

The "E Word"

Further Exploration on the "Evangelism for Non-Evangelists" Webinar Series

Group Study Guide

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A CATALYST to EQUIP Disciples to SHARE the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to be a companion to the 2019 (part 1) and 2021 (part 2) 3-week “E-Word” webinar series. The recorded sessions are available on The Foundation for Evangelism website at:

<https://foundationforevangelism.org/webinar/eword>. The videos are available online and for download. (If you wish to download videos to use offline, select the “Vimeo” icon on the bottom right corner of the video. Once the page loads, click the “Download” link below the video and details.)

Groups may choose to work through the sessions in one of the following ways:

OPTION 1: Watch all three sessions of Part 1 (2019) and then all of Part 2 (2020), completing discussion questions in the order they are listed in this resource.

OPTION 2: Watch both Session 1s (from part 1 and 2), then both Session 2s, etc., jumping forward and backward through the resource. Because the topics are similar but presented by different speakers it may add value to the discussion to compare and contrast.

You are welcome to use the resource in the way that best fits your group’s needs.

This series was recorded in November 2019 and November 2020 with a small live virtual audience. Each session features a teaching session from a current or past E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism, followed by a time of dialogue and questions from participants. This guide offers 60-minute and 90-minute options to accommodate the scheduling of both Sunday morning and mid-week gatherings. Depending on the level of engagement and discussion, the longer option could be broken up into two sessions.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS STUDY?

Sunday school classes, small groups, church leadership, and ministry teams would all benefit from this study. But remember, evangelism is not the job of a single committee or group within the church, so this resource would also serve as a great congregation-wide study. As disciples of Jesus Christ, all of us have the privilege of being bearers of the good news. While the questions are open-ended and can be used in most contexts, leaders may change or adapt questions for your ministry setting.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

In their book, *Transforming Evangelism*, two of the ESJ Professors, Hal Knight and Doug Powe, define evangelism this way:

Evangelism is our sharing and inviting others to experience the good news that God loves us and invites us into a transforming relationship through which we are forgiven, receive new life, and are restored to the image of God, which is love.¹

Their definition is broad, compelling, and transformational. Yet evangelism is often understood and practiced in narrow ways. As you begin this study, use these questions to get a baseline for your group's understanding of and comfort level with evangelism.

- 1. How would you define evangelism?**
- 2. What practices come to mind when you think of evangelism?**
- 3. What are your current individual and congregational practices of evangelism?**

¹ *Transforming Evangelism*, p.17.

- PART 1 (2019)-

SESSION 1: Faith Sharing & “Why Jesus?” with Dr. Jack Jackson

Watch the Video at <https://vimeo.com/375732444>

(For a 1-hour session, watch the first 30 minutes of the recording.)

Discussion questions:

1. Dr. Jackson states that he has never heard a story as good as the story of Jesus.

What is so good about Jesus that you choose to identify with, follow, and share the story with others?

2. 2 Corinthians 5:20 declares that we are Christ’s ambassadors.

What does that mean to you?

3. In Galatians 1, Paul proclaims that it was God’s plan to reveal Jesus to him so that he could proclaim him among the Gentiles.

How has Jesus been revealed in your life?

4. Dr. Jackson states that most of evangelism in the past century has centered on justification and seeking an immediate response from the person/people hearing the Gospel message.

Was the idea of awakening new to you?

Have you understood evangelism to require an immediate response?

5. Dr. Jackson offers that we are invited to keep telling the story and respond throughout our lives.

How does your congregation help people hear and respond during all stages of their faith journey?

6. Dr. Jackson uses the acronym of **REVEAL** to explain the steps of faith sharing, with the first being...

EXAMINE:

Have you ever mapped out your faith story and development? If not, consider making a timeline of your life and include the moments, people, and places of decision that have brought you to this point.

LISTEN:

Being a disciple is not just about agreeing to a set of theological statements or principles.

