

Go and Tell Sessions

“Intersecting ~~the~~ Your World”

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The premise of the *Intersecting ~~the~~ Your World Series*

To intersect your world with the light of the gospel, you need to know your world and understand where the people in it are coming from in their way of life and thinking.

Part 1 of a 3 part Series

Part 1 uses the book entitled *Searching For Who Knows What* by Donald Miller to make the point that one place people are coming from is that life is *relational* not *propositional*. As a result, to intersect our world with the gospel we must communicate the gospel in *relational* terms for it to be understood by people much less accepted by them

I. Life is relational

A. God is the picture of relationship

1. Gen. 1:26 says “Let us make man in our image.”
2. Another example is when Jesus was baptized. The Holy Spirit descended upon Him while the Father said, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.” Matt. 3:17.
3. Jesus spoke of the Spirit and His Father and the relationship they share. John 15-17

B. Since we humans were created in God’s image, we were created for relationship.

C. God intended that there be a relationship between human beings and Himself.

1. As a result of the fall, man’s relationship with God was breached or broken.
2. But also man’s relationship with other people, and man’s relationship with self were also breached or broken

D. *Humans need all three of these relationships*

1. Life is *relational* in that humans need these three basic relationships, and whether they know it or not, they long for and seek after these relationships in their lives.
2. The gospel is *relational* in that it is about being rescued from broken of relationships.

II. Basic insights from *Searching for God Knows What*

A. A *propositional* approach to the gospel doesn't work well with people who are in a *relational* framework.

1. The formula (*i.e.*, the propositional) approach to spirituality doesn't work because it doesn't deal with the relational aspect of life, and formulas don't change a person's heart.
2. People often want the propositions, however, because "*formulas seem much better than God because the formulas offer control; and God, well, He is like a person, and people, as we all know, are complicated.*" (p. 12)
3. People in their minds want the formula so that they can continue to be in control in terms of interacting with God, with others and with self. The propositional approach only offers God on our terms, not His.

B. But Life is relational

1. Therefore, the gospel is better expressed in *relational* terms if it is to make sense to people who come at things relationally.
2. This is so because humans need relationships in the three senses noted above, because the description of people living relationally fairly describes the state of being and mind of many around us, especially those who are in the younger generations, and because God is relational! Miller puts it like this:

... the essence of God's message to mankind, wasn't a bunch of hoops we needed to jump through to get saved, and it wasn't a series of ideas we had to agree with either; rather, it was an invitation, an invitation to know God. (p. 14)

II. How do we communicate the gospel in relational terms?

A. An overall *relational* approach

1. Miller suggests that we first think about the gospel in relational terms. He writes:

... if the gospel of Jesus is just some formula I obey in order to get taken off the naughty list and put on a nice list, then it doesn't meet the deep need of the human condition, it doesn't interact with the great desire of my soul, and it has nothing to do with the hidden (or rather, obvious) language we are all speaking. But if it is more, if it is a story about humanity falling away from the community that named it, and an attempt to bring humanity back to that community, and if it is more than a series of ideas, but rather speaks directly into this basic human need we are feeling, then the gospel of Jesus is the most relevant message in the history of mankind. (p. 45)

2. Miller wonders whether “*becoming a Christian [does] not work more like falling in love than agreeing with a list of true principles.*” (p. 46), and suggests that we explain that our brokenness will be fixed by God telling us who we really are in the context of an intimate relationship with Him.

3. Miller writes, “... *if we stop reducing the text to formulas for personal growth, we can read it as stories of imperfect humans having relations with a perfect God and come to understand the obvious message....*” (p. 59) If we read the Bible in that way, we can talk about it in that way, and even suggest to our non-believing friends that they read it in that way.

B. Some examples of relational communication

1. **God’s love** - is like a married couple so much in love that when they are apart for even a few days “*you can see it in their eyes how much they miss and need their friend.*” (p. 72)

2. **The fall** - “*Far from a technicality in behavior, their eating of the fruit was a heart-level betrayal between committed friends: God and man. At issue in the tragedy of the Garden is a relational crime.*” (p. 83)

3. **Sin** - “... *how awful it must have been for Adam and Eve to have been deceived by Satan, to have been tricked into breaking their relationship with God.*” (p. 72) Adam and Eve had “...*an infinite amount of love pouring through their lives and then it’s suddenly gone.*” (p. 73)

4. **Salvation involves a relationship with God** - “... *God wired us so that He told us who we were, and outside that relationship, the relationship that said we were loved and valuable and beautiful, we didn’t have any worth at all.*” (p. 107)

5. **The relationship with God is through Jesus** - “*The first thing that hit me when I started reading through the Gospels was the thought that Jesus had come to earth in the first place.... He had it good where He was but He sacrificed it all and became a man. ... To exchange heaven for a place, and to exchange eternity for time, was an act of humility I don’t think any of us can understand.*” (p. 121)

III. **Summary and application**

Because people come at life *relationally*, the gospel must be couched in *relational* terms to be heard. The Bible seeks “... *to describe a relational break man tragically experienced with God and a disturbed relational history man has had since then and, furthermore, a relational dynamic man must embrace in order to have relational intimacy with God once again, thus*

healing himself of all the crap he gets into while looking for a relationship that makes him feel whole.” (pp. 154-55, emphasis in original) We can intersect our world for Christ by *relating* to non-believers, by talking with them in *relational* terms as opportunities arise, and by loving them through showing them what God is like in the context of our *relationship* with them.