

UNLEASHING THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH YOUR IN HOUSE CHRISTIAN GROUP P.1

THE WORD

What part did the Word of God, the Bible, play in your conversion to Christ?

For me the thing that made a big difference was to read what was actually in the Bible for myself. I'm from a churchgoing family in regional Australia but had never read the Bible for myself. The sermons I heard didn't resonate with me and (in hindsight) were peripheral to the main truths of Christianity. I soon lost interest in 'religion' and stopped going to church.

A few years later when I moved into a residential college at university, a friend invited me to read the Bible with him. I wasn't too keen for this, but my friend's enthusiasm persuaded me to do it.

My eyes were opened as we 'dug deep' into key Bible passages on Who is God? Who are humans? Who is Jesus? How to get right with God? The Bible passages we read were interesting, easy to understand and resonated with my experience of life. As I read the Bible it all 'rang true', and at the end of the studies I prayed to become a Christian.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes .. (Romans 1:16)

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow .. (Hebrews 4:12)

Others like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop - some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown. (Mark 4:20)

UNLEASHING THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH YOUR IN HOUSE CHRISTIAN GROUP

I'm assuming that you want to see God's kingdom grow and want more people to hear about the grace of God that is in Jesus? Our workplace gives us many opportunities to get to know people and to share our life and faith with colleagues (as is appropriate). Our In house Christian groups can also be vehicles to encourage this.

HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?

I heard an encouraging story recently of an In house group in Melbourne who were invited by their HR department to advertise their Christian group on the company intranet. It was part of a health and wellbeing initiative during the worst of the Covid lockdowns.

To the group's surprise, a non-Christian woman (Joanne) contacted them and said she was interested in exploring spirituality. She joined their (online) meetings and was the most regular attendee as they discussed the Bible and prayed. After a number of weeks, the group leader asked Joanne for a chat. He clarified her understanding of the gospel and invited her to pray a prayer of commitment to Christ, which she gladly did.

UNLEASHING THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH YOUR IN HOUSE CHRISTIAN GROUP P.2

A great story, yes? The downside was that this is the *only* non-Christian person in six years who has attended their group and become a Christian.

Don't get me wrong, our In house groups are good places to encourage *existing Christians* to mature in Christ and live for the Kingdom at work. They also help those who don't go to good Bible teaching churches to understand the gospel better. But our groups are not attracting the hundreds / thousands of people in your company who haven't yet heard the good news of Jesus. How can we do better to bring the Word of God to them?

'THROUGH' YOUR GROUP

Maybe a way forward is for your In house group to focus on being a safe, encouraging place for Christians, where they are equipped for ministry *outside* the group? Ministry such as respectfully engaging work colleagues with the Christian message, and inviting those who show interest to read the Bible with them.

An example. I help one of the big four banks in Australia with their In house ministry. We set up a Hope group^{*1} with the aim of providing a place where Christian and non-Christian employees could build community and get wisdom (hope) from Jesus through the Word.

The result? No non-Christians came. It was a barrier too high, a bridge too far, even though the group was designed to be attractive to the outsider.

But what did work was setting up a separate training and prayer group for the Christians, and encouraging them to find someone *outside* the group to read the Bible with. As a result we saw one of the group members starting up two of her own Hope groups with some of her non-Christian colleagues.

May God bless our efforts to unleash his Word *through* our In house groups.

FOR MORE INFORMATION and resources to help you, contact craig.josling@citybibleforum.org



Use your In house group to launch further ministry

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. If the Word of God is so powerful why do some people reject it?

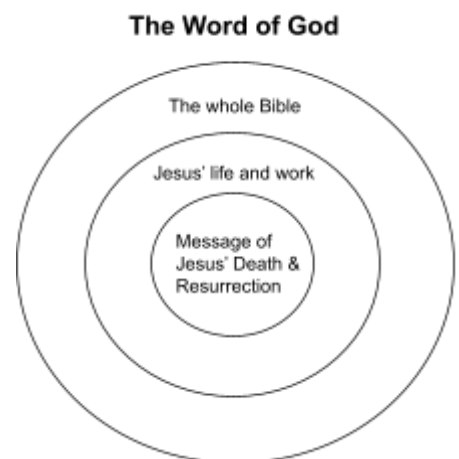
God sends his Word into the world so that people will be saved as they hear the message about Jesus and trust in it (faith). God delights when someone hears the Word of God and believes it (Ezekiel 18:32, Luke 15:7). However, God’s plan is that not everyone who hears his Word will believe and be saved. Preaching the Word also confirms that God is right in judging stubborn people as they reject his mercy. The way people react to the Word shows what is truly on their hearts (Hebrews 4:12-13). Jesus’ teaching in Mark 4:1-25 (The parable of the soils) teaches this. So, while we urge people to believe the Word, we should not be surprised when some reject it. On the upside, we should be optimistic that some people *will* accept it (the good soil).

2. Where does the Holy Spirit fit into all this?

The Holy Spirit works hand in glove with the Word of God (John 3:34, 6:63, 14:25-26, 15:26-27, Acts 1:8, 4:31, Romans 15:19, Ephesians 1:13, 6:17). The main job of the Holy Spirit is to glorify The Son. The Holy Spirit does this by pointing people to the Son, through the Word, and by convicting people that the Word (about Jesus) is true so that they will worship the Son (John 16:13-15, 1 Corinthians 2:10-15, 12:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6). The greatest miracle of the Holy Spirit is to cause people to be born again as they hear the Word of God and believe it (John 3:3-8, 1 Peter 1:23). So, as we do our best to explain the Word of God to people, we also pray for the Holy Spirit to convict, change and save people (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

3. Is the Word of God just the gospel about Jesus or the whole Bible?

Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14). The gospel message about Jesus’ death and resurrection is the Word of God (Luke 24:44-47, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8). The Old Testament is the Word of God (Luke 24:44-47, Hebrews 1:1). The letters of the Apostles are the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:36-37, 2 Peter 3:15-16). The whole Bible is the Word of God because all of it, in some way, points to Jesus and his death and resurrection. The Old Testament points forward and prepares people to meet Jesus. The gospels are a record of Jesus’ life and teaching. The letters of the Apostles are written by people appointed by Jesus to clarify and apply ‘the faith’ given once for all (Jude 3) to future generations. Nothing needs to be added to the Word of God, it is complete (2 Timothy 1:13-14, 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:3, Revelation 22:18-20).



prepares people to meet Jesus. The gospels are a record of Jesus’ life and teaching. The letters of the Apostles are written by people appointed by Jesus to clarify and apply ‘the faith’ given once for all (Jude 3) to future generations. Nothing needs to be added to the Word of God, it is complete (2 Timothy 1:13-14, 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:3, Revelation 22:18-20).

Notes. *1 Hope groups look back to share what’s been happening in your life, look up to get wisdom and hope from Jesus’ teaching and look forward to consider how we can help people.