

# GOSPEL FLUENCY

*A Two-Session Study on Speaking the Language of the Gospel*

What would it look like to live a life that the truths of the Gospel were the first things that came to mind as you had conversations, made decisions, interacted with family, friends and colleagues. It would be more than a “What Would Jesus Do” bracelet from the 1980’s. It would be more like “How Would Jesus Love, Interact, Decide, Be Compassionate, Kind Caring, Discerning, Listen, Teach and Encourage?” Not only would that be a longer bracelet, but it would also have far greater impact on the world around us. We are taught throughout the New Testament to imitate Christ. (John 13:15, Eph 5:1-2, 1 John 2:6, 1 Peter 2:21) We are called to forward leaning movement, and this calling is part of the normal Christian experience.

Jeff Vanderstelt, a pastor in Bellevue, Washington, wrote a book in 2017 titled “Gospel Fluency” and I give him credit for the snappy title. Vanderstelt’s book points to how the first century church consistently pointed to Jesus and that’s the hope of this short study. Together we will discover what it looks like to have the same love and sympathy that Jesus did for those in our spheres of influence and regularly connect their life experiences to the good news, pointing them to Jesus.

## How to Use This Guide

This study is organized into two sessions, each containing five sections. Each section opens with one or two Scripture passages for the group to read aloud, followed by guided discussion questions. A story then illustrates the scriptural themes and opens the conversation further. A reflection time invites participants to place their own lives inside the topic. Each section closes with a single memorable Point to carry forward. Sessions conclude with homework and a personal challenge designed to move participants toward Gospel Fluency and Christlikeness.

### **Format per section:**

- Scripture passage(s) for group reading
- Discuss as a Group questions
- Story to illustrate and deepen the theme
- Reflection with additional discussion
- Point: a single phrase to remember

# What Is Gospel Fluency?

## 1. Being Fluent



### *Colossians 4:2–6*

*Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.*

*Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*

### DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- What are the two pulses of gospel fluency that Paul speaks of in this passage?

### STORY *The Extra Chair*

Mara kept an extra chair at her small kitchen table. It was not decorative. It was intentional. Every Thursday evening, the same quiet rhythm unfolded: soup simmering and bread warming. Often, someone new sat in that extra chair. A coworker having a hard week, a neighbor who had just moved in, or a friend of a friend who simply needed to get out of the house.

Mara was gifted at listening more than she spoke. She laughed easily, asked thoughtful questions, and remembered small details, like favorite teas, upcoming exams, and sick relatives. Her kindness felt natural, not rehearsed.

One evening, Grace, a work colleague, said to Mara: "There is something more to you. You have this peace, even when things go sideways."

"There is something more," Mara said. "I believe I have been loved and welcomed by God in a way I did not earn. It changes how I see people, how I want to treat them, and how I want to encourage them."

Grace responded, "What do you mean by that?"

And there it was: the open door of opportunity to speak the truths of the good news.

Mara did not rush. She spoke simply and kindly, seasoning her words with the salt of hope. She shared how Jesus had met her in her own brokenness, how she had found forgiveness and purpose, and how the love of Jesus spilled into the way she welcomed others at her table.

The conversation stretched into the evening.

### DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- In what ways is Mara Gospel Fluent?

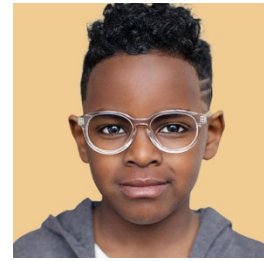
### REFLECTION

- Have you traveled in a non-English-speaking country, and how did you overcome the language and culture barriers?
- What are the differences between a tourist and a local?
- As tourists, we learn phrases to help us navigate the places we go. Christians have their own language. List as many “Christianese” phrases as you can.

### POINT

***Many Christians are like \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_,  
we know \_\_\_\_\_, but not the \_\_\_\_\_.***

## 2. The Gospel as a Lens



### **2 Corinthians 5:17–19**

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

### **Romans 8:1–8**

*Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

*For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- How does becoming a “new creature” or “being set free from sin and death” change the way you view your past, present, and future?
- How does the “ministry of reconciliation” and the truth of “no condemnation” change the way you see your role in relationships, conflicts, and the world in general around you?

