

Crossing the Barriers

EVANGELISM COURSE



Crossing the Barriers: A 12-Lesson Study on Evangelism (Study Guide)

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Welcome

The word *evangelism* puts a knot in the stomach of many Christians. Paired with a misunderstanding of what the Bible teaches on the subject, this fear inclines many to avoid sharing their faith, thinking they can leave it to a special, gifted few.

That's why we're so glad you've chosen to explore some of the most foundational, biblical truths about evangelism. *Crossing the Barriers* is designed to give you the confidence to share your faith by reinforcing your understanding of the Gospel, teaching you what evangelism is, and equipping you to navigate the many barriers that seem to get in the way.

By God's grace, as you listen to the twelve messages in the corresponding sermon series (also called *Crossing the Barriers*), you will learn what it means to faithfully proclaim the message our King has given us. Remember that, as Alistair says, "evangelism is the privilege and responsibility of every member of Christ's body. You can't say, 'This is an elective course,' can't say, 'That's not a course I'm taking.' We're *all* in it!"



FIND ALL 12 MESSAGES AT
[TFL.ORG/CROSSINGTHEBARRIERS](https://tfl.org/crossingthebarriers)

USING THIS GUIDE TO
HELP YOU

Share Your Faith

This study isn't meant to prepare you for a test. Rather, as you study the Scriptures, it ought to help you become "equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). As you begin, make up your mind from the outset that you will actually share the Gospel with others.

Tips for before You Begin

- Are you using this as a group study? Consider having an informal meeting or conversation to talk about one another's
 1. current understanding of evangelism,
 2. past challenges and successes in sharing the Gospel, and
 3. goals and expectations.
- Familiarize yourself with the study's structure.
- Tap the + on the *Crossing the Barriers* series page to add it to "My Library" for easy tracking and access while you're online or using the Truth For Life mobile app.
- Do you prefer listening or reading—or both? All of the messages have both the audio and the transcripts available for free.
- Pray fervently. If your heart resists the idea of evangelism, ask God to change your heart. If you are unaware of opportunities to evangelize, ask God to open your eyes. Pray also that God prepares the hearts of unbelievers you know so that they will be receptive to the truth of God's Word.

WHAT YOU'LL BE

Learning about Evangelism



The implications of these truths are far-reaching, and they ought to instill in us a renewed sense of dependence upon God and an increased confidence in God, which will be demonstrated largely in our prayers.

ALISTAIR BEGG

- 01 What Is Evangelism?**
- 02 Evangelism: God's Part, Our Part**
- 03 Understanding Our Message**
- 04 Examining Our Motives**
- 05 The Master's Plan for Evangelism**
- 06 How to Share Christ with Someone — Part One**
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- 11 Reaching the City for Christ**
- 12 Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God**

HOW TO

Use This Study

This guide can be completed individually or together with a group. When working as a group, you'll find it most beneficial for each person to listen to the lesson's message and answer the corresponding questions individually before coming together to discuss your answers. Feel free to make the study work best for you by spending additional time on particular sessions or relistening to desired messages.

EACH LESSON HAS

Three Learning Phases

Each session in this study corresponds to a sermon from Alistair Begg and follows a three-part outline.

01

Session Overview

| ⌚ 5 – 10 mins.

This phase begins with a summary statement or commentary on the sermon designed to acquaint you with the material for that session. You'll then review key terms and themes that are touched upon in the sermon. You may want to revisit these terms and themes during phases 2 and 3.

02

Listen & Learn

| ⌚ 30 – 45 mins.

Listen to or read the sermon and complete the fill-in-the-blank* and short-answer questions to help you process the main ideas. You may find it helpful to read the transcript found below the audio message on the sermon's webpage.

03

Prayer & Response

| ⌚ 5 – 10 mins.

This phase begins with a key quote to reiterate one of the main points of the lesson, followed by a question for personal application and a prayer prompt. Spend time considering and praying about how God is calling you to respond to what you've learned.

*Fill-in-the-blank answers can be found at the back of the study guide.

SESSION

01

What Is Evangelism?

“

It is a serious matter to distort or to fiddle with the Good News in any way at all. If it's God's Gospel, then we better tell it God's way.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

01 | What Is Evangelism?

Although some people are peculiarly gifted in evangelism, the Bible is clear that all Christians are called to evangelize. For many of us, this can be a daunting prospect, but it is actually a supreme privilege whereby God allows us the opportunity to work with Him in the lives of others. The key is knowing that the power is in the Gospel itself, not in our ability to articulate its great truths.

Key Terms and Themes

to evangelize — *euangelizo / euangelizomai*

This verb is used more than fifty times in the New Testament, including twenty-five times by Luke and twenty-one times by Paul. Its essential meaning is to announce or proclaim good news.

the Gospel — *euangelion*

This noun, which means “the good news,” occurs more than seventy times throughout the New Testament.

to proclaim — *kerusso / keryssein*

This verb is used as commonly as the verb *to evangelize*, appearing sixty-one times in the New Testament. The underlying picture is that of a herald or town crier who sounds the trumpet, conveying the news from a king.

the proclamation — *kerygma*

This word is used to indicate the preaching/proclamation of the Gospel.

