

TELLING THE STORY

- God's Story**
- Our Story**
- Tools**
- Communication**



To Know,

Be Known,

Make Known

News Release Basketball

God's Story

A Word Before...

This study has been designed for the News Release Basketball tours for three reasons:

- (1) For News Release Basketball *to know God deeper* and understand what it means to be His people.
- (2) For News Release Basketball *to know each other deeper* as brothers and sisters in Christ—a team on a mission.
- (3) For News Release Basketball *to know the mission of God* and participate in what He is doing on the European Continent.

To know God and each other—and to bring these relationships to Europe—this ‘relational mission’ summarizes what News Release Basketball is all about. We are a team that is united by a transforming faith through the Holy Spirit in the climactic event of Jesus Christ, God’s agent of healing and love to the world. We are a sign and a foretaste of this healing and love that Jesus uniquely brought the world. The word that the Apostle Paul used for this common life and common mission was *koinonia*, often translated as ‘fellowship’ or ‘sharing’ in our English Bibles:

Philippians 2:1-3: If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship (*koinonia*) with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Philippians 3:10: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship (*koinonia*) of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...

Philemon 6: I pray that you may be active in sharing (*koinonia*) your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

On these tours, we will share together the power of the same Spirit, the burning and heartache of the same suffering and the inspiration of the same faith. Our prayer is that God will use this common life that we have together for the next month as a *sign* and a *foretaste* of His wise, powerful and tender reign. We will be a sign (in word and deed) that shows the people of Europe where to find God and a foretaste that they, too, can experience His presence.

The Story in Scripture: Living out What God Has Done in the World

This narrative can be scripted as a 6-Act Play that is easy to explain:



CREATION - The powerful narrative from the pages of Scripture is that God created the world—it was good and beautiful and imaginative from the beginning—and it still is.

CRISIS - Humanity has rebelled, choosing the counterfeit to the original design. We are in bondage and we are de-humanized and undignified by it. We were created to reflect God in all that we do and say, but our waters have been diluted and the result has been pain, hurt, death, disease, hardship, lack of trust, insecurity—these are *signs* that the world needs to be put back together, not the signs of an absent or angry God.

COVENANT - The narrative in the pages of Scripture tells of a determined, intentional God who pursued one man, Abraham, and made a family who would worship God and be a blessing to the world, to bring healing and reconciliation to the entire world. God blessed Abraham with a huge family and it became ‘Israel’. God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them to the promised land, to set up a kingdom to worship Him freely. The story, however, is plagued by Israel’s constant pursuit of other gods and practices. They cling to ‘other narratives’ to explain their world and lives. Israel is exiled—dominated by other countries over and over again, but God never gives up—He promises (through prophets, priests and poets) that Israel will, one day, be redeemed again by an ‘Anointed One’ to be King over, not just Israel, but the entire world. People of all races will come to worship Him and God will reign.

CHRIST - Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of that ‘Anointed One’, the Messiah (or in Greek, *Christ*). God did not call Israel to separate themselves and quietly worship Him in isolation, and He did not call them to assemble troops to dominate the Roman government who ruled over them either. Jesus of Nazareth didn’t use the dualistic choices of fight or flight—his 3rd choice was about peace, service, sacrifice, discipline, humility and compassion. He embraced the people on the margins, those excluded in Israel’s society, who were abandoned and were seen as signs of God’s punishment and continued shame—the lepers, the prostitutes, non-Israelites, tax collectors, women. These ‘outcasts’ comprised the core of His movement. He critiqued Israel with *anguish* through His teachings about what the kingdom of God really was, His rule and reign, establishing a people who would surrender their lives (individually and collectively) to His Way. He winced (and wept) over Israel’s desire to use violence or retreat to the ghetto of ‘holy living’. He energized Israel with *amazement* through his teachings and miracles and healings and acceptance. Jesus intentionally pursued people and re-structured the common ideas of what it meant to be holy. Jesus became what Israel was not: a light to this broken world, reaching out with compassion and love, freeing people from all the counterfeit

ways of living. Jesus gathered around Him a people who would become the new Messiah people, who would re-enact His radical obedience, love, compassion, sacrifice, forgiveness, humility and service.

