

SOW YOUR SEED

**Outlines for
Evangelistic Bible-Studies**



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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. 9:10

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FOREWORD

Evangelism by systematic teaching of Biblical truths is not fashionable today. What is in style? It is "gospel-sharing" that presents the minimum of substance and evades the core issues of the law and the gospel. It urges a verbal acceptance of Christ even if real conviction of sin is absent. What matters to the soul-winner is that it secures visible results of "decisions for Christ," though in many cases, they prove to be without the commitment of a disciple.

We reject this shallow approach on such a vital issue as bearing witness to the gospel. We maintain that approach in evangelism where God truly is glorified, the essential issues of the gospel presented and taught, and the sinner is confronted both with his guilt before God's law and with God's offer of mercy in Christ Jesus. This evangelism results in either rejection, or - as we pray it would be the case - in discipleship.

There lies the difference. Shallow "gospel-sharing" can easily secure decisions; but we are after disciples! And disciples, as the term suggests ("learners"), are conceived, born, and grow under the faithful teaching of the gospel and the whole counsel of God. This is the rationale for this material.

In the following pages, I humbly offer outlines for Bible-study which cover: *Knowing the True God*; *The Way of Salvation*; and *The New Christian*. They are designed for use as evangelistic Bible-studies until the early stages of discipleship. To the user, let me give the following advice:

- (1) You must prepare. This material is not a substitute for your diligent study of what you will present.
- (2) You must be flexible. No outline here is designed for rigid presentation as it appears. Use your wise discretion according to your hearer's condition/needs. Flexibility includes the length of presentation. While every title presents one lesson, it need not be taken up in a single session.
- (3) You must pray. You are to make the lesson something from your own soul, and this happens in the discipline of prayer.

It cannot be overstated here that a key factor for the usefulness of these outlines is not the research of the author, but the faithfulness of the user. There is a crying need for evangelism that disciples through the sowing and watering of the Word of God. Ours is a generation that is hearing from all quarters all sorts of messages that offer to make life enjoyable. But you and I know that there is that single message on which depends man's joy and peace now and in the hereafter. We know because we once heard it presented to us ourselves — and by the Spirit, we were born again.

Now "ours is the same commission." Remember that you are called to be God's "special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:10). When God's people in our church faithfully labor to be such proclaimers, I shall deem my labor amply rewarded...

THE RIGHTS OF GOD

AIM: To establish the Creator rights of God upon man His creature

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION - What is man's common idea of God's relation to man?

Possible Answers:

- (a) He makes things happen in the life of man.
- (b) He gives blessings to man.
- (c) He forgives and understands human weaknesses.
- (d) He demands man's obedience and love.

All these answers are true, but the answer of the hearer should give you an idea of his spiritual position.

READ: Genesis 1:1,26,27 *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.'"*

- God created mankind in His own image.

QUESTION - What is the fundamental relationship between God and Man?

CREATOR-CREATURE RELATIONSHIP

Analogy: What are the rights of a maker over his craft?

Possible Answers:

- (a) to be served by it
- (b) to gain from it
- (c) to reflect his own personality, e.g. artwork

Determine if the hearer accepts God as his Creator; be open to his personal problems/objections.

- What may God claim upon man as his Creator?

READ: Psalms 100:2,3 *"Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."*

- (a) Man was created to have a joyful relationship with God.
- Man should be happy about God's rights over him.
- (b) Man was designed to be God-like in character.
- note: This is what our human dignity (as opposed to animal character) stands on.

READ: Romans 11:36 *"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen."*

- The right response to the sovereign rights of God:
 - "of Him" = origin; God is the source of all things
 - "through Him" = sustenance; His power keeps all things
 - "unto Him" = goal; His glory is the purpose of all things
- The Biblical expression of acknowledging God's rights:
 - To Him be the glory
 - to glorify God = worship; service; obedience; dependence

stress the part that will speak most to the hearer

= attitudes and deeds that show the honor of God

SEARCHING QUESTIONS: Is our life seeking the glory of God?