How do you practice listening to others' stories, hopes, and struggles?

How does your congregation respond to what they are hearing from the community?

VERIFY:

What are examples of ways our lives can verify the Gospel?

How have our lives been transformed and made different because we said "yes" to Jesus?

ANNOUNCE:

Does your congregation intentionally link good works to the Gospel?

Would people serving in your mission opportunities be able to articulate why the church is serving and doing good, and how their motivation is different from a civic organization?

ENCOURAGE:

How do we encourage and create space for people to listen for the Holy Spirit both individually and in our work as a congregation?

[REPEAT]

If your group meets for 90 minutes or longer, watch the remaining portion of the recording and share any responses you have to the Q & A session.

SESSION 2: Evangelism & Discipleship with Dr. Lacey Warner

Watch the Video at <https://vimeo.com/375733492>

(For a one-hour session, please watch the recording until the 24:08 mark.)

Discussion questions:

1. ***Who is currently responsible for evangelism in your congregation?***

2. Dr. Warner quotes part of the baptismal liturgy (“to proclaim the good news and live according to Christ”) as a commissioning for each of us.

Have you considered that practicing evangelism is part of living out your baptism?

3. With the constant pressure to recruit Sunday school teachers, committee members, and fill other vacant volunteer positions, it is easy to default to only focus on using gifts and talents for serving inside the walls of the church.

How do you help people understand and live into their Christian vocation not only in the church, but in their everyday lives?

4. John Wesley described 18th Century England, especially Oxford, as “comfortably slack.”

Do you think that the church finds itself in a similar state to what she describes as the state of the Church in Wesley’s day?

5. Dr. Warner uses the images of a swamp and a garden to describe two different environments where things grow. The difference is the intentionality of the garden.

Does the growth occurring in your congregation more closely resemble the swamp or the garden? Why?

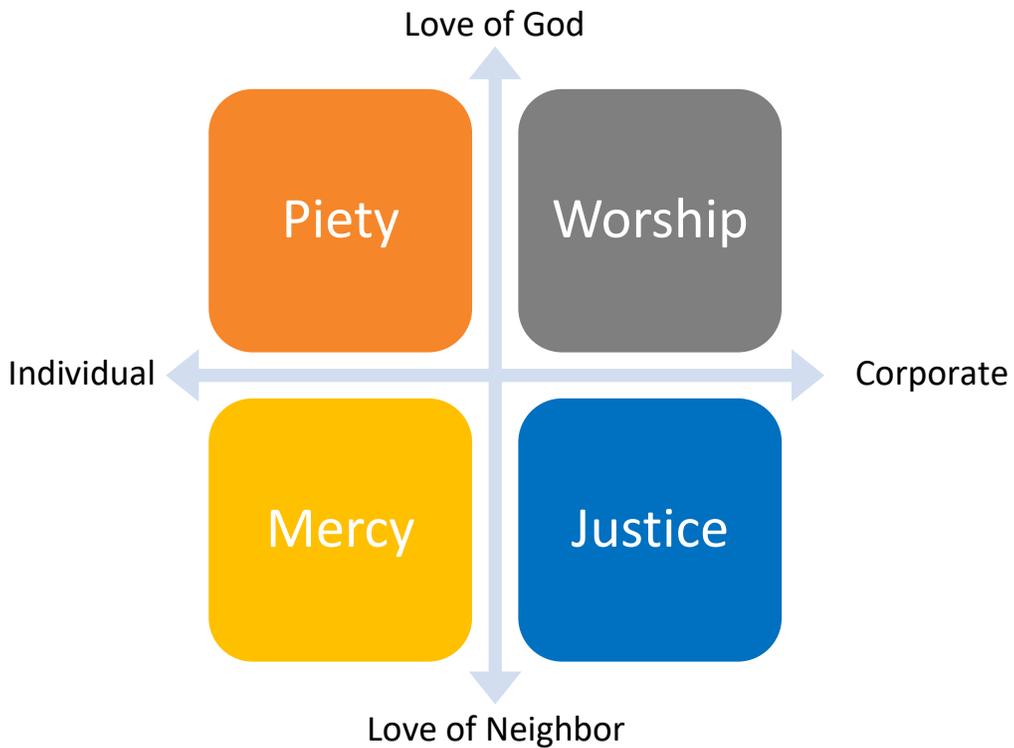
6. The early Methodist movement did not divorce faith and good works. The works of justice and mercy conducted in their communities (ie. The Foundry) verified their discipleship.

