# *Leader* guide

## In this lesson:

SCRIPTURE

Acts 17:16-17

CORE PRACTICE

Authenticity (John 13:33-34): I know and understand biblical truths and transfer these truths into everyday life. Who I am on the inside and outside is a pure reflection of Christ and His Word.

TAKE HOME TRUTH

1. Get visible, because visibility is credibility.
2. Be repeatable, because routine is dependibility.

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# The Matter of Frequency

## OVERVIEW OF THIS LESSON

In this week's lesson, we dive into Part 2 of our three-part miniseries on intentional evangelism. Last week we saw how our perspective matters. Todd defined evangelism like this: "it is simply a natural conversation about supernatural conversion. This is actually how the Bible presents evangelism, as a natural conversation about supernatural conversion. Let's put it even simply: it's just sowing seed. It's talking about what matters most."

In thinking about evangelism, we saw that our perspective matters…our theological perspective. Todd gave us five statements to reflect on this week concerning our theological perspective and how it impacts our evangelism efforts:

1. God delights in and deserves glory from his creation and he does so primarily through the saving of his people by the Gospel.

2. Satan deceives people. He blinds them to the Gospel so that they do not worship God and instead they worship themselves and other things. The result is endless idols.

3. This is sin/unbelief, and it separates us from God. Idols fueled by Satan's deception, rob worship and glory from God temporarily, and can destroy people eternally if those idols are not exposed and exterminated.

4. The Gospel does this. It exposes and exterminates idols, frees people from sin, and it empowers people to give God what he rightfully deserves and joyfully delights in: worship and glory.

5. When we evangelize we are prioritizing God's glory, showing compassion for man's condition, and battling Satan's tactics and schemes.

This week, we will focus on the importance of frequency. For many, this will require a paradigm shift. For generations, evangelism has been equated with "gospel presentations" (e.g. The Romans Road, or Four Spiritual Laws, or any number of predefined presentations). Gospel presentations are one way—I talk, you listen; Gospel conversations are a dialog. We will learn the difference between the two this week as well as the key signs to look for in a conversation that can help us connect the gospel message naturally and effortlessly while in the midst of a conversation.

## MEMORY VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Acts 17:17

## INTRODUCTION

**Where is a place you love to meet people for conversations? Starbucks, Cracker Barrel, an activity like hunting?**

**Looking back at your notes from this week's sermon, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?**

*Make sure you ask this question this week. It gives people the opportunity to discuss questions or issues that come up beyond the written questions. People's responses can often lead into one of the questions in the "Digging Deeper" section. Also, some weeks this question will result in a lot of discussion, other weeks, not so much.*

## READ THE TEXT (ACTS 17:16-17)

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

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## DIGGING DEEPER

*In this section, feel free to develop your own questions to help guide your group's discussion. Below are some suggestions. Remember, if you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have to time to discuss every question. You may start with one that catches your attention so you don't run out of time. For example, it's not odd to start with Question #6, then go to Question #5 and if you have time come back to Question #4.*

*NOTE: Portions of this lesson are adapted from Alvin Reid, Sharing Jesus without Freaking out: Evangelism the Way You Were Born to Do It (Nashville: B&H, 2017).*

**What are the differences between a gospel presentation and a gospel conversation?**

| Presentation | Conversation |
|---|---|
| Starts in our Christian worldview | Starts in the other person's worldview |
| Assumes they have some knowledge of the gospel | Assumes they don't know the gospel |
| Focuses on the lost person as a sinner | Focuses on the *imago Dei* (image of God) in the sinner |
| Effective with people with a church background | Effective regardless of church background |
| Focuses on immediate decision | Hopes for a decision but appreciates the process involved in reaching people today |

*In a gospel conversation the witness seeks to do more than get an unbeliever's attention enough to present the gospel to them. It seeks to do more than share the gospel as briefly as possible with people we hardly know; it starts in the worldview of the unbeliever, shows them truth they already affirm, and then moves from that truth to show the gospel, as Paul did in Athens in Acts 17, starting with an unknown god and with creation.*

**What are the key "connecting points" to listen for in a conversation?**

*Take a moment and think about a specific conversation you had this week with a coworker, neighbor, or friend. More than likely, in the course of the conversation they either brought up some concern or they talked about a hope or dream.*

*Over the next few days listen to the things people you meet talk about. We converse regularly—either in serious conversations or in casual chitchat—often about our pain or our passion. In such conversations we can easily talk about Christ.*

*Alvin Reid shares an example of how listening for ways to connect with someone's pain or passion can easily flow into a spiritual conversation:*

> *I fly a lot. I recently got on an airplane and took my typical aisle seat, this time in the very back row. A young lady named Alex who was*

*carrying a bag full of tennis rackets sat next to me. A lot of my trips have collegiate athletes on them because of all the universities in our area. She told me she was a freshman at a major college in the Midwest, returning home from a tennis tournament. We chatted a bit; I told her I was a professor and a minister who worked with young people like her. She told me her major was communication, focusing on using technology to communicate information. I asked her a question I love to ask young people, "If you were not limited by money or geography, where would you go and what would you do?"*

*She replied immediately. "I'd work for Pixar," she said with a smile.*

*"Why Pixar?" I asked.*

*"They are the best!" she replied.*

*We had a natural, not forced, conversation, moving from her passion for excellence in her career (I shared a similar passion for teaching) to the gospel. She grew up in church and admitted to losing her focus on spiritual things after arriving at college. I told her she was pathetic and had to get right with God or she would burn. Okay, I didn't exactly say those words, although I urged her to yield all her life to Jesus. She didn't trust Christ, but she admitted her need and thanked me for taking time to help her see how she had lost her way. One of the simplest ways to introduce Jesus naturally in a conversation grows out of talking about one's passion.*

**What are the three things people can tell about us in a conversation? Spend some time this week observing this in people you meet. Did the checkout guy at the grocery store (or your waiter or a casual acquaintance) care about you as a person?**

*Sharing Christ conversationally makes sense when we remember three vital things people can tell about us in a conversation:*

1. People can tell if you care about them. They don't care how much you know about God until they know how much you care about them.

