

The Gospel- our message

"The early Christians were led by the Spirit to the main task of bringing people to God through Christ, and were not permitted to enjoy fascinating sidetracks." - JB Phillips

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Evangelism

The greatest task that faces us as Christians is the task of bringing others to Christ. In the light of eternity, there is nothing more important. Yet most Christians cringe at the mention of evangelism as it has often come to mean 'strangers pressurising people by artificial means to accept something that is alien to them'. We need to rediscover natural evangelism that makes it a joy for us to share our faith with others.

Evangelism is not some technique to learn, it is a way to live.

"I'm not going to suggest a new formula, because I feel as you do that techniques aren't the most effective, especially for friends. Have you ever thought of looking more deeply at the life of Jesus? If you live by the same priorities and values that he had, you will find evangelism happening naturally. It becomes a lifestyle and not a project." - 'Out of the Saltshaker' by Becky Pippert

Becoming a Contagious Christian

A sceptic once commented *"If I believed what you Christians believe I would not rest day or night from telling others about it"*

Evangelism....

ought to be natural

'You are the salt of the earth.....'

Salt makes us thirsty

Salt adds flavour

Salt preserves

If we live our lives in the power of God's Spirit we will make those around us spiritually thirsty.

If we live out our faith with sincerity and boldness we will add a bit of flavour to others lives with our challenges and seemingly radical points of view.

If we live Christ like lives we will hold back the moral decay in society.

However, salt is no use unless it is out of the saltshaker!

'... but if the salt loses its saltiness how can it be salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out'

ought to be personal

'You are the light of the world..... '

Light makes things visible

Light helps us see things as they really are

Far too many Christians have convinced themselves that people are going to gain an interest in Christianity, want it, and somehow figure out how to get it all by themselves.

People need to accept the messenger before they will accept the message.

If we are to have the powerful influence God desires, we need to stop hiding our light and start sharing our lives with those who don't know Jesus. Personal contact is the only way non-Christians can come to understand our faith and believe it themselves.

'.... a city on a hill can not be hidden'

ought to be authentic

'The greatest single cause of atheism today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips then walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.' - Brennan Manning

Our attitudes will either draw people towards a relationship with God or push them further away. Think about it: how we live our daily lives has implications that stretch into eternity.

Seekers have little respect for weak Christians. Deep down they are looking for someone - anybody - to stand up and proclaim the truth and live it boldly. What's stopping us? We have the Holy Spirit to empower us, the Word of God to guide us, the Church to support us. So I've got to ask: Why can't that be us?

'Let your light shine before men that they might see your good works and praise your Father in Heaven'

Credits to Bill Hybels' book *'Becoming a Contagious Christian'* which inspires and guides this section.

Finding the approach that suits you

The greatest impediment for people getting involved in evangelism is that they misunderstand what that entails.

Have you ever done evangelism with your church and just got nothing out of it? You just did it, feeling uncomfortable as you did, and then feeling guilty for feeling uncomfortable? Then after that experience were you put off ever evangelising again?

When we think of an evangelist, what do we think of? Many think of the American tele-evangelist, infamous for scandal and frequent appeals for 'funds'. Others think of the man on the street corner, megaphone in hand, screaming fanatically about the coming doom and the fire and brimstone awaiting sinners. Of course, most of us as Christians don't see ourselves doing that sort of thing, and hence can't see ourselves as 'evangelists'

Most of us have an aversion to evangelism because we see it as involving us being different from who we are. It isn't natural, and hence we get to feeling uncomfortable about it.

Don't you think that God knew what He was doing when He made you? He custom-designed you with your unique combination of personality, temperament, talents and background. He built diversity into His Body so that different parts of the Body could reach out to different sections of society. Until we realise that God doesn't call us all to share His truth in the same way, we'll find ourselves needlessly imitating others and wasting our skills and abilities in things unsuited to them.

In evangelism, **you are free to be yourself!** In fact, only when you are fully being yourself, will your spiritual impact on others be maximised. Underneath are outlined six people in the New Testament who each had a different evangelistic style. As each style is described, ask if that fits you. Learn to work in the design God has given you, and you will find evangelism becoming a joy and bearing fruit as you reach out to those people you are uniquely in a position to reach.

Different evangelistic styles

Peter's confrontational approach

Why did God use Peter as his spokesman at Pentecost (Acts 2)? He needed someone who would be unafraid to stand up right in the middle of Jerusalem and tell the thousands of people there, mostly Jews, in no uncertain terms that they had crucified the Messiah and they needed to call upon Him for mercy and forgiveness. Peter's personality was perfect for the situation and three thousand people became Christians that day.

A lot of people in our world won't come to Christ until someone looks them straight in the eye and tells them directly and strongly that they need Him. If they are to be saved, we need Christians who won't beat around the bush but who'll clarify the Christian position to others and challenge them to do something about it. If this sounds like you, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to know how, when and where to direct your words and challenges, combined with His wisdom, sensitivity and convicting power. Some people with this style: Chuck Colson, Billy Graham.

Paul's intellectual approach

Why did God use Paul with the philosophers in Athens (Acts 17)? He needed someone who could present an ingenious argument built on logic to philosophers who would not have related to Peter's 'turn-or-burn' approach.

In our increasingly secular world, more and more people not only need to hear the Gospel declared but also defined and defended. They want to see that Christianity is more than just blind faith. These people need Christians that will take time to deal with them in their intellectual stumbling blocks to Christianity. If this sounds like you, ask God to teach you, help you to explain His truth to others and to use this to remove barriers to belief in Christ. Some people with this style: Josh McDowell, Ravi Zacharias.

The blind man's testimonial approach

The blind man in John 9 was no sooner healed of his blindness by Jesus than he had to explain what had happened to a hostile audience. He refused to join in theological debate with them and steered away from confrontation. Instead, he spoke from his experience and said "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!". Nobody could argue with that!

There are a lot of people who need to hear a personal testimony from a believer in Christ about what He has done in their lives. They might not respond well to a challenge or an argument, but an account of someone becoming a Christian could influence them powerfully. Effective testimonies don't need to be dramatic, just honest. If this sounds like you, ask God to lead you concerning what details to give in each testimony and to whom to tell it, asking that they might be able to relate themselves to aspects of the testimony that they hear and be drawn to seek for what you have found.

Some people with this style: Dave Cravecky who lost his arm to cancer, Joni Erickson Tada who is quadriplegic as a result of an accident.

Matthew's interpersonal approach

When Matthew became a Christian, he decided to put on a big banquet and invite all of his friends (Luke 5:29). Yet there is no account of the friends being confronted with the Gospel when they got there or embroiled in intellectual argument, nor even of Matthew standing up and sharing his testimony. Instead he just built on the friendships he already had with them, spending time with them and sharing his house and food with them.

Everyone needs someone who will take time to listen to them and build up a level of intimacy with them where they can feel comfortable and loved. In doing this, we are sharing Christ with them, who supremely as their Creator longs to be known by them intimately. Many people need to be in this position of intimacy before they will open up their deepest fears and needs that Christ can help, and need to know the Christian well before they will truly listen to what he or she has to say about God's role in their life.

Are you a warm people-centred person who enjoys long talks over a cup of coffee and patiently listening to others? Do you enjoy opening up your home, sharing a meal, spending time in conversation? If this is you, ask God to give you His love for these people, opportunity to get to know others better and trust in friendship where your friend will respect and listen to what you have to say about your faith. Some people with this style: Becky Pippert and Joe Aldritch both of whom have written books on the subject.

The Samaritan woman's invitational approach

When Jesus spoke to this woman in John 4 she quickly realised this guy was worth hearing, and so she went back to her town and brought her townfolk out to hear Jesus for themselves. She realised that the message was something worth sharing, and that the others in her town might not have an opportunity to hear it if she did not tell them of it.

There are a lot of people out there that would make progress in their spiritual searching if only someone would invite them to a seeker-friendly church service or evangelistic event. In fact, one survey indicated 25% of adults would go to a church service if a friend invited them. Although invitations are a great way for all of us to reach out to people, some people have a knack of getting people to go with them to places. If this is you, start considering who you know that you can invite (family, friends, neighbours, work or club mates) and what sort of events would be appropriate to invite these people to. People with this style tend to stay out of the limelight. Yet they make up the silent heroes who fill outreach events with people who need to hear the message.

Dorcas's service approach

You are probably saying who's Dorcas? Of all the people considered so far, it is safe to say she is the least known. This lady of God, we are told in Acts 9:36, was "always doing good and helping the poor". Specifically, she made robes and articles of clothing for widows and other needy people in her town. It is easy to see how people observing her activity would get a glimpse of her love of Christ that inspired her. In fact, her work was so important that when she died a premature death, God sent Peter to raise her from the dead and put her back in service.

This is the service approach to evangelism. It doesn't get the headlines as much as the other approaches, and it often takes a much longer time to produce spiritual results but it is a vital form of evangelism, because it reaches the people none of the others can. Ordinary acts of service, coming from a love for Christ, can take down brick by brick the walls people put up between themselves and Christianity. If you naturally notice needs in others that other people do not see, and find joy in meeting them, even if you don't get any credit for it, then this is your form of evangelism.

People with this style are almost invariably the unknowns, the quiet types everyone else in the church is convinced is useless as they are clearly not involved in anything. Yet their love and service to others often opens the way to people making commitments to Christ, and their work will be rewarded in Heaven.

Getting to talk about God

Eventually we need to raise topics of faith with our friends. People won't work out the message on their own.

How you raise spiritual topics in conversation will depend upon your personality, the subject matter you normally talk to people about and your own particular style of evangelism. As you read the different methods presented below, take special note of the ones you think you could use and note down any other ones that occur to you as you read. The primary objective is to stimulate your thinking.

The lone prerequisite for beginning these types of discussion is the heart-felt assurance that your life is better now than it was before you knew God and that the lives of others will be better too, even through the tough times. Without this certainty, it will be impossible for you to motivate yourself to pray regularly for opportunities, to watch for them throughout the day and to take time to grasp them when they come. If you sense you need to reaffirm this, begin by listing the benefits you can think of of knowing Jesus. Then review the promises God makes to His children in the Bible. Finally thank and worship Him for the privilege of knowing Him. After doing this, you'll wonder how anyone could pass up God's offer of love and forgiveness!

Methods of talking about God

The direct method

This approach doesn't wait for opportunities, it creates them! You straightforwardly raise a spiritual topic and see if the person is interested in discussing it. While you don't force anyone to discuss matters of faith, you do leave the door open for them to do so.

A possible opener would be something as simple as "*I'm a Christian. If you ever want to ask me about what I believe, feel free to do so.*" Following Jesus' example in John 4, where He grabbed the woman at the wells interest by talking to her about living water, ask for Holy Spirit wisdom and try something that will make people curious to hear more - for example, given most peoples' automatic classification of Christianity as a religion, you could offer to explain to people how Christianity actually differs from religion.

Another possibility is when meeting people, after asking how they are and they replying fine or some such phrase, if the person seems quite open, responding "*Ahh come on, how are you really?*". People often are very impressed at someone taking a genuine interest in their wellbeing, and as they mention struggles or problems, you may have opportunity to relate them to your faith if you have also gone through similar times.

The indirect method

This method takes some element of the discussion topic and turns it to spiritual matters, the church or Christ. There's almost no limits to how this can be done, given a little ingenuity. It's best of course that the initial discussion topic be one of interest to the non-Christian.

Community: when new people move in to an area, it's common to help them with the location of places to shop, or eat, or get particular services. Why not add a query concerning whether they've found a church? Even if they weren't looking, it's a natural lead-in to spiritual conversation.

Work/Hobbies: when discussing with people the area in which they work or the activities they enjoy in their spare time, it's often possible to bring in something Christian or Church related, whether it's telling a sound engineer about the sound system at Church or someone who likes walks in the country about Christian retreat centres.

Nature: when you next consider some of the wonders of creation, consider the opportunities they give to talk about the Creator. Taking a stroll in the park, or knocking around with friends at the zoo, its simple to point at something and say "Isn't the creation of God amazing?". Or just point at a penguin and exclaim, "Boy, God must have had a sense of humour when He created them!"

Music: when sharing your musical loves with others, it's often a lot simpler to bring Christ in than you might think. Much classical work was inspired by composers' Christian beliefs, the Church has created many popular styles of music (eg choral, gospel) and there is a lot of contemporary Christian music in every style from rave to heavy metal that could be shared with fans of that particular style. A lot of modern songs are fascinating to analyse from a spiritual perspective, whether it be U2, Radiohead or the Verve.