Listen & Learn

01 | What Is Evangelism?

Five Features of the Gospel

The Bible describes the Gospel as having at least five features. Using Alistair's teaching and the Scripture references as helps, identify each.

1. It is the Gospel of the _____ . (Matt. 4:23; 9:35)
2. It is the Gospel of _____ . (Mark 1:14; 1 Thess. 2:2, 8-9)
3. It is the Gospel of _____ . (Mark 1:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:4; 9:13)
4. It is a Gospel for _____ . (Mark 13:10, 16:15; Rom. 10:11-13)
5. It is a Gospel that must be _____ . (Mark 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 15:1-2)

A Definition of Evangelism

Alistair shares the following definition of evangelism from J. I. Packer: *To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus to sinful people in order that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they may come to put their trust in God through Him.*¹

How can this definition of evangelism give you confidence when you share your faith?

¹ J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961), 37-38, 40. This definition is derived from Packer's language and comments throughout the cited pages.

The Nature of Evangelism

Scripture deals extensively with the nature of evangelism. Read the statements below along with the corresponding referenced verses. Then answer the questions provided.

1. Evangelism is the normal life of the healthy church and can never be regarded as an optional extra (Acts 4:31). Further, when we consider the absence of appeals by the apostles to the churches in the matter of evangelism, it seems that evangelism was assumed, operating without special techniques or programs. (Compare Gen. 1:28 and Matt. 28:19-20.)

How might it look for evangelism to be a normal part of the life of a church rather than it being relegated to a mere program or optional extra?

2. Evangelism is a privilege and responsibility for all believers (Mark 16:15; 1 Peter 3:15). While the gift of evangelism is unique to some (Eph. 4:11), the responsibility of witnessing falls to all without exception.

How do the verses in Mark and 1 Peter cited above support the fact that all believers without exception are responsible for evangelism?

3. Evangelism is supremely God's work in people, in which He enlists human cooperation (Ezek. 38:23).

Why do you suppose that God chooses to enlist us in the work of evangelism? What does this truth imply about our relationship to Him?

4. Evangelism is essentially a process rather than a program.

In what ways is this reality liberating? In what ways is it challenging?

Prayer & Response

01 | What Is Evangelism?

“ Jesus said to the apostles, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation’ (Mark 16:15, NIV 1984). This truth helps us to realize that it is our responsibility to cross the barriers of class, to cross the barriers of creed, to cross the barriers of culture, irrespective of the cost involved.

A L I S T A I R B E G G

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Write down the name of at least one unbeliever for whom you will commit to pray throughout this study. Pray that God will grant you courage, love, wisdom, and zeal in sharing your faith. Pray that God will soften your friend’s heart. Pray for evangelistic opportunities.

SESSION

02

Evangelism: God's Part, Our Part

“

It is God's unique prerogative to bring about the new birth.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

02 | Evangelism: God's Part, Our Part

God, the creator of all, does not need any help to save people—but in His perfect plan, He has chosen to enlist human cooperation. As we prepare for evangelism, Alistair teaches us what God alone can do and what role we play in the process. Understanding this distinction relieves us of pressure, exhaustion, and our sense of responsibility for the salvation of others and enables us to glorify God as we see His hand at work.

Key Terms and Themes

conviction of sin

An essential ministry of God the Holy Spirit is that of conviction (John 16:8). The unconverted man does not accept that he is sinful. God alone must reveal this truth to people.

the new birth

Taken from John 3, this term refers to one's spiritual conversion. God brings about the spiritual new birth in believers by revealing Jesus and drawing people to Him for eternity, thereby destroying death's dominion. (See also John 1:12; Rom. 6:9.)

Listen & Learn

02 | Evangelism: God's Part, Our Part

God's Part

In order for us to fulfill our responsibility to be obedient to the Great Commission, we must first be clear as to what God alone can do and what we therefore cannot do. Using Alistair's teaching and the Scripture references as helps, explain God's part in evangelism.

1. _____ of sin is the work of God the Holy Spirit. (John 16:8)
2. God alone can give _____ to men. (Acts 5:31; 11:18)
3. Only God can _____ men and women to Christ. (John 6:44)
4. God alone can _____ Jesus. (2 Cor. 4:6)
5. It is God's unique prerogative to bring about _____ . (John 1:13; 3:3-5)

Our Part

We must be clear about what God requires of us by way of preparation and cooperation in the work of evangelism. Read the statements below along with the corresponding referenced verses. Then answer the questions provided.

1. To prepare for evangelism, we need to open our life to God and be cleansed from all known sin (Ps. 51:10; 2 Tim. 2:20). In addition, we must be living in the fullness of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:4).

Why is it essential that you confess and repent of sin prior to engaging in the work of sharing the Gospel? How should you pursue the cleansing Alistair talks about?

2. If we wish to be effective evangelists, we must know the Scriptures (Col. 3:16) and understand the human predicament without Christ (Matt. 9:36).

