

Three Circles, session 8, audio

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] Yeah, I was going to say I have to commend you because tonight, and I know a lot of people are at home staying out of the wet and spring break is going on.

Tonight, so that's good. That's progress. I won't say who that person was. I'll just let that be between them and the Lord, and I'm just joking.

But Dave Crawford and I have formed an alliance of outsiders in Oklahoma rooting for our team, so Rock Chalk Aggies won today against UNC.

Rock Chalkies! A couple announcements while you're waiting to get your hand out. Tomorrow night, we will have men's night at the normal time.

So men, we are having men's night, and go ahead and plan to come for that. But there will not be a woman's Bible study will not meet.

[1 : 23] So Tom told me that means that the men we have, we can really carouse tomorrow night because the ladies won't be in the building with us. And then we'll have, we will have...

Yeah, we have the whole building. We can play capture the flag and... Yeah. Yeah. We will have Bible study on Wednesday night, but we will not have Awana.

Because, thanks Cameron, because we are on, the kids are on spring break. So we will have men's night. We won't have women's Bible study tomorrow night. We will have our adult Bible study will meet Wednesday at the regular time and place.

And youth is going to Wheels and Thrills on Wednesday. So, it's going to be thrilling, right?

Okay. And, I thought we would start a little bit different tonight with a testimony. Because this past weekend, we already had some engaging taking place.

[2 : 33] And so, Jesse? Were you joking about giving the testimony? Are you good? Okay.

Do you want a microphone or are you going to speak? Okay. Okay. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. So, I think Bob found the house close by.

Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay.

Okay. Good. Yeah. Thank you guys for doing that. So, these are kind of some of the things that we're looking at doing, you know. And I know that they had a long conversation with this gentleman who they put his fence up.

[3 : 44] And you can be praying for him. His wife is not in good health. Because they invited him to come to church homebound. Well, maybe if we think about it, we can reach back out to him and ask him how things are going in a couple weeks.

Okay. Let's go ahead. This is lesson number five of six. We'll conclude everything next week. And then after Easter, on April 8th, we'll begin our new study, which is counterculture.

I didn't bring the book with me, but just remember there's a book that David Platt wrote. And then he based this series off of that book.

You can buy that book and that's great. It's a good book. I've read it and encourage you to do so.

But that's not the one you need for the class that we'll have. That one is, it's smaller.

It's red and gray. The book you need for the class is white. And it says counterculture and it's bigger. You can pick it up at Lifeway. You can pick it up at Amazon. I'm not sure if Evelyn put a list out here, but there will be.

[4 : 54] She did. Okay. So if you want one of those books, instead of going to Lifeway or Amazon, just write your name on the list because we did go ahead and preorder some of those. And that'll be a really good study because we are living in times, like Dan said this morning, 10 years ago, things were not good and they're not getting any better as far as our culture.

I mean, you see what the Bible says in Romans 1 happening right before our very eyes. This is what it looks like when God gives a group of people over to their reprobate mind.

And what's the role of the church while that is happening on? Well, not to sit back and say, well, that's not our fight because it is. That's what we're to do is to counterculture, right?

And so we're going to cover some heavy issues, some issues that are happening right now. And as Christians, we need to know how to, you know, again, going back to this morning's sermon, how to defend the faith, how to stand up for what we believe in and to do so in a world that desperately needs to hear that.

So, yeah, we'll cover some pretty heavy issues, but it's going to be a great study. And I encourage you to come to that. And also other people in the church, I ask that you would encourage them to come and participate as well.

[6 : 14] Okay, let's go ahead and watch our fifth video here. Thank you.

Welcome back to week five of our gospel conversation training. We've been training hard, getting in our reps, and I hope that you're starting to see the payoff.

You're getting really good at your transitions, your gospel presentations, and your invitations. But every invitation invites a response. And I want to help you see how every response can be a win. We don't want to send you out on a journey with no idea of where you might end up. Thanks to modern technology, we don't have to stop and ask for directions anymore. But there's nothing more frustrating than having Siri's voice constantly redirect you as you take wrong turn after wrong turn. Not that it's ever happened to me with a van full of eight kids, but I'm just saying that I could imagine it being a very humiliating situation. So we don't want to frustrate or humiliate you as we send you out on God's mission.

[7 : 39] We want to give you a clear idea of where you're headed. This session will focus on the three places you're likely to end up as you turn everyday conversations into gospel conversations.

