

Gospel Fluency Worksheet

Introduction

Far too often we don't share the gospel because we aren't sure what to say, so we don't share anything. Others of us have tried to use a formula when sharing the gospel, but we soon realize this approach isn't effective with real people who have unique stories and face complex situations. Jesus and his followers in Scripture stayed faithful to the one true gospel but adapted their approach for various contexts and individuals (Mark 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Col. 4:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:15-16, 21-22). We can too, if we follow the Spirit, learn from Scripture, and truly listen to the stories of people we interact with. We can grow to be more fluent in sharing the gospel.

Increasing in gospel fluency is like becoming fluent in another language. One may hear and speak the language at a basic level initially. That's a good start. However, fluency requires immersion in the language of a culture so the new language is used naturally in all types of settings. A person who is fluent not only grasps what is spoken to him or her, but also express their heart, thoughts, and can converse and nuance their choice of words so that the one being spoken to grasps their meaning with real understanding. This takes time. Fluency increases over time with both study and engaging in conversations with real people in real life situations. Gospel fluency is similar.

Each of us really can become more "gospel fluent" when sharing Jesus with others. ***Gospel fluency is...giving biblical direction for life situations with gospel motivations.**

The following worksheet is designed to help you increase in gospel fluency. It starts with an approach and questions that allow you to adapt as you get to know all types of people you desire to share the good news with. These questions help you into a better understanding of what a person's "gods" or heart "idols" may be. These are what one may cling to instead Jesus and what he offers those who repent and trust him. There is a summary of this and also an appendix with more details.

Worksheet

Person you're seeking to love & share the good news with: _____

Story...What do you know about this person's story and what he/she is facing?

good – What can you affirm in this person that displays God's image? (Of course God's image in him/her is distorted by sin and will never merit salvation, but it can still be affirmed)

gaps – What is the gap in this person's life? (e.g. wounds, issues, or hurts he/she desires to fill or fix, etc.)

gods – What is the heart "idol" this person is attempting to save him/herself with? What does he/she believing will bring life or fill their gap? (It can be a religious or irreligious idol; it may be something generally acceptable, but that he/she is making an "ultimate thing")

gospel – Which aspect of the gospel will sound like really good news to him/her? What does Jesus offer that is better than their god, given their gap?

Repent	Believe
gods	The Gospel
functional idols...	"in Christ" I am...
-Power idol	-Not condemned
-Approval idol	-Adopted as God's child
-Comfort idol	-Justified
-Control idol	-Received & celebrated over by God
-Helping idol	-Filled in him
-Dependence idol	-A temple of the Holy Spirit
-Independence idol	-Sealed & given the Spirit as a guarantee
-Work idol	-In God's kingdom now
-Achievement idol	-Redeemed
-Materialism idol	-Forgiven
-Religion idol	-Reconciled to God
-Individual person idol	-A branch in the Vine
-Irreligion idol	-No longer an enemy with God
-Racial / cultural idol	-Dead to sin, but alive to God
-Inner ring idol	-Called according to his purpose
-Family idol	-At peace with God
-Relationship idol	-Assured God is for me
-Suffering idol	-Chosen
-Ideology idol	-Sent by Jesus as the Father sent him
-Image idol	-A Spirit-empowered witness
-Others...	-A member of Christ's body with purpose
(List from T. Keller Probing Idolatry doc)	-God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus
	-Confident of sure hope of resurrection
	-Others...

(See Appendix for questions about idols & more new identity metaphors with biblical texts)

* The term "gospel fluency" is borrowed from Jeff Vanderstelt; Definition and worksheet created by SENT Network.

Helping another respond to the gospel personally

The gospel includes historic events, but needs to be personalized and calls for a response. The good news is Jesus -- his birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, sending the Spirit, and future return. The gospel events are true, but need to be become real for an individual. He/she will need to personally repent of their functional idols that have become an “ultimate thing.” Instead one must trust Jesus, and the good news in him.

