

MIDWEEK STUDIES

AUGUST 2022

GO
GATHER
GROW

SUNDAY MESSAGES
BIBLE STUDIES
DAILY DEVOTIONS

Midweek Study 1: EASY GOSPEL EXPLANATIONS

On the weekend, Tony McLennan preached about “THE WAY OF LIFE” a way to explain the gospel to people that you meet.

If your group saw that, discuss the points that you took away from it.

Is this something that you feel like you could do? Why, why not?

If you group didn't see that, feel free to watch that on The Chapel Collective's YouTube channel.

Today, we are going to look at three ways to explain the gospel, using visual aids. Watch the explanations on YouTube, or read on. The first is the 3 circles:

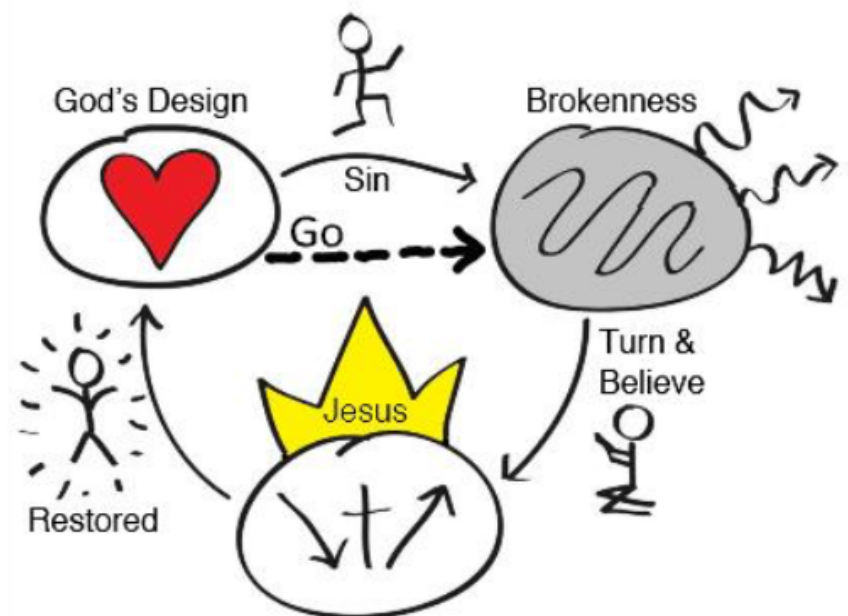
Three Circles Evangelism Guide: *How to share the gospel*

Introduction

This guide is designed to help Christians share their faith by incorporating a tool called three circles evangelism. This tool provides a method of turning everyday conversations about brokenness into everyday conversations about Christ. The goal of '3 Circles' is to equip Christians to share their faith with non-Christians.

Overview of 3 circles

- This tool helps Christians to share the gospel using three simple circles. These represent (1) God's Design, (2) Brokenness and (3) the Gospel. They also illustrate how accepting and

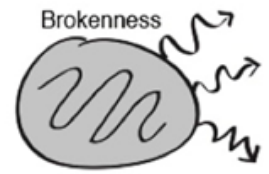


submitting to Jesus will grow faith and lead to God's perfect design.

- "Three Circles" is something that people easily understand.
- All you need to have is a pen and paper, or napkin, or hand!
- The method provides quick answers to common questions of faith:
 - What was GOD's DESIGN?
 - How did we depart from God's Design through SIN?
 - Can anyone escape BROKENNESS and what does BROKENNESS feel like?

Explaining the gospel using three Circles

- 1- Draw a circle and label it "Brokenness". Draw several squiggly arrows out from it and looping back to 'Brokenness'. We are trying to show no matter what we do it just boomerangs back to brokenness.



