

“A Door for the Word”:
Declaring Christ in an age of Darkness

SECTION I: MOTIVATION

Study #1 The What and Why of Evangelism Colossians 4:2-6

1. Introduction and Stories in Large Group
2. What is evangelism?
3. Why evangelize?

Study #2 Partnership: God's Part and Ours 2 Corinthians 4.1-7

1. God's Part
2. Our Part

SECTION II: SIX WAYS TO SPEAK

Study #3 Integrity Philippians 1:27-2.16

1. Integrity of Lifestyle
2. Integrity of Speech

Study #4 Telling God's Story: The Gospel Message Acts 17:16-34

1. The content of the Biblical Gospel

Study #5 Telling Your Story: Personal Testimony

1. Your Personal Story as part of God's big story

Study #6 Answers and Questions 2 Tim 4:1-5

1. Answering Hard Questions / Asking the questions of God
2. Inviting

Study 1: The What and Why of Evangelism

Colossians 4:2-6

Part 1: Large Group

Introduction to the Evangelism Study Series
Stories

Part 2: Small Group Prayer

In your prayer triplets, bring before God the fears, failures, frustrations, joys, good and bad experiences you've had in trying to share Christ with others. Pray for each other, that God will meet you in the apprehensions you may bring to this series. Pray that God will bless you as you learn more.

Part 3: Small Group Study

Read Colossians 4:2-6.

1. What three things does Paul tell the believers in Colossae they must do (verse 2)? Why is each of these important in evangelism?

2. How does Paul direct the Colossians to pray for him?

3. What does it look like when God ‘opens a door’? Think of a time when God opened a door for you to share his message.

Focus on “mystery of Christ” In verse 3 Paul asks his readers to pray that he would be able to proclaim the mystery of Christ. *Mystery* in this letter refers to what was once hidden but is now revealed: What God has done for us through Jesus Christ is no longer a mystery. In a few weeks we will focus more on the content of the message. For now, though, one way to understand the (revealed) mystery of Christ that Paul wants to proclaim is:

This is God's world; he created it and us. We belong to him and are made to enjoy and serve and love him. But we placed ourselves under our own rule and turned away from God and his love. As a result, humanity is under a curse (Genesis 3:17, Galatians 3:13). But according to God's purpose his Son Jesus Christ died for our sins, (1 Corinthians 15:3). Christ is Saviour and King to people who were once without hope in this world or the next. As people submit to Him as Lord and serve him as King in the fellowship of His Church, they are “redeemed” or rescued.

4. Regarding the mystery of Christ,

How do we say it?	
When do we say it?	
To whom do we say it?	

5. What prevents you from ‘making the most of every opportunity’ (verse 5, NIV) to share the good news of Jesus with others?

6. What motivation to tell others do we find in Mark 5:14-20?

7. Read Romans 10:13-15. Why does God's word tell us to tell others about Jesus?

Part 4: Small Group Prayer

Pray for each other from the texts you have studied.

Notes for this study are on the next page.

NOTES

What is evangelism, and what is our motivation for it?

The first thing to remember is that evangelism is *a work of God*. His desire is to reconcile us to Himself. The initiative is always His, the power is His, the results are from Him, and so the glory is His.

So, ***what exactly is evangelism?*** We have to understand it biblically or we will get it out of balance and miss the joy that God has prepared for us.

In the book of Acts, we can see that evangelism has 5 parts:

- a. **The Proclamation of a Message:** Words used to describe this activity in Acts are: “testify”, “proclaim”, “preach”, “herald”, “teach”, “argue” (reason, dispute, convince, debate; in other words: persuade). See Acts 13:5, 7, 46,
- b. **The Presentation of a Person:** The *subject* of the word is a man, crucified, risen, Saviour, coming judge, the Christ
- c. **The Offer of a Gift:** Salvation, forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit (See Acts 10:43; 13:38; 2:38)
- d. **A Call for response:** (In other words, not simply giving information). See Acts 17:30. The consistent response expected is repentance and belief.
- e. **Welcome into the fellowship:** Baptism is the normal external sign of repentance and belief. See Acts 2:37-38

In summary, The New Testament definition of evangelism is: “a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God's message of mercy to sinners, with a summons to turn and put faith in Christ.” (J.I. Packer)

Why evangelize? What does the Bible give as motives for evangelism?

