



*Your Guide To Being A*

# GOSPEL NEIGHBOR

*Great Commission + Great Commandment* 

TREASURING JESUS TOGETHER THROUGH MISSION



FIVE POINTS BAPTIST  
TREASURING JESUS TOGETHER

# The Biblical Foundation For Being A Gospel Neighbor

*“And Jesus came to them and said, ‘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.’” —Matthew 28:18-20*

*“And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’” —Matthew 22:37-40*

The passage from Matthew 28 above is known as the Great Commission, while Matthew 22 is often referred to as the Great Commandment. Being a Gospel neighbor means bringing both of these together. This booklet is designed to help you do just that by providing you with practical tips on how you can live on mission in your neighborhood.

As you're getting started, you may feel pretty nervous about this whole idea. That's okay! Many of us feel that way when we begin a new venture. But remember this — As a believer, there is no more rewarding way to live your life, than on mission for God! And one very strategic way to that is by living on mission in your neighborhood!

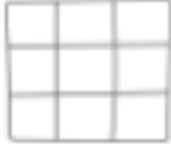
# What's The Goal of Being A Gospel Neighbor?

In the ***Be A Gospel Neighbor*** initiative, our aim is to be faithful in explaining the Gospel from the Bible with the hope of seeing our non-believing neighbors repent and believe. More specifically, we hope to see a multitude of our members do this by reading the Bible one-to-one with a non-believer.

Now before we go any further, it is important to clarify something up front. While we pray that this effort leads to many men and women turning from their sin and trusting in Christ, we also recognize that God has not given us the responsibility to produce conversions. Indeed, we can't make someone trust in Christ. Conversion is a work that God does by His Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10-13). Instead, as mentioned above our task is simply to be faithful in explaining the Gospel from the Bible.

But therein lies an important question: How do we go from having neighbors we may have never met to reading the Bible with them? The graphic below is a snapshot of a strategy that we think will help you bridge those relational gaps.





# Learn Your Neighbors' Names

Before you can share the Gospel with your neighbors, it is a good idea to learn their names first. But even before you do that, it is important to develop a heart of compassion for your neighbors.

## 1. Develop A Compassionate Heart For Your Neighbors

What we mean is that you must see your neighbors as Christ sees them. Of those who are not believers, they are like sheep without a shepherd. In Matthew 9:35-38, it was compassion that compelled Christ to come near to crowds of sinful people. And it is this same kind of compassion which we must pray the Lord would create in our hearts.

When you drive back into your neighborhood at the end of the day, you might only see streets, sidewalks, mailboxes, and houses. But within each one of those houses are real people made in the image of God. People who are going through challenges and heartache known only to them. People who are trapped in patterns of sin that are wreaking destruction in their lives. People who don't know that they are lost and in need of a Savior. Sure, they may seem like they've got it all together on the outside, but we know what the Scriptures teach. We live in a world marred by the fall from Genesis 3. This means we live in a world of sin and suffering. Seek to view your neighborhood through these lenses. And allow that truth to create a deep and abiding sense of compassion in your heart for those who live near to you.

## 2. Go On A Prayer Walk

A great way to begin doing this is by going on a prayer walk around your neighborhood. Meditate on truths like those from Matthew 9 above as you see people wash their car, play with their kids, or cut grass.

## 3. Be Intentional In Striking Up Conversations

When you go to check your mail, look around. If someone is outside, smile and wave. If they're close enough spatially, go over and introduce yourself. Also, Instead of always retreating to the backyard, consider hanging out in the front yard. Pull your grill into the driveway. Throw the ball with your kid in the yard and let neighboring children join in. If a neighbor is working on an outdoor project, offer to help. As you introduce yourself, be intentional in remembering their names. Use the Block Map on the following page to write their name in the home that matches their location. Then take time to pray for them each day.

# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



YOU ARE HERE





# Host A Block Party

The purpose behind hosting a block party is to continue removing relational boundaries between you and your neighbors. A low-pressure event like this is easy to pull off and pays dividends toward creating meaningful relationships with others. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you think about hosting your block party.