Conversation Example: *"We live in a world of brokenness, full of hurting people hurting each other. We try escaping brokenness by focusing on career, gaining money, overachieving, drugs, gambling, or alcohol. But all this just leads to greater brokenness. I overachieved, and had a long string of failed relationships. But in the end I just felt more pain."*

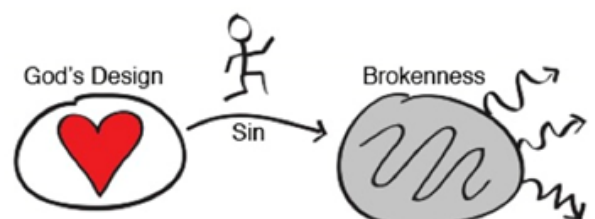
- 2- On the left, draw a second circle, and write "God's Design" above.

Conversation Example: *"Brokenness was not God's original design! God's design was perfect, like Himself, with no brokenness present."* (Draw heart to symbolize God's love).



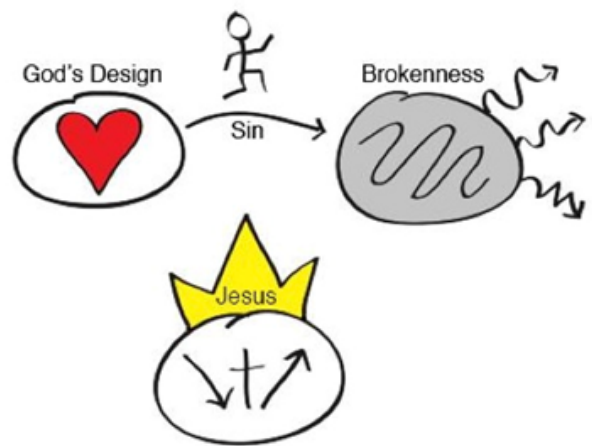
- 3- Draw an arrow from God's Design to Brokenness and label it "Sin".

Conversation Example: *"Each of us has rebelled against God and walked away from His perfect design. The Bible calls this sin, and this leaves us in brokenness. Are you familiar with the concept of sin? Do you see this in your own life?"*



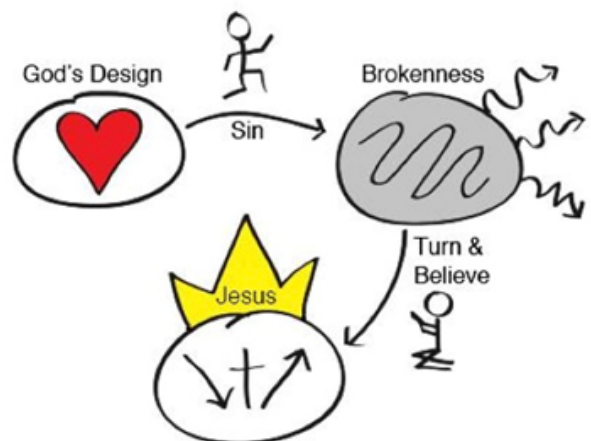
- 4- Draw a third circle below and between the first two (forming an upside-down triangle of circles), and write “Jesus” above it.

Conversation Example: “God saw we could not escape our brokenness on our own, so God demonstrated his love towards us!” Now draw a down-arrow below Jesus’ name inside the circle. “God sent Jesus to the earth. Jesus was perfect and lived a perfect life, because He was God.” Next draw a cross next to the down-arrow. “He suffered a horrible death on a cross to take our sin upon Himself.” Next draw an up-arrow next to the cross. “Then Jesus rose again proving that He has power over death! He’s alive!”



