

**Group Leader Training**  
*Gospel-Centeredness Workshop*  
March 6, 2022

**Agenda**

- I. Arrive (5:00)
- II. Introduction (5:05-5:15)
- III. Explain Practice (5:15-5:20)
- IV. Table Discussion (5:20-5:35)
- V. Renewing the Mind (5:35-5:45)
- VI. Crown, Cross, Creation (5:45-6:15)
  - a. CROWN
  - b. CROSS
  - c. CREATION
- VII. [Euangelion Video](#) (6:15-6:20)
- VIII. Housekeeping (6:20-6:30)
  - Attendance
  - New Guest submission
  - Database clean up

The aim for the individuals in our groups is to learn to: **LOVE, GROW, SERVE, and SHARE.**

**VISION** – Where we are going and what it looks like when we arrive.

**INTENTION** – How we get there, the plan.

**MEANS** – What tools we use to implement the plan.

## **MEASURES OF FAITHFULNESS**

	<b>GOSPEL</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>MISSION</b>
<b><i>VISION</i></b> (Where are we going?)	Gospel-centeredness is learning to think and speak the gospel fluently.	Community is a life sharing, burden bearing, and bread breaking gathering of people.	Creating and cultivating with God through sharing good news and serving neighbors.
<b><i>INTENTION</i></b> (What's the plan?)	Renewal of the mind (Love)	Communal gospel habits (Grow)	Neighborhoods OR Networks (Serve & Share)  Identify bridges & barriers
<b><i>MEANS</i></b> (How will we implement the plan?)	Crown, Cross, Creation idea inventory  Gospel Primer	Creative & Intentional Calendar  Accountability Groups	3 Circles / Telling Gospel Story  Jesus Parties  Gospel Entry

**Fluency exercise for believers:** Imagine you are sitting down with a member from your small group. They share one of the following situations with you and your goal is to think through potential gospel-centered responses.

1 - My spouse and I have grown distant and we are considering separation. There has not been “foul play” (adultery, abandonment, or abuse). We have simply fallen out of love.

2 - I don’t feel close to God. I try to read my Bible and pray but it is difficult for me to stay focused. How do I follow Jesus if I don’t feel like it?

3 - I have been diagnosed with anxiety and depression and I am not sure how to reconcile that with my faith. What should I do?

4 - If God loves me, I do not know why he’d let me lose my job. Why does he let these things happen that do not seem to make sense?

**Fluency exercise for non-believers:** Imagine you are sitting down with an unbeliever who you’ve built a casual relationship with. You begin talking about religion. Your goal is to hear their worldview and respond to it in a way that points to the gospel.

5 - I believe that as long as you love other people and are a good person that’s what’s most important. We should respect all other religions and not try to force other people to believe what we believe.

6 - I haven’t been to church in a long time. Most of the Christians I knew growing up were hypocrites. I’ve never really had a positive experience with Christianity.

7 - This world is too broken to believe in a God.

## **GOSPEL CENTEREDNESS**

The gospel in short is ***King Jesus, for us, in our place, defeating death and launching His Kingdom.***

**The focus of the Gospel** is then on what God has done in Christ and not about something we can do for Christ.

God has sent His Son to carry out His mission to redeem sinful, rebellious humanity and establish His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

So, we don't do the gospel. We can't be the gospel.

We can only respond to the gospel *and live with it constantly in view.*

**The results of the Gospel-kept-in-view** are a transformed life and a new way of living.

The gospel brings a transformed life, for the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe (Romans 1.16).

The gospel brings a new way of living, for the grace of the gospel goes on to train believers to say "No" to sin and the flesh and "Yes" to Christ in the present (Titus 2.11-14).

Once the gospel is received, it is meant to become the lens through which believers understand God, themselves, the world, other people, and things. Then, more and more, the gospel informs, influences, and drives all they do in every part of their lives. And the lives of believers become ***cruciform***—*shaped by the cross of Christ and lived according to His patterns*. Cruciform living happens when your day-in-day-out lifestyle is marked by self-denial, self-loss, and persistent, intentional pursuit of Christ with the goal of seeing Christ "formed in you" (Gal. 4.19).

**The heart of the Gospel**, the good news, is this:

***God sent His Son, Jesus***

***To live a sinless life,***

***Die a substitutionary death,***

***And rise from the dead***

***So that***

***Sinners who repent and put their trust in Jesus***

***Will be forgiven and have eternal life with Him.***

## **BECOMING GOSPEL FLUENT**

The **cruciform** life involves a renewing of the mind. The New Testament *heavily* influences the theme of mind renewal in the process of transformation. To be different, you have to think differently. Consider Paul's famous words on this in Romans 12:1-2:

**12** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Notice that we are either being **conformed unknowingly** or **transformed knowingly**. In other words, we are either being turned into our environment unknowingly or we are becoming like Jesus, knowingly.

One of the most compelling ways this mind transformation has been explained is in *Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard.

The contents of our mind can be categorized into two things: **ideas and images**.

- **Ideas** – abstract thoughts that are difficult to define that govern the way we see and act in the world. We inherit these early on from our families and culture. “Thus, when he (Satan) undertook to draw Eve away from God, he did not hit her with a stick, but with an idea.”
- **Images** – Pictures and symbols associated with our ideas. These are specific and heavily laden with feelings.

Consider this example: the American Flag. When you see the flag, you have all sorts of ideas associated with it. In recent days, there has been huge controversy surrounding how we should *think* and *feel* about the flag. It is an **image** that is packed with our **ideas**. Setting domestic controversies around the flag aside, think about how foreign countries think and feel about the American flag compared to how you see it. The flag is an **image** that evokes certain **ideas** we have attached to it.

