

JEFF VANDERSTELT



GOSPEL FLUENCY



*Speaking the Truths of Jesus into  
the Everyday Stuff of Life*

# Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life

*Jeff Vanderstelt, Jackie Hill Perry (Foreword)*

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**flu·en·cy / noun**

*:the ability to speak a language easily and effectively*

Even if they want to, many Christians find it hard to talk to others about Jesus. Is it possible this difficulty is because we're trying to speak a language we haven't actually spent time practicing?

To become fluent in a new language, you must immerse yourself in it until you actually start to think about life *through* it. Becoming fluent in the gospel happens the same way—after believing it, we have to intentionally rehearse it (to ourselves and to others) and immerse ourselves in its truths. Only then will we start to see how everything in our lives, from the mundane to the magnificent, is transformed by the hope of the gospel.

## **Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life Details**

Date : Published February 14th 2017 by Crossway

ISBN :

Author : Jeff Vanderstelt , Jackie Hill Perry (Foreword)

Format : Kindle Edition 226 pages

Genre : Christian, Christian Living, Religion, Theology, Nonfiction, Christianity, Evangelism, Faith



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## **From Reader Review Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life for online ebook**

### **Ana Ávila says**

¡Quiero este libro en español! Me encantaron los ejemplos de cómo escuchar a nuestro prójimo, hablar el evangelio, y mostrar quién es Dios con nuestras vidas. Un libro corto, claro, y necesario.

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I want this book in Spanish! I loved the examples about how to listen to our neighbors, speak the Gospel, and show who God is through our lives. A short, clear, and necessary book.

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### **Andy Gainor says**

Read in a group setting. This book is an awesome tool. It also puts structure for many Christians to easily conceptualize core disciplines such as repentance and sanctification. Highly recommend.

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### **Chase Lukasiewicz says**

Elegant, thoughtful, innovative, and practical. I read this book for a summer training project; I read about two chapters a week and had a small group of others to discuss it with. Because of this group I had a lot of opportunity to dive into the application of this book and see how it changed my thoughts and actions.

I think if I were to highlight anything, it would first and foremost be the excruciatingly explicit explanations of the gospel. There's a whole chapter dedicated to this and for good reason. The truths that Jeff spills out are contingent on the foundation of truth: the gospel. This was helpful for those who are gospel-fluent and those who are unfamiliar with the gospel. To be gospel-fluent simply means to be immersed in wisdom of the gospel as to apply it to our hearts, actions, thoughts, feelings, and especially words as if it is a language.

I was most effected by this idea of belief. In the first chapter he explains how everyone is an unbeliever; that's actually the chapter title and it is as unambiguous as you would assume. He expands on the notion of unbelief or maybe a better word is wrong belief as we approach the midway point. In chapter 7 Jeff tells us the hard truth of faith and fruits. James 2:17 says, "For also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." This may be the working theme of the book. Our actions, thoughts, and feelings are all products of what we believe and when we have unbelief in God or wrong belief of God our fruits are sinful. Likewise these products can bear witness to all sorts of belief in really anything. In short, when these false beliefs are discovered we often feel shame or anxiety and are usually left in those feelings. We then learn to cover up our actions and hide ourselves better; precisely what the devil wants us to do! However, Jeff makes sure we know that Jesus died for our shame and the gospel truth and application leads to repentance where grace and forgiveness reside.

To finish off this short review, the practical usage of the gospel became more evident to me than ever and my understanding of God's grace to our perpetual unbelieving hearts overflowed.

Highly recommend for anyone claiming themselves to be a Christian. For if our hearts truly believe God and his truths than the love of Christ Jesus ought to fly off our lips without even thinking.

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### **Kristen C. Crawford says**

#### **You don't have to be a pastor**

Truly speaking the gospel in everyday conversation is not what you learned in Sunday school. If you really want to speak the truth effectively with love and grace, this is a good start.

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### **Jennifer Stahl says**

I'm only giving this 3 stars out of personal preference. It was good themes, well-written, however very "Christianese." Granted, Vanderstelt did give definitions, explanations, and examples for his terms; still, I felt like Christianity was reduced to a system or formula (which is sad and I hate to say, because that's exactly what this book was trying to say Christianity is NOT; rather, it's a way of life). I still underlined and was challenged. But when the book ended, I still felt like I was waiting for something more.

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### **Phillip Howell says**

The content of this book is excellent. The writing is easy to read and simple which is good but it felt more like a good series of lectures then a well written book. Much of the book is Jeff retelling conversations he has with people. I also picked it up thinking it was a book on evangelism. In many ways it is a good book about speaking about Jesus but it is much more than that. There is a longer section in the book about how to apply the gospel to yourself and speak Jesus in to your own heart and I think it's sections like those that make Vanderstelt worth reading/listening to. His other book Saturate was also very similar to this one. I liked that one but found myself liking this one a little less.