- (1) Do you acknowledge God as your Creator Who has rights over you?
- (2) Does your life acknowledge these rights by seeking His glory?
- (3) Do you sense something in you that makes God seem distant from you or even against you?

Supporting Scriptures

1. God as Creator
 - Original creation story - Genesis 1 & 2
 - The Lord created all things - Psa. 33:6; 102:25; Isa. 40:26; 45:12; Acts 17:24; Rev. 4:11; 10:6
2. Glorifying God as man's duty
 - God is mindful of His glory - Isaiah 42:8; 48:11
 - Man to glorify God in all his life - 1 Corinthians 10:31

THE LAW OF GOD

AIM: To enlighten on God's dealing with man according to Law; and how man stands before the Law of God

INTRODUCTION: When laws are made in any community (e.g. nation; club), those laws are empowered...

- to require the order of life for the members of the community
- to punish violators of that order (NOTE: If law does not mandate punishment, it is little better than when there is no law.)

- Accepting the existence of God's MORAL LAW -
The Bible defines it in the *Ten Commandments*

READ: Deuteronomy 4:13 "So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone."

Determine the hearer's attitude to being under the Law of God. Note familiarity with the Ten Commandments — what commands does he know?

SUMMARY of the LAW of GOD

READ: Matthew 22:36-40 "...Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

stress the part of the Ten Commandments that you believe will speak most to the condition of the hearer.

1. *Loving God with one's all and above all*
 - 1st "No other gods beside Me" = unrivalled devotion to Him
 - 2nd "Do not bow down to graven images" = spiritual worship
 - 3rd "Do not use the Name of God in vain" = reverence for God/His works
 - 4th "Keep the Sabbath day holy" = separate a day for worship

2. *Loving the neighbor as oneself.*

- 5th "Honor your father and mother" = respect for authority
- 6th "You shall not kill" = respect for life and personhood of others
- 7th "You shall not commit adultery" = fidelity to marriage
- 8th "You shall not steal" = respect for property of others
- 9th "You shall not bear false witness" = integrity of truth
- 10th "You shall not covet" = purity of motives and desires

Note the possible open violation by the hearer of any of the commandments, and focus on it.

CURRENT MENTALITIES on how man stands before God's Law

- **Mentality #1** *"Nobody's perfect. God can't really expect us to be serious about His law."*

READ: Galatians 3:10 *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'"* cf. James 2:10

- * What is the result of violating God's law?
CURSED - to be set apart by God for destruction/punishment

- **Mentality #2** *"I try to obey God's law. I merit God's favor."*

READ: Romans 3:19,20 *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

- * Where does God's law leave the morality of man?
GUILTY - already under the judgment of God

READ: Matt.5:21,22,27,28 *"...whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment... whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

- * To what extent is obedience to the Law demanded?
INTERNAL - not just external, but state of the heart/desires

Sinner's Confession:

- (1) *I have been a violator of God's law and stand guilty.*
- (2) *I have no hope of being accepted by God through my efforts.*

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

AIM: To impress on the prospect the character of God which demands appropriate response

INTRODUCTION: Note how the character of people closely associated with us affect our dealing with them.

BS Leader: You can do this by personal testimony about a friend or loved one; or you can ask the prospect about a close person in his life... Ask the prospect what character of God impresses him most...

■ Get reaction to these views of God:

- (1) God has left to man the running of earthly life; and He intervenes only during special occasions.
- (2) God is trying to do man good, but man would not allow God. God helps those who help themselves.

* NOTE: The hearer's answer will disclose his appreciation, or lack of it, of God's active involvement in human life and His sovereignty.

GOD'S CHARACTER IN HIMSELF

READ: Isaiah 40:9,12-18,25-28 "...Behold your God!" Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span... Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has taught Him?... Behold the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the balance... To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?... Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak O Israel: 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God?' Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching of His understanding."

