

Partnership in the Gospel #2:

Putting the Gospel at the Center of our Actions

Icebreaker:

Split into teams or pairs. List the following according to their age, starting with the earliest.

90's Movies

- The Sixth Sense ()
- The Lion King ()
- Clueless ()
- Jurassic Park ()
- Titanic ()
- Saving Private Ryan ()
- Terminator 2 ()

Presidents (start with the earliest one elected)

- Abraham Lincoln ()
- John Quincy Adams ()
- Thomas Jefferson ()
- James K. Polk ()
- Ronald Reagan ()
- Calvin Coolidge ()
- Warren Harding ()

Probabilities, according to a reliable online source (start with the smallest)

- Odds of injury from shaving:

- Odds of injury from using a chain saw

- Odds of drowning in a bathtub:

- Odds of being killed by lightning:

- Odds of being considered possessed by Satan:
- Odds that a celebrity marriage will last a lifetime:
- Odds of being born a twin in North America:
- Odds of being on plane with a drunken pilot:
- Odds of catching a ball at a major league ballgame:
- Odds of finding a four-leaf clover on first try:

Icebreaker Follow Up

1. We all have lists in our lives that we order based on priority. What are the main priorities of your life? To get a more objective answer, what do you spend most of your time doing? Make a list of the top 5 things you spend the most time on.
2. Look at your list. Do you think any changes should be made? What would you change and why?

Bible Study: The Gospel Comes First in Situations and Relationships

1. Paul writes all throughout Philippians 1 that we must put the gospel first in every aspect of our lives. Read Philippians 1:12-18 in your group.
2. Paul says that what has happened to him has really served to advance the gospel. What has happened to him during the course of his life and during the time that Philippians was written?
 - a. See verses 1:7, 13.
 - b. Read 2 Cor 11:21-33
3. What are two ways Paul sees his current situation as advancing the gospel?
 - a. See 1:12-14
 - b. Follow up questions: How is Paul different from other prisoners that the Roman guard would encounter?

- c. Can you think of any modern examples of how one person's suffering emboldened others? (one is the death of Jim Elliot, a Wheaton graduate, and others in Ecuador and how it has inspired other Wheaton students to give their lives on the mission field in subsequent decades).
4. Paul then has the gospel at the center of his situation and responds accordingly, but he's not naïve. It's not all good what has happened. His must put the gospel at the center of his *relationships*. Look again at 1:15-18.
- a. It's important to note the other preachers are not heretics (or Paul would have called them out as in Gal 1:8-9). These are people who think that Paul has done damage by getting in prison. People who would say Paul wasted his opportunity to preach the gospel by being inflexible. They had a different philosophy than Paul on how to reach people for the gospel and may have put him down to magnify their own ministry.
 - b. Look at Acts 20:22-25 and 21:7-14. Was Paul right to go Jerusalem? What if he had stayed? Could he have planted more churches?
 - c. What does Paul care about though? How does he handle criticism? Look back at Phil 1:18. How should this impact the way we view other churches/pastors?

Application

Is the gospel at center of your actions? How do you view situations and relationships?

Go back to the list you made at the beginning. Where is the gospel?

All things bent toward our selves, all our aspirations, are insignificant compared to the advancement of the gospel. What are your aspirations? To get married? To Travel? To see your children or grandchildren grow up? To have a fine career? To retire early? None of these are to be despised; they are part of normal cycles of life, but they cannot be at our center. They must be on the periphery with the gospel at the center.

The following conversation may help serve the point:

Jerry: So Ed, what do you do?

Ed: I'm a Christian

Jerry: No, I didn't ask your religion, what do you do?

Ed: I'm a Christian.

Jerry: Oh, I see, so you're a vocational minister?

Ed: No. I'm not a vocational minister, but I'm a Christian full-time.

Jerry: But what's your vocation then?!

Ed: My vocation? Well I'm a full-time Christian but I pack pork to pay expenses.

The gospel at the center. The rest is on the outskirts.

Pray for this to be true of our groups as we meet each week and individually for each person there. The big idea to walk out the door with: Put the gospel first.