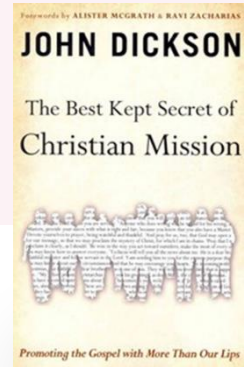




# LEADER'S GUIDE

## THE BEST KEPT SECRET OF CHRISTIAN MISSION BY JOHN DICKSON



*"But perhaps the best kept secret of Christian mission is that the Bible lists a whole range of activities that promote Christ to the world and draw others toward Him."*

**JOHN DICKSON**

### THEMES

Christian Values

Evangelism

Faith and Works

Ministry and Missions

Prayer

### BOOK SUMMARY

John opens the book with his 'Confessions of an Evangelist'. These few short pages pack a punch and challenge a lot of what we believe to be true of evangelism and how to share the Gospel. While confessing his own tendency to enter into 'evangelism mode', becoming a 'bible thumper', or becoming so self-conscious that the joy of sharing the Gospel is robbed, he begins to shed light on the better way to share Jesus; the natural, joyful, and Holy Spirit inspired way. It is a unique way for each of us. Being an 'Evangelist' is a Holy Spirit gifting which not all Christians are blessed with, yet sharing our faith whenever the opportunity arises, is required from us all, and the Lord will equip us.

We share the Gospel because God is the one true God who is worthy of our worship. We share the Gospel because we desire to speak loving truth into people's lives. We share the Gospel because we desire to follow the 'friend of sinners' example, who role modelled fellowship with all kinds of people, especially the broken-hearted, oppressed, and mistreated in society.

There are many activities that promote Christ to the world and draw others towards Him, including;

- Prayer; evangelism is founded in heartfelt prayer. "The most basic gospel promoting task is not evangelism; it is prayer to the Lord of the harvest" (p62).
- Godly behaviour; we are lights to the world - our good deeds shine out for all to see and show Jesus to others. How we live day-by-day matters because we represent Christ to the world.
- Public praise of God; the humble church service is a powerful promotion of the good news of Christ.

- Providing answers to questions; what exactly is the Gospel? How do we succinctly share this with others in an easy to understand and engaging language? We must always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have.
- Financial assistance; if we are financially supporting the work of the Gospel, we are full partners in this task.

All the above activities are 'mission' based, yet only a few involve the lips at all. Wrapping it all up, John provides helpful answers to common questions and comments we might be asked from non-believers under 'gospel bites'.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1

Q. What is *The Best kept secret of Christian Mission*?

### TALKING POINTS

Many activities promote Christ to the world and draw others towards Him, including;

- Prayer
- Godly behaviour
- Public praise of God
- Providing answers to questions
- Sharing testimonies
- Financial assistance

2

Q. Why do you believe it's important to share the Gospel with others?

### TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- So people can spend eternity in heaven worshipping God.
- So people won't go to Hell.
- So people can be in relationship with their Creator.
- So people can live transformed lives.

What John says;

- The fundamental reason to share the Gospel with others is that God is worthy of praise and allegiance among people (p33).
- "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name" (Psalm 96:8).

3

Q. John says, "We are the means by which, through God's Spirit, others hear the call to 'come home' to the Father. We are Christ's photos" (p59).

As we examine our hearts, behaviours, attitudes, and role modelling, do you believe that the image you portray to the world radiates Jesus?

## TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- All my friends and family know I am a Christian.
- I am not perfect, but I do try my hardest to represent Christ in all that I do and say, no matter the company I am with.
- I do not have any non-Christian friends; all my friends are from the Church.
- My non-Christian friends do not know I am a Christian.
- I need help to represent Christ to others better.
- I have found areas in my life where I am not a good representation of Christ.

Points to think about;

- Do people know that we are Christians? Do we tell them about or show them Jesus?
- Do our actions support our Christian values and beliefs? Are we living in God honouring ways?
- Do we participate in worldly things with our worldly friends? Perhaps living 'double' lives which may not reflect Christ?
- Do we participate in 'God talk', casually and comfortably sharing our faith in everyday conversations?

This is an opportunity for us to repent of our sin and to ask the Holy Spirit to empower us to live more God honouring and righteous lives, not only for our own benefit and spiritual growth - but because of the witness our lives are to others.

# 4

Q. "If the fundamental gospel promoting activity is hidden from us, it's clear, that involvement of God's mission requires more faith than activism, dependence more than programs, and humility more than boldness" (p75). How do you think we, as the Church, execute this?

## TALKING POINTS

Points to consider while discussing this question;

- Evangelism is founded in heartfelt prayer.
- Prayer is the crucial foundation of missions.
- Often, we can become caught up in the programs or doing 'all the things', that we neglect the most fundamental aspect of missions; prayer.
- Programs can become a priority over people, instead of people first and then the programs.
- We can work out of the misconception that what we do, or do not do, can save a person's soul, forgetting only the Lord can save.
- Compassionate and regular prayer for all unsaved people is crucial and pleasing to the Lord, who wants all people to be saved and know the truth.

