

4. Reaching out to others



4.1 Sharing your story

A mature Christian knows how to share a clear, concise testimony

Jesus: Fishers of men

Matthew 4:18-22 - One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹ Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ²⁰ And they left their nets at once and followed him.

²¹ A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²² They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind. [NLT]

Parallel passages: Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-11

We are all called to be fishers of men and women. Jesus commanded us to go and preach the Good News; to go and make disciples. When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John from their thriving fishing business, He saw in them a number of qualities – qualities that are required of us also.

- They fished with nets – They cast out deep and wide. A DESIRE TO REACH MORE.
- They worked with partners – UNDERSTOOD THE VALUE OF TEAM
- They ran a commercial enterprise – They were ‘Big Picture’ people. VISION OF WHAT COULD BE
- They were sons, not hirelings (Mark points this out) – INVESTED RELATIONALLY
- They had heard Jesus’ teaching – (Luke) – EARS TO HEAR THE TRUTH
- They had fished all night – THEY COULDN’T RELY ON THEIR OWN PERSONAL RESERVES
- Nevertheless, they cast out their nets – WILLING, RESPONSIVE OBEDIENCE
- With the catch they reflected on their sinful unworthiness – HUMILITY
- “I’ll make you fishers of men” – TEACHABLE
- They left everything and followed Jesus – TOTAL COMMITMENT

These men may have lacked the educational qualifications required by many, (‘Ordinary, unschooled men’ – Acts 4:13), but Jesus saw qualities that would help them reach the world with the Gospel.

Before, Christ, After

1 Peter 3:15 - Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. [NLT]

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." [NLT]

We are all commissioned to share our faith. This should never be a project but should be a desire to see others experience the precious gift of salvation. Bill Hybels in *'Just walk across the room'* (2012) outlines a 3D approach:

- Develop friendships
- Discover stories
- Discern next steps from the Holy Spirit

We should never underestimate the power of our testimony. A succinct story of what God has done in our life empowered by the Holy Spirit can lead someone to Jesus.

We should all prepare our clear faith story that we can share when divine opportunities come our way. Here are some keys:

1. _____ .
2. _____ .
3. _____ .
4. _____ .
5. _____ .
6. _____ .
7. _____ .

Before

What was your life like before you received Christ? What were your struggles?

Christ

When and how did you invite Jesus into your life?

After

What change has He made in your life?

Remember that our aim is to faithfully share the message of the gospel. Salvation is a work of the Spirit, not the result of a clever, convincing argument. If confronted with a negative reaction, remember that you have done what's required of you. I like what Bill Hybels says: "Never just means no for now."

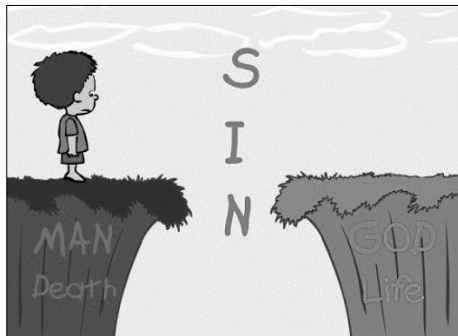
Bridge to Life

There are a number of easy step processes that have been developed over the years to explain the journey to salvation to an enquirer. One of these is called the Bridge to Life (also known as the Four Spiritual Laws). The benefit of this simple process is that it can be drawn out easily without needing a tract.

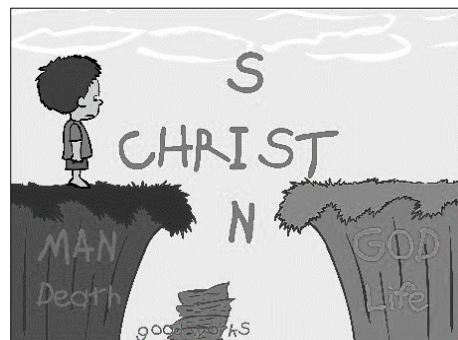
The Four Spiritual Laws are:

1. Sin separates us from God – Romans 3:23
2. Sin brings death and judgement – Hebrews 9:27; 2 Thess 1:8,9
3. Jesus bridged the gap – 1 Tim 2:5,6; 1 Peter 3:18; John 3:16
4. We must make a decision to accept Christ's forgiveness – Rev 3:20; John 14:14