### **STORY *Greg’s New Glasses***

Greg was a typical five-year-old. He played in the dirt, rode his little bike, played kickball with the neighbor kids, and loved ice cream and cake. Saturday morning was made for cartoons, and his folks noticed that Greg consistently sat very close to the television.

Greg’s parents found an eye doctor they trusted and made an appointment. After a quick visit to Dr. Johnson, the mystery was solved. A few tests later, it was clear that Greg had myopia. He was nearsighted and needed glasses in a significant way.

The day finally came when they went to pick up Greg’s new glasses. The optometrist placed those little brown frames on Greg’s face and adjusted the earpieces until they fit perfectly. It was like unlocking a new and fantastic world filled with wonder. Street signs, stoplights, billboards, and buildings all came into clear view.

Greg could see perfectly, as long as he was wearing his glasses.

## DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- What steps did it take for Greg to see the world differently?
- What makes our view of the world blurry?

## REFLECTION

The Gospel and the meta-narrative of Scripture move through four key movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation. Consider the following summaries as you discuss.

### **Creation**

Where did everything come from? Genesis 1-2 gives us the account of God's creation of all things, including us, his creatures and image-bearers. Although this section of the Bible is short, it's theologically significant and foundational to everything that follows, setting the stage for the rest of the Bible's unfolding drama.

Here we meet several key characters and first grasp the setting for Scripture's story. Also, in creation, various typological patterns are established, that in the story will reach their fulfillment in Christ and the new covenant (e.g., the *rest* of the seventh day [Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11] and salvation rest in Christ [Heb. 3:7-4:13]; Eden as a temple sanctuary that is fulfilled in Christ as the new temple; and marriage which points to a greater reality, namely Christ's relationship to his people [Gen. 2:24-25; Eph. 5:32]). *All* of these patterns will be progressively unpacked through the later covenants, all working toward an ultimate end and explaining the Bible's story.

### **Fall**

What went wrong? In Genesis 3, everything changed in God's good world. Adam, the first man, forever changed the direction of history with his choice to rebel against God. When tempted by the serpent, Adam disobeyed God and plunged all humanity into sin, death, and condemnation.

The Fall establishes the terrible problem that the rest of Scripture is written to address. Apart from Genesis 3, we cannot make sense of God's plan of redemption and how we, as humans, can stand justified before our holy God, given our sin. Because of Adam's sin and our banishment from God's presence, our only hope is found in God's gracious initiative to redeem and to reverse the effects of sin and death caused by Adam.

### **Redemption**

Where do we find hope? In Genesis 3:15, God promises that a son, the "seed" of the woman, will one day defeat the serpent and reverse what Adam did. Although humans merit death for their sin (Rom. 6:23), death will not have the last word. In truth, the rest of the Bible, with all of its stories and details, the people, the sacrificial system, its saving events, tells us how this will happen by slowly unfolding this "good news" promise, which ultimately leads us to Christ.

As history unfolds, Christ eventually comes, God's own Son, and by his life, death, and resurrection, the Father creates a new humanity, the church, who enjoy the full forgiveness of sins, new hearts, and access to the Father by the Spirit. In Christ, what the triune God originally intended for his creatures, crippled by the Fall, is now beginning to be restored.

### **New Creation**

Where is history going? The direction of history is toward the new creation, the goal and end of God's redeeming promise. The present order is the old creation in Adam, but Christ will bring a new creation. The OT prophets describe this new creation as arriving in the coming of God's King and Messiah. Through his life and cross-work, Jesus brings the new creation. In his return, the new creation is consummated, as beautifully portrayed in Revelation 21-22. But even now,

some of what John envisioned is present in Christ's people, who are a new creation, a colony of the future age, although we still await the fullness of it when Christ returns.

