



**Setting a Foundation: Missions
Why, How, and When**



Week 3

When & Where: Location Foundations

Summary: This week's lesson will help you and your group discern when and where you can share the Gospel. The key word in that sentence is **discern**, because each of us needs to be able to understand not just where it's appropriate to share the Gospel, but who it's appropriate to share it with. This lesson will help you build your discernment muscles.

Recap from week 1 and 2

In Week 1 - we learned three biblical foundations for why we share the Gospel. We discussed what the Great Commission is, what it means to be a witness, and the source of our faith.

In Week 2 - we learned three different tools to share the Gospel. Remember, the Gospel is unchanged, but the method that we share it changes

Discernment

Discernment literally means "the ability to judge well". Said in a different way, discernment is the **proper application of wisdom in the right circumstances**. Think about it, using math that launches rockets into space to figure out how much peanut butter should be used on a PB&J is the application of **wisdom** but in the **wrong circumstances**. In another example, taking off the wheels of your car to keep it from rolling away is the application of **no wisdom** for the **right circumstances**. So really, what this lesson seeks to do is develop our ability to use **our wisdom in the right circumstances. Here's what that means:**

- Our wisdom is the Gospel, our walk with Christ, and the ability to share both of those. We've already covered that in Week 1 and 2.
- The right circumstances are where (attitude and context) and when (in the relationship, time of someone's life, etc) we share the Gospel.

Where- attitude

Every single one of us engages with the people around us with some kind of attitude. Our attitude about our surroundings affects the way we **choose** to exist in those surroundings. In order for us to share the gospel effectively, we have to **approach people with the right attitude**.

The Effects of Attitude

Scripture helps us understand the role that attitude has on our ability to communicate the gospel

- **Matthew 9:35-38 & 15:32 - Compassion**
- **Luke 8:36-50 - Care**
- **John 11:33-36 - Love**
- **Luke 9:54 - Anger**

Discussion Questions for these texts:

1. What event, miracle, parable happened before or after these attitudes are mentioned? (what's the context?)
2. What do you think would happen **if** these attitudes weren't present?
3. How does Jesus' attitude towards people frame his ministry?
4. How do we feel about the James and John's anger **after they had already been sent**?

Plumb Lines:

- A **screeching baby** in the supermarket with an overwhelmed parent
- Your neighbor starts mowing the yard at **6:30 am** on a Saturday
- You see the driver **cut you off** on 17 at the gas station
- Bob from accounting **reminds you** that you forgot to staple your TPS report

How do these situations affect your attitude? Do those attitudes help you Share the Gospel?

Where- context

All of us live our lives in different place. We exist in several different places each week: work, drop off line, kid's sports practice, the pool, marina, favorite restaurant, etc. We most likely have relationships in the places. The Question is:

Who are the people you know in your sphere that do not know Christ?

Note about workplace evangelism

Some of us work in places with policies **explicitly banning** proselytizing (sharing the gospel) at work. Check with your company to see if it's one of them.

You can still share the Gospel by inviting people to coffee before work, sharing why Church this weekend was so important to you, or **asking for permission from the other person to have a religious conversation.**

Leverage your sphere for Christ

Are you having trouble thinking about your **sphere? Write down the places that you go to almost every week.**

- Where do you work? How many people are there? How many people do you interact with weekly?
- Where do you live? How many neighbors do you have? How often do you talk to them for more than 30 seconds?
- What do you do for fun? How many people do you see when you're there? Do you do with a group? How often do you see them?
- How do you feel about the people you see almost every day

Once you answer these questions, write down the names. **You've now identified your Sphere and how you engage with it.**

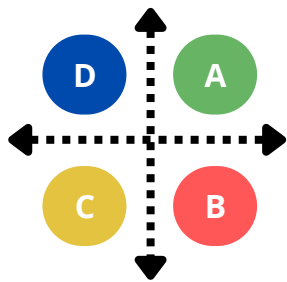
How do we enter a Gospel Convo?

Some of us have never had a gospel conversation before, **that's okay! Here are some tips:**

- Ask questions to help **discern** where the person is / or how open they are.
 - "Have you ever been to a church service before?"
 - "What did you do Sunday?"
 - "Where do you go to Church?"
- Ask **permission** to Share the Gospel, if you've discerned that they are open.
 - "I hear you say you're struggling with hopelessness, I have something I can help... is it okay if I share it with you?"
 - "Can I share my faith story with you?"
- Ask if they are hearing what you're saying
 - "we just covered a lot, and it's an important message. Would you mind repeating what you heard me say?"
 - Do you have any questions about what I shared with you?

When - relationship

As you begin to see the people in your life as people who **need** Christ, you will most likely begin to pray for them & hopefully consider how to share the Gospel with them. It may take some time, but as you get to know someone more deeply you will be able to **discern** where they are spiritually and how far they are willing to go in conversation. This section will provide two tools to help you navigate this: **the Gray Matrix and the Stop Light**



The Gray Matrix:

The **x-axis (left to right)** is a measure of **openness** to spiritual things like God, Gospel, church, etc. The further right, the more open someone is.

