

# R Borgonon The Word One to One 20140616c

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Preacher: R Borgonon

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you again for coming. You've been in the city of New York, I understand you've been there for 40 years. 40 years this August, yeah. Doing what? I'm in the insurance business, so I'm at Lloyd's of London. And still there now? Still there now. Very good. And that time, all that time you've been a Christian? Almost 40 years?

Yep, I started as a teenager Christian in the city in 1974. Two years before I was born. That really helps me. I was a lot taller then as well, Paul, so.

What would you say is the biggest thing you've learned in those 40 years as a Christian in the city? Well, I'd like to take you back, not to the 40th year, but actually about the 33rd year. And the reason I want to say that is I'd like you to get a snapshot of what I was like seven years ago. I would describe myself as a card-carrying member of the Christian Rotting Sponge Party.

Now what do I mean by that? I mean that I'd had a fantastic Christian education. Which means a guy like you could stand up and preach and I'd stand there and I'd go, oh yeah, 5.9 for presentation. Absolutely excellent. 6.0 for accuracy of Bible teaching. Absolutely right. In other words, I knew all the right answers, but I wasn't giving out.

[ 1 : 15 ] So just like a sponge when you leave it in the bucket, when you wash the car and it rots out, or you leave it under the sink, under the sink in the pool of water and it rots out.

I was taking in, but where was I giving out? My sponge needed a really good squeeze. And the thing that changed it, we're going to get on to in a second. But the other thing I want to tell you about, and I am not proud about this, is I was the king of warm conversations.

Let me describe that. If I got to the end of a day and I thought, marvellous, I've managed to mention Jesus today. I'll tell you what I was really doing. I was doing this.

I was going to bed at night thinking, well then Richard, you mentioned Christ today. But where do those conversations go? And the answer is, they went very, very little distance at all.

Because what was I doing? I was effectively saying, I've got the cure for cancer and I feel great. Now that doesn't really help you if someone's got the cancer, does it?

[ 2 : 19 ] You actually need to be able to explain how you've been cured. And the reality is that I think most of us spend our Christian lives coming to church, good thing to do. Going to Bible studies, good thing to do.

Taking in, where do we give out? And the change for me happened when I ended up doing what I thought was the cracking of evangelism.

A friend of mine is Professor John Lennon. He is the man that takes on Richard Dawkins. And I had a very senior city friend of mine who I managed to convince to actually have dinner with Professor John Lennon.

Cracked it. Evangelism done. My job, I bring in the professional. The professional does the talking. Guy gets converted. I go home. Okay? Now, I want to stop there for a second because I want to tell you what I think we've been doing in churches recently.

And you saw Rico Tice who wrote Christianity Explored who is a massive supporter of everything I'm going to tell you about tonight. The danger with where we've gone in the last ten years in particular with Alpha and with Christianity Explored is that we folks sitting in the pews, in the chairs in church, have actually thought our job was to simply get our friend along to an evangelistic event or get our friend along to go on a Christianity Explored course.

[ 3 : 39 ] There you go. Here's the ball. Paul Levy. It's now in your court. You're the professional. You do evangelism. I don't do it. My job's over. Well, I sat there through not one dinner with this very senior friend of mine with Professor Lennox.

I sat through two dinners. Seven hours of debate. And, of course, Lennox is phenomenal. So I'll tell you what those debates were like.

It was like watching someone, my mate is six foot four, he's 20 stone, he's built like a tank, and he fires an AKAC gun all the time. So all he did is he sat there and he fired questions at Lennox all the night, twice, seven hours.

And Lennox, it was like watching a mismatched Wimbledon match because Lennox just aced the ball straight back over the net and my friend didn't understand the answer. Just didn't. And I got to the end of the seven hours, and of course, as a Christian, I'd been praying for those dinners to happen.

I couldn't believe it. This was a major guy in my industry sitting down discussing Christianity. Of course I'd been praying that would happen. And I found myself saying to him, thanks very much for these dinners, I don't want to do another one.

[ 4 : 49 ] And he looked at me as if I'd gone stark raving mad. And he said, why? So I love it when you bring John down from Oxford University. Why don't you want to do another one? And I said, the truth is, mate, you're biblically ignorant.

Now can I stop you right there and just point out something? I knew my friend well enough to tell him he was biblically ignorant. And that is a clue to what we're talking about because every single one of us has got private, personal relationships.

That is your ministry. You see, in churches, and I go to lots of churches now, the number of churches I find that have got a motto which says, reach, reach people for the Lord, build them as Christians, send them out.

Well, I was a senior Christian guy who for years had been sitting in the pew going, reach, great. Build, absolutely. Send, I'll even help pay for it.

But let's send someone else because you can't be talking about me. I've just got, I'll help. I'll help send. But not me. No, every single one of us has got a ministry to have in his own or her own right.

[ 5 : 58 ] Because every single one of you have got friendships and connections that I haven't got. You've got them. And the Lord has placed you where you are. And the mouthless thing about what I'm going to tell you tonight is that you're going to discover you're just a pawn in his game.

Because he's been working in lives around you that you haven't got a clue about. And we'll get back to that in a second. So there we are. There's my mate on one side, flabbergasted that I've been so rude to say you're biblically ignorant.