How closely are the mission and service opportunities in your congregation tied to discipleship?

Does your congregation understand doing good works as a response to God's love?

7. Dr. Warner poses two questions at the end of her lecture:
- 1) How might practicing the means of grace help us to practice Christian discipleship?***
 - 2) How might these practices contribute to systems of discipling in our congregations?***

As a means of evaluating your congregation's current practice of the means of grace, consider plotting all your church activities for one month. Using your newsletter or online calendar, plot each activity in one of the quadrants of the Jerusalem cross: worship, piety, mercy, and justice. In which areas does your congregation spend most of its time and energy? Which areas could use additional focus?



If your group meets longer, watch the remainder of the recording and share your responses to the Q & A session.

SESSION 3: Contextual Awareness with Dr. Doug Powe

Watch the Video at <https://vimeo.com/375737705>

(For a one-hour session, please watch the recording to the 22:20 mark.)

Dr. Powe begins by challenging us with the words from Romans 12:2 to not be conformed to the world, but to allow ourselves to be open to the new things the Holy Spirit is doing. In order to accomplish this goal, we must address some of the obstacles many of our congregation's face.

Discussion questions:

- 1. Does your congregation struggle with having an insider mentality?***
- 2. How do and why do ministries and events get scheduled on your church calendar? Is it based on tradition, or is each item tested on whether it fits into the church's mission and context?***
- 3. "Four-I" Model of Ministry:***

INQUIRE

Is your congregation's programming based on assumptions about your community, member preferences, or the expressed needs of the community?

What are the unique strengths and gifts that your congregation has to offer?

How are you utilizing those strengths to align with God's Reign?

IMAGINE

Where are the places in your community where you see gaps between the current realities and the way God desires them to be?

What ministries do or could help bridge that gap?

INCARNATE

Who are your community partners in ministry?

Is your congregation able to articulate why these ministries are important and how they connect to the Reign of God?

IMMINENCE

Does your congregation regularly evaluate each ministry and program?

Do you plan each ministry, program, worship service, etc. with an expectation of transformation?

If so, how are you measuring transformation?

- 4. If you could have any impact on your culture or society as a congregation, what would it be?***

What sort of culture would you need to create in order to have this change?

How could you cultivate the space, time, people, and resources to create this alternative culture?

- 5. How does your congregation move individuals into deeper relationships with God and others so they can share your vision of a transformed culture and society through Jesus Christ?***

If your group meets for 90 minutes or longer, watch the remaining portion of the recording and share any responses you have to the Q & A session.

- PART 2 (2020) –

Session 1: Starting Point with Dr. Angel Santiago-Vendrell

Watch the Video at <https://vimeo.com/476104784>

(For a 1-hour session, begin at 5:28 and end at the 41:02 mark.)

Discussion questions:

1. Dr. Santiago-Vendrell begins with the texts from 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 and Acts 1:8. ***Do these speak to your understanding of and call to evangelism?***
2. Often the Gospel story presented in evangelism narrowly begins with the fall and ends with redemption through the resurrection.
If we understand the story to be bigger and begin with creation and end with the new creation, what difference does that make and how might our practices be changed and expanded?
3. Two meanings of grace are offered during this session: undeserved favor, mercy and the free love of God, and the actual power of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be empowered by the Holy Spirit?

Have you thought about being given the same Spirit that led and guided Jesus in the Gospels? Does that give you more confidence?

