



How: Gospel Conversations

Summary and Goal

Gospel conversations involve sharing the good news of Jesus with the lost and searching, while trusting the Holy Spirit with the results. The goal of this study is to encourage you to engage in gospel conversations more effectively and more regularly.

Main Passages

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Peter 3:15-16

Session Outline

1. Look for Opportunities (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:15-16)
2. Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing (1 Cor. 15:3-4)
3. Trust the Holy Spirit (Gal. 6:7-9)

Theological Theme

The gospel is a historical event with eternal implications. Christ died, was buried, and rose again. Adequate gospel conversations should focus on the Scriptures, not only on lived experiences.

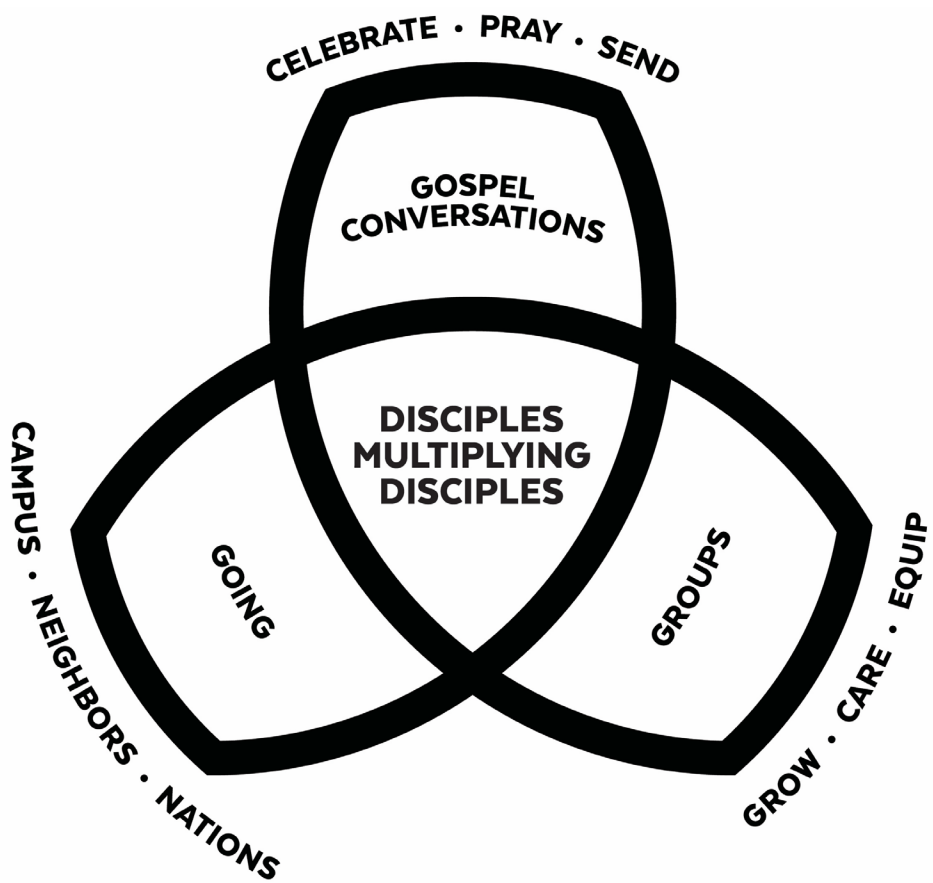
Christ Connection

When Christ is regarded as Lord in your heart, it becomes easier to share the gospel and to give a defense to anyone who asks about the hope that is in you.

Missional Application

Gospel means *good news*, but it is only good news if we share it. Paul says that the gospel is “most important.” As Christians called to live out the Great Commission, nothing is more important than sharing the gospel.

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



DxD This Week

Heading

xxxxx

Heading

xxxxx

4

Session Plan

How: Gospel Conversations

? For Further Discussion

How often do you pray for opportunities for gospel conversations?

Introduction

- ? What keeps you from having more gospel conversations?
- ? How can you connect the everyday experiences of your life to the gospel?