THE CROSS - As part of God's strategy to extend His blessings (love, compassion, freedom from sin, eternal life) to the entire world, Jesus died a criminal's death on the cross on a Friday and rose from the grave on Sunday morning. This was God's strategy, a Messiah-plan to begin to reconcile the world back to Himself. His death disarmed the powers of this world, the control that money, sex, power and greed have on the human condition. It was the culmination of Jesus' obedient life in a sin-filled world. His death heaped the world's sin and guilt onto Himself—it was a *sacrifice* that cleansed the world (forgiveness) in order that His followers live out the vocation of Israel. His death was also a *victory* that liberated the world from the prison of sin and death and an *example* and symbol of how the new people of God would live, suffering and sacrificing, grasping a new idea of power and leadership. Jesus was the 'climax of the covenant' and brought the Kingdom of God to the world.

CHURCH - God's people, the church, live between the 'now and not yet'—God reigns in the life of the church in the midst of the brokenness of the world. He sent the Spirit to energize, guide and comfort the new Messiah people—a down payment, guaranteeing our inheritance in regards to the end of the narrative. The church re-enacts the love, obedience, humility and service of Jesus Christ and extends God's hospitality to the world—every time we love our enemies and forgive and extend peace, joy and righteousness to world, we actively proclaim the Kingdom of God.

CONSUMMATION - One day, Jesus will come back and complete His mission—to reign on earth, with full authority to renew the world. Tears, pain, grief and violence will be no more.

1. **Are there any ways this story, our story, has been told differently than you've heard it before? Would you add or change anything in this story?**
2. **What are 'competing stories' (different worldviews) that people live by in our culture?**
3. **Koinonia: How did 'your story' collide with 'the story of what God has done in the world'—share with the team *how* you came to Christ and *why* you believed this story to be true and decided to be a part of what God is doing in the world.**

We believe this Story embodies Truth, Beauty and Goodness. It is the Story that we find ourselves in. We believe that the Kingdom of God is being 'lived out' now through his people—little pockets of people all over the world who commit to living their entire lives in Christ, under the reign of God. God delivered the truth, beauty and goodness originally through this Story—not doctrinal statements or formulas or laws. To live in the 5th Act of the 6-part drama is to become characters in the on-going work of God. He is the author and we are the actors. We learn how to live rightly and obediently by rehearsing the Story over and over in our own community—the Story of Scripture empowers us to *action* through the Holy Spirit. And as we live, we invite others to join the people of God, mirroring what God wills for humankind.

NEWS RELEASE BASKETBALL

SHARING YOUR FAITH : REAL, RELEVANT, REVITALIZING

In years past we have utilized a philosophy of sharing testimonies. We do this during half time of games, during our basketball “hoop camps” and in general conversations.

In observing what makes an impact in peoples’ lives in Europe, we’ve come to the conclusion that our life style speaks louder than words. We have to make our sharing **real, relevant and revitalizing**.

REAL

We tell our story like it is. But we must be able to include other parts of our story than just our conversion experience. Maybe it’s to include something that the Lord has been working in your life recently. Or it might be to include something that you are learning in your walk with the Lord. What makes us “real” to someone else?

Being real means being true to who you are. It takes being transparent. We should not be afraid to share ourselves, our hardships, our struggles, our failures. As much as we would like to think that we are, we are not on a pedestal. We are often afraid to expose our faults because it exposes our weaknesses. Yet as we get to know people we want them to know more of us. We must be brave enough, and vulnerable enough to be willing to share aspects of our lives that aren’t always attractive, but that speak to who we are. The more real we are to others, the more people may be able to relate to us.

Being real also means being honest: with ourselves, with others, and with the Lord. In doing this, we come to know ourselves better, and others get to know us as well.

In John 9:25 the blind beggar was asked to portray exaggerated versions of his healing experience, and discredit the person who healed him. Yet, he resisted all of them, and exclaimed: “All I know is, I once was blind, and now I can see”. He was real, honest, and he told his story.

RELEVANT

We also want to tell the part of our story that other people can relate to. We need to scan our audience. What part of our story will most likely speak to them?

We want to provide some “hook” to our audience. A hook is something that the audience will be able to latch on to: something that they will be able to say “I can relate to that”. When that happens, there is a bond formed between listener and teller. This bond is one of familiarity, trust, being able to relate to the teller, etc. When this kind of connection is made, the listener is willing to learn more. Indeed, he often WANTS to learn more.

In our relevance, people should see that we are different. We go through the same life situations as others, but how we handle them should reflect the life that Jesus gives us. This should be a visible sign to all those around us.

In Acts 22:1-21 and in Acts 26:1-23 Paul gives his testimony twice. It's the same story, told in different ways to different audiences. He made his story relevant to his listeners.