We've given you the pattern. I sure hope you know it by now. There's a place to write it again in your training guide. T-G-I. Because every day we look for opportunities to transition the conversation to the gospel and invite people to repent and believe in Jesus.

Imagine you've successfully executed your well-practiced transition statement, presented the three circles, including your clear gospel piece, and reached the crossroads. You've positioned yourself to get one of three responses, a red, yellow, or green light.

They mean exactly what you think they mean. Basically, stop, slow down, or keep going. As with most things, there's nothing new under the sun.

Responses to the gospel are as old as the gospel itself. We see that in Acts chapter 17, verses 32 to 34, where Luke writes, Now, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.

[8 : 52] But others said, we will hear you again about this. So Paul went out from their midst, but some men joined him and believed. Let's look first at the red light response.

Some mocked. It's this response that makes us most fearful to tell people the good news. Even though we can tell somebody it's good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and that God raised him from the dead.

Even though we can tell somebody that God is planning a huge party, and he's invited them to come. Even though we personally believe these things, we're still afraid that people are going to mock us.

We think they're going to reject this good news, and then reject us too. And yes, that may happen. Jesus told his disciples, There, no surprises.

Some people will reject the message that God loves them and has made a way out of their brokenness. We get many reports like this one. I shared the gospel with the tattoo artist and got a fat red light.

[10 : 01] Not just a red light, a fat red light. I think that means it was an emphatic no. We tell people to respond graciously and take this response at face value.

We shouldn't argue or debate or try to pull out all of our best apologetic moves. Instead, we can say something like this. Thanks for listening to me. If you ever find yourself in a place of brokenness, I hope you'll remember this conversation and that God has made a way to help you.

If they keep that napkin or that piece of paper with the three circles on it, you never know how God might use that in the future. The goal of our reaction to a red light response is to be gracious so future gospel conversations are possible.

Next, we have our yellow light response. But others said, we will hear you again about this. It means that they need to think about it. They need more time and exposure to the gospel and the

teachings of Jesus.

They're open to what they've heard, but they're not ready to repent and believe. Again, we take this at face value as well. However, we also realize it may be a long time before they have another gospel conversation.

[11:07] This is a great opportunity to invite someone to your Bible study or small group. Ed Stetzer has found that 42 to 61 percent of non-Christians would be willing to study the Bible with a friend.

People are often more open to talking about life and God than we might think. God is working on their hearts and showing them to Jesus. I developed a friendship with a successful businessman in our community over the last three or four years.

He's a very kind and good person, but the truth is, he's far from God. I put him on my prayer list, and I had been praying for him when he called and asked me to go to breakfast.

He had some problems and thought that maybe I could help since I'm a pastor and all that. I went to breakfast, listened, transitioned to the gospel conversation, and got a yellow light.

I've shared the three circles with him multiple times now, and I've told him other stories from the Bible. I've even been in his house. Now we have an ongoing conversation about the gospel, and I'm not giving up hope.

[12:07] The goal of our reaction to the yellow light is to extend the conversation. Let's keep praying, extending the conversation, and wait to see what God will do. Finally, in Acts 17, we read that some men joined him and believed.

This is our green light response. It's the one we're always hoping and praying that we'll get. There's nothing like it. We walked you through what to do with that response last week, right?

You lead them in your well-practiced, theologically accurate prayer. However, there's another possible green light response. It's when people tell you that they are already believers. This presents another great opportunity.

You can train them just like we've been training you. The goal of our reaction to a green light is to help someone take the next step. Belief, training, discipleship, Bible study, baptism, and connect with the church family.

I hope you've already grasped the fact that the three circles are easily reproduced. I personally know that the three circles have been drawn on napkins, on boulders in the Blue Ridge Mountains, in concrete, in the sand, and they've been presented using tortillas.

[13:16] They've been shared with kids, teenagers, adults, prisoners, homeless people, and people all over the world. The three circles have been translated into Spanish, Creole, Japanese, Filipino, and Fulham.

I had to Google that one. That's what they speak in Myanmar. Myanmar is a country closed to the gospel in a place where Christians face intense persecution. We even had one report that 21 Iranians repented and believed after hearing the three circles.

We're literally hearing thousands of stories from around the world about people who are repenting and believing the gospel because of the three circles. God is using this tool to carry His message of reconciliation into even the darkest of places.