Be compassionate, yet bold. Ask your friend if he/she is willing to turn from their attempts to save him/herself through a functional god (idol). Encourage him/her to trust in Jesus and the good news offered in him by grace.

Cases & Situations to Practice Gospel Fluency

We want to become people who are increasing in “gospel fluency.” **Gospel fluency is...**giving biblical direction for life situations with gospel motivation.

Here is an example of bad, better, and best (gospel fluent) response.

John and Jane

John and Jane are a couple you know. John has hurt his wife Jane by saying something in a group setting recently. She can't forgive him. He's tired of her being overly sensitive again and caring way too much about what people think, that it wrecks her.

Bad – give bad direction that is unbiblical

- ➔ Just move on. Forget it. She will forget.
- ➔ Better – give biblical direction with wrong motivations
 - Her: Better forgive him because bitterness will wreck you.
 - Him: Better reconcile because divorce is messy, costly, and bad for your image at work.
 - Gospel Fluent – give biblical direction AND gospel motivation
 - Her: Forgive, even as God in Christ has forgiven you (Eph. 4:32; Mt. 18:21-35)
 - Him: Reconcile. God initiated and reconciled with you through cross of Jesus. Be reconciled. And, our unity as believers tells that story to others (Mt. 5:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:16 ff. & Jn 17:20-23).

Use the worksheet on page 2 as you consider the case of “Jack.” Consider the questions and how you would speak to Jack with gospel fluency.

Jack

You and your group throw a backyard cookout to invite people who don't know Jesus. During the cookout you are get into an extended conversations with Jack, 31 years old, married with two young kid.

As you talk, you learn that Jack grew up in the suburbs near your city in a family that was successful by many standards. Jack confides in you that it wasn't all that great. He says his Dad (Company Pres.) worked way too much and played too much. He suspected him to be a closet alcoholic that kept it together for long hours at work, but was pretty distant from him growing up. In fact, Jack can't

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remember ever having heard his Dad affirm him. Jack shared, 'Nothing we ever did was good enough. He always tried to motivate us with criticism and by comparing us with others.

Jack says that despite the fact that his grown siblings haven't cut it in life (two siblings on drugs, the other just barely gets by...all their marriages tanked except his), he has been able to overcome and be successful. Jack mentions he was student government Pres., varsity athlete, attended an Ivy business school, and that his current business is thriving. "Well, until recent setback with the economy, but that will improve," says Jack. He proudly says it's been his inner drive to succeed and to provide the nicer things for his family that has made the difference for him. Jack does admit that he hasn't had as much time with his two children as he'd like, but says 'its hard to do it all when your building a successful business.

Jack says his wife has been bugging him about going to church again. He admits it may be good for his kids, and confesses he feels guilty about not attending Mass. He also confesses to an inner conflict that he knows he should get back to church because he needs all the help he can get from God right now at work, but Sundays are the one day he has for boating and golfing with his buddies.

Jack, while a bit surprised that he has disclosed all this, goes on to say, what do you think?

Scenarios

How would you respond to someone in these follow scenarios. How would you speak with gospel fluency? Assume each individual is open and wants your help with the following:

Scenario #1 Over-working to make a name and prove him/herself

Scenario #2 Using people to get love vs. self-giving love for others

Scenario #3 Using power or position to control or manipulate others

Scenario #4 People-pleasing to be accepted

Scenario #5 Hoarding money because of fearful anxiety

Scenario #6 Feeling superior & staying distant from the poor / marginalized

Scenario #7 Unwilling to accept or invite correction from others

Scenario #8 Practicing sexual immorality to fill their longings for intimacy

Scenario #9 Not giving generously, but selfishly consuming too much

Scenario #10 Indifference to moving toward lost people with the good news

Appendix

20 piercing statements to probe my idols (from Tim Keller)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...

