



HOW TO TALK ABOUT JESUS

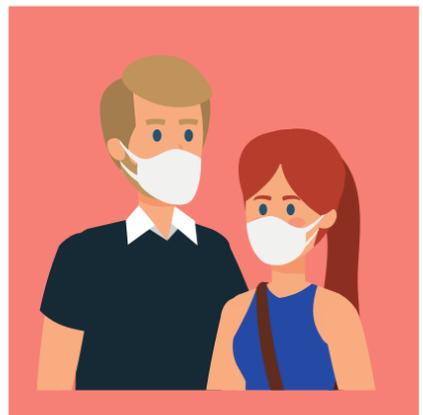
st lukes
miranda

connecting people with Christ

**TERM
4
2021**



WITHOUT BEING "THAT GUY"



BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 4 2021

How to talk to people about Jesus without being “that guy”

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Bible Studies written by Tim Goldsmith
Based on “How to talk about Jesus: without being that guy” by Sam Chan
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How to talk about Jesus without being “that guy”: introduction

The very first thing to note as we start this series is that the title is lifted from the book by author and evangelist, Sam Chan. These studies have been written as a stand-alone series and don't require you to own a copy of the book, but the best way to get the most out of these studies is to read the corresponding chapters along with the studies.

Each of the Studies that we do will be a mixture of looking back at a Bible passage that illustrates the thesis statement of the study as well as looking deeper at how we understand the principles of evangelism and how we might apply them thoughtfully in our own situation.

When many people think of evangelism, they imagine knocking on doors, or hanging out in university lunch areas, having conversations with strangers and hoping for the opportunity to draw 6 pictures that explain the gospel, or the famous “bridge to life” (see below). Over the years this kind of evangelism has had some success, but it has also provided a barrier for people who feel that uncomfortable conversations with strangers is something they try to avoid, not initiate.

Not everyone has the kind of gifts that mean they can walk up to anyone in the street and have an evangelistic conversation. Ed Stetzer, in the foreword to Sam's book, points out that the gift of being an “Evangelist” was a specific gift from God (Ephesians 4:11). That said, the role of the Evangelist is to “*equip his people for works of service*”. That is, while we might not all be gifted evangelists, that doesn't mean we don't have the opportunity to engage in evangelism ourselves.

The purpose of these studies is to encourage us all to think about how we might shape our lives in such a way that we might grow “organic” opportunities to share the gospel with the people who we “do life with”. We all have friends and family. Many of us will chat to people regularly in school, or work, at the school gate, in our sporting teams, or watching sporting events. We know that being a Christian isn't something that we turn on for Sunday and turn back off Monday morning, so how do we live our lives in such a way that we're being an effective witness to those around us? Are there opportunities that we could be making more of, and other opportunities that we could be creating?

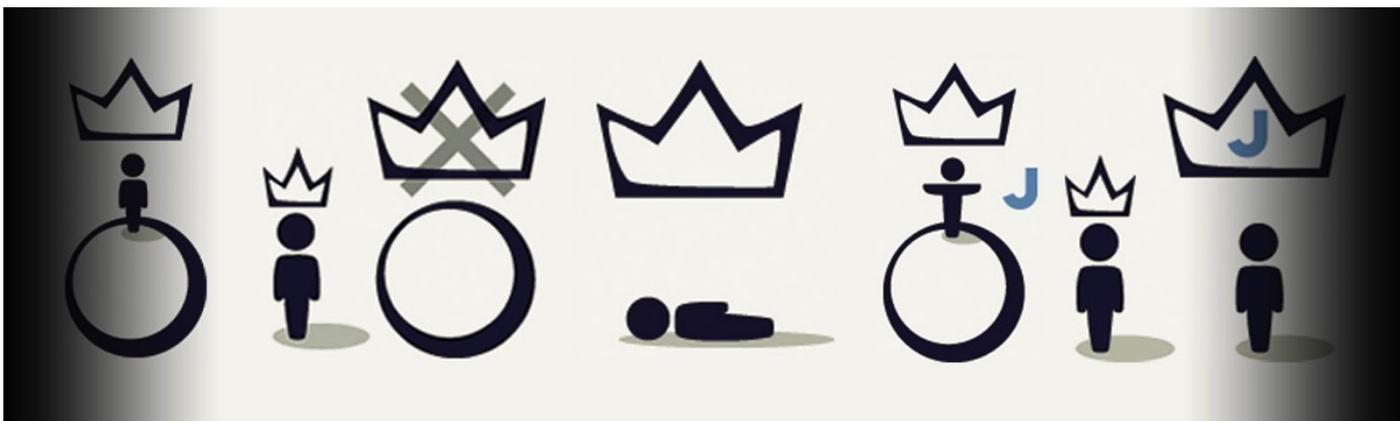
It's also helpful to remember that Evangelism is not necessarily a one-on-one sport. If your peer group has a common friend who doesn't yet know Jesus, building opportunities to share the gospel with them might be something that you work on together. Not only can you work on evangelism with your peers, but the church as a whole is here to help too. If you feel like you could “sharpen up” a little when it comes to sharing the gospel with someone, then attending one of our *Simply Christianity* courses is a great way to do that. Better yet, you can bring a friend along with you when you do so!