What role does your knowledge of the Bible play in evangelism?

3. Our responsibility is to make God's Word known (Acts 16:14; Rom. 10:14-17). We should urge unbelievers to seek God (Isa. 55:6-7; Luke 13:24), to repent (Matt. 4:17; Acts 17:30), to be converted (Matt. 18:3), and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31).

What are the dangers of failing to proclaim the *full* Gospel?

Prayer & Response

02 | Evangelism: God's Part, Our Part

“ Even if I were utterly selfish, and had no care for anything but my own happiness, I would choose, if I might, under God, to be a soul-winner, for never did I know perfect, overflowing, unutterable happiness of the purest and most ennobling order till I first heard of one who had sought and found a Saviour through my means. ... No young mother ever rejoiced so much over her first-born child, no warrior was so exultant over a hard-won victory.¹

C. H. SPURGEON

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul-Winner; or, How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour* (New York: Revell, 1895), 231.

SESSION

03

Understanding Our Message

“

Our responsibility in going out into the world is not to commend ourselves, not to commend our brand of Christian understanding, but it is to commend and to present Jesus.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

03 | Understanding Our Message

“You don’t seriously believe that, do you?” This question can stymie the well-intentioned evangelist if we are not clear about the message of the Gospel and confident about its validity. The essential facts of the Gospel may vary in presentation but should always remain consistent in content. It is therefore imperative to have a solid grasp of these foundational truths before we can expect any meaningful response to our efforts.

Key Terms and Themes

spiritual blindness

The Bible describes the unconverted person as spiritually blind, unable to see the light of the Gospel in a clear, saving sense (2 Cor. 4:4). Satan is said to have brought about this blindness in unbelievers, making necessary God’s work to open their spiritual eyes.

justification

God’s work in declaring a sinner righteous through the work of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). In justification, God not only wipes our slate clean of sin but also credits us with the righteousness of His Son.

Listen & Learn

03 | Understanding Our Message

Essential Facts about Jesus

It is vitally important that we have a solid grasp of the essential facts of the Gospel, which must be declared before we might expect or anticipate any kind of meaningful response. Using Alistair's teaching and the Scripture references as helps, identify the essential elements of Christ's person and work.

1. The central truth of the Good News is _____ Himself. (Col. 1:28)
2. Christ's purpose in coming into the world and dying upon the cross was to _____ sinners. (Matt. 1:21)
3. Christ's coming and death were no accident but were part of God's eternal _____. (Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:20)
4. Christ's _____ was the Father's declaration of Jesus as His Son and evidence of His satisfaction with His work. (Rom. 1:4)

Essential Facts about the Unconverted

In addition to understanding the essential facts about Jesus, we need to know the essential facts about the unconverted.

The Bible uses vivid imagery to describe the state of the unconverted: they are dead in trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1), their unbelieving minds spiritually blinded (2 Cor. 4:4). Jesus taught that they are spiritually lost, enslaved to their sin (Luke 19:10; John 8:34).

What do these descriptions of unbelievers reveal about their spiritual condition, and how might these truths affect how you evangelize?

The Benefits Promised by the Gospel

Equipped with the essential facts about Jesus and the unconverted, we must also understand what the Gospel does in a person when he or she receives its message.

1. In light of our sin, the Gospel promises reconciliation with God (2 Cor. 5:18–21), justification before Him (1 Cor. 1:30), and deliverance from condemnation (John 3:18; Rom. 8:1).

Reflect on your own salvation. In what ways did God reconcile you to Himself and deliver you from sin’s grip?

2. God not only deals with sin's effects on the individual but also saves that person into His family. The Gospel grants belonging to the people of God (Acts 2:41; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10) and membership in the His kingdom (Col. 1:13).

Why is it significant that God's salvation is not merely individualistic but also corporate in nature? What role should the church play in the discipleship of new believers?

3. Upon conversion, God gives His people the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 2:12). The believer has also the future hope of eternal life (John 3:16) and the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 6:14).

How might speaking of believers' future hope help win an unconverted person to faith in Christ?

Prayer & Response

03 | Understanding Our Message

John Stott, commenting on one of the reasons the church does not evangelize, states, “Our tongue is tied and our lips are sealed because we lack either a thorough knowledge of the gospel or a conviction about its truth or both. There can be no evangelism without an evangel, no mission without a message.”¹

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

¹ John R. W. Stott, *Our Guilty Silence* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1967), 28.

SESSION

04

Examining Our Motives

“

God is interested not simply in *what* we're doing, but He is extremely interested in *why* we are doing it.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

04 | Examining Our Motives

Since God looks at the heart, it is important that we regularly examine the motives of our hearts as well. Regarding evangelism, there are many spurious, unbiblical motives that must be rejected. With Paul as our example, we see that we are most useful to the Lord when motivated by a desire to see God glorified and a sincere concern for the welfare of others.