1. Love for God and concern for his glory (God is glorified as we tell of his great acts of salvation).
2. Love for people and concern for their welfare (their salvation is more important than our reputation) See the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31.
3. Obedience: Jesus says to his disciples at the end of Matthew's gospel, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations....” Paul writes to the Corinthians, “[In Christ God is] entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).
4. That our joy may be made complete. Paul says to Philemon 6: “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.”

Study 2: Partnership: God's Part in Evangelism, and Ours

2 Corinthians 5:17-6:1

Part 1: Small Group Prayer

In your prayer triplets, continue to pray for God's blessing and work in your own life, and that he would bring you joy in what he has done for you. Pray for God to open doors for the word in some specific relationships in your own life.

Part 2: Small Group Study

We need to distinguish between God's part in evangelism and our part. It's going to be incredibly frustrating if we try to do God's part—because only God has the ability to reconcile us to himself. Only the one sinned against can forgive.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:1

A. **God's Part.** Even if you were the best communicator who ever lived, with a perfect lifestyle to match, you do not have the power to give new life, or to awaken someone's spirit. The Bible is utterly clear that God initiates the gospel, initiates and empowers evangelism, and initiates response. On our own, we are incapable of seeing Jesus for who he really is, or desiring to follow him, unless God through his Holy Spirit does it.

1. The word “reconcile” or its variations appear five times in these verses. What is ‘reconciliation’?

2. Who has reconciled whom to whom?

3. How does God reconcile us to himself?

4. How are we changed by God's reconciliation?

B. Our Part.

5. What part does God give us in communicating Christ to others?

More on "ambassadors" An ambassador is an official representative of someone else.

Three things about ambassadors are important:

1. They *are only a representative*. They don't say anything they want to; they are a mouthpiece for someone else.
2. Their words are authoritative *only as long as they speak the words given to them by the one who sent them*.
3. Being an ambassador implies speaking with tact, dignity, and courtesy.

6. How is Paul an ambassador to the Corinthians? (Read 6:2-11 for additional examples)

7. How does 2 Corinthians 4:7 describe us? Why is this surprising given 4:6?

How does this verse describe God's role in evangelism?

8. The apostles focus much of their teaching on the priority of the “ministry of the word”, which includes evangelism along with teaching, preaching, and prayer. It is clear that the apostles and other leaders such as Timothy, Titus, and Barnabas were particularly gifted at evangelism. However, it is just as clear that speaking about Jesus Christ isn't only for ‘professionals’ or the obviously gifted. Look up the following verses in Acts chapter 8 (1b, 4, and 14) and discuss the evidence you find (*optional*: note Jesus' last earthly words in Acts 1:8). You may also find it helpful to read Philippians 1:12-14 and notice the effect of Paul's imprisonment on the congregation.

9. The story of Lydia is a lovely example of the partnership of God and humans in evangelism. Read and reflect on Acts 16:13-15. How might this story encourage you as you think and pray about your part and God's part in evangelism?

NOTES

J.I. Packer has written, "To say we work for God is not untrue. To say we are 'working together with him' is truer, but 'him working through us' is the most profound and precise truth of all." The Bible is clear that God is sovereign and powerful and desires to seek and save the lost (Luke 15; 1 Corinthians 2.5; 3.6; Titus 3:3-8a). God is the evangelist: His purpose for the gospel is to reach the ends of the earth. In the book of Acts, Luke wants us to sense that nothing can frustrate God's plan for the gospel. The very last word in Acts in the word "unhinderedly." This dynamic word captures the inevitability of the advance of the word of God despite all opposition.

Yet we see in 2 Corinthians 4-6 the startling truth that God partners with people and 'gave us the ministry of reconciliation.' He 'entrusted to us the message of reconciliation'. He makes his appeal through us, and we work together with him. In spite of our fragility and weakness, our reluctance and 'opaque-ness' as jars of clay, he demonstrates his power by using us as his instruments, his partners.

Study 3: Integrity of Lifestyle and Speech

1 Peter 3:15-18

Outline of the Study

The first two weeks of this series examined four topics:

1. What is evangelism (communication about Christ/call for response)
2. Why we should take evangelism seriously (love; obedience; joy)
3. God's part in evangelism (the much greater part!)
4. Our part in evangelism (God works through us)

During the next three weeks we will consider six ways God speaks through us when we:

1. Have Integrity of lifestyle (grace and humility)
2. Have Integrity of speech (openness and honesty about life and faith)
3. Tell the gospel (explaining the message of salvation)
4. Tell our own story (explaining what God has done for you)
5. Answer and ask hard questions
6. Invite others (practical ideas and what to expect)

Part 1: Large Group

In the large group, we will hear some stories about living and speaking God's message to others.

