



BY JAMES MERRITT

# STUDY GUIDE



Touching Lives  
with James Merritt

## WELCOME TO THE BEST NEWS

This training course will equip you to share the saving truth of the gospel with your friends, family members, neighbors and coworkers. We recognize that the thought of having gospel conversations with others intimidates many people, so if you're feeling apprehensive, don't worry. This three-week module and accompanying The Best News card will simplify the process and give you the confidence you need.

Five components were carefully designed with you in mind, and each one is critical for your success:

**Weekly Gatherings:** Evangelism is a communal activity; it requires more than one person. Each week, you will gather alongside others to learn about how to start and sustain gospel conversations. The curriculum builds from week to week, so make sure you do not miss a gathering.

**Newscast Exercises:** At the end of each gathering, there will be a "Newscast" exercise where you will put what you've learned into practice. This might feel uncomfortable at first, but participation is critical. These exercises will help you to try out the principles you've learned and increase your confidence. If you're feeling unclear about how to complete these exercises, reach out to your leader for clarification.

**Study Guide:** The booklet you're holding will help you retain and organize all of the ideas you're discovering in the course. When you view the video lesson each week, you can follow along and take notes in the corresponding fill-in-the-blank section. Keep it in a safe place, so you don't lose it.

**The Best News Cards:** Many evangelism training courses provide participants with a mountain of helpful principles but leave them stranded when it comes to implementation. To avoid this, we've developed a simple tool to guide you as you start gospel conversations. Make sure to get a packet of The Best News cards from your group leader after the second session.

**Intentional Prayer:** Because the Holy Spirit is responsible for conversation and salvation, any practice of evangelism should include prayer for friends and family who are far from God. That's why we've built in time during each gathering to pray for those with whom you would like to start a gospel conversation. Remember that this is not a time for personal prayer requests, which are also important. It is a time focused on those in our lives who need to believe the best news of the Christian gospel.



## SESSION 1: MOTIVATION

*“... so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

ROMANS 12:5

### INTRODUCTION

Some good news about The Best News: You don't have to go it alone! We are in this together. Take a moment, and introduce yourselves to the other members of the group. Make a commitment to get to know at least one other participant in a deeper way following the gathering. You'll be glad you did.

### LISTENING GUIDE

HEADLINE:

You'll never become \_\_\_\_\_ to share the gospel's message until you become sure of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel's message.

“I am \_\_\_\_\_ way, \_\_\_\_\_ truth, and \_\_\_\_\_ life.”

John 14:6a

1. \_\_\_\_\_ will not unlock a relationship with God.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ will not unlock a relationship with God.
3. Only a \_\_\_\_\_ is the way to God.

“\_\_\_\_\_ comes to the Father except through me”

John 14:6b

The way to heaven is not a \_\_\_\_\_, not a \_\_\_\_\_ and not a \_\_\_\_\_ . It is a person named Jesus.

## INTENTIONAL PRAYER

*“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

*James 5:16*

Prayer is not just for our benefit; our words can sway the heart of God. He hears and responds when we bring requests to Him. Pray for a person who is far from God in each of the following categories: family member, friend, neighbor and coworker.

## NEWSCASTING

It's impossible to convince someone else to make a decision to believe the gospel if you can't explain your own experience. Write down your conversion story below focusing on the following three periods of your life:

### Life Before Christ

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## Transformative Encounter with the Gospel

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## Life Now

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**Congratulations on writing down your story!**

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Memorize John 14:6 this week. Consider writing it on your mirror in dry-erase marker or scribbling it on paper and posting it at your workspace.

## SESSION 2: EXPLANATION

*“You do not have because  
you do not ask God.”*

*JAMES 4:2B*

### INTENTIONAL PRAYER

When it comes to evangelism, tactics and strategies are important, but they are not ultimate. As James says, many things are left unaccomplished not for lack of planning but lack of prayer. Pray for a person who is far from God in each of the following categories: family member, friend, neighbor and coworker.

### LISTENING GUIDE

“There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:22-26)



## INTRODUCTION

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## LISTENING GUIDE

HEADLINE:

Justification is by \_\_\_\_\_ alone, in \_\_\_\_\_ alone, through \_\_\_\_\_ alone.

Last week explained \_\_\_\_\_ we should start gospel conversations with people who are far from God. This week, we'll explore \_\_\_\_\_ those conversations should look like.

### THE \_\_\_\_\_ NEWS

Our \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ us from God.

### THE \_\_\_\_\_ NEWS

We can do \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ our sin.

#### The Big Question:

How can \_\_\_\_\_ be right with a \_\_\_\_\_ ?

