

# Sharing God's Word One to One

Jesus said "I am the Good shepherd... my sheep hear my voice and I know them... I give them eternal life."

**John 10:15, 27, 28 (ESV)**

## Outline of talk by Carl Porter

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*Below is an outline of what the talk covers. Please see the corresponding session guide for more guidance on structuring the rest of the training session.*

### Introducing The Word One to One

- Sharing from personal experience

### How to get Started

- Making an invitation
- Allowing the Word to speak
- Listening and responding to the conversation

### Demonstrating The Word One to One

- Helpful features
- Walking through a few pages
- Responding to reactions
- Prayer support and accountability

## Transcript of talk by Carl Porter

*You are free to use and adapt the content of this talk to suit your context.*

I became a Christian in the summer of 2014 and on becoming a Christian, I set off as a very enthusiastic gospel sharer. I spent two years trying to win a colleague for the Lord, speaking with him, arguing with him, buying him dinner, coffee, metaphorically kicking him, all to no avail.

He was completely hung up on the creation story and wouldn't budge. And so in frustration, I said to him, "We're getting nowhere. Why don't we look at the Bible together?" And he said, "Yes." It was then that I began to panic. I'd never opened the Bible with anyone before. What was I going to do? I knew from my church about The Word One to One books. So I bought a copy and proceeded to run the worst one-to-one ever.

I didn't look at the books in advance. I forgot to pray. I turned up in a cafe to meet him, ripped the cellophane off the books, and then simply began to read the Bible verses from John 1 to 18, and

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the notes alongside them in the book. After 10 minutes, he said, one thing, this is what he said, "Jesus has always existed."

Now. I was so nervous. My brain was whirring. Thinking, has Jesus always existed? Yes, I think that's right. So I just nodded at my friend. He went his way, I went mine and the next week we met again. Jesus had turned all his lights on. He'd become a Christian. It took God through his Word, 10 minutes and 18 sentences to do what I'd been trying for two years under my own steam.

I immediately thought, Carl, you're a wally. You're taught every week the word of God is powerful, living and active, so why on earth have you not been using it in your evangelism? In this video we'll think about sharing God's word, evangelistically. I'm going to talk primarily about The Word One to One. A resource I found hugely helpful for this. Although there are other Bible sharing materials out there.

So first up, how to get started. So thinking back to my early days as a Christian, I was so excited that over the next 20 weeks, I arranged 20 cups of coffee with 20 different men I knew. One at a time, I simply said, "I've become a Christian recently. I have these short books that take you through a book of the Bible. Do you fancy taking a look with me? The first meeting will only take 20 minutes and I promise I'll only ask you two questions at the end. Did you enjoy that, and would you like to do it again?"

So an easy invite, 20 minutes, no pressure, no commitment. Just a quick look at the Bible with a mate. Do you know, I was amazed when five of the 20 said yes. This fits with the national average that one in five people, or 20% percent of the people in the UK would like to take a look at God's Word. They are just waiting to be asked.

Whatever way you can get the word open with a friend is amazing, and you should just go for it. Personally, I've discovered The Word One to One helpful because all of the hard work has been done for us. It's a guided read through of John's gospel, where we're benefiting from someone else's theological training, their wisdom and their hard work. The episodes are helpful, and all the questions and answers are in the notes. This creates a level playing field for you and your friends, and enables us not to run a Bible study, but to facilitate a chat about what God is saying to us. Word One to One uses the language of Bible sharing and sharing God's word.

Helpfully, it doesn't put our friends on the spot with awkward questions or applications when they are not a Christian. Instead, it allows the word to work in them and them to raise the questions that the Holy Spirit prompts in their mind. I think this is important to understand because when I got going in Bible sharing, I was worried about what I would say. How could I force the conversation? Make sure it's not boring.

But what I didn't have was a trust in the power of God's word. The longer I've done this, the more I've seen, I just need to sit back and wait. I don't know what verse it will be, for each person it's different, but as we read God's Word and they hear directly from the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit will prompt them to say something and then I can respond.

Recently, I was reading with someone from an Eastern Orthodox background and we got to the Lamb of God verse in John chapter one and they asked me about rituals in religion, and if they didn't keep them, would they go to hell? This enabled a profitable chat about the completed work of Jesus on the cross, about grace and about forgiveness.

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Another friend I read with said at the end of chapter five, "I've got to work out why I'm doing this." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Jesus just said to the Pharisees, you search the scriptures, but you're not looking for me." I'm not sure I know enough about Jesus to trust him yet. And I said, "That's okay. We can keep reading." But he insisted, "That gives me a problem. You can't get this far into the gospel and throw it in the bin."

A different friend got to the end of chapter one. He slammed the book on the table and said, "Hang on. Is this telling me Jesus is God?" Even the most simple truths are revelations of the spirits. Think of it like this. We need to back out the conversation and let the Word in to do the work. This lies at the heart of sharing God's Word with others. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd and my sheep hear my voice. I know them and I give them eternal life." John chapter 10 verses 27 and 28.