And I said to him, look, the truth is, why don't we get John back and just get him to open the Bible? I was as vague as that. I didn't say a gospel. I simply said, open the Bible.

And then you can see what it actually says. And much to my disbelief, he agreed. Because he was so flabbergasted I just called him biblically ignorant. So we had a third dinner. And I always get emotional at this point because what I saw I will never forget to my dying day.

My friend John Lennox brought John chapter 1, the Gospel of John. And off went the Akak gun for verse 1. For verse 2, for verse 3.

[ 7 : 03 ] But at verse 4, ladies and gentlemen, it jammed. My friend dropped his drawer metaphorically to the table. And it stayed there for the rest of the evening.

Because for the first time in his life, someone had shown him what the Bible actually said. And he understood it. And it was not what he expected it to be. And he sat there, gobsmacked, for the rest of the evening.

Now I rushed back to my church and to my minister, William Taylor, and said, You know I've never taught the Bible in my life. I'm 52 years old and I've never taught the Bible.

Can you please teach me how to teach this book John? Because I've just seen it floor Europe's most powerful insurance broker. He was speechless. And that's how these notes came about.

Because I couldn't remember what William was teaching me. So I started to write it down. And I also found it really helpful to have something with me to be able to show my friend.

[ 8 : 03 ] So that we were both looking at the same thing. So what you end up with is a pack like this. It has two book ones, two book twos, and two book threes. And we've got some open here for you to actually see.

So what you would do is you would hand book one. May I have book one? And then you would go through book one piece by piece with your friend. Only when they finish that, you get book two. You never give it to them in advance.

You only ever hand them the book that you're working on. And you actually ask, Please don't read ahead. Let's do this together. That's a key thing. And then when you finish the first four chapters of John, And we didn't care how many booklets this took, You then pick up the booklets for chapters 5 to 10.

They're green. And then when you finish chapters 5 to 10, You pick up the booklets for 11 to 17.

And on July the 4th, out will come the blue booklets, Which do chapters 18 to 21.

So is this a course? No. It's not a course. It's more a way of life. Actually. What you're going to become is living church to your friends.

[9:10] You see, if you think about it, All I'm going to be able to say, All I'm suggesting you say to your friend is, Have you ever read the Bible? That book that sold more copies than any other in the history of mankind.

Have you ever read the Bible? Would you like to read it with me? Just for an hour. Just to see what you think. Have a cup of coffee. Read it. See what you think. And all I'm going to say at the end of it is, Did you enjoy that?

Would you like to meet again? Now, what I'd like to do straight away to show to you that every single one of you can do this, Is we're going to put up some of the pages from the booklet on the screen, And I'm going to go through it with you.

Because people say to me, Oh, I could never do this. I promise you, you can. In fact, I can guarantee you can. Because after nine months of these booklets now being out, We're getting all the feedbacks.

These booklets are being used by old age pensioners. Absolutely adore them. They have coffee with their friends. I got a phone call from Hove the other day. A gentleman who's 88 years old is now doing it for the second set of seven friends.

[10:12] Teenagers, youth groups, boys' brigades, wives at home having coffees with their friends. In fact, the girls have stripped us out too quickly, Because they actually meet every other day if we're not careful.

Whereas we business boys tend to meet once every three to four weeks. You girls meet and you go, That's great. Should we see you tomorrow? Yeah, absolutely. You'll meet tomorrow. So let's actually have a look at what this looks like on the page.

Now, we're going to have a slight problem because that page is... I need the whole page if you can get it. Yeah, shrink it down. Can you actually read that?

Oh, no, you're not. Okay. Well, let me tell you what it says because I'm literally going to do what that page says. So if you could have read it, what you'd be doing is simply turning to what is effectively the first session.

There's a one in the right-hand corner. And we start by simply saying this. And everything I'm going to say to you, bar a few things, are in the booklets. The first thing to note, if only you could, This is denim blue.

[11:16] Surround. Prisoners wear blue. Denim blue. Princes wear denim blue. When we did this, we were begged to come up with something that absolutely everyone would feel comfortable with.

And they have. That's why they seem to be selling so incredibly quickly and being used so greatly. So this is something that hopefully you're going to find is really useful to have. So it starts by simply saying, look, it's a bit of a shock, but John's Gospel starts with an overview.

It's all about God coming to earth. And because it's an overview, the first 18 verses are actually quite compact. So we're going to have to take a little bit of time to unpack them.

There is a lot in this section, so don't be surprised that it's going to need some unpacking. And then it says on the right hand side, which you definitely can't read, and I need my glasses to read, You might find this a surprising start.

No angels, no Bethlehem, no stable, no baby Jesus, no wise men. You see, most people who say yes to meeting think they know what the Bible says. So it's a heck of a shock when they start in John, and there is no baby Jesus, there is no Bethlehem, because that isn't how John started his book.

[12:27] So you've immediately got a bit of a surprise. One of the eyebrows has gone up because this is not what they thought. Now when you go to the next slide, what you'll see very quickly, I'll hold up the original, is you get five verses only on the left hand side of the page.

This is not intense. The whole idea is that you're going to just go through a small chunk, verse by verse, with questions being raised on the right hand side, but the answers also being on the right hand side.

See, one of the things that Rico discovered in the last three or four years with Christianity Explored, is when he was going around and speaking, he couldn't understand when he got to the question session, he got no questions.

