus?

3. God doesn't punish little sins. (Rev. 21:8, 1 Cor. 6:10, Proverbs 11:21).
4. God is loving and good and allows most, if not all, people into heaven. (It is because God loves justice and is good that He does not allow unrepentant, unloving, unpardoned lawbreakers into heaven).
5. Why hell? (Heaven is a place for people who love God and hell is the place for those you don't).

Paul stated in Romans 10:14, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" Make or get a *Sharing Card* and you'll "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

Why Jesus?

Lesson Three Outline: How to Share Jesus

I. Getting Started

- A. Ask: *“In your opinion, is there one way or many ways to heaven? Why?”*
1. If they respond that Jesus is necessary for salvation but cannot explain why, ask if they realize that they are a sinner and if so, start with the heading on the *Sharing Card*, *“What is the penalty for sin?”*
 2. If they claim to be a Christian but say that there are many ways, ask them about John 14:6 and explain the Gospel from the first heading on the *Sharing Card*.
 3. If they are a non-Christian, explain the Gospel from the first heading on the *Sharing Card*.

II. Sharing Card

- A. *Have you kept the Ten Commandments?*
- James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.
- B. *What do you call a person who murders? (a murder)*
- C. *Have you ever lied? What does that make you? (a liar)*
- Rev. 21:8, all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.
- D. *Have you ever stolen or cheated? What does that make you? (a thief)*
- 1 Corinthians 6:10, nor thieves, ... will inherit the kingdom of God.
- E. *Have you ever used God's name in vain? (this is called blasphemy)*
- Exodus 20:7 the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
- F. *Are you innocent or guilty of breaking God's Law?*
- G. *Do you think God punishes the guilty?*
- Proverbs 11:21 Be sure of this, God will not let the guilty go unpunished.
- H. *What is the penalty for sin?*
- Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- I. *Who paid the penalty and overcame death?*
- 1 Cor. 15:3-4 ...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day...
- J. *What is the purpose of life?*
- The Greatest Commandment, Matt. 22:37 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
- K. *Our ultimate purpose is to love God.*
- L. *Those who love God will be united with Him in heaven and those who do not love God will be separated from Him in hell.*
- M. *How do we show God we love Him?*
- 1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands.
- N. *What does God command?*
1. *Apologize for our sins*
 - Luke 13:3 But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
 2. *Trust in Jesus as our Lord*
 - Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Why Jesus?

VI. Possible Responses

- A. *What do you want to do about what you have just heard?*
1. Receive Christ. (Help them pray to repent and receive Christ).
 2. Think about it. (Ask if there is anything you can do to help).
 3. Clean up their life before receiving Christ. (Christ will accept them as they are but not leave them as they are. If they refuse to change, they should receive Christ disingenuously).
 4. Reject Christ. (Love cannot be forced and this is their choice).

VII. Conclusion

- A. Why Jesus prepares Christians to share the Good News while answering the major objections:
1. There are many ways to heaven.
 2. Forgiveness from God is available by just repenting.
 3. God doesn't punish little sins.
 4. God is loving and good and allows most, if not all, people into heaven.
 5. Why hell?
- B. You are now prepared to share Jesus
- Romans 10:14, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"
 - 1 Peter 3:15, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,..."