2. People can tell if you believe what you are talking about. We will not convince every person we meet who does not know Jesus that they must believe in him, but let them not doubt that we believe.

3. People can tell if the hand of God is on your life. There is something very powerful about a simple, honest conversation about Jesus. Our lives and our lips testify to our faith.

*Matt Carter, pastor of the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas, shares this example about a friend he had in high school. Matt was quite a rebellious young man when he met Jesus at age eighteen. His friend immediately dropped their relationship. He was uninterested in this new Jesus Freak Matt had become. Years later Matt discovered this friend now lived in Austin. Matt prayed that God would help him find this friend. The next day (no kidding) an elder in his church texted him to say he was at a dinner party and this guy (Matt's old friend) was there. He got Matt the man's number and they reconnected.*

*Matt took him to dinner. They caught up about life, and his friend asked Matt about his church and his life. Matt gave his testimony. When Matt looked at his friend and simply said, "Jesus changed my life, and gave me peace I had*

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*never experienced," the friend broke into tears. "I so want to have peace," he said. At the time of writing this he has not trusted Christ, but he is very open to talking more about this with Matt.*

*If Jesus is the greatest thing that ever happened to us, he should come up in conversations. Not forced, not structured, but simply because he is the biggest deal in our lives.*

**What is the "Project Warning" and how can we watch for it in gospel conversations?**

*There is a grave danger, I believe, that Christians must be on the look out for when it comes to evangelism, and I call it "The Project Warning." This digs into the very heart and motivation for why you do what you do, so it's a dangerous place to dig, but it is necessary.*

*What is the "project warning"? Simply put, it is when we treat people as projects rather than as people. Nothing creates a barrier between two people more than when it becomes clear that you are pursuing a relationship only to accomplish a goal or objective, and as soon as that objective is accomplished, you're ready to move on to your next "project."*

*How can we tell of we are guilty of seeing people as projects? A key difference between someone who is looking for his/her next project and someone who is truly interested in relationship can be found in the nature and connection of the friendship.*

1. *Are you out looking for people only to present the gospel to or are you sensitive to your existing friendships and relationships and looking for ways to connect those conversations with the gospel?*

2. *Are you ready to move on when you sense a dead end as far as the gospel is concerned, or do you see more value in someone than simply an easy score for a gospel conversation?*

*These are difficult questions, because they get to the heart of our motivation, but I believe it is worth being cautious in this area.*

*Too many Christians have used relationships simply to share the gospel, and when that becomes difficult, they abandon the relationship and look for the next easy target. That is not cool, and I believe this kind of evangelism is more obvious to others, especially our "targets," than we would like to think it is.*

**Can you think of a current example of how you or someone you know is using simple conversations to engage others in faith dialogs?**

*There could be many that surface in your group discussion, but here's a good one from our partner in Australia, Russ Matthews. Russ has started using the medium of film to dialog about faith. Here's a good example from a current film, Darkest Hour.*

*After providing a brief overview and review of the film, Russ connects some of the themes of the lesson to a biblical leader—Nehemiah. Here's how he does it:*

*Most of the celebrated leaders throughout history may not be perfect, but despite their flaws, they rise above themselves to impact history. In our current portion of history there seem to be few leaders to celebrate which leaves people to look to the past for examples. A great example of an unassuming leader who rose the challenges set before him is a servant of a king who became the saviour of a nation. The story of courage, considerable opposition and the right man at the right time in history. Nehemiah's is a fascinating study of leadership and exceptional focus on achieving the goals set before him that rivals and possibilities exceed that of Winston Churchill. Nehemiah's story.*

*Notice how he doesn't launch into a "Romans Road" presentation of the gospel, but he connects a relevant theme with a biblical narrative that opens the door for conversation. Brilliant.*

*We could all do this. It just takes a little "out of the box thinking" to see the connections that exist all around us.*

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## NEXT STEPS

Questions to consider as you continue to reflect on what you learned this week:

- **Take Action:** Over the next seven days, pay attention to how often and in what ways people talk about their pain or their passion. This includes anything from trivial matters to serious, life-altering events. Write down several examples. Reflect on these instances and how the good news of Jesus can speak to these points of passion or pain. Practice connecting that person's situation to Jesus.

- **Take Courage**: Even though we're two weeks into our study, I'm still not asking you to stand on a street corner wearing a cardboard sign saying Jesus is coming! We're taking small and deliberate steps here toward a lifestyle of evangelism. Spend this week continuing to look for opportunities and ways to share Jesus in everyday conversation with others. As you observe if others genuinely care about you, also observe if your actions reveal if you care about others.

Work to memorize this week's memory verse: Acts 17:17 - So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

Our Core Practice this week is **Authenticity** (John 13:33-34): I know and understand biblical truths and transfer these truths into everyday life. Who I am on the inside and outside is a pure reflection of Christ and His Word.

Remember to use the daily Bible reading plan as part of your walk with Christ, taking the time to reflect on each passage and what it means for your lives.