And we think the answer is, is that because now we all live in a Google age, we don't like making idiots of ourselves in public. We sit at home in front of our computers, and we ask the computer a question, and nobody says, you dummy, they simply get the answer.

So the answer here is to actually put, set up the questions that the passage raises, and then give you the answers from the passage, so that you get this in a way that is really easy to do.

[13:41] Very occasionally, like one in a hundred, you might find a friend who gets into this and starts going, no, don't tell me the answers, let's discuss it. One in a hundred. Most people actually want to go through this, and they will want to go through it with you probably doing most of the talking to start with.

It's going to be a bit like a book club. So it's not where it is something that becomes two-way initially to start with. What I often find is I might get to about the third or fourth session, and I've finished every single session with, did you enjoy that?

Would you like to meet again? I'm never presumptuous to expect somebody to meet again unless they say yes. And when I get to perhaps the third or fourth session, I go to my cup of coffee, and the magic words come out of my friend's lips, oh, I've really been looking forward to this, Richard. I've been thinking. And by now, they've begun to see how this goes. It's begun to get their grey cells going, and they now start to talk to you about what's actually in their mind.

Now here's where we're at as a people. We're not thinking about Christianity. We're not going on Christianity Explored Courses. Where we're at as a people is that we're sitting at home thinking, my marriage isn't what I thought it was going to be.

[14:59] My job is not doing what I thought. I haven't got the pleasure from the things I now own that I thought I was going to. I didn't get into the university that I thought I was going to.

In other words, we're not happy. It's not that we are actually thinking about Christianity. I'd express it more biblically in saying we're not at peace.

We now do lots of dinners to introduce people in the city to these notes. And I often walk around as I talk to people in the dinner about what this is like.

And I said to them one dinner, I walked past and I said, you know, guys, we know we've tried marriage, some of us, many times. And the poor man sitting next to you, I made eye contact, who nearly fell off his chair, he'd been married four times.

He knew that that wasn't the answer, that he thought it was going to be. And I walked through and the Bible talks about, you know, we've tried possessions. And the Bible describes about how we've built bigger barns.

[15:56] And one guy really fell off his chair. He was in the middle of building a bigger barn for his bigger car collection. He knew that that wasn't the answer, that it was going to be.

But I want to now take you through what this actually says. So John begins with, on the left hand side, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

So the question is, on the right hand side, look how often the phrase the Word is used. John stresses twice, the Word was there in the beginning.

So the next question is, understandably, what or who is the Word? Well, it says on the right hand side, verse 1, the Word was with God and was God. That's exactly what the first verse says.

It then changes, and it's really interesting to your friends, because verse 2 starts with a he. He was with God, and in the beginning. So, hang on a second, the Word is a person, which is exactly what it says on the right hand side.

[16:56] Verse 3 adds, the Word who is God and a person made everything. Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made. So we by now know, the Word was with God, was God, the Word is a person, the Word who is God and person made everything.

Now, just stop and plug the brain in. That is an outrageous claim. Your friend, you're sitting here as Christians, you know that that's true, but the reality of your friend is they have no clue that's what

the Bible actually says.

That is outrageous. There's not a document anywhere in the world that's going to make a claim that's as outrageous as that. And so what got my friend was, he got to verse 4, in him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I buy a car, I'm useless at reading the book. Absolutely terrible. My wife kills me all the time. I only get the booklet out when I can't get something to work. Well, here we have the instructions for life.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. That's what I got, my friend. Now, I'll step out for one second from what's on that page and tell you a story about the brightest guy I know who's been converted in doing this with me.

[18:17] His name's Martin. And we went through Bible studies for 18 months. Very busy bloke. And he finally got there, and I said to Martin, what was it that finally made you kneel at the foot of Christ?

A foot at the cross. And he said, Richard, you're not going to like this, because you just spent 18 months doing Bible study with me, but I never got over the first six words. In the beginning was the word.

And he said, that haunted me. And really, Richard, I don't remember anything you said. And that's the great joy for all of us in this room tonight. They don't remember what you say.

You see, I'll tell you what the Bible's like. This, like that, is useless. Utterly, completely useless. It props up bookshelves all over the country.

Most of them you could pick off the bookshelf and go, and blow the dust off it. Recently, there was a, and for those of you from Nashville, Lee Mack is a very funny comedian. There was a comedian called Lee Mack, who was on our program called Desert Island Disc, which for those in Nashville, is a program where you choose various records to take to a desert island.

[19:22] And at the end of choosing your records, they then say to you, you can have the Bible, and you can have Shakespeare, and then they say, what luxury would you like? And Lee Mack, the comedian, suddenly went really serious.

And he said something which Kirstie Young was really surprised at, because it's never happened in the entire 40-something years the program's been running. He said, I was thinking about this program, and I suddenly thought, if an alien came down to Earth and asked me, is there any book that would give me a guide to living as a human, I'd immediately say, yes, it's called the Bible.

And the obvious question from the alien would be, and what does it say? And of course he had to say, I haven't got a clue, because I've never read it. So his luxury was, please could he have some notes on the Bible to take to the island, so that he could understand the Word of God.

You see, I think that's where your friends are at. I repeat, they're not thinking about Christianity. Church is an anathema to them. They're not thinking of joining or coming to church. They're not thinking of going on a Christianity Explored course.