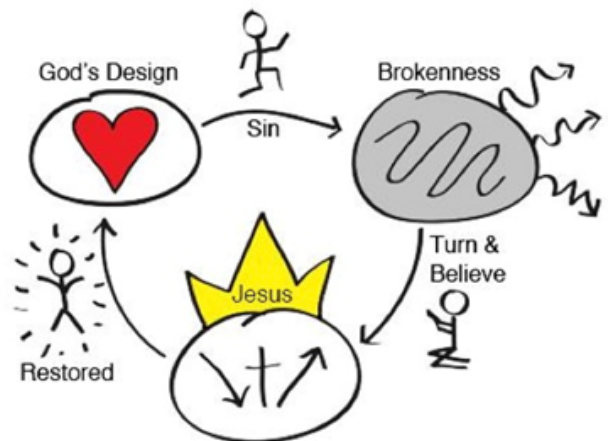
- 5- Draw a line from Brokenness to Jesus, draw a king's crown and write Turn and Believe (or follow).

Conversation Example: “Jesus tells all people to repent and **turn** from your sins. He also tells us to **believe** that He died for your sin and that God raised Him from the dead and to follow Jesus as king of your life. Jesus promises that if you do that you will be forgiven and restored back to God’s design!”



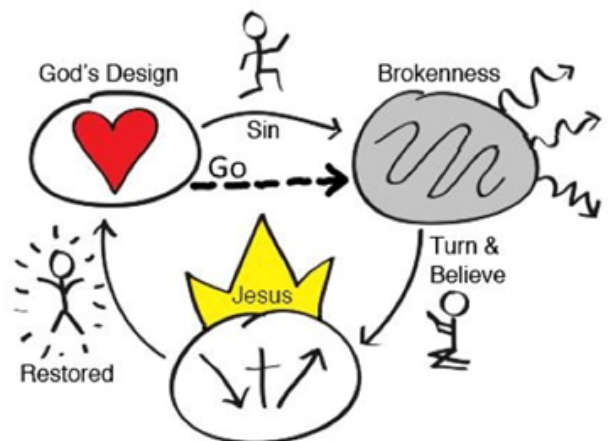
6- Draw a line from Jesus to God's Design and label it "Restored."

Conversation Example: *"If we turn and believe in Jesus we can leave this world of brokenness and be restored into a relationship with God and pursue His design."*



7- Draw a line from God's Design to Brokenness and write "Go" above it.

Conversation Example: *"More than that, God then sends us back into this 'Brokenness' to tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ."*



8- After the Diagram is drawn

Conversation Example: Ask them, *"Where do you see yourself? Are you in God's perfect design or are you currently in brokenness?"*

There answer to this will help you understand where they see themselves in relation to God and give them an opportunity to respond to follow Jesus. This can be followed by your testimony.

Group Practice

Break off into pairs and practice the "Three Circles" evangelism method on each other.

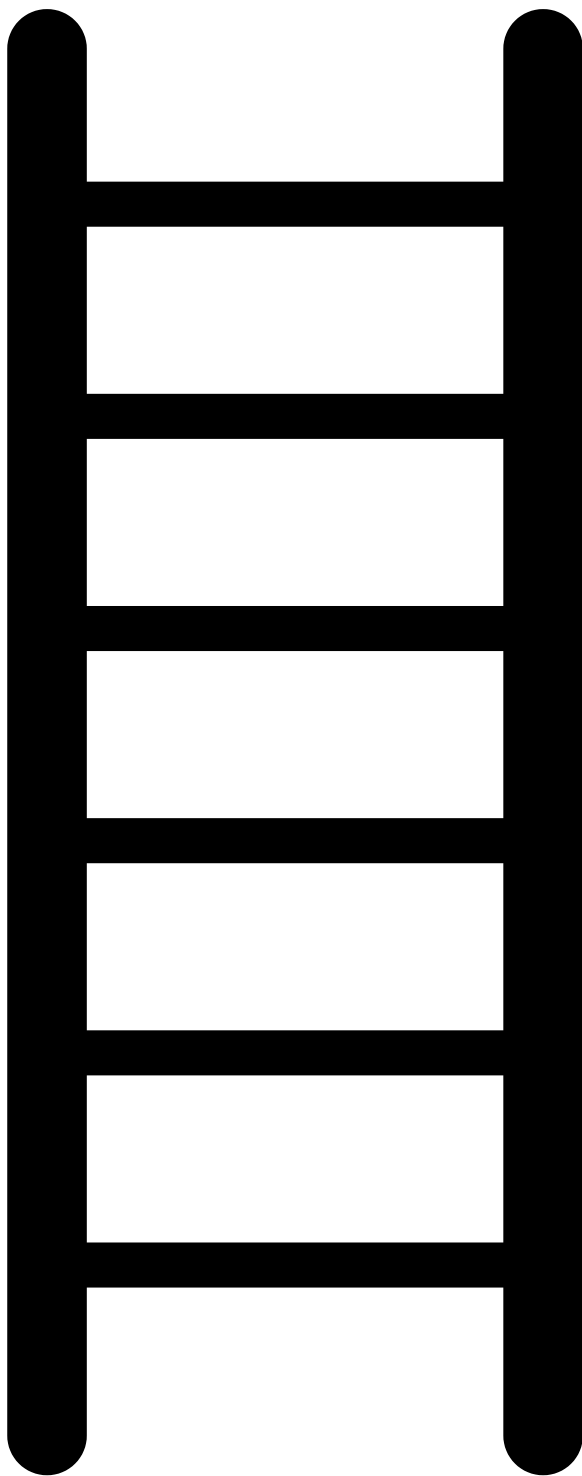
The Morality Ladder: (From "Just Walk Across the Room")
The "Morality Ladder" illustration expresses the universal need for God. If you have friends who don't think they have any real use for God, this one's for you.