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### **Nathan says**

Really, really REALLY enjoyed "Gospel Fluency" by @JeffVanderstelt. This book has been hardcore blessing me, and paints a beautiful picture of transformative gospel ministry. I'm so excited to implement this vision for gospel community!

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### **Jimmy Reagan says**

Mr. Vanderstelt is on to something. We are not fluent with the Gospel. As he strives hard to point out, a lack of gospel fluency is far worse than a little broken English. The stakes are so much higher. Getting the directions wrong to a tourist site because of ineffective language is of so much less consequence than getting wrong the directions to God because we don't know how to talk about the Gospel.

This book is written for broad appeal among Christians. In other words, the net is cast all the way to the edge where the newest Christian lives, and yet is still meant to reach longtime Christians on the other side. Though that means some pages might seem to be on an elementary level, all Christians can be challenged.

The book is in five main parts. The first part explains what gospel fluency is and how so much of our attempts to speak to others lacks the Gospel. In a nutshell, if we don't give them Jesus, we don't give them the Gospel. I loved how he explained that even as Christians we like to speak the gospel to ourselves and really deal often with unbelief. He says a few shocking things like: "I have met too many people who love their Bibles yet have no genuine relationship with Jesus Christ".

The second section is about the Gospel itself. In three chapters, he reminds us of what the Gospel is and how powerful it really is. Some of that is basic as many of his readers may not even have a fundamental understanding of the Gospel, but anyone will enjoy when he illustrates how wonderful it is. Part three covers the Gospel in me in three chapters. Don't miss the chapter "Fruit to Root" as it had outstanding insights.

Parts four and five covered in six chapters attempts to take what we have learned and make it practical. His discussion of the importance of listening is a great reminder.

The book is easy to read. The only fault I found with it, and it is only a personal preference on my part, is that he illustrates too often with discussions that he had with people where he gave them great answers. While that strikes me as a little too self-promoting, we might remember that, in his defense, he might feel the need for us to know that he practices what he preaches.

The book is a success in the sense that it makes me remember that I need to put the Gospel so much more into my conversations with people. I pray the Lord will help me to do much better.

I received this book free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

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## **Becky says**

From the foreword: Every human being on earth needs salvation, not only from the wrath to come, but also from the flimsy theology permeating our Christian communities. That might sound a bit extreme, but in essence it is true.

From chapter one: I'm an unbeliever. So are you. "Wait," you're thinking. "What are you doing writing a book about the gospel of Jesus Christ if you're an unbeliever? And what do you know about me? Who do you think I am?" I grew up believing that people fall into two categories: you are either a believer or an unbeliever—; you either believe in Jesus Christ and what he has done for us or you don't.

Do you know the gospel? Do you need the gospel? Do you love the gospel? Do you live the gospel? Do you SPEAK the gospel, not just in the words you say in front of others, not just in the words you say to justify yourself to yourself, but in the way you live your life? Vanderstelt's book is about becoming fluent in the gospel.

What does it mean to be gospel fluent? In his own words, "We need to know how to believe and speak the

truths of the gospel—the good news of God—in and into the everyday stuff of life. In other words, we need to know how to address the struggles of life and the everyday activities we engage in with what is true of Jesus: the truths of what he accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection, and, as a result, what it is true of us as we put our faith in him. The gospel has the power to affect everything in our lives."

He continues, "Gospel-fluent people think, feel, and perceive everything in light of what has been accomplished in the person and work of Jesus Christ. They see the world differently. They think differently. They feel differently. When they are listening to people, they are thinking: "How is this in line with the truths of the gospel? What about Jesus and his work might be good news to this person today? How can I bring the hope of the gospel to bear on this life or situation so this person might experience salvation and Jesus will be glorified?" When they see movies, they see the themes of the gospel, and they also notice which themes represent a false gospel. They begin to evaluate the storylines of their surrounding culture in light of the story of God's redemptive purposes in Christ Jesus, and they learn to perceive where God might already be at work around them, preparing the soil of a community and individual hearts for the seeds of the gospel to be sown. Most significantly, those who are growing in gospel fluency are experiencing ongoing transformation themselves."

This book is divided into five sections: Gospel Fluency, The Gospel, The Gospel in Me, The Gospel with Us, and The Gospel to Others.