So no matter how old you are, how long you've been a believer, where you are, what language you speak, or what materials you have, you can turn an everyday conversation into a gospel conversation.

You're ready to transition, to tell someone the whole gospel, invite them to respond, and now you're ready to wrap it all up. We can be prepared for every type of gospel response.

[14:22] We've given you examples of how to handle each of them, but again, we're going to let you make them your own. So let's close by getting reps on everything.

I want you to pair off and take turns presenting a problem, issue, or concern so that you can each get a rep. Transitioning the conversation. Sharing the three circles with your clear and complete gospel presentation.

Asking our two invitation questions. Where do you see yourself in this diagram? Is there anything that will prevent you from repenting and believing the gospel right now?

Then reacting to whichever response you get. Red, yellow, or green light. You have examples in your trainee guide, and your facilitator will help you during your practice time, and then he or she will give you some time to work on your red and yellow light responses, celebrate your stories, and

assign your personal training for the week ahead.

So let's keep practicing, and let's get those reps. Okay, we'll go back over the fill in the blanks here. [15:32] Okay, TGI, because every day we look for opportunities to transition the conversation to the gospel and invite people to repent and believe in Jesus.

Transition the conversation to the gospel and invite people to repent and believe in Jesus.

Responses to the gospel are as old as the gospel itself.

Acts 17, 32 through 34 is listed here. Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, but others said, We will hear you again about this. So Paul went out from their midst, but some men joined him and believed.

And speaking of Paul at the Areopagus, right? You remember that story? One, some mocked. This is the red light response.

John 15, 18 through 19 says, If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

[16:33] But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. The goal of our reaction to a red light response is to be gracious.

So future gospel conversations are possible. And in my experience, you don't get as many red light responses as you get yellow and green.

If you have shared the gospel, you know, I think that's one of the greatest fears that people have. It's one of the greatest lies or one of the many lies that Satan tells us, especially to try to keep us afraid of sharing the gospel, is that people are going to just be mean and nasty.

And in my experience, that hasn't been the case. There's been a couple. There's been one who, I remember, you know, the gentleman said some mean things to us and shut the door on our faces before we could really say anything.

And we just, you know, okay, have a good day. But in other cases, you know, you just, it's not, it's not, it just doesn't happen as much as I think that you're led to believe the lie from Satan that it does.

[17:51] And one of the things I've learned that's helpful is you're, we're dealing with people who, these red light responses, usually they've endured some kind of major tragedy.

Or suffering in their life. Not to say that none of us has ever faced that. But there's usually something that they're really mad about God, they're really mad about God over.

And so one thing I've learned to ask them is, when you can tell that they're really not wanting to hear what you have to say is, what happened in your life that made you want to believe that there was not a God?

And whenever I've asked that question, and this came from a buddy who is just gifted in evangelism, it really, it catches them off guard, but it causes them to think.

And then it puts them in that place where they're like, you really want to know? It's like, yeah, I do. That's why I asked. But that's something to think about too. You know, you ask it in a nice way. What happened in your life that made you hate God, you know?

[18:56] This isn't a movie. This isn't God's Not Dead 1, 2, or I guess they're making a third one, you know, where there's the dramatic scene. You know, you speak the truth in love. What happened? And did something happen in your life that made you want to believe that there was not a God?

And you'll find out, you know, it's usually, there is something. And it's usually a tragic loss of a loved one, a child who died, a number of different things.

So if you ask that question, be prepared also to be able to help that person through. Okay. Number two here, it says, but others said, we will hear you again about this.

This is the yellow light response. The goal of our reaction to a yellow light is to extend the conversation. And so if you remember last Sunday, I shared the story about my best friend in college.

We had that conversation where I presented the gospel to him. And, you know, it was just light touches over 15 years before I found out earlier this year that he was baptized.

[20:02] And he and his wife last Easter. And so, you know, keep at it, those yellow light responses. Number three, some men joined him and believed.

This is our green light response. New believer, lead the person in a theological accurate salvation prayer. Now, we talked about that last week too, that we're not wanting to, we're not, we didn't do

that actually.

We skipped over that because we don't want to go through some kind of a sinner's prayer where that person is led to believe that, oh, if I just say the magic words, that I'm saved. Because we know that salvation doesn't work that way.

And so we're not leaning into that as much as if somebody's believing. And then we say, well, let's pray. And we can lead that prayer, but then we ask for them to pray themselves.