REVITALIZING

There are many ways to tell a story. Jesus used stories and parables to talk about his truths. Some on our tours have used skits, or are animated while talking; some have used humor; and some have used examples in their lives, or examples from other life situations (see notes on The Revolutionary Communicator). Ask yourself, "What will spark my listeners?"

Even more than just telling our story, we need to be "alive" in our thoughts, words and actions. I have often said that if non-Christians can't see the joy in our lives from Christ, why would they want to become Christians at all?

FOR US: Let's work to make our stories more real, relevant and revitalizing:

- **Be family.** We are participating in God's Kingdom and inviting others to join us.
- **Be open, vulnerable, transparent.** Allow your tour teammates to get to know you, and allow your European friends to get to know you – the real you. Then share how you do life, with all the blessings and struggles, with Jesus.
- **Start now, even in training camp,** so that players know each other, or are getting to know each other, and are used to being open and honest.
- **Be connected to God's spirit.** Be prayed up constantly.
- Call testimonies "**our stories**" or story time.
- Embrace "**current Christianity.**" Emphasize what Christ has done, or is doing, in my life **TODAY.** How do we live life with Jesus, every day?
- **Be observant and reflective of the things that Christ has done** in us, for us, and through us. Then **be excited about that.** May we never take for granted the gifts of the Lord to us. (journaling helps in this. It gives the person something that they can look back and reflect on).
- **Let our story be played out in our lives.** Do we display our story? Do we encourage purposeful and active living out the values of NRB?

- Active worship
- Live by faith
- Display family
- Exude fun
- Serve with others in mind first
- Do all we do with quality.
- Worship and Faith (Honor and respect)
- Family and Relationships
- Service and Joy
- Quality and Continuity

Bottom line: **Who we are enhances what we say.**

- **Be creative** in our stories. Tell something that is exciting, and will grab our listeners.
- **Think about relevance.** “How would my story impact someone in my audience who was hearing this?” Prepare to share
 - to adults, and to kids:
 - in large group (half-times) and in small groups (group break outs in Power Hour),
 - in our organized Hoop camp ministry, and in off-court, casual, informal and random conversations.
- **Prepare.** Spend time thinking about your story, then write it down, review it with a tour leader, and or our host missionary. Practice it often, and in the various settings
 - casual conversation
 - one-on-one personal sharing
 - Small group setting
 - Large group presentation

Although we need to know how to share our story impromptu and at any time, we should not leave the telling of our story to chance. We need to be prepared.
- **Our story should be a part of the Master story.** (See NRB God’s Story)
- **Include Jesus** as a part of all we do and say. Life is not lived in compartments. Let Christ be at the center of everything, and it will communicate that way.
- Have the attitude of **sharing, not preaching**. It takes the mystique out of our talks.

QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE REAL, RELEVANT AND REVITALIZING SHARING

Self reflections: “How do you do life with Jesus?”

- Share stories of faith.
- Share the challenges of following Jesus. And share the rewards.
- Do you ever question your faith? What confuses you about Jesus? When do you have questions in life?

