

**ONE-VERSE GOSPEL PRESENTATION  
BASED ON  
ROMANS 6:23**

Quick Note: One-Verse Evangelism first appeared in *Discipleship Journal*, Issue Forty-Four, July 1986. I have adapted it somewhat, I must confess, to fit what I believe the Bible teaches to be essential parts of the Gospel story; namely the condition of the heart and the importance of baptism in conversion. Some of the advantages to this presentation are (1) it is short and can be used effectively when time is limited; (2) is expandable with optional analogies that can make the presentation adaptable to many situations; (3) is easy to understand; (4) is easy to learn, since there is only one verse to memorize; (5) does not require flipping back and forth from the Old and New Testaments, which can confuse your friend especially if he/she is unfamiliar with the Bible; (6) uses a picture that helps your friend focus and remember what he is hearing and (7) gives you the opportunity to find out if your friend clearly understands the Gospel message by re-verbalizing the message in his/her own words.

**Step 1.** It is important to realize that the Word of God and the Holy Spirit convict, lead, and save people from their sin NOT our personalities and/or methods we use for sharing the Gospel. Jesus gets all the glory - period. Still, we have been entrusted as ambassadors of Christ to carry out His ministry of reconciliation. We are actually foreign emissaries carrying out the foreign policy for the Kingdom of Heaven! So, being prepared and comfortable with the Gospel allows us the opportunity to be used by God to share the greatest message ever told! Further, loving people and building relationships with non-Christians earns us the right to talk about spiritual things. Shot gunning the Gospel message to someone (unless you've been given a Divine appointment), no matter how good you think you are (I'm guilty of this), is rarely effective without some amount of rapport and trust built between you and the person with whom you are sharing, therefore, take the time to lead your friend into spiritual topics by asking spiritual questions. Often, when a conversation turns to spiritual topics, I will ask the other person if he would like to understand the basic theme of the entire Bible. I tell him that if he is interested I can draw a picture that will explain the one major message of all sixty-six books of the Bible in a practical way that he can easily understand and I assure him that it will not take all day to do it. Writing out the verse and drawing the picture help to keep your friend focused on the message and allows him to internalize what the message says. Usually, I transition into the actual presentation by explaining that above all else the Bible teaches us about the relationship that God desires to have with His people. I then ask the "2 questions" as taught by D. James Kennedy in EE.

**Step 2.** Open your Bible to **Romans 6:23** and ask your friend to read the verse aloud to you while you write it at the top of piece of paper. Draw a box around the word “Wages” and then write it mid-way down the left side of the page and box it there also. Now, ask an open-ended question that will allow your friend to verbalize in his own words what wages are. (An open-ended question is one that he cannot answer with yes or no) For example: “How would you define the term wages?” (Wages are the reward you receive for work you have completed.) “Suppose you worked 10 hours at 10 dollars an hour, how much would your Boss owe you? What if he only paid you 50? How would you feel? That’s a God-given response. It’s fair. Deep down, we all know that it is only right that a person gets what he deserves. We earn wages from God for the way we have lived our lives.”

**Step 3.** You and I were created in God’s image and capable of making free will decisions. We have the ability to choose to do right or do wrong. To love or hate. To develop integrity relationships or to be selfish. We see examples all around us of these types of choices. Now draw a box around the word “Sin” in the verse and then write it below “Wages” on the left side and box it. One of the choices the Bible says that all people eventually make is sin. “What do you think of when you hear the word sin?” (Usually you’ll hear doing wrong, breaking the Ten Commandments, etc.) If they don’t answer with something about God’s law then we must direct the conversation to it. **1 John 3:4.** It’s missing the mark or standard God has set for us. [Target illustration] Explaining the glory of God as the bull’s-eye. I then explain that God gave us His moral law to demonstrate His holiness and perfect nature. “Sin, is an action to be sure but let me ask you, what if you knew to do the right thing and you simply refused to do it, would that be a sin?” **James 4:17** “That’s because sin is just as much an attitude as an action—it can be a hostile or apathetic response towards God.” “Based on what we know about sin and God, how good would a person have to be in order to live with God in heaven? Have you always lived your life that way?” “Me either, in fact no-one has and the Bible says in **Romans 3:23**..... In fact, in order for us to earn our way into heaven Jesus said in **Matt 5:48**..... (This should help them see that by their own definition - works keep us out of heaven) “At any point in your life has God seemed distant or far-away?” When he answers “yes,” draw in the lines of the cliff on both sides and explain that sin has separated everyone from God. (Check out **Isaiah 59:2!!!**)

**Step 4.** Draw a box around the word “Death” and write it below “Sin” and box it. “What thoughts come to mind when you think of death?” “Death often means separation - you are physically separated from your family and friends. Spiritual death is also a separation for when you die your soul is separated from your body. If a person chooses to reject God by breaking His laws or remaining apathetic towards Him while alive on earth his personal sin has already separated him from a relationship with God. He is dead in his sin. **Ephesians 2:1** If he dies separated from God, that separation that started on earth will extend into all eternity in a place the Bible calls hell.” (We must include the biblical doctrine of hell in the Gospel presentation.) [Illustration about Gehenna] Many will argue that hell is not fire and brimstone or outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. I wouldn’t even argue because that’s not the worst part of hell. The worst is that God and His presence are not there.

