

GOSPEL Acronym Training Packet

Second Edition 5/3/2022

By: Pastor Guro Vince Alvarez

The GOSPEL Acronym is a gospel presentation and tactical conversation tool based on six theological principles drawn from Scripture.

These six principles act as points of orientation to help the believer navigate and leverage any circumstance and/or conversation towards presenting and abiding by the truths of Scripture.

A believer equipped with sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures and the tactics of the GOSPEL Acronym will be capable of advancing the Kingdom of God in any situation, be it evangelism, apologetics, encouragement, counseling, preaching, teaching, discipleship, etc.

The GOSPEL Acronym

G- God is God as the Bible says He is

O- Our sinful nature is offensive to God and is leading us towards Hell

S- Salvation is in Jesus Christ alone, the Son of God, who lived, died, and rose from the grave

P- Partaking in salvation means to confess, repent, and believe in Jesus

E- Eternity is secured for us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His guidance

L- Life is now to be lived in joyful, worshipful, obedience to God and His Word.

Expanded Explanations of the Acronym

G- God is God as the Bible says He is

“God’s person and character is knowable and the means of knowing God’s character is through the Bible which accurately gives account of God’s character and activities, as well as being the standard of truth, law, justice, ethics, conduct, and character.”

O- Our sinful nature is offensive to God and is leading us towards Hell

“Human beings, although made by a Perfect and Holy God, are currently in a state of inherent sin as a result of the Fall. As a result we are imperfect physically and spiritually. This now natural state makes us offensive to the perfect standard of God’s law and character, demanding our eternal exile into Hell”

S- Salvation is in Jesus Christ alone, the Son of God, who lived, died, and rose from the grave

“The core message of the Gospel: the sole means of one receiving salvation and redemption, is in the person and works of Jesus Christ. Being truly man and truly God, Jesus Christ born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfectly obedient life, died in the place of sinners as the sacrificial atonement for our sin so as to appease the wrath of God, and rose from the grave to conquer death and pave the way for eternal life for those who would partake in salvation.”

P- Partaking in salvation means to confess, repent, and believe in Jesus

“Our role in salvation is in response to the will, works, and character of God. In acknowledging our need for salvation caused by our sin, we then trust in and have faith in Jesus’ works as the sole foundation for our redemption.”

E-Eternity is secured for us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His guidance

“At the point of salvation, the work and presence of the Holy Spirit, who is God and the supernatural agent responsible for spiritual regeneration and faith, guides a person to believe in the Word of God, partake in salvation, obey the Scriptures and likewise empowers them to serve God. He likewise secures the believer that they have assurance of eternity in Heaven with Christ.”

L- Life is now to be lived in joyful, worshipful, obedience to God and His Word.

“As a result of salvation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believers are now to live life in accordance with Biblical character, commandments, and convictions so as to glorify God and proclaim Christ.”

Angles, Flow, and Attributes:

Drawing inspiration from the Filipino Martial Arts (FMA) tactics and techniques, *the GOSPEL Acronym uses the concepts of Angles, Flow, and Attributes* to tactically navigate conversations and circumstances while wielding biblical principles.

Angles: Predetermined directions in which all techniques can be categorized.

In terms of conversation and utilization of the GOSPEL Acronym, the six principles of the Acronym are the angles of attack or lines of thought which the believer uses in their conversations. These principles are used to communicate truth, refute a contrary point, or encourage others in Christian living.

Flow: being able to fluidly transition from one position or strike to another and likewise combine movements efficiently.

The flow in regards to the GOSPEL Acronym is that the six principles in the Acronym can all be used as starting, transitioning, or ending statements in a conversation. Believers are not limited to a particular order in which they must state the principles of the Gospel. Using the concepts of angles and flow, the believer can adapt to changes in the conversation and maintain a bearing in speaking in accordance with Scripture. (This concepts works in conjunction with the OODA Loop process which will be explained later on)

Attributes: Understanding traits of purpose built weapons and recognizing those attributes in the immediate surroundings.