Key Terms and Themes

Christian obedience

Our love for Jesus is revealed in our obedience to His commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3). God's compelling influence in our lives brings us to a place of joyfully doing what He says.

spurious motives for evangelism

Several motives for evangelism are misguided or disingenuous and must therefore be rejected. Examples include the following: a desire for peer-group acceptance, conformity to external constraints, a perverse satisfaction in pronouncing judgment, a thirst for control over people, and a feeling of pressure to meet a required quota.

Listen & Learn

04 | Examining Our Motives

Love to God and Concern for His Glory

The ultimate motive for our evangelism ought to be love to God and concern for His glory. Read the statements below along with their corresponding referenced verses. Then answer the questions provided.

1. Evangelism is one of the activities that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19). Our emphasis on obedience to God's commands should imply a spirit not of reluctance but of joyful privilege (Acts 5:41).

Why do you suppose people tend to equate obedience with drudgery? How can we guard against this attitude?

2. In evangelism, we tell the world about God's marvelous deeds (Ps. 96:2-3). The apostle Paul was exemplary in this; deep-rooted concern for God's glory fueled his evangelistic zeal (Acts 17:16-17).

Which of God's marvelous works spur in you a zeal to share with others? Why?

Love to Man and a Concern for His Welfare

A second motive for individual evangelism is love to man and concern for his welfare. Believers must take seriously the biblical truth that we should “do good to everyone” (Gal. 6:10).

Our awareness of man’s condition demands that love will issue in action (e.g., see Luke 10:29–37). The impulse to evangelize should be a natural response to the need of our neighbor (2 Cor. 5:14). This was true for Andrew and Philip, for example, both of whom shared the Good News with another upon learning of it (John 1:35–45).

What are some ways that you could bridge the gap between *knowledge* of God and *action* in sharing the Gospel with others?

Paul’s Approach

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul outlined his approach to evangelism. Using Alistair’s teaching and the Scripture references as helps, identify the distinguishing features of Paul’s motives for sharing the Good News.

1. Knowledge of the _____ of God brought urgency and consistency. (2 Cor. 5:10–11)
2. The inner compulsion of Paul’s life was _____. (2 Cor. 5:14)
3. What made it possible for Paul to exercise his own ministry were the _____, the _____, and the _____ of Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17–18, 21)

Prayer & Response

04 | Examining Our Motives

“ The unifying theme is the glory of God. And when God is being glorified, then our worship is in accord with His purposes, and the supreme incentive of our modern evangelism is set in place.

A L I S T A I R B E G G

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

05

The Master's Plan for Evangelism

“

We must not miss the opportunities to become a bridge over which
Christ may walk into the heart of our friends and neighbors.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

05 | The Master's Plan for Evangelism

Many Christians consider evangelism an optional task for a select few. But telling others about Jesus Christ should be a natural activity in the spontaneous overflow of our Christian experience. We are to practice a “holy worldliness” by being vitally involved with the world yet remaining radically different from it.

Key Terms and Themes

the believer in the world

Jesus spoke of contact with the world without contamination by the world. However, we must not mistake identification with assimilation. Christ's life and ministry is our model for doing spiritual ministry in a natural manner.

Listen & Learn

05 | The Master's Plan for Evangelism

Evangelism's Pattern

Evangelism is the normal life of the church and can never be an optional extra. Read the statements below along with the corresponding referenced verses. Then answer the questions.

1. Jesus did not simply state the facts pertaining to evangelism; He also established a pattern for His people to follow (John 17:18; 20:21).

What can these two verses teach us about the pattern that Christ established for evangelism? How would you say the church is doing in following this pattern?

2. John 1:14 tells us that the Word became incarnate—that Jesus Christ *came* as one full of grace and truth. He came in order that the invisible God might become apparent to the world (v. 18).

How should the simple truth that *Jesus came to us* shape how we do evangelism?

3. Jesus prayed that His disciples would be kept in the world but also kept away from the Evil One (John 17:15-16). In other words, we should seek to obtain a balance between being different from the world and remaining involved in it.

What safeguards might we establish to keep us from becoming *like* the world while engaging *with* those in the world?

Prayer & Response

05 | The Master's Plan for Evangelism

“ The evangelism of England ... is a work that cannot be done by the clergy alone; it can only be done to a very small extent by the clergy at all. There can be no widespread evangelization of England unless the work is undertaken by the lay people of the Church.¹

WILLIAM TEMPLE

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

¹ Attributed to William Temple in *Towards the Conversion of England: A Plan Dedicated to the Memory of Archbishop William Temple* (London: Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1945), 36.

SESSION

06

How to Share Christ with Someone Part One



We need to remind ourselves constantly that effective witnessing begins when we're on our knees and not when we're on our feet.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

06 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part One

Christians have a treasure they must share with a world in need—the good news of Jesus Christ. Alistair dispels myths that inhibit effective evangelism and offers practical help in telling others about our hope in Christ. Noting that effective witnessing begins with prayer, we are reminded that Jesus is the soul-winner, through us and with us.

Key Terms and Themes

living in containment

The danger in placing too great a priority on avoiding the world's influence is that it can cause us to err on the side of “rabbit-hole Christianity,” where we become too inward-focused. Our social involvement becomes primarily with church people, and we become preoccupied with our own personal development, thereby putting unbelievers on a figurative island that is hard for us to reach.