Our minds are constantly associating certain ideas with the images that it sees. We do this without knowing it. It is how we make sense of the world. The Bible is full of ideas that are explained through specific images. We will grow in gospel fluency if we learn to identify gospel images with gospel ideas.

## IDEA INVENTORY

Let's practice this with a simple **idea inventory**. We will look at an image, empty our minds of the ideas we naturally associate with the image, and consider how the image is meant to thread into the gospel story.



What comes to your mind when you see the crown? What do you feel?

What Biblical words come to your mind when you see this image?

How does the gospel inform our understanding of the words listed?

In what ways do I struggle to remember & believe that it is a good thing for God to call the shots in my life and in this world?

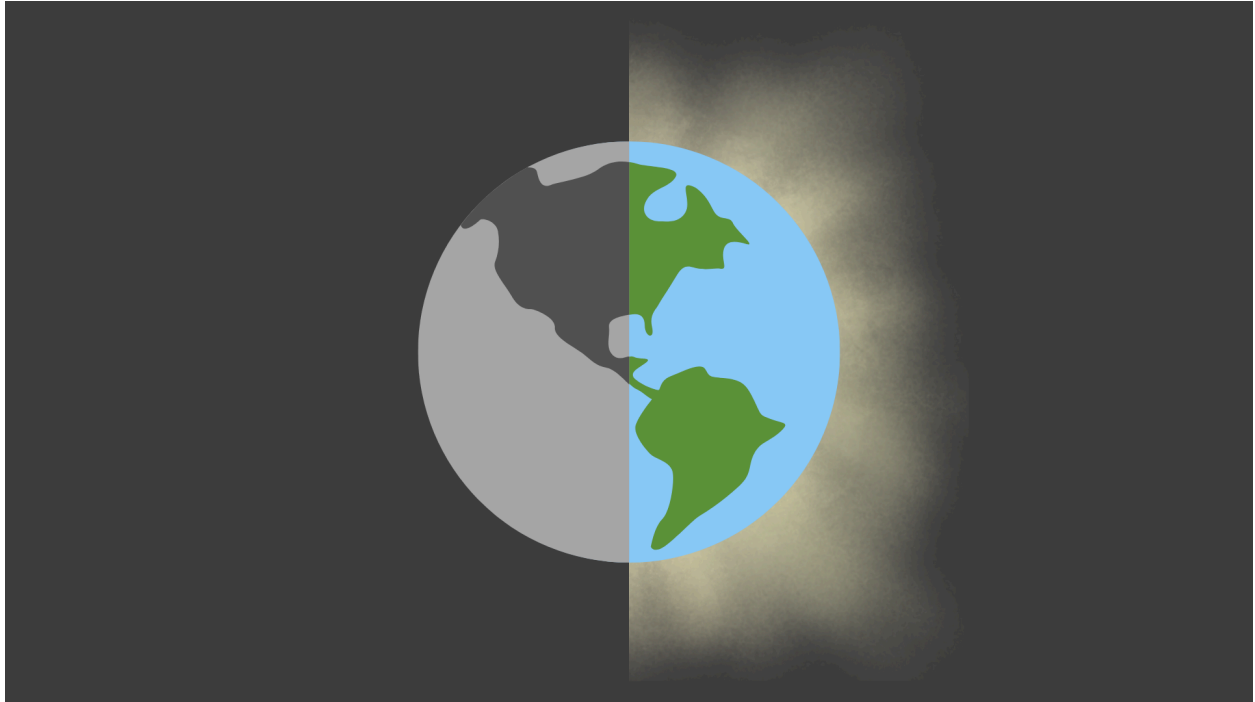


What comes to your mind when you see the cross? What do you feel?

What Biblical words come to your mind when you see this image?

How does the gospel inform our understanding of the words listed?

In what ways do I struggle to remember & believe that the cross displays Jesus' love for me and His victory over death?



What comes to your mind when you see the creation/new creation? What do you feel?

What Biblical words come to your mind when you see this image?

How does the gospel inform our understanding of the words listed?

In what ways do I struggle to remember & believe God is making all things new?



## **GOSPEL IMAGES CONCLUSION**

**CROWN** - It is good for God to be in charge. He wants those loyal to him by faith to rule with him eternally. We can invite his rule into our broken world by living as if his idea for the “good life” really is true.

**CROSS** - Jesus died to defeat death itself and bear our sin. He invites us into a daily death, which is the ironic pathway to abundant life. By His death, we have direct access into the presence of God and a living example of how we ought to love and live with others.

**CREATION/NEW CREATION** - Christ is risen! His resurrection seals his victory over sin and death and symbolizes the future for those who trust Him. All of creation is going through “labor pains” as it waits to be made new. Heaven and earth will be united as one, Eden will no longer feel like a distant dream.

The three gospel images provide a Biblical portrait of the good news. These images can help us renew our minds as we learn to apply the gospel to our thinking. The goal is gospel fluency - the ability to think and speak the gospel in all of life. Below you will find recommended resources to help deepen your understanding and increase your fluency.

### **RESOURCES**

- [WORD STUDY VIDEO by the Bible Project](#) (5 minute video)
- [SON OF MAN podcast series](#)
- [Gospel Primer 8-week Group Study](#)

### **BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS**

- *Gentle and Lowly*, by Dane Ortlund
- *Delighting in the Trinity*, by Michael Reeves
- *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott