

# The one-verse Bridge Illustration

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is simple and complex. It can be studied, believed, and explored for a lifetime and not be exhausted, yet it can also be explained and illustrated in many simple ways. The one-verse Bridge Illustration is one way to explain the essential truths of the Gospel. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a clear, concise, and interactive way to answer any of these questions:

- What are your spiritual beliefs?
- What is the main theme of the Bible?
- How does someone enter the Kingdom of God?
- What does it mean to be a Christian?
- How does someone start a relationship with God?

The bridge illustration can be used with friends or with a stranger. Here is how you could start with a stranger:

**“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am practicing a 5 minute illustration that explains the main theme of the Bible and I was wondering if I could show it to you and get your feedback?”**

Below is an explanation of how to share the one-verse bridge which can be easily drawn on any piece of paper. Sharing the bridge never goes the same twice. Flexibility and adaptation are key! The illustration is based around Romans 6:23. Memorizing this verse will prepare you to share the bridge in a moment’s notice.

1

Start by writing out Romans 6:23 and reading it. Say **“This sentence from the Bible has three parts. The first two contrast with each other. Let’s take a look them.”**

2

Circle **wage** and **gift**. Ask, **“What is the difference between a wage and a gift?”** Discuss how a wage is earned and deserved but a gift is given freely, undeservedly.

EMPHASIS: Grace! (Ephesians 2:8-9)

3

Circle **sin** and **God**. **“It seems that every person lives for something (money, career, power, pleasure, acceptance, etc). Do you agree? God, the creator of the world, designed us to live for Him. Who is God? What is sin?”**

**Sin is when we live for something besides the true God – a false god.**

EMPHASIS: Religious/Irreligious doesn’t matter. We all live for something besides God. (Romans 3:23)

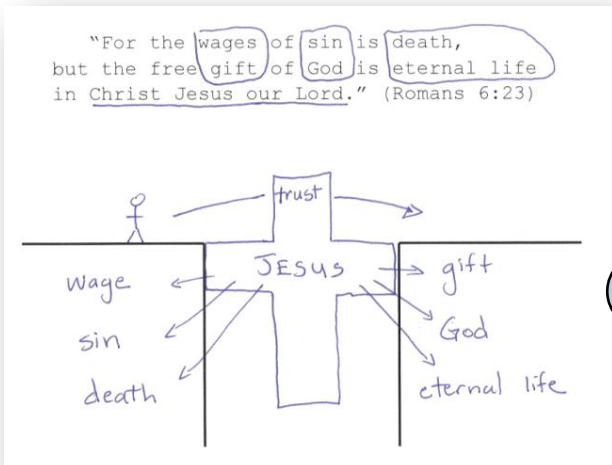
“You shall have no other Gods before me.” Exodus 20:3

4

Circle **death** and **eternal life**. **“Because of our sin against God, we have earned its wage - death. What is death?” What is eternal life?”**

EMPHASIS: Death is being eternally separated from the true God because we chose to live for false gods instead (sin).

Eternal life is an eternal relationship with the TRUE GOD! (John 17:3)



5

## The heart of the matter: The Third statement.

How did God give us the gift of an eternal relationship with Him? **In Jesus.**

At this point I usually ask something like **“what stands out to you about Jesus?”** Most people eventually say the crucifixion, so I draw the cross and ask **“why do you think Jesus died?”** These three statements make it clear. On the cross Jesus paid the **WAGE** of our **SIN** which was **DEATH**. Then he rose again to give us the **GIFT** of **GOD** which is **ETERNAL LIFE**. At this point I draw the arrows to emphasize that Jesus is the central part of the entire story.

How do we respond? Jesus asks us to trust in what he did on our behalf, and receive the gift. We have to admit our sinful rebellion against God and trust in the forgiveness that Jesus died for. Trusting Jesus is the beginning of an eternal relationship with the true God. **Which side of the bridge would you place yourself on? Do you have a relationship with God? Do you want to?**

Left Side → **Would you like to trust Jesus today?** → What is holding you back?

Right Side → Tell me more about that. → What is God doing in your life now?

Middle → Explain that you can’t be in the middle. Maybe you are on the left but you are thinking about it crossing.

Not on either side → ask for clarification → At what point do you disagree? Discuss.

Remember to end by asking for feedback – Did the illustration make sense? Is there anything I could explain better?

## **ADDITIONAL VERSES FOR THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION**

While there are many verses that can supplement Romans 6:23 and the one-verse bridge illustration, below are some that are commonly used. We encourage you to memorize and use as many of these as you can, but don't limit yourself to this list!