Listen & Learn

06 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part One

Myths of Evangelism

One of Satan's favorite ploys seems to be convincing believers that being a faithful evangelist is an achievement reserved for only a select few. Read the three myths about evangelism below. Then respond to the questions.

Myth #1: *You must be a certain kind of believer to evangelize.*

Alistair points out that while there were vast differences between Jesus' disciples, they had one thing in common: their Teacher. How does reflecting on the various personalities that we find in figures throughout the Bible and church history encourage you?

Myth #2: *You must be a walking Bible dictionary.*

“We need to remind one another,” Alistair says, “that what we’re doing is not trying to introduce people to an ideology which we’ve come to embrace but to a person we’ve come to love.” Evangelism isn’t primarily about what you know but about whom you’ve come to know and love. Why is that comforting and encouraging as you try to share your faith?

Myth #3: *You are personally responsible for sharing your faith with everyone.*

While believers are not bound to turn every conversation into an evangelistic one, many are more likely never to try. Where on this spectrum do you find yourself? What else has considering these myths taught you about yourself?

Prayer & Response

06 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part One

“ Lord Jesus, at the beginning of this day I ask for grace to see the opportunity. And secondly, I ask for grace to be able to take it.

ALISTAIR BEGG

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

You're now halfway through the study. How has God been at work in your life as it relates to evangelism? Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

07

How to Share Christ with Someone Part Two

“

So many people have rejected Christianity without
ever having understood what it is.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

07 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part Two

How do you communicate the good news of the Gospel with those around you? With Jesus as our great example, Alistair offers six helpful guidelines for sharing our faith with others. As we talk with coworkers or meet people in our community, our approach needs to be flexible and adaptable, with us seeking to connect with them as we share the hope we have in Christ.

Key Terms and Themes

guidelines for evangelism

When sharing the Good News, there are several important guidelines to keep in mind. We should remember to be natural, listening, vulnerable, brave, imaginative, and direct in our personal interactions.

Listen & Learn

07 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part Two

Three Fundamental Truths

Whenever we evangelize, we should have fixed in our minds three fundamental truths that we wish to convey. According to Alistair's teaching, what are they?

1. The bad news of _____
2. The good news of _____
3. The necessity of a _____

Using Romans 6:23, 10:9, and Ephesians 2:1-10 for reference, consider how Scripture describes the importance of each of these three fundamental truths. What language from these passages especially stands out as you think about evangelism?

What are some examples from your life or in the world that demonstrate mankind's condition?

How have you seen God's provision in your own life and in others' lives?

What are the biggest obstacles you have faced when you reach the point of telling someone about the necessity of a personal response to Jesus as Lord and Savior?

Prayer & Response

07 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part Two

“ Not every conversation will yield the opportunity for a clear and concise presentation of the Gospel. However, when it does, we need to be ready to seize it.

ALISTAIR BEGG

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

08

How to Share Christ with Someone Part Three

“

God is sovereign in the way in which He deals in the affairs of our lives and in the affairs of those with whom we may share the Gospel.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

08 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part Three

Friends and neighbors, coworkers and complete strangers—each person in your life desperately needs the grace and salvation found only in the Gospel. But how will they hear? In this message, Alistair outlines step-by-step instructions on sharing your faith in Jesus Christ with others. While style and methodology may vary, these key points must eventually be included in your presentation.

Key Terms and Themes

the human condition

We are born into sin. And *sin* is not merely a word for a bad deed. It is primarily a condition, a state of being for humanity. “Sin,” says the Westminster Shorter Catechism, “is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.”¹ It is an “estate whereinto man fell” that can be properly described as a “corruption of his *whole* nature ... together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.”² Sin, in other words, describes *the way we are*, and it describes *what we do* as a result—and its most basic feature is that it puts human beings at odds with God and His good design.

¹ The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 14.

² The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 18. Emphasis added.

Listen & Learn

08 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part Three

Presenting the Good News

A clear and concise statement of the Good News includes explanations of the following: the human condition (Job 14:1), the divine diagnosis (Rom. 3:23), God's remedy (Isa. 53:6; Matt. 1:21), and one's need for a personal response (Rom. 10:9).

Of these essential elements of the Gospel, with which are you least familiar? Most familiar? How might you take steps toward becoming more knowledgeable in unfamiliar areas?

Preparing to Evangelize

Being now equipped with the essential elements of the Good News, craft a brief Gospel presentation and write it below. Continue praying for short-term and long-term contacts with whom you may share the Gospel.

A Sinner's Prayer

At the end of his sermon, Alistair provided this sample prayer. It may be helpful for you to familiarize yourself with its content so you can bring it to mind when the Lord provides evangelistic opportunities:

“ Dear Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a helpless sinner before You. I've tried to clean up my act so many times, and I fail. I believe that the Bible is true when it says that You are the Savior for my sin. I've considered the revolution that will come should I close with Your offer of salvation. And I ask You to come. Forgive me. Enable me to turn from sin and to turn in faith to You. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Give me a desire for Your Word. Give me a desire to share good news with others. Number me amongst those who are Your own.