And when I've done that, you know, you notice that people, I mean, you know, if they're believed and they have been given the Holy Spirit, they know what to say. God, I'm a sinner. Forgive me for what I've done.

[21 : 05] I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. It doesn't have to be a long paragraph, long drawn out thing, just sincere and true. And you'll find that to be the case with your green light responses.

Already a believer? Train them just like we have been training you. The goal of our reaction to a green light is to help the people take their next steps.

Discipleship, Bible study, baptism, and connection with a church family. The three circles are easily reproduced. We can be prepared for every type of gospel response.

And the more we've been going over this, the more I really, I like this tool. It's helpful to stay on track, stay on track when we're having these conversations.

And even on Easter, I've been thinking about, you know, what I'm going to preach on. And right now, I'm going to go over the three circles and I'm going to try to, I'm going to say this so, you know, you can hold me accountable.

[22 : 08] I'm going to try to preach a message that's over the entire Bible. One message, the entire Bible on Easter Sunday. So, you know, what the Bible says, beginning with God's design, and we see brokenness.

And we see all of the different ways that men have tried to heal their brokenness. And ultimately, it's through Christ coming in his life, in his death, in his resurrection that we have forgiveness where we can recover God's design.

So, I'm going to preach for about five hours on that Sunday, if that's okay. You guys think that's all right, right? We can have an intermission time. Maybe, yeah, yeah, we'll break for lunch and then we'll come back.

Let's do it. I think we're on to something here. So, right now, our assignments are to pair up or get into groups.

And the scenario here is that partner one presents a problem, issue, or concern. Partner two then transitions to the three circles, shares the three circles with clear gospel presentation, and invites a response.

[23 : 19] And then partner one either gives a red, yellow, or green light response, and addresses the response with the prepared red or yellow or green light response, and then switch partners.

So, in this two, and then assignment two is to give trainees time to work on their red light responses. So, this is something that you guys can do. And talking together is, okay, if you are presented with a red light, yellow light, green light response, what should you say?

If it's a red light, you know, obviously, we know that that conversation is coming to an end. We talked about this some last week as well. So, when we're out engaging people, we're going to get these different kinds of responses.

And we talked about, you know, there will be somebody, there will be some who, they don't want to hear any of it. And when that's the case, we don't say, well, wait, I didn't get to circle number three yet.

You haven't even heard about the gospel, you know, and we're holding them down. And then we're on the news that night. Highland Park Baptist Church tries to reach community, but instead causes a riot or something like that.

[24 : 28] So, yeah. So, we want to, we want this, and we're praying for this. But you've got to understand, even with those red lights, you could be planting a seed. And so, as hard as it is, man, and it's painful sometimes to see somebody.

I remember another instance where we were, we were walking through town. And we were, we were going up a guy's driveway. And he was, you know, had a beer and a cigarette, one in each hand.

And he said, nope. We're like, well, we just, we just want, we won't take much of your time. Nope. Don't want any of it. Don't want to hear it. Just keep on going. And so, we said, okay.

And then I remember my, my, the guy who I was with, he was my, like a, this was back at the House of Prayer. And he was the leader there, and I was an intern. And he just told me, he's like, you know, it's sad because eternity is forever.

And I was like, yeah, that's right. You know, and that poor guy, man, we were right there on his driveway with the gospel, with the news that could bring transformation to him and salvation, ultimately.

[25 : 33] And he wanted nothing of it. And so, it breaks your heart. But we were there, and we were willing. He didn't want to hear. Okay. But on the 31st, you know, we might encounter that, but we'll also encounter different responses.

In each and every case, we'll be ready because now we're going to train. So, get in groups of two or more and talk about this. Talk about maybe if you have some experiences of dealing with red, yellow, and green light responses.

How did you handle those situations? And give your feedback to each other, okay? Let's go ahead and do that for the next 10 or 15 minutes.

Let's go ahead and do that.

Let's go ahead and do that.

[27 : 13] Do your sound and work on earth these times. And let your kingdom come.

Okay, well, we'll come back together. Does anybody want to share any of their examples of red light, yellow light, green light responses?

Anybody want to share what you've talked about? Yes. Yes. Yeah.

Absolutely. Yeah, I think that's great. And I think it's also good if they'll let you have it to get their information, too. Yeah, and say, you know, do you mind if I check on you every once in a while?