### **MAN**

Genesis 1:26-17

### **SIN**

Romans 3:10-12

Romans 3:23

Genesis chapter 3

Isaiah 53:6

Exodus chapter 20

### **DEATH**

Hebrews 9:27

### **SEPARATION FROM GOD**

Isaiah 59:2

### **GIFT**

Ephesians 2:8-9

### **GOD**

Genesis 1:1

1 John 4:8

1 John 1:5

Isaiah 40:28

Exodus 34:6-7

### **ETERNAL LIFE**

John 3:16

John 17:3

### **BELIEF/FAITH IN CHRIST**

John 5:24

Romans 10:9-10

John 1:12

### **JESUS**

Romans 5:8

Colossians 1:15-20

Philippians 2:1-11

1 Peter 3:18

### **IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

2 Corinthians 5:17

Galatians 3:26, 4:4-7

Romans 8:1, 38-39

### **ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

1 John 5:11-13

1 Peter 1:3-5, 23

### **ROMANS ROAD**

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8

Romans 10:9-10

### **WORD OF GOD**

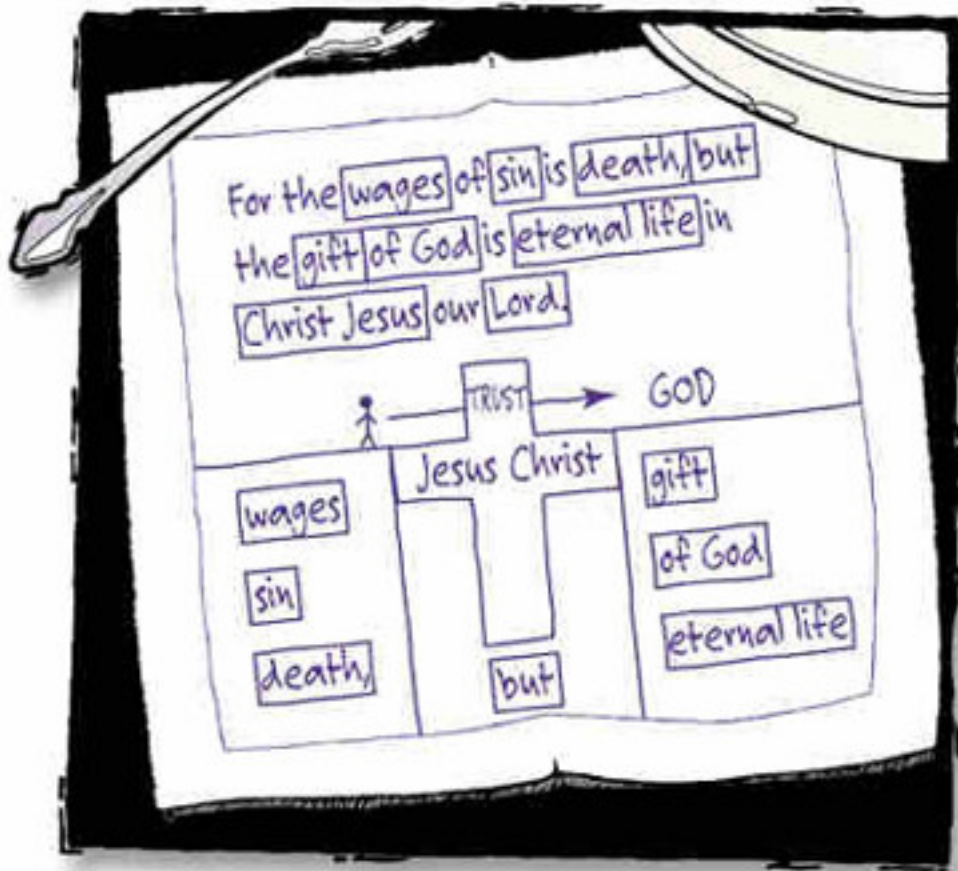
2 Timothy 3:16-17

Hebrews 4:12

# ONE-VERSE EVANGELISM

How to Share Christ's Love Conversationally & Visually

By Randy D. Raysbrook



Many people feel that to be effective in evangelism they must memorize a complex illustration and a multitude of verses. But the Gospel is most powerful when shared with love, clarity, and simplicity.

One-Verse Evangelism(r) is a simple, interactive way to share Christ's love conversationally and visually. It is based on asking questions and sharing. It's easy to learn because it uses just one verse. One-Verse Evangelism(r) is also sensitive to peoples' busy schedules because it can be shared in just 10 or 15 minutes.

Here's a brief look at how it works. Let's say God's leading you to share the Gospel with your neighbor, Jeff. Write out Romans 6:23 on a piece of paper or a napkin: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NIV). Then put your Bible away. Ask Jeff if he would like to see a simple picture based on this verse that will explain God's relationship with people.

\*Adapted with permission from *One-Verse Evangelism*, copyright 2000 Randy D. Raysbrook. All rights reserved.

wages

Circle this word and ask, "How would you feel if your boss refused to pay you the wages that were due to you?" Deep down, we all know that it is only right that we get what we deserve. Similarly, we earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives.

sin

Draw a circle around "sin," asking your friend what he thinks when he hears this word. You might explain that sin is more an attitude than an action. It can be either actively fighting God or merely excluding Him from our lives. You can ask, "Has God ever seemed far away?" If he says "Yes," add that that's one of the things sin does-it makes God seem far away. Now draw two opposing cliffs with a gap in between.

death,

Circle this word and ask what thoughts come to mind. Explain that death in the Bible always means some kind of separation.

but

While circling this word, mention that it is important because it means that a sharp contrast in thought is coming. What we have just looked at is bad news; what follows is good news.

gift

Draw a circle around this word. Ask, "If wages are what a person earns, then what is a gift?" Remind your friend that someone must purchase every gift.

of God

Circle this and explain that the gift you are talking about is free. It is from God Himself. It's so special that no one else can give it. Ask, "How do you feel when someone gives you a special gift?"

eternal life

Circle these two words next, and then ask, "How would you define these words?" Contrast one side of the cliff, death, with the other side, eternal life. Ask, "What is the opposite of separation from God?"

Christ Jesus

Draw these words so they create a bridge between the two cliffs. Help your friend to consider that every gift has a giver, and only Jesus Christ can give the gift of eternal life.

TRUST

Write this word over the bridge you just drew. Explain that friends trust each other, and tell your friend that Jesus wants a trusting friendship with him. All he has to do is admit that he is responsible for the "sin" of either fighting or excluding God from his life. That is what trust means-trusting that Jesus wants to forgive us for rejecting Him from our lives. At this point, you can ask him if he wants to start a relationship with God that will last forever. If he says "Yes," invite him to pray a short prayer in his own words, asking Jesus to forgive him.

Close by reminding him that this simple illustration shows what God is like: Someone who really cares about people, especially him. Invite him to read all about it in the Bible, perhaps beginning in the gospel of John.