Holidays: Christmas and Easter are extremely fruitful times for spiritual conversation. Not only are there usually some programmes on the TV and radio relating to the religious aspect of the holidays, but just in general questions can be asked: "So do you think Jesus was really God's Son?", "Do you reckon Jesus rose from the dead?". You can ask people about what traditions are kept during the holidays at home (such as going to Church on Christmas Eve!), which can often be a lead-in to inviting them to a service at your Church.

The invitational approach

Inviting people to seeker-oriented outreach events can open the door to spiritual conversation even if people decline the invite. Graciously accept their 'No' but gently enquire why they have no interest in exploring Christian claims - have they ever seriously looked at the person of Jesus? Have they rejected their Church upbringing and hence think they have rejected Christianity? Do they have particular stumbling blocks to even considering Christianity?

When making invites, think carefully as to whether the form of event is truly appropriate for the people you are inviting. Are you sure the event will be jargon-free and outsider-friendly? Try to get something tangible to them as a physical reminder of their promise to come along, and of the details of time and venue. Finally, if you can, offer them a lift. Suggest having food or coffee after the event, as an opportunity to ask them about what they thought and learnt from the event and to give them someone to ask further questions to.

Finally.... a few points to keep in mind:

Pray: there is no substitute for consistent prayer, asking both for God's wisdom and compassion in you and openness and interest in your non-Christian friends.

Individuality: try if at all possible to talk to people one-on-one. It removes a lot of possibilities for distraction, and any embarrassment or concern about the opinions of anyone else that is listening.

Curiosity: don't feel you always have to bring up your faith in a direct and sudden fashion. Draw peoples' curiosity like Jesus did at the well - let people ask you what you mean or what you are referring to.

Reciprocity: if you want to tell someone about your beliefs, start by asking them about theirs.

Seize opportunities: it takes courage to initiate spiritual conversations, and we often take the easy way out, omitting to mention our church youth weekend, or that we disagree that someone else's belief. Yet every time we do that, we lose a chance to sow some spiritual seed in seeking hearts.

Don't underestimate interest: we can easily make the mistake of thinking that other people just aren't interested in spiritual truth. Yet in this modern technological and secular society, many people in their hearts are crying out 'Theres got to be more to life than this!', and there we are with the answers to spiritual purpose in this life and the next.

Explaining your faith

Imagine you are given a minute, in which you have to explain to a group of unchurched people what makes someone a Christian. What would you say?

Regardless of whether you are a recent convert or a long-standing Christian, that sort of situation really puts you to the test. Your mind goes blank, you can't decide where to begin and all the time you feel heaven and hell hanging in the balance. It could happen to any one of us yet the Bible tells us to '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)

What people do with the message they hear is up to them. But it's our responsibility to make the Gospel as clear as possible to them.

Click [here](#) for some different models or illustrations of the Gospel.

A very vital emphasis needs to be put on the aspect of personal commitment to Jesus Christ, rather than just going to Church or living a good life. We can't make that decision for others and we can't push them to make it prematurely. We can however make sure they understand there is no other way to God except through Christ.

It's possible the person will have questions for us. We need to help people understand that God isn't angry or afraid of honest doubt from those who are trying to discover the truth about Him. In fact, He invites all who have sincere questions to ask them so that He can clear up others misconceptions and misunderstandings. Of course, it's through us that God does this.

When you get a difficult question, don't be ashamed to tell your friends if you can't give them an answer straight away. Tell them you'll look into it and promise a response at a later time. In fact, seekers are often impressed just that Christians are willing to say that they don't have all the answers (I mean, who has?)

A particularly effective form of communicating your faith is in the giving of your own personal testimony. People enjoy hearing other peoples' stories, particularly when it is concise and well thought out. Coming from your personal experience, it's hard for people to argue with. A few guidelines for a testimony:

Don't give a speech: People want to talk with you, not be talked at by you. It's easy to offload a long monologue onto another person. The best way to avoid this is to ask questions first and listen attentively to the answers. Then when it's your turn to talk, watch the other person to see if they are following you. If they look confused, stop and ask them if what you are saying is making sense to them. Let them explain what they are understanding from you, thus ensuring not only that they feel relaxed and in control of the discussion but also that they are understanding correctly what you are communicating to them.

