

BUILD III

Understanding and Sharing the Gospel

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**BIBLICAL
UNDERSTANDING
INTERCESSORY
LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT**

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Colossians 2:6-7

BUILD III

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this BUILD study is to gain a better understanding of the gospel, and the ability to share it with someone else. The word "gospel" simply means "good news." Author John Piper defines the gospel as:

The news that Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, died for our sins and rose again, eternally triumphant over all his enemies, so that there is now no condemnation for those who believe, but only everlasting joy.¹

The last two words of Piper's definition are critical, yet often overlooked. They point to the end result of our salvation—eternal joy in our fellowship with Jesus Christ. As Piper writes elsewhere:

Forgiveness of sins and justification are good news because they remove obstacles to the only lasting all-satisfying source of joy: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not merely the means of our rescue from damnation; he is the goal of our salvation.²

It is my hope that this BUILD study will help us find greater joy in what Jesus has done for us. As we study the message of the gospel, we will examine biblical passages that help explain the "why" and "how" of God's provision for our salvation. But we will also seek to gain a greater appreciation for what the gospel means for us personally as "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

Gaining a deeper appreciation for the richness of the gospel should give us a greater desire to share it with others. Jesus has called us to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). The apostle Paul referred to those who shared the gospel as "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20). In order for us to be effective as witnesses and ambassadors for Jesus, we must know how to explain the truths of the gospel to others. Our BUILD study will take us progressively through key points of the gospel so we can grasp the foundational truths of its message. Each point will be supported by Scripture, and it is vital that you memorize the verses assigned for each gospel truth.

In addition to regular prayer with and for your BUILD team members, please recruit one prayer partner outside of BUILD (your spouse, a family member, or a friend). Ask this person to pray for your spiritual growth during our BUILD study, and for an opportunity for you to share the gospel with someone in the coming weeks.

As you study and memorize God's Word and pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, may you increasingly "know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

In Christ,



David Beaty
Pastor, River Oaks Community Church

¹ John Piper, "The Gospel in Six Minutes," *Desiring God* (September 12, 2007), desiringGod.org.

² John Piper, "What is the Christian Gospel?" *Desiring God* (June 5, 2002), desiringGod.org.

MY COMMITMENT AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE BUILD III MINISTRY

With God's help, I commit to:

- Meet weekly with my BUILD team.
- Read the Bible for a minimum of 10 minutes each day during BUILD. I will memorize the assigned verses and review them during the semester.
- Spend a minimum of 5 minutes each day in prayer during the BUILD semester. I agree to pray daily for the spiritual development of the other members of my BUILD team.
- Seek to live in such a way as to honor Jesus Christ and represent Him well before others.

Signature _____

Date _____

UNIT 1
GOD-OUR HOLY CREATOR

The gospel begins with God. He is our creator, judge, redeemer, and Lord. Eternal fellowship with Him is the greatest good and highest joy that any human being can experience.

In order to appreciate what God has done for us in the gospel, we must begin with an understanding of who God is and what He is like.

1. Read Genesis 1.

What makes men and women different from the rest of God's creation?

2. If God is our creator, in what ways are we accountable to Him?

3. Read Isaiah 6:1-7.

What is the key descriptive word used of God in this passage?

4. Why does the prophet consider himself "lost" in light of who God is?

5. Why is an understanding of God's holiness necessary in order for us to understand and appreciate the gospel?

6. Memorize 1 Peter 1:15-16.

Learn the main points of the Gospel Presentation Outline on page 16.

UNIT 2
GOD-OUR GREAT JUDGE

Many people who believe in God think much of His love and mercy, but give little thought to His holiness and justice. Throughout Scripture, God is revealed as the great judge of all. Psalm 7:11 says, "God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day." This understanding of God as judge is not limited to the Old Testament. In Acts 17:31, the apostle Paul tells us that God has appointed a day on which "he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed." (This "man" is a reference to Jesus, who is both God and man.)

1. Read Romans 1:18-25.

What knowledge of God is available to all human beings?

2. In what ways do all people worship and serve "the creature rather than the Creator"?

3. Read Romans 3:19-26.

Why has God given us the law contained in the Old Testament?

4. What does it mean to "fall short of the glory of God"?

5. Why does our sin separate us from God?

6. Memorize Psalm 7:11.

Review 1 Peter 1:15-16.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 3
OUR SIN

In light of God's perfect holiness and justice, we human beings stand in great need before God. None of us perfectly obeys His laws. Even a simple command like, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) brings us up short and makes us realize our tendencies toward self-centeredness.

But in the midst of our great need, God comes with great mercy. The great Judge becomes the great Justifier (Romans 3:26). God's merciful initiative in providing for our salvation and forgiveness is beautifully seen in Ephesians 2:1-10.

