

Evangelism seminar Part 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 January 2020

Preacher: Jim Donahue

[0 : 0 0] Okay, so now we're going to get into some practicals here. And, Sean, what time should I go? What time should I? Should I shoot? It's 11.30. Don't tempt me.

It's 9.30. It's 9.30. Okay. I'll go to 9.30. Okay, we're bound to 9.30. I won't go that long. I'll go to the building at 9.30. Okay.

That means, like, cleaned up and then out there. All right. So let's look at this. I want to talk about evangelism and our times. So this is just going to kind of set us up for the environment that we're trying to minister in.

Okay. One of the biggest challenges we face is a steady erosion of conviction in the area of evangelism.

People don't have conviction in evangelism. Because evangelism doesn't really fit in with our postmodern thinking. And let me just say this. I want to start with this.

[1 : 0 4] I have been an evangelist for over 20 years. I don't say the word evangelism. I say it so fast it's going to come out like evangelism. Like, it just means evangelism.

Okay. I just have said the word more than any other word. It's like, that's just right. EVA is an abbreviation for evangelism. So I'll just, I might slur that a little bit.

Yes. Can I interrupt you for a second? Yes, you may. I just want to make sure we gave it the right. Is this the right word? Yes. Yep. You're right on it. Evangelism and our times. Take the one and have the one. Oh.

Oh, what do you guys have? Oh, guys. You're out. I don't know. Oh, my God. She's already got notes on it. Hey, I can save it for tomorrow. Okay.

You say it. Yeah. Don't take hers back. Don't take Emily's back. No, just save the other one for tomorrow. Yep. Save it for tomorrow. All right. And I think one of the problems is that evangelism does not fit in with our postmodern thinking.

[2 : 0 9] The highest moral value in our culture is tolerance of other ideas, right? So tolerance is really the highest value.

We're out of bounds if we force our truth claims on someone else. You'll see this quote by Sam Chan. He says, first, we need to understand that tolerance is now the highest moral good.

In modernism, it was okay to tolerate a person but not agree with their ideas. That's because truth was objective and external to the person. But in postmodernism, we're told that we must tolerate all ideas.

That's because truth is viewed as subjective and internal to a person. It is a product of language, culture, and upbringing. So who are we to disagree with them and impose our ideas, which are only a product of our own upbringing, upon them?

The only thing we should not tolerate as postmodern people is intolerance. That's because intolerance is understood as the worst moral evil. It is to impose our arbitrary meta-narrative upon someone else's narrative.

[3 : 12] It is to play a power game. It is to do violence upon someone else's language, culture, and upbringing. So there is a tremendous amount of societal, political, and social pressure to conform to what the news media and what our college professors believe.

The cost of being a Christian is rising every day. Every day. Every day. And we don't want to be marginalized or ostracized.

And we're desperately trying to find ways to get out from under the stereotypes associated with conservative Christianity, especially younger generations.

More and more I see Christians who believe biblical truth privately, like orthodox biblical teaching on cultural issues, pro-life issues, marriage issues, but publicly were less and less willing to make a stand.

And that's exactly what our culture wants. They want us to keep all of our ideas to ourselves. This is why we have to hold tight to biblical convictions, especially when it comes to evangelism.

[4 : 28] So I want to talk about three different points here. The first is our environment. I think you'll see this in your outline. We live in the age of post-modernity, which is very odd.

It started in the 1980s. Modernity was from the 1600s to 1980s. And then now we are in the age of post-modernity.

And it's in direct contrast to the age of modernity. So post-modernity is characterized by several things. I don't know if you have these in your outline. Subjectivity of the individual.

So I'll just go through these. First is, are they in there? Okay. The subjectivity of the individual. So people are not neutral, objective, or blank slates.

We are subjective, we're biased, and we're influenced. Okay? Post-modernity is also characterized by the fact that truth is free-floating.

[5 : 29] Truth is not based on prior truth. Like in the past. Truth is more like free-floating rafts, like kind of loosely tied together.

Think of like planks that are loosely tied together. So these truths are all a product of our context. The culture we live in, our tribe, our language, our community, our upbringing.

