

ADVANCING THE GOSPEL

Staff Training Bible Study



Our Navigator calling is *"To advance the gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost."* This statement roots our work in the soil of the lost and broken people of our world. It also invites us to trust God in advancing His good news among all people. Let's explore this good news further.

WHERE WE'RE GOING:

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
THE GOSPEL	SHARING	PURITY	ADVANCE	LABS	RESPOND	OPTIONAL STUDIES
What is the gospel? Study the use of the word itself, searching Romans 1-8 and defining key terms	Study how Jesus and the apostles communicated the gospel.	Investigate Galatians for what pollutes the gospel	How does the gospel actually move forward?	Deploy what you've learned in unique real life activities.	Connect what you learned to your life and ministry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Insider • Dealing with Fears • The Lost



WHERE YOU'VE BEEN:

Take a few minutes to prepare your heart for the study: Who are the people in your life, right now, that you are praying for and sharing the gospel with? What do you hope to see God do in their life?

01 THE GOSPEL

What exactly does the Bible mean by “The Gospel”? In this opening module we’ll explore the meaning of the gospel, seeking to understand what it is, and is not.

A. What is the Gospel?

The Greek word translated “Gospel” (*euangelion*) appears 77 times in the New Testament. For each of the references given below, record your observations as they relate to the gospel. Then use your observations to answer the questions that follow.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Philippians 1:5,7,12,27; 2:22; 4:13,15

1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:2,4

2 Thessalonians 1:8

2 Timothy 1:8,10; 2:8

Matthew 9:35-38

Mark 1:14-18

Luke 8:4-15



Optional Further Study: Use a concordance to look up every mention of the word “Gospel” in the Bible. Read the verse in context and take note of what is said. Add your findings to answer below.

1. What is the gospel?
2. What certainties are connected with the gospel?
3. What other characteristics does the gospel have?
4. How does the gospel change my perspective on life and purpose? My relationships?
5. What am I to do with the gospel?



B. The Gospel According to Romans

Read through Romans 1-8. On a separate sheet, note key observations about the gospel.

Focus in on Romans 6-8. Prayerfully consider:

What is God saying to me about my identity in Christ?



Optional Further Study: Create an outline of Romans and map out Paul's explanation of the gospel. Come up with key passages and verses to help someone understand the gospel using Romans.

C. Defining Terms

Define the terms below using a Bible dictionary (available online at [Blue Letter Bible](#)) and find key Scripture references for each of them. On the following reflection page write down how each term is good news to you right now. How are you experiencing these truths (or set free not to experience them)?

Term	Definition	Scriptures
ADOPTION		
ATONEMENT		
GRACE		
GUILT		
JUSTIFICATION		
MERCY		
RECONCILIATION		
RIGHTEOUSNESS		
SHAME		
SIN		
WRATH OF GOD		

THE GOOD NEWS

"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

Micah 7:18,19

ADOPTION

ATONEMENT

GRACE

GUILT

JUSTIFICATION

MERCY

RECONCILIATION

RIGHTEOUSNESS

SHAME

SIN

WRATH OF GOD

WRITE A PRAYER...



02 SHARING

A. Examples in Scripture

Fill in the following chart to explore how the gospel is communicated.

	MESSENGER	AUDIENCE	MESSAGE
	Who is sharing the gospel? What is their relationship to the audience? Their attitude toward the listener? How do they handle the Scriptures?	Who is hearing the gospel? What is known about their culture, religion, view of God, view of self?	What is said? What aspects of God's character are emphasized? Why? What barriers were there to the gospel? Does anything surprise you about what is included/excluded in this gospel presentation?
John 3:1-21			
John 4:1-42			
Mark 7:24-30			
Acts 2:14-36			

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Acts 17:16-34			
Acts 25:23- 26:32			

B. Pulling it Together

As you look over your discoveries from these six examples, what patterns emerge?



C. Take it to Campus

How might your approach to sharing the gospel change as you interact with students of various ethnic backgrounds on your campus? Who could you ask and learn from?



03 PURITY

Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey in AD 46 or 47. Their journey lasted about 18 months and took them into the regional cities of Galatia. In each city they preached the gospel that God had revealed to Paul—for both Jew and Gentile, justification is by faith in Christ apart from the law.

A. Through Galatians

Not everyone agreed with Paul's understanding of the gospel. Some men, probably from Jerusalem, retraced Paul and Barnabas' route with the purpose of correcting Paul's gospel. The letter to the Galatians is Paul's reasoned, but also emotional, response to their mission.

Read through the book of Galatians. On a separate sheet, make note of your observations regarding the essence of the gospel and the ways the good news was being compromised.