### THE \_\_\_\_\_ NEWS

At the \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ what we \_\_\_\_\_ for ourselves.

Grace is \_\_\_\_\_ what you don't \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE \_\_\_\_\_ NEWS

Through \_\_\_\_\_, we freely receive \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## NEWSCASTING

One of the primary obstacles to evangelism is fear. People are afraid of being rejected, and they are scared of the unknown. There is often a voice inside that whispers, "I know they need to hear the gospel, but what if I don't know what to say?" These fears may be overblown, but they are not altogether invalid. Sharing the gospel can be tricky. The secret to reducing the apprehension you feel and to growing more confident is to practice. So today, we're going to spend some time role-playing. Pair off with a member of the group and practice starting a conversation with your The Best News card. Allow your partner present his or her questions or concerns as you go along. Once you finish, ask them to evaluate you. Then, switch and repeat the process with your partner as the conversation initiator.

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**Congratulations! You're well on your way to being a skilled and confident gospel conversation-starter!**





## SESSION 3: IMPLEMENTATION

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”*

JAMES 1:5

### INTENTIONAL PRAYER

The practice of evangelism is built on the foundation of wisdom. We are sharing the wisdom of the gospel message, but we also need spiritual wisdom to say the right things at the right moment to the right people. Pray for a person who is far from God in each of the following categories: family member, friend, neighbor and coworker.

### LISTENING GUIDE

HEADLINE:

**In order to reach** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ **must simply reach** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Week 1** explained \_\_\_\_\_ we should start gospel conversations with people who are far from God.

**Week 2** explored \_\_\_\_\_ those discussions should look like. This week, we'll examine \_\_\_\_\_ to engage in these conversations.

Two goals of the Manhattan Project: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

People who \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ people who need to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

We must become obsessed with this singular question: “ \_\_\_\_\_ ?”

You can \_\_\_\_\_ someone in a gospel \_\_\_\_\_.

We must choose to be dominated by one of these two thoughts:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ matter the most to \_\_\_\_\_.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ matter the most to \_\_\_\_\_.

You can \_\_\_\_\_ someone with a gospel \_\_\_\_\_.

You can \_\_\_\_\_ someone to have a gospel \_\_\_\_\_.

## NEWSCASTING

As we conclude this training about the good news of Jesus Christ, here is some terrible news that may surprise you: Unlike God, you're not omniscient. You do not know all there is to know about every subject. You should expect to encounter objections for which you will not immediately have an answer.



To offset this, it is helpful to develop a couple of tools for your evangelism toolbelt. But before you do this, spend time with the rest of the group brainstorming possible objections that you may encounter.

Possible Objections

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**Tool 1: Distraction Dismissal**

The gospel can make a person far from God feel a little uncomfortable. As a result, it is common for someone to say something extreme or make a joke in order to sabotage the situation. It's helpful to memorize a statement that will dismiss the distraction and keep the conversation on topic. Read the sample statement below and draft your own version using words that sound like you.

**SAMPLE STATEMENT:**

**“I understand what you’re saying, and I get why you feel that way. Can I share something with you that has been helpful for me as I thought through this?”**

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## Tool 2: Retrieve and Return

As you dialogue with people who are far from God, you will also encounter sincere and legitimate objections for which you do not immediately possess an answer. It is important in these cases not to dismiss the person's concerns. Rather, you need to make a good faith effort to go and find an answer to the question before returning to converse with them further.

It's helpful to memorize a statement that will validate their genuine objection and express your ability to assume the responsibility for resolving it. Read the sample statement below and draft your own version using words that sound like you.

### SAMPLE STATEMENT :

**“That is a very good objection, and it’s one that I honestly haven’t thought about before now. Would you mind if I take some time to think about it and research it a little bit?”**

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As you depart, we want to encourage you to preemptively research all of the objections you've listed above. Also, begin compiling a list of mature Christians you trust who you can go to when you encounter legitimate objections for which you do not immediately possess an answer.

**Congratulations on completing  
The Best News evangelism training course!**

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**Let the journey begin!**



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# AVAILABLE NOW

*The newest book by Dr. James Merritt:*

## CHARACTER STILL COUNTS



IT IS TIME TO RESTORE  
OUR LASTING VALUES

# CHARACTER STILL COUNTS

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and I don't know anyone more qualified to speak on it than James Merritt."

**RICK WARREN,**

*New York Times* bestselling author, *The Purpose Driven Life*

James Merritt

Learn how to  
develop attributes  
for authentic living.

Character still counts,  
and always will!

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