Our power rests in the good news of the gospel and in how that reality has affected us personally. We have been redeemed for a new, true, eternal purpose. Our hope is the resurrection, which foreshadows the future for believers, who will be raised to new life and everlasting community with the triune God and other believers. Our mandate is to bear witness; our triune God does the converting. Obedience is confident witness, not conversion. We are called to sow the good news, but God will bring about the harvest according to His power and His will.

1. Look for Opportunities (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:15-16)

Having gospel conversations can be as simple as explaining why you behave the way you do—assuming that you live as a follower of Jesus, of course. But the key ingredient in those gospel conversations must be “the gospel.” You can trust in the power of God’s Word as well because He has promised that His Word will not return void. (See Isa. 55:11.)

- ? Read Isaiah 55:11. What does this verse tell you about the Word of God? How does this promise give you hope when gospel conversations do not result in a salvation?
- ? Where are places you might look for opportunities to have gospel conversations?
- ? Application: How can you begin to pray for God to give you opportunities and the courage to share the gospel more often?

2. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

Paul’s method of discipleship was mentoring. He modeled belief in front of his people and encouraged them to follow his example. He was intentional and

he was personal. But Paul was very clear about his intentions: “I passed on to you as most important” (v. 3). What was most important? “That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (v. 4).

- ❓ Why did Paul emphasize the historical nature of the gospel? How do you understand the gospel differently when you consider it first as a historical event and second as a personal experience?
- ❓ What are topics that tend to derail you in your efforts to share the gospel?
- ❓ Application: How might you keep the main thing the main thing in the areas where you tend to get hung up or derailed in gospel conversations?

3. Trust the Holy Spirit (Gal. 6:7-9)

Rebirth is a miraculous experience, made possible only by the Spirit of God. Your responsibility is to be obedient to the Lord and obedient in the Great Commission, but it is God’s privilege and responsibility to save. Only He has the ability to do so.

- ❓ Read John 3:1-9. What was necessary for Nicodemus to be born again?
- ❓ What are some ways we might wrongly share the gospel if we don’t trust the Holy Spirit?
- ❓ Application: Think about your own life. How did the Holy Spirit save you? What do you know about yourself that was “unsavable” apart from the work of God? How can this give you confidence in gospel conversations with others?

Conclusion

- ❓ Ask someone in your group or another friend to hold you accountable to have gospel conversations each week. How many should you strive for? How might your relationships change if you make more effort to share the gospel?
- ❓ The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread loneliness and hopelessness. How can the “hope that is in you” of the gospel be a powerful apologetic in this lonely and depressed world?
- ❓ What can you change about your weekly routine to give you more opportunities to share your faith?

❓ For Further Discussion

In just a few weeks, schools, colleges, and universities will resume classes. How can you pray for students, teachers, and staff to use their platform to engage in gospel conversations?



Expanded Session Content

How: Gospel Conversations

Introduction

No one ever has to ask a grandparent about his or her grandchildren. Grandparents will tell you about their grandchildren whether you want to hear about them or not. It has been said that grandchildren are the reward God gives to parents for putting up with their children.

Of course, the truth is that grandparents love their grandchildren so much that they can't help but talk about them. Talking about their grandchildren becomes second nature.

As we consider how we might engage more people in gospel conversations, we should work to make it second nature. Make conversations about Jesus as normal as conversations about grandchildren.

- ❓ What keeps you from having more gospel conversations?
- ❓ How can you connect the everyday experiences of your life to the gospel?
- ❓ How often do you pray for opportunities for gospel conversations?

Session Summary

Our power rests in the good news of the gospel and in how that reality has affected us personally. We have been redeemed for a new, true, eternal purpose. Our hope is the resurrection, which foreshadows the future for believers, who will be raised to new life and everlasting community with the triune God and other believers. Our mandate is to bear witness; our triune God does the converting. Obedience is confident witness, not conversion.

We are called to sow the good news, but God will bring about the harvest according to His power and His will.




