

GOSPEL EMPHASES FOR RHC

**SESSION 7
THE GOSPEL CHANGES US
AT THE HEART LEVEL**

Handbook

GOSPEL EMPHASES FOR RHC

For the next 7 weeks, our church will be embarking on a series called “Gospel Emphases for RHC” – diving into 4 aspects of the gospel that we hope for our church to grow in understanding so that we can know and love Jesus more deeply.

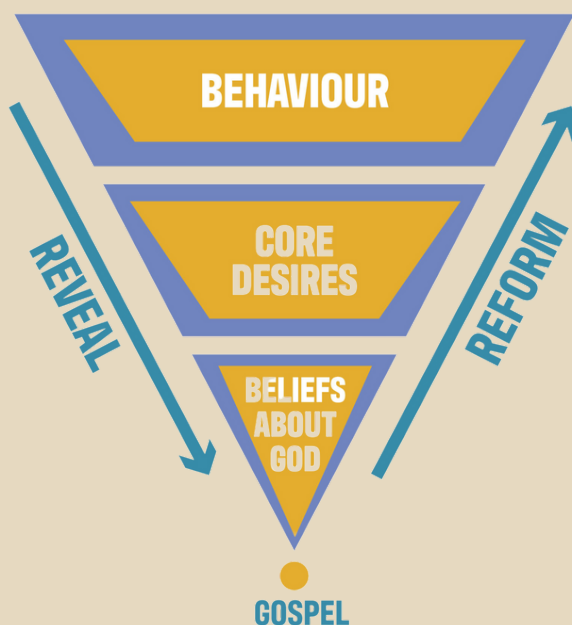
These 4 aspects that we are emphasising are not an attempt to define the gospel comprehensively or write a “creed” for RHC. Rather, it is something that is specifically contextualised for RHC, in response to the areas that we feel like we may be weaker in understanding the Good News of Jesus for us in our church. We hope that these emphases and tools give us a common language as we use them throughout the life of our church, to strengthen our faith individually and collectively at RHC.

These 4 emphases are:

- The gospel is Good News Not Implications
- The gospel is about a Person, Not a Philosophy
- Christ’s Work is Rich & Relevant
- The gospel Changes Us at a Heart Level

In our CG study over the next few weeks, we’ll be focusing largely on the first two emphases.

Today, we’ll dive into the last emphases: the gospel changes us at a heart level.





CASE STUDY & DISCUSSION

BRUCE
15 MINS

Bruce struggles with anger management, especially when he feels inferior to others – whether in his role as an employee, father or husband. He is extremely concerned about what others think of him and sensitive to comparisons that might be made between himself and others. Although he might not react publicly or in front of his bosses, he takes out his frustration on his loved ones at home.

Recognising that he has an issue, he actively sought out some advice from his CG mates. One person told him to pray more actively for him to stop bursting out in anger all the time; another gave him a list of self-help books on anger management; another brother even offered to be his accountability partner and check in on whether he has lost his temper each week. Bruce tried all the above strategies offered by his CG mates, but they all failed to help him control his anger better.

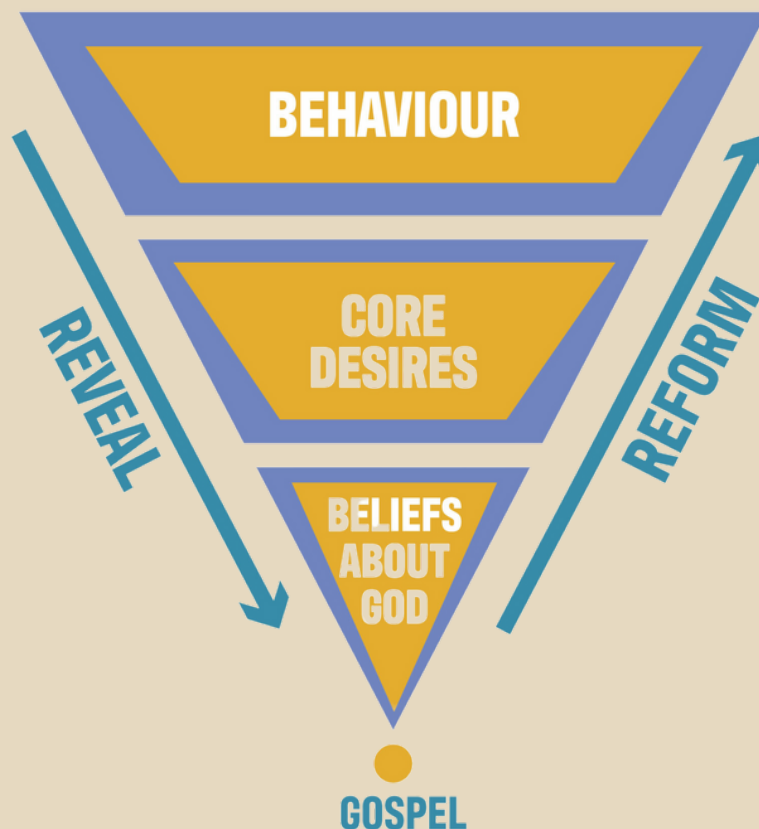
Discuss: Why might these strategies or advice be unhelpful?