4. Evangelism is typically thought of as an individual act or decision, and that we are saved from something. The Wesleyan understanding of salvation is that we are saved for something, primarily to love, serve, and share with others. This understanding directly links evangelism, salvation, and discipleship.

How does your congregation invite people into relationship with Jesus and then equip them to live out their salvation in their everyday lives?

5. Proclamation is often merely thought of as preaching.

What are additional ways your church, and you personally communicate the Gospel message of love and grace?

6. Dr. Santiago-Vendrell ends with the metaphor of the balcony and the road. We can either look down from the balcony and see things from a distance or locate ourselves on the ground, with the people in our communities.

What ways are you and your church on the road?

Are there opportunities to step down from any balconies on which you might be currently standing?

If your group meets for 90 minutes or longer, watch the remaining portion of the recording and share any responses you have to the Q & A session.

Session 2: Theological Reflection with Dr. Hal Knight

This session could easily be broken down into two sessions. The Q&A portion offers rich insight and further opportunities for discussion.

Watch the Video at <https://vimeo.com/479086232>.

For a 1-hour session, begin at 3:19 and end at 29:45, using the questions below to guide your discussion.

A second 1-hour session could begin at 30:10 and conclude at 58:08, with the questions posed as prompts for dialogue and reflection.

Discussion questions:

1. Dr. Knight asserts that Christians have settled for less than the Gospel offers. He describes two misunderstandings: Bar Code Faith and Being Good Enough. Both focus on the afterlife, but not the here and now. For many, the Christianity presented to them has been too small and not compelling.

How is your congregation inviting people into a greater story of transformation and new life?

2. Three ways of inviting people to enter the way of salvation are presented: preaching and teaching, faith sharing and testimony, and being part of community.

Is there an intentional invitational component to each of these aspects of your congregation?

3. If living a new life and being sanctified is the goal of salvation, and not just making an initial response, ***what means of grace and disciplines do you offer to help people on their journey to sanctification?***
4. Aside from official church activities, ***how do you help people focus daily on their love of God and neighbor?***
5. ***Does your congregation have space for people to have deep conversations and hold one another accountable?***

6. ***Are there ways people are challenged and commissioned to live out Wesley's Three General Rules:***

- Do no harm
- Do good to the bodies and souls of others
- Attend to the ordinances of God

7. Dr. Knight differentiates American freedom from the freedom we experience through Christ.

Do you agree that discipline and practice can actually set us free and lead to new life? Why or why not?

Session 3: Contextual Awareness with Dr. David Whitworth

Watch the Video at <https://vimeo.com/481511089>.

(For a 1-hour session, play the recording until the 22:40 mark.)

Discussion questions:

1. Dr. Whitworth offers the following two Missio-Evangel axioms (statements held to be true). ***What difference do the bold contrasting terms make in each axiom?***

- Christians/Church are not in **control**, but they are **responsible**.
- Christians/Church have nothing to **prove**, but they have much to **share**.

2. ***What is your greatest obstacle to sharing the Good News, both personally and communally?***

3. We easily can find ourselves in an attitude of competition and comparison. Instead, we can acknowledge our common, universal purpose, but celebrate what makes us distinct.

How does your congregation discern what God is uniquely calling you to do and be?

4. What is your congregation's mission or vision?

Through the life of your congregation, what do you plan to achieve?

5. Dr. Whitworth offers a rhythm of the Christian life with contextual values and connects them with action. Examine your church calendar or list of ministries.

What practices or ministries would you place in each of the

three areas:

- COME and GROW in FAITH in JESUS CHRIST
- ABIDE and SHARE in HOPE through JESUS CHRIST
- GO and SERVE in LOVE with JESUS CHRIST

How were these developed, and how do you measure their effectiveness or transformative impact?

If your group meets for 90 minutes or longer, watch the remaining portion of the recording and share any responses you have to the Q & A session.