

## 2 TIMOTHY

THE GOSPEL: DO IT



## TEACH IT TALK SESSION 5

This talk guide is just that: a guide. It's not intended to be a manuscript to read aloud. It's here to give you ideas, structure, and stories to blend with your personal study (Prep It) as you prepare your talk.

The content complements the other Teach It guides and allows you to give a talk on the same topic students are studying in other settings, such as small groups, without too much overlap.

### 1. Materials (Optional)

A video clip of a game-winning, buzzer-beater shot. You can find this by searching YouTube or another video sharing Web site with key words such as *buzzer-beater last second*. For a video with a good local high school flare, search with *winning shot Sutherland Knights*.

### 2. Optional Openings

#### VISUAL ILLUSTRATION

Show a buzzer-beater clip from YouTube—or any clip of a victory in the final seconds of a sports event. Talk for a minute or two about how exciting this moment was to the crowd. Then ask your group—

**How much do you care about who won this game?**

Continue with—

**The answer is probably “not much.” The end of a game isn't too exciting when you don't know any of the players or the history of the team. It's infinitely more exciting if you're into the sport, know the players, or have followed the team all year. But if you're not a fan, you're not that interested. It's still an exciting moment, but because it doesn't relate to you or your interests, you just don't care.**

**This is how nonbelievers sometimes view Christians who are excited to talk about the gospel.**

#### QUOTATIONS

Share a few of these quotes to introduce the concept that questions are good—and that finding out the questions our friends are asking can help us share with them the answers that matter.

**The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.**  
—Albert Einstein (1879-1955, German physicist and mathematician)

**If you ask the wrong question, of course, you get the wrong answer. We find [...] it's much more important and difficult to ask the right question. Once you do that, the right answer becomes obvious.**

—Amory Lovins (1947-present, American environmentalist and Rocky Mountain Institute CEO)



**He who asks is a fool for five minutes, but he who does not ask remains a fool forever.**  
—Chinese Proverb

**Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers.**  
—Tony Robbins (1960-present, American motivational expert and best-selling author)

**Historians are like deaf people who go on answering questions that no one has asked them.**  
—Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910, Russian writer and philosopher; author of *War and Peace*)

**No man really becomes a fool until he stops asking questions.**  
—Charles Steinmetz (1865-1923, American mathematician and electrical engineer)

### PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story about a friend who was obsessed with a hobby you weren't all that excited about. Here's an example:

**I used to have a friend who was really into drumming. He carried drum sticks with him to school, to movies, out to eat—he always had those sticks. You might ask most people, “What’s with the drum sticks?” But you’d only ask Mike if he *didn’t* have them with him. He was just obsessed with drums. He even read drum magazines. I had no idea those even existed.**

**So we’d sit at a restaurant, and he’d start playing the table with his sticks. He’d play the dashboard of my car. He’d play the inside of the elevator doors. He’d literally bang those sticks on any surface; it didn’t matter to him. And when he couldn’t “play” the drums, he’d talk about drums. He’d talk about new drums he wanted. He’d talk about drum competitions, famous drummers, jazz drumming, band drumming, steel drums, anything drum-related. He had it so bad that he’d even try to set up conversations that revolved around drumming. I was around him more than once when he asked someone if they had any hobbies. He then asked if they were into music and what instrument they played. He did all this so he could lead into a drumming conversation. Obsession was his middle name.**

**So you can imagine how excited he was when he’d saved up enough money to finally get his dream kit—a set like the one used by Neal Peart, the drummer for the group Rush. It was the ultimate in classic rock drum sets. You’d have thought someone had just handed him a new car. He was glowing with excitement. He was so fired up and couldn’t understand why the rest of us didn’t want to drop what we were doing to run over and see his drums. It wasn’t even in his realm of possibility that everybody wouldn’t be incredibly excited that he had these drums. The thing is, we weren’t all that excited. We just weren’t that interested in drums.**

### OPTIONAL MIX-INS

You may want to point out some background on 2 Timothy:

*-Did you ever notice that the word gospel contains the word go?*

*-Within a few decades of Jesus’ life on earth, his followers saw the early signs of the gospel message being distorted by errant teachers and sects. Measures were taken to warn Jesus’ followers of these distortions and to articulate the tenets of Jesus’ message.*

*-In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul laid out exactly what this foundational message (the gospel) consists of: Jesus died, was buried, rose again on the third day, appeared to many, ascended to the Father, and now he “appears” to us and offers us the grace of God.*

*-In 2 Timothy Paul shows us what Christ’s followers are responsible to do with this message: protect it and pass it on to others.*

### 3. Digging In

Continue with—

**I’ve seen the “Jesus is the Answer” bumper sticker many times while driving down the highway. For years that sticker always struck me as funny. “So what’s the question?” I’d ask. “What does**



two plus two equal?” Jesus? That answer doesn’t add up. “Who was the first president of the United States?” Jesus? Nope, that’s not right. Knowing that Jesus is the answer doesn’t mean much to a generation of people who aren’t asking the right question.