Prayer & Response

08 | How to Share Christ with Someone — Part Three

“ When we are least expecting it, least planning on it, least ready for it, least willing to do it, God may choose to intervene and surprise us despite ourselves. We are not the key. He simply gives us the privilege of being a part of what He chooses to do.

A L I S T A I R B E G G

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

09

Evangelism: Dealing with Difficulties Part One*

Editor's Note: Questions 2-4 in the **Listen & Learn section are addressed in "Evangelism: Dealing with Difficulties — Part Two." Consider listening to both "Part One" and "Part Two" and completing sessions 09 and 10 together.*



In evangelism, prayerfulness and humility matter more
than knowing all the answers.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

09 | Evangelism : Dealing with Difficulties — Part One

There will be obstacles in every meaningful endeavor, including our endeavors to share Christ with friends and family. Alistair walks us through some of the common difficulties encountered when telling others about the truth of God's Word, which assures us that while God may use us as instruments to reach others, it is the Holy Spirit who unveils blind eyes to see God's truth.

Key Terms and Themes

the role of Scripture in evangelism

We must remember that the chief purpose of the Scriptures is to bear witness their Author, not to answer people's difficulties. That is also one of our main Christian duties, endeavoring to show Christ from all the Scriptures to those who doubt (Luke 24:27).

the exclusivity of Christ

Based on texts like John 14:6 and Acts 4:12, this doctrine teaches that Jesus is the only way to eternal life. Many sincerely believe that there are many ways to heaven, but that is not what the Bible teaches. The *object* of our faith is ultimately what matters, and that object must be Jesus.

Listen & Learn

09 | Evangelism : Dealing with Difficulties — Part One

This session and the next will speak to eight difficult questions that may be asked in evangelism. Each question will be addressed in turn, with relevant Scriptures and a reflection prompt to respond to.

Question #1: *“You’ve been quoting a lot from the Bible, but why should I accept its authority?”*

There are compelling reasons to accept the authority of the Bible:

1. It uniquely claims to be the very Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. It has an outstanding degree of unity.
3. It contains accurate, fulfilled prophecy.
4. It has been circulated more than any other book in history.
5. It has transcended social, racial, and economic barriers like no other book.
6. It has life-changing power.

Which of these reasons has been most helpful for you, and why? How might you use these points when sharing your faith?

Reminder: The remaining seven questions are taken from the sermon “Evangelism: Dealing with Difficulties — Part Two.”

Question #2: *“What about those who have never heard the Gospel?”*

Scripture declares that God, who is “Judge of all the earth,” is just and fair (Gen. 18:25). It also teaches that not everyone will be saved, nor is there a possibility of salvation after death (Luke 16:19–31; Heb. 9:27). In addition, every person has a God-given moral compass within him and yet knowingly violates God’s law (Rom. 2:12–16). The one who has not heard the Gospel will be condemned for violating his own moral standard. At the same time, there is no indication that anyone apart from Jesus Christ will be saved (Acts 4:12).

How do the teachings on the exclusivity of Christ affect how you view the task of evangelism?

Question #3: *“You’re not suggesting that Jesus is the only way to heaven, are you?”*

In answering this question, we should be mindful to shift the basis of our claim *away* from ourselves and *toward* the claims of Scripture. (Three verses at least are crystal clear in teaching that Jesus is the only way to heaven: John 10:9, 14:6, and Acts 4:12.) Yet we must also stress the exclusivity of Christ with humility.

Why do you suppose this teaching—that faith in Jesus is the only way to heaven—is so troubling to many considering Christianity?

Question #4: *“How can I believe in a God who allows people to suffer?”*

Suffering is not theoretical for most people. Still, though we may not have the whole picture, Scripture provides clues as to why God allows suffering.

First, recall the biblical narrative: God made man good, but man chose to rebel, causing sin and death to spread to all (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12–21). God ultimately redeemed the situation by sending His Son, so that sin and death would be defeated and eternal life would be given to all who believe in Him (1 Cor. 15:55–57; John 3:16).

Second, we must view suffering through the grid of Calvary. At the cross, we see the magnitude of God’s love (Rom. 5:8), the magnitude of our sin (Rom. 6:23a), and the tremendous possibility of healing and forgiveness (Rom. 6:23b).

How could the fact that Jesus Himself suffered pain, loss, and agony be of comfort to a suffering person who is considering Christianity?

Prayer & Response

09 | Evangelism : Dealing with Difficulties — Part One



Genuine questions need to be treated with sympathetic listening and also with convincing answering.

ALISTAIR BEGG

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

10

Evangelism: Dealing with Difficulties Part Two

“

When we're dealing with difficult questions, we need the sensitivity and the wisdom of the Spirit of God.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

10 | Evangelism : Dealing with Difficulties — Part Two

When sharing our faith with others, we can expect to be challenged by their questions and attitudes. Alistair surveys common questions that arise when we share the Gospel and gives helpful responses based on God's Word. He reminds us that the goal is to bring people face-to-face with Jesus, which requires humility, sensitivity, and full dependence upon God.