Give it in parts: People don't want to be overloaded with too much information in one go. When people show an interest in your faith, it doesn't mean they want all the details. Over time, their spiritual interest may increase. But until then, we need to satisfy the level of their spiritual thirst - and then back off.

Be bold: When the moment comes, it's unlikely you'll feel up to it. That's when you lean on the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Just remember, people will respect you for not beating around the bush. They may not say it, but they are looking for something that makes sense and they want to hear it from someone who really believes what they are saying.

Leading another person to Jesus

The goal of evangelism is not just to tell people about Christ. That's just the process that leads to the goal, which is to lead people to Christ.

Forget boating, abseiling, parachute or bungee jumps or even white water rafting. There's no adventure quite like leading someone in making a commitment to Christ. Right there in front of you, invisibly yet assuredly, God is forgiving, transforming, indwelling and adopting your friend. So many believers never experience this ultimate goal of evangelism because they need some pointers on how to finish the process.

Find out where they are at

The first step is to assess your friend's interest, understanding and readiness so that you can proceed accordingly. Do this by applying your explanation of the Gospel to their spiritual situation, asking something like "So have you ever realised your need to make a commitment to Jesus Christ?"

Interest: gauge how your friend responds to the question. If they react in a defensive or a disinterested fashion, don't push the subject. Thank them for letting you explain to them something that means a lot to you and let them know you are happy to discuss it again another time if they have further questions. Your willingness to back off may be the thing to lower their defences. They need to know you may be enthusiastic about your faith but you are not a fanatic who'll shove your beliefs down their throats.

Understanding: if your friend does show interest, then you need to gauge if they have a proper comprehension of the Gospel. Some people will have a clear understanding of the Gospel but aren't ready to respond to it. Others say they are willing to accept Christ but they don't really fully appreciate the message. Most seekers need weeks or months of hearing the Gospel, thinking about it, discussing it before they are ready to respond to it properly. When your friend seems to have got it, ask them to explain it back to you. It's vitally important they know exactly what it is they are being asked to commit to.

Readiness: finally you need to gauge if your friend is ready to make that commitment. Have a spirit of expectancy about you, after all your friend needs to be aware that this decision is the most vitally important one they'll ever make. Encouraging them will foster confidence in them that this is the direction they ought to head in. If they have admitted that they have never made such a commitment to Christ, and you feel certain they understand just what making that commitment represents, it is time to ask them if there is any reason why they couldn't pray with you right now to receive God's forgiveness and become a member of His family. If they say no, ask them why not. Maybe you can work through with them whatever is a barrier to them making that final step.

Ready to cross the line

If your friend is ready, now all that is left is for you to be ready!

Relax - God has used up to this point to lead this person to Him, He is not going to fail you now! Trust that He is going to help you now to lead this person to Christ.

Forget about formulas - Often we feel nervous because we don't know the perfect prayer for leading people to God. The truth is there is no magic formula. All the person needs is an attitude of repentance and a little help from you to make a heartfelt request to God for His salvation.

Pray together - Find a quiet place, making sure you won't be disturbed. As most seekers will be very unsure about praying, they will welcome your willingness to help them and your accompaniment of them will make them more confident later to have you as a witness to the fact that they really did make that commitment to follow Christ. If someone else has been a greater spiritual influence on their life, they may prefer to pray with them. Encourage them to do so as immediately as they can and to call you later to let you know what happened.

Pray aloud - For the sake of clarity both of you ought to pray out loud. Your friend may not be so keen, but remind them that you are with them to help and that they only have to express their feelings to God just the same as they have expressed their feelings to you.

Start the prayer - Lead off in a natural way that will model for your friend how they can talk to God. Begin with thanking God for bringing both of you to this point and asking God to help your friend in making a sincere and humble request for His forgiveness.

Turn it over to them - Now tell your friend to continue the prayer in their own words. Encourage them to focus on two things: their need for God's forgiveness through Christ's death and their desire for God's leadership in their lives. Then just listen. It may take your friend a minute or two to get up the nerve to talk, but then you are likely to hear one of the most authentic and moving prayers you will ever hear. If they do seem to be getting off the point, gently interrupt and lead them back to the core things they need to pray. When they have made those two requests, encourage them to add a little bit of thanks as God will have already answered their prayers!