The **y-axis (up to down)** is a measure of **knowledge** of spiritual things like God, Gospel, church, etc. The further up, the more knowledgeable someone is.

A

is **open and knowledgeable**. This person is probably ready to be a Christian. **Invite them to Church.**

B

is **open but not very knowledgeable**. This person is open to learning more about Christianity. **Share the Gospel**

C

is not **open and not knowledgeable**. This person is **not** open to hearing about Christianity. **Build Trust.**

D

is not **open but is knowledgeable**. This person **may be** open to experiencing more. **Invite to Small Group**

The Goal of the Gray:

While this may seem analytical - it is - this is a **helpful tool** to better understand where an individual is spiritual, and to help you **plan** how to Share the Gospel with them. Ideally, we want to help move people to A over time

Practice placing people you know on the gray matrix, or you can help "plot" the following examples:

- Maria - "I grew up in the Church for 20 years, but I'll never go back... its too hypocritical"
- John - "I'm interested in getting to know about Jesus, but I don't know where to begin."
- Alex - "I heard about that one church, and I don't think I can trust things that are called "church".
- Matt - "I went to FCA in college and I enjoyed that community, I'm not plugged in anywhere yet."

How would you proceed with each of these?

The Stop Light

The Spot Light is like the Gray Matrix, but it's only a measure of openness toward hearing the Gospel. **This is about attitude not knowledge.**

Red Light

This person is hostile to the Gospel.

They may not be ready or want to hear the Gospel.

Here's some hints:

- "I don't want to hear that"
- "You cannot change my mind"

Do not share the Gospel with this person, but do pray for them.

Yellow Light

This person isn't sure where they are spiritually.

Proceed with Caution.

Ask several questions to help understand where they are spiritually, and if they are open to hear the Gospel.

Share the Gospel, but leave an exit if they go to Red. Be Prepared to follow up to try again.

Green Light

This person open to the Gospel.

They open to hearing more about who Jesus is, what he did, and why it matters to them.

How to tell:

- They are asking questions back
- They are interested in your story

Share the Gospel with them, invite them to church, or to meet again.

Why this matters

Discernment is the **proper use of wisdom in the right circumstances**. When we understand the Gospel and how to share it **we have wisdom**. Our ability to care for people around us, enter into a authentic gospel conversation, and judge a person's need and attitude **enables us to use that wisdom properly in the right circumstance**.

Situation 1

You have a rushed morning into work, Bob sent you an "urgent" email about your TPS report that's not due for a month, and you have a stack of work that you didn't finish yesterday. Your coworker comes in looking down, you know his dad just passed. **What are you most likely to do? Why?**

Situation 2

You're on your way home from a long week of work, it felt like all you could do to get to church groups, work meetings, and after-school programs for the kids. Out of the blue, your close friend who isn't a Christian calls and asks about your plans this coming Sunday. **What are you most likely to do? Why?**

Situation 3

You're at your favorite coffee shop with another church member. You're talking about Sunday's message. You have a sense that the person at the next table is eavesdropping on your conversation, but you keep talking. You get up to leave for work, and as you reach for the door the person from the next table says "I know you're leaving, but what did you mean when you said 'Chad said, Jesus is the only way to salvation?'"

What are you most likely to do?
Why?

Situation 4

You're at a restaurant with a non-Christian friend, and you ask if you can pray for the food. Your friend politely says "sure". Once you're done praying your friend says, "You know, I don't get why you do that every time you eat. It's not like God cares about you and your dietary habits, right?"

What are you most likely to do?
Why?

You **may have** been in situations like these. You **may not have** been in situations like these. Regardless, **you can most likely think of times in the last month** when something like this happened and you didn't know what to do, say, or think - or you did know what to do, say, or think. Here's some tips to stay aware and ready:

Getting Started

- Identify your sphere of influence
- Start praying for these people weekly
- Practice sharing the Gospel so you feel comfortable sharing it with others
- Keep your lifegroup informed about who you're praying for, how you've shared the gospel with people, and how they can pray for you.

Staying Focused

- Make plans with non-Christians at least twice a month
- Pray for Gospel conversations weekly
- Keep track of who you've shared the Gospel with and how to follow up
- Keep your lifegroup informed how you've been sharing the Gospel and how they can pray for you.

Additional Resources

Discernment is a hard thing to catch. It takes time to learn. We will be talking about two tools to help you either discern when you can share the Gospel and where you can share it. The QR codes below will take you into a more in depth information that what we covered in this guide.



<https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/the-intentional-life-of-a-christian/>

Intentional Living

A short blog posted by NAMB to conceptualize the where



<https://thegraymatrix.org/index.php/the-matrix/>

The Gray Matrix

A **very** heady explanation of what we'll cover later