Ensure the conversation remains life-giving through verbalising constructive feedback only. Do not allow anyone to openly berate the Church or people involved. These questions focus on finding new ways to encourage one another to become more prayer and people-focused.

# 5

Q. Before reading this book, did you realise the importance and impact your financial assistance has in promoting the Gospel? If you do not yet financially support the Gospel, why might it be worth considering?

## TALKING POINTS

- If we are financially supporting the Gospel, we are full partners in this task.
- Money given for the Gospel is an act of worship.
- Our resources are a gift from God.
- Our resources are not purely for our own use but should also be used to bless others.
- Tithing is simply giving our first 10% back to God, knowing everything we have is His to begin with.
- Tithing and generosity with our resources protect our hearts from the love of money.
- Tithing and generosity put God before our finances in our hearts.
- Tithing and generosity welcome God into our financial situation. It welcomes His sovereignty over our finances, and because of this, we are abundantly blessed.

# 6

Q. John reminds us that it is crucial to quickly and effectively share the 'Gospel Story'. What are some key points to include while sharing the Gospel with others?

## TALKING POINTS

'Gospel Story' (in short form page 117);

- Jesus identity as the Christ.
- Jesus saving death.
- Jesus burial.
- Jesus resurrection.
- Jesus appearance to witnesses.
- Based on 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

# 7

Q. John discusses four common characteristics of Evangelists (p150-152). Do you see any of these traits in yourself?

## TALKING POINTS

The four common characteristics of Evangelists (pages 150-152) are;

- Keen to share the Gospel.
- Relates well to non-believers.
- Is a mature Christian.
- Able to clearly present the Gospel (without biblical jargon).

Points to consider while discussing this question;

- God's word does not teach that every Christian is an evangelist, but we must all be willing to share our faith in Christ with others.

- Ephesians 4:8-12 discusses separate groups of workers within the body of Christ and allocates the role of 'Evangelist', suggesting it is a role gifted to a few.
- Evangelists are among Christ's gift to the Church, "to equip people for works of service, so that the body may be built up" (p149).

## 8

Q. Often, when we share our faith, we can find ourselves fearful of saying or doing the wrong thing. John reminds us, "... Don't rush off to find an evangelist! Say what you know about the life, death and resurrection" (p177). Have you ever felt that God should have chosen someone else to share His story, maybe someone more 'charismatic' or 'qualified' than yourself?

### TALKING POINTS

Points to consider while discussing this question;

- Sharing the Gospel is about so much more than just our words; our Godly lives, acts of kindness, and role modelling of the Christian faith can often speak much louder than our words and are a fantastic method of sharing the Gospel.
- "It's not enough to know the truth; one must also embrace the privilege of explaining and defending the truth to those who don't believe" (p174).
- We must always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have, but always with respect and kindness.

How can we feel more prepared to share?

- Follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for guidance as we speak or share.
- Pray for opportunities to share our faith, expecting that the Lord will equip us and bless our words as they reflect Him and His story.
- Understand what we believe and read our Bible regularly.
- Be able to refer to scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.
- Regularly read and review our 'gospel points' summary to keep them fresh in our minds and hearts.

## 9

Q. 'God Talk' (p182) is brief, casual, passing references to the faith in everyday conversations. What God talk have you added into your conversations with non-Christians since reading this book?

### TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- Mentioning attendance to Church on Sundays.
- Offering to pray for those who are suffering.
- Inviting your non-Christian friends to hang out with your friends from Church.
- Incorporating scripture into your conversations where appropriate.

This may be an excellent opportunity to encourage those who may feel shy or fearful to begin some 'God talk' if they haven't already.

## 10

Q. Out of the following, which Gospel Promoting activity do you feel led to pursue?

- Flexible Social Relationships
- Financial Support of the Gospel

- Prayer
- Good works
- Praise of God
- Answering for the Faith
- Evangelist works

## TALKING POINTS

Allow each woman to share (if they are comfortable) which activity they would like to pursue. This can lead to a time of prayer and thanksgiving. You may want to structure your prayer to include the following;

- Thanksgiving and praise for the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Repentance and the desire for clean hearts, minds, and lives which can represent Jesus and shine His light to those around us.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to provide opportunities to share the good news, as well as the development of spiritual gifts, wisdom, and grace, to respond in a way that sows fruitful seeds and honours God.

Conclude the prayer with any other needs, requests, or praise points from within the group.



## ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR LEADERS

If you would like to continue your study of "The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission", you can find more helpful resources by following these links;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAU\\_FwfUZmg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAU_FwfUZmg) (Video introductions for each chapter by John Dickson)

<https://zondervanacademic-cdn.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/blog/2015/09/Best-Kept-Secret-Christian-Mission-Guide.pdf> (Zondervan Academic Book Guide)

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