“Everything can be used as a weapon” is the principle drawn from the understanding of the FMA concept of attributes.¹ Likewise, each of the six principles of the GOSPEL Acronym contain various theological attributes in their statements and expanded explanations. Understanding the attributes that compose the six principles of the GOSPEL Acronym will train the believer to recognize when those theological attributes are present in the circumstances and conversations and engage via drawing parallels, comparison, contrasts. Just as “everything can be used as a weapon” to the FMA practitioner, “**everything can be used to present the Gospel**” if one trains in using the principles and tactics of the GOSPEL Acronym.

¹ Rubio, P., & Marcaida, D. (n.d.). *Doug Marcaida | Marcaida Kali | Weapon attributes - youtube*. Retrieved March 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3qpXBegnkg>

Utilization of the GOSPEL Acronym

Deploying Acronym:

1. Know your Bible
2. Start a conversation
3. Recognize a Letter in the topic
4. Draw upon all knowledge you have on the subject
5. Use knowledge and logic to connect to the Acronym
6. Transition from initial conversation to Gospel and Scripture
7. Continue and repeat at your discretion, to the best of your ability, as the Spirit guides you

These steps of deploying or using the GOSPEL Acronym all occur within the context of the next two methodologies. Understanding all three is crucial to using the Acronym.

Believers using the Gospel Acronym will generally use one or both of the following methodologies: Observe, Interpret, Apply (OIA), and OODA Loop.

OIA: Observe, Interpret, Apply

The first foundational method of using the GOSPEL Acronym, or for that matter most Gospel presentations, are the steps of *Observation, Interpretation, Application (OIA)*. This method is most notably used by the late Dr. Howard Hendricks in his book, *Living By the Book*². (Please refer to this book for a more in depth look at this process, as the details of OIA are beyond the scope of the lessons in this packet). Foundational not only to studying the Bible, but to any matter of study, the OIA process is often the vehicle for presenting the Gospel message and truths of Scripture.

Observe- Gathering of or presenting information

This step uses “*Who, What, When, Where*” questions to gather content and context. Likewise, attention is given to what *Words* are used and how.

Interpret- Processing and properly understanding the gathered/presented information

This step asks the “*Why*,” questions in relation to the content and context previously gathered. The goal is to properly conclude relevant principles, intentions, motives, and culture.

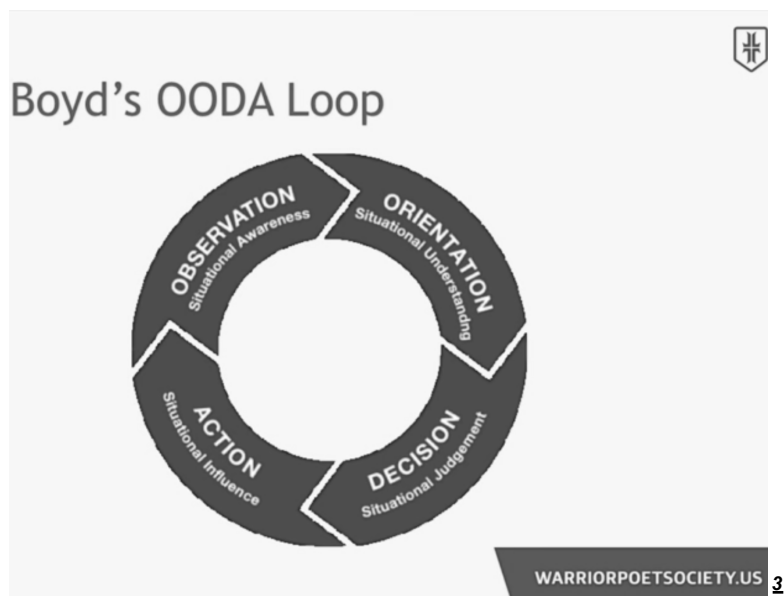
² Hendricks, H. G., & Hendricks, W. (2007). *Living by the book: The art and science of reading the Bible*. Moody Press.