Part 2: Small Group Study

1. In this letter, written to “God's elect” scattered throughout Asia Minor, Peter addresses the issue of sharing our faith. In 1 Peter 2:9, what does he say is the purpose of the church and what are we called to declare? (Note:

this week we will concentrate on *the manner in which we communicate*.
Next week we will look at the content of the *message*.)

2. Read 1 Peter 1:6 and 1 Peter 2:11-12. What kind of situation were the original readers living in?

3. How would this have affected them in speaking about Jesus?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-18

4. According to these verses, how do we live our lives in a way that is honouring to Christ?

5. Peter clearly assumes that those who believe in Jesus will speak about him, and that they need to be prepared for opportunities. According to verse 15, why will believers be asked?

In what way are we to speak about Jesus?

What will be the outcome of speaking and living this way? See also 1 Peter 2:12.

6. What was the purpose of Christ's suffering?

Focus: Suffering for Christ. The New Testament is clear that as Christ suffered, his followers will suffer. Note 1 Peter 3:16, "...**when** you are slandered...." *Suffering* means *suffering for the sake of Christ*. It may mean physical suffering (it certainly did for Paul: see 2 Corinthian 11:23-33; and does so for many Christians around the world in the modern era, many of whom willingly died and continue to face death for the sake of the gospel.) But in 1 Peter suffering is often verbal in nature ('slander' 3:16, 'when they speak against you as evildoers' 2:12, 'If you are insulted for the name of Christ...' 4:14).

What should be our response to suffering?

1. *Expect it.* "Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you." 1 Peter 4:12.
2. *Rejoice in it.* "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you also may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." 1 Peter 4:13. See also 4:14 and 2:19 and 20.
3. *Trust in Christ who triumphed over it.* "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...." 1 Peter 3:18

7. Have you experienced some kind of suffering for speaking or living out the gospel?

8. What is *integrity*? Why is it important to have integrity both in speech and in lifestyle?

9. Why isn't it enough simply to live a Christian life but never speak about God?

Discuss: If our *godliness* (living the Christian life with integrity) adorns the gospel message, what about our *sin*? How should we handle the fact that we are still sinners, even though forgiven and in process of being conformed to Christ? In other words, how might our honesty about sin (and also repentance and forgiveness) actually *help* authenticate the gospel?

Part 3: Small Group Prayer

Read Colossians 1:3-14 aloud together. Then use the verses to pray for one another (for example, a group member prays “with one eye on the text” for another group member, using phrases from the letter they think are appropriate.)

NOTES

The opposite of integrity is hypocrisy, where the *internal* and the *external* aspects of our lives do not match up. The classic form of hypocrisy is where we say we believe something, but live in a way inconsistent with what we say we believe. But the opposite hypocrisy is also possible, where we may *live* a beautiful Christian life, but are never prepared to “give a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Peter assumes the church is committed by lip as well as life to witness to the saving message, to the hope we have. Both words and actions should back each other up, and even the way we deal with sin will be a testimony to the gospel.

Part of integrity of lifestyle is simply being *transparent* about what God is doing in our lives.

Study 4: Telling God's Story: The Gospel Message

Acts 17:16-34

In first two weeks of this series we examined four topics:

1. What is evangelism (communication about Christ/call for response)
2. Why we should take evangelism seriously (love; obedience; joy)
3. God's part in evangelism (the much greater part!)
4. Our part in evangelism (God works through us)

In week three we began to consider the first two of 6 ways that God speaks through us:

1. Through integrity of lifestyle (grace and humility)
2. Through integrity of speech (openness and honesty about life and faith)

This week we will try to understand more clearly *the content* of God's message to humanity through us (“the gospel”, or “good news”). However, the gospel was not, for the apostles, simply “content,” but “...the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

Part 1: Prayer

Continue to pray for one another, for open doors, and for specific people in your life.

