

Gospel in Life
Grace Changes
Everything



Gospel in Life is an intensive eight-session course on the Gospel and how it is lived out in all of life. First in our heart, then in our community, and lastly out into the world.

Session 1 opens the course with the theme of the city: our home now, the world that is. It concludes in Session 8 with the theme of the eternal city: our heavenly home, the world to come. In between, we will look at how the gospel changes our heart (sessions 2 & 3), changes our community (sessions 4 & 5), and changes how we live in the world (sessions 6 & 7).

The study contains Bible studies, discussion questions and a DVD. There is an elective home study for those that chose to go deeper into the subjects.

The Eight Studies:

1. The World That Is
2. Three Ways To Live
3. The Sin Beneath The Sin
4. The Context For Change
5. An Alternate City
6. Cultivating The Garden
7. A People For Others
8. The World That Is To Come

It is suggested the individuals read the bible verses before the Life Group meets. The verses will be read in the group and questions will be answered in the group.

After the bible study is completed the group will watch a 10 minute video. The group is then encouraged to discuss the video and answer the questions included in the study.

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Gospel in Life

Session One: The World That is



Bible Study

Jeremiah 29:1-4

Context

In 586 BC, Jerusalem was destroyed and the elite of Jewish Society—the artisans and professionals and leaders were taken to Babylon by force. The prophet Jeremiah received a word from the Lord and wrote these exiles a letter.

Read Jeremiah 29:4-14:

It said: ⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ⁸For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, ⁹for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

¹⁰For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Group Questions:

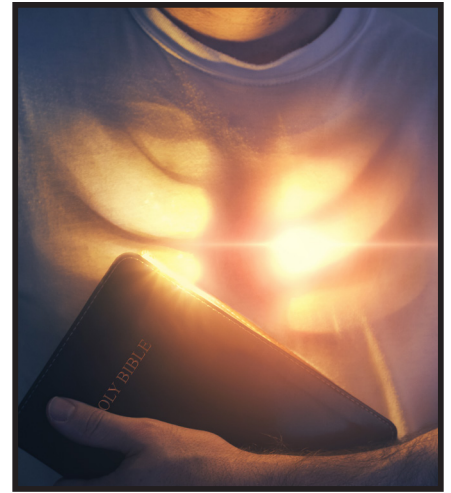
1. What specific directions does God give the exiles for relating to the city of Babylon in verses 4-7? How do you think the exiles felt about this?

2. What is the relationship between the "prosper you" of verse 11 and the "prosperity of the city" of verse 7?

3. What was the purpose of the exile, according to verses 11-14? Why do you think these verses were included in the letter?

Gospel in Life

Session Two: Three Ways to Live



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we saw that we are not just to seek prosperity and peace in the places where we live, but we are to seek prosperity and peace *for* the places where we live. God says in Jeremiah chapter 29 verse 7, "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." We are to serve and love our place of residence, rather than resemble it, or remove ourselves from it.

We saw that cities were designed to be places of refuge and safety, places of justice, places of culture development, and places of spiritual seeking and finding. In order to seek their peace and prosperity we: serve and love those who need help and protection, bring God's love and justice to bear on a broken world, create and cultivate culture, and hold out Christ as the ultimate satisfaction of people's spiritual search. We are going to look at each of these themes in more detail in the sessions that follow.

This session's theme is the gospel and the heart.

Bible Study

Read Luke 18:9-14:

⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to

me, a sinner!' 14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Group Questions:

1. Look at what the Pharisee says about himself in verses 11 & 12. Is the Pharisee a hypocrite?

2. What does the Pharisee understand righteousness to be and how to achieve it?

3. The tax collector does not actually say what you see in the English translation of verse 13, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." He uses a definite article in the Greek. He says, "God, have mercy on me, *the* sinner." What can we learn about repentance from the attitude of the tax collector?

DVD Section

First, read Luke 15:11-32:

¹¹And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Now watch DVD for session 2

Discussion Questions

1. Was there anything in the DVD new to you, or had an effect on you? Did you hear anything that raised more questions in your mind?

2. Which of the two brothers is easiest for you to identify with, and why?

3. What emotions and attitudes does the elder brother display, and what does this show about his relationship with God?

4. If Jesus is our true elder brother, how does it change the way we live on a daily basis?

Close the session with prayer

Gospel in Life

Session Three: The Sin Beneath The Sin



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we looked at the parable of the two lost sons in Luke 15 and saw that there are two ways to be your own savior and lord, just as there were two ways the sons tried to get the father's things. One son tried to do it by living a bad life, the other by living a good life. We concluded that there are three ways to relate to God—irreligion, religion, and the gospel. The irreligious don't repent at all. The religious only repent of sins. But Christians repent of both their sins and of their righteousness.