1. I have power and influence over others.” (Power Idolatry)
2. I am loved and respected by ____.” (Approval Idolatry)
3. I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” (Comfort idolatry)
4. I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of ____.” (Control idolatry)
5. people are dependent on me and need me.” (Helping Idolatry)
6. someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” (Dependence idolatry)
7. I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone.” (Independence idolatry)
8. I am highly productive and getting a lot done.” (Work idolatry)
9. I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work.” (Achievement idolatry)
10. I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.” (Materialism idolatry)
11. I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities.” (Religion idolatry)
12. this one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me.” (Individual person idolatry)
13. I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality.” (Irreligion idolatry)
14. my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior.” (Racial/cultural idolatry)
15. a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in.” (Inner ring idolatry)
16. my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” (Family idolatry)
17. Mr. or Ms. “Right” is in love with me.” (Relationship Idolatry)
18. I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt.” (Suffering idolatry)
19. my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power.” (Ideology idolatry)
20. I have a particular kind of look or body image.” (Image idolatry)

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New Identity In Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

Everyone who repents and believes the gospel receives a new standing in Christ. However, we all have some bad “tapes” running through our head and heart that keep us in bondage to the old. Comprehending and experiencing the good news of our new identity in Christ is one key to freedom and lasting joy. Truly grasping our true identity that’s ours by grace helps us view ourselves as God sees us and this fuels gratitude and love for God. It also frees us to actively love others because we know we have been loved without earning or deserving it. We love because he first loved us. *(Study guide adapted from Living Free in Christ, by Neil Anderson)*

In Christ...

Rom. 8:1, 2	I am...	Not condemned
Rom. 8:28	I am...	Called according to his purpose
Rom. 8:31ff.	I am...	Promised God is for me
Rom. 8:35ff.	I cannot be...	Separated from the love of Christ
2 Cor.1:21, 22	I have been...	Sealed & given his Spirit as a guarantee
Col. 3:3	I am...	Dead & my life is hidden with Christ in God
Phil. 1:6	I am...	Sure God will bring to completion what he has begun in me
Phil. 3:20	I am...	A citizen of heaven awaiting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ
2 Tim. 1:7	I have not been...	Given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, & self control
Heb. 4:16	I can find...	Mercy & grace to help in time of need
Luke 15:20-24	I am...	Received back & celebrated over by God

John 1:12	I am...	A child of God, born of God
John 15:15	I am...	Friend of Jesus
Rom. 5:1	I have...	Been Justified by faith, peace with God
I Cor. 6:17	I am...	Joined to the Lord, & one spirit with him

I Cor. 6:19,20	I have...	Been bought with a price, a body that is a temple of the Holy Spirit
I Cor 12:27	I am...	An individual member of Christ body
Eph. 1:1	I am...	A saint
Eph. 1:5	I have been...	Predestined for adoption as a son
Eph. 2:18	I have...	Access in one Spirit to the Father
Col. 1:13-14	I have been...	Transferred into the kingdom of God's beloved son & have been given redemption & forgiveness
Col. 2:10	I am...	Filled in him
Matt. 5:13,14	I am...	Salt & light in the world
John 15:1, 5	I am...	Branch in the Vine to bear fruit for God
John 15:16	I have been...	Chosen and appointed to bear fruit
Acts 1:8	I am...	A Spirit-empowered witness
I Cor. 3:16	I am...	God's temple that God's Spirit dwells in
2 Cor. 5:17ff.	I am...	New creation
John 20:21	I am...	Sent by Jesus as the Father sent him
Rom 12:4-5	I am...	A member of Christ's body with a unique function
Eph. 2:10	I am...	God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works
Gal. 5:16	I can...	Walk by the Spirit and not gratify the desires of the flesh
Phil. 4:13	I can...	Do all things through Christ who strengthens me
2 Cor 5:18-21	I am...	Reconciled to God
I Cor. 15:	I have...	Sure hope of my resurrection

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