Part 2: Bible Study

1. In bullet (point) form, write out how you would answer this question from one of your friends: “What do you believe?”

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

In your small group, have everyone share their answers to this question. Listen to each others' lists. What is common to all your answers? (*Fill in the answer to this question during the small group study time*)

-
-
-
-

Read Acts 17:16-34

2. Paul finds himself in Athens, and what he observes motivates him to speak. What observation particularly motivated Paul (verse 16)? What then did he do (verses 17-18)?
3. Paul is ultimately taken to speak at the Aeropagus, the intellectual forum for Athens. Why? (Verse 19-21)
4. What are we told about the people of Athens? Make a list of what the passage tells us about Paul's audience.

5. In point form, write down the main elements of Paul's speech to the Aeropagus (verses 22-31).

6. How did his particular audience shape his message?

Application

7. What do you think Paul would notice about the city you live in, and particularly the lives of those you have been praying for?

8. In light of this passage and what we have learned, is there any way you would revise your answer to question 1?

Part 3: Large Group Presentation

A SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL

1. Creation – God is the loving creator who made the whole world and us. We were created to be in relationship with our Creator.
2. Problem – We rebel against God and break relationship with Him. We call this sin.
3. Judgment – The sentence God gives us is just. He gives you what you want, namely to be without Him. Sin leads to death.
4. Solution – God sends Jesus who lived a perfect life to take the punishment of death on himself so that we may be free to be in relationship with God again, now and forever.
5. Re-Creation – God extends forgiveness and gives us eternal life with Him. Eventually he will restore creation and bring all of it under the reign of Jesus.
6. So what? – there is a response required; a decision to be made. God asks us to “choose this day whom you will serve”: to live with or without Him.

SOME CONSTRUCTS WHICH CAN HELP EXPLAIN THE GOSPEL

- The Bridge Diagram
- Know and Tell Diagram
- Sin on Him/No sin on Him Diagram.
- Choose one of the following Bible Passages. Read and explain the gospel from the text.
 - John 3:13-21
 - Romans 1:1-6
 - Romans 5:1-9
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-7
 - Colossians 1:15-23
 - Titus 3:3-8a

PRACTICAL TIPS

Explain the gospel in clear, simple language. Avoid theological jargon. Be prepared to define even simple words like sin, faith, Jesus, and God.

It is important to know how to put together the complete gospel message, but it is normally inadvisable to share that message in one long monologue. Be prepared to stop to answer a question; stop talking and listen to the other person; ask them how they feel about what you have said; stop if the Spirit says things are not right. Very often we share the gospel in small bites over several conversations as we share our lives with others.

Your relationship is more important than saying *everything* in one sitting. Take time and care with people and you will have several opportunities to speak to them.

Study 5: Telling Your Story: Personal Testimony

John 4:1-42

Structure of this Study

1. Pray in groups of 3-4.
2. Bible Study Questions
3. Home Exercise: Write out your own story using a set of questions.
4. Small Group Exercise: Share your story with a partner.
5. Review Practical Tips together
6. Pray to conclude

As part of your preparation, it will be helpful to think through your own story as part of the bigger story. This study puts you in the bigger picture of what God is doing, and, we hope, will help you to speak about what the gospel means for you.

Part 1: Prayer

Continue to pray for one another, for open doors, and for specific people in your life.

Part 2: Bible Study – John 4:1-42

Read John 4:1-42

1. Describe why the disciples marveled that Jesus was talking to this woman.

2. Why does she say, “Come and see a man who told me everything I did?”

3. What does she find out about Jesus during the conversation?

4. Observe how personal testimony influences the other people in this story, in verses 27 – 42.

Part 3: Home Exercise - Your story

We can understand God's work in our own lives as a reflection of God's work in the world. The gospel is available to all but becomes real for those who have received it.

Occasionally, people may ask you about how you became (or why you are) a Christian. Your personal story is both unique and universal. Everyone who is a Christian and who is becoming more like Jesus has an interesting, powerful testimony, regardless of whether or not it appears spectacular to you. For your friends, it gives an identifiable snapshot of what salvation looks like. We have the opportunity to tell the story of God's generous work in our lives, our own personal miracle story. While people can argue theology, personal experience cannot easily be dismissed.

In order to help you to tell your personal story about how you became a Christian we would like to use the following sets of questions. There are two sets of questions.

