

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL AND HOW DO I SHARE IT?

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Read **1 Peter 3:15–16**.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

If you think sharing your faith with others is tricky, you should meet Peter. First of all, he spent much of his time with Jesus learning how to be more gentle and respectful (the traits he challenges his readers to in these verses). Despite his incredible gift for leadership among the 12 disciples, we also see Peter respond in doubt, frustration, impatience, confusion, and even anger to the circumstances that arise as he follows Jesus. As one of Jesus's closest friends and followers, Peter had every reason to believe that Jesus was who he said he was. He had witnessed supernatural miracles beyond anyone's imagination, and he had experienced close, intimate fellowship with the Son of God himself. Even so, Peter struggled with many of the same things we do. He even denied knowing Jesus on the night he was crucified. However, once Peter was reunited with his Savior after the Resurrection, his life was truly transformed forever. He experienced personal forgiveness for his sins, and he accepted Jesus's challenge to care for his people as a shepherd cares for his sheep. The doubt, fear, and restlessness that he had experienced when Jesus died was replaced with an insatiable desire to follow Jesus's final instructions and spread the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth.

In his letter (the book of **1 Peter**), he challenges the Gentile believers in the early church to be prepared to talk about their faith. Gently. Respectfully. But intentionally. Peter faced incredible challenges as he faithfully ministered to others. He was, after all, just a fisherman from Galilee who had no formal education or training other than what he had received during his time with Jesus. There were cultural, societal, religious, financial, and political barriers at almost every turn, but Peter had determined himself to rely on the Holy Spirit and trust that when it was time, he would have the words to share the incredible story of what God had done for his sake, and for the sake of those he met. Sharing his story and the story of life with Jesus was what he was certain of. And he did it faithfully until his death.

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THINK ABOUT IT

1. Have you ever had the opportunity to share the gospel outright with someone? What did you say? What did you learn from that experience? How have you seen this done poorly (without gentleness and respect) in your life or in the life of someone you know?
2. One of the most intimidating things about sharing your faith can be attempting to answer the questions and doubts that arise as someone processes their thoughts about God. Make a list of the top three to five questions you would be most intimidated to address. Even if you can't answer them, what can you do to grow in your confidence about listening well and gently encouraging someone to move forward in their faith journey even without all of the answers?

APPLY IT

In **Acts 2**, we have the opportunity to see Peter as a skilled preacher and teacher whose words about Jesus “cut them (the crowd) to the heart.” Read this passage and underline the words and phrases that define Peter’s testimony. Why do you think the crowd was so moved? What principles from this sermon can help us to learn how we can share our faith with others?

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION (IF DESIRED)

Most people have memories of the season of life or even a specific moment when they understood the magnitude of what Jesus had done for them. Talk about the people, the place or places, and the words that you remember about that time for you. What about those memories can be a part of what you would share with someone else about your faith journey?