So your truths will be different than my truths, but there's not one truth that is right and another one that is wrong. You have yours and I have mine.

Also, outcomes are determined by predispositions. We are all trying to prove things. Our starting point, our presuppositions will determine our ending points, our conclusions, our methods, our constructs that we impose on our observations.

So think about like the news or social media. Most people now listen to or watch what they already agree with. Right? So we don't read or study or listen to things that we disagree.

[6 : 39] We just kind of line ourselves up with what we already agree with. Okay? That's a very post-modern thing to do. And I even heard somebody was telling me a book. It was called like Lying Through Statistics.

So there's a book. It's just about how statistics are manipulated to say what you want to say. And that's kind of what we're talking about here. Certainty of knowledge is impossible in post-modernity.

Belief in self is supreme. So truth can only be found by looking inside of yourself. So we've shifted from this external source of authority like the Bible being an external outside of ourselves source of authority to internal sources of authority.

Authority comes from inside. Don Carson says, The assumptions of the current form of secularism dictate that every individual enjoys not only the right, but the obligation to choose their own path and identity.

It is ugly and foolish to submit to self-proclaimed authorities. And those authorities that try to tell you who you are and what you must do, religious, traditional, and governmental, are narrow-minded, corrupt, and intolerant.

[7 : 54] All right? Next, there is no universal truth. Sam Chan again says, To say that truth is universal is to impose our truth on other cultures, peoples, and languages.

It's not that post-modernism denies the existence of objective facts. It's just that all facts have to be construed. And this construal is a product of our cultures, peoples, languages, places, and upbringing.

And then finally there, extremism. Christianity is no longer just perceived as irrelevant. It's perceived as extreme.

So it's extreme to believe in the exclusivity of Christ, the authority of God's word, male leadership, sexual purity, marriage exclusively between a man and a woman, etc.

Our views on LGBT issues are considered hateful and could even be criminal. Okay? So this is the world that we live in where, as a pastor preaching or teaching these things, I remember thinking that years ago, maybe 10 or 15 years ago, thinking, Okay, well I can see maybe my kids, in their generation, people might have to go to jail for just teaching what the Bible says.

[9 : 16] And now I can say, I can see that in my, I can see it with me. It's not, I don't think it's that far off. Sam Chan again says, Ethics have become a barrier to believe in the gospel.

When our non-Christian friends think of Christianity, they don't think of good news, salvation, forgiveness, restoration, justice, mercy, or love. Instead, they think of hate, fear, power, and violence. They think that Christians are unethical because of their perceived stance on birth control and euthanasia.

They see their own views as the ethical stance because they are seeking to empower, liberate, restore justice, and give mercy to the marginalized and depressed. Their views are labeled by words such as love, choice, mercy, freedom, equality, rights, or justice.

In post-modernity, Christians are viewed as the oppressors and haters, while non-Christians are viewed as the ones on the side of love, justice, and mercy.

All right, so that's a little bit about our environment. And I want to, we'll do Q&A; after this, so write down any questions you have, and I want to hear your thoughts on this as well. Number two, our ethnic group.

[10 : 19] Now again, I'm stretching with the E's. I really try to get three different E's. Do I have three E's there? Oh, yes, so I really, I had to work it with the ethnic group. So I'm just talking here about the people we're trying to reach, and especially those in the younger generation.

So as I mentioned, usually referred to as millennials and Gen Z. That's basically millennials, basically 30s, Gen Z, 20s. And there are a ton of statistics out there, and I've been reading different books out there, and I wanted to just talk about this a little bit.

I think we have to be careful when it comes to statistics. Again, lying through statistics. But I've tried to think about areas where the statistics actually line up with my experience, and there's a lot of overlap here.

One of the most alarming trends is the rise of the nuns. And by that, I don't mean small Catholic ladies who live in a convent.

I'm talking about nuns, N-O-N-E-S, those who check the box nun when it comes to religious affiliation. So they're called the nuns.

[11 : 23] You may have heard of that, the rise of the nuns. There's a book called The Rise of the Nuns. The number of nuns in the 30s and 40s was at 5%. So, again, those who would check nun for religious affiliation.

So in the U.S., 30s and 40s, it was 5%. By 1990, the number had only risen to 8%. Okay, so that's a 3% increase in over half a century.