Context: addressed to God's people who are anticipating the judgment of God - the exile. To the Israelites, it will be like the defeat of God Himself. They needed a reminder of the character of God that bears upon their human experience.

* NOTE: repeated, "behold your God..."
= Give close attention to what God is like.

BS leader: for each of the categories of God's character, think of an illustration/analogy understandable to the hearer.

From the cluster of descriptions, God is presented as...

GOD IS INFINITELY PERFECT and SOVEREIGN

- (a) Infinite in what according to v.12?
in His immensity: no physical element can limit Him
- (b) Infinite in what according to vs.13,14?
in wisdom and knowledge: no one can add to His knowledge/counsel
- (c) Infinite in what according to vs.25,26?
in power/might: He can do what His will determines.

- **QUESTION:** If we are to accept Isaiah's description of God, how should this affect our thinking of Him?

BS Leader: Ask the hearer if he has ordinary views of God that need to be modified?

CONCLUSIONS ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD:

1. vs.21-23 No power in creation can usurp the right and power of God.
"princes and judges" represent all the power that man can come up with — powers of position and wisdom.
Even forces of nature are in God's control.
 2. vs.27,28 Nothing in human creation is not accountable to God.
He notes our just claims as well as our sins. He is not a distant Spectator.
- **CHALLENGE:** If this view of God were taken seriously, what thoughts should it introduce to your consideration?
 - **EMPHASIZE:** sense of accountability to God... There is no escaping from the judgment of the sovereign God.

READ: Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 *"Fear God and keep His commandments for his is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil."*

Supporting Scriptures

1. God's infinite attributes:
His omnipotence (all-powerful) - Isa. 46:10; Dan. 4:35; Rom. 9:19
His omniscience (all-knowing) - Hosea 5:3; Psalm 139:3; Heb. 4:13
His omnipresence (all present) - Psalm 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23, 24
His eternity - Psalm 90:2; Isa. 57:15; Heb. 1:11, 12; 2Pet. 3:8
2. God's sovereign control over all things:
Psalm 115:3; 135:5, 6; Eph. 1:11

GOD'S CHARACTER IN RELATION TO US

- ASK THE PROSPECT: How would you react to the following characterizations of God?

- (1) He is a judging God. He will punish all sinners.
- (2) He is so merciful that He will overlook the sins of men.
- (3) He loves the moral person, and reserves His hatred upon the wicked.

BS Leader: His answer will give you an idea which side of the biblical view you need to stress more.

READ: Exodus 34:5-8 "...The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty..."

Context: Moses pleads to know God. This is the closest a man could get to a personal introduction by God of Himself.

- * NOTE: How do you account for the apparent contrast/paradox in the characters listed? "keeping mercy... forgiving" vs. "by no means clearing the guilty"

It suggests that our view of God's character in relation to us should be seen in two clusters. Each is to be emphasized side by side with the other.

First Cluster: God is MERCIFUL and LOVING

- * *It is His nature to seek our good and establish personal relationship with us.*
- (a) He exercises special concern for those who are in misery because of sin (their sins; or others' sins against them both as sinners themselves, and as victims of sins).
 - (b) "*gracious and longsuffering*" - It is not His first reaction to judge but to be patient and to forbear, even to bless those who do not deserve any blessing.
 - (c) "*forgiving...*" - Cancelling our guilt, and cleansing corruption is the supreme act of grace.
- ASK: What does this say to the idea: God loves the morally righteous,

BS Leader: Note the particular form of salvation by works to which the hearer probably subscribes.

and hates the wicked?

Do you think you are in need of God's mercy? Why?

- CHALLENGE: Any idea of salvation by meritorious works is wrong because it makes unnecessary the mercy of God.

Second Cluster: God is HOLY and JUST

READ: Habakkuk 1:13 *"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness..."*

Romans 1:18 *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."*

As holy and just, He is repelled by every sin however little it is regarded by man. Every sin calls for just punishment. While He exercises patience for the most part now, He will exact the fulness of judgment on the last day.