MOVING PEOPLE

EVANGELISM IS A PROCESS

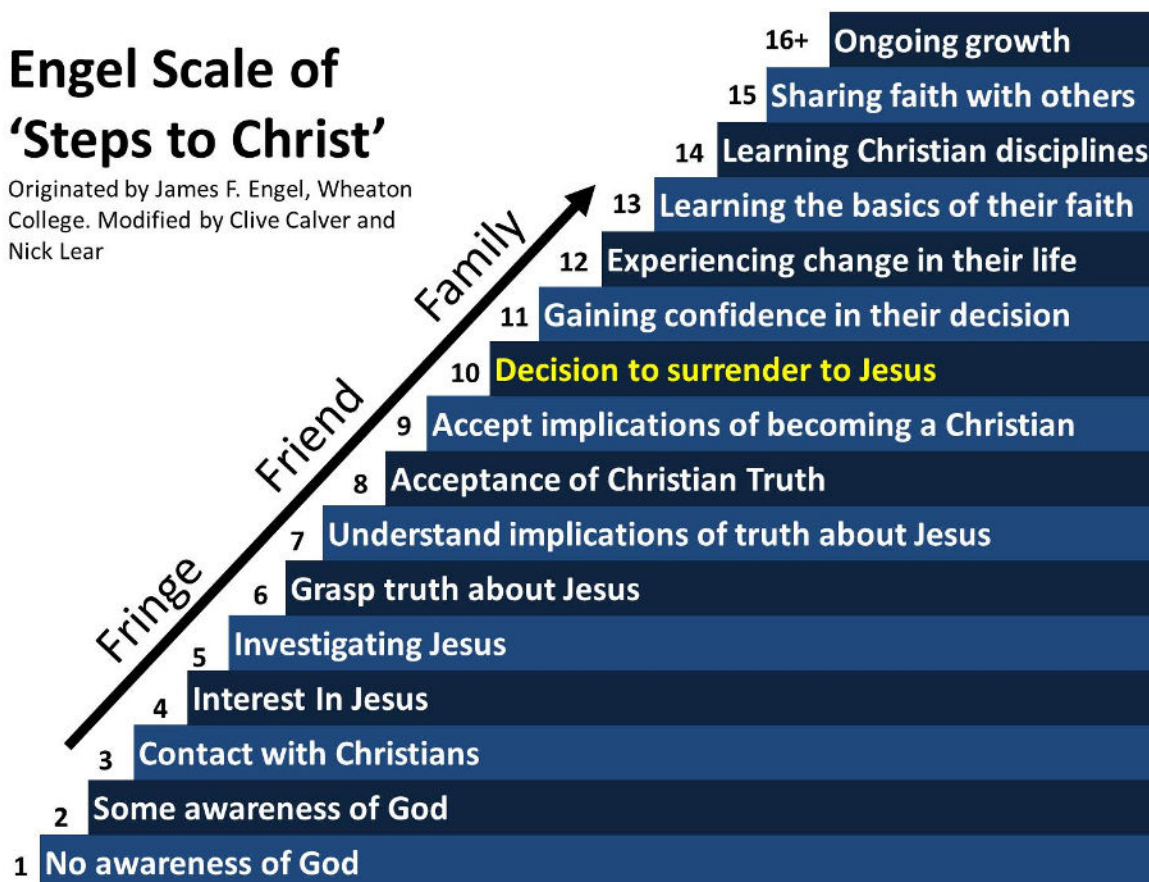
"Evangelism is a process. Sociologist James Engel captures the process of evangelism in the Engel Scale (a variation is shown below). Engel recognized that people are at different stages of belief. His scale delineates the necessity of discerning where a person is spiritually before sharing the gospel.

To determine where a person is on the path of faith, determine: *Does a person believe in a Supreme Being? Do they have some awareness of the gospel and understand its fundamentals and implications? Do they have personal needs and problems? What is their attitude -- negative forward faith, or seeking repentance and acceptance?*

Evangelism is the process of moving a person from one stage of belief to the next. Some people experience sudden conversions, but most come to know Christ the same way they get acquainted with others -- a step at a time. The ultimate goal is to lead a person to profess Christ and incorporate them into the church.

Christians do not fail when someone does not respond immediately to the love of Jesus. Be encouraged when people are simply in process and you can help them take the next step. A process-oriented evangelism allows unchurched persons time to analyze the gospel and its relevance to life.

From *The High Impact Church*, by Linus Morris, p. 199



TALK THE TALK - THE TESTIMONIES OF PAUL

	Acts 22:1-21	Acts 26:1-23
A. What were the circumstances surrounding this event? (You may have to scan previous chapters to find answers).		
B. Who was Paul addressing here?		
C. What was Paul saying? Write down the main points of his speech.		
D. What style did he use as he was sharing? What was his tone? His attitude?		
A. What similarities do you see in Paul's stories?		
B. What principles can you draw from these two incidents about how to tell others of your life in Christ? Identify at least three.	1. 2. 3.	

SHARING YOUR STORY WORKSHEET

Write your Story, and share with your tour leader

(Know your Audience and Setting)

Introduce yourself and the team

Transition

My Story

- Relate a personal story of faith, struggle, searching, awe and wonder, grace, hope, etc, and share how God is in that, OR
- What was your life like before Christ? What made you recognize a need for something different? How were you introduced to Christ? What is life like now with Christ?

Invitation to know the family

(“Get to know the team,” “Get to know me,” “Get to know Jesus”)

PRINCIPLES FOR SHARING YOUR STORY

1. Let them get to know you with your story.
2. Share yourself. Be open and honest, but with discernment. Be real. Share so that others can identify with your past and present experiences, so that they can relate to your story.
3. Be positive and joyful so that people will be attracted to this kind of life.
4. Be clear about how you came to know Jesus, or what Jesus has done for you: clear enough so that others could experience the same.
5. Use simple terms - share so that people can understand you. Do not use Christian jargon to a non-Christian. Keep your story short and sweet.
6. Where you can, speak with pictures or illustrations. Christ often used parables, and the great teachers that I know always use illustrations from everyday life.
7. Don't:
 - "preach".
 - be too wordy.
 - mention church denominations, or terms that imply political/social connotations.
 - speak negatively toward anyone or any group.