Between 1990 and 2008, in just 18 years, the number of nuns doubled to 15%.

And then in just four years, between 2008 and 2012, it jumped to 20%, representing one in every five Americans. And for millennials and Gen Z, or actually this is more Gen Z, for those 30 years or younger, nuns are one out of every three in our country.

So 33% of our country of Gen Z are nuns, would check the box for nuns. James White said the nuns are no longer the second largest religious group in the United States.

[12 : 28] They are the largest. And they are still by far the fastest growing. But the significance is not simply that nuns are growing. The number of professing Christians is also shrinking.

Now, I want to share some characteristics. So in this reading that I've done, I want to share some characteristics of these younger generations. Now, these things might not be surprising to you, but I think it's important that we understand who we're trying to reach out to as we seek to reach out to peers in the next generation.

And there can be, let me say this, there can be opposition and even hatred and self-righteousness when it comes to how the older generations interact with the younger generations.

And also how the younger generations interact with the older generations. Like, okay, boomer, right? You've heard that phrase? Right? Isn't that like the meme, okay, boomer. Like, it's very, the generation can be very dismissive of one another and very self-righteous.

And both ways, I think the boomers toward younger generations, you young whippersnappers, and this kind of, like, animosity, I think, is wrong and it's unhelpful.

[13 : 36] Nobody wants to think the way their parents did. And every generation thinks that they're superior to the ones that came before them and the ones that come after them, okay?

So let's just kind of set that as parameters. And I think it's important that we learn and kind of listen and try to understand this. So here's a couple characteristics about these next generations.

One, they're hopeful and optimistic, okay? They're not pessimistic. I'm considered Generation X. We are the pessimistic generation.

We are the, you know, latchkey, parents are divorced, depressed, on psychotropic medications, in counseling.

That's my generation, okay? But this generation is very optimistic. They believe that they can do something great and they want to change the world.

[14 : 33] Thank you, Disney. They're relational. They are learners. They're the most educated generation in history. They're looking less and less to religion.

Very few consider spirituality to be important in their lives. And listen, most don't think about religious matters at all. They're not necessarily antagonistic against religions or religious people.

They just are, they see it as unimportant. They see it as irrelevant to their lives. And they can tend to see religion as very divisive and argumentative. Minorities make up about 40% of the next generation.

Now, this is interesting. In my generation, again, I was born in 69, so my generation is Gen X. So I forget what a generation, I think we were like 64 to, help me out, 80.

Yeah, I think it's 64 to 80 is Gen X. So that generation, in my generation, I think minorities were 8% of our country.

- [15 : 38] Now, minorities make up 40% of this generation. I think it was 8% of my, 8% to 40% in millennials and Gen Z, which is important.
- They don't like to, so these younger generations, they don't like to commit to things. And they definitely don't like to sign up for things. Smile if that's true about you.
- They don't like things that are formal or overly polished. They don't do things because of tradition, because we've always done it that way.
- They do value mentorship. So they love one-on-one mentoring relationships. It's one of the reasons I'm in charge of college ministry. We've changed our college ministry instead of focusing as much on meetings to focusing on mentoring because of this.
- They're terribly lonely and depressed. Suicide rates are almost double previous generations. They spend a ton of time on screens. They work, play, and socialize through computers and phones.
- [16 : 41] It's how they connect to the world. You know that. They believe that disagreement is the same as judging. So if you disagree with them, you're judging them, right?
- So James White, again, he says, members of Generation Z hold few things more dear than acceptance and inclusivity. They view many moral stances, such as opposing gay marriage, as social stances in line with racism.
- To them, acceptance means affirmation. If you don't affirm, you don't accept. This, unfortunately, permeates all of culture, not just Generation Z, where to be considered welcoming to say the LGBT community is code for condoning their lifestyle.
- All right, they believe that tolerance is the highest moral good. The only thing that we should not tolerate are people who are intolerant. All religions are valid to them and essentially the same.
- There are no absolutes. They are usually unconvinced by proof or evidence. They believe that there are many ways to know something. They don't trust authority figures.
- [17 : 44] Even scientists, they're not trusting as much anymore. And they prefer testimonies of people over expert opinions. So the modern mindset, is anyone else in here with Gen X with me?
- Oh, good, Kevin. You said Gen X. He's so old he forgot, folks. Okay, so I have a couple. We don't have boomers here, right?
- We're just, okay. So at least we're, okay, well, oh, easy, boomer. Okay, boomer. So my parents are boomers. But so Gen X, all of the commercials, and you guys are all younger, you wouldn't know this.
- All of the commercials, like, in the 80s always had, like, a guy in a white lab coat. Like, if they're like, here's Tide, right? And here's the Tide commercial. There's a guy in a white lab coat with a clipboard behind, like, because you're like, oh, this is scientific.
- Oh, Tide is the best detergent that you could possibly get. Always, like, expert scientific guy to tell us. The expert is telling us what is the best, what we should do.
- [18 : 53] Now, that's not at all how people don't even trust. They don't trust science. They don't trust any of that. But now what you guys do is you're looking at ratings and reviews and comments from other customers.
- We don't trust experts. We're going to trust what somebody else said about this. As we look on Amazon, we go to the reviews. What are people saying about it? Okay, very different in that mindset.
- These younger generations are very open to the perspective of other cultures. They tend to see Christians as unethical, and they look to things like CrossFit and yoga for community. Now, it's true.

