

## **Week 1: The Story**

- › The Bible is made up of one big, overarching story.
- › Humans were created in God's image to be like Him, but everyone has rebelled against God.
- › God has a plan for restoring everyone and everything to the way He originally created it to be.
- › It is all God's work to do this restoration.

There is a big Story that actually helps us make sense of our lives and why things work the way they do in the world. It's called the Story of God. It's a story found throughout the Bible, and it tells of an amazing God who created a perfect world full of beauty, love, and amazing possibilities. The story will quickly give us the big picture on what God is up to and what life is all about.

In this story, God is the hero. The Story of God really includes all of our stories too.

There will be places in your life where you will have experienced God rescue you from a self-inflicted bad situation.

God created us in His image to be like Him and to live a life close to Him.

We will briefly share something of our own life stories.

## **Week 2: The Four Questions**

- › Learning how to read the Scriptures.
- › Laying the foundation for ongoing learning about God in our discipleship journey.
- › The Bible is God-centered.

The Four Questions:

1. Who is God?
2. What Has He Done?
3. Who Are We in Light of That Truth?
4. How Do We Live in Light of That Truth?

What keeps us from reading and exploring the Bible to discover God?

How does this method of reading the Bible compare to the way you read the Bible?

What would it look like to catch a glimpse of God's character and action on each page of the Bible?

## **Week 3: The Two Sons**

- › Dive into the story of the Prodigal Son and deepen our understanding of the gospel's message to us.
- › Understanding the grace God extends.

What would it look like to catch a glimpse of God's character and action on each page of the Bible?

If the older son considered his work to be like slavery, why do you think he kept at it? What do you think he wanted in life?

Do you think either son truly loved the father and wanted to be with him?

Their actions look very different, but explain how both sons' hearts are very similar.

This parable of the lost sons is a picture of what is called the gospel. After hearing this story, how would you explain the gospel?

Which son do you identify with in this story? What does the father do toward you? How is God inviting you to respond?

What would it look like to obey this parable? If you're an "older brother," how will you respond to the Father? If you're a "younger brother," how will you return to the Father?

What can you do this week to enter the feast and party that is prepared for you?

## **Week 4: The Gospel**

- › Clarify the nature of the gospel.
- › Introduce the relationship between the gospel and discipleship.

Understanding Two Gospel Perspectives

We can read the Bible across the grain (thematically), and we can read it with the grain (as a story). Both are necessary, and each one leads to a different way of seeing the gospel. It takes both perspectives to understand and engage the gospel fully.

**Thematically** - The gospel power. We understand the means of salvation.

**God**—eternal, all-powerful, creator of everything.

**Sin**—humanity has all chosen self-rule over submission in relationship to God; the penalty for sin is death.

**Jesus**—God incarnate came to die as a substitute for the penalty of humanity's sins.

**Faith**—by faith in what Jesus did, not by any effort of our own, we are saved from our sins.

We are more broken and sinful than I ever dared believe, and at the same time we are more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope because of Jesus.

### **As a Story**

The gospel purpose. Here we come to know the reason for salvation. We can look at the gospel through the lens of a story.

**Creation      Fall      Redemption      Restoration**

The gospel is not just about my individual happiness or God's plan for my life. The gospel is about God's plan for the world.

How do you understand HOW we are saved? How do you understand WHY we are saved?

How would you explain the gospel if you only had two minutes for this first conversation?

### **Week 5: Change**

- › God's singular purpose for us is that we become like Jesus.
- › Prayer is crucial to discipleship.
- › Identify a specific area of life we will bring the gospel to bear on for the next few months.

How does Jesus reflect the glory of God?

In Romans 8:28, what is the "good" God works all things together for?

What do you think it means that God "predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of his Son"?

2 Corinthians 5:17 says we are a new creation. How are you a "new creation"?

Do you want to be like Jesus? Why or why not?

A disciple is someone learning to apply the gospel to absolutely every part of life.

Your Gospel Change Project.