*The excerpt is from the Concise Theology series from The Gospel Coalition.*

#### DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- Using these four movements, divide Greg's story into Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation.
- Divide into groups of three and take turns sharing your own life story through these four key Gospel movements.
- Take some time this week to write out your story.

#### POINT

***The \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't just \_\_\_\_\_ you, it changes how you \_\_\_\_\_ everything.***

### 3. Gospel to Self



#### **Psalm 42:5–6**

*Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, for the help of His presence. O my God, my soul is in despair within me; therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.*

#### **Romans 6:1–11**

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

*For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.*

*Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

#### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What elements of the Gospel and the meta-narrative of Scripture do these passages preach to us?

#### **STORY *Dorie: The Girl Nobody Loved***

She was too ugly to be loved by anyone. Dorie was absolutely sure that this was true. After all, her mother had told her so every time she brushed away Dorie's attempts to hug her or sit on her lap. "Why can't you be pretty, like your sister?" she would ask, pushing her away, and Dorie would once again find a place to hide and weep.

Dorie's earliest memories are of long, lonely hours spent in the apartment while her mother was working. They were often hungry. Dorie's father was not in the picture, leaving their 21-year-old mother to provide for two children during the Great Depression.

One day her mother announced, "Children, your father and I can't take care of you, so you are going to a home you will enjoy." Dorie's mother did not cry when she said goodbye at the orphanage.

If life was hard at home, it was doubly hard in the orphanage. For the seven years she would

stay there, she was beaten every night without fail before she went to bed. Dorie decided that if she could not be loved, she could at least be feared. Her tough, angry facade ensured that no one would get close enough to hurt her again.

One day, some students from a nearby university came to the orphanage to tell Bible stories and talk to the children about Jesus. They explained the Gospel and assured the children that they could experience God's love.

*"Loved by God?" Dorie thought. "Is it possible that God could love me?" She prayed for the first time. "God," she said, "if you love me, you can have me." Within two weeks, God brought a new Christian worker to the orphanage. She invited Dorie to attend church with her, and Dorie soaked up everything she could learn.*

At thirteen, Dorie was sent to a foster home. The cruelty there was unspeakable. She was abused and allowed to bathe only once a month. The children at school called her "Stinky." The next foster home was just as awful. Finally, Dorie got a job as a maid for a kind family and was able to work for her board and finish school.

God gave Dorie a husband who loved her and shared her desire to go to New Guinea. On the field, God helped Dorie to see that He had perfectly fitted her for the ministry. The people there were often cruel. She knew what it was like to both give and receive cruelty. The people there were unwashed and unlovely. Dorie knew what that felt like, too. She was able to see past those things and identify with the Dani people. She could love them, because despite everything, God loved her.

Summarized from Dorie: The Girl Nobody Loved by Doris VanStone with Erwin Lutzer (Moody Press, 1987).

#### DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- What Gospel did Dorie preach to herself?

#### REFLECTION

"God is not a mumbling trickster... If he wants us to know something, he will be both able and willing to communicate it to us plainly, just as long as we are open and prepared by our experience to hear and obey. This is exactly what takes place in the lives of... biblical characters... We may be sure that 'no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God' (2 Peter 1:21). With very little exception the form such inspiration took was nothing more than thoughts and perceptions of the distinctive character that these people had come through experience to recognize as the voice of God in their own souls." - Dallas Willard, Hearing God

We are constantly being influenced by voices that speak into our lives every day. Consider these four voices:

**The Voice of the Flesh:** Originates from within, from our own lower nature and cravings. It is characterized by selfish desires, inner turmoil, and pride.

**The Voice of the World:** Influences us from the outside through societal pressures, media, and culture. It promotes values opposite to spiritual truths, such as vanity, greed, and superficiality.

**The Voice of the Devil:** Often appears as external thoughts or accusations that lead to fear, confusion, temptation, and doubt of God's goodness.

**The Voice of God:** Brings peace, never contradicts Scripture, is never confusing, will never tempt you to sin, is never condemning, and always points toward the gospel.