And they're not thinking of coming to an evangelistic event. What they are probably thinking is, I'm not at peace. And you're right, if there is one book, I would say it would be the Bible.

[20:47] And perhaps I ought to read it one day. You see, like that, useless, like that, well, I've got good news for you. This comes fully loaded with the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is absolute dynamite. And it is something that you can take and the words just sing off the pages to your friends. And it's not you that does it. The Holy Spirit does it. It is an empowered Word.

Fantastically powerful. Useless. Dynamic. Beyond all belief. If you want to see your Christian life take off, share this. But the problem is, if you walk out with this like this, it is incredibly daunting to your friends.

You see, you'll suddenly say, well, I'd like to talk about, you know, in Isaiah, I don't know, is Isaiah a place? Is Isaiah, where is Isaiah? I mean, I have no idea. And everything in life today, we're supposed to know what we, you know, we're supposed to know what we're doing.

So, even in the city, I find that this is something I definitely do not take with me. At least not to start with. Because it puts my friends off. These booklets, where do I put it?

[21:48] These booklets, are not threatening. Denim blue. Nice and warm and cuddly. And it just explains exactly what the word has to say.

So, let me just finish this page off. I'm come back in from having told you about Martin. It says down at the bottom here, this box here, the word existed before time, before creation, before the

beginning.

In short, he is eternal. They won't remember what you say. They will remember what the word says. As I don't know if you remember what Rico said, we are not all to be Bible teachers.

We are all to be Bible sharers. Don't worry about what you say. These words are going to be what they remember. We finish off on the right hand side.

What difference does the word make for life? Well, by now, on just two pages, we found out it's the source of life, verse 4, it's the answer for life, verse 4, and it's an eternal life.

[ 22 : 51 ] This makes sense if, as John has just claimed, the word is our creator. Now, your friend, their head is suddenly going, this coffee is not going the way I expected.

I'm hearing things that I didn't expect I was going to be hearing. And we finish the page with verse 5, Jesus is the light, and 2,000 years later, his light shines more brightly than ever before.

You see, the type of thing that you will know the right words for your friend to say, but at that point, the one thing I might add is just look at China. You know, in 1951, when Chairman Mao kicked all the missionaries out, the church thought it was a disaster.

Total disaster. That's it, China written off, the missionaries have had to leave. The truth is, when we got into China in the years of the last decade, we've discovered more Christians than members of the Chinese Communist Party.

Why? Because the missionaries left this. And the Chinese were smart enough to realize that that could open. And when they found it open, they didn't need the missionaries, God was there.

[ 24 : 03 ] And he sang to them straight off the pages. These notes have had exactly the same impact on the internet. We've got people who are contacting us to say, thanks so much, I've read the notes, I've been soundly converted, I'm now showing these notes to my friends.

Don't need anybody. Now, it helps. There's no question it helps. And one of the reasons it helps is because you become a living church. You see, let's go back to that analogy, or not analogy, it's true.

We come to church, we go to the Bible study group. Actually, if we then take the Bible in a format like this, which is acceptable, to our friends, we start to become church.

Because as time goes on, that friendship that you had that was good enough to be able to invite your friend deepens. Because your friend starts opening up about the things that are really bugging them, or really making them unhappy, or really being the angry question that they've always had. And you're able to say, well, you know what, I've been praying about that since you mentioned it, George. Thank you so much. Or, I was at church last week, and Paul Leely preached on that very subject, and I've got a CD made up for you.

[ 25 : 12 ] Here's that talk, or here's the link to the website that gives you that talk. Or, I looked at the bookstore for you, and here's, you know what you were talking about, about the sorrow that you have in your life?

Here's a booklet for you. See what you're being? You're being church. And your prayer life will take off. Because you see the Lord at work in a way that you just could not have believed.

Because your sponge just got squeezed. And now you're taking in, and now you're giving out. Let me show you by turning over to verse 12. I want to show you one verse, and I want to give you an example of how this goes down in the city.

I'm really sorry this isn't working tonight. Verse 12 says, Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

And what the booklet says about that verse, is as follows. Look at the unique and awesome gift for those who accept him. They are adopted into his family.

[ 26 : 16 ] Now can you just imagine for one second, this will take a really long stretch of an imagination, but just imagine that Paul Levy gets a phone call from Queen Elizabeth. And she rings up and says, Paul, this bit you'll get very quickly.

Paul, you've done nothing to deserve what I am about to say to you. Here are the keys to the palaces, here are the Coupsbank account numbers, I have decided to make you a prince in my family.

I have adopted you. What that verse says is way bigger than that phone call from Queen Elizabeth. It says he gave the right to become children of God.

Now I tell you, let's just spend a little bit of time thinking what that verse says, because I tell you, it will haunt your friends. See the book says, imagine being adopted into the royal family.

God offers something way bigger. The phrase in verse 12, he gave the right, his offer comes with absolute authority. And the next thing says, the right for what? Because that's the obvious question. [ 27 : 17 ] To become children of God. And then there's an arrow that takes you to the bottom of the page. This is a right to a family's wealth beyond your wildest dreams.

This father is richer than a multi-trillionaire. Just stop and think. You've got a job where once a year you get reviewed for a salary. You spend all year wondering, oh, what am I going to earn next year? You have a job that might give you a bonus. Oh, are they really going to take on board what I've done this year? Or you're a student. You're a student going for that first job. And you're sitting, quaking in your boots at somebody who's interviewing you.