- *Before and After Questions:* for those who remember a time when they weren't believers
- *Always Believed Questions:* for those who can't remember a time they didn't believe

Choose a set and answer those questions. Do not do both sets of questions.

'Before and After' Questions

1. Before:

- a. What was my life like before I received Christ? (Reflect on your values, direction of life, and in a general way, lifestyle)

- b. When did I first become aware of God working in my life? (What did God do to get your attention so that you were ultimately ready to receive Christ?)

2. How:

- a. How did I come to understand the gospel? (Share what Christ did for you at the cross and the significance of his resurrection).

- b. How did I receive Christ? (Explain how you came to see your need and how God opened your heart to him. If possible, include a verse that explains what happened).

3. After:

- a. What changed after I became a Christian? (Reflect on attitudes, desires, values, actions, habits, relationships, etc.)

- b. What are my goals and ambitions now? (Reflect on key things learned from following him; how God has led you; present direction of life, etc.)

'Always Believed' Questions

1. The Present:

- a. What does my faith in Jesus Christ mean for me today? (Reflect on attitudes, desires, values, actions, habits, relationships, etc.)

- b. What are the most significant things about my life with Jesus? (for example, how God has led you, how you have grown, changed ambitions, etc.)

2. The Past:

- a. How did I grow into my present relationship with Jesus? (Reflect on the process of your maturing in faith; significant events and circumstances, etc.)

- b. Who have been significant people who influenced and encouraged you in your spiritual journey?

3. The Gospel Facts:

- a. Why are the cross and resurrection so important to me?

- b. What do they teach me about the character of God?

Part 4: Small Group Exercise – Sharing Your Story

1. Take out the Home Exercise: *Your Story*. Using a highlighter, spend 5 minutes highlighting the key words in each of your answers.
2. Using your highlighted sheet, practice telling your story to a partner in 3-5 minutes. Keep in mind that this is a first try. As the listener, imagine that you do not believe or understand the Christian faith.
3. Share in your study group what was hard or surprising about this exercise.
4. Share what you imagine would be helpful about your partner's story if you were an unbeliever.

Part 5: Practical Tips

Read through the following list of practical tips together as a group. Comment and add any additional ideas your group comes up with.

Practical Tips on *How to Tell Your Story*

Don't be afraid. If people have asked you about your story, they want you to tell them. It is your story and you know it best. Speak from the heart.

Remember to be personal, not preachy, brief, honest and authentic. This is not a memorized speech to be delivered. It is an interactive conversation.

Don't dwell too much on your past but move quickly on to how Jesus has impacted you. This is supposed to be about Jesus not about you.

It is very important to listen to the Spirit's promptings. He is our guide and will speak through us. Sometimes He will also close our mouths!

Keep your story Christ-centered and Biblical. As Paul did at the Aeropagas, begin with what your audience knows and move to the person of Jesus.

As with our whole Christian life, we are to be dependent on God for helping us to tell our story. Prayer is essential.

Be aware of how the other person is receiving your story. Watch their body language. Be prepared to stop to answer questions, ask them how they feel or to ask them if they understand what you mean.

Think about concluding your story by looking for a response from the listener in terms of understanding or personal commitment. "Do you understand?" "What do you think about what I have said?" "Would you consider reading the Bible together? "

Try not to take rejection of the gospel personally.

Other Ideas?

Part 6: Conclude with Prayer

Study 6: Asking Questions: Invitation and Examination

2 Timothy 4:1-5

In first two weeks of this series we examined four topics:

1. What is evangelism (communication about Christ/call for response)
2. Why we should take evangelism seriously (love; obedience; joy)
3. God's part in evangelism (the much greater part!)
4. Our part in evangelism (God works through us)

In week three we began to consider the first two of 6 ways that God speaks through us:

1. Through integrity of lifestyle (grace and humility)
2. Through integrity of speech (openness and honesty about life and faith)

In weeks four and five we looked more closely at

3. *the content* of God's message to humanity (“the gospel”, or “good news”), and
4. our own *experience* of the gospel (God's story acted out in our own lives).

This week, we will focus on *asking* questions. Asking questions implies two types of activity:

- **invitation**
 - inviting people to events or groups your church may host
 - inviting people to find out more about the Lord Jesus Christ through further investigation or discussion
 - inviting people to put their faith in Christ who invites us to respond to him
- **examination**
 - asking someone questions about what they believe, in order to understand their beliefs
 - asking someone probing questions (following the example of Jesus) to help them discern inconsistencies or false assumptions in their own beliefs

Part 1: Prayer

Continue to pray for one another, for open doors, and for specific people in your life.