Envision morality as escalating rungs on a ladder. God sits at the top of the ladder because he is holy — he's perfectly moral. And of course, really evil people are at the bottom — mass murderers and the like. The rest of humanity is somewhere in between. When I draw this for people, I ask them to put a mark somewhere on the ladder that represents where they believe they are, based on what kind of morals they keep.

Before I go any further, though, I toss in a few assumptions. "Mother Teresa," I say, "would probably qualify for a rung about three-fourths of the way up. As far as I'm concerned, I guarantee I land lower than her." I place the names of the three of us on the ladder, leaving an honourable amount of space between Mother Theresa and me. I know my place.

Then I hand over the pen. Inevitably, the person I'm in conversation with writes his or her name just south of me. "Okay," I say. "Here's my only question: What is your plan to make up your gap?"

"Mother Teresa had a plan for her morality gap," I continue. "It was the cross of Jesus Christ. Billy Graham has a plan for closing the gap between his level of morality and God's standard of perfection. It's the cross of Jesus Christ. So what is your plan? If you believe that you can rise to the standard of God's holiness on a self-improvement program, you will waste the rest of your life in spin cycle. Real freedom is found when you ditch your man-made plans and choose instead to accept the work that Jesus did on the cross. You can be forgiven. You can live an abundant life. Your morality gap can be closed once and for all by choosing faith in Christ."



GOD

Mother Theresa

Bron

Hitler

GOD



Let your right hand represent yourself, and the ceiling represent God.

STEP #2 – Now take a book and place it on your right hand...

GOD



Suppose this book contains a record of every sin you have ever committed, every sin you are committing now, and every sin you are going to commit in the future. It contains a record of every accidental sin, and every deliberate sin. All the sins you know you committed, all the sins you didn't even realize you committed. So in effect, the book contains a record of you past, present, future, accidental, deliberate, known and unknown sins.

So now my sin stands between me and God. And the Bible teaches that because God is holy, there is something about Him that He can't just ignore my sin. He can't just turn a blind eye. He can't overlook it. There is something in God that has to punish sin. And the punishment for sin is an eternity separated from Him. So now God has a problem. He created me to live with Him forever. He doesn't want to punish me, but He has to punish my sin. So how does God solve His problem? How does God punish my sin, without punishing me?

STEP #3 – Now hold out your left hand with your palm facing upward towards the ceiling...