**Step 5.** Draw a box around the word “But” and write it between the bases of the cliffs. “This is a very important word in the verse because it indicates that there is more to say. What we have talked about so far is man’s way and the result is bad news **Proverbs 14:12**, but God has good news and that’s the Gospel truth! In fact, Gospel means good news! What we’re going to talk about now is in contrast to what we have just discussed.”

**Step 6.** Draw a box around the word “Gift” and write it on the right side of the cliff opposite of “Wages.” Box it there. “What is the difference between a wage and a gift?” (From now on, be sure to point back and forth to each side of the cliff to emphasize that the words contrast each other.) “A gift is not earned by the person who receives it, but someone else pays for it. How do you feel when someone gives you an expensive gift?” Some people try to earn God’s favor by doing good deeds, living moral lives, or taking part in religious activities. But it is impossible to pay for something that has already been bought.” **Ephesians 2:8-9** “Say you wanted to buy a special gift for a close friend to show how much that person means to you. How would you feel if the friend refused to accept it without first paying you for it?” I often use the giving of my wife’s engagement ring. There was a lot more wrapped up in that diamond than money! “Now what if that gift was one of your children. How much are they worth?”

**Step 7.** Draw a box around the word “God” and then write it below “Gift” on the right side of the cliff opposite of the word “Sin.” Box it there. Point to the word “sin” and explain that all of us have sinned but God is perfect and has not. “God wants to give you a gift. I can’t give it to you; a church can’t, not even a religion can; no one can give you this gift but God alone. Why do you think God would want to give you a gift? Why does anyone want to give someone a precious gift?” **John 3:16, 1 John 4:19** or **Romans 5:8** would be good here.

**Step 8.** Draw a box around the word “Life” and then write it below “God” opposite the word “Death.” Box it there. “What do you think eternal life is?” “Eternal life means a relationship with God in blissful harmony forever. Remember how separation from God starts in this life and extends into eternity, eternal life, through a relationship with God, can start now and go on forever in a place the Bible calls heaven. In faith, no one can take it away from you and no sin can end it.” **Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 John 5:13**: (At this point ask if there is any part of the presentation that needs to be re-explained. Be sure that each point is clear before proceeding. If necessary, go back explain each point that is not clear.)

**Step 9.** Draw a cross between the cliffs as a bridge. Box the most beautiful words ever spoken, ever written, ever incarnated - “Christ Jesus!” in the verse. Write “Christ Jesus” inside the cross. “Jesus is the means by which we can obtain the gift of eternal life. No one can offer a gift except the one who purchased it.” **1 John 2:1-2**. These verses paint a picture for the powerful love that Christ has for us. [Court room scene illustration] You may want to draw this illustration on the back of the piece of paper. Jesus purchased your gift by paying for it with His life. **2 Corinthians 5:21!!!** On the cross Jesus paid for the wages of your sin with His death that you might receive God’s gift of eternal life in relationship with Him.

**Step 10.** “If you were to place yourself on the bridge, where would you be?” “Would you like to be assured that you are safely over on God’s side?” Hold out your car keys or a pen etc. and ask the person to imagine you are giving it to him as a present. As you hand it to him, ask at what point the gift becomes his. (When he accepts it.)

**Step 11.** Box “Lord” and write it in the cross underneath “Christ Jesus.” “You can accept God’s gift of eternal life only through the cross of Christ and by making Jesus (y)our Lord.” Trusting Jesus is more than just an intellectual acknowledgment of the facts about the Gospel. It’s the surrendering of your heart to Him. [Blondin illustration] In the NT we see people turning towards God in faith by:

1. **Repentance** - U turn. A conscious decision to turn from sin and intentionally want to live for Christ. You were driving down your own road, away from God, tuned in to your own station and now you’ve done a complete 180. You’ve set the compass of your heart towards God and are tuned into His program. **Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38**
2. **Confession** - Acknowledgment. You acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. That He is your Lord and Savior. It means by your actions as well as your words that you aren’t ashamed to be called a Christian. **Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33**
3. **Baptism** - The Bible tells us that we personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in water baptism. **Romans 6:3-5.** Further, baptism is the place, under normal circumstances, that God has promised to grant the blessings of salvation; namely the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:38.** Baptism, therefore, is not a work that you do in order to earn your salvation but an expression of your trust in the work that Jesus did to purchase your salvation with His blood. **1 Peter 3:21.**

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO READ THIS LAST STEP!!!!!!**

**Step 12.** Ask your friend, “On the basis of what we’ve shared from God’s Word, what must a person do to have eternal life.” Or “Again, if you stood at heaven’s gate and God asked you, ‘Why should I let you into My heaven?’ what would your answer now be?” (They need to answer something like - make Jesus Lord, turn from sin and trust God, have a change of heart that wants Christ as Lord etc.) Here it comes, ask him/her then - “Would you like to make Jesus your Lord today and know for certain that you’ll spend eternity with Him in Heaven?” **1 John 5:13.**

\* If your friend desires to make Jesus his/her Lord and Savior ask him/her: “Do you believe with all of your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and do you desire to make Him Lord and Savior of your life?” Now pray with them. Set a time to baptize your friend. Immediately is the Biblical pattern, but if they want people there or would like to give a testimony to the church on the Lord’s Day, that’s all right as long as they know that baptism is something they should do and not neglect. Finally, stress the importance of getting involved in a local church where they can fellowship with other Christians and grow and mature in their new relationship with the Lord.