

GETTING TO KNOW THE GOSPEL

Use this “gospel cheat sheet” to become increasingly familiar with Bible passages that relate to the good news of Jesus. Return to them often, meditate and memorize, so they get inside you and can be drawn on naturally in conversation.

Jesus is the most interesting man in the world. He has changed the course of human history, inspired and empowered people to live more loving lives, and claimed to be the final sacrifice to bring the end to all religion. Whether you are talking with a seeker, saint, or skeptic, be confident that the core message of Jesus is fascinating and worth talking about!

The Gospel in Thirty Words...

*Jesus is GOD WITH US, come to
SHOW US God's love,
SAVE US from sin,*

*SET UP God's kingdom, and
SHUT DOWN religion, so we can
SHARE IN God's life.*

GOD WITH US

- The Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament, written hundreds of years before Jesus) prophesied a time when God would bust through the boundaries of religion and dwell intimately with humankind.
 - » **READ Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-29**
- Jesus's coming began the fulfillment of many prophecies, and started a “New Covenant” or new way of living in relationship with God and with others.
 - » **READ Luke 22:20; 2 Corinthians 3:6; John 1:1-18; 5:37-40; Colossians 1:21-23**

- In his life, death, and teachings, Jesus—and only Jesus—gives us a clear and unmistakable demonstration that God is really with us and for us.
» **READ Matthew 1:23; Luke 23:34; John 13:1-5; and all four gospels**
- Because we know that God is with us, for us, and not against us, we can come home to him like the prodigal son (Luke 15) with confidence and bold joy.
» **READ Hebrews 4:16**



SHOW US GOD'S LOVE

- The essence of God, our Source and Sustainer, is love—pure interrelating love. This truth resonates with us on a deeply intuitive level because we have been made by (and for) this God who is love.
» **READ 1 John 4:7-21**
- Jesus (and only Jesus) gives us clear and definitive evidence of God's great love for us.
» **READ John 3:16; Romans 5:6-10**



SAVE US FROM SIN

- Sin is any attitude or action that is anti-love. Sin separates relationships because of patterns of selfishness, self-centredness, and eventually self-absorption. Sin leads increasingly to a kind of living death.
» **READ Isaiah 59:1-2; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 6:23**
- When we envision the crucifixion, we see our sin killing Christ, acted out by the leaders of religion and politics. It is our sin that we see acted out in the rejection, mockery, wrath, and violence against Jesus. It is our sin that drives in the nails and washes our hands of it all. And it is our sin that Jesus takes upon himself and drags down into the grave with him.
» **READ the passion narratives; notice the pattern of early church gospel preaching in Acts 2:23-24, 36; 3:15, 19; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52; etc.**

- Jesus assures us that we are now free from judgement, wrath, and condemnation.
 - » **READ John 5:24; Romans 5:9; 8:1**
- Jesus embodies God's message of forgiveness and reconciliation, and announces God's plan to renew and restore us and our world.
 - » **READ John 3:3-8; Romans 3:23-24; 5:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:14-22; Colossians 1:21-23**
- When we trust God to rebirth us into our true selves, we are made perfect in spirit and can live in union with God, even if we are still temporarily living in bodies that sin.
 - » **READ Romans 7:17, 20; 2 Corinthians 5:21**



SET UP GOD'S KINGDOM

- Jesus not only saves us *from* something (sin and self-destruction), he also saves us *to* something: living in union with God's will and God's way. This is called "the Kingdom of God".
 - » **READ Matthew 6:10; Mark 1:15**
- The Kingdom of God is an eternal life that we can begin to live right here and right now. Jesus shows us the way.
 - » **READ Luke 17:20-21**
- The way of the Kingdom is a way of peace, where we view other people who oppose us, not as the enemy, but as victims of the true, unseen enemy. This allows us to reach out to all people with the divine, non-violent, love of Jesus.
 - » **READ Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36; John 18:36; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Ephesians 6:12**



SHUT DOWN RELIGION

- Jesus introduces us to the most irreligious concept of all: grace. Grace means that God gives to us as a gift everything that religion tries but fails to accomplish.
 - » **READ John 1:17; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; Hebrews 8:13**
- Jesus never used the word “religion” to describe what God wants, but he did talk about “faith”, which simply means a trusting relationship. What God gives us as “grace,” we receive by simple “faith” (or believing/trusting).
 - » **READ John 3:16; 6:28-29; 17:3; 20:31; Ephesians 2:8-10**
- If we think of religion as any system of rules and rituals that we use to get right with God, then God’s gift of coming to us and making us right causes the rules and rituals of religion to become redundant.
 - » **READ 2 Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:23-4:7; Hebrews 8:13**
- Now our “religion” is simply to live a loving life. This means all of the spiritual practices we participate in (church, prayer, Bible reading, etc) are “want to’s” not “have to’s.”
 - » **READ James 1:26-27**

SHARE IN GOD’S LIFE

- God’s hope is to include us in God’s own triune love life, starting now and stretching into eternity.
 - » **READ John 14:15-20, 23; 15:15; 17:26**
- We can begin to live in love with God here and now, through partnership with the Holy Spirit.
 - » **READ Galatians 2:20; 2 Peter 1:3-4**

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