No, you're the child of the trillionaire. The person on the other side of the table is the poor one who's just working for the job.

Let me give you another analogy. I went on holiday once to a little island in Spain and when I got there the place we were staying in had no toaster and no kettle. So I went out and I bought a cheap toaster and a cheap kettle.

[ 28 : 20 ] Did I slam those into my case to take them home? Of course I didn't. Why? Because I got a perfectly good toaster and a much better kettle where I was going.

Well, this life is like that in relation to eternity. You are the members of a trillionaire, trillionaire, trillionaire's family. You've got wealth beyond your wildest dreams.

So this life takes on a whole new meaning because you're only here on holiday. You're just passing through. You've been given one great commission and the great commission is to open the word of God to your friends so that your friends get to see the living word of God.

See, that verse haunts the guys in the city because they spend their lives worrying about how much they earn. They get to this and they suddenly put it into context. They can't do anything in relation to God.

They're not going to turn up at the gates of heaven and go, well I gave millions away. Well it means nothing if the kingdom you're going into is the home of a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillionaire, does it?

[ 29 : 29 ] Nothing. You might as well be giving a penny away. It means nothing because it's all about the cross and the gospel takes us to the foot of the cross and shows us that it's all about the cross.

Can you see that everything in this very poor site, can you see that everything you need is in the notes? And what happens is you get to the end of these studies and each study takes roughly about 25 minutes.

Could be, if you get lots of towing and fraying, it might be 40 minutes. But each one takes, let's say, about 25 minutes. There's a summary at the end and then you turn over and now your friend is ready to read the whole of that passage in one go so that they finish by seeing the whole thing in context and then get a little yellow box which gives them the next week or next time this is what we're going to look at.

So this becomes like the archers or like, I hate to say EastEnders because that's so depressing but it becomes like, I wonder what's going to happen next week.

Your friends get hooked on the word. Did you do that? No. You definitely didn't. It's a massive relief. They really will not remember what you say but they do remember what the word says.

[ 30 : 42 ] And just to ram that home, let me tell you, I am always, always wrong why someone says yes to meeting. See, people say to me, three things are big steps.

The first is, Richard, I could never ask. And the truth is, yeah, it's a big step. You worry about how am I going to ask. OK? And you suddenly get, you've asked two or three people and suddenly you find one and they say yes and you go, yes, they've said yes and then you go, no, they've said yes, I'm not going to have to do these notes.

So it's a worry when you start that first study. But as soon as you start this, you start fumbling your way through it and the word is what they remember.

And months in, they might tell you why they said yes to meeting. I'll give you just a couple of examples. Stuart, big tough business guy. Four months into meeting, he owns up.

The big tough Stuart said yes because he's terrified of his four-year-old daughter starting in a Christian primary school that she was going to come home and ask him a question he couldn't answer.

[ 31 : 44 ] So big tough Stuart said yes to study. Was that me? I didn't know that. The Lord was already at work in Stuart's life. Or Mark who lost his wife to cancer and I waited four months for Mark and then I went and saw him and I said look mate, I think you'd find this incredibly comforting.

Let me show you the word of God. He said yes instantly. Months later he owns up his daughters in the British Olympic swimming team training in Miami. Her roommate works for Campus Crusade has done a course in how to share the gospel.

She's shown his daughter what the gospel actually says. The daughter has said to dad, this is amazing dad, I found it so comforting. That is why Mark said yes.

Did I know that? No. Or Peter, I love this one, Peter, busiest man I know, sitting in his big plush posh office, absolutely stressed out of his brain box.

And I said to Peter, look mate, I really think you'd find this a huge stress buster. And he said yes instantly. Months and months later he owns up, his mother goes to a high church.

[ 32 : 52 ] She keeps saying to him, Peter, you should support the church, i.e. give some money. He says to his mother, every time this comes up, no mum, I wouldn't be prepared to do that.

But if something came along that helped me understand faith, well that I would do. So he sits in his office, looks at me, who he's known for nine years, and thinks, if I say no to Richard, what am I going to say to my mother?

Who was at work? The Lord was at work. Already dropped that little mustard seed into Peter, so that when I came along, I'm just a pawn in the game. I was a pawn in the game with Stuart, I was a pawn in the game with Mark.

Did you get the picture? Or Mike, we'll stop here because I could tell you these all night. Mike waited the whole year to be finished. And then he turned to me and said, I never told you this, but my father died when I was 15.

My father worked for Barnardo's, the Christian children's charity, and I knew as my father died that he had something that I definitely didn't have. And I spent 35 years being angry with God and wondering what it was he really did have.

[ 33 : 59 ] He said, that's why I did this. Now who was at work in that? Do you get the picture? So every single one of you are surrounded by people where mustard seed is being put down by the Lord.

Okay? Your job is to just go find which one. And the only way to find them is to offer your friends on this basis. Have you ever thought about reading the Bible? Have you ever looked at it?

Would you like to look at it with me? Just for one hour. All I'm going to ask is, let's have one hour's coffee. Did you enjoy that? Would you like to meet again? And I will keep asking that question until they beat me to it and have either got their diary out or their phone out and they're saying, when can I see you next?