Part 2: Bible Study – 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5

1. What is the “charge” or “exhortation”?
2. What is the reason the charge is given? Why is that important?
3. How do verses 3 and 4 describe the ‘coming time’? Have we come to that time today?

What are the implications of living in a time such as this?

4. What do all the elements of the charge in verse 2 have in common?

5. From everything we have learned in these studies so far, what do you think it means to 'do the work of an evangelist?'

Do you consider yourself an evangelist?

Part 3: Inviting

Extending an invitation to anything explicitly Christian scares most of us, and yet most people come to know about Christ because someone they know invited them to "come and see."

- Think about your own journey to Christ. What role did an invitation (or a series of invitations) make in God revealing His grace to you?

- Think of the last times you were invited to something that made you naturally apprehensive. What would've been the components of the best invitation *for you?* (*i.e. casual or formal, written or conversational, spontaneous and last minute or three weeks ahead, serious or humorous*)

Read through the following list of practical tips together as a group. Comment and add any additional ideas your group comes up with.

Practical Tips on *Inviting*

Many people do not assume that they are invited to your church (any more than you'd assume an invitation to a mosque or a private club).

Many people are curious and want to be invited to learn more.

Invitations are easiest to respond to positively when you understand why you are being invited.

Remember that most people generally say no a few times before they say yes. *Christianity Explored* author Rico Tice says that it usually takes three to four invitations to their course before someone will attend.

Inviting someone to an event or a course is like asking them on a date. It is normal to be nervous.

Keep the goal in mind. The goal is not to get them to a particular event at all costs, but that they would know Christ. So the tone of your invitation needs to reveal Christ.

Invitation: Getting our Expectations Right

Mark chapter 4 (The Parable of the Sower) reveals that when we speak the word of God, which includes invitation, we should expect three things:

- Disappointment (4:1-8, 14-20): The seed can fall in unfruitful places, or *appear* to take root. An invitation may seem to be gladly received, but a person doesn't show up, or comes to an event and never talks about what they heard.
- Delay (4:26-29): It takes time for fruit to appear. Sometimes it seems that nothing is happening, but we don't know how God is at work in unseen ways.
- Dramatic Results (4:30-32): Jesus concludes this section by talking about a small seed that makes a large tree. The effect produced seems to be not equivalent with the input. There is a disproportionate quantity of fruit for an insignificant seed. Such as the power of God. When our words and invitations seem weak to us, God may use them for great gain.

In the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:12-24) God invites everyone to the eternal banquet. In the parable, God's servants are those people who pass on His invitation to others. But some people will reject his invitation. It may feel like they are rejecting the invitation and the servants, but if they persist they are rejecting God himself.

Part 4: Asking Questions

Focus: Asking Questions

Even though we may feel like we are always ‘on the defensive’, trying to answer questions people have about the Christian faith, in the Bible it is God who questions us: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (Job 38:4) “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain...against the LORD and against his Anointed...” (Psalm 2:2). In the garden of Eden, after the Fall, it isn’t Adam and Eve asking questions of God but God asking questions of them! The Bible is full of questions we need to answer.

Jesus often answered questions with questions, aimed at teaching, exposing false assumptions, or revealing hard hearts and folly: “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?” “Who do you say that I am?” “Do you know what I have done for you?”

One of the most effective ways to converse with people about the gospel is simply to ask them questions. Here are some to start with. See if you can come up with more that may be interesting conversation ‘starters’ or probing questions:

- Do you have spiritual resources to deal with that?
- What do you mean by _____? (define ‘God’, ‘religion’, ‘religion’, ‘church’, ‘spirituality’, ‘salvation’, ‘sin’ etc.)
- What do *you* think? (in response to someone's hard question)
- Do you have any church background?
- Have you ever been to church? (What did you think?)
- What does your religion say about Jesus?
- In your religion, what happens after death?
-
-
-
-
-

6. Can you think of a time when you asked someone ‘probing’ questions about what they believed? What was the result?

Has somebody asked you these kinds of questions? How did these kinds of questions help your faith in Christ?

Conclusion: Colossians 4:2-6

Consider again these words:

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.