These are generalizations, but I think these can help us really think about this, get an outline of who we're trying to reach out, who you're trying to reach out to, and also who the future leaders of this church are.

Now, one thing that jumped out to me when I was studying this was how similar these characteristics are to my generation and to me personally.

[19 : 58] So I didn't want to do anything the way my parents did. I certainly felt superior to them. I was optimistic. I wanted to change the world.

Thank you, Disney. They were saying the same thing back then as they are now. I was relational and educated. I found my community in sports. I spent a lot of time on screens.

They just happened to be a TV screen, and I also played video games looking at that TV screen. I didn't trust in authority figures either, right? And I think the baby boomers could say the same things.

I think the big difference is that, listen, here's what I think the big difference is between your generation and my generation, is that religion was a bigger part of our lives. It was a much bigger part of our lives, and it was a much bigger part of our parents' lives.

It was a factor, not necessarily a meaningful one, but it played an important role in our lives. This move away from church has opened up our culture to being more secular, more relativistic, and more pluralistic, more tolerant of everything, more immoral, more liberal in our thinking.

[21 : 09] And listen, these ideologies are not just affecting younger generations. They're all pushing up into different generations. These things are affecting us all. That's why it's becoming increasingly hard to publicly support hot-button issues like pro-life or anti-abortion issues or complementarian issues or LGBT or race, whatever.

These things are affecting us. And I think that we are increasingly and we will increasingly see the rise of private support for things Christians are unwilling to take a public stand on.

That divide is happening sharply that Christians are saying, oh, well, I believe this privately, but they're unwilling to make a public stand on that because the cost is so great.

This is why evangelism is becoming more and more difficult, and we're more and more scared to evangelize. Many people in younger generations do not like evangelism or the stereotypes associated with evangelism.

That's why I'm so encouraged that you're all here. I can't even believe you're all here. It's beautiful. But people don't want to be marginalized. They don't want to be ostracized. And there's a growing number, as I mentioned, there's a growing number of Christians who believe it's wrong to evangelize, people that believe it's the job of the church to do evangelism.

[22 : 37] But I know that's a lot of information. Here's the good news that I've found as I've kind of studied this. These younger generations, they spend a lot of time with non-Christians.

They have at least an average of four close friends that are non-Christians, while their Christian parents have an average of one or less. So they're spending time with non-Christians, and they're well-connected in their communities, which is great.

This presents tremendous opportunities for the gospel. This is one of the main ways that the gospel is going to spread is through these relationships. And we'll talk about that a little bit in the next section and tomorrow.

So number three, our evangelism. Here's our third E. So here's just a couple of things I'll mention about this, and then we'll try to jump into Q&A.; All right, so first, one of the most important things that we need to do is to merge our friendships, to have it so that our Christian friends are spending time with our non-Christian friends, that we have non-Christian friends, and we're encouraging them to spend time with our Christian friends, and we're merging these two groups.