Close the prayer - You will probably want to thank God too for what He has just done in the life of your friend and also pray for His protection and guidance for this new Christian.

Starting the rest of their life

Of course, the Christian life doesn't end with the 'Amen'. Your friend has just taken the first step into a new life with Christ. Now you need to ensure they get firmly established in their new path.

Celebrate - after someone has taken such a big step, it's only right to take time to rejoice over it. Remind your friend of Luke 15.10, which says that there is rejoicing in heaven over every sinner that repents.

Affirm - also reiterate what it is they have just done. Some people may not feel deeply struck by the emotions you may have expected, but that's not as important as that they meant what they prayed. Feelings will follow, more strongly for some people than others, but God's salvation isn't based on feelings, but on His character. He has promised to forgive anyone who asks, so your friend can be assured that he or she has indeed received God's salvation.

Be realistic - explain to your friend that, like any relationship, they will experience ups and downs in their level of intimacy with Christ and in the level of excitement they will feel about serving Him. What is important is that they persevere through both good and bad times, trusting in Christ in it all.

Emphasise spiritual growth - your friend also needs to know the importance of some basic habits for the sake of their spiritual maturity. Again like any other relationship, the only way to get to know someone is to spend time with them, learning about them, talking with them. If they are to grow in knowledge of their faith and God, they need to take time every day to pray and read the Bible. Daily devotionals and Bible study guides may be useful to someone unsure where to start. Encourage them also to get involved in a Church as soon as possible, and have Christian friends who can encourage, teach and challenge them. Finally, it's never too soon for your friend to start sharing their new found faith with others though they ought to be patient with close friends and family, who may need time to see if the change in them is real before considering the Gospel for themselves.

Provide long term nurture - after providing the foundation, it's easy for us to stop there and assume our friend will somehow now survive on their own. Rather it is vital we commit to meeting with them regularly to chat and pray with them. If we can not, then we ought to find for them a mature Christian who your friend has some affinity with who will be willing to take over in discipling the friend.

Gospel models or illustrations

These illustrations may prove useful in explaining the Gospel to various people, or to give you ideas on how to communicate the message in some other way. The important factor is to choose something that relates to the person you are talking to, given what you know of their background, spiritual past and current interests.

Do vs Done is purely verbal and hence needs no props or visual aids, and is good for use when you need to get across the message very quickly or emphasize the difference between Christianity and religion.

You need to recognise the difference between Christianity and religion. You see, a lot of people think they are the same thing but they are not.

Religion is spelt DO, because it consists of the things people do to try to somehow gain God's forgiveness and favour. The problem is, you can never know when you've done enough. It's like being a salesman who knows he must meet a quota but doesn't know what it is. Worse yet, the Bible tells us in Romans 3.23 that we can never do enough. We will always fall short of God's perfect standard. Thankfully that's not all.

Christianity however is spelt DONE, which means what we could never have done for ourselves, Jesus Christ has already done for us. He lived the perfect life we could never live, and He willingly died on the cross to pay the penalty we owed for the wrongs we've done. A real Christian is someone who has trusted in what Christ has done on their behalf, freeing them from religion and assuring them of God's love, forgiveness and aid in their life.

The Bridge graphically shows people their predicament and God's solution.

We matter to God. He made us and He wants to have a relationship with us.

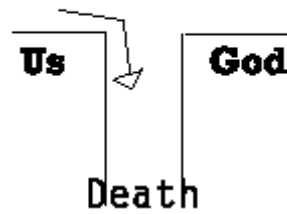
Us God

We have rebelled against God. Both actively and passively we have all disobeyed Him. And our disobedience has separated us from Him, and broken off the relationship.

Us God

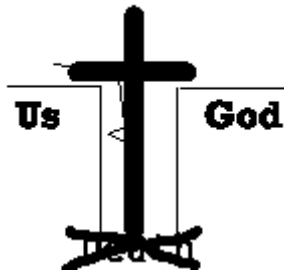
To varying degrees, we are all aware of our distance from God. And so we try to find ways to get back to Him, whether by doing good works, or attending religious services, or exploring spiritual things like the New Age or the occult. But the Bible makes it clear none of these things can restore that relationship with Him. Our attempts will always fall short. Furthermore, the sins we have

committed need to be punished and the penalty we owe is death, which means physical death as well as spiritual separation from God in eternity.

