

Five Lessons in Communicating the Gospel

There is no better training manual for communicating the Gospel than the Bible and the book of Acts is a special goldmine for good guidance. In Acts 17 the Apostle Paul addresses people with a world view and values at variance with his own. They initially write him off as a ‘babbling’ who is foolish and misguided but he engages them successfully resulting in several key conversions. This seminar explores five key lessons drawn from this passage to apply to our own practice: Go where the people are; Use words they understand; Give opportunity for discussion; Start from where they are at; Employ the Identify, Confront, Invite model.

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Paul’s initial struggles in Athens

- A. Addresses those with a world view and values at variance with his own
 - B. They write him off as a ‘babbling’ who is foolish and misguided
 - C. He engages them successfully, resulting in several key conversions
 - D. Recognition of the spiritual battle (prayer, power, persuasion)
- I. Go where the people are**
- A. Go where people feel most comfortable (Acts 13, 17, 19, 28)
 - B. Different groups are most comfortable in different places

C. Examples: Muslims, Atheists, Parents

D. Internet and social media

II. Use words they understand

A. The problem of 'Jesus' and 'Resurrection'

B. Identifying Christian jargon

C. 'De-jargonising' our language

III. Give opportunity for discussion

A. 'Dialegoria' as Paul's general pattern (17:1-4, 17, 18:4, 28, 19:8,9)

B. The importance of asking questions (Genesis, Job, Jesus)

C. Clarification of language – 'When I use a word...'

D. Deadly questions – being ready for whatever comes up

IV. Start where they are at

A. Different ways for different people (Acts 13:13-51, 14:14-18, 17:16-34, 22:1-22)

B. The importance of making a worldview diagnosis

C. Tolkien, Frankl, Animal Rights, Rugby

D. Practical needs – food banks, street pastors, crisis pregnancy, debt counselling

V. Use the Identify, Prosecute, Preach model

A. Identify signs of truth in their world view (cruisers and battleships)

B. Take the lid off and confront their false beliefs (Acts 17:29; 2 Cor 10:4,5)

C. Faithfully preach the Gospel, especially with respect to repentance and judgement

D. Always come back to Jesus – his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, return

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