So I'm never presumptuous about this. Right, that's these shown. Let me tell you some, we're going to get to Q&A; but let me just go through a few things which I always get asked, so hopefully the following might be helpful.

people ask me why John? Very simple. I saw my mate stopped in his tracks with John's gospel, therefore that's the one I asked for.

[ 35 : 09 ] I did that in ignorance, now I've got some more knowledge about the different gospels. John is fantastic to do, because it goes in themes. You see, John only gives you seven miracles.

He doesn't bother. Luke set out to write a history. He put lots in. But John is getting it clear in your mind what the main themes of Christianity are. And that is a very useful thing to do.

So John is a great book to do, that's why we do John. How do I ask someone? The real answer is you'll know how to do this, because you'll know what the conversations are you have with your friends up to this date.

Some will blame me. Some will simply say I met this idiot the other night who was telling us about how in the city, people who don't go to church, in fact some really senior people who do not go to church, are studying what the gospel actually says, what the bible says.

And the reason is he's got these great notes that do it. He doesn't ask you to go to church, I'm not going to ask you to go to an event, I'm simply suggesting how about having an hour's coffee and seeing what you think of these notes. If you enjoy it, all I'm going to say at the end is did you enjoy it, would you like to meet again?

[ 36 : 14 ] Or it might be some of my older friends used to say, you know, I believe all roads lead to the same God. But the reality has been since 9-11, what's happened is there's been a subtle shift in their thinking because they've got to understand a lot more about the God of Islam and many of them will say to me, I don't believe in him.

Which actually means there's a crack gone right up that thinking that all roads lead to the same God. Some of the honest answers therefore say, well have you ever looked at what the Bible says? How about having one coffee and seeing what you think?

That's one way in. Or another way is that people have said to me that they don't like what they see coming out of Europe. A bit of a general term. But they say something along these lines.

They'll say, you know, I just see that our laws keep getting changed coming out of Europe and I don't like it because, you know I don't go to church, Richard, but I just think it's eroding some of the Christian ethos of our law in our country.

That's one way. I say, well have you ever looked at what the Bible actually says? No. Well, why don't we have a look? Or the story about Lee Mack might be a way to do it. Just to tell, did you hear what happened with Lee Mack?

[ 37 : 25 ] And I've got some really good notes exactly what Lee Mack was looking for. The truth is you will know. But the job is to simply put out that throwing some seed if you like and then see who comes back.

And you'll be amazed at who comes back. The take-up rate has been astonishing. I went through one period where seven out of the ten people that I asked said yes.

Now at the moment I'm going through a period where I'd say it was more like 30% of the people that I asked say yes. But today I see 16 of the senior people in my industry.

16! I pinch myself every week when I walk into offices all over the city of London with the Bible. If you'd have told me that ten years ago, sorry, seven years ago, I'd have said you're joking that way it happened.

Senior people who want to know what the Bible actually says. Not because I said anything clever, but purely because where they're at they know that they haven't got all the answers. People say to me, do people meet and stop?

[ 38 : 28 ] I've had one. Actually, there's a couple of facts I want to tell you. First of all, I've done the first hour study, which is I've gone through this booklet for an hour, so my first cup of coffee, however many studies that took me to.

So I might have got through, here's number two, and I might have got through that, and then that was the end of my time. And I simply said, okay, did you enjoy that? Would you like to meet again? And only five people in seven years have said no.

And in every single case I can tell you the reason why they said no. Isn't that interesting? No. It was one, was a Roman Catholic friend who started the evening by saying to me, well of course Richard, you know I'm a Christian.

And who stopped the evening by saying, you know what Richard, that was absolutely amazing. I've never seen that that's what the Bible says. But I think I'm comfortable where I am.

You see, his whole theory is that as long as he gets confession before he snuffs it, he'll be fine.

How sad is that? Or one man who's living the dream through his children at the moment because his children are doing things that he really wanted to do in his life.

[ 39 : 35 ] His wife has become a Christian. And he said to me, Richard, I know one day I'm going to do this. I just don't want to do it yet. But he's the one that raises it every time I see it.

Or the one guy who was most violent, he got to the end of it and he went, Richard, that was amazing, I will not look. And then he came to three evangelistic evenings. Dennis. So something's going on in his mind.

So that's three out of the five. So you get the point is somewhere they're not ready. You did what you had to do, don't worry about it, move on to the next one. Now, where does that take us to?

Is this, of course, no, sorry, actually I missed the most vital thing. What is the most common comment? Now you're not going to like this. I don't like it. It hits me every time I have to read this out.

Do you know what every single person has said to me in seven years in doing this? Why has no one ever shown me this before? Joe, I thought I'd completely blown it.

[ 40 : 40 ] We got to the third meeting and he suddenly slammed the side of his desk. He said, Richard, how is it possible I've had one of the most expensive educations that money can buy and I've never seen this before? Isn't that damning to us as Christians?

You see, I take you back to the cure to cancer. If we as Christians are staying in our Christian enclave and simply saying, I feel good when we're asked, we're not giving the gospel. We're not taking the answer to life outside. What we find when we take it outside and we open it up is it's not what you say, it's what the Lord says and you do feel great because your prayer life takes off, your excitement excitement about talking to people about Christ is because you've seen the power of the Holy Spirit at work and you're actually beginning to wonder, I wonder who else I could ask because I'd like to see what I just did happen again.