## 1. Invite another church member(s) who lives nearby to help you

This is a great way that we can treasure Jesus together through mission. It also provides an opportunity for you to show others the beauty of Christian community up close (John 13:34-35).

## 2. Send out a flyer / invite by mail or door-to-door

Mail or hand out flyers with the day, time, and location. Also make sure they know that children are welcome. Verbal invites, with a hardcopy flyer, are the most effective approach overall. If you are hosting your event outside, you might also consider including a make-up date in case of inclement weather.

## 3. Seek to keep it smaller the first time you host one

A great way to begin is by inviting a few of those on your Block Map. It is a lot better to begin small and then host larger events later as you get the hang of them. If you are in a cul-de-sac, it is best to invite everyone who lives around it so that no one feels left out.

## 4. Determine what kind of block party you want to host

- ▶ Barbecue — Consider asking guests to bring their own meat and you and the co-host(s) provide sides, drinks, desserts, etc.
- ▶ Potluck — Everyone brings a dish to share
- ▶ Catered — Everyone chips in to pay for the cost
- ▶ Picnic — Everyone brings their own meal
- ▶ Chili / Soup Night — Everyone brings their favorite chili or soup (this is especially a good idea in mid to late fall or winter)

## 5. Don't forget about adequate seating, tables, and trash

Make sure you have plenty of tables and chairs. These can be borrowed from the church upon request by church members. If it is an outdoor event, you can ask for people to bring their own chairs.

## 6. Remember that the point of the event is not the event, but to get to know others!



# Invest In A Meaningful Relationship

In a culture that is growing increasingly hostile to the Gospel, the church must adapt its missional strategy away from a program-oriented event-centric approach, to a more incarnational and relational approach. And here's what's so interesting about that: Faithfully engaging the culture in the future means looking to the past and learning from the church in its earliest days. And when we do, here's what we'll see: **Gospel-driven hospitality**.

Acts 2 records the day the church was born. And what an amazing day it was! Peter preached his first ever sermon and some 3,000 people repented of their sin, trusted in Christ, were baptized, and then added to the church (2:41). The next paragraph (2:42-47) describes how the Gospel then transformed their lives individually and collectively. Here are a couple of notable snippets...

**2:42:** "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

**2:46:** "... and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God..."

What was the result of their life together? Verse 47 gives us the answer: "*And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*"

So what was the missional approach of the earliest church? They gathered together corporately for worship and teaching and then they opened their hearts and homes, breaking bread together and praising God. Pretty simple, huh?

This is probably the reason why Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said that pastor-elders must be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8) — Because pastors are to provide an example to the flock. This shows us something of the importance of **Gospel-driven hospitality** in the life of the believer and the church.

Okay, now here's how it works at the heart level of the believer — Christ comes to us as sinners and He openly welcomes us to come to Him.

**"Come to Me**, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." — Matthew 11:28-30 (Emphasis ours)

Doesn't that invitation from Christ just flood your heart with comfort and relief? It is as we meditate on Christ welcoming us that we then find the drive to want to welcome others into our homes and our hearts. And we do this with the goal of giving them the opportunity to also hear for themselves this sweet invitation from Christ. That's what Gospel-driven hospitality is all about.

So, following your block party, intentionally invest in a deeper, meaningful relationship with at least one of your neighbors. Seek to show them hospitality. Care for them. Pray for them. Check on them. Serve them. Let them know that you genuinely love them. And let it be known early and often that you do this because of the love you have first received from Christ — That it is because of the Gospel and its transforming impact on your life that you now gladly give yourself to Gospel hospitality.

The event-centric approach may be attractive to some Christians looking for a new church, but it is the sincere love that believers have for Christ, one another, and the world that will actually cause non-believers to pause and truly consider the claims of the Gospel. As Jesus Himself said:

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” — John 13:34-35*





# Read The Bible One-to-One

*Remember the ultimate goal: **To faithfully explain the Gospel from the Bible.** One of the simplest ways to do this is by inviting an unbelieving friend to read the Bible with you. And once you've gotten to know some of your neighbors and invested in a meaningful relationship with a couple of them, then asking them to read the Bible with you isn't nearly as intimidating. Here are a few ways you can do that:*

## **Get equipped by attending midweek Bible study, beginning August 9th, 2023**

Pastor Andrew will be leading an inductive Bible study on Colossians and giving you the tools you need to learn how to read the Bible with another person.