So what we might want to figure out is, what questions are they asking? Who are my friends, relatives, and neighbors that seem to be looking for more? Who are the people in my life that I’ve built enough of a relationship with that they would ask me the deeper questions?

Ultimately I think we’re all looking for more life, more purpose, more direction. If I can start pursuing conversations that go a little deeper than the Packers game last weekend, maybe it’s possible that people will actually talk to me about their search for more. Maybe if I could talk about things that really matter to people, *they’ll* eventually start talking about the things that really matter to them. Maybe our friendships will deepen. Maybe we’ll have one of those 2 a.m. conversations where you dig into the stuff that’s really been working on your brain. Maybe, just maybe, we’ll eventually stumble across the question, “What’s the most important thing in this life?” And then we can talk about the answer.

#### 4. Taking It Inward

Continue with—

Way back before the Internet era, people in offices would pass around funny photocopies (the precursor to today’s email “forwards”). Soon you’d be passing around the copy of a copy of a copy of a copy. Things would get pretty distorted over time, and before long, you could hardly read the piece of paper or make out the drawing that was supposed to be so funny.

Just like the first generation of Christians, every generation has to ask: *What if what I’m getting about God or Jesus is a copy of a copy of a copy? What if the info I’m getting isn’t even true to the original anymore? Think about it: What would happen to the world if the foundational message about Jesus—the message we call the gospel, the good news—got lost or distorted or twisted over time?* It’s pretty easy to talk about the gospel when you know what it is. But are we making sure we’re talking about the true message, or is it just what someone else has passed along to us?

In 2 Timothy Paul gives us several instructions on what to do with the gospel:

- Don’t be ashamed of it (1:8).
- Be willing to suffer for it (1:8).
- Keep it as the pattern of sound teaching (1:13).
- Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit (1:14).
- Entrust it to reliable men so that they can teach it to others (2:2).

Did you notice that none of these instructions are an out-and-out command to go tell someone about the gospel? Granted, we should do this whenever God gives the opportunity. But sometimes we get the cart before the horse. We give people the answer when they’re not even asking the question. And then you know what they see instead of the gospel? Pushy people. Obnoxious people. People they’ll run from the next time the word *Jesus* comes up.

Picture yourself during a normal day, any time from, say, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Picture all of the people you interact with during that stretch of time. Now imagine yourself interacting with these people, but actually doing with the gospel what Paul says to do in 2 Timothy: You’re willing to hurt a little for the sake of it. You’re keeping it by spending time in Scripture and seeking to interact with people based on what Scripture says. You’re guarding it by standing up to philosophies that seek to undermine the message of the gospel. You’re entrusting it to anyone who’s curious about it. You’re not ashamed of it. As you interact in these ways, there’s a good

chance that someone is going to ask you that question, “What really is the most important thing in this life?” And there’s an even better chance that you’ll have a great answer—and best yet, it will be the *right* answer.

If we stay focused on what 2 Timothy tells us to do with the gospel—keep it, guard it, entrust it, don’t be ashamed of it—all we need to do is listen for opportunities to share about the gospel. Then when we share, we are more likely to convey accurate information about the gospel and play a vital part in passing along its message—in keeping it, guarding it, and entrusting it to others. But we need to listen for the opportunities.

## 5. Wrapping It Up

Finish with—

Every once in a while, you’ll hear about a political candidate going on a listening campaign. It might be a U.S. Representative heading back to his or her district to listen to constituents or a presidential candidate getting on a bus and going across the country to hear what’s on the minds of citizens. A listening tour gives the impression that the politician won’t be out there creating spin or making promises. He or she is just listening. And people want to be listened to.

Maybe we need to go on a listening tour of our friends. Let’s commit to do two things over the next few days:

1. Guard and keep the gospel in our lives by seeking to know the message better.
2. Listen to the people around us, and wait for them to ask the question.

Let’s do a lot less talking and a lot more guarding, growing, and listening. And let’s see what happens this week.