GOD

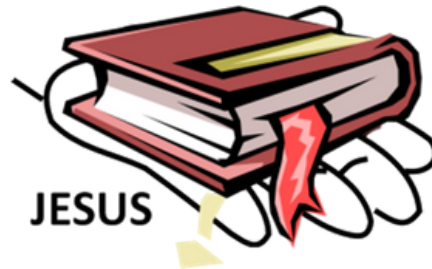


Let your left hand represent Jesus. Because Jesus never sinned, there is nothing standing between Him and God.

Now because God has to punish my sin, but doesn't want to punish me, Jesus offers to take my sin upon Himself.

STEP #4 – Transfer the book from your right hand to your left hand...

GOD



So if I allow Jesus to take my sin upon Himself, my sin now stands between Jesus and God. As a result, Jesus cops the punishment for my sin. This is what was happening to Jesus when He was on the cross. Jesus paid for all my past, present, future, accidental, deliberate, known and unknown sins. He was condemned so that I could become uncondemnable.

Because I allowed Jesus to pay for my sin, it no longer stands between me and God. I have escaped judgement. The Bible says that there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). I am completely loved and accepted. I am free to enjoy a relationship with God. I can be 100% confident that I will spend eternity with Him.

Which of these explanations best resonates with you? Which one do you think you could repeat? Is there another way in the group that you find easier?

Study 2:

Who is someone that you know who has had a profound impact on your faith?

What was it about them?

Their bible knowledge?

Their spiritual disciplines?

Or was it their life that spoke to you?

What was it about their life?

Discuss these together as a group.

Watch the online study, or read on:

Last week, we looked at Easy Gospel Explanations. In the weekend message and midweek study, we looked at ways to articulate the gospel, and took it personal in our daily devotions. This week, we look at Courageous God Conversations: How to live conspicuously Christian in our weekend message. In this study, and in the daily devotions, we look at Living a Life of Love: How to live an attractive life.

Read Colossians 3:12-17 together and see if there are any qualities in here of the person you mentioned who inspired you in your faith journey. Read it in a few versions.

The word: CLOTHE. I read it in the ESV as PUT ON.
ENDUO.

It's the word Jesus used when He said, don't worry about what you will wear, because life is more than clothing. Paul here says to Christians, don't worry so much about the clothes that you are clothing yourself with, but rather the conduct you are clothing yourself with. If you are getting frustrated all the time, short with people, annoyed, complaining...clothe yourself differently to that.

Let's break it down and discuss:

- Hearts of compassion- what does that look like? What is the opposite of this? How can we show hearts of compassion to those who love Jesus? How about those who don't? How can we practise in these areas: family, friends, workplace, church.
- Kindness – what does that look like practically? What does unkindness look like? Who epitomises kindness to you? What is an example where you have been treated unkindly (don't mention names)?
- Humility – How do we show humility? What does not having any humility look like? HELPS WORD STUDIESs an inside-out virtue produced by comparing ourselves to the Lord (rather than to others). This brings behaviour into alignment with this inner revelation to keep one from being self-exalting (self-determining, self-inflated). For the believer, humility means living in complete dependence on the Lord, i.e. with no reliance on self (the flesh). Read Acts 7:49.

Mark Varughese says, Your talent doesn't impress Him. He gave it to you. Your empire doesn't impress Him – He rests His toes on our planet. Our moral virtue doesn't impress Him – He has worked that in us. Our hearts being totally dependent on Him is what gets His attention.

- Meekness (praohtace) – How can we show meekness? What is meekness not? HELPS WORD STUDIES – meekness ("gentle strength") which expresses power with reserve and gentleness.

- Patience – how are you going with it?

- Longsuffering/forbearance. Just remember God's longsuffering with us!

- Forgiveness. First stop, when someone gives you reason to complain. Sub out forgiveness. Just as God subs it out instead of complaining about you. "grace, extending favour") – properly, to extend favour ("grace"), freely give favor to grant forgiveness (pardon). "favour that cancels" (forgiveness) is used of God giving His grace to pardon. This is freely done and therefore not based on any merit of the one receiving forgiveness.