This one is good and basic and fundamental. Don't assume because it covers all the basics that "mature" "advanced" believers can skip it, that this is one for baby Christians. I'm convinced that we need the gospel every day, no matter what. And sometimes it's the people who think they know the gospel inside and out and back again that need the most basic principles of the gospel fleshed out for them...again.

The ideas are really good. The narrative has a lot of illustrations in it--dialogue situations--that I haven't quite decided if I like or not. I think his coaching you through how to speak the gospel to others--or to yourself--in love can come across at first as a little condescending. There were certain passages that I just felt were slightly awkward or unnatural. But. That being said, do I disagree with his theology? No.

I found his ideas thought-provoking for the most part. I liked what he had to say about stories and storytelling especially. "Listening to one another's stories enables us to learn about God's work in one another as well. Every one of us has a story, and all of our stories are part of the true story. Really, our story is God's story. Though we regularly believe they are about us, our stories are really all about him, for "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28)."

His ideas about gospel fluency stayed with me as I read two books: John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Taylor Caldwell's *No One Hears But Him*. Both would be great examples of gospel fluency, in my opinion. Caldwell's book in particular stood out to me in terms of stories and finding ways to connect the gospel to our lives, our stories, our needs. But Christian and Faithful OR Christian and Hopeful (depending on where you are in their journey) are also great at speaking truth in love into any and every situation.

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## Justin says

It is very easy to preach a Gospel that you don't actually live. Great content from Vanderstelt. The bummer is that he was the hero of all his own stories. Makes me wonder if he is living the Gospel that he is preaching.

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### **Jennifer says**

Do you want to be encouraged? Read this book. Do you need to recharge your spiritual batteries? Read this book. I had the chance to read this one with my husband and we both loved it and are grateful to the Gospel Coalition for recommending yet another great read. Boy, did I need to hear this. In one part of the book, the author reminded me as believers to "remember" who God is and explains that I'm showing myself and others what I believe about God by my actions.

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### **Laura S says**

So bad. The topics were really scattered without a consistent theme from section to section and chapter to chapter. The content was really basic without many biblical references. But the worst was the tone - it came across as condescending and self-congratulatory.

I have heard that Vanderstelt is a great pastor and speaker, but this book was a real flop to me.

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### **Joel McCarty says**

Read review online at <http://joelmccarty.com/gospel-fluency...>

Gospel Fluency by Jeff Vanderstelt is a book I was excited about when I first heard it announced, and my excitement has only grown after reading the book. I have learned much from Vanderstelt about the topic of gospel fluency through many of his other resources and am grateful it has now been compiled into one book, which is easily accessible to anyone.

If you are unfamiliar with the idea of gospel fluency, it can be defined as learning how to speak the good news of Jesus into any and every situation and circumstance. Jeff believes this is something that is severely lacking among believers, and I wholeheartedly agree. Whether it be a coworker going through a divorce, a child's response to not getting his way, or a spouse's struggle with identity and worth, followers of Jesus often struggle to see how the gospel is the answer to each of these problems. Even if one can see how the gospel is the healing that is needed, they are often not equipped with the appropriate language to speak into the situation with grace and truth. Jeff does not try to provide immediate solutions, as learning any language does not happen overnight, but he does seek to provide a good foundation of how to begin speaking the language of the gospel into all of life. I highly recommend this book to anyone who desires to have a deeper, more holistic understanding of how the good news really is good and wishes to share this news with those around them.

The book is broken into five parts:

#### **PART 1: GOSPEL FLUENCY**

To begin this section Jeff speaks to the struggle we all have, saved or unsaved, which is to believe in our hearts the truths of the gospel. He reiterates that the answer for the problems we encounter is not a stricter

view of moralism or a greater adherence to man-made laws. Rather, the answer has always been and will always be Jesus. If we believe this, then we must constantly be thinking and speaking the language of Jesus.

"A life of true living is a life of faith in Jesus, a life of believing in Jesus in the everyday stuff of life."

Gospel fluency is compared in this section to fluency in any other language in that it takes complete immersion to become fluent. It is no different with the language of the gospel. We must be constantly immersed in gospel community and gospel conversations to grow in our understanding of how the good news of Jesus is applicable to every situation.

## PART 2: THE GOSPEL

This section reviews the one true story of God, how Jesus is our salvation past, present, and future, and how our unbelief in this story prevents us from living out our true identities as image bearers of our Creator.

## PART 3: THE GOSPEL IN ME

If what we are believing and sharing is not good news, then it is not the gospel. Belief must first start within our own hearts, for we cannot give to others what we have not first received. The battle of belief does not start with our actions though our actions reveal what we are believing in the moment. This section contains some of the most practical helps in the entire book as Jeff walks through getting to the root of our struggles by closely examining the fruit. If the fruit is addressed as the problem instead of analyzed through a gospel lens to see the root, then we are asking the law to do what it cannot do, and outward conformity takes place instead of inward transformation.

