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Scripture teaches clearly that the responsibility and calling of followers of Jesus is to share the gospel with those who don't yet know or follow Jesus. Yet, if statistics and studies are accurate, the overwhelming percentage of believers in Jesus don't share their beliefs with those who don't believe in Jesus. Scripture clearly tells His followers that we are ambassadors for Jesus (*II Corinthians 5:20*), and that Jesus came to seek and save the lost (*Luke 19:10*).

This lack of participation in one of our greatest purposes as Christ followers is not due to a lack of clarity- our calling is all throughout the Scriptures. And, this lack of engagement most likely is also not due to a lack of conviction- most Christians understand that they should be doing this, but still somehow don't.

The likely reason for this departure from a lifestyle of sharing the gospel with others is not a lack of clarity that we should, or a lack of calling that we would, but a lack of confidence that we could.

Jesus was of course the master at having conversations that led to belief in Himself. He would turn a conversation from something very natural, into the supernatural. A quick look at many of Jesus' conversations reveals a pattern in His progression: **Good.God.Gospel.**

Jesus would have a **GOOD conversation.** He would then transition the conversation into a **GOD conversation.** Then ultimately, He would reach the penultimate point of all conversations, and have a **GOSPEL conversation.**

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One example of a Good.God.Gospel. conversation: The Woman at the Well. John 4.

GOOD CONVERSATION:

Jesus: Can I have a drink of water?

Woman: Why would you ask me, a Samaritan woman, for water?

GOOD: I'm thirsty, I'm asking kindly for a basic need, I'm crossing all kinds of social boundaries having this conversation. This woman knows there is something different about Jesus immediately. Here, Jesus is just talking about being thirsty, needing a drink of water, and breaking social norms.

GOD CONVERSATION:

Jesus: If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Woman: Are you greater than our father Jacob...

GOD: Jesus makes a quick transition into a God conversation. He says something spiritual, and tests to see where she is spiritually. Her response is to move the conversation into some form of biblical history. Jesus can easily tell here where she is spiritually. A quick mention of God from Jesus moved the woman into a conversation about her perspective of God.

GOSPEL CONVERSATION:

Jesus: Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. The water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

GOSPEL: Jesus makes the transition to eternal life, salvation and even ongoing sanctification. He identifies Himself as the source of salvation. Jesus senses that the woman would be ready to have a spiritual conversation, and makes a transition from a general talk about God, to a specific talk about the gospel. Jesus makes it clear that all of these things about God culminated in Jesus, and the salvation He provided and made available to her.

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GOOD.GOD.GOSPEL.

GOOD.GOD.GOSPEL. conversations can be had often and easily. When we understand that progression of a conversation, we can take the next step with some clarity and confidence. And ultimately, a sensitivity to the Spirit of God is crucial in each part of the conversation. The Spirit will use each step in this conversation to reveal where the person is in their relationship with God. Then, the believer knows if, when, and how to step into the next part of the conversation.

This conversation process doesn't always, or even often, happen as quickly as Jesus' conversation happens here. Sometimes, trust in a GOOD conversation is built quickly with a server at a table, in a taxi/Uber/train, or on a plane. Sometimes, trust takes longer to build. This step is essential. Sincerity is crucial. If you don't really care about someone, and they know you don't care about them, then it's almost hurtful to have a GOD conversation. The GOOD conversation should take whatever time is necessary.

Then, after trust and sincere care have been formed, we make a transition to a GOD conversation. For a Christian, the GOD perspective is present everywhere. And, we understand this theologically, but also experientially, that every person has a perspective of God. Everyone has thoughts of God. Whether they don't believe in God, or they believe unbiblical or unrealistic things about God, everyone has considered God at different levels. Caring about, respecting the person's journey, and appreciating the trust given by even discussing their place with

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God, is a huge part of the GOD part of the conversation. There is always a bridge from the GOOD conversation to the GOD conversation.

Then, for a follower of Christ, the GOSPEL conversation should always be the goal. We pray for, prepare for, hope for, look for, the GOSPEL conversation opportunities to occur. This is part of walking in the Spirit. This is part of our deeper understanding of the gospel. This is part of every believer understanding that the grace of God began our relationship with God, sustains our relationship with God, and seals us with God for our ultimate salvation with Him in Heaven for eternity.

The bridge to the GOSPEL part of the conversation is almost always personal. It involves a humility, and a joy, and a story of our own journey of believing in and receiving Jesus, and the consequences of our being changed by the salvation given us in Christ.

The GOSPEL conversation also often includes apologetics and explanations for our reasons for believing in Jesus, rather than not believing in Him, or believing in an alternative source for salvation. And, the apologetic of the brokenness and beauty of the world, and the source and reconciliation for these things, is also explained in the GOSPEL conversation.

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GOOD conversations are already happening through daily love and kindness. Christians should be having the most GOOD conversations. GOOD conversations are kind, caring, interested, and letting people feel known and aware and cared for.

GOOD conversations would include topics like:

- How's your day, family, work, etc.?
- How is the situation going that you were dealing with?
- How long have you lived in this area?
- Why did you move here?
- Are you connected into community here?

GOD conversations should also be natural. After an opening in a GOOD conversation, similar to the one we referenced above with Jesus and the woman at the well, phrases often present in a GOD conversation:

- God has been good to me to allow me to...
- God did some big work in my life when...
- My transition to this town was an opportunity for God to...
- A similar trial in my life was the season where my relationship with God changed...

GOSPEL conversations are the goal. We would hope that the GOD conversation creates an opening or opportunity to take the next step toward the gospel. A few examples of bridges into the gospel conversation are:

- I realized I could not change myself, no matter how hard I tried. I needed a Savior other than myself...

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- I searched through different religions, but they all had a similar thread- an individual working their way to God. I realized that I could never overcome my sinful debt to a holy God by working my way to holiness. I needed God's grace to pay for my sins, and not myself...
- I searched through different religions, but they all had a similar thread- a human being who became a god. But in Christianity, God became a human. He left heaven and came here, because He loved us and wanted to save us.

(I write more in-depth, tell a ton of stories, and help us grow in confidence and preparedness, in my upcoming book: Good.God.Gospel.: Conversations Toward Salvation.)

Every relationship we have as Christians should have these goals and progressions. We can have GOOD conversations. They often can turn into GOD conversations. Then, we pray and prepare for GOSPEL conversations.

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GET BACK TO GOD'S ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR PASTORING HIS CHURCH

Let's begin by **rethinking** and **returning**.

A biblically articulated and applied ecclesiology is happening in churches at a growing rate. Together we are walking out leading in Jesus' plans for His church, and encouraging each other along the way.

Jason Shepperd planted Church Project, a Church of House Churches, in 2010 in The Woodlands, TX. With no people, no place, no money, and no outside support, Church Project started as nothing more than an idea. Since 2010, thousands now gather weekly in local "House Church" communities, and millions of dollars have been directed to gospel-centered ministries.

Jason has also started and oversees Church Project Network, House Church Network, Good City, START WITH 7 and GOOD.GOD.GOSPEL.

RESOURCES FOR CHURCH LEADERS & CHURCHES

CHURCH PROJECT NETWORK

HOUSE CHURCH NETWORK

CHURCH PROJECT (THE WOODLANDS, TX)

GOOD CITY

START WITH 7 AUDIO DEVOTIONALS

GOOD.GOD.GOSPEL