And the average is something in the order of you do it with four separate friends. Now, isn't that, it's not actually amazing when you go through it because you do it, you get to the end of the first study and you go, I can't believe how that went.

That was amazing. Who else can I ask? Let me try that again with someone else. And I've also got George to do the next one with. See how that goes?

[ 41 : 57 ] What else is on my question? What about Uncover? If you're a student here, I'm a director of UCCF and we've published a thing called Uncover.

And Uncover does six studies and it's done it so far in Luke and it's about to be launched again in John. And students absolutely adore it. I've lost track of how many we've sold.

It's just all used. It's way over 100,000 in this country alone on its way to, I think the published number is nearly 200,000. It works with students brilliantly.

The reason is it's very compact and it's full of questions and it's interactive to take them on their phones to little videos. The difference is when you leave university, you don't like being questioned. And this, as I've tried to explain to you, is not a course, it's something you do however often your friend wishes to meet, that's what you do. It becomes a way of life. It's just deepening your friendship.

[ 42 : 56 ] You see, when you started to watch East Enders for you, you didn't say, I'm sitting here and making a decision, I'm now going to spend two and a half years of my life watching this dark program.

You don't do that, do you? You don't switch on the arches if you're an arches fan and think, yes, I'm making a commitment, I'm going to listen to this for the next 30 years. Of course you don't do that. All you're doing is, you turn on when you want to turn on and you're going to have a coffee with your friend, but you're taking something powerful with you.

Don't forget what I said at the start. Stop having warm conversations. Your Christian life is not about having warm conversations. Your Christian life is about being a pawn in the game and seeing the word of God livingly work off the pages in front of you.

You'll be full of the Holy Spirit as you do it. Now let's turn to the do's and don'ts. And I think you've got a slide for this. Let's see if we can read it. I'm sorry about this, we've not had this problem before.

So things not to do. Don't have a Bible out at least to start with and don't ever ask someone to read out loud. See if you're at school or well actually at school it might happen, but at work you never go into a meeting and somebody says, right George, would you now read out the contract?

[ 44 : 09 ] You know, that never happens. And the truth is we don't now often know how to read out loud because we don't embarrass people. So don't embarrass them by asking to read out loud. Treat this like a book club and simply say, would you just read the left hand page?

And then tell them to themselves and then let's discuss it. Okay, so don't read out loud. Avoid being overheard. If you do this in a coffee bar, if you do it on tables, you will find the conversation on that table and the conversation on that table will grind to a halt.

Because they're now listening to you. And I can't believe what you're doing. The same will happen in a restaurant. So it's not a good idea, don't do it, unless you can sit alongside your friend.

So coffee bars that have got counters in the window, great, that's easy. Because you can sit alongside your friend. But try to be somewhere where you can't be overheard. So do think about, ask your friend, what's the best time for you to meet?

And where should we meet so that we have some privacy? Okay? Don't jump to the assumption your guest is interested in Christianity. they're probably not. Okay?

[ 45 : 10 ] You are, because you've fallen in love with the Lord. You know what happened at the cross for you. But your friend is simply going through life, going it's not going the way I expected. So don't assume that they're thinking about Christianity.

The truth is, as they go through the gospel, they will be interested in Christianity. Because they'll understand it in a way they've never understood it before. But don't start with that assumption. Because it's wrong.

In nearly every case. Don't worry about what you say, they remember the word. I've said it about 19 times because it's the most important thing to understand. Don't worry about what you say. They won't remember it. Do pray about what you say. But don't worry about what you say. It's the word of God they remember. They remember that verse 12. Or they remember the first verse at the very start of John.

That's the kind of thing that happens. Questions. People say to me, I could never do questions. You can. Because the reality is, you know more about Christianity than your friend does. So most questions are questions that you can answer.

[ 46 : 11 ] Occasionally a question is going to come up that you can't. Just note it down without embarrassment. Say it's a good question. I'll get you an answer for next time we meet. And then you run off and see Paul Levy and say, now Paul, I need help.

Help me with this question. Don't assume you know what is going on in their head. Stick to your task and listen. Because God is at work. See, remember the stories of Stuart and Mike and Mark and Peter.

Who was at work? The Lord was at work. I had a job to do. And I stuck to my job. But actually, it was God who was doing this.

So I don't make assumptions because I'll probably be wrong. I listen and I try and care for that person because I remember that I am their Christian contact.

I am church to this person. Don't assume that they will automatically want to meet again. I've said it about nine times. I'll say it again. All I say at the end is, did you enjoy that? Would you like to meet again?

[ 47 : 08 ] Until it becomes a redundant question. I think that's the bottom on that slide. Is that right? It is. Great. Let's do the things that are positive. Things to do. Pray lots. If you want, I tell you, I am not the same man I was seven years ago.

I was a boring business from seven years ago. Now I bore about this because this is the most exciting thing I've ever had in my life. And it has knocked corners off me that I didn't even know I had because I've had to humble myself at the foot of the cross as I've seen the Lord at work. My faith has taken off like a rocket. So pray lots because you are about the great commission. Pray before you talk to your friend and ask them that.