## **Use Colossians as a starting point**

Since Andrew will be going through Colossians, use it in your one-to-one Bible reading! It is also a great book of the Bible for a non-believer to interact with because of its clarity on the Person and work of Jesus Christ and what it looks like to live in light of the Gospel.

## **Invite your unbelieving friend to the mid-week Bible study and discuss the lesson afterwards over coffee, lunch, etc.**

If you're still a bit nervous about doing this by yourself for the first time, invite them to come to mid-week Bible study. Then set a time each week to discuss what was covered in class over lunch or coffee.

## **Invite your unbelieving friend to come to gathered worship and then discuss the sermon later in the week over coffee, lunch, etc.**

Since we mostly preach expositionally through books of the Bible on Sundays, this provides a great opportunity to invite a friend to come with you to hear the sermon and then plan to discuss how the passage applies to our lives today later that week. This option also has the added benefit of them getting to see the church gathered together as a faith family as we worship God as brothers and sisters.

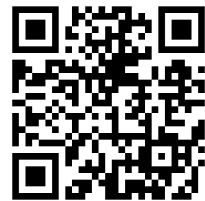
The last two above are different from the event-centric approach of church in that the gathering isn't designed around consumeristic preferences. Instead, as you are investing in a meaningful relationship with a non-believer, you are inviting them to see our family life up close when we come together as a church. And it is the beauty of a faith family centered on Christ that compels genuine seekers to repent and believe the Gospel.

## Use the COMA Method of Bible Study

If you are unable to come to mid-week Bible study, here is a crash course in inductive Bible study that should provide thoughtful ways for you to read the Bible with someone else

- ▶ Consider the **C**ontext of the passage
  - >Who is the author of the passage?
  - >Who was the original audience of the passage?
  - >What was the author's purpose in writing?
  - >Example: Colossians was written by the apostle Paul to the local church in Colossae in order to help protect them from false teaching
- ▶ Make **O**bservations on the passage
  - >What does this passage say about God?
  - >What does this passage say about people?
  - >Is there a promise to be trusted, a command to be obeyed, or a truth to believe?
- ▶ Determine the **M**eaning of the passage
  - >What is the overarching point the author is trying to make in the particular passage you are studying?
- ▶ **A**pply the passage to your life
  - >How should this truth shape or change the way we live our lives today?
  
- ▶ **You can also order a copy of "Christianity Explained"**

This is a great evangelistic Bible study that is designed to be done in one-to-one settings. It will take you and the person you're sharing with through the Gospel of Mark, detailing what it looks like to be a disciple of King Jesus. You can scan the QR code to purchase your own copy.



# What Is The Gospel?

Since the goal is to explain the Gospel, a primer on what the Gospel is about might prove helpful. The word itself means “good news”. More specifically, it is the good news about what God has done for sinners through the work of Christ. And it can be summarized in 4 key concepts: **God, man, Christ, response**. Each of these can be seen in Isaiah 6:1-8.

**(6:1-4: God)** — *1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.*

**(6:5: Man)** — *5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”*

**(6:6-7: Christ)** — *Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”*

**(6:8: Response)** — *8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”*

While this passage is in the Old Testament, it offers us a beautiful foreshadowing of the Gospel. The Gospel narrative begins with a recognition of God’s holiness ([Isa. 6:1-4](#)). It is in light of God’s holy perfection that we come to see our own sinfulness ([Isa. 6:5](#)). Having been made aware of our need, we are positioned to see that it is only in Christ’s atonement that our sins can be forgiven ([Isa. 6:6-7](#)). When we come to recognize this truth, our response is a changed life ([Isa. 6:8](#)).