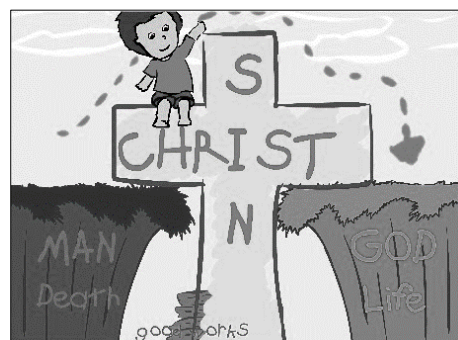
Many of you will be familiar with the simple drawings that illustrate this process and these can be drawn very easily when sharing your faith story with someone.



Sin separates us from God.
The wages of our sin are death
There was nothing we could do in or of ourselves to
earn salvation



We try to earn our salvation through good works but
we fall short of God's standards
The only answer was through God sending His Son,
Jesus Christ to be the perfect, sinless sacrifice for us



Jesus came and dies upon a cross for our sin.
If we repent of our sin, receive and accept His
forgiveness, and confess our faith in Him, we are
restored to right relationship with God the Father

The Roman's Road

The Roman's Road is a journey through 5 key verses in the Book of Romans that show the salvation plan. By just remembering the first verse (Romans 3:10) and having the next written in the margin and so on, you can take an enquirer on the journey to acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

- 1) 3:10 – We can't earn salvation
- 2) 3:23 – All sinners fall short
- 3) 5:8 – Christ still died for us
- 4) 6:23 – Sin brings death but God's gift is eternal life
- 5) 10:8-10 – Confess and believe

Divine opportunities

If we are faithful with our desire to reach a lost world, God will give us divine opportunities. Here are seven ways that we prepare ourselves for these opportunities:

- Remain passionate for the things of God
- Pray for opportunity and wisdom
- Learn to connect
- Involve yourself in an activity that involves unsaved people
- Make sure you're prepared and equipped
- Start with your immediate area of influence
- Remember that one-on-one evangelism is still the most effective way of reaching the lost

A final word ...

"What kind of encounters does the Holy Spirit use most often to produce fruit? He uses a witness whose heart is motivated by love. A survey from the Institute of American Church Growth showed that 75 to 90 percent of new believers come to Christ through a friend or acquaintance who explains the good news on a one-to-one basis. Only 17% of all conversions come through what is called an 'event' – a pastor giving his Sunday morning message, a Billy Graham crusade, or a Friendship Sunday."

- William Fay (Share Jesus without fear)

Complete exercise 4.1 from the Pathway to MATURITY monthly challenge sheet.

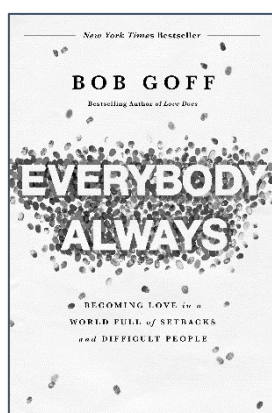
4. Reaching out to others



4.2 Compassion

A mature Christian will have compassion for the lost and hurting

Everybody always



"Loving each other is what we are meant to do and how we were made to roll. It's not where we start when we begin following Jesus; it's the beautiful path we travel the rest of our lives. Will it be messy and ambiguous and uncomfortable when we love people the way Jesus said to love them? You bet it will. Will we be misunderstood? Constantly. But extravagant love often means colouring outside the lines and going beyond the norms. Loving the neighbours we don't understand takes work and humility and patience and guts. It means leaving the security of our easy relationships to engage in some tremendously awkward ones." (2018:8)

Matthew 22:37-39 - Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' [NLT]

John 13:34-35 - So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." [NLT]

The call to loving God and loving others is our highest command. As Bob Goff puts it, 'Loving everybody, always.' So how do we go about fulfilling this command?

1. Remember that love is God's grace in operation through you.
2. Start with common courtesy that places value on everyone.
3. Get joy in your life. As Bob Goff says, *"When joy is a habit, love is a reflex."* (2018:21)
4. Build people up.