In Summary

The purity of the gospel is under constant threat by those who seek to mix it with human rules and traditions. The Gentile world couldn't understand the gospel as long as it came wrapped up in Jewish tradition. In a similar way, whenever we add to the gospel, we subtract from its purity. When this happens it ceases to be good news for all nations.

B. Thinking it Through for You

1. Do you see any similarities between the Galatians and yourself in terms of how you view, understand and apply the gospel to your life? How so?

2. What little additions does your religious culture unknowingly add to the gospel? What are some effects?



C. Take It To Campus

1. What have you learned about presenting the pure gospel in various ways so that it is clear and attractive to different people?

04 ADVANCE



"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit."
Colossians 1:3-8

God is advancing His gospel all over the world. He uses people to move the good news into new places. And where it goes, it grows. While much of what Paul and his team did was in response to the social and religious context of their day, we can still draw valuable lessons for our times by understanding how God used them in His work of gospel advance.

A. Natural Expansion

In Acts 2-11 we read how the Gospel expanded among a group of people who were ready to hear the message. Acts 2:5 identifies the crowds gathered in Jerusalem as *"God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven."* They were a prepared audience and they responded quickly to the preaching of the gospel. However, over five years later and the gospel had not moved from Jerusalem!

All of this growth remained in the city until persecution drove them out. Then, *"those who were scattered went about preaching the word."* (Acts 8:4)

Acts 11:19 tells us that as these Jewish believers were scattered through the surrounding regions, they shared their new faith with fellow Jews and Jews who had adopted the Greek language and customs (Greek = Hellenists). Although the gospel was advancing geographically, apart from a few exceptions through Peter (Acts 10) and Philip (Acts 8), it was still confined culturally to Jews.

B. The Apostolic Team

It took the emergence of the "apostolic team" to break the gospel out of the Jewish world and into different people groups. The word "apostle" means "sent one." Many English translations use a capital "A" to speak of the original 11 disciples and Matthias—the men Jesus selected to be with Him and specially trained by Him. However, the word also is used to refer to a wider group of people. People like Paul, Barnabas, Andronicus and Junias are all referred to as "apostles." They were sent ones. They crisscrossed the region of what we now know as Southern Europe and the Middle East, planting the gospel and establishing the faith of those who believed.



C. The Mobile Teams

What characterized the ministry of these “mobile teams”? Look at the following passages and note some of their characteristics.

Acts 13:1-5

Acts 15:36

Romans 15:17-29

1 Corinthians 9:19-22

2 Corinthians 10:13-16

Choose five words or phrases to describe the “apostolic ministry”.

D. Local Believers and the Advancement of the Gospel

The litmus test of Paul’s apostolic ministry was what the local believers did with the gospel planted in their midst. On several occasions Paul links the phrase “not in vain” to his ministry. He uses the Greek word “kenos.” When applied figuratively the word means “useless, for no purpose, or without effect.”

Read through the following scriptures. What did Paul want to see happen in and through the lives of local believers to conclude that his ministry in a city or region had fulfilled its purpose?

Romans 12:14-21

Philippians 2:14-16

1 Thessalonians 1:8

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

1 Thessalonians 4:11,12

Titus 2:5,10

It was up to the local believers to carry the gospel through life and speech into their existing family, social and economic networks as “insiders”.

E. Compare/Contrast Apostolic and Local Ministry



“2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

Colossians 4:2-6

Use the verse above and your observations in the sections C and D to fill in the following chart comparing and contrasting the respective contributions for apostolic and local teams.

APOSTOLIC TEAMS	LOCAL MINISTRIES
Outsiders to the culture/place Mobile/Transient	Insiders to the culture/place Permanent

F. In Summary

Paul’s apostolic team worked together to take the gospel to the nations. The fruit of their labor, the local believers in a city, bore the ongoing responsibility to carry the gospel into a people group. These two expressions of the church, the mobile and the local, were vital to the advance of the gospel. They needed each other to fulfill their shared calling to advance the gospel to the nations.

Often, we make two common mistakes when we fail to understand this distinction between these two types of teams:

First, we teach and expect the local laborers to minister as apostles in their current environment (school, neighborhood, jobs, hobbies, recreation, etc.). When this happens the laborer often loses rapport with those he or she is trying to minister to and becomes discouraged in the process. After a while they no longer believe it is possible to labor fruitfully among the lost.

Secondly, a staff team that needs to minister in an apostolic manner attempts to implement their mission the same way a team of insiders would. When this happens the outcomes are slow and discouraging. New risks and initiatives are not taken.

