

Effective Gospel Conversations
First Baptist Church Dandridge
February-March 2026

Session One: Before You Go

Our Task: Make Disciples of All Nations

1. **Matthew 28:18-20** – *“And Jesus came and said to them, “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.”*
 - a. **Make Disciples:** According to the Great Commission, Jesus called believers to “make disciples of all nations.” In essence, disciple-making is the process of leading sinners out of a life of sin and into a life of following Jesus, all through the life-changing power of the gospel. (Don’t get the Great Commission and the Great Commandment confused!)
 - b. **Three Participles that Define Disciple-Making**
 - **Go:** The first participle, “go,” communicates movement. Some translate this word, “As you go,” indicating that believers should look for opportunities to make disciples as they go from place to place (e.g., work, school, activities, events, travel, etc.). We should never limit the word “go” to mission trips or outreach events. The idea is that we should be looking for people who need to hear about Jesus as we go about our daily lives.
 - **Evangelism:** The second participle, “baptizing them,” emphasizes the work of evangelism, which is explaining to people the “good news” of Jesus, and urging them to repent and trust him as Savior and Lord. In essence, Jesus is calling believers to have gospel conversations with unbelievers.
 - **Teach:** The third participle, “teaching them,” describes what happens after a person is converted. The church is called to teach them the truths of God’s Word and help them grow in their walk with Christ. A major goal is to help these new believers mature to the point that they are having gospel conversations with others.

Before You Go

1. **Prepare Your Heart and Mind**
 - a. **Pray For Your Heart:** Having effective gospel conversations begins with the right heart. We must have a burden for the lost and a desire to obey God’s call to reach them.

- **Burden:** Matthew records, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send our laborers into his harvest'" (9:36-38). We must see our community through the eyes of Jesus, who could see the forever judgment that awaited those who didn't know him. We must ask God to fill us with compassion for the lost. (isn't that for professionals, like pastors and missionaries?)
 - **Calling:** When Jesus commanded the disciples to "go...make disciples," we must not think he was only speaking to them. Jesus continued, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Therefore, the command to make disciples extends to every believer. We must ask God for the desire to obey his command. (But I don't know what to say....well, learn! Next week).
- b. **Pray for Opportunities:** In order to have gospel conversations we must seek opportunities to share. In God's providence, he places us where we need to be to interact with those who need to hear. Sometimes these are referred to as "divine appointments" (e.g. Jesus and the Samaritan woman).
- **Psalm 37:23** – "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way."
 - **Acts 16:6–10** – "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."
 - **Prayer Fields:** In his book, "Share The Gospel," Tony Payne introduces "prayer fields," which refer to the various people and places that surround us in life (e.g., home, extended family, neighborhood, friendship circle, workplace, school, sports team, hobby group, etc.). We should incorporate these "fields" into our prayers.
- c. **Pray for Boldness and Confidence:** As we obey God's calling and anticipate being led to a person in need, we must pray for God to give us the boldness and confidence to engage them.
- **Acts 4:29, 31** – "And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness....and when they had prayed, the place

in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.”

- **Luke 12:11-12** – “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

2. Understand the Hearts and Minds of Others

- a. **The Allure of the World:** The allure of the fallen world is the attraction that lost people have for all that the world has to offer. Our world tells us that if you want success, joy, and pleasure in life, it comes through wealth, beauty, popularity, success, good health, and recreation. This worldview prevents people from turning to Jesus because they assume he cannot provide a better life than what the world has to offer. In other words, giving up the sinful promises of the world doesn't make sense. In addition, those who have what the world promises don't see a need for Jesus. Therefore, idolatry is a major barrier.
 - **Luke 18:22-25** – “When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, ‘How difficult is it for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.’”
 - **Ephesians 2:2** – “[Unbelievers] follow the course of this world.”
- b. **The Attacks of the Devil:** As we have gospel conversations with unbelievers, the devil will do all he can to prevent them from trusting Christ. He will fill their minds with doubt, confusion, and unbelief. He will create a sense of fear over repenting of sin, reminding them of everything the world has to offer and make it attractive.
 - **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** – “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
 - **Ephesians 2:2** – “[Unbelievers] follow the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”
 - **Matthew 12** – Jesus describes the devil as a “strong man” that has control over a house.

- **Matthew 13:3, 19** – “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell among the path, and the birds came and devoured them.... When anyone hears the world of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.”
- c. **The Antagonism of the Heart:** The most difficult stronghold is the lifeless, sinful heart that keeps unbelievers from seeing their need for Jesus. Everyone is born in a fallen condition, separated from God, with a heart that is rebellious to God’s rule. The human heart doesn’t want to give up control to God.
- **Psalms 51:5** – “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my brother conceive me.”
 - **Ephesians 2:1, 3** – “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins, in which you once walked....in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
 - **Romans 1:18-19** – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.” (e.g. denial of evidence, constant distractions, irrationality, other religions, etc.)
 - **Romans 3:10-12** – “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”
 - **1 Corinthians 2:14** – “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

3. Depend on the Grace of God

- a. **Luke 18:26-27** – “Those who heard it said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ But [Jesus] said, ‘What is impossible with man is possible with God.’”
- b. **Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9** – “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that on one may boast.”
- c. **Prayer:** Let these gospel truths shape how we pray and approach those who are lost.