5. "Walk a mile in their shoes."
6. Vulnerability – Keep it real!
7. Come from a position of trust.
8. A minute at a time.
9. Don't be so self-focused. As Bob Goff states, *"What if we found out God's big plan for our lives is that we wouldn't spend so much of our time trying to figure out a big plan for our lives?"* (2018:91)
10. Love can be expressed in all sorts of creative ways. Be creative.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." [NLT]

Acts 1:8 is the scriptural foundation for our missions outreach at Capital Edge Church. It highlights 4 distinct regions:

- Jerusalem – local
Local missions includes: Care Hub; Church planting support; Connect Group seed money program
- Judea – national
National missions includes: AAOM missionaries in the Kimberleys, W.A.; Flood, drought, fire victim support; A21
- Samaria – the disenfranchised, poor and unjustly treated
Includes: Indigenous communities in the Kimberleys, W.A.; Haven girls home – Kandy, Sri Lanka; A21 – Argentina
- World – international
World missions includes: Church planters, Sri Lanka; Missionaries in Vietnam; Pastors conference, Myanmar; Missionaries in Argentina/Uruguay.

Requirements of missionaries sent out from Capital Edge include:

- An interview with Senior leadership of the church to discuss the calling to missions with a very clear direction from God.
- Completion of a minimum 12-week Missions course through World Harvest Institute.
- Completion of a validated marriage enrichment course or seminar.
- Familiarity with MYOB and a clearly outlined financial budget.
- A signed agreement of accountability which includes monthly budgetary reporting, bi-monthly newsletter and the churches commitment to missions.
- A vision statement with specific aims and objectives.
- Registration with ACCI – Australian Christian Churches International where possible.

The state of the lost

Joel 3:14 - Thousands upon thousands are waiting in the valley of decision. There the day of the LORD will soon arrive. [NLT]

We can easily forget the state we were in before we received the gift of forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. It pays us to remind ourselves of the condition of the lost from time to time, to stir our passion to reach those who don't yet know Jesus and to stir our heart with thankfulness for all Jesus has done for us.

THE CONDITION OF THE LOST

EPHESIANS 2:1-5	Doomed for ever Full of sin Obeying Satan in heart and action Evil in nature Subject to God's anger
EPHESIANS 2:12	Excluded Without hope
COLOSSIANS 2:13	Dead in sin
TITUS 3:3-5 (AMP)	Foolish Disobedient Misled Slaves to lust and pleasure Wasting life on malice and envy Hateful

Col 2:13-15 - You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴He cancelled the record of

the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. [NLT]

Jesus: To seek and to save

Luke 19:10 - For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." [NLT]

This statement by Jesus was made after reaching out to Zacchaeus the tax collector in Jericho. Jesus showed us a number of things in this story in regards to reaching the lost.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

A final word ...

"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."

- Henri J.M. Nouwen

Complete exercise 4.2 from the Pathway to MATURITY monthly challenge sheet.

4. Reaching out to others



4.3 Shining in the workplace

A mature Christian will be an example of integrity in the workplace

Jesus: WWJD?

2 Timothy 2:15 - Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. [NLT]

This verse shows us that our diligent work is something that meets God's approval. He is interested in the example we set in the way we work. Our work place is an opportunity to represent Jesus and possibly open up the word of truth functioning in our lives to others.

Imagine for one moment that we were to take Jesus to work with us in a physical sense each day. What would Jesus do?

1. He would be friendly, helpful and not overbearing
2. He would be very conscious of modelling the right behaviour
 - Humility
 - Generosity
 - Servanthood
 - Kindness
 - Courtesy and respect
3. He would place more value on people than the task
4. He would be diligent with the task and show a 'second mile' approach
5. He would share His uncompromising message with creativity, not abusing the rules of the workplace
6. Everyone would know He was there and I was His colleague
7. He would prepare Himself before hand by:
 - Praying for my colleagues
 - Praying for wisdom and discernment
 - Praying for courage and creativity
 - Praying for open doors
8. Even though He knows everything, He wouldn't act like it

9. He would build relationship with people over time – invite them back to His place
10. By being with Jesus, I would feel more fulfilled and fruitful than ever and see His purpose in what I do and where I do it
11. My eyes would be miraculously opened to needs and opportunities around me because of Jesus
12. Not everyone would like what Jesus and I did or said

The fact is:

We do take Jesus with us to work each day and, representing Him, these are things that we would be aware of and practice.