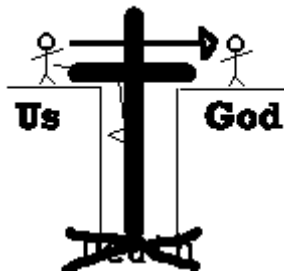


At the moment the picture looks pretty bleak. However the good news is that we matter to God. In fact, He loves us so much that He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He provided a bridge over which we can find His forgiveness and restore our relationship with Him. He built it by coming to earth as one of us and dying on a cross to pay the death penalty we owed. The bridge is the cross.





That represents the central message of the Bible. That's what God wants us all to understand. But it's not enough to just know about this or even agree with it. We've got to act upon it. God wants us to move over to the other side. We do that by humbly admitting to God that we've rebelled against Him and need His forgiveness and leadership. That simple act of trust and obedience results in our sins being pardoned and our debt being paid. Our relationship with God is firmly re-established because we are immediately re-adopted into His family.



Some final questions to consider:

does every section of the illustration make sense?

are there any sections that you want to discuss further?

where in the drawing are you?

do you want to cross the bridge?

The Roman Road involves the person seeing the message straight out of the Bible.

Make sure you have a Bible ready and look up these verses for yourself so that you can see it is what the Bible indeed says. They are all in Romans, which is in the New Testament after the Gospels and Acts.

Romans 3.23 *'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'
According to this, all of us have sinned against God. This includes not only big sins such as rape and murder but stuff like lies, cruelty, insensitivity towards others, losing your temper, cheating, lustfulness, envy and self-centredness. If we are honest, all of us are guilty of these sort of things from time to time.*

Romans 6.23 *'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'*

According to this, those things we have done wrong have earned us a penalty. The penalty is death. But that's not the entire verse. It goes on to refer to a gift. God has offered us a gift of eternal life. We can freely receive God's forgiveness and His pardon from the death penalty that we owe. The penalty has been paid for by Jesus' death on the cross. And like any other gift, we can't earn it, we can only receive it. To find out how, let's go to the next verse.

Romans 10.13 *'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'
See how simple it is to receive the gift? All we have to do is recognise the fact that we've sinned and stand under penalty of death and then call out to God humbly for His forgiveness and the new life He's offering us.*

The Football Illustration is good for sports fans who need to be convinced their moral efforts can never gain them salvation.

Imagine a new honour being offered to top football players. Lets call it the 'The All-Universal Hall of Fame'. The prestige and rewards of being inducted are astronomical. And there are only three requirements and they are easy enough to understand.

First, the player must play consistently for at least five consecutive years. Secondly, they must play error-free ball. That's right - no errors ever. Thirdly, they must score at least one goal in every game they play. Just do those three things and you're automatically assured induction into the All-Universal Hall of Fame!

Simple? Yes, and obviously impossible too. This is what the Bible says about trying to earn your way into heaven. Romans 3.23 makes it clear that no matter how hard we try, we'll always fall short of God's standard. In fact, James 2.10 says 'For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.'

Thank God that what we could never do for ourselves, He has already done for us. Jesus came to earth, and in effect, played error-free ball and scored a goal every game. Like a relief player who is substituted for us, He lived a perfect life on our behalf and then died to pay the penalty for our sins. And all we have to do is receive Him and His gift.

The Aeroplane Illustration is good for helping complacent seekers and nominal church goers understand it's not enough to merely give lip service to God or go to Church

Imagine someone who wants to travel but only ever goes as far as the airport. You can learn all about the physics of flight, know which airlines have the safest record, pick the best craft to fly in, reserve your flight, drive to the airport, go to the gate, check the cockpit crew's credentials, but it all gets you nowhere unless you actually get onto the plane!

Knowledge alone won't get you anywhere. You have to act on what you know. You have to board the aeroplane, trusting that it'll take you where you want to go.

Similarly, it's not enough to know all about Christianity. You can study until you are an expert, go to Church, even get involved in the ministry, and not have a relationship with Christ. You finally have to take a step of faith and 'get on board' by receiving the forgiveness He purchased on the cross and entrusting your life and future to Him. That's what it means to become a real Christian.