MORE PRINCIPLES (from Past Bible Lessons)

1. **Teach the truth (Be Biblically-based).**
2. **Keep words simple and clear.**
3. **Don't manipulate moods (let the truth speak for itself).**
4. **Speak with power, boldness and confidence in your message, and kindness in your presentation.**
5. **Realize it's the Spirit that calls people to Him.**
6. **Use the power of prayer when sharing.**
Ask your teammates to pray for you as you speak to others.

SPRINKLING THE SALT

In questions:

Respond with the salt of the gospel, or return unseasoned questions with a salty one.

In derisions:

Focus on real issues, and don't get sidetracked by secondary concerns. Bring conversations back to the salt of Jesus Christ.

In commendations:

Give the glory to God through Christ. Acknowledge His role in your accomplishment.



"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Colossians 3:5-6

"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."

I Peter 3:15

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."

Matthew 5:13

Tool #1

One Verse Message Romans 6:23

For (this explains everything)

but (contrast)

the **Wages** (payment for work done,
what we deserve)

of **Sin** (missing the mark, guilt)

is **Death** (spiritual death =
forever separation
from God)

the **Gift** (given without owing, free)

of **God** (the source of the gift)

Is **Eternal Life** (physical presence
and
spiritual relationship)

Through Christ Jesus (its only by Him)

Our Lord (our response is to follow Him)

One Verse Message John 3:16

For God so loved the world
(ultimate love)

That He gave His one and only son
(God's sacrifice for us)

That whoever believes in Him
(saving faith, trust, belief, follow)

Shall not perish
(will not be punished for what is deserved)

But have eternal life
(will enjoy life and fellowship with God forever)

One Verse Message

GOOD NEWS

BAD NEWS

GOOD NEWS

YOU CHOOSE

Tool #2

THE GAME OF LIFE

FIRST QUARTER:

*God had a game plan
The world was to worship Him
He would provide for us and love us.*

SECOND QUARTER:

*Things went awry
God still held to His part, but
Mankind went out of control*

Halftime, time to regroup.

THIRD QUARTER:

*Plan B / Adjustments
Life is still salvageable
God sacrificed His Son for us*

FOURTH QUARTER

*Game/Life on the line. How do we respond?
(include assurances of salvation)*

Write down some verses that will help you to share your faith with others.
These are some examples. (You don't need to know all, just one per column.)

1st Quarter - God's Intention	2nd Quarter State of Sin	3rd Quarter Christ's work	4th Quarter Response	Final Horn - Assurance
<i>John 3:16 He loves us</i>	<i>Rom. 3:23 all have sinned</i>	<i>1 Tim 2:5-6 One mediator</i>	<i>John 1:12 children of God</i>	<i>1 John 5:12-13 you may know you have life</i>
<i>1 John 4:10 life of peace. .</i>	<i>Rom 6:23 wages are death</i>	<i>1 Pet. 3:18</i>	<i>Rev. 3:20 door and knock</i>	<i>Rom. 8:31-39 nothing will separate us</i>
<i>John 10:10 life abundant</i>	<i>Heb. 9:27 judgement</i>	<i>Rom. 5:8 While sinners. .</i>	<i>Rom. 10:9,13 call on his name</i>	
<i>Jer. 29:11 plan and purpose</i>		<i>Eph. 2:8-9 grace to heaven</i>	<i>Eph. 2:8-9</i>	
		<i>Titus 3:5</i>	<i>John 3:3</i>	

Tool #3

WALKTHROUGH OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS – A GOSPEL STORY

BACKGROUND:

- a. It was written by the Apostle Paul.*
- b. It was written to Christians in Rome.*

THEME:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 6:23.

1. ALL HAVE SINNED.

- a. What is sin?
 - 1. Failure to acknowledge God. - Romans 1:18-21.
 - 2. Failure to keep His commands. - Romans 2:21-24.
- b. No one is without sin. - Romans 3:10-12.

2. GOD'S PLAN FOR US THROUGH CHRIST.

- a. The righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. - Romans 3:21-24.
- b. A Description of Faith. - Romans 4:21-22.
- c. We are declared righteous in front of God. - Romans 4:23-25.