We also have some wonderful resources such as “The Word One-to-one”, which breaks down John's gospel into small chunks and includes both questions about the passage as well as the answers to those questions. It is a resource that has been created to be so simple that you don't even need to be trained how to use it!

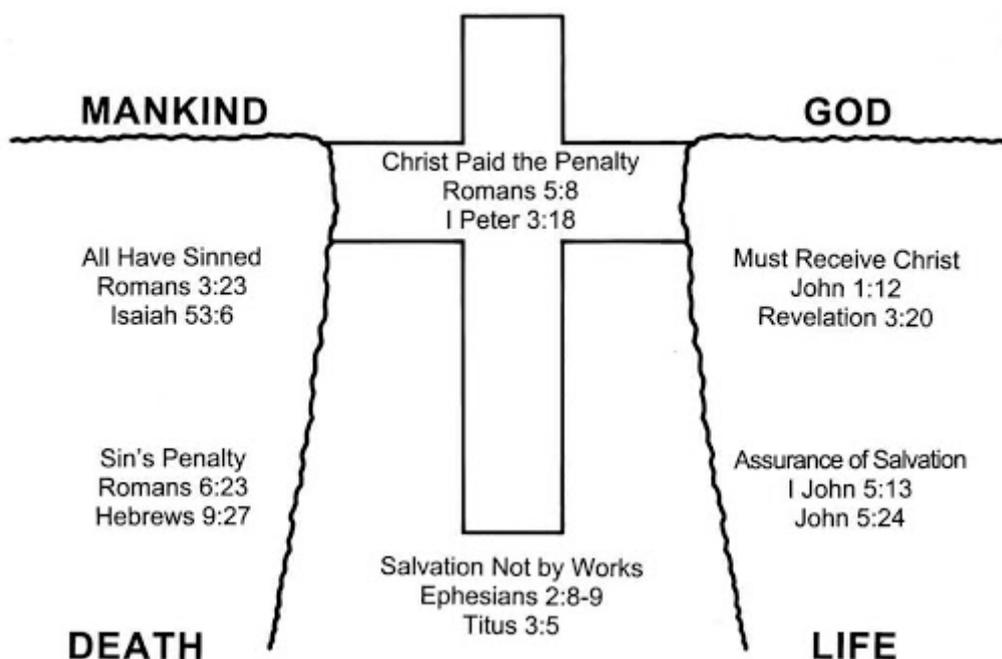
One **key thing** that you can be doing as a Bible study as you work through this series is *praying* for people in your life that you would like to introduce to Jesus. As Rowan Kemp reminded us at our recent Global Mission Week, authentic revival begins with prayer, so it would be great to put some time aside every week to pray for people in your life, by name, or just in general.

If you find yourself enjoying this series and would like to dig a little deeper, there are many options available to you. Sam Chan has written a more in-depth version of this book called *“Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to make the unbelievable news about Jesus more believable”*. Some other helpful resources include the following.

- *“Questioning Evangelism: Engaging people’s hearts the way Jesus did”* by Randy Newman.
- *“The Gospel and personal evangelism”* by Mark Dever.
- *“Promoting the gospel”* by John Dickson
- *“Evangelism and the sovereignty of God”* by J.I. Packer
- *“A Better Story: God, sex and human flourishing”* by Glynn Harrison (Not specifically about evangelism as such, but a helpful book unpacking the relationship between sex and identity in modern culture)
- *“Tactics: A game plan for discussing your christian convictions”* by Gregory Koukl.



“Two Ways to live” to see more about this resource, visit matthiasmedia.com.au



The “Bridge to life”

Study 1 - Understanding Two Worlds

1 Corinthians 15:1-19

Talk

- 1) What do you think are some of the biggest barriers to people you know becoming Christians?
Is it a matter of pride? Access to the information? Is the Church itself perceived as a barrier to faith?

- 2) Which people in our society do you think are the most trustworthy?
 - a) Do you think Christians/the church are seen as trustworthy? Why/Why not?