REAL CHANGE BEGINS FROM THE HEART

The Bible tells us that real biblical change must take place inside out rather than outside in. It must begin from the heart, rather than from our circumstances or behaviours.

What drives our behaviours are our core desires, and what drives our core desires are lies that we entertain about God.

OUR BEHAVIOUR IS ROOTED IN OUR DESIRES AND BELIEFS ABOUT GOD



This depicts how, below our surface behaviours (whether good or bad) lie core desires, and below those, beliefs about who God is. To understand what is driving our negative behaviours, follow the left hand side of the triangle down, to explore what core desires are driving your behaviour, and then what those core desires tell you about your view of who God is to you. To reform your behaviours, dwell on the gospel, and let that inform your view of God which will then shape your desires, and then behaviours.

WHY WE NEED TO DIVE DEEP

The 'solution' that we think we need depends on the way we perceive our problem. If our problem of addiction is merely behavioural, then all we need are practical measures.

But if our issue is fundamentally unbelief towards God, then our hearts need to be rid of that lie, and in place be given truths. It is only when we recognise the lies that we believe about God at the heart level, that we can allow the gospel to correct our sinful views of God.

HOW THE GOSPEL CHANGES US

The gospel reminds us that since God Himself has called us into an eternal, glorious, saving relationship with Him through Christ, He Himself desires to, and proactively strengthens and establishes us against all our anxieties and worries in life. At the same time, the gospel also frees us from self-condemnation when we stumble, as it assures us of God's ongoing love and work in our lives, and that Jesus' saving grace continues to sustain us.

Therefore, when we arrive at this deep-seated conviction of God's care and love, we observe that applying the gospel to our lives is not an instant fix, but a constant dependence and going back to Jesus, which will help us to turn away from worldly addictions with true and increasing resolved, heartfelt sincerity, increased knowledge and love towards God.



GROUP WORK & APPLICATION

1. Look at the case study with Bruce. What might Bruce's angry behaviour reveal about his core desires?

You may refer to the table below for some examples of core desires.

Comfort	Control	Power	Approval
<p><i>I desire comfort, freedom and serenity.</i></p> <p><i>I fear stress, inconvenience or demands made of me.</i></p>	<p><i>I desire self-discipline, certainty, control over my environment and circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>I fear uncertainty. I am worrisome and anxious.</i></p>	<p><i>I desire success, winning, authority, influence and mastery.</i></p> <p><i>I fear being weak, helpless or humiliated.</i></p>	<p><i>I desire approval from man, affirmation, love, and relationships.</i></p> <p><i>I fear being shamed and rejected.</i></p>

2. How does Bruce's core desire reveal some of the lies he believes about God?

You may refer to the table below for some examples of core desires and corresponding lies about God.

Core Desires	Comfort	Control	Power	Approval
<p>Lies about God</p> <p>Leaders' note: These core desires and lies are not mutually exclusive and each of these can correspond to any of the core desires. This is also not an exhaustive list/table.</p>	<p>God will make my life comfortable and smooth sailing according to my desires because He loves me.</p>	<p>God is not in control; I need to take things into my own hands</p>	<p>God Himself is not sufficient for me, and I need more in life for assurance and security.</p>	<p>God does not love me and therefore I need to gain his/other people's approval to find value and worth in my identity.</p>

3. What are some truths about God from the gospel we can encourage him with that correct his misconception about God? Refer to the table below for some corresponding truths.

Core Desires	Comfort	Control	Power	Approval
<p>Lies about God</p> <p>Leaders' note: These core desires and lies are not mutually exclusive and each of these can correspond to any of the core desires. This is also not an exhaustive list/table.</p>	<p>God will make my life comfortable and smooth sailing according to my desires because He loves me.</p>	<p>God is not in control. I need to take things into my own hands</p>	<p>God Himself is not sufficient for me, and I need more in life for assurance and security.</p>	<p>God does not love me and therefore I need to gain his/other people's approval to find value and worth in my identity.</p>
<p>Gospel</p>	<p>Hebrews 12:1-2</p>	<p>Ephesians 1:4-6</p>	<p>Romans 8:28-32</p>	<p>1 John 4:9-10</p>
<p>Truths About God</p> <p>Leaders' Note: These are not meant to be exhaustive.</p>	<p>Suffering and hardship do not mean that God is displeased with me, as Jesus Himself suffered. Rather, God is using my circumstances for His glorious purposes.</p>	<p>God sovereignly works all things for our good, just as He ordained Jesus to go to the cross for us.</p>	<p>God has give us Christ, the most precious and costly gift. Therefore, we need not worry that He will withhold anything else from us that we need in this life.</p>	<p>God loves us and demonstrates that by sending Jesus to die for our sins.</p>

4. Finally, how do these beliefs about God that are rooted in the gospel, transform Bruce's desires?



REFLECTION & PRAYER

15 MINS

In pairs, share a sin that you want to work on. Go down the triangle, camp on the gospel by referring to some passages provided in the table, and go up the triangle. Pray together for it to compel our hearts.