- LOVE.

- Then the peace comes, and the gratitude comes.

Philippians 2:14-16

We are called to Shine Like Stars...ALL THINGS without grumbling, or complaining!!!

Combine that with being conspicuously Christian, which is what your local preacher spoke about on the weekend, and you find a powerful witness that hasn't had to use many words at all.

Midweek Study 3

Where do you eat dinner at home? At my house, when my mum and dad first got married, we would eat around the table, and then read the bible together after the meal. I can't actually remember when that stopped, but I know that a drift occurred. First we stopped reading the bible. Then my older brother started eating his meal in front of the TV. Then, we all did, except for dad, who stayed at the table, and whoever wanted to eat with dad that night. For other members of my family, there may have been clear markers of how this came about. I didn't see them, I was the youngest. For me, it just seemed like a gradual drift.

Society has really gone there too, hasn't it? A drift away from togetherness and community to individualism. One of the key things that would shift this back is hospitality.

Hospitality is mentioned 4 times in the New Testament, but the biblical narrative about hospitality is in the Old Testament as well. Scott Cormode, professor at Fuller Seminary, writes in a challenging way about hospitality:

hospitality is a Christian practice that extends all the way back to the Book of Genesis. Although in contemporary Western culture, people use the term to mean catering a meal or putting on a party, hospitality means far more as a Christian practice. Hospitality is the offer to extend the privileges of community to those who do not have the standing to expect it, especially those who are vulnerable because they are strangers.

Hospitality often involves sharing meals, but hospitality is about more than eating. Eating is, for example, one of the privileges of being in my family. My kids have the right to expect to be fed every single night. When I share a meal with them, it is not an act of kindness. I owe it to them. When I share such a meal with an outsider, I invite them into my family for that brief period. Hospitality is an offer to identify with outsiders and to treat them like insiders.

All of human life begins with God's act of hospitality—with God's making a place for us in the world that God created, a world that we had no claim to inhabit. God knew that this offer was dangerous because we the outsiders might defile the pristine world. But he welcomed us anyway. "Having been embraced by God, we must make space for others and invite them in—even our enemies," writes Miroslav Volf in his book *Exclusion and Embrace*. Hospitality is treating outsiders like insiders, just as God treated us.

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Hospitality is integral to the earliest biblical stories. God welcomed Adam into the Garden of Eden. Hospitality is a significant part of Abraham's story in Genesis 12, 14, 18, and 19. Each of these stories turn on the proper (and improper) way to treat a stranger. Later in the Old Testament, Rahab welcomes the Hebrew spies, Elijah receives the hospitality of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17-18) and Elisha is hosted by the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4.

And God expands the notion of hospitality to include more than meals. It became central to the very identity for what it meant to be the People of God. “Treat the foreigner as your native-born,” Leviticus 19 says. “Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God” (translations are my own). It’s a commandment echoed in Deuteronomy 10: “You shall love the stranger because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” And, later in the Old Testament, God’s prophets remind Israel and Judah that God will judge them based on how they care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger—that is, by the degree to which they provide outsiders with the privileges that automatically come to those who are part of the community.

Hospitality in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus practiced hospitality and he received it. He ate with sinners and tax collectors. Accepting their hospitality was not just about sharing a meal, it was a way of identifying with them and making them a part of his community—a point the Pharisees both understood and reviled. Luke 9 is a particularly interesting passage for understanding what Jesus was trying to teach the disciples about hospitality. At the beginning of the chapter, Jesus sends out the twelve without provisions. He purposely asks them to rely on the hospitality of others.