### **Week 6: Motivation**

- › Becoming like Jesus has more to do with our motivation and affections than merely our behaviour—it's about the heart.
- › We all tend to be motivated wrongly, thinking we can justify ourselves.
- › The gospel transforms our motivations, and we grow to understand it's not about us—it's about Jesus.

We will look at why we often do the very things we don't want to do.

Why Would You Like to Change?

It's often for the wrong reasons: 1. To Prove Ourselves to God 2. To Prove Ourselves to Other People 3. To Prove Ourselves to Ourselves.

Justified by Grace: What's wrong with wanting to change so we can prove ourselves to God or other people or ourselves?

Do you think you will miss the sin you give up?

Do you think of giving up your sin as an unpleasant duty you need to do to be accepted by God?

Do you want to change for the wrong reasons?

What evidence is there that you might be trying to prove yourself to God, others, yourself?

### **Week 7: Identity**

- › We are given a new identity as children of God.
- › We are called to “be who we are”.
- › To live out our new identity is to experience joy and delight in God.

The New Testament again and again calls us to “be who we are.” Change is not about achieving something so we can impress. It’s about living out the new identity God gives us in Jesus. So who are we?

Meditate on what it means to be a child of the Father. Compare slavery to sin to being a child in God’s family. On the cross Jesus cried out, “It is finished.” Imagine yourself answering back, “Not quite—there are still some things I need to do to finish the job.” Think about how ridiculous and insulting this is.

### **Week 8: Rules**

- › The law cannot restore our hearts.
- › The law points us to Jesus.
- › The gospel of Jesus is the power and means of our transformation.

Have you despaired of ever changing? Do you think you are a lost cause? Maybe you think it is different for you. Other people can change, but your history or temptations or problems make it different for you. The glorious Good News of Jesus is that you and I can change. Part of the problem is we often try to change in the wrong way.

1. The Law Cannot Remove Our Condemnation.
2. The Law Cannot Conquer the Flesh.
3. The Law Couldn’t Give the Son the Glory for Justification and Sanctification.

What are some things you’ve tried to do to change? Why do you think those things are ultimately ineffective for bringing about lasting change? What are some areas where legalistic thinking is present in your life? What would it sound like to repent of your damnable good works?

### **Week 9: Freedom**

- › Change is God’s work, but we have a role to play.
- › God the Father renews, liberates, and sanctifies us by His Spirit through Jesus.
- › We are both justified and sanctified by faith in the gospel.

The law, although it has the appearance of wisdom, cannot restore our hearts. How can we grow and change? Is it up to us? What do you think Paul means when he says to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”?

We are sanctified by Faith in the Gospel.

How is God at work in you? What evidence have you seen that God is transforming you throughout the last year or two? What evidence is there that He has changed (circumcised) your heart and given you a new heart? What is our role in being conformed to the image of Jesus?

Write a summary of how you are praying God will change you and a summary of how God has changed you.

Write down the aspect of God’s work of change that especially gives you confidence that you can change.

### **Week 10: Worship**

- › God uses everything that happens to us—even our struggles—to make us more like Jesus.
- › My behavior comes from my heart.
- › My circumstances trigger my heart.
- › We sin because we do not trust God and do not worship God.

Our struggles reveal our hearts. Why do we do the things we do?

What kinds of things have you seen come out of your heart? Pray for each other. Ask God to give you the wisdom and grace to live by faith.

Trusting God instead of believing lies, this = faith.

Worshipping God instead of worshipping idols, this = repentance.

“There is no neutral on the worship gear stick of your life. You are always in gear, and you are always in drive or reverse.”

Begin writing a summary of when you sin and what is going on in your heart.

### **Week 11: Truth**

- › The truth shall set you free.
- › All sin comes from lies we believe about God.
- › God is great, so I don't have to be in control.
- › God is glorious, so we do not have to fear others.
- › God is good, so we do not have to look elsewhere.
- › God is gracious, so we do not have to prove ourselves.

Behind every sin and negative emotion is a lie. Every time we don't trust God or His word then we are believing something else: a lie. Life and freedom are found by trusting and delighting in the truth about God. Our problems are created by the gaps between what we believe in theory and what we believe in practice. We need to learn to preach the truth about God to our hearts.