Does that make sense? Do you guys know what a plausibility structure is? Has anybody ever heard that term, the term plausibility structure?

[24 : 04] Okay, so a plausibility structure is accepted beliefs, convictions, and understanding that you have. It's almost like a grid that you look through or glasses that you look through that help you either greenlight something as something that's plausible, something that's true, or you redlight something as implausible.

All right, so a plausibility structure is just like how you determine whether something's true or false. It's a way of saying that. So, for instance, let's say that your friend said, Oh, my goodness, you're not going to believe this, but last night the spaceship came down in my backyard, and this alien walked out and invited me to come onto the spaceship, and so you're not going to believe this, but I got on the spaceship.

It zoomed away. We went to Jupiter, and I had dinner there on Jupiter, and then we came back, and only like a second had elapsed.

It was like some kind of time-space continuum. It was amazing, okay? If somebody told you that, your plausibility alarms are going crazy. Your plausibility structures have no roof.

It's like red flag, like this cannot be. Now, the reason is your alarms are going off is because of this.

[25 : 26] Your plausibility structures are made out of three different things. One is our community, okay? Like have other people that I know experience this? No, nobody else that I know in my community has had a spaceship, land in their backyard, okay?

So that's one. Another factor is our experiences. I've never experienced that. You're saying you experienced it. I've never experienced that in my life. And evidence is the third one.

There's no, what evidence, you know, let's go to your backyard. Is there like a blast off? Did the grass get blasted away? Like what evidence can support this, okay? So those three things. What do you think is the most important thing when it comes to our plausibility structure?

Out of those three factors, what do you think is the most important one? What's that? For Gen Z or for us? Just anybody, for anyone. Community.

Our community of trusted friends and family is the most important factor in determining what we believe. People will find a story more believable if more people in their community believe this story.

[26 : 34] So if you told this story, or let's say somebody told you the story about the alien, and you're sitting there going, oh my goodness, this person is crazy. And then you talk to another friend and said, oh my goodness, you're kidding me because that's crazy.

Like last night I had an alien come down to my backyard and took me, you know, up to Jupiter. I was having dinner. I think I saw that other person there.

I just didn't want to say anything to him. And then it came back in like no time elapsed. Okay, now you have two people and your plausibility alarms are still going like, okay, is this some kind of hoax?

Like, you know, what is that? But now you have somebody else that's like, wait a second, what is going on here? There's strength in those numbers.

And this is why conspiracy theories can gain such traction. And it's honestly why the Internet can be very dangerous because you can find community with other crazy things and find that and solidify kind of what you believe.

[27 : 39] Now, and this is one of the many reasons we need to merge our universes of friendships. You know why? Because we're the ones with the story of aliens. Let that sink in.

We're the alien story guy. We have the story of the aliens that have landed. They do not have a community that believes these things.

That's why it's so helpful if non-Christians can spend time with groups of Christians. So that's why it helps if you can bring unsaved friends, family members, neighbors, coworkers into the community of the church, into your community group or small group, into a ministry like the Bridge Course, where they can see other people that actually believe the same thing.

It gives our beliefs credibility and believability. It's much harder to convince someone of the truths of the gospel if you're the only one that they know that believes it. Because they can write you off as an exception.

You're just an exception. But if they start to see multiple people, a room full of people that believe this, that is a totally different story.

[28 : 56] This is something I've been thinking about and working on for at least 23 years since I've been in ministry is this. How do I get our church and these wonderful, amazing Christians together with the rest of the world?

Because so often these worlds are separate and we're not rubbing shoulders, intersecting, building these relationships. How do we overlap and merge so that we build relationships and friendships with people who are not Christian?

I've been working on this for a long time and it's not easy to do. Christians are very busy. There's a lot of meetings. There's a lot of Christian meetings. A lot of things we have to do. And we can often insulate and isolate ourselves so we don't have time for non-Christian.

But if we can just get these worlds overlapping to some degree, good stuff is going to happen. Good stuff. Fireworks are going to happen.

And God is going to use that to reach people for the sake of the gospel. How can we build these kind of friendships with people who don't know the Lord?