- 3) In his book, Sam Chat talks about “Plausibility structures” (those elements that determine whether someone/something is trustworthy or not) and the importance of building them with non-Christians. What is it that makes Christianity believable for you?
 - a) Sam notes that the three main sources contributing to plausibility are:-
 - 1: Community - we trust friends and family.
 - 2: Experiences - having some kind of experience with something makes it trustworthy, and
 - 3: Facts, evidence and data.

Does this order surprise you? How might this order effect the way we approach evangelism

Discuss and Apply

9) Why do you think it is so easy to keep our christian friends and our other friends in separate groups?

a) Where do you think some natural points of connection might be in your life?

10) The Second chapter of Sam's book is about "Going to their things". The more we show we are willing to invest in others, the more likely they are to come to something to which we invite them. What are some areas in your life where you might be able to invest in your community?

11) What do you think it looks like in our day to day lives to make Christianity a "plausible" life choice for our friends/work mates?

12) Are there activities that you do solely with friends from Church? What would it take to make it an activity to which you'd be keen to invite some non-christian friends?

a) How do we avoid the situation of looking like we're trying to "set people up" for evangelism?

13) PRAY: think of 3 people who you can be praying for through this term. Pray that God might grant you opportunities to display how your faith adds value and meaning to your life.

Prayers

Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Please pray for Brett as he seeks to encourage, serve and build up the wider staff team. Pray for wisdom that he and the team develop ministry plans that will help St Luke's stay faithful and grow into the future.

We pray for Evan Caddy our Ministry Trainee, with us over the next 2 years, working alongside Brett and Sam.

Pray for our Church Wardens: Colin Adams, Joel Garlato & Helen Webster. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Timothy Clipsham, Laurie Davidson, Amanda Garlato, Elise Hankin, Jade Loughnan, Eliza Lucas, David Parkes, Kath Telfer and Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer). Pray for our Parish Nominators: Timothy Clipsham, Michael Easton, Megan Smith, Amanda Garlato, Louise Parkes. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.

Pray for Matt and Lauren, Ezra, Joanna and Samuel Thomas and their mission work with OMF International to an unreached people group in South East Asia.

Pray for the global COVID crisis and ask for wise decision making from leaders. Bring before God those who are physically or mentally ill, grieving or experiencing financial hardships due to the pandemic.

Study 2 - Coffee, Dinner, Gospel

Acts 17:15-34

Talk

- 1) Bible study material and youth groups are famous for the quirky opening “getting to know you” questions. What is the best/strangest one you’ve encountered?

- 2) Have you ever had a gospel conversation go badly? Why do you think it did so?

Read and Investigate: Acts 17:15-34

- 3) What are the different groups of people that Paul has discussions with in this passage?

- 4) Looking at the three different groups that Paul conversed with, what level do they appear to be on. Why do you think that might be the case?

- 5) While not a “conversation” as such (it’s only Paul’s words that are recorded), when speaking to the Areopagus, Paul displays a masterful way of moving from “interests” to “values” before landing at a “worldview” statement. Look at v.22-34 and discuss how he does so.

- 6) In v.29, Paul challenges the mindset of the day that was caught up in idol worship. The people of the day could almost be said to “collect gods”. What do you think are the idols that people are most likely to get caught up in today?
- How might we paint a picture of a God who is bigger than these idols?

Discuss and Apply

- 7) Where are the areas in your week-to-week life where you have regular “coffee” type conversations?
- a) Can you think of ways that you might encourage a conversation to go just a little bit deeper this week?
- b) What are some of the best questions you can think of that encourage people to talk about values/beliefs? (See Sam Chan’s book p.41-42)
- 8) In his book, Sam calls hospitality the “secret sauce of evangelism”. Look at the following passages. What do they say about hospitality? Luke 14:7-14, Matt 25:42-46, Rom 12:13-20

Prayers

Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as she ministers and cares for the people who attend the Thursday Communion Service. Pray for her as she continues to pray and care for those who are unable to attend, due to Covid.

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois, Finn and Cleo Morton. Pray for Sam as our Services Pastor, preparing the elements, which make up our Sunday services. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Youth Ministry and high school Scripture.

Pray for Sandy Rigby as she supports Sam in ministering to the youth of St Lukes. We continually bring before God, high school scripture, that he will continue to make paths for us to teach over this disrupted year.

Pray for Shane and Ruth, Kye, Joel, and Finn Sparks and their mission work making disciples in Gijon, Spain.

Pray for our Prime Minister and government. Pray for our state and federal members, our Premier and government. We pray also for our local Council including our Mayor.

