

Adapted from Jeff Vanderstelt's

Gospel Fluency

<http://soma-missionalmusings.blogspot.com/2010/03/training-on-gospel-fluency.html>

Gospel Growth

Speaking the TRUTH in Love IN Ministry

In Ephesians 4:11-16, we are instructed about the means by which the Church grows up into maturity. God gives certain people to the church to equip all believers for ministry (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers). Then as each part is doing their job, they build up the body of Christ to maturity and the stature of the fullness of Christ. Paul goes on to describe what must take place for this growth to occur:

1. **Speaking the Truth in Love** – The truth is found in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”. So, speaking the truth in love is another way of saying – “Speak the Gospel to one another.”
2. **In Ministry (and on mission)** – The way in which the body is built up is through each part ministering to the others (v. 16). It is in ministry and on mission that we become aware of where each of us is need of being built up in the Gospel. The areas of deficiency in our belief in the Gospel show up when we are called to Love Others and Makes Disciples.

Therefore, in order to grow up in Christ and help others grow up in Christ, we need to be Gospel Fluent and call people to live lives that both demand the power of the Gospel and reveal where we are not living in the truth of the Gospel

Creating a Culture

We want to create a culture where it is normal to speak the Gospel to each other regularly. Every sin and issue that stands in the way of our faithfulness to Jesus' commands is ultimately a Gospel issue, since sin is the outcome of unbelief in Jesus (John 16:9).

It Starts With You

Shaping a Gospel Fluent Culture starts with you being regularly shaped by the truth of the Gospel. This means you have to KNOW it and APPLY it to everyday stuff, while asking others to SPEAK it into your life.

Do you know the Gospel? Could you articulate it? Can you address everyday issues with the Gospel?

Rehearse the Gospel Regularly

Regularly restate the elements of the Gospel out loud together.

Here are three questions I ask to help people remember...

1. Who is Jesus?

- He is the perfect man who lived a perfect life fully submitted to God the Father in all things
- He is the God-Man who is God in the flesh so that we could know what God is like and God would be near us

- He is the Messiah sent by God to save us from our sin, death and destruction

2. What Did Jesus Do?

- On the cross, He exchanged his perfect obedience (His righteousness) for our sin so that those who have faith in Jesus get Jesus' righteousness credited to their account and their sin credited to His account
- When he died on the cross not only were my sins removed, but they were paid for (atoned for)
- He rose from the dead to show his power over sin and death (the wages of sin is death so Jesus' resurrection shows the debt is paid in full)
- He ascended to the right hand of God the Father from where he sent His Spirit to bring faith and new life to us, empowering us to live lives of obedience

What Must We Do?

- Repent – Have a change of mind about who God is and in particular Who Jesus Is and how we need him and his work on our behalf
- Believe – By faith, put our trust in Who Jesus Is and What He Has done, believing it was accomplished for us
- Be Baptized – Publicly express our faith that our lives are now united and identified with God in Christ

What Happens to Us?

- We are forgiven and cleansed of our sins
- We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
- We are included in the Family of God
- We are commissioned to Make Disciples of Jesus

Apply the Gospel to Personal Stories

When we share our experiences or testimony, tell it in light of what we believe about Jesus and how the Gospel has affected all of life. Also, we want to listen with “Gospel Ears” paying close attention to areas where the Gospel has redeemed and rightly informed our story, as well. For example, if someone’s story recounts a life without a father present or maybe a life with an abusive father, listen for where they came to see that they have a perfect Heavenly Father who was always present.

Express Gospel Need and Fulfillment with Communion

When we remember and celebrate our Lord’s Death on Sunday, try to identify with one of the elements (the bread or the wine) and reflect on our need for the gospel in light of the *visual aids* of bread and wine. How does the Gospel, pictured in the Lord’s supper, satisfy my deepest needs?

For example: I particularly identify with the bread this week because I am realizing that I have

been trusting in my own works to make me righteous before God instead of trusting in the righteous life of Jesus lived on my behalf in human flesh. Or, I am so grateful for the cup this week because I have been overcome with the reality of my sin and I need to be reminded that Christ blood was poured out for me for the forgiveness of my sins.

Regularly ask, “How does the Gospel address this?” or “What about the Gospel am I not believing?”

Whenever we discuss the Scriptures or a situation someone is dealing with, instead of giving quick advice, let's ask, “How does the Gospel address this?” We want to train ourselves to regularly ask how *Who Jesus Is* and *What He Has Done* shapes how we handle the stuff of life. A few things will happen when we do this regularly:

- 1) We will see that the Gospel really can and does address everything in life
- 2) We will become much more fluent in Gospel conversations over time
- 3) We will be able to see if we are coming to know and believe the Gospel fully.

Slow Down to Identify Idols and Compare to Jesus

As we gather around the table for supper, engage in Bible study and prayer or hang out over at McDonalds... listen closely to the conversations and the stories. Listen for what we are ultimately putting our trust in – ask, “What idol/god am I putting my trust in?”

Sometimes the best way to identify the idols of the heart is by calling people to ministry and mission. Idols become easiest to see when God calls us to be faithful to Jesus' mission. Listen for the excuses or reasons for not being willing or able to obey – fear, insecurities, selfishness, pride, approval of man issues, worship of children, family or work, etc...Then, as we become aware of the people or things that have become idols or “little gods” take the time to compare them to Jesus -- Jesus is more satisfying, more reliable, more trustworthy, more...

Identify Key Descriptions of Jesus' Work and Display them on Mission

Remind ourselves of what is true of Jesus in the Gospel (He's our Advocate, Mediator, Sacrificial Offering, Shepherd, Husband, etc...) – then, discuss how our Tuesday night group might display this truth about Jesus in the context of mission. How do those Gospel qualities work out in and through us?

Check out:

The Prodigal God by Timothy Keller

Total Church by Steve Timmis and Tim Chester

The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission (Biblical Theology for Life) by Chris Wright