Apply- How to use the gathered and processed information once it has been properly understood

This step determines an appropriate response to be enacted in relation to and as a result of the previously observed and interpreted information.

This methodology is best suited for static conversations and circumstances. Prime examples of this are sermons, Gospel tracts, presentations, classroom lessons, reading, watching movies etc. This methodology functions to present information to a compliant audience with little to no possibility of interruption or feedback.

OODA Loop



Coined by Air Force pilot and master tactician John Boyd, the **OODA Loop** is the decision making cycle of observing, orienting, deciding, and acting. In a sense, OODA Loop is putting the OIA process into practice and under stress. The OODA Loop process is often used to teach one how to make decisions at an accelerated pace and under stress or conflict, as is the case in combative situations. It is said that winning a fight is maintaining one's OODA Loop process while disrupting an opponent's ability to cycle through their OODA Loop. ***Dominating the OODA Loop dominates the situation.***

³ Lovell, J., & Warrior Poet Society. (n.d.). *Caught Dead in the OODA Loop - YouTube*. Retrieved March 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZTjraJEKpQ>

This is the “flow” that was previously mentioned in the FMA concepts. When one is “flowing,” they are effectively cycling through the OODA Loop in the context of FMA or combat. Whatever the situation, one’s ability to flow/cycle through the OODA Loop determines their ability to adjust, improvise, make decisions, and maintain and achieve their objective. *Through training, anyone can dominate and wield the flow concept and OODA Loop process to their advantage in any circumstance.*

In regards to the GOSPEL Acronym, understanding and utilizing principles from the OODA Loop process aims to sharpen the believer’s ability to adjust to the conversation he or she is a part of and not be overwhelmed by an opposing argument. Just as combative situations are changing with each passing second, conversations and debates often present new arguments and perspectives in which one must accommodate in order to continue engaging in the conversation and successfully present and defend the faith.

OODA Loop Cycle

Observe, Orient, Decide, Act

Observe - Awareness- *“Realize something is going on”*

Orient - Understanding- *“Figure out what going on/ what that something is”*

Decide- Judgment- *“How are you going to respond to what is going on?”*

Act- Influence- *“Respond to what it going on”*

Loop- Repeat as needed until a conclusion has been Observed.

Observe - Awareness- acknowledging the situation and relevant factors at play

“Realize something is going on”

Orient - Understanding- processing the situation, assessing possible courses of action, and understand one’s relationship to the situation

“Figure out what going on/ what that something is”

When at the Orient phase, one must determine what aspect (the facts, terms, concepts, and answers presented/available) of the circumstance or conversation will be utilized and likewise the what position to take in relation to the circumstance/conversation. Previously gathered information from the Observe phase determines the options one has in relation to the circumstance/conversation. The Position of Orient one takes refers to one’s state of mind in relation to the

circumstance/conversation. This step is when the “fight or flight response” occurs. However, orienting has several possibilities: Positions for our purposes⁴.

Positive Positions:

Positive in that these states of mind are intentional responses and deemed helpful to the situation

Fight- Engaging, Acting in line with one’s well-being, beliefs, agenda, and/or convictions
E.g.: getting involved, praying, asking for help, asking questions,

Flight- Proactive Retreat, Fall Back is also an appropriate term for this position.
Stepping away to better position one’s well-being, beliefs, agenda, and/or convictions.
E.g.: Not arguing, stepping away, holding your tongue

Neutral Positions:

Can be a positive or negative response depending on relevant factors and circumstances

Focus- Detach or Abstain from acting to gather more information, also a chance to detach⁵- reorient, reassess, and/or overcome
E.g.: Detaching, probing questions, listening, looking around, “seeing the big picture”

*This position is generally positive in that one is preventing themselves from being tunnel visioned. This allows a person to see most if not all factors at play, leading to better observations, decisions and actions.