- 4) Having listened actively to someone else share about their life, it is more likely that they will want to know about your beliefs. Have you ever shared with someone how you became a Christian? How was that experience?

Read and Investigate: Acts 26

- 5) Acts 26 is largely taken up with the story of how Paul became a Christian (and why he finds himself in the position he is in). If you were to break up Paul's testimony into sections, what would they be?

6) In Ch.5 of his book, Sam Chan notes that most great stories follow a similar pattern:

Part 1: Introduction - the main character is introduced.

Part 2: The Mission - a mission is defined so that a goal can be achieved

Bridge - The hero has an "*aha! moment*" when they *redefine* the goal and recommit to the mission ready to launch into the climax.

Climax - The hero *achieves* the mission

Conclusion (Sam calls it a Denouement) - We glimpse the hero in their new *normal* life.

- a) How does Paul's story fit into this kind of structure?

Discuss and Apply

- 7) When we want to share the story of our own faith, whether we grew up in a Christian household or came to faith later in our lives, it is good to think of it as a story. Spend 5-10 minutes and see if you can frame the story of your faith in terms of the story framework above.

8) This may be the moment where someone says to you: “yes, but what is a Christian?” Can you clearly explain

a) What are some of the “Christianese” jargon words that people can sometimes get stuck on?

9) In Paul’s case, he knows that he is very much part of the bigger story of the Jewish nation. We know that we are also part of God’s salvation story from the beginning of history, but we are also part of the story of the Church. Why can that be problematic in this present day and age?

Prayers

Pray for Tim and Shona, Annika, Hamish, Edward and Hugo Goldsmith. Pray for Tim as our Community Pastor. Pray for Tim as he also heads up our Local Mission profile for St Luke's and focuses on outreach and evangelism.

Pray for Colin as Office and Site Manager. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as he takes on this new role looking after staff and the Church site.

Pray for Eddie as he assists with the bookkeeping on a Wednesday.

Pray for Lisa as Admin Assistant, as she looks after the administration of the Church.

Pray for Sarah and husband Tim and her work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Pray for Rachel and Michael Burgess as Rachel serves with AFES as a senior staff worker at at the Australian Catholic University in North Sydney

Thank God for the many and varied resources available to us as a parish. As we seek to witness to the goodness of God daily, pray that we might make the most of opportunities to invite people we know to church. Pray that God would be preparing the hearts of people we could invite to a service at St Luke's.

Read and Investigate: Psalm 1

5) Where does this Psalm see the source of wisdom being?

a) What do you think the Psalmist means when he says this type of person will be “Blessed”? What kind of blessing do you think that might be?

b) If we experience this kind of blessing, how might this encourage/challenge people around us?

Read and Investigate: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

6) In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul speaks about the “wisdom of the cross” versus “the wisdom of the world”. Our modern culture seeks to define our value through our sexual identity, or our sense of self. How does an identity wrapped up in Jesus speak against this?

a) How might this be a comfort/encouragement to people who struggle in the modern age?

Discuss and apply

7) For many of us as Christians, we might feel like we’re struggling for answers ourselves let alone being available to be the de facto chaplain to others. Why do you think the gospel might both challenge that mindset and empower us?

- a) We certainly don't want to "proof text" people in tough positions, yet the Bible often does offer comfort to people who are going through a hard time. Can you think of some Bible passages that might be a comfort to people in the following situations?
- i) Struggling with guilt or shame?
 - ii) A deep feeling of unworthiness?
 - iii) People who feel overburdened or burnt out?
 - iv) People who feel like God could never love them
- b) Can you think of other ways that Christians can be an effective Chaplain/supporter to friends who are struggling?

8) Are there people in your life (Christians or not) who are finding life hard at the moment? Spend some time praying for them and praying that you might be able to care for them.

Prayers

Nicole Murray working with our Young Adults. Luke Murray working on Sundays as our Student Minister. Prayer that their time in preparation is productive and good for all they serve.

Pray for Kylie Zietsch and her work at Johannesburg Bible College, South Africa.

Pray for Andrew and Adele, Isaac, Lucy, and Finn Southerton and their church plant in Wellington, City on a Hill, New Zealand.

Pray for Marty & Katrina, Simeon, Jed and Luke Feltham, preparing to serve in Kenya with CMS.

Please pray that our new system for welcoming people would be useful and encouraging to keep loving new people. Pray that we would continue to connect with hospitality and warmth even with the current restrictions in place.

Praise God for our Bible Study leaders and for their faithful work in teaching and ministering to us throughout the term.

