

Effective Gospel Conversations
First Baptist Church Dandridge
February-March 2026

Session Two: As You Go

1. Turning the Conversation to Christ

- a. **Pre-Evangelism:** One of the most effective means for engaging someone with the gospel is establishing a natural relationship. It doesn't have to be a longstanding relationship, but some type of relationship where familiarity is established and trust is built.
- **Examples:** A fellow coworker, other parents from your child's school or athletic events, your doctor, a repairman, a shop-keeper or check-out person, another patient sitting next to you during medical treatments, someone you cross paths with at a local restaurant or coffee shop, etc.
 - **Engage:** After seeing them on a regular basis and having casual conversations, you will build the familiarity and trust needed to have more personal conversations, especially those pertaining to spiritual matters. It's not impossible to have a gospel conversation with someone you meet for the first time, but it's more natural and helpful when you have a prior relationship.
 - **Action:** Once you identify someone that you have been able to get to know, begin praying for God to open the person's heart for a future gospel conversation. Seek to build the relationship with this opportunity in mind. Be gracious to them, listen to them, invite them to coffee or a meal, etc. In essence, you want to build a sense of love and trust before you tell them about Jesus. While it's not always possible, it always helps.
- b. **The Transition:** At some point, as the Lord leads, seek a moment to transition a normal conversation to a gospel conversation. For some, this might be the most difficult part of the process, because transitioning to spiritual matters can often feel awkward, clunky, and intimidating. However, unless the conversation turns the gospel will never be presented.
- **Don't Self-Censor: Talk About God** – According to Tony Payne, believers are often guilty of censoring their speech concerning spiritual matters. He writes, "When we are with our Christian friends, we often talk quite naturally about the parts of the Bible we're reading, or what God is doing in our lives, or what happened at Bible study last Wednesday, or things we would like to pray for, and so on. Jesus is a normal part of our conversation, because he is the central person in our lives. But in our secular world, we often speak a different language....we self-censor, we edit Christianity and Jesus and church out of our conversation" (Payne, 47-48). Rather, we should be injecting details about our spiritual lives back into the conversation. For example, when someone asks about our weekend, mention

something you learned at church; when someone asks us what we did the night before, mention that we had a Bible study at church, like every Wednesday; when someone asks about our future plans, mention how we are praying for God's direction; etc.

- **Utilize Brokenness:** In "Three Circles Evangelism" (NAMB), a transition is made by discussing God's perfect design and the world's brokenness—the worldwide brokenness that's experienced by everyone because of God's curse against sin. For example, when humans experience sickness, heartbreak, injury, loss, violence, disaster, and death, there is something inside of us that says, "This world isn't right. This isn't the way things are supposed to be." Why do we feel this way? Because there is enough of God's image left in us to tell us that God has something better. So, as people naturally share with us about the brokenness they are experiencing, we have an opportunity to redirect the conversation to restoration through Christ .
 - A person comments to you about work stress, the struggles of parenting, bad health, uncertainty about the future. You can respond by saying, "Where do you usually turn when life feels overwhelming?" "Do you have anything that gives you real peace and hope when things are difficult?" Depending on the answers you can follow with, "What's helped me the most in life is my relationship with Jesus."
 - A person reflects on all the sickness, violence, division, and hate in the world, especially political unrest and conflicts. You can respond by saying, "Why do you think the world is so divided? Why do people not get along?." Depending on the answers, you can follow with, "God has told us in the Bible why the world is so broken. It's all because of our sin and separation from God."
 - A person points out someone's success or accomplishments. You can respond, "Do you think that success is truly satisfying? Why do these people always seem to want more?" Depending on the answers, you can follow with, "The only One who will make us feel complete and satisfied is Jesus."
 - A person mentions upcoming holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Thanksgiving. After discussing their family traditions, you can ask, "Have you ever heard how these holidays came to be, what they're all about?" You can follow by explaining the significance of Christmas and Easter.

2. The Essentials of the Gospel

- a. **Sin/Brokenness:** Once a transition has been made, our goal is to show how the brokenness we experience is due to sin. We not only live in a fallen world that has been cursed with God's judgment, but we ourselves are sinners and deserving of God's judgment. Keep in mind that most people don't think of themselves as sinners. However, ask them to name some sins they've committed. Remind them that it just takes one to keep us out of heaven (James 2:10).

Some think that having a sinful nature is only reflected in those who do things like murder, steal, commit adultery, abuse children, or hurt others with no remorse. But in the most basic sense, a sinful nature is having the desire to rule our own lives rather than being ruled by God. In other words, it's having a rebellious heart and mind that desires to live how we want to live rather than how God wants us to live and finding great joy in controlling our own lives. Therefore, evidence of a sinful nature isn't just found in those who commit the most horrific and harmful sins, but also in those who have impure thoughts, jealous hearts, hateful speech, unloving attitudes, and selfish spirits.

- **Romans 3:10-11** – “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.”
 - **Romans 3:23** – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
 - **Romans 8:5** – “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”
- b. **Jesus/Salvation:** Once a person has been made aware of his or her sinful condition, explain how Jesus is the only One who can make peace between us and God. The gospel is the good news that Jesus lived a perfect life and died a sacrificial death so that by turning to him in faith we receive his righteousness and he removes our sins, thus making us right with God. Through faith, Jesus changes our lives by filling us with the Holy Spirit, giving us a new heart and mind that seeks to obey.
- **Romans 5:8-9** – “But God shows his love for us in that we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”
 - **Romans 10:9, 13** – “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved....for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
 - **John 14:6** – “Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
 - **Acts 3:19-20** – “Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,”