

## B.L.E.S.S. Practices - Be Listening Study Guide

### Session 3: The Narrative of Evangelism

Click [here](#) to sign up for free and watch the video!

#### SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** Knowing that people make sense of the world through stories, we can use storytelling in our evangelism.

**Head Change:** To know that evangelism is rarely a quick event or linear process.

**Heart Change:** To feel confident in the power of storytelling.

**Life Change:** To share our story of coming to Christ with others.

#### OPEN

Does your family or friend group have a good storyteller? What kinds of stories does that person tell?

Stories are fundamental to the human experience. From nursery rhymes to bestselling novels to our own life stories, storytelling marks us as humans, shaping us and the way we view the world. To be human is to be moved by stories.

Evangelism, likewise, is inextricably linked to storytelling. After all, in evangelism we are bearing witness to the story of the world, the story of the gospel, and the way those

two intersect with the story of our personal lives. In this session, Dave will teach us about the power of good storytelling and the place it holds in the task of evangelism.

## VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Dave Ferguson's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What two things make up Dave's conception of the narrative of evangelism?

What examples did Dave give of language about evangelism that we should leave behind?

*Watch Session 3: The Narrative of Evangelism (12 minutes).*

## REVIEW

Dave opened this session by sharing an evangelism story about his friends Marco and Victoria. Do you have any positive evangelism stories that you've witnessed or been a part of? If so, what are they?

In this session, Dave focused on the idea that evangelism should be framed within the context of a story, both the story of the gospel and our story and the stories of our neighbors. Why do you think people tend to respond so well to stories? What stories have shaped you? In what ways?

Dave said that storytelling can be a powerful way to articulate values. What values do your favorite stories articulate? How do those values compare with the values Dave shared in the previous session (people matter, eternity matters, life matters)?

"To revive evangelism," Dave said, "we must tell our own stories of seeking and saving the lost, because storytelling shows how it can be done and makes us believe we can do it." In what ways do stories of evangelism (like Marco's and Victoria's) help us believe we can evangelize too?

Does Dave's storytelling approach make evangelism feel less intimidating to you? In what ways?

In the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus challenged the norms of his day as well as the assumptions we make about evangelism today, namely that evangelism only happens in church. How does the assumption that evangelism only happens at church inhibit our ability to evangelize? In what other places can evangelism occur?

Dave also talked about the language we use in our evangelism and how intentional we should be when sharing the good news with neighbors. What are some of the words and phrases you use when sharing the gospel that might be confusing or unhelpful to those you're sharing with? What words and phrases might be better instead?

Some of the language we use to think and speak about evangelism isn't always useful. For instance, we can think of evangelism as a sales pitch, a conquest, or warfare. But Dave argued that evangelism should be thought of more in terms of hospitality, invitation, or friendship. How do these changes help to flip your perception of evangelism? In what ways would the second list (hospitality, invitation, or friendship) be more conducive to productive evangelistic conversations? What could it look like to adopt the language of the second list?

A great place to share stories is around the table, which is why Dave's third B.L.E.S.S. practice is to begin eating meals with neighbors. Food has a powerful way of connecting us with others, creating opportunities to build relationships with those at the table with us. Why do you think eating a meal with someone can be so influential? How can you be intentional about sharing meals with neighbors? Which of your neighbors will you try to schedule a meal with first?

*For more information on B.L.E.S.S. practices, check out the bonus session at the end of the series.*

Our life stories are important. The words we use to tell them can determine how others respond to our message and, ultimately, to the message of the gospel. Re-think your story and the way you normally tell it. How can you be more intentional with your words so they're well-received? How can you use your story as an on-ramp to share the gospel?

## BIBLE EXPLORATION

A story that Dave referenced in this session that captures his vision for evangelism is the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus. Read Luke 19:1–10.

Jesus's interaction with Zacchaeus was quickly scrutinized by the crowd of onlookers. Because Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, he would have been despised by the Jews who called him "a sinful man." Have you ever been criticized for interacting with a person others viewed as sinful? Why do you think we are often quick to respond like the onlookers in this story?

In this story, the first words out of Jesus's mouth are directed at Zacchaeus. He invites himself to stay at Zacchaeus's home, which can seem like an uncomfortable way to start a conversation. When have you stepped outside of your comfort zone to engage in evangelism? How did that interaction go?