3. THE RESULTS OF FAITH IN CHRIST.

- a. We have peace, access to God, joy, hope. - Romans 5:1-2.
- b. Suffering can not get us down. - Romans 5:3-5.
- c. We become God's friends. - Romans 5:6-11.
- d. There is no condemnation. - Romans 8:1-2.
- e. We have eternal life. - Romans 8:11, 10:9.

4. WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE?

- a. Believe in Jesus as Lord. - Romans 10:9, 13.
- b. No longer live in sin. - Romans 6:1-2.

5. GOD'S ASSURANCE TO US.

- a. God works for the good of those who love Him. - Romans 8:28.
- b. Nothing will separate us from the love of God. - Romans 8:31-39.

Tool #4

God meets your needs

We all have a need to:	God fills those needs in us:
Feel special (Have you ever felt insignificant, that you don't matter?)	God made you unique. Matthew 10:29-31
Feel loved (Have you ever felt unloved, even hated?)	God loves you, fully and unconditionally. John 3:16, Romans. 8:38-39
Feel we belong (Have you ever felt out of place, that you don't fit in anywhere?)	God welcomes you into His family. John 1:12
Feel we have meaning, have a purpose. (Have you ever asked: "Why am I here", "What am I doing with my life?")	God has a wonderful plan for you. Jeremiah 29:11

BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US,
we can learn to love God, ourselves, our family, our community, the world.
I John 4:19

COMMUNICATION

The Revolutionary Communicator: Principles Jesus used to Impact, Connect and Lead.

(by Jedd Medefind and Erik Lokkesmoe)

1. **Attentiveness**: Show a sincere concern for those with whom we communicate.
2. **Seeking Connections**: Find something they can relate to: on their turf and in their terms.
3. **Asking Questions (then listen)**: Start a listening revolution – Ask lots of questions, and hear and process their answers.
4. **Be Authentic**: Give your audience a taste of what's real in your life.
5. **Storytelling**: Jesus told stories to explain well and communicate.
6. **Break Through Filters**: Seek to know, understand, and meet their needs.
Understand what keeps them from hearing you.
7. **Solitude**: Enjoy your time with people, but also find time away from the crowd to decompress, evaluate, regenerate, and reconnect with God.
8. **Defining Success**: God is the one who changes lives. We are called to be loving and obedient.

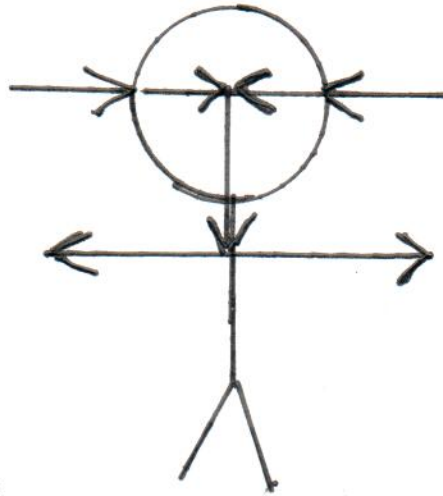
The Journey of Connection

Even after all the sacrifice and effort, no doubt there will be times when attempts to meet a person in their space are met with rejection. Such was the experience of Jesus.

But Jesus approach requires the long-term view. In the long view, we do see in Jesus' life everything that we could have hoped for; immeasurable effect upon human souls, devoted friends who would ultimately give their lives for him, and shockwaves sent through history itself.

The people around you, all of them, have deep need of what you now have to offer. They need you to meet them on their turf and in their terms. They require attention, authenticity, stories that can rouse them to new truth and weave meaning from their tangled lives. You are now equipped to be that person.

MODEL OF COMMUNICATION: HOW A MESSAGE IS RECEIVED



Levels of Communication:

A message has to go

- to ears (hear it)*
- to head (understand it)*
- to heart (be motivated by it, or feel it)*
- to hands (act on it)*

Filters:

Each of these interfaces have filters:

Ear filter - the listener may not be paying attention, bored, not interested

Mind filter - the listener may have a bias against what is being taught.

- the listener may lack knowledge to understand

- the listener may be distracted.

Heart filter - the listener may not believe that the message applies to him.

- the listener may not be able to relate his life experiences to yours.

Action filter - the listener may not have practice in the action, or may not

have the resources necessary to perform the action.

We all have filters. Break through someone's filters by seeking to know, understand and meet their needs.

Perceptions:

What one person perceives to be true, whether it is actually true or not, is true to him.

In communication, know and understand people's perceptions, then you will know where they are coming from.