[30 : 03] How do we become friends of sinners? Because if we do this, God's going to use that. And part of the reason is, you know, again, I'm going to kind of undercut myself here.

We're going to do training and stuff tomorrow. We're going to think through how do we share the gospel and stuff. But the reality is we could do this without any of this training. You guys know Christ.

You know the gospel. You love Jesus. You're great at befriending people, at connecting, at fellowshiping, spending time, having hospitality.

All those things you guys are great at. I'm sure every one of you would get high marks on this. Why? Because you're Christians. This is what we do. We know how to have a small group. We know how to sit and serve pie and talk to each other and serve one another and care and love and all these things.

And we're merciful. All these things the Spirit of God has done in our hearts already, right? If we can just connect with unbelievers, they'll see those things.

[31 : 04] And we know the gospel. And God can use that to reach them. The problem is it's kind of like never shall the two meet. Like how do we get these two worlds together?

And it's not easy. It's not easy because it takes time. One, because it's dangerous. But two, because it takes time and it's messy. It's messy and it requires a lifestyle change.

See, our usual approach when it comes to this is to maybe like hear a message on evangelism, maybe a sermon or something like a seminar like this. And then we'll just try to reach out to somebody or invite somebody.

But we need to do this in a way that is not just kind of a tackle, but it's an evangelistic lifestyle. We need Christians, our Christian friends, to become friends with our non-Christian friends.

And we need to be a part of their community. We need to get into their lives and their worlds. And then they will see how the Christian life works.

[32 : 07] They'll discover that the Christian life is livable. It works. It makes a difference. And then if they see that, then they'll see that it's believable. And if they see that, then they might also acknowledge that it's true.

But that's only going to happen as we live out our lives with non-Christian friends, not just visiting them, not just going out with them once in a while, but living among them. So they're part of our closest network of friends.

And we're part of their closest network of friends. That's hard for us. That's hard for me. You know why? Because there's a steep cost to that. I don't know if I have time for that.

But we need to do that. We need to find somehow. I need to find a way to do that, to go to their events and their games and their concerts and their fundraisers.

And then when we invite them to things, it will be natural because they invite us to things and we come to their things and they come to some of our things. It will be more natural when we finally decide to invite them to come to church or a small group social or a bridge course or something like that.

[33 : 16] So that's letter A. Letter B is to listen to their story. And letter C is to tell his story. So let me just say something real quick because I want to get to Q&A.; One of the things that Sam Chan says, I really like this, is just listening is so different.

Nobody's listening to anybody anymore. Everybody's just like judging other people, mic dropping, and then just nobody is listening. You want to be different? Listen to people, okay?

And I love how Sam Chan says he likes us. He really says that coffee has come. This is cool. We went to a really cool coffee shop. This is like the coffee capital of the world, like all these little cafes. Anyways, inviting somebody to coffee is perfect because it's an opportunity to listen to talk in a short environment.

It might be like 30 or 40 minutes. It's not that long. And it takes advantage of the sacred-secular divide where you can talk about secular things, just natural things over coffee.

That's just to know, hey, want to grab coffee? Hey, why don't we grab coffee? It's short. And to do that a couple times to get to know somebody. And so then you can jump from that to dinner where if you invite somebody to dinner, even if you go out to dinner, especially if you invite them to their home, which is great, much more intimate.

[34 : 25] Okay, so now we're a couple hours at dinner, and it takes advantage of that more sacred space. Like you talk to people if you're at dinner about what they believe, what they think about, what they fear, what their hopes, what their dreams.

You go deeper in that, okay? So there's a natural progression that can happen that goes from, like, coffee to dinner and then to being able to share the gospel and opening up into those kind of things.

But listening to their story, getting to know them before it was really important. We started a thing called Coffee and Conversations. I might have time to talk about tomorrow at our church. It's worked really well in that regard.

And then tell his story. So once you've listened to their story, then you can tell their story. And one of the amazing things about this, and I'll just say this to close, is that we need to understand what somebody's story is so that we can help them to see how God is really the answer to what they've always been looking for.

So every single person has a story. They have a mission, something that they think will bring happiness, something that will bring joy, something that will bring purpose. It really won't, in the end, bring them joy and fulfillment.

