



Two Ways to Live: Study 6

Walking and Talking in the Real World

We've spent the last few weeks looking at the Two Ways to Live gospel outline as a clear and simple way of explaining the message about Jesus. We've also looked more closely at the biblical teaching behind the outline to gain a deeper understanding that should be helpful when people ask us further questions. But what are we actually meant to *do* with all this? We'll hopefully look more deeply at the practical side of sharing the gospel in a future series, but here we'll finish by discussing just a few guiding principles for sharing the gospel in practice.

Take time now to practice explaining the Two Ways to Live in your own words.



Follow Paul's example, as he followed the example of Christ

As a starting point, we'll look at Paul as an example of someone who often passed on the great news about Jesus to others. Then we'll look at how some of the principles drawn from him might be applied in some concrete situations.

Paul was a bit different to us in that he was specifically commissioned by the risen Jesus to spread the gospel... throughout the whole world! But the principles that he followed in his life of sharing Jesus still apply to us. In fact, he encouraged others to follow those same principles.

Read the passages from Paul's letters to the Corinthians below:

1:18 The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.....²²Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God...

2:1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified — 1 Corinthians 1:18-24; 2:1-2.

4:1 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. —2 Corinthians 4:1-6.

a) When talking to people about Jesus, what should we focus on and what kinds of things must we avoid? (1 Corinthians 1.22-23, 2.1-2; 2 Corinthians 4.2,5)

b) In practice, when would we ever be tempted to alter (2 Corinthians 4.2) or hide (1 Corinthians 1.22-23) the truth about Jesus?



c) Why wouldn't altering the truth ever really help people to accept Jesus?

d) Why would it be most helpful to focus on Jesus instead of philosophical debates (1 Corinthians 2.1-2)?

Read some further thoughts from Paul below.

9:19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some...

10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.— 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 10:31-11:1.

2:6 As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, 7 but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. 8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. 9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. 14 For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews. —1 Thessalonians 2:6-14.

e) How should we act toward those who need to hear about Jesus? (1 Corinthians 9.19-22, 10.31-11.1; 1 Thessalonians 2.6-12).



f) In what way is it following the example of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11.1) to adapt to the way others do things instead of expecting them to adapt to us (1 Corinthians 9.20-21, 10.32-33)?

g) What would adapting to others mean in the context of talking to them about Jesus?

h) What does it tell people about our motives for sharing the gospel if we humbly serve them as well (1 Corinthians 9.19, 10.33, 1 Thessalonians 2.8-9)?

i) What are some practical ways you can serve others at the moment?

We should also note that these passages we've looked at from Paul's letters make clear that there will be both acceptance and rejection of the message. When you think about this – this can actually be a comfort to us. When the message is rejected we don't have to blame ourselves, and we can be encouraged to keep trying to tell others about Jesus because some people certainly will accept the message.

The passages above raise lots of important issues for us and as we meet together regularly, we can encourage each other to work at them. The points that we need to think about when actually talking to people are: focusing on Jesus, not compromising the truth about him, understanding and listening to people so as to adapt our presentation to them, and doing all this with gentleness, not forcing them to change but praying that they will...

In the real world

We'll now look at how we might do these things in some practical situations...

For each of these possible scenarios, consider:

1. How could you find out more about what the other person thinks and where they are coming from?
2. How can you relate what they've said to the message about Jesus, as summarised in the Two Ways to Live outline?
3. How could you respond with both truthfulness and gentleness?

Before having told them anything about Jesus:

- a) You're talking about the tsunami that's killed so many people and a friend asks "You believe in God. Why did he do that?"
- b) The church's view of homosexuality is in the media again and a workmate comments "I don't know why Christians are so judgemental. People's lifestyles are up to them."
- c) When discussing the weekend you mention that you enjoyed church and a workmate asks "Do you go to church? Why?"

After telling them a bit about Jesus:

- a) Having explained that God is the creator of all things you're asked "How do you even know that God exists?"
- b) Having explained that accepting Jesus is the only way to be forgiven you're asked "What about people who've never even heard of Jesus? And what about people who sincerely follow other religions?"



- c) Having explained that being a Christian means accepting Jesus as saviour and Lord, and that this will change the way you live, they say "But you're a Christian and you're not much better than me! Aren't you being a bit hypocritical?"

After telling them all about Jesus (well, what's in the outline):

- a) You ask them which way they're living now and they say "I'm kind of half-way between my way and God's way."

- b) You ask them which way they want to live and they say "Well, my way actually."

- c) You ask them which way they want to live and they say "I think I should start living God's way. What do I need to do?"

For the next year (at least!)

We've looked at how we can be involved in sharing the news about Jesus with others, even if we're not particularly gifted for it. Hopefully now you'll be able to explain to people a bit more about Jesus when you get the chance.

Keep praying for people that we will have opportunities and take those opportunities to tell about others about Jesus. Some people will reject Jesus (and us with him), but others really will accept him and be saved.

The Two Ways to Live Presentation

To help with memorisation, you might like to do up memory cards—the drawing on one side, and the bible verse and statements on the other.



1

God is the loving ruler of the world. He made the world. He made us rulers of the world under him.

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

—Revelation 4:11

But is that the way it is now?



2

We all reject the ruler—God—by trying to run life our own way without him. But we fail to rule ourselves or society or the world.

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away.

— Romans 3:10-12

What will God do about this rebellion?



3

God won't let us rebel forever. God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgement.

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. — Hebrews 9:27

God's justice may sound hard. But...

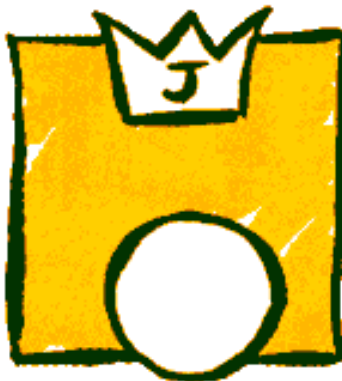


4

Because of his love, God sent his son into the world; the man Jesus Christ. Jesus always lived under God's rule. Yet by dying in our place he took our punishment and brought forgiveness.

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. — 1 Peter 3:18

But that's not all....



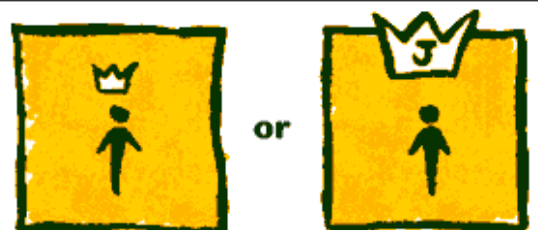
5

God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world. Jesus has conquered death, now gives new life, and will return to judge.

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

— 1 Peter 1:3

Well, where does that leave us?



6

The two ways to live:

My way:

Reject the rule God.

Try to run life our own way

Result:

Condemned by God

Facing Death & Judgement

God's new way:

Submit to Jesus as our ruler

Rely on Jesus' death and resurrection

Result:

Forgiven by God, Given new life

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

— John 3:36