

Effectively Engaging Unbelievers with the Gospel

Presenter: Jeff Mindler, MTh

Research Assistant, Apologetics for the Church; Adjunct Professor of Apologetics at Lancaster Bible College

Introduction

Engaging unbelievers with the gospel can feel intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Jeff Mindler's session focuses on giving you a **practical game plan** for sharing your faith confidently, biblically, and effectively.

Big Idea:

Effectively engaging unbelievers with the gospel requires:

1. **Clarity about the gospel**
 2. **Confidence in defending the gospel**
 3. **Dependence on God through prayer**
-

1. Clarity About the Gospel

Before you can share the gospel, you must **understand it clearly**.

What the Gospel Is NOT

- Your personal testimony (though it can start a conversation)
- "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life"
- "Say a prayer and Jesus will forgive you"
- Promises of happiness, meaning, or healing

These may be true in some sense, but **strictly speaking, they are not the gospel**.

What the Gospel IS

- **1 Corinthians 15:1–6** is the clearest summary:
 - Christ **died for our sins**, was **buried**, and **rose on the 3rd day**
 - He appeared to many witnesses
 - **Memorize verses 3–4** – a concise, scriptural explanation of the gospel

Four Key Elements

1. **God** – Holy, righteous, just, and loving (Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 11:7; 1 John 4:8)
2. **Humanity** – Made in God’s image but morally corrupt and guilty (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10–12)
3. **Jesus Christ** – Sinless substitute; died and rose to pay for our sins (1 Peter 3:18)
4. **Our Response** – **Repentance** (turn from sin to God) and **Faith** (trust in Christ alone; Ephesians 2:8–9)

Tip: Memorize big passages, not just isolated verses. Context matters – “Christ is king, but context is queen.”

2. Confidence in Defending the Gospel

Apologetics Basics

- Answer questions and objections
- Challenge worldviews thoughtfully
- Prepare in advance – “premeditated evangelism”

Examples of common questions:

- Can we trust the Bible?
- How can God be loving if evil exists?
- Who is Jesus really?

Think several steps ahead, like chess, but let conversations unfold naturally.

Practical Steps:

1. **Study Scripture regularly** – defend what you know
2. **Learn sound doctrine** – e.g., know who Jesus truly is (2nd Person of the Trinity, not Michael the Archangel)
3. **Practice with others** – get feedback from fellow Christians
4. **Ask thoughtful questions** – challenge assumptions respectfully:
 - “What do you mean by that?”
 - “How did you come to that conclusion?”
 - “How do you know that is true?”
 - “What evidence would change your mind?”
 - “Why is this important to you?”

These questions encourage critical thinking and spiritual conversations, even in a “TikTok theology” world.

3. Rely on God Through Prayer

- Only **God changes hearts**.
 - Pray before, during, and after conversations. We do the conversing; God does the converting.
 - Approach evangelism humbly, recognizing your **dependence on God**.
-

Additional Tips

- **Practice often** – don't fear mistakes; God uses imperfect instruments
- **Use resources** – books like Paul Washer's *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* and Greg Gilbert's *What is the Gospel?*
- **Engage with gentleness and respect** – 1 Peter 3:15

Summary

To effectively engage unbelievers:

1. **Clarity** – Know the gospel, what it is and isn't
2. **Confidence** – Be prepared to defend your faith and answer questions
3. **Dependence** – Rely on God through prayer

With this approach, your conversations can be faithful, respectful, and impactful.

Key Scripture References

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Corinthians 15:1–6 • Romans 5:1 • Ephesians 2:8–9 • 1 Peter 3:15 • Jeremiah 17:9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 11:7 • Isaiah 6:3 • 1 John 4:8 • 1 Peter 3:18
--	--

Recommended Resources:

Gilbert, Greg. *What Is the Gospel?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
 Gilbert, Greg. *Who Is Jesus?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
 Packer, J. I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961.
 Ventura, Rob. *Equipped to Evangelize: A Practical Guide to Sharing the Gospel*. Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016.
 Washer, Paul. *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Muscle Shoals, AL: HeartCry Missionary Society, 2012.