- ASK: What does this say to the idea: God will overlook our sins? What is your personal reaction to this character of God?
- CONCLUSION: God exercises love and mercy on sinners. This is grace! But He will mete out punishment on the unrepentant and unforgiven as His justice demands.
- CHALLENGE: You have to fear the justice of God. Plead God's Mercy!

Supporting Scriptures

1. God's love and mercy
 - (a) Love is the very essence of God's character -
Psalm 25:10; 1Jn. 4:8, 16
 - (b) Love is the basis of God's saving acts -
Hosea 3:1, 2; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8; 1Jn. 4:9, 10
 - (c) God does not presently deal with us in the way that our sinfulness really deserves; this is mercy -
Psalm 103:10; 130:3, 4
2. God's holiness and justice
 - (a) Holiness is the outstanding distinctive of God's character -
Psalm 99:3; Hos. 11:9; Psalm 24:3; Isa. 6:3
 - (b) As a just God, He is impartial in the execution of His laws -
Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 2:3-6
 - (c) He will surely punish sin -
Psalm 5:4, 5; Rom. 2:16; 2Cor. 5:10, 11

MAN AS SINNER

AIM: To bring conviction of the reality of the state of the soul in sin

INTRODUCTION: Ask for reaction to the following sentiments...

- (1) Man is basically good, but is imperfect. God will understand his failures.
- (2) Only the most wicked offenders deserve God's punishment.
- (3) All men are sinners deserving God's judgment.

WHAT is SIN?

Common Idea: identify sin with crimes, specially the heinous ones...

Most people limit sin to actual deeds of wrongs; or else, that which actually harms others.

- * Biblical Concept: Sin is transgression of the law of God.

READ: 1 John 3:4 *"Whoever commits sin transgresses the law, for sin is transgression of the law."*

- * The STANDARD — The Law of God

- ASK: Is it right to limit sin to heinous crimes and vices?

BS Leader: Review briefly the 10 Commandments, specially the part that will apply most to the hearer.

Give examples of sins according to God's law, but may not be considered today as criminal or vicious. (e.g. coveting).

READ: James 4:17 *"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."*

The EXTENT of sin — includes Sins of OMISSION

Not just actual deeds, but failure to do the right thing is accounted by God as sin.

- ASK: How does this differ from the common idea of sin?

Moral responsibility is not just about avoiding wrong, but doing right for God and man.

Give examples of sins of omission

READ: Romans 5:12, 18 *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned... as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."*

The ORIGIN — Adam's Fall

Adam was the representative head of Mankind. His fall was accounted to all humanity, his sin was imputed to all his children.

READ: Romans 5:12; *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."*

Romans 5:19 *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..."*

- ★ IMPORTANT POINT: *We do not become sinners with our first act of sin. Rather, we sin because we are already sinners from the start.*
- ★ IMPLICATION: Our only hope is through another Representative
- the Second Adam is Jesus Christ (implications to be studied later)

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS:

- (1) Given his state of sin, how can man ever attempt to reverse God's judgment?
- (2) Is there a possibility that God will forego judgment of sinners?

BS Leader: The hearer must come to see helplessness in oneself

- ASK: How do you react to the thought that because of sin, God is against you?

Supporting Scriptures

1. The sinfulness of man
 - (a) It is universal - Ecclesiastes 7:20; Rom. 3:11, 23; Gal. 3:22
 - (b) It is total -
there is not a part of our humanity that is not affected by sin -
Jer. 17:9; Jn. 3:19; Titus 1:15; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:18
2. The spiritual helplessness of man because of sin
 - (a) He cannot understand spiritual truth.
1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4
 - (b) He cannot and will not receive the offer of salvation by himself.
Jn. 5:39; 6:44, 65; Rom. 8:7, 8; Heb. 11:6