Pray before you do the study. and you'll get the way that that works because we're going to look at that a bit later. Finish with did you enjoy that? Would you like to meet again? Be flexible. Expect cancellations.

The truth is this gets very personal. So they might be in the middle of a really tough day and when they meet you, every time they meet you, they are going to the heart of themselves.

[ 48 : 14 ] So it might well be that today, a tough day, they can't face it. So right at the last minute you're going to get a cancellation. It happened to me today. I'd driven up to London specifically to see someone for lunch and he blew me out at half past eleven.

Truth was, it's painful and personal this stuff. So don't be surprised. Turn the other cheek. Expect it. It goes with the territory. Realise you're a living embodiment of church.

Look for opportunities to serve your friend. You see, it has been wrong that all the pressure is on that guy sitting there and the other ministers in the team. It's down to us.

We're Christians. We're the ones who've got the connections. They haven't. We have. So pray and realise that we are church as we go out. Think about what you can take for your friend.

Think what will actually express the love of the Lord to them. And here's a way to remember it. Pearls. P-A-R-L-S. P for pray. Pray more than you're doing.

[ 49 : 14 ] It's serious stuff and you'll soon realise it's a huge privilege. Two, enjoy. It's going to set you on fire. You'll learn. I mean, I've been doing this for seven years. I do passages time and time again.

I spot something new nearly every time. Because that's how the word works. So enjoy each study. You will grow, learning and praying. Teachers for years, drum into us. Think of your last chemistry lesson. It's one thing, and it might be quite a time for some of us. But, you know, it's one thing to read it in the book. It's something else to see it happen inside, in front of your very eyes.

Isn't that true? Okay? Well, guess what your Christian life's like. You see, as you actually give out the word, you see how the word works. So don't be surprised that it's going to be something that you will grow and you will learn and you will absolutely take off with your prayer life.

Because now, instead of coming in and saying, I'd like to pray about my back, or I'm a bit worried about this example, both of which are important and are fair to raise, you'll be saying, would you please pray for me tomorrow?

[ 50 : 18 ] I'm seeing George. We're up to chapter 9. Please pray. It'll take off. Agonise. There is one danger with this. You have the friendship to start with.

That's how you manage to get this person to say yes to meeting you. That friendship really deepens. So it comes to Tuesday and you go, oh great, I'm seeing Tom. Marvellous. I really enjoy seeing Tom.

I do really enjoy seeing Tom at 8 o'clock nearly every week, one day a week. I really enjoy seeing Tom. The danger is, is I just think about, it's great, I'm going to see Tom and I don't properly prepare.

I should be praying for Tom. I should be reading up on the passage that we're doing. I might go and get a booklet or I might go on to the church and say, Paul, what have you got? When did you last preach on John?

Have you got any notes that you can give me that can back up these booklets? So that I learn and read a bit more around the passage. Many churches are actually putting this in underneath everything else they do in their evangelism.

[ 51 : 18 ] So that they now are often turning the Bible study groups into doing things like, let's look at John. You do that in your Bible study group. You've also got the booklets. You're going out talking with your friends. Guess what your Bible study is going to be like next time?

See, it's going to take off because you'll know so much more. So read up, pray more, it's not just a copy. Rejoice! You will see the mustard seed grow as God works.

Richard, has anybody ever stopped? Yes. One man in seven years. He got to the same place in the Bible where people walked away from Jesus.

It's at the end of chapter six of John and the reason was because Jesus was not the political Messiah that people wanted him to be and they walked away. And that's why my mate left.

Because Jesus was clearly not going to be what he wanted. So he left. Do people stop and then carry on? Yes. Funnily enough, same thing in the Bible. When Lazarus is raised from the dead, some of the, well not some, the Jews, the Jewish leaders tell him, what are you going to do?

[ 52 : 23 ] Everybody's believing in him. And the type of statement my friends will say is, you know Richard, there is no undoing this knowledge. Now that doesn't mean they've become a Christian, they're just admitting that there is no undoing this knowledge.

You see many will start not even believing in God, they go through, I now believe in God, I now believe in Jesus, that he was the son of God, doesn't mean that they've knelt at the foot of the cross. So I've had people stop after Lazarus, and not at my suggestion, and they've taken a break, but they've all come back and wanted to finish it.

Because it won't leave them alone. So, yeah, it can happen. So, mustard seed grows. I've got friends now, across the seven years, some are sitting in the shade of the mustard tree, fully converted, sharing the gospel with other people.

I've got other people who will openly say to me, Richard, my life's not the same. So, for example, I got stopped last Wednesday by a guy halfway through our study, and just like Zacchaeus, the tax collector, turning and saying, I'm going to bring all my tax collector mates to hear Jesus.

This friend of mine who goes to AA, Alcoholics Anonymous, stopped my meeting and said, Richard, I want all my friends of my AA class to hear this. And he's invited, he's paying for a dinner for 15 of his friends to come to hear about the gospel.

[ 53 : 45 ] Now, is he a Christian yet? No. Is the mustard seed growing? You bet it is. It does grow, because it's the word of God. It works. Learn. Take a note of what works, and listen.

Lastly, submit. You are doing his work. Ask God to refine you more and more and more. It's a joy to do that. It can be very hard to do that, but it's a joy because you feel closer to the Lord through doing this whole process.

Ask someone else the average is four. Now, that's me done, but I'm more than