We also saw that religion is the default mode of the human heart and that behavioral compliance to rules without heart change will be superficial and fleeting. It is only an ever deepening faith in the gospel that restructures our motivations, our self-understanding and identity, and our view of the world. Only the gospel changes our hearts.

This session we continue the theme of gospel and the heart by looking at how and why our hearts construct idols.

Bible Study

Read Romans 1:18-25:

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise,

they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Group Questions:

1. What is the reason that our minds and hearts become “futile” and “darkened”?

2. According to these verses, what are some of the results of idolatry in our lives?

3. What do these verses tell us about the wrath of God?

4. What are some examples of personal idols?

DVD Section

Watch DVD for session 3

Discussion Questions

1. Was there anything from the DVD that was new to you, or had an effect on you? Did it raise more questions in your mind?

2. "If you really want to change... Jesus Christ must become your over-mastering positive passion." When and how have you found this to be true in your experience or in the lives of people you know?

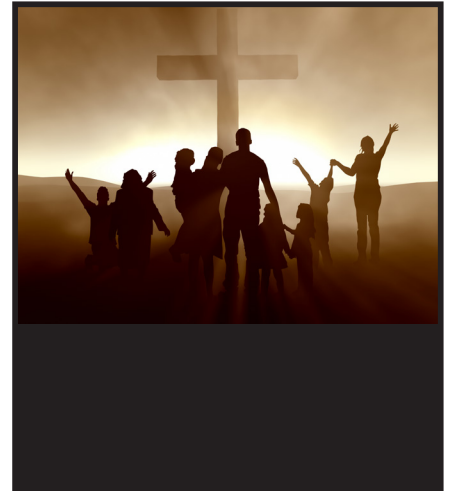
3. Sir William Temple said, "Your religion is what you do with your solitude." When you are alone what do you tend to think about most? Where do your thoughts go naturally, instinctively, habitually? How does this help identify your goals?

4. Under every behavioral sin is the sin of idolatry, and under every act of idolatry is a disbelief in the gospel. Do you agree? Why or why not? What are the implications of how we really change our hearts and lives?

Close the session with prayer

Gospel in Life

Session Four: The Context For Change



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we saw that nothing is to be more fundamental than God to our happiness, meaning in life, and identity. We saw, however, that we easily create idols.

An idol is anything besides Jesus Christ that we feel we must have to be happy, anything that is more important to our heart than God, anything that is enslaving our heart through inordinate desires. Martin Luther said that under every behavioral sin is the sin of idolatry, and under every act of idolatry is a disbelief in the gospel.

As we look now at the idea of a Christian community, keep in mind that idolatry is also one of the key problems we face when it comes to creating community.

Bible Study

Read Philippians 2:1-11:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Discussion Questions

1. Looking at verses 2:2-4, what can we infer is the problem that Paul is addressing in the Philippian church?

2. What are the four grounds for unity and humility that Paul lists in verse 1? How do these grounds lead to unity and humility?

3. Verse 5 says, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." What do we learn about Jesus' attitude from verses 6-11?

DVD Section

First, read 1 Peter 2:9-12:

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Now watch DVD for session 4

Discussion Questions

1. Was there anything from the DVD that was new to you, or had an effect on you? Did it raise more questions in your mind?

2. We heard in the DVD that,

We are "a holy nation"—different, distinct from the world and the people around us. And yet at the same time, we're supposed to be "a royal priesthood"—deeply involved in the lives of the world and the people around us.

Do you feel that you are part of the sort of community described in the DVD? If not, why not? What can you do to make this happen?

3. "We will not know God, change deeply, nor win the world apart from community." To what extent have you experienced this?

Close the session with prayer

Gospel in Life

Session Five: An Alternate City



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we saw that the church is “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9). It is a new humanity, a new community of people under the lordship of Christ.

We need to create a great community because that is, according to Jesus in John 17 verses 20-23, a crucial way to show the world that we are truly followers of Christ. In fact, we saw that we will not know God, change deeply, or win the world apart from community.

This sessions continues the theme of gospel and community, and looks at how we witness as a community.

Bible Study

Read Acts 2:42-47:

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Group Questions:

1. What do we discover about how the early church learned together? What do we discover about fellowship and service? What can we learn from this?

2. The early church was so involved with fellowship they experienced it every day. Do we have daily fellowship? Why or why not?

3. What do we discover about how the early church worshiped and how they grew?

DVD Section

Watch DVD for session 5

Discussion Questions

1. "An Alternate city is gospel-speaking." What intimidates us about telling other people about Jesus?

2. Are some people more intimidating than others? Why? What motivates us to tell people about Jesus?

3. "There is a credibility that comes if you are consistent in your behavior, there is a credibility that comes if people see the gospel transforming you." Do people notice your lifestyle and that of your community? Do they appreciate it, even if they don't understand it?