Because that's how my parents came back to the church was through somebody. You know, they would have been given the yellow light response, but he just kept checking on them. And eventually they were there, and then, you know, they've been in that church for longer than I've been alive.

[28 : 33] Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yeah.

Absolutely. Yeah. For sure. Consistency is important, especially with those yellow light responses.

And I think that's great what you said, Pat. I would say exactly the same thing. Offer to pray for the person there. And then ask if you can have their information and let them know.

Or this is what I would say. At my church, we like to pray for people. Is it okay if we pray for you at my church?

[29 : 49] Almost all the time, they're going to say yes. Yeah. Yeah, if they're not willing to give you their information. Yeah.

Yeah, or yeah, you might say, hey, can I have, do you have an email address or a phone number? I'd like to check up with you. I'm not going to, I just want to know how things are going so we can know how to be praying for you.

And we had an example of a yellow light response who is here today. Right? Who Katie had been talking to one of her co-workers for a long time.

There's a co-worker that Katie's been talking with for a long time. And he, her son plays on Jack's soccer team.

And so Katie and Danny both and Jesse, you know, just been consistent with inviting her to come to church. And she was here today. So there's an example of how the yellow light works.

[30 : 57] You know, be persistent. And again, even when we'd see her, or when you see that person, you know, it's not like a didn't see you in church. What's, come on.

You know, but it's more of a just, we'd like to see you in church. You know, and it almost, we'd like to see you. Didn't see you there last Sunday. We'll be there. Same time. Love to have you come. Wes? Yeah.

Yes, exactly. And you'll find that a lot of people will have, they'll have questions. They'll have good questions. And at that point in time, you may not, you may not have an answer. If you're kind of like me, sometimes I'm better, not on my feet, but after I've thought about something for a while, and I'm like, let me think about that.

And let me talk to you about that. Or if they have a really good question, that's a really good question. I want to, I want to answer that question. Do you mind if I get back with you on that one? So there's, that's good as well.

Keep, keep that dialogue open. That's good. That's what we're looking for too. And then we'll have some green lights, you know, some people who will, you know, it's just like, wow, it's, yeah, you believe.

[32 : 07] All right. Well, where do you go to church? I don't have, come to our church. Okay. Okay. So, okay. We're going to end, we're going to wrap up with that.

We'll head into our time of birthday fellowship. And Wes? I just like to say one more thing. In sales, they talk about, we're selling to my house. Yeah.

Somebody go to green light on you, go to Jesus planting and everything else, and write it to the grave. If you keep the loan on, they might think, I need to check this out a little bit more, and I can get back to them later.

If they're ready to go, let's go ahead and ask for a lot of prayer. Yeah. I'm going to sell to the grave. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

We want to close the deal, right. Okay, let's close in prayer. And I'll pray for the fellowship and then we'll sing the song.

[33 : 07] I've been here long enough, I should know how things are. All right, let's pray. Lord, thank you for this night that we've had together. And God, we're looking forward to the 31st day where we will be out in our community and we'll be serving our community, Lord, not seeking anything in return, but purely to give.

And Lord, what we pray most is that we would give people the gospel, that we would give the gospel with our words, that we would give the gospel with our actions, Lord, that people would see that we're different and that they would see that that difference is you, that we are believers.

We have been people who have been redeemed by your son, Jesus Christ, who have been forgiven. We have hope in this world because we know that the best is yet to come. And so, Lord, we pray for that day. We understand that we're going to encounter different responses, Lord.

And in each case, give us wisdom on how to proceed and that in all cases we would speak the truth in love. And, Lord, we know that this isn't something you call us to do just once a year.

This is supposed to be a way of life. So, besides the 31st and the days leading up to it and the days after it, Father, we pray that we would be people who are on mission, that we would be looking to our coworkers, our friends, our families, our neighbors, those around us, Lord, and that we'd be seeking to do all that we can to share the gospel with them, that they'd have an opportunity to hear it.

[34 : 36] And, again, Lord, we pray that all of this training that we're doing, all of this work and effort that we're putting in to this Engage event, Lord, that it will be fruitful and we trust and believe that it will.

And, Lord, we can't wait to rejoice in the results. And thank you, Father, for the joy that you've given us in being followers of Christ. And we pray for our time of fellowship tonight, that you would bless that.

And thank you for those who have worked hard to prepare that. And, Lord, just pray that it would be a great start to our week. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.