The effect of these two mistakes is the same—**no generational ministry!**



G. Thinking it Through For You

Does your local ministry (e.g. *your neighborhood, the gym*) look differently than your campus ministry? How so? How are they similar?



Optional Further Study: Read “[The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission](#),” an article by Ralph D. Winter, founder of U.S. Center for World Missions. The author explores God’s use of both mobile (sodalities) and local (modalities) functions in His Kingdom advance.



H. Take it to Campus

What are you doing to help your student friends share the gospel right where they are?

What risks are you taking to advance the gospel on campus?



05 LABS

Labs take learning and put it into practice. We hope you can creatively incorporate the principles of Scripture into some fieldwork in order to deepen your understanding of what it means to Advance the Gospel. This lab seeks to help you experience what Paul experienced as he looked for doorways for the Gospel.

A) Gospel Doorways Lab



“So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.”

Acts 17:22-23

This lab seeks to help you experience what Paul experienced as he looked for doorways for the Gospel. Have you ever noticed objects of worship, random Bible verses, or religious images sprinkled throughout your campus? Well, here's your chance!

1. Find “Doorways” To The Gospel

Walk around your campus and take photos of at least five objects that could provide an open door for the gospel. It could be the football stadium, artwork, statues, inscriptions, or just about anything that might serve as a gospel doorway.

2. Use a “Doorway” to Start a Conversation

Pick one of the five objects and think through how you could use it as a doorway to share the gospel. Now give it a try. Go to the object, strike up a conversation with someone and use your gospel doorway to share the gospel of Jesus.

3. Compile Your “Doorways”

After you've shared the gospel using your gospel doorway, compile all five of your pictures into a Word document and then write about the single object you chose as a doorway. Describe the object, why it's significant, and how you used it as a doorway to share the gospel. Conclude the Word doc with a summary of how it went sharing the gospel and what you learned throughout the whole process

4. Share Your Experience

Share your experience with your staff team or staff trainer



B) Kingdom Testimonies Lab



“Some Christians speak of a personal encounter with Jesus as if this were a one-time matter—something that happens at conversion. This is a tragic confusion of an introduction and a relationship. A first encounter is just that—a first encounter. What God longs for us to experience is intimate knowing that comes by means of an ongoing relationship.”

David Benner

Look back again at that chart of gospel definitions. These aren't only biblical concepts to study or truths to pass on to others. These are realities God invites you to experience! It's helpful to know God adopts us into his family...but how are you experiencing God as a Father?

Stories of our conversion are helpful and must be told (like Paul in Acts 22..). But stories of our day-to-day experience of the good news can lead to a powerful form of testimony as well (like Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9,10).

The gospel is good news. Anywhere, anytime to anyone. And Jesus' plan is not just to send reporters with facts, but witnesses recounting their experience (Acts 1:8).

What is your experience?



1. Choose at least one of the definitions of Gospel in the Bible study.
2. Spend some time prayerfully considering how you are currently experiencing this aspect of the good news.
3. Over the next week share this testimony with a variety of people (an EDGE teammate, some strangers on campus, students you're ministering to, someone in line at the coffee shop).
4. Reflect on your experience of sharing this type of testimony.
5. **Write a 1-3 paragraph reflection** about your experience, and share this with your staff team or trainer.

After you do this assignment, search YouTube for the video titled:
“What's the Difference Between Gospel Benefits and Prosperity Theology?”



06 RESPOND

Take a few minutes to *review* your study and consider the highlights. Then *reflect* on the questions below. DON'T SKIP THIS...responding is a key part of being formed through this experience.

What were 1-2 key takeaways or discoveries from the study?

How did what you learned in this study shape your approach to Advancing The Gospel on your campus?

What is one way you might need help in this area of ministry?

What questions arose that you are excited pursue and learn more?



To Complete Your Study:

Return to the online course, select Module 06 from the menu, and follow the instructions!



07 OPTIONAL STUDIES

THE INSIDER

What happened after the apostolic team left town? How would the gospel continue to advance? The apostolic team established a beachhead—a foundational generation. This generation had inside access to families, neighborhoods, places of work and social networks. The believers in this generation were insiders. It was up to the local believers to take the gospel into a place. They were *key* to the ongoing movement of the gospel.

“...the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries... chattering to friends and chance acquaintances in homes and wine shops, on walks and around market stalls. They went everywhere gossiping the gospel and they did it naturally... and with the conviction of those who are not paid to say that sort of thing.”

– Michael Green *“Evangelism and the Early Church”*

A. Jesus and the Insider

Jesus had a lot to say about how we should relate to unbelievers. Reflect on the following passages and note your observations.