1. Look for Opportunities (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:15-16)

Paul said that when he was with the Corinthians, he “passed on” the gospel. He shared it. He made opportunities to tell someone about the gospel. When Peter wrote, he told his recipients to be prepared to give a defense. But the defense was not for the anger within them, or the fear, or the vitriol. They were to give a defense for the *hope* within them.

Paul and Peter both also wrote about a lifestyle of gospel sharing. These are two sides of the same coin. Christians should look for opportunities to instigate gospel conversations. But Christians should also live lives that cause others to want to know their story. In a world filled with sin, strife, anger, and division, lives that display the fruit of the Spirit stand out.

Having gospel conversations can be as simple as explaining why you behave the way you do—assuming that you live as a follower of Jesus, of course. But the key ingredient in those gospel conversations must be “the gospel.” Paul was very clear with the Corinthians about what he shared. He shared with them the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. He didn’t tell them how Jesus made his life better—following Jesus nearly killed him. Paul simply shared the gospel and trusted in the power of the Word of God to work. You can trust in the power of God’s Word as well because He has promised that His Word will not return void. (See Isa. 55:11.)

Gospel conversations do not always have to be long and involved. They may be short. If you have an opportunity to see someone on a regular basis, consider an ongoing gospel conversation. If you buy coffee at the same place regularly, engage the server, ask about their story, and begin sharing the gospel with them slowly. You might not have 20 minutes for a full gospel conversation, or you might get a few minutes multiple times per week.

-  Read Isaiah 55:11. What does this verse tell you about the Word of God? How does this promise give you hope when gospel conversations do not result in a salvation?
-  Where are places you might look for opportunities to have gospel conversations?
-  Application: How can you begin to pray for God to give you opportunities and the courage to share the gospel more often?

Ready to Give a Defense

Inner reverence for Christ should lead believers to be ready at any time, especially in the midst of persecution and suffering, to give a frank defense of the hope within them.

2. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

Paul's method of discipleship was mentoring. He modeled belief in front of his people and encouraged them to follow his example. He was intentional and he was personal. But Paul was very clear about his intentions: "I passed on to you as most important" (v. 3). What was most important? "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (v. 4).

What was most important? The gospel of Jesus Christ. There are other things to talk about, but only one thing is of greatest importance.

- ❓ Why did Paul emphasize the historical nature of the gospel? How do you understand the gospel differently when you consider it first as a historical event and second as a personal experience?

As you pray about and focus on engaging others with gospel conversations, work to keep the main thing the main thing. In a politicized age, certain church groups or denominations can get attached to political parties or candidates, but politics is never the main thing. In fact, as Christians try to talk with others about the Bible, all sorts of topics can come up, but no topic is as important as the gospel.

- ❓ What are topics that tend to derail you in your efforts to share the gospel?

Work to keep the main thing the main thing. Author, Jackie Hill Perry, who was saved out of a gay lifestyle, speaks of how when she married her husband, people applauded her marriage more than they applauded her salvation in Christ as if her marriage was what redeemed her.¹

Gospel conversations need to get to the gospel and focus on the gospel. The gospel is not the same thing as your testimony. Your testimony matters and is important, but it is the testimony of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection that saves. Keep the main thing the main thing. Get to the gospel and get the gospel to the lost.

- ❓ Application: How might you keep the main thing the main thing in the areas where you tend to get hung up or derailed in gospel conversations?

3. Trust the Holy Spirit (Gal. 6:7-9)

The responsibility to share the gospel has been given to Christians. The Great Commission is clear: Christians are to go and make disciples of all nations. But the work of salvation is not the responsibility or the ability of any man or woman. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that he must be born again if he wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven.


Rebirth is a miraculous experience, made possible only by the Spirit of God. Your responsibility is to be obedient to the Lord and obedient in the Great Commission, but it is God's privilege and responsibility to save. Only He has the ability to do so.


 Read John 3:1-9. What was necessary for Nicodemus to be born again?

When writing to the Galatians, Paul warned that we will reap what we sow. If you sow to the flesh, you will reap of the flesh. If you sow in the Spirit, you will reap in the Spirit. There is no greater spiritual seed casting than spreading the gospel through one-on-one personal evangelism.