## PART 4: THE GOSPEL IN US

The glorious news of Jesus is meant to be shared, and this is done best within a blood-bought community of Jesus followers. As we eat together, we use these opportunities to remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As we daily engage the lesser stories of our brothers and sisters, we speak a better story over them—the story of Jesus. He is the hero of all stories, and so it is to him we run in every conversation.

## PART 5: THE GOSPEL TO OTHERS

Some of the most helpful advice in this book is for followers of Jesus to learn how to listen well. If we even speak the gospel at all, it is often a canned gospel presentation that is not applicable to the individual we are sharing with, so we should not be surprised when our shallow, unconvincing, mundane news is rejected. Jeff admonishes believers to learn how to listen to the stories of those around us while simultaneously listening to the Spirit as he grants us supernatural wisdom to know when and how to speak. This enables us to speak an applicable gospel to the lesser stories we are hearing. It is not as if there is ever more than the gospel, but there is always more of the gospel. Depending on the context of those with whom we are sharing, we will highlight certain parts of the story of God as we share. (For a short, helpful read that will broaden your view of the gospel, see *The 3D Gospel* by Jayson Georges.) We are also to live lives that require a gospel explanation. Jeff uses the language of "Show and Tell", which I think is very helpful and concise. Some of us tend to lean toward only showing and never sharing why we live as we do, and others tend toward telling good news while continuing to live lives that are perfectly explainable apart from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

"Kindness alone doesn't change neighborhoods. Jesus does."

Jeff challenges us to take seriously the call of I Peter 2 (please go read now), which will lead to others taking us seriously when we speak Jesus into their lives. The last challenge from Jeff is a growth in love and wisdom. There is no one who has arrived and fully understands the language of the kingdom, but we should constantly be seeking to grow in love and wisdom empowered by the grace of God.

## CONCLUSION

There is great encouragement for disciples as we each have the very Spirit of Jesus living within us and teaching us the language of the gospel. The Scriptures tell us he is the best teacher ever, so we submit our fears, inadequacies, and excuses to him, and go on the mission of the Kingdom, proclaiming the excellencies of him who has called us out of darkness. We are empowered to continually speak Jesus, the light of the world, into every situation we enter, and through this we pray his glory floods the entire world.

Disclaimer: This book was provided by Crossway. I was under no obligation to offer a favorable review.

This book is due for release February 28th, and is available for purchase on Amazon.

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## **Blake Thompson says**

"The main reason people don't talk about Jesus is not that they lack training. I am convinced it is that they lack love. ... those affection lead you to express verbally and physically what you love most, because you talk about what you love."

The first part of this book spent a great deal discussing how we must be shaped by the Gospel in our own lives first. We must know what Christ has done for us, that He is the hero of our story and that we must remind ourselves of our love for Him because of His love for us. When we go through life ask "What difference does the Gospel make here?"

The book then moves into how we share the Gospel with others verbally and physically. We proclaim Christ as we listen to the needs of others.

"Gospel fluency isn't just about talking. Its about listening as well."

"If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first fifty-five minutes asking them questions and finding out what is troubling their hear and mind, and then in the last five minutes I will share something of the truth." -Francis Shaeffer

When we sit and listen horizontally and vertically, we help facilitate space to effectively communicate the love and difference of Christ. Name, narrative, and need. Once we have these three from a person we can tell them of Jesus and how He is the root of their true desire and need, He will be the hero of their narrative.

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## **Tim Lindner says**

(Disclaimer: I received this book from Crossway for the purpose of writing a review, but this did not influence my review in any way.)

As a believer in Christ, talking about the gospel and including it in all of life's conversations and relationships is something that I have often wanted to do well, but it one of those things that does not come natural. This book provides very useful tools teaching how to do this this effectively.

I am a Bible teacher at a small Christian school and an associate pastor. This book gave me some great ideas for talking students and church members through various issues and always pointing them to the gospel of Jesus. I will be able to use this in discipline and correction conversations, fun conversations, and when people ask for advice. I greatly benefitted from the "Fruit to Root" chapter and the "He's the Better..." chapter. These two tools alone are worth reading the book for.

I would thoroughly recommend this book to any Christian. It is a great tool for parents, friends, church members, pastors, elders, and everyone in between! This book teaches us how to do what we, as Christians, want to and know we should be doing as members of Christ's kingdom! Read this book. Learn from it. Use it in all areas of life where God has placed you to share the good news of Jesus' sinless life, death, and resurrection.

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