Flinch- Reaction, Involuntary/instinctive/impulsive. This can be a defensive or ‘knee jerk’ reaction, or a predetermined and trained response

Positive examples: Reflexes, flipping a switch, training kicked in, “was moving before I knew what I was doing”

Negative examples: conventional flight responses/running away, outbursts, PTSD, trauma, panic, being startled, triggered, bad habits giving into temptation, feeling attacked

*With training, the Flinch is not necessarily a negative orientation in that training gives a person the ability to preemptively choose how they will respond to prevent being overwhelmed, harmed, or defeated. However, in cases of trauma or temptation, a flinch oriented response can result in a negative response. Therapy, counseling, and/or training can be seen as reprogramming one’s flinch reaction towards a more positive response.

⁴ These positions are not formally part of the original/official OODA loop teaching. These are observations that have been built upon and expanded by the author for the GOSPEL Acronym.

⁵ Tactic of leadership and discipline famously taught by retired Navy Seal Jocko Willink

Negative Positions:

Negative in that these states of mind are generally reactions, often unintentional, that hinders a person's relationship with the situation

Fixate- *Excessive/irrational focus* or fortification of one's position, view, decision or desire. Can also be conventional immaturity or a heightened emotional state

E.g- Obsession, denial, tunnel vision, being defensive, "wearing rose colored glasses", "seeing red", "digging in one's heels", "I don't have a choice", "My way or the highway"

Fractured- *Impaired*, a lack of clarity or capability. Inability or denying the need to overcome past/present circumstances and one's perspective of those circumstances due to injury, influence, or illness.

E.g. Injuries, grief, depression, traumatized, CPTSD, anxiety, medicated, drunk

Freeze/Flustered- *Disoriented*, crashing of OODA Loop Process, energy and time must be expended to reorient and restart OODA Loop.

E.g.: Speechless, overwhelmed, cornered, unconscious

Note on Positions of Orient:

Knowing these positions is likewise knowing one's own mental framework, state of mind, or worldview as well as knowing another party's or opponent's framework/state of mind/worldview. This makes maintenance of the Orient an essential priority in any conversation, competition, or conflict. In addition, being aware of others' current orientation is essential for properly countering arguments, establishing rapport, building relationships, counseling, teaching, encouraging etc.

That being said, the positions of Orient are not absolute truths. They act as reference points which address critical thinking and tactics in very broad generalizations. The positions of Orient should complement and accompany trained wisdom and discernment, not take their place.

(For example, the current work on Gospel Training and positions of Orient primarily address confrontational or counseling settings, in which conventionally negative emotions are the main issues being addressed. However, Gospel Training and positions of Orient apply to conventionally positive emotions and situations. For example, worship and praise would be categorized as a "Fight" position in that singing praises and admiring God in accordance with Scripture is in line with the "Fight" position's definition.)

Decide- Judgment- determining the best course of action to take in order to respond to the situation, be it a conscience or subconscious decision

“How are you going to respond to what is going on?”

Act- Influence- actively affecting the situation as a result of the decision to act

“Respond to what it going on”

Loop- Repeat as needed until a conclusion has been Observed.

This methodology is best suited for dynamic conversations and circumstances. Prime examples of this are emergency/combat situations, driving in high speed traffic, being witty, improvisation, having fast reflexes, conversations, debating/arguing, negotiating, etc. This methodology functions to present information to a non-compliant audience and anticipates responding to interruptions and feedback.

Note on the Methodologies:

While the OIA and OODA Loop methodologies are being emphasized here in relation to martial arts/combat and using the GOSPEL Acronym, it must be noted that both methodologies are used on a regular basis. Reading this packet is an act of using the OIA process. Consequently, discussing the contents of this packet with others and dialoguing