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

What was our spiritual condition before having faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord?

2. Why is our salvation dependent upon God's grace, rather than any works on our part?

3. Why do you think God designed His plan for our salvation as He did?

4. What would you say to someone who says, "If salvation is by grace, why not sin all we want?"

5. How does our salvation give new purpose to our lives on earth?

6. Memorize Romans 3:10 and 3:23.

Review 1 Peter 1:15-16 and Psalm 7:11.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 4
JESUS-WHO HE IS

Many people have the opinion that Jesus is just one of many ways to God. Those with this view may believe that Jesus died to save us from our sins, but they do not see Him as the unique and only Savior. The Gospel of John, however, presents Jesus as the unique Son of God. In John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." The apostle John tells us that he recorded the signs done by Jesus "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

1. Read John 1:1-18.

How long has Jesus existed?

2. What was His role in creation?

3. Was Jesus God, a human being, or both?

4. In what way did Jesus bring "light" to the world?

5. Why did "the Word" become "flesh"?

6. Memorize John 1:1.

Review 1 Peter 1: 15-16, Psalm 7:11, Romans 3:10, and Romans 3:23.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 5
JESUS' SACRIFICE

The prophet Isaiah lived over 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Yet Isaiah's prophecies speak in detail about the sufferings of Jesus and why they were necessary. Isaiah chapter 53 gives us one of the clearest descriptions in Scripture of the primary purpose of Jesus' coming—to bear the judgment for our sins so that we might have eternal joy in the holy presence of our God.

1. Read Isaiah 53.

In what ways did the Messiah, Jesus, suffer?

2. What was the purpose for Jesus' sufferings?

3. Read verse 6 again.

What spiritual transaction took place when Jesus was crucified?

4. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be both divine and human in order to take our place on the cross?

5. Based on verse 11, how can we be considered "righteous" before God?

6. Memorize Isaiah 53:6.

Review 1 Peter 1: 15-16, Psalm 7:11, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, and John 1:1.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 6
JUSTIFICATION

The Book of Romans provides a thorough teaching on of justification by faith. Justification is the act whereby God declares a sinner to be forgiven and "just" in His sight. How does our perfectly holy God, the righteous Judge, declare us just when we are guilty of sin? He has done that by allowing the just judgment for our sins to fall upon Jesus. As the sinless Son of God, Jesus' sacrifice was of infinite value. As a human being, Jesus could take our place. Because of Jesus' suffering for us, the just demands of God's law have been met by Christ, and we are credited with His own righteousness. If we have placed our faith in Jesus as our Savior, we will enjoy eternal fellowship with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. Read Romans 3:19-31.

Why do all people stand guilty before God?

2. Why can no one be justified by keeping God's commandments?

3. Find and write out a definition for the word "propitiation." (Verse 25)

4. How many times do you see the word "faith" or "believe" in verses 21-30?

5. What role does faith play in our justification?

6. Why has God chosen to justify us by His grace alone through faith alone?

7. Memorize Ephesians 2:8-9.

Review 1 Peter 1: 15-16, Psalm 7:11, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, John 1:1, and Isaiah 53:6.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 7
REAL FAITH AND REAL LOVE

In Romans chapter 6, the apostle Paul seems to be responding to the question, "If salvation is by grace alone and not by our works, why not sin all we want so grace can abound?" In other words, if salvation is a free gift, what is our motivation for good works? The answer is love. Love for the One who gave His life for us is the motivation for a life of obedience to Him. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Real faith results in real love that motivates us to please the One we love.

The more fully we understand the gospel, the more we can appreciate the love God has shown for us. As we respond to His love, we long to please Him and enjoy His fellowship. This motivates us toward a life of spiritual progress and "sanctification." Sanctification is the process whereby God works in us to make us more like Christ throughout our lives.

1. Read Romans chapter 6.

Once we have come to saving faith in Jesus, why should we live differently?

2. What should be our attitude toward the sin that separated us from the Lord in the past?

3. Why are we no longer enslaved to sin?

4. Discuss with your team the changes you have seen in your life since becoming a follower of Jesus.

5. Memorize John 1:12.

Review 1 Peter 1: 15-16, Psalm 7:11, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, John 1:1, Isaiah 53:6, and Ephesians 2:8-9.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 8
JESUS AS LORD

Placing faith in Jesus' work on the cross for us is more than just intellectual agreement that He died to save us from our sins. It involves a complete reorientation of our lives toward the lordship of Jesus Christ. We transfer our trust from our efforts to save ourselves to His perfect work on the cross for us. And we transfer our allegiance to His rule in our lives.