Key Terms and Themes

the evolutionary hypothesis

Proponents of Darwinian evolution maintain that all forms of life descended from some original form of matter whose origin remains a mystery. This view stands in stark contrast to biblical teaching, which posits that the one true God created and sustains all things.

personal responsibility

The claims of Christ and Christianity demand a personal response. Scripture shows that people must personally believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved (Rom. 10:9).

Listen & Learn

10 | Evangelism : Dealing with Difficulties – Part Two

This session continues working through eight difficult questions that may be asked in evangelism. The remaining four questions will be addressed in turn, with relevant Scriptures and a reflection prompt to respond to.

Question #5: *“Hasn’t science disproved creation and miracles, making Christianity obsolete?”*

It is important to note that there is no scientific proof of the evolution of more complex structures from simpler forms of life as entities. Consequently, both the Christian and the secular scientist operate in the realm of faith to some degree. The Bible offers sufficient data for us to believe its claims. If one refuses the evidence of Scripture, no additional evidence will be able to convince that person (Luke 16:28-31).

In what ways do both believers and unbelievers operate in the realm of faith to some degree? How should this inform your evangelism conversations?

Question #6: *“Isn’t Christianity just a psychological crutch for folks who can’t face life’s challenges?”*

Examine the biblical evidence for this claim: the lives of Peter (Matt. 4:18–22), Matthew the tax collector (Matt. 9:9), and Paul (Acts 8:1–3; 9:1–9) certainly call it into question. None of these three men surrendered their rationality or fortitude in following Christ. Even so, we must remember that our faith is grounded not in subjective experience but in the objective truth of Christ’s resurrection (1 Cor. 15:17).

What is the danger in relying too heavily on subjective experiences and feelings as they relate to your faith?

Question #7: *“I was baptized as a baby, and I’ve attended church a lot. Shouldn’t I be okay?”*

“Churchianity” is not Christianity. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are signposts pointing us in the right direction, but they are not vehicles to take us to our destination. In countering such a claim, it is wise to point out what the Bible says about sin: it is an attitude and a condition, causing the natural man to reject the God of the Scriptures and the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18–25). The natural man is dead in sin (Eph. 2:1). All people without exception need God’s grace and mercy (Eph. 2:4–10).

How is evangelizing the person who thinks he or she is right with God because of personal morality or church attendance in some ways more difficult? What unique problems does this type of evangelism pose that the others might not?

Question #8: *“What about Roman Catholics?”*

In this scenario, the issue is the truth about Jesus. Start positively, acknowledging that this person likely has been catechized, believes in the virgin birth, has a measure of biblical understanding, and believes in the resurrection of Christ.

Alistair turns to John 1:12 as a key verse for interactions with Catholics. What about it may be especially pertinent to such conversations?

Prayer & Response

10 | Evangelism : Dealing with Difficulties — Part Two

“ Our goal is to bring them face-to-face with Jesus—not our church, not our system, not our group, but with our Jesus.

A L I S T A I R B E G G

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

11

Reaching the City for Christ



If we're ever going to reach people for Christ, we cannot be naive concerning the spiritual conflict that we face.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

11 | Reaching the City for Christ

When faced with an entire city of people who don't know the Lord, can one person really make a difference? Alistair describes the apostle Paul's method of evangelism and his trust in God for the transformation of Ephesus. Where there is great opportunity for the proclamation of God's Word, there is often great opposition, but God moves mightily in just such an environment.

Key Terms and Themes

the city of Ephesus

Known as "the Treasure House of Asia," Ephesus was strategically located with regard to trading in the ancient Near East. It was an influential town where the Roman governor conducted legal affairs and the Panionian Games were held. The city was also a criminal haven, because the Temple of Artemis offered a right of asylum. Of all the places Paul visited in his missionary travels, he spent the most time preaching the Gospel in Ephesus.

Listen & Learn

11 | Reaching the City for Christ

Factors in Reaching the City

God moved mightily through Paul's ministry in Ephesus: "The word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily" (Acts 19:20). Using Alistair's teaching and the Scripture references as helps, identify some of the details of Paul's ministry that might suggest a pattern for our own evangelism.

1. Acts 19:8 mentions Paul's proclamation of God's word. He did this for _____ months in the setting of a local Jewish _____.
2. Specifically, Acts 19:8 tells us Paul persuaded them about the _____ of God.
3. As Paul taught in the synagogue, some of his hearers became _____, speaking _____ of Christ and Paul's message. (Acts 19:9)
4. The duration of Paul's ministry in Ephesus was _____ years. (Acts 19:10)

God's Power and God's Deeds

In Ephesus, Paul didn't perform the miracles; God did them through Paul's hands. Then, as God worked through Paul, the devil deceitfully imitated the works, attempting to draw people away from the true Gospel. Read the statements below along with the corresponding referenced verses. Then answer the questions provided.

1. Using Paul to heal men and women, God worked wonders that He alone can do (Acts 19:11). The greater triumph was not the healing of the body but the cleansing of the soul (19:12).