When we Christians read the passage, we focus on the message that the disciples carried. But Jesus intentionally put the powerful message in the hands of powerless people. He made them dependent. When we carry the gospel to our neighbours, it is easy to let our comfort get in the way.

after the disciples return—we see the feeding of the five thousand, which is another act of hospitality. The crowds have overstayed their welcome and the disciples want to send them away (so that the disciples can find food for themselves). And Jesus tells the disciples to feed these strangers—to treat them as if they are insiders, or part of Jesus’s crew. The command to provide hospitality makes no sense to the disciples. So Jesus feeds the outsiders. The disciples were so caught up in their own needs and wants that they did not see the obligation they had to extend their privileges to those outside the band. Jesus wanted the disciples to treat the five thousand outsiders like they were insiders in his chosen band.

Hospitality in the early church

We have talked about the Old Testament and the New Testament, but what about the early church? Hospitality in the early church became a basis for evangelism. One of the primary reasons that the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire was that the Christians practiced a different kind of hospitality. Ancient Romans typically practiced hospitality for important people—that is, only for people who could give them something in return. But the Christians became noted for extending hospitality to all, even the least of these. This was a significant part of how the early Church developed a reputation of love. The early Church loved outsiders as if they belonged.

Why did they do this? Our Christian motivation for extending hospitality to the stranger is our experience of receiving hospitality from God.

We were estranged from God with no claims on God. But God, in his great love for us, offered us hospitality while we were yet sinners. He invited us into his household, not just as guests but as adopted joint-heirs with Christ. And God's hospitality came at a cost. His only Son had to suffer and die (and rise again in vindication) so that we might have a place once again at God's table. Hospitality is at the core of the Christian experience.

How we should practice hospitality today

In the same way, hospitality is often the first experience outsiders have with God's people (and the loving God we represent). Outsiders measure "warmth" by hospitality—by the degree to which insiders treat outsiders like they belong.

It is easy to think about hospitality in terms of what food we might offer at a dinner. It is far more difficult (and far more important) to think about what it means to accommodate a stranger when it comes to the things we do as the people of God.

Hospitality will cost us - Welcoming the bad guest

What about the "bad guest"? Doesn't hospitality leave us open to exploitation? And don't good guests have an obligation to be grateful? Our worries about good hosts and bad guests depend on whether we see ourselves as the hosts or as the guests. We practice hospitality because God practiced hospitality. God invited us humans into this earth God created. And we were (and are) bad guests. We messed up the Garden of Eden and we continue to treat each other poorly. We do not show gratitude to God. Yet God keeps offering us hospitality.

The only way that we can ask about the “bad guest” is if we see ourselves as only being the good host—that is, if we forget that we are the ungrateful guests at God’s table. If hospitality is treating an outsider like one of us, then it will change the ways that we invite people to participate in our community.

Where have you been welcomed into someone's family, home, community?

How did it make you feel?

What is the impact it had?

Where do you hesitate to offer hospitality?

How can this be overcome?

Midweek Study 4

Why Church? (TEMPLE) GROW YOU, GROW OTHERS
Watch the study on YouTube, or read on.

23 Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Do you not know that you yourselves are the temple: the church is the new temple. Us individually, but also, us
TOGETHER.

Why gather as THE CHURCH?

1. It helps us Portray the kingdom. Young, old, male, female, poor, rich, educated, uneducated. It's meant to be a mix of people who aren't like each other who come together for His name's sake.

2. It Prepares us for heaven. All the people you see now, you don't get free of them once we hit the shining shore. It's every tribe and tongue. You had better get used to it.
3. It Teaches us perseverance. And when perseverance works it works character. And when character works it works us into maturity. We can't just leave every time it gets hard, we'll just hit that lesson somewhere else in life. You bail, you fail.
4. Helps us learn patience. You won't love everything, but you can love the work that it does IN you.

GROW YOU

You are accessing all this: to chat about this is preaching to the choir. Well done!

Grow others: Connect – amazing. Consider reading the bible with someone. Instruction is great – the word of God CHANGES things.

Is there any area you need to change and value church?

What challenges you the most about gathering as the church?

How do you think you could help grow someone else?