

# The Gospel Story

We often are in relationship with others who have a need in their lives for which the gospel is the answer (the gospel is pretty much the answer to every life issue) but we find ourselves ill equipped to offer it to them.

For example, you're talking with someone who's struggling with career, marriage, raising children, experiencing lots of stress, anxiety, and frustration.

Here is one way to share the Gospel Story that perhaps relates to those of a younger, more post-modern generation (Millennials & Z). God will give you your own way of how to share the gospel. He will always use your own life story to do that. So be free to share along the way how this is a part of your own story.

## 1. God's Love & Glory

God made man for glory. Glory is that sense of personal significance, worth, value, stability and meaningful purpose in life.

When God made us he gave us glory. In the garden...We were totally satisfied and fulfilled in the significance...the worth, meaningful purpose and value that he put inside us. We were so satisfied and fulfilled in it that we sought it from nowhere else. Complete contentment.

Psalm 8:4-5 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup>what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

<sup>5</sup>Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

## 2. Our Sin—Glory Lost

Adam & Eve, being tempted & deceived by the Devil, thought that they should have more than God had provided for them, and decided to disobey God and take from the one tree that God had forbidden. This act of disobedience the Bible calls sin against God...seeking meaningful life apart from relationship with God.

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned against God they immediately lost the glory...the sense of significance and meaningful life, and began hiding and covering up...seeking by their own means to regain the lost sense of worth (glory).

Adam and Eve sought their significance and acceptance in coverings that they made with their own hands (the fig leaves). But their own coverings wouldn't hold up.

Ever since that garden experience (the fall) we, along with Adam & Eve, have sinned against God by also seeking significance and meaning in life, on our own, apart from God...sinning against him.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

And we also, along with Adam & Eve, try to cover up ourselves as we present to others a pretend version of who we really are (fig leaves) seeking acceptance & love. We look to many other things to provide this essential thing in life for us, but they can't. Deep inside we're always left lacking. This *lacking* the Bible calls *spiritual death*. It's the death of our spiritual life with God because of our choosing to go our own way.

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Deep inside our soul knows that our looking to worldly means of gaining life are only a flimsy cover up of the real thing that's there...our true unworthiness...our true unacceptability.

We try education, successful careers, a good marriage, money, reputation, and worldly success. But they won't hold up. We're still left with the deep longing inside us for the real thing...the real meaning...the real glory that can only come from God.

There is still something lacking deep within us that we can't make up...Something that only God can fix.

### **3. Jesus—God's provision for Glory Regained**

God made a way to again give us his glory, to unite us to himself in relationship...to experience his love and forgiveness for us, and his plan for a meaningful & satisfying life. He made a way to forgive us for our sin against him. He sent to us his own glory in his son, Jesus.

This forgiveness he offered to us at a very high cost. It required the shedding of blood to forgive our sins.

For Adam and Eve this forgiveness through the shedding of blood was signified by clothes made from an animal skin...a covering (forgiveness). That required the animal to die...it's blood to be shed, and by God's hand, not by Adam's or Eve's. This was to demonstrate to Adam & Eve the high cost of their forgiveness and to point them to the coming, bleeding Messiah, the Savior Jesus, the real covering over our sin, and our unworthiness.

That's what all the sacrifices were about in the Old Testament. They were teaching people then, and us now, that our forgiveness and relationship with God is costly and requires a great sacrifice. All the sacrifices were pointing to one BIG Sacrifice...The Cross of Jesus. Our forgiveness from sin required a sacrifice of this magnitude.

Jesus, God in the flesh, was God's means of our redemption from our sin.

John 3:16 (ESV)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And this forgiveness was not something that we had to perform for, keep religious laws, or be good enough for. It is a Free Gift from God to us.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The proof that Jesus Christ really was the true Messiah and Savior for us was his resurrection from the dead.

Luke 24:33-39 (ESV)

<sup>33</sup>And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

<sup>34</sup>saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

<sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

<sup>36</sup>As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

<sup>37</sup>But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

<sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

<sup>39</sup>See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

## 4. Repentance

We receive this wonderful gift from God of his forgiveness through repentance from our sin, and trust in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Repentance means turning around. It means that we're making a choice to do something differently. It means that instead of trying to find this glory...meaning in

life, a sense of personal worth and significance, value ...peace...joy... on our own, by our own efforts, like Adam and Eve tried to do, we accept God's gift of grace in Jesus.

Grace is receiving something really wonderful that we don't deserve or earn.

God offers to us his grace in Jesus Christ as a Savior for our sin.

And...in our repentance we cease, as a way of life, to seek a meaningful life apart from God, but in the way that God provided for us to...in a personal relationship with him, like Adam & Eve had before the fall.

Then, by keeping his commands out of a sense of gratitude and love for him, we will experience the best of life possible in a broken world.

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## 5. The Holy Spirit

Daily Repentance—a life of strength, joy, meaning, and peace in the power of the Holy Spirit

Romans 15:13 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

This means that we need to daily follow God in the strength that he provides for us through the Holy Spirit. Only by *walking in the Spirit*, will we experience the life that we long for. We don't do it perfectly. We still sin against him in our effort to obey him. But, when we sin, he forgives us when we ask him. Thus repentance becomes a way of life for us...daily recognizing our sin and seeking his forgiveness as we strive, in our response to his love and grace, to live, by the power of the Holy Spirit in a way that pleases him and provides for us the best life that we can imagine. This is often called discipleship...becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, that we might learn and live as a follower of his in the power of his Spirit.

Ephesians 3:14–19 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

<sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

<sup>16</sup>that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

<sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

<sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

<sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

This is the gospel of Jesus and how we come to become disciples of Jesus Christ and followers of him.