Pray for our witness to our local community – especially as more units are developed and more people move into the area. Pray for opportunities to connect with our community.

Study 5 - Lean into disagreement

Luke 20:20-39

Talk

1) Have you ever had a tense discussion or disagreement about Christianity? How did it make you feel?

a) What do you think the best thing is to do when you come across someone who disagrees with Christianity, or a particular part of Christianity?

In 1975, the Pepsi company first ran a new campaign called the “Pepsi Challenge”, where they would encourage people to do a “blind taste test” of both Pepsi and Coca Cola (over 40 years later, they ran the same campaign in Westfield Miranda!). They were confident to do so, believing that when people tried both drinks side-by-side, Pepsi would reign supreme.

2) Are we this confident about our faith in Jesus Christ?

In this study, we’ll be encouraged to “lean into disagreement”, not so much because we want to pursue arguments, but because we are confident that the gospel is good news for anyone who responds to it with repentance and faith.

Read and Investigate: Luke 20:20-40

3) Is there anything that stands out in this passage to you?

4) In this passage, Jesus faces two questions, one from a group of “spies” hoping to catch him out, and the second by some Sadducees. What appears to be the purpose behind the spies’ question?

a) How does Jesus avoid the trap that the spies have set?

b) What is the outcome of Jesus' answer? Is there a lesson to be learned for how we respond to people who attempt to ask "trap questions"?

5) When the Sadducees come afterward, they have a slightly different tactic. What appears to be the purpose behind their question?

a) Jesus answers in two parts, first in v.34-36, then in v.37-38. What is the purpose of these two answers?

b) Is there a helpful principle in Jesus' answers?

Discuss and apply

Side note: It's far more likely in our context that people are going to disagree with the moral or ethical position that we take as Christians. Sam Chan's helpful suggestion/reminder (p.119 of his book) is that when challenged on our position, the best thing we can say is that *"I hold the same view as Jesus does"*. This is helpful for two big reasons.

- ❖ Firstly it grounds our view in something deeper than our personal opinion, pointing to the founder of our faith.
- ❖ Secondly, if we are to say this, it means we need to ensure that our view isn't just a matter of culture, or personal opinion. We need to ground our opinions in scripture. Christians ought to be willing always to look at themselves and ask "is this a gospel matter, or am I taking something from my culture and turning it into the gospel?"

- 6) Cast an eye over some of Jesus' parables in Matthew 13. Why do you think Jesus uses these parables and how might telling stories be effective when we speak to people who disagree with us?

Definition: In the following questions, we'll be talking about "Apologetics". For many, when they hear that word it brings to mind "apologising" for the Christian faith, as if there is something that we are embarrassed about. The word "Apologetics" however, comes from the Greek word "Apologia", which means "a reasoned defence". Apologetics is for everyone. As Peter notes in 1 Peter 3:15, Christians are called to give *"an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."* Of course, it's also incredibly important that we remember the final words of that verse, where Peter reminds us *how* that is to be done *"But do this with gentleness and respect."*

Apologetics, in the first sense, is about defending the Christian faith from accusations made against it. There are literally thousands of books and blogs, there's even an organisation called the "Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics". There is no end to the reading and discussion that can be done in this area. Particularly in the internet age, it does beg a question:

- 7) Do you think taking a defensive position tends to be particularly successful? Have you ever seen a Christian argument go particularly well online?

The second strand of apologetics is to (gently) challenge the position of the person who is questioning you. Let's take a look at how Jesus did this:

8) Read Matthew 15:1-9. How does Jesus initially respond to the question from the Pharisees?

a) Why do you think Jesus might have been a fan of such a tactic (he does this almost 30 times in the gospels)?

9) What are some possible "counter questions" to some of the following?

a) Isn't religion just a crutch for people who can't hack it?

b) If God really exists, why is there so much pain in the world?

c) Isn't it arrogant to say that Christianity is the only way?

10) Where many Christians may fear discussions about human dignity because of contested views on gender, how does the Bible and the Christian faith speak positively into human dignity?

11) How does your Christian faith positively affect your life? How might you articulate this positive effect to those around you?

Prayers

Pray for Cam, Katrina, Peyton and Thea Harte. Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Children's Thursday arvo programs.

Pray for Jess Moran as she overseas our Crèche and Playtime programs. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as she looks after this age group as well as providing support and encouragement for the parents.

Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus. Pray that this would be a great witness to the wider community.

Pray for Geoff and Liz, Johanna, Will, Tom and Zoe Robson as Geoff takes up a position at Matthias Media.

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Pray for David and Kathryn, Reuben and Felix Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.

Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University.