Salvation is God's Work by God's Word. It doesn't depend on our ability to run a one-to-one or answer questions, which is wonderfully encouraging. So having a look at how to get started, let me show you a few helpful features of Word One to One and then a quick demonstration of how to use it.

Every episode comes with a title page, including a main point and some notes to get the conversation started. Here, the main point is that God came to Earth, and then the notes below. You have the Bible verses, some questions and answers to aid the conversation. At the end of each episode is a helpful summary of all the things you've discussed. Then finally, the Bible notes at the end of the episode. After I've said to my friend, "Did you enjoy that and would you like to do it again?" If he says, yes, I can then say, "Why don't you read over these verses at home. When we get together again, if you have any questions we can chat about that." It is a wonderful bonus of these notes. You each have a copy and the learning continues beyond our meeting. So I'm convinced that the best evangelism is taking place when they're sitting at home, reading the Bible on their own.

So one last helpful feature to show you is this. You see here in verse 23, there is an Old Testament quote. This is explained on the following page. All you need to run through the gospel is contained in these books without flicking around other parts of the Bible, which is good for me as a Bible sharer and for my friends. So let me demonstrate this for you. As I do this, I hope you observe that I don't need to do anything other than read what is there. I lean completely on these notes.

So I'd welcome my friend, open up to page seven and simply say, "Today we are looking at those 18 sentences I said. We're going to see that God came to Earth. So this first episode is about our author, an eyewitness, John, starting with an overview. He doesn't start with baby Jesus. No stable, no angels, no Bethlehem, but he does make some massive claims, so don't be surprised if it will need some unpacking.

Let's take a look at what it says. On page eight, the sentences with the numbers on them are from the Bible." And we then read the three verses on page eight and use the notes to chat through. Starting from the top of page nine, I would say, "This is telling us about the God who made everything. John introduces us twice to the Word. Twice he says the Word was there in the beginning. So the Word existed before time, before creation, before the beginning. In short, the Word is eternal, but who or what is the Word? The Word is God, the Word is a person. See how the sentence starts with he? The Word who is God and a person made everything, no exceptions. And

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in just three sentences, we're being introduced to the creator. But John's claims for the Word go even further. Let's turn the page to take a look."

I hope you see from this, just how simple this is. The verses, questions and answers really flow nicely. Getting the Word open and relying on it is a really great way of us decreasing in our evangelism and the Lord Jesus increasing. The very lesson John the Baptist teaches us in John chapter three. Indeed, once I've got my friend into the Word, my role is to love them and keep turning the page. So I don't call myself an evangelist, but a loving page turner.

So far, we've seen how to invite, how to trust the word to do the work and the benefits of the notes and how to use them. But what can we expect as we get going? Well, my experience is we have to be prepared to work hard at keeping our friends going. Some of my friends have lost interest. Some even stopped returning calls or wanting to meet up. However, it's always after seeing a big truth of the gospel that they walk away.

A friend who read that no one comes to the father except through Jesus was so outraged about what that meant for his Muslim family that he walked away. So we need to be on the front foot in praying for our friends, in staying in touch, in always having a way for them to pick it up again, in being ready to meet when they are ready to meet. If it takes a few years to get through the gospel, then so be it. We must love them, serve them and go at their pace.

Finally, another helpful tip is to have an evangelism partner or partnership group. I found this vital because it's really tough to go it alone. So find a person or group with whom you share everything related to your evangelism. The ups, the downs, the encouragements, the discouragements. Make sure you are praying for one another, praying for those you are reading with or hoping to invite.

I've found messaging platforms and private groups on social media great for this. I've a bunch of friends who I've set up a group with where I share with them. I'll say, "I'm just about to ask so-and-so if they'll look at John with me. Can you pray?" I always get a few messages back straight away, saying they're praying. This really helps give me courage as I meet my friends.

As we finish, let me share with you four tips I've learned from inviting many people to look at God's Word with me. Number one, make your invite simple and commitment free for your friend. Set the bar low in terms of what you're asking them to agree to. Number two, really trust in the power of the Word of God to do the work. To see that once the word is open, we can simply be loving page turners. Number three, be realistic about what it will mean to keep walking alongside your friends, but be patient, loving and open. Hope for them to turn to Christ straight away, but be ready for the long haul too. Number four, don't go it alone. Team up with at least one other person from your church or ministry group to help keep you going.

God is at work in the world we live in and the power to change hearts and lives is in God's Word, not us. So why not use God's powerful Word as you share Christ with those around you, and let him do the talking.

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The training video is available for anyone to watch at [apassionforlife.org.uk/fw2-view](https://apassionforlife.org.uk/fw2-view)