[35 : 47] Jesus is the one that can do that. And Jesus is the one that is the answer to the story. And so we'll talk about that more. Like, how do we do that? What does that look like? And we'll talk about that tomorrow.

Questions? Love to hear questions. And I would also love comments on what you think about your generation, younger generations, and if what I mentioned was accurate, how you would adjust that, what your thoughts are.

Yes, Emily? I have a friend at college who we've got really close to. She is Catholic. Her boyfriend's Muslim. And she thinks that Muslim Christianity and Catholicism kind of stem from the same part of Scripture.

So in essence, she thinks that they're the same God, just different. So, but she's also still trying to figure out what she believes and believes that truth is, like, your truth is your truth.

Yeah. So how do you, like, go from talking about truth and, like, the meaning of the word truth is that there's things that are false.

[36 : 53] So how do you kind of, like, talk about truth? Yeah. I don't know. Sean, what do you think? No. Yeah.

So, and you have a good friendship with this girl, too. So, again, one of the things that, and I'll talk about this a little bit more tomorrow, the corporate witness. So them seeing other believers who believe this is really important.

One of the things that can happen in our bridge course is that they are experiencing, they're listening to truth. I'm preaching. I'm talking about truth.

We're talking about all these rational things. A lot of times people don't believe that. But what affects them the most are the relationships. These people are serving them, caring for them. There's friendships.

They have kids that seem to be somewhat obedient. There's people that are giving money so they can go on this retreat. And there's people that love each other. And they're seeing the love that we have for each other and serving them. Like, that sometimes has more of an effect than the apologetics as you're going to help her see that, you know, when she says, you know, I don't really think, you know, there's one particular truth.

[38 : 07] You could say, do you think that statement is true? So it's always self-defeating, the relativistic, it defeats on itself. So even when she says that, like, do you think that's true?

So she believes things that are not, that there is objective truth. One of the main ones is that you have to be tolerant about everything. That's the objective truth. So whatever. So the argument often defeats itself.

What I try to do there, sometimes you're going to get on, like, those rabbit trails. I will often bring it back to the gospel because the gospel is the power of God for salvation. And they often don't understand. So, you know what, that's a great question.

I'm not really sure. Let me think about that. But I want to make sure I'm not sure you really understand what the Bible says about this. So you don't even have to have the argument about truth. Just let me help you understand what this says so you know.

Because a lot of people get this wrong. They think it's about their own good works or efforts. So let me take you through this. So sometimes just, you know, you can answer those little apologetics and it's a self-defeater.

[39 : 06] But I think getting a community and then trying to bring it back to the gospel and trying to get her to look at what you want her to look at, not just what she wants you to look at.

You do need to do that some. But I don't know if that helps you or not. That's a really good question. Good. Who else? Yes. What's the W spectrum on the back? Yeah. So the W spectrum is kind of cool.

This is, it was, it's a missionary scale that they use. W stands for worker. And it's interesting. It's how kind of the gospel has been shared in the past.

So look at W1. It's like the aim of the evangelist, oppose the culture storyline. Gospel there messages your culture storyline is wrong. You must reject your culture, follow Christ. Then the model of Christ is Christ triumphs over the culture storyline.

The model of sin is transgression, rebellion. And then it progresses. Just look at W3. So W3 is retain and repurpose the culture storyline. The gospel message, your culture storyline is good, but Christ can make it better.

[40 : 07] And then Christ transforms the culture storyline. And the sin, the model of sin there is brokenness. So what it's showing is that there are, there's kind of a progression, whereas the old way of sharing the gospel, the modern way is more like a W1 and probably W2.

And what might be more effective now is more W3, W4. So in the past, the way you would do things, you'd share the gospel, say this, you'd say, this is true.

You must believe it and you must live it. Now it's the reverse. You would say the gospel is livable. It actually works.

And therefore it's believable. And therefore it's true. Is this saying that these are all valid ways to communicate the gospel? It's just a matter of... Yeah, I think it is. I think it's saying depending on where you are, I think the more modern mindset would be more like the W1, W2, whereas the 3 and 4 is moving more toward where our culture is now.