For readers, the interaction between Jesus and Zacchaeus is unique because we don't see Jesus giving an evangelistic message—Zacchaeus simply responds to Jesus and his "invitation" with repentance. What would you say are the major things we can learn about evangelism from Jesus's interaction with Zacchaeus?

In verses 9–10, Jesus makes two beautiful statements. First, he says, "today salvation has come to this house." When was the last time you witnessed someone come to faith in response to your evangelism? What was it like for you to hear someone respond to the gospel message with belief?

This passage closes with an idea that we referenced in session two, that Jesus has come into the world "to seek and save the lost." He's not on a mission to condemn and judge us, but to save us. In what ways might Jesus and his mission be different from our neighbors' perceptions of him? How can we embody Jesus's mission in our everyday lives?

The story of Jesus and Zacchaeus is instructive, but it's not the only example of evangelism in the New Testament. Based on our context, our gifting, and our willingness, the possibilities are endless for how we can spread the good news to those who haven't received it. What is your context like (neighborhood, workplace, etc.)? In what ways can you view your context as an opportunity for evangelism?

How have you been gifted? What could you do to leverage your gifts for the sake of sharing the gospel?

## LAST WORD

Everyone is living a story. From Zacchaeus in the first century to our neighbors across the street, a multitude of factors all combine to make up their stories. But each individual story contributes to something greater.

Everyone's story, since Adam and Eve, has all been written into a grander story—the narrative God is writing in the pages of redemptive history. As Christians, we get the opportunity to tell this story of God's gospel to those who are desperate for good news.

Set aside a few minutes to reflect on your life story. Consider how the trajectory of your life changed when you heard the story of the gospel. Pray that your neighbors will be receptive to that same good news when you share it with them.

## DEEPER WALK

**Pray:** Continue praying for your eight neighbors. Pray that their hearts would be open to beginning or deepening a friendship with you.

**Share:** Model for your neighbors what it looks like to share their story by telling them some of yours.

**Eat:** Eat a meal with one of your neighbors. Ask about their story and listen intently.

## BLESS Practices- Be Eating Message Slides

Big Idea: Meals are a Big Deal to God

### Worship

Genesis 2:16- "...you may surely eat."

Genesis 2:17- "...you shall not eat."

### Seven Feasts

Passover- Justification

Unleavened Bread- Deliverance

First Fruits- New Life

Feast of Weeks- Provision

Feast of Trumpets- End of Harvest

Day of Atonement- Confession

Feast of Tabernacles- Dwelling

### Five Offerings

Burnt offering- I need to worship God

Grain offering- I need to depend on God

Fellowship offering- I need to be known

Sin offering- I need to be forgiven

Guilt offering- I need to be restored

Jesus: "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35)

Luke 19:10 "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost..."

Luke 7:34a "The Son of Man came eating and drinking..."

Luke 7:34b "...Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard..."

Luke 5:33- "John's disciples fast and pray...yours eat and drink."

### Italian Meals

A tavola non si invecchia.

Chi mangia bene, vive bene.

Amicizie e maccharoni, sono meglio caldi.

### Mission

Luke 10:8- "Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you."

### Pre-Crucifixion

John 1:29- "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

## Post-Resurrection

John 21:9-10- When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught."

Luke 24:30-31

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened,

## New Testament Church

Acts 2:42- "...devoted...breaking bread..."

1 Tim 3; Titus 1 – "...hospitality..."

Acts 11:7 "Rise, Peter; kill and eat..."

1 Cor. 10:27- "If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience."

## Return of Christ

Rev. 19:9- "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

## The Open Invitation

Revelation 3:20- "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

## Big Idea: Meals are a Big Deal to God

### A Meal with a Tax Collector (Matthew 9: 10-13)

10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

"Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (v.11)

1. "They that are well don't need a physician." (v.12)

2. "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." (v.13a)

3. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (v.13b)

## Big Idea: Meals are a Big Deal to God

### A meal with a Pharisee- Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

### A meal with a Pharisee- Luke 7:36-50

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

**Big Idea: Meals are a Big Deal to God**

#### Excuses- Ferguson

I don't like to have people to my home.

I wouldn't know what to say.

I don't have time.