You can trust the Lord that if you regularly share the gospel in the power of the Spirit, then God will be at work. God will change you and change others.

There is no need for threats, twisting of the truth, or false promises. You can trust the Holy Spirit to do His work. The Holy Spirit does not need you to add to the gospel promise or take away from it. The Holy Spirit will work according to God's promises through the power of the Word.

 What are some ways we might wrongly share the gospel if we don't trust the Holy Spirit?

 Application: Think about your own life. How did the Holy Spirit save you? What do you know about yourself that was "un-savable" apart from the work of God? How can this give you confidence in gospel conversations with others?

Conclusion

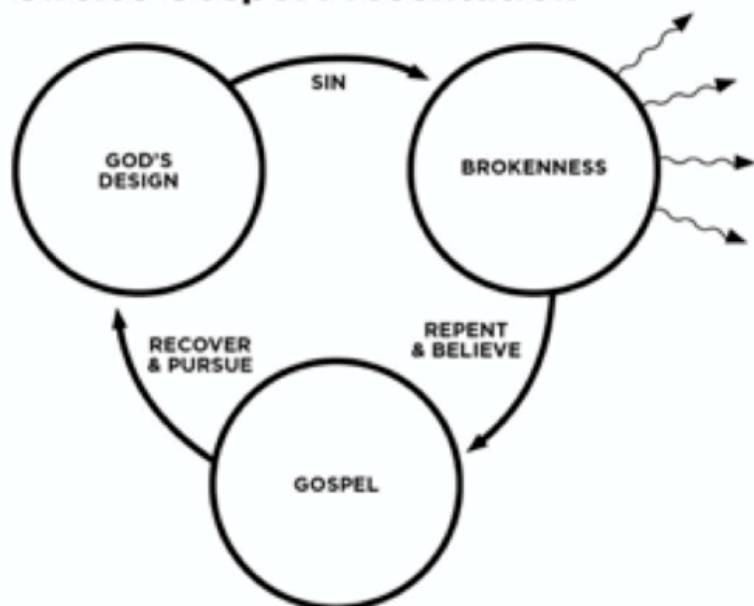
Gospel conversations should be second nature for Christians, but it is not always that easy. If you struggle in this area, you aren't alone. But you can improve. Begin by being open to opportunities to share the gospel. Pray for them. Search for them. Give a reason for the hope that is within you. Next, remember to keep the main thing the main thing. Theories about Revelation may be fun for Christians to argue about, but they are not the pure, simple gospel of Jesus. Communicate the gospel.

Finally, trust the Holy Spirit. Trust the Spirit to give you opportunities. Trust the Spirit to use you in those opportunities. Trust the Spirit to work through His Word, even after your gospel conversations.

In addition, make use of available tools. In addition to your personal testimony and the Scriptures, learn to use a gospel presentation tool. The value of learning a tool is that you can be ready anywhere, anytime with anybody to share your faith. The "3 Circles Gospel Presentation" offers a simple, easily reproducible tool to have gospel conversations. While you may supplement this tool with other resources and tactics, "3 Circles" will be the common language used by our pastors and will be a part of our core gospel conversations training.

DxD

3 Circles Gospel Presentation



- ① Ask someone in your group or another friend to hold you accountable to have gospel conversations each week. How many should you strive for? How might your relationships change if you make more effort to share the gospel?
- ① The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread loneliness and hopelessness. How can the “hope that is in you” of the gospel be a powerful apologetic in this lonely and depressed world?
- ① In just a few weeks, schools, colleges, and universities will resume classes. How can you pray for students, teachers, and staff to use their platform to engage in gospel conversations?
- ① What can you change about your weekly routine to give you more opportunities to share your faith?

Prayer of Response

Close in prayer, asking God to lead our group to grow in gospel conversations. Ask Him to help us look for opportunities, keep the main thing the main thing, and trust the Holy Spirit.