So if we were to use this list as an evaluation on how we approach our work place, how do we shape up? What do we need to change?

The letter and spirit of the law

As Christians, it's important that we understand the difference between the letter and spirit of the law. The letter is the literal interpretation of rules and regulations whereas the spirit is the intent of those rules and regulations. The spirit of the law takes into account extenuating circumstances and the application of mercy. This is why a judge has the right to vary the penalty of a crime committed from one case to another. The letter of the law sets the parameters of judgement but the judge takes into account the letter and the spirit (circumstances) of each case.

The spirit of the law doesn't negate the letter of the law but reinforces the intent of it.

Jesus regularly reinforced the spirit of the law to the Pharisees. In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus criticized the Pharisees for rigidly sticking to the letter of the law regarding Sabbath by pointing out the rightness or spirit of the law by showing that it is good and legal to help and save someone on the Sabbath.

At other times, Jesus brings clarity to the letter of the law by reinforcing the intent of the law. EG. Matthew 5:21-22 - "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' ²²But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell. [NLT]

So why is this relevant in the workplace?

People are constantly searching for loop holes in the letter of the law to negate the intent:

- Tax evasion and false claims
- Time off; extended breaks; lying about reasons for absenteeism
- Overcharging clients
- 'Cash under the counter' transactions
- Justifying common practice – "Everybody does it!"

As representatives of Jesus we must show integrity in the work place. That means paying attention to the spirit of the law as well as the letter. That means that while other colleagues may unfairly claim certain benefits, take time off for certain things and justify various questionable practices, we cannot.

We represent the integrity of Jesus in the market place.

Salt of the earth

Matthew 5:13 - "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavour? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. [NLT]

How are we to be salt of the earth in our work place, salt that has not lost its flavour?

SALT BENEFIT	EXPLANATION	WORK PLACE
Flavour		
Preservation		
Purification		
Longevity		
Value		
Permeation		

Light of the world

Matthew 5:14-16 - "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. [NLT]

We are to display our faith in action in our work place. This doesn't mean that we don't adhere to policy and procedure set in place. We come under the authority of our managers and leaders but we don't bury the light of Jesus in us.

We hide our light under a basket when:

- Our character doesn't reflect our belief
- Jesus isn't a part of our work-week world
- We compromise righteousness for acceptance and popularity
- We don't take divine opportunities to share our faith
- We don't exude the following traits:
 - Consistency in manner
 - Positive attitude
 - Courtesy
 - Friendliness
 - Encouraging others
 - Willingness to assist
 - Punctuality
 - Diligence
 - Excellence

A final word ...

Colossians 3:23 - Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. [NLT]

Complete exercise 4.3 from the Pathway to MATURITY monthly challenge sheet.

4. Reaching out to others



4.4 Growing others

A mature Christian will help others achieve fruitfulness

Reciprocal investment

Luke 6:38 - Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.” [NLT]

Scripture talks extensively about the principle of sowing and reaping – that when we sow in generosity and fruitfulness, we will yield a harvest in return. This harvest can be seen as a reciprocal investment, shared and received. It is to be seen in God’s natural and spiritual economy. It is the foundational principle of farming but also the result when we sow spiritually in helping others grow.

By definition, reciprocal investment is seen as a balanced agreement between governments where one form of giving returns an equal measure of come-back. But God’s economy is different. Often our giving to Him is returned to us far more than equal measure. This should never be our motive in giving but it is a flow on consequence from this principle.

When I sow into the lives of others, helping them grow and be fruitful, I receive:

- Clarity and wisdom in defining and acting out my faith and belief.
- The benefits of generational influence, continuing long after I’m gone.
- Multiplication of what I’ve sown – John 12:24
- The longevity of fruit that keeps on producing – John 15:1-8
- Heavenly reward – Matt 6:19-21

This principle of reciprocal investment is foundational to being a disciple of Jesus Christ. By definition, a disciple cannot be a disciple without discipling others. The very term ‘disciple’ hints at investing into the lives of others.

So what are some keys to investing in others so that we see a great return?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Mentoring

“Christian mentoring is a dynamic, intentional relationship of trust in which one person enables another to maximise the grace of God in their life and service.”