Matthew 5:13-16

Matthew 5:43-47

Matthew 13:24-30

Jesus lived what He taught. He gained a reputation among the religious establishment for being good friends with some very lost people. Jesus, the One who was without sin, moved freely among those who were sinners. He did not demand that people change in order to be with him socially.

What do you observe about the attitudes and actions of the major characters in the following passages?

Matthew 9:9-13

Mark 2:13-17

Jesus asked some people to drop all they were doing, leave their families and “follow Him.” But was everyone called to this way of following Jesus? Explain.

Mark 5:18-20

John 4:28-30; 39-42

Summarize your observations about Jesus and the Insider:

B. The Insider and the Epistles

The first generation of believers in the pagan city of Corinth faced many challenges. It was tempting to resolve these tensions by withdrawing from relationships. In fact, these believers wondered if spiritual transformation meant relational and physical relocation. They wrestled with the question, “What should the new believer do?”

What did Paul want to see happening in and through the local Insiders?

1 Corinthians 7:12-24

Romans 12:8-10

Galatians 4:19

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Colossians 1:3-6

What does the Insider need from the apostolic team?

Acts 15:36

2 Corinthians 12:14-18

Philippians 1:21-26

C. In Summary

More often than not, when people become Christians, the church or other believers encourage them—either directly or indirectly—to make radical changes in their relational world. As a result, that’s often the last their old friends will see of them. But by withdrawing from relationships, they exchange one of their best assets—their strategic field position—for a far more difficult one. The insider has now become an outsider. If our Navigator calling is to become a reality, we must do a better job than this. Insiders are vital to our calling, and we must convey that.



D. Take it to Campus

Why are Insiders vital to the Great Commission?

What do Insiders need to flourish and be fruitful?

Does your current strategy of ministry validate or erode the idea of being an Insider?



06 OPTIONAL STUDIES

DEALING WITH OUR FEARS

Whenever God asks us personally to respond in faith to His promises, we are confronted with the reality of our fears. In order to lead others in implementing our Navigator calling, we must deal with our fears. Along with its derivatives—anxiety, stress and worry—fear conspires to make life uncomfortable. Fear is contagious and can paralyze and imprison not only us, but those we seek to lead and influence. Living out of our fears can keep us from passionately pursuing our God-given calling.

A. What do we do with our fears?

We all have fears. They are not necessarily abnormal or wrong. It is not the absence of fear, but our response to fear that is crucial. With God's help we can move through our fears to a place of boldness and obedience.

What do you observe from the passages below about overcoming fear?

Psalm 34:4

Isaiah 6:1-12

Acts 4:23-31

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Ephesians 6:19-20

Philippians 1:19-26

Colossians 4:2-6

1 John 1:7

What do you observe in the following passages about human weakness and the gospel?

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

2 Corinthians 12:7-10



B. Apply

What are some fears that you have encountered in seeking to advancing the gospel?
How have you dealt with them?

What would it look like for *you* to lead boldly in advancing the gospel?

Where is courage and boldness currently needed for both your staff team and for the students in your ministry?



06 OPTIONAL STUDIES

THE LOST

As we consider the importance of sharing our faith, one aspect to keep in mind is the condition of those to whom we are going. This motivated Jesus. We see His heart in the following passage:



When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:36-38

Sometimes it is easy to become frustrated, angry or intimidated by lost people. It may be helpful to realize that they are living exactly how we should expect them to live – given the state they are in and what they believe about God.

A. The Condition of the Lost

List all the things these passages say about our friends who do not have faith. What do these things look like in their lives? Do you think they are aware of their condition?

Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 61:1-2

Acts 26:18

Ephesians 2:1-3

Ephesians 2:11-12

B. The Predicament of the Lost

Look at the following passages and write down your observations about both the present and future problems those without Christ are facing.

Isaiah 64:6

Isaiah 59:1-2

Acts 4:12

Romans 3:23

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Revelation 20:11-15

C. God's Heart for the Lost

What do the following passages say about God's heart for those who do not know Him?

Matthew 9:36

Matthew 18:14

John 17:20-21

Isaiah 61:1-3

Ezekiel 18:23

1 Timothy 2:3-4

John 3:16

Romans 5:8

Luke 19:41-44

Which of the above passages particularly grips your heart as you consider the lost?
Why?

D. In Summary

The people we know who do not have faith are in a very bad place - both now as they live without the life God desires for them and forever when they slip into eternity without knowing Christ. God cares deeply about them and desires them to be saved.



E. Take it to Campus

What is your honest heart response as you think about the lost?

How can your response become more like God's heart?

Is there a campus activity that would expose us to lost people on campus or allow us to serve the lost in some meaningful capacity?