Additional Resources

- *Tell Someone* by Greg Laurie
- *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* by Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright
- *Tactics* by Gregory Koukl

For Next Week

Session Title

- God is Good

Main Passages

- Genesis 1:26-31; Romans 8:28

Session Outline

1. The Goodness of God (Gen. 1:26-31)
2. Working for Our Good (Rom. 8:28)
3. Our Good Works (Rom. 8:28)

Memorize

³ For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Daily Readings

- Monday - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
- Tuesday - 1 Peter 3:15-16
- Wednesday - John 14:6
- Thursday - Romans 1:16
- Friday - Acts 8:35
- Saturday - Psalm 96:3

Historical Context of 1 Corinthians

Purpose

Paul's purpose in writing 1 Corinthians was to motivate the Corinthian church to acknowledge the Lord's ownership of them and the implications this had in their lives. Key topics Paul addressed in this overarching theme of the ownership and authority of the Lord include Christian unity, morality, the role of women, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection.

Author

First Corinthians ascribes Paul as its author (1:1; 16:21). Biblical scholars are almost unanimous that Paul wrote the letter. He wrote it during the last year of his three-year ministry at Ephesus, probably a few weeks before Pentecost in the spring of AD 56 (15:32; 16:8; Ac 20:31).

Setting

First Corinthians is the second letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. He had written them an earlier letter, of which no extant copy exists, that included an admonition not to mix with the sexually immoral (5:9). The writing of this second letter (1 Corinthians) was prompted by oral reports from Chloe's household about factional strife within the church (1:11). Paul had also received reports about an incestuous relationship among the membership (5:1), factions that arose during observance of the Lord's Supper (11:18), and confusion over the resurrection of the dead (15:12). As a result, Paul addressed these issues in 1 Corinthians. Apparently as he was writing the letter, he received a letter from the Corinthians asking his opinion on various issues (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). Therefore, he included his replies within this letter to the Corinthian believers.

Special Features

First Corinthians is the most literary of Paul's letters. With a variety of stylistic devices—irony, sarcasm, rhetorical questions, alliteration, antithesis, personification, framing devices, hyperbole, repetition, picturesque words (with local color), double meanings, and other wordplays—Paul attempted to persuade his readers. He wanted to communicate to the Corinthians the necessity of accepting the Lord's authority over their lives.

Extended Commentary

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

15:3–4. Paul next explained why it was important for the Corinthians to believe his teaching about the resurrection. He justified his insistence that they hold fast to the gospel, insisting that the resurrection was central to the gospel message. Why was this so important? Why was the resurrection a necessary element of the gospel?

First, Paul received and passed on this gospel. In rabbinic Judaism this terminology described the transmission of authoritative religious teachings. Paul told the Corinthians to maintain the gospel as he had given it to them because it was a sacred tradition, not a human tradition. Second, he delivered this gospel teaching as a matter of first importance. In other words, nothing was more central or more important in Paul's conception of gospel than these teachings.

Paul summed up his gospel as having two main concerns: the death and the resurrection of Christ. Both of these took place according to the Scriptures. Paul repeated this phrase to emphasize the importance of the scriptural witness and to demonstrate that the resurrection's importance paralleled the centrality of Christ's death.

He spoke first of Christ's death, declaring, Christ died for our sins. Christ's substitutionary death on behalf of believers brought salvation to those who would otherwise have been lost. When Paul said that Christ's death was according to the Scriptures, he probably had in mind Isaiah's prediction that the son of David would suffer on behalf of the people of God (Isa. 53:1–12).

Second, Paul referred to the resurrection. Christ was buried, but he was raised on the third day. Paul never said that Christ raised himself. Instead, the apostle taught that God the Father raised Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4; Gal. 1:1). The resurrection was also according to the Scriptures. Paul probably had in mind Isaiah 53:10–12. The prophet explained that the son of David would come back from the grave to bring great blessings to God's people. Paul also may have thought of Psalm 16:10, a passage in which David recorded that God would not allow his Holy One to see decay. Jesus defended the idea of resurrection in the Old Testament by asserting that God was the God of the living (Matt. 22:31–32). By including both Christ's death and resurrection as essential elements of the gospel, Paul precluded those who denied the resurrection from claiming salvation in Christ.²

1 Peter 3:15-16

3:15 Peter urged believers to regard Christ the Lord as holy from the center of their being. This inner reverence for Christ should lead believers to be ready at any time, especially in the midst of persecution and suffering, to give a frank defense of the hope within them. On "hope," cp. v. 5; 1:3, 21.

3:16–17 Christians ought to defend their faith with gentleness and respect, not anger and arrogance. By this means, unbelievers will be humiliated when they malign believers at the last judgment. Note from v. 17 that suffering is ultimately from the will of God.³

Galatians 6:7-9

6:7 “A person cannot claim to accept the gospel and the obligations that come with it and at the same time live in obedience to the flesh instead of the Spirit” (Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*).

6:8 Destruction here may refer to: (1) eternal damnation (5:21) or (2) loss of eternal rewards (1Co 3:12–15). Eternal life does not mean earning your salvation since justification before God is through faith (2:16). It refers to life from the Holy Spirit (Rm 6:22).

6:9–10 The Christian life is a marathon race, so let us not get tired (i.e., grow weary or lose heart). Doing good is not seeking to be justified by works, but living as God has planned for those who have received his gracious salvation through faith (Eph 2:8–10). To “sow to the Spirit” over the long haul means taking the opportunity (Gk *kairos*, “opportune or appointed time”) that the Lord places before us to work for the good of all.⁴

References

1. [Christian Sexuality]. “Christian Sexuality - Interview with Jackie Hill Perry.” Youtube video, 48:03, October 21, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pc_s2xItSsI.
2. Richard L. Pratt. *I & II Corinthians*. Edited by Max E. Anders. Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2000).
3. *CSB Study Bible: Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).
4. *Ibid.*

Author Bio

Greg Laurie (Tell Someone)

Greg Laurie is the senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside and Irvine California. In 1990, Laurie began holding large-scale public evangelistic events called Harvest Crusades. Since that time, more than 5,242,000 people have attended Harvest Crusades events around the United States, and in Australia and New Zealand. More importantly, more than 439,900 people have registered professions of faith through these outreaches. Greg and his wife Cathe have two sons, Christopher and Jonathan, and five grandchildren.

Jimmy Scroggins (Turning Everyday Conversations Into Gospel Conversations)

Jimmy Scroggins serves as the Lead Pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, FL. Jimmy is married to Kristin and they are blessed with eight children – James, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaac, Stephen, Anna Kate, Mary Claire and Caleb. Jimmy earned his PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. Jimmy is dedicated to building families in South Florida through a network of neighborhood churches. His vision is to see each Family Church campus on mission to help people in their community discover and pursue God’s design. The Family Church Network has a vision to plant 100 churches in South Florida.

Steve Wright (Turning Everyday Conversations Into Gospel Conversations)

Steve Wright serves as Pastor of Discipleship and Church Planting at Family Church in West Palm Beach, FL. Steve is married to Tina and they are blessed with three children – Sara, William, and Tyler. Steve earned his PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. Steve is also the author of *ApParent Privilege – Family Discipleship* and *reThink - Decide for Yourself: Is Student Ministry Working?* Steve is passionate about multiplying disciples and desires that every resident in South Florida have repeated gospel conversations.

Gregory Koukl (Tactics)

Gregory Koukl holds MA degrees in both apologetics and philosophy. He’s spoken on over 80 university campuses and hosted his own radio talk show for 30 years defending “Christianity worth thinking about.” Greg is founder and president of Stand to Reason (str.org) and serves as adjunct professor of Christian apologetics at Biola University.

Jackie Hill Perry (Christian Sexuality - Interview with Jackie Hill Perry)

Jackie Hill Perry is a writer, poet, and artist whose work has been featured on the Washington Times, The 700 Club, Desiring God, The Gospel Coalition, and other publications. Since becoming a Christian in 2008, she has been compelled to use her speaking and teaching gifts to share the light of the gospel of God as authentically as she can. At home she is a wife to Preston and Mommy to Eden and Autumn.