What Truths Do You Need to Turn To? The Truth Shall Set You Free.

What areas of your life are you tempted to control? What is the lie you are believing when you seek to control those areas? Who do you sometimes fear more than God? What is the difference between knowing something in your head and believing it in your heart? How do you know when there is a gap between these two in your life? How does Jesus provide the greatness, glory, goodness, and grace your heart craves?

### **Week 12: Idolatry**

- › Idolatry manifests itself in many different ways in our lives.
- › We desire or worship idols instead of worshipping God.
- › Idolatry is false worship.
- › God is jealous and pours out His wrath in response to idolatry.

Influenced by lies about God instead of God's Word, our desires (they usually feel like needs) are often for things other than God and His glory.

Explain how idolizing someone or something is really just you setting yourself up as an idol. ("It takes an idol to make an idol.")

What idol do you think is behind the issue you're addressing in your gospel change project? Write these out. Then identify the lie or misplaced desire that is behind each idol. Finally, write down the truth about God you need to believe when you are tempted to worship those idols.

### **Week 13: Repentance and Faith**

- › Sin arises because we desire something more than we desire God.
- › Continual repentance.
- › We repent by faith.
- › God is bigger and better than my sinful desires.

When we worship idols, we offend God. Repentance and faith are the right responses when the Holy Spirit convicts us of idolatry. God is the Most Offended Party.

What are you saying to God when you are sinning? Do you believe He is the most offended party? What would right worship sound like in the moment of temptation?

### **Week 14: Gospel Formation**

- › Avoid the desires of the sinful nature/not sowing to the sinful nature.
- › Follow the desires of the Spirit/sowing to the Spirit.
- › Doing works in keeping with repentance.

Although understanding can be a big step forward, it does not equal change. Even if you have not fully analyzed your heart you still know the gospel truths and the gospel disciplines that will set you free. The gospel disciplines of faith and repentance are a daily struggle. What strategies do you need to put in place to reinforce faith and repentance?

Avoiding the Desires of the Sinful Nature.

Following the Desires of the Spirit.

Listening to the Scriptures.

Listening to God in Prayer.

Corporate Worship.

Community.

Mission.

How does the gospel give us power to walk in repentance?

### **Week 15: Community**

- › The role of community in shaping, sending, and discipling us.
- › Our role in community to disciple others.
- › Repentance and faith expressed through participation in the mission of God.

We don't sin, believe, or grow up in our faith in a vacuum. Real change happens in the context of community. How would you describe your experiences with the "Christian community"?

We don't give from the margins.

› We don't give from convenience.

› We don't give from comfort.

› We don't give our leftovers.

› We don't give from insecurity.

Rather we . . .

› We give ourselves with joy.

› We give ourselves with generosity.

› We give ourselves with truth.

› We give ourselves with humility.

› We give ourselves with forgiveness.

› We give ourselves with confidence, not allowing our community to live in sin, worship idols, and disregard Jesus as savior.

› We give because God gave Christ.

› We love because Christ loved us.

How does the truth of the gospel free us to participate in the biblical community?

Discuss ways your Christian community embodies the characteristics described in the Scriptures. How does it fall short? What is God leading you to do and be within those communities? How is God leading you to engage with the church as family?

### **Week 16: Mission**

- › The role of mission in shaping, shepherding, and discipling us.
- › Our role in community is to disciple others.
- › Repentance and faith expressed through participation in the mission of God.

How would you describe your calling to participate in God's mission? How does the transformation you've experienced shape how you share the gospel?

What does Jesus claim about Himself? What are the implications of Jesus having all authority on your life?

The Gospel Isn't a Cul-De-Sac.

The Gospel is Missional: It Changes Where & How We Live.

The Gospel Changes Everything.

The Gospel Sends Us on Mission.

How has your understanding of the gospel through this guide impacted the way you engage your neighbours, co-workers, and friends? Why?

How will you engage the mission of God as the purpose of your life?