Divide into groups of three and discuss:

- How do you discern the voices in your life, and what Gospel do you preach to yourself most often?

POINT

***Gospel \_\_\_\_\_ begins \_\_\_\_\_  
before it begins \_\_\_\_\_.***

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## 4. Practice Makes Perfect



### **Hebrews 5:13–14**

*For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

### **Deuteronomy 6:4–9**

*Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What role does immersion (Deuteronomy 6:7–9) play in moving someone from spiritual infancy to maturity (Hebrews 5:13–14)?
- How do both passages together shape our understanding of spiritual maturity and gospel fluency?

### **STORY *Ethan in Mexico City***

Ethan studied Spanish for five years. He aced every exam, rolled his r's with precision, and could conjugate verbs in his sleep. So when he finally landed in Mexico City, he felt ready.

The first morning, he walked into a small café. The barista smiled and asked, “¿Qué te gustaría?”

Ethan froze.

The sentence was simple, and he knew it: What would you like? But suddenly his mind went blank. His carefully memorized phrases scattered. He panicked, his heart pounding, and blurted out, “Uh... baño?” The barista pointed awkwardly toward the restroom.

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- Why did Ethan freeze?

## REFLECTION

Consider these examples of practice and immersion:

- Winchester Public Schools offers a Dual Language Program designed for families who want their children to learn another language while receiving the same high-quality academic curriculum. Language is taught through consistent, daily immersion.
- Peter wanted to learn Spanish fluently, and after countless hours of classes he was no closer to that goal. So after graduating from college he moved to a small fishing village on the coast of Mexico. He lived with a local family who did not speak English, and six months later Peter was able to communicate clearly, with a decent accent and relative ease.
- Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *Outliers*, suggests that roughly 10,000 hours of deliberate practice are required to achieve mastery in any field. He emphasizes that dedicated training rather than talent alone leads to elite performance. A study of the Berlin Academy of Music found that the top students at age 20 had practiced an average of 10,000 hours, far outpacing regular students who had practiced 8,000 hours.

## DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- How many of you took three years of a foreign language in high school and now know only a few phrases?
- Name as many activities as you can for which practice is required to master the skill.

## POINT

***We don't need more \_\_\_\_\_,  
we need \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.***

## 5. Wrap-Up and Homework



### James 1:22–25

*But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.*

### DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- We are called to be doers of the word. How do we prove that to ourselves when it comes to Gospel Fluency?

### STORY - *Walt Stack*

Walt Stack was 80 years old in 1988 when he was first featured in an advertisement for Nike, who at the time trailed Reebok as the world's top-selling shoe company. The only words Walt said in the commercial were "Just Do It!" The slogan was meant to be completely inclusive and approachable enough for anyone to grasp as their own. Decades later the phrase has become a household term for intentionally getting something done.

### REFLECTION

- How many of you have had a gym membership or started a new fitness regimen? What happened? Did you stop? Did you have encouragement along the way?

### POINT

***You won't become \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ a class—you need \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and a \_\_\_\_\_ that speaks the gospel truths with you.***

### HOMEWORK

1. Read "This Is Good News," a simple tract that offers a snapshot of the meta-narrative of Scripture and the Gospel.
2. Write out the Biblical meta-narrative in your own words, making the Gospel clear. Aim for one page in length.
3. Practice: Ask at least three people if you could practice sharing with them the Biblical meta-narrative you created.

# Gospel Fluency in Conversation

## 1. Open and Review



### *Psalm 107:1–3*

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

*Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story, those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.*

### REFLECTION

Divide into groups of three and share:

- “Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story.” How did your Gospel practice go this past week?

### STORY *The Navigator’s Challenge*

The Navigators is a parachurch ministry that has been sharing the Gospel on college campuses, military bases, in workplaces, and in communities since 1933. Bill has been on staff with the Navigators for decades. They hold an annual meeting for staff training and encouragement, and a few years ago the first main session featured a well-known Pastor and Evangelist.