In biblical times (and in some places in the world today), confessing "Jesus is Lord" could be very costly. In some cases, it could even cost one's life. Keep that in mind as you read what Paul says about acknowledging Jesus' lordship in Romans chapter 10.

1. Read Romans 10:1-17.

Paul opens this chapter by expressing his great desire for the Jews (his own people) to be saved. What mistake were many of the Jews making?

2. What is the difference between righteousness based on the law and the righteousness based on faith?

3. Note verse 10. Why is it important that a person's belief be acknowledged verbally?

4. Why must we share the gospel with others?

5. Memorize Romans 10:9.

Review all verses: 1 Peter 1: 15-16, Psalm 7:11, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, John 1:1, Isaiah 53:6, Ephesians 2:8-9, and John 1:12.

Review the Gospel Presentation Outline.

UNIT 9
FINDING THE OPEN DOOR

For many people, the biggest challenge in personal evangelism is getting to a point in conversation at which you can share the gospel. The awkwardness of this can be helped if we learn some considerate ways to transition into the sharing of what Jesus has done for us.

Despite what we may fear, many people really are eager to understand how their sins can be forgiven and how they can have assurance of eternal life with God. If we are prayerful, prepared, and willing to share God's message, the Holy Spirit will open doors with people He has prepared to hear the gospel.

Sharing the message may seem much more natural with a friend or family member with whom we have a relationship. But the Bible records many examples of Christians sharing the gospel with complete strangers. God calls us to be prepared to share His message with anyone at any time. The apostle Peter wrote:

But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Having learned a presentation of the gospel with relevant Scripture, we should also learn some simple ways to guide a conversation to spiritual matters. One good way to do this with a person who has told you about a need or concern in their lives is by offering to pray for them. After praying about a person's need, it is natural to ask about his or her relationship with God. Having prayed with someone, you might ask: "Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know you have eternal life?"

Regardless of a person's answer, it is helpful to ask: "If God asked, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' what would you say?" The answer to this second question will tell you what a person is trusting in for salvation. Most people will reply by stressing their good works or good intentions. It is then very natural to explain that it was helpful for you to learn that eternal life is a gift to us from God. You can then explain that salvation must be a gift to us in light of who God is as our holy creator and judge, and continue with a presentation of the gospel.

Having shared the message, if a person seems genuinely ready to place his or her faith in Jesus as Lord, we can lead them in a prayer of commitment like the one with the Expanded Gospel Presentation Outline. Never push someone to pray if his or her understanding of the gospel or sincere desire to follow Christ seems lacking. Simply trust that God will use what you have shared to bear fruit in that person's life over time.

Memorize the Expanded Gospel Presentation Outline.

Review all Scripture verses.

GOSPEL PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Ephesians 2:8-9

GOD'S NATURE:

- He is our holy Creator. 1 Peter 1:15-16
- He is our Judge. Psalm 7:11

OUR PROBLEM:

- Our sin. Romans 3:10
- Our inability to save ourselves. Romans 3:23

GOD'S SOLUTION:

- Jesus is God the Son. John 1:1
- Jesus bore our sins. Isaiah 53:6

OUR RESPONSE:

- Receive Jesus as Savior. John 1:12
- Confess Him as Lord. Romans 10:9

EXPANDED GOSPEL PRESENTATION OUTLINE

TWO QUESTIONS

1. "Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know you have eternal life?"
2. "If God asked you, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' what would you say?"

TRANSITION

- "It helped me to learn that the Bible says eternal life is a gift from God."
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- "I realized that it has to be a gift to us in light of what the Bible says about God."

GOSPEL PRESENTATION

GOD'S NATURE:

- He is our holy Creator. 1 Peter 1:15-16
- He is our Judge. Psalm 7:11

OUR PROBLEM:

- Our sin. Romans 3:10
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GOD'S SOLUTION:

- Jesus is God the Son. John 1:1
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OUR RESPONSE:

- Receive Jesus as Savior. John 1:12
- Confess Him as Lord. Romans 10:9

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Lord, I acknowledge that I am a sinner in need of Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to bear the judgment for my sins. And I believe that He has been raised from the dead. Lord, I turn from my sin and I turn to You. I place my trust completely in what Jesus has done to save me. Jesus, I receive you as my Savior and my Lord. Amen.

GOSPEL PRESENTATION MEMORY VERSES*

Ephesians 2:8-9	For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.			
VERSES	GOD'S NATURE	OUR PROBLEM	GOD'S SOLUTION	OUR RESPONSE
1 Peter 1:15-16	...but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."			
Psalms 7:11	God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.			
Romans 3:10		None is righteous, no, not one.		
Romans 3:23		...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.		
John 1:1			In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.	
Isaiah 53:6			All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.	
John 1:12				But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
Romans 10:9				If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

*English Standard Version