- John Mallison (*Mentoring to develop disciples & leaders* – 1998:8)

“A mentor in the biblical sense establishes a close relationship with a protégé and on that basis through fellowship, modelling, advice, encouragement, correction, practical assistance and prayer support influences his/her understudy to gain a deeper comprehension of divine truth, lead a godlier life and render more effective service to God.”

- Gunter Krallmann (*Mentoring for Mission* – 1992)

Mentoring has to be more than just answering questions of an enquirer or discussing various doctrinal and theological points of view at length. There is required an investment, a journey towards a perceived outcome, a time schedule to bring process to completion and a means of evaluation. If any of these factors aren't clear, mentoring can become a confusing, haphazard catch-up – interesting but unfruitful.

As we study the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, we see that Jesus focused His disciples on 9 main areas of development:

- Godly character
- Prayer and fasting
- Devotion (relationship with God)
- Truth
- Kingdom Living
- Sharing and growing in faith
- Giving and service
- The Holy Spirit
- Leadership

A mentoring approach should consider each of these areas of development or steps to maturity.

A mentor will follow a pattern of teaching:

INSTRUCT	'This is how I do it.'
MODEL	'Watch me do it.'
SUPERVISE	'Let's do it together.'
EMPOWER	'You do it.'
RELEASE	'It's all yours baby!'

Team work

2 Kings 6:1-7 - One day the group of prophets came to Elisha and told him, "As you can see, this place where we meet with you is too small. ²Let's go down to the Jordan River, where there are plenty of logs. There we can build a new place for us to meet."

"All right," he told them, "go ahead."

³ "Please come with us," someone suggested.

"I will," he said. ⁴ So he went with them.

When they arrived at the Jordan, they began cutting down trees. ⁵ But as one of them was cutting a tree, his axe head fell into the river. "Oh, sir!" he cried. "It was a borrowed axe!"

"Where did it fall?" the man of God asked. When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water at that spot. Then the axe head floated to the surface. ⁷ "Grab it," Elisha said. And the man reached out and grabbed it. [NLT]

In this story, we can see a powerful illustration of connected team.

- 1 United vision
 - "One day a group of prophets ..." (vs 1)
- 2 Proactive ownership
 - "...came to Elisha and told him ..." (vs 1)
- 3 Contagious passion
 - "As you can see, the place where we meet is too small." (vs 1)
- 4 Humble sacrifice
 - "Let's go down to the Jordan river where there are plenty of logs." (vs 2)
- 5 Collective building
 - "There we can build a new place for us to meet." (vs 2)
- 6 Family focus
 - "Please come with us." (vs 3)
- 7 Corporate anointing
 - They were all chopping but the one who had borrowed an axe ended up losing the axe head in the river. (vs 5) – speaks of carrying another's anointing and not functioning in one accord.
- 8 Loving correction
 - "Elisha cut a stick and threw it in the water." (vs 6)
- 9 Supernatural dimension
 - "Then the axe head rose to the surface and floated. 'Grab it,' Elisha said to him." (vs 6-7)

Team work divides the task and multiplies the success. As we build teams, we build individuals.

Jesus: "I am the vine"

John 15:1-8; 15-16 - "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

(...) I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. [NLT]

The key to our spiritual growth is abiding in the Vine. At the foundation of us bearing fruit is our relationship with Christ. There is a clear pattern to bearing fruit in this passage:

FRUIT –	vs 4	-	Relationship/Abiding in Jesus
MORE FRUIT –	vs 1-2	-	Pruning required
MUCH FRUIT –	vs 7	-	Productivity – His Word nourishing us
LASTING FRUIT -	vs 15-16	-	Partnership – working together as friends

Fruitfulness requires all of the branches working together, being appointed to go and produce fruit that will last. That means that the growth and maturity of other branches affects my fruitfulness and therefore, it is in our own personal interest to help other branches grow.

Reaching out to others is essential for the follower of Jesus Christ.

Complete exercise 4.4 from the Pathway to MATURITY monthly challenge sheet.



Pathway to MATURITY

Monthly challenge

4. Reaching out to others

4.1 Take time to prepare a concise 'Before, Christ, After' story for your testimony. Share it with someone.

4.2 We are told a number of times in the Gospels that Jesus was moved with compassion. What does this mean and what should be our response?

4.3 How can you be an example of Jesus in all of your areas of influence? Be specific.

4.4 Try to list at least 5 things you can do to help others around you grow.