Close the session with prayer

Gospel in Life

Session Six: Cultivating The Garden



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we saw that our community is to be a “city on a hill” (Matt. 5:14). The world must see in our community what life can be in all its beauty under the kingship of Jesus Christ.

We also saw that it is important to have gospel-speaking, neighborhood-loving, community-transformed congregations everywhere. Only the gospel enables us to build an alternate city together.

This session’s theme is the gospel and our work.

Bible Study

Read Matthew 6:19-21:

¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss “treasures in heaven” (v. 20) and “treasures on earth” (v. 19). Define these concepts. What are the differences between them?

2. How do most people you know tend to spend their time, energy and money? Where do you spend money on most effortlessly and joyfully?

3. How might you and your group go about storing up “treasures in heaven”?

DVD Section

Watch DVD for session 6

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the practical implications of the biblical teachings that work is good and has dignity?

2. What are some of the practical implications of the biblical teachings that we must not separate God from our work?

3. Besides telling co-workers about Christ, what does it mean to “bring the gospel into your work”? Brainstorm some ways that you can work with Christian distinctiveness in your workplace.

Close the session with prayer

Gospel in Life

Session Seven: A People For Others



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we saw that Christian living is a continual process of bringing everything in line with the truth of the gospel. It means that all of our jobs and gifts and skills are to be realigned in light of the mission of the kingdom of Christ.

We saw that the gospel changes the motivation, ethics, and conception of our work. We also saw that we must the gospel with us to work.

This session's theme is the gospel and our neighbor.

Bible Study

Read Luke 10:25-37:

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a

DVD Section

Watch DVD for session 7

Discussion Questions

1. **"Shalom means total flourishing in absolutely every dimension: physically, relationally, socially, and spiritually." In what practical ways can you and your group "resolve to have shalom felt everywhere...and begin to reweave the broken fabric of creation"? What can you as a group (or a church) bring into your neighborhood that is uniquely helpful?**

2. **Benjamin Fernando from Sri Lanka writes,**

There is no such thing as a separate individual gospel and a separate social gospel. There is only one gospel—a redeemed man in a reformed society... Social problems assume greater importance in Christianity than in Buddhism or Hinduism. The theory of Karma and rebirth gives a fairly reasonable explanation for social inequalities of this life which on the one hand are consequences of the previous life and on the other hand can be compensated for in the next life. But to a Christian there is only one earthly life and so social problems have to be dealt with now or never.

Do you agree with his assessment that "social problems have to be dealt with now or never"? Why or why not?

3. "It's natural to want to help people who are like you, who like you, and who you like." What would it mean for you, specifically, to help people who are not like you, who do not like you, and whom you do not like?

Close the session with prayer

Gospel in Life

Session Eight: The World To Come



Summary Of Previous Section

Pray for the session

Read the paragraphs below aloud to summarize the main points of the previous session

Last session we saw that we are to bring shalom to the world. We need to “act justly” and “love mercy.” We are to be engaged with our neighbors and with the poor and marginalized.

We saw that a deep social conscience and a life poured out in deeds of service to others, and especially to the poor, is the inevitable sign of real faith and a real relationship with God.

In this final session on the course we will be thinking about eternity.

Bible Study & DVD

Read Isaiah 60:1-14:

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.

³And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from afar,
and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and exult,

because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.

⁷All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will beautify my beautiful house.

⁸Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?

⁹For the coastlands shall hope for me,
the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your children from afar,
their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the Lord your God,
and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has made you beautiful.

¹⁰Foreigners shall build up your walls,
and their kings shall minister to you;
for in my wrath I struck you,
but in my favor I have had mercy on you.

¹¹Your gates shall be open continually;
day and night they shall not be shut,
that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations,
with their kings led in procession.

¹²For the nation and kingdom
that will not serve you shall perish;
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.

¹³The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,
to beautify the place of my sanctuary,
and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

¹⁴The sons of those who afflicted you
shall come bending low to you,
and all who despised you
shall bow down at your feet;
they shall call you the City of the Lord,
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Watch DVD for session 8

Discussion Questions (Make sure to have watched the DVD already)

1. Isaiah 60 describes a vision of the New Jerusalem as incorporating the cultural achievements of all people and all nations. What aspects of your work do you think might be incorporated into this final kingdom? How does this affect your understanding of your work?

2. The community described here is one of perfectly restored shalom. What are some tangible ways that the church can be a better foretaste of that community?

3. What are some things that are competing with God as your “glory” and your “everlasting light”?

4. What do you think would change if God were your only glory and everlasting light?

Take a few minutes to review the course to look back through your notes and discuss in the group how the studies have changed or affected you.

Go Further

This booklet is adapted from the the *Gospel In Life* series by Timothy Keller published by Zondervan (2010). The original series contains additional teaching material. It can be purchased at <https://gospelinlife.com/>