His first words cut through the air like a knife: “Who shared Christ with someone today? Go ahead, raise your hands.” No hands went up to meet the challenge, not even Bill’s. The speaker tried again: “Who has shared Christ with someone this week? Raise your hand for me!” No one moved. Bill looked around, hoping no one noticed.

The speaker was not backing down. He stood on the edge of the stage and declared, “Who has shared the precious good news of our Lord Jesus Christ with anyone in this past month? Raise your hands!” Bill was relieved to be able to raise his hand along with a small number of others.

The speaker, with outstretched arms, declared: “I am embarrassed and ashamed. I share the gospel with everyone I meet, because when they see and hear me, they get a picture of my Jesus, maybe not always a good one, but a picture of what salvation looks like. It is by the grace of Jesus that I am standing here today. And so are you. You are an ambassador of the Kingdom of Good News. Everywhere you go you are a portrait of what Jesus can do.”

Bill sighed.

**REFLECTION**

Two or three people share with the group:

- What was the experience when you first shared the gospel? Tell us your story.

**POINT**

***What may have felt \_\_\_\_\_ at first now feels  
\_\_\_\_\_ because of practice.***

## 2. Overflow



### **Luke 6:43–45**

*For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.*

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What is the central theme of this passage?

### **STORY *Dan's Breaking Point (Part One)***

*"Dan, I need that report and I need it now." His manager's voice cut through the air.*

He swallowed. "Almost done," he muttered, though it was not true.

A notification pinged. Then another. His phone vibrated endlessly beside his keyboard. His heart kept pace, faster and tighter. He tried to focus, but the cursor blinked like a taunt.

*"Dan?" Louder this time.*

Something broke in Dan. "I said I'm working on it!" he snapped, louder than he meant to.

His manager frowned. "There's no need for—"

*"No need?" Dan stood abruptly, his chair scraping the floor. "No need? I have been here ten hours, fixing everyone else's mistakes, and you keep piling more on like I'm not even human!"*

Then, just as suddenly, the storm passed, leaving something hollow behind.

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What filled Dan to overflowing in this story?

### **STORY *Dan's Breaking Point (Part Two)***

*"Dan, I need that report and I need it now." His manager's voice cut through the air.*

He inhaled, slowly. "I'm close," he said, though the truth wavered a bit.

A notification pinged. Then another. His phone vibrated endlessly beside his keyboard. His heart kept pace, faster and tighter. He tried to focus, but the cursor blinked like a taunt.

*"Dan?" Louder this time.*

Something in Dan moved forward. "I hear you," he said, his voice quieter than expected. "I'm

trying to finish it, but I'm juggling a few things right now. How can I best help you as we prioritize what you need first?"

His manager paused, caught off guard. "The report," she said, less forcefully. "That's priority."  
"Okay," Dan nodded. "I'll focus on that."

#### DISCUSS AS A GROUP

- What filled Dan to overflowing in this version of the story?

#### REFLECTION

Have you ever filled a glass with too much water and then tried to carry it across the room?

Our words and actions are direct reflections of what is stored in our hearts. If our hearts are filled with love, peace, and trust in God, our words will bring life lived in the gospel. But if our hearts are weighed down by pain, anger, and resentment, it will show in how we speak and treat others.

**Fill your heart with the gospel → life bumps you → the gospel comes out.**

#### POINT

***You can't \_\_\_\_\_ fluency,  
it is an \_\_\_\_\_ of your \_\_\_\_\_.***

### 3. Gospel Connections



#### **James 1:19–22**

*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

#### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- How do you best “receive the word” in your daily life?

#### **STORY *Jan at the Grocery Store***

You see your friend Jan at the grocery store and strike up a conversation. “I haven’t seen you in a while. How are you doing, Jan?” With a sigh, Jan says tiredly, “I’m exhausted from work. I feel like I’m playing catch-up every day.”

You nod, but Jan keeps talking, her words coming faster than she seems to notice. “There is always one more thing I could have done better. One more email I should have sent, one more detail I missed.” She forces a laugh. “Everyone else makes it look so easy.”

Her grip tightens on the cart handle. “I just don’t want to fall behind, you know? I can’t mess this up.”