In what ways do biblical examples of divine intervention cause us to consider God's character and work?

2. The devil is a master at imitation. Whenever the power of God is displayed, the Evil One seeks to imitate and twist God's truth (Acts 19:13-16). Paul would later write to the Ephesians that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

What are some defenses for spiritual warfare that guard us against Satan's deceptive tactics?

The Transformation of God's People

We must not be naive concerning the spiritual conflict we face, treating Satan's schemes as mere trickery. That evil produces actual results cannot be denied. At the same time, we ought not be alarmed; the power of the risen Christ pierced the darkness and evil of this world (John 16:33; 1 John 5:5).

When faced with spiritual conflict, what promises of God can we remind ourselves of to be strengthened for the task of evangelism?

Prayer & Response

11 | Reaching the City for Christ

“ How will we reach a city for Christ? In the proclamation of God’s Word, in the demonstrating of God’s power, recognizing that there will be the imitation of God’s deeds, and crying out for the transformation of God’s people.

ALISTAIR BEGG

What might God be calling you to believe or do in response to the truths learned in this session?

Continue to pray for the name(s) you wrote down at the end of the first session. Write down updates and/or additional prayer requests.

SESSION

12

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God

“

No one who ever wanted to become a Christian was
unable to become a Christian.

ALISTAIR BEGG

Session Overview

12 | Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God

Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). Since Christians are called to evangelize, we must ask the question: If God is in control, then what is our role in the process? In the final session of our study, Alistair leans on J. I. Packer’s classic *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* as he helps us understand the balance between human responsibility and God’s sovereignty.

Key Terms and Themes

divine sovereignty

God is in control of the affairs of the universe, including the salvation of sinners. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty is clearly taught in John 6:37–39 (among many other places), where we read that God the Father has purposed to give to His Son those whom He has chosen from all eternity.

human responsibility

God’s sovereignty does not negate our need to respond to the Gospel. All have the opportunity (John 6:35) and responsibility (v. 36) to believe.

antinomy

Two truths that sit side by side as seemingly irreconcilable and yet both are undeniable.

Listen & Learn

12 | Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God

Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

In John 6:35–40, Jesus' teaching emphasizes man's genuine opportunity for belief, man's responsibility for unbelief, God's firm grasp on His people, God's sovereign purpose from eternity, and man's responsibility to respond in faith.

What is the antinomy—the two side-by-side truths—that we must consider as it relates to salvation?

1. God is _____.
2. Mankind is _____.

What We Must Do

Overemphasis on human responsibility can lead to us regarding ourselves as responsible for securing converts. Overemphasis on divine sovereignty can lead us to lose sight of our responsibility to evangelize. Read the statements below along with the corresponding referenced verses. Then answer the questions provided.

In discussing these doctrines, we must remember that man's responsibility for his actions and God's sovereignty in relationship to those same actions are equally real and ultimate facts (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23).

Do you tend to emphasize God's sovereignty or man's responsibility more in your approach to theology? Why do you suppose that is the case?

God's Sovereignty and Our Duty to Evangelize

The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not remove the necessity of evangelism. God's way of saving sinners is to bring them to faith by bringing them in contact with the Gospel (Matt. 22:1-14).¹ Additionally, God's sovereignty negates neither our urgency in evangelism (Luke 13:3-5)² nor the genuineness of a Gospel invitation (Rom. 10:13).³ Man remains responsible for his reaction and reception to the Gospel.⁴

In what ways should God's sovereignty in grace promote our urgency to evangelize rather than hinder it?

¹ J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961), 97.

² Packer, 98.

³ Packer, 100.

⁴ Packer, 104-5.

Prayer & Response

12 | Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God

“ God’s sovereignty does not close down evangelistic zeal; it gives it power and purpose.

A L I S T A I R B E G G

What are the main ways that God has transformed your understanding and practice of evangelism over these twelve sessions?

Now that you have reached the end of this study, what have been your three greatest takeaways? How do you plan to continue to put what you’ve learned into practice? And what or who do you need to continue praying for?

Answer Key

Session 01

1. kingdom
2. God
3. Jesus Christ
4. all nations
5. personally received / believed in

Session 03

1. Christ
2. save
3. plan
4. resurrection

Session 07

1. man's condition
2. God's provision
3. personal response

Session 12

1. sovereign
2. responsible

Session 02

1. Conviction
2. repentance
3. draw
4. reveal
5. the new birth

Session 04

1. judgment
2. love / the love of Christ
3. power, ministry, death

Session 11

1. three, synagogue
2. kingdom
3. stubborn, evil
4. two

Next Steps

Consider inviting someone who's new to Christianity or exploring the faith to join you in the companion study to this one, *The Basics of the Christian Faith: A 13-Lesson Survey*. If you don't feel equipped to lead a new believer through that material, consider going through it yourself with a more mature Christian before you begin this study. Visit tfl.org/christian-faith.

To see more studies from Truth For Life and Alistair Begg, visit truthforlife.org/studyguides.

Provide your feedback about this study at letters@truthforlife.org.