Not one right or wrong way. The power of the gospel is neat. The gospel needs to go forth and get out there. It's just saying how you might connect in their story differently. So it's kind of progressive.

[41 : 23] Does that make sense? Good, good question on that. Yes. I have a two-part question about your merging with communities. Yes. So the first one is like, so we go with like their worlds and the events of James.

Yes. And in exchange they would... Hopefully... Yes. But if they're... What if they're like at a point where they don't necessarily want to come to establish things that already happen in our community?

Have you had to create like... In the middle kind of space of an event and like what have you done? Yeah. So just invite somebody over for dinner and say you're having another friend over. Oh, I'm having a friend or I'm having a couple friends over.

Yeah, dinner party. Why don't you come over for that? Or me and a couple friends are having a game night. Would you like to come with us? Or like little things like that that aren't big. I'm inviting you to a small group.

I'm inviting you to church. Those might be down the road. But it might be some friends and I are going to a movie. Would you want to come with us? That sort of thing.

[42 : 28] And then a lot of times they'll reciprocate and say, oh, would you like to come to this with me? That sort of thing. So yeah, just creating those little events or little spaces where people can come. Or even just, hey, I'm going to dinner with a friend.

Would you like to come? And then they get to meet your Christian friend or somebody you think they might connect with or whatever. Does that answer that question? Okay, good. And what was the second one? One part I was also wondering is, other than time, what have you found to be the cost?

And what is the messiness? Oh, the messiness. We'll talk about that tomorrow. The big part of the messiness is it's just much easier to be with Christian friends. You have so much more in common.

You believe the same things. You enjoy the same things. And it's messy. When you're with non-Christians, they like different things or they value things that are sin for.

You have to draw lines. You can't go into sin. They might say, hey, let's watch this movie. You might be like, oh, is there another? I probably wouldn't feel as comfortable watching that movie. And it gets messy like that. Their language, what they want to talk about.

[43 : 27] You have to navigate through that. When you have kids, that brings its own set of challenges. And I've had lots of messy situations there where you have to just trust God.

But the way that their kids are, what their kids are, those influences, those sort of things. So you have to be careful. And they're not going to value the same things.

They're not going to act with integrity or the same way. So you could have that mud splash on you. It gets messy when you're with them. So we'll talk, I think, a little bit about that tomorrow.

But does that fill it in a little bit for you? Yeah, good question. Who else? Yeah. How do you make the trade-off of, maybe you can give some guidelines around when to keep investing?

Yes. In one versus this time you want to be responsible. Yes. Great question. I think we have to be wise there. And the scripture I would pull on there is where, not scripture.

[44 : 27] There was a book called Experience of God where he talked about going where you see God at work. Okay, where is God at work? So the scripture I would use for that is Luke 19 where Jesus and Zacchaeus.

So when Jesus was walking that road, he stopped in front of one tree. And it happened to be a guy that was up in that tree. Somebody that, there was big crowds all along this road.

Why did he stop there? Well, this guy had run ahead and climbed up in a tree, was obviously interested. So you could draw from that this idea that go where you see God at work, okay?

We don't have time. We're limited in our time. We can't reach out to everybody. And I tell people, I say, listen, go to the person that seems friendliest to you, somebody that likes you, enjoys you, wants to talk to you, seems interested.

Go there. Get involved there. There's something there. You don't have to figure out, like, okay, who's the hardest, most difficult person that I can befriend on the earth and go there. Put your antennas up.

[45 : 26] Pray. And sometimes God will lead you to very hard people, and God does something there. But just think about that. Who do you connect with? Who seems friendliest? Who do you relate to well?

Who has an affinity towards you or seems friendly? Start there. And invest there. And if you're investing there and you start trying to, you know, just build this friendship and then you eventually start bringing around the spiritual issues and you're talking about and you keep, you know, doing that over time and a year and two, it's not going well.

You might need to think, okay, God, is there somewhere else that I need to, this person seems to really be shutting these doors. It doesn't always mean give up right away. My friend didn't give up on me. But there's a time where we're limited.

We can't be friends with everybody. So we do have to be strategic. So go where you see God at work. That's kind of just like a general principle. And does that make sense? It's a great question.