You offer that “I know what you’re feeling” kind of nod. Jan’s words spill out: “I just want them to know I’m doing a good job.”

You realize she is not just tired. She is afraid of stopping long enough to feel like she is not enough.

#### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What Gospel truths does Jan need to hear from you?

Questions to ask ourselves as we respond:

- How does the gospel bring good news to this situation?
- What about the gospel needs to be heard right now?
- What about the gospel has been forgotten or failed to be believed in this moment?
- How is Jesus better than what we have or what we want here?

**REFLECTION**

Think of a conversation as an iceberg. The words someone speaks are only the tip. Below the surface live their deeper desires, fears, and longings. Thoughtful questions help us discern where the gospel is most needed.

**Words = the tip of the iceberg**

**Desires and fears = what lies below the surface**

**Questions help us discern where the gospel is needed.**

**POINT**

***Gospel fluency connects \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_.***

## 4. Practice: Role Play



### **Philemon 1:4–7**

*I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake. For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.*

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- How have “the hearts of the saints” been refreshed, and what example does that set for us?
- How does this passage inspire you to encourage and strengthen others with the gospel?

### **REFLECTION**

Divide into pairs or small groups of three. Pick one of the following scene starters and role-play the conversation, responding with gospel-centered care and attentiveness. Take turns and switch scene starters. If you are in a group of three, rotate roles.

#### **Scene 1: “I Said I’m Fine”:**

Person 1: I said I’m fine. Why can’t you just believe me?

Person 2: Because “fine” doesn’t usually come with shaking hands.

Person 1: It’s just stress. It’ll pass.

Person 2: You look like you’re holding something so tightly it might break you.

#### **Scene 2: Breaking Point After Work:**

Person 1: It was just another day, nothing worth talking about.

Person 2: Then why did you sit in your car for 20 minutes before coming inside?

Person 1: I just needed a minute.

#### **Scene 3: 2 A.M. Truths:**

Person 1: I always have trouble sleeping. It’s not new.

Person 2: You’ve been up three nights in a row.

Person 1: I’ll crash eventually.

#### **Scene 4: Anger Covering Hurt:**

Person 2: You snapped at me earlier. That’s not like you.

Person 1: Maybe I’m just tired of people poking at me.

Person 2: I’m not poking. I’m worried.

Person 1: Well, stop. I don't need that.

**Scene 5: Fear of Being “Too Much”:**

Person 1: If I tell you everything, you'll look at me differently.

Person 2: Try me.

Person 1: You say that now. But people always do, until it's too heavy.

Person 2: I'm still here.

Person 1: For now.

After the role plays, discuss as a group: What did you take away from the experience?

**POINT**

***Awkward \_\_\_\_\_ is the path to \_\_\_\_\_ fluency.***

## 5. Final Challenge and Closing



### **Matthew 28:19–20**

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What are the commands in this passage, and what does obedience to them look like in everyday life?

### **STORY *The Portrait Nobody Knew Was Painted***

Donald Whitney tells this story in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*.

A man became a Christian during an evangelistic event in his city. When he told his boss about it, his boss responded, “That’s great! I’m a Christian and I’ve been praying for you for years!”

But the new believer was crestfallen. “Why didn’t you ever tell me you were a Christian? You were the very reason I have not been interested in the gospel all these years.”

*“How can that be?” the boss wondered. “I have done my very best to live the Christian life around you.”*

*“That’s the point,” explained the employee. “You lived a model life without telling me it was Christ who made you different. I convinced myself that if you could live such a good and happy life without Christ, then I could too.”*

### **DISCUSS AS A GROUP**

- What disconnection did the employer have in his faith, and what does it reveal about the difference between living well and speaking the gospel?
- Who needs to hear gospel truths from you? Picture that person in your mind. How will you step into that conversation?

### **POINT**

***You grow in gospel fluency when you \_\_\_\_\_  
step into \_\_\_\_\_ thinking about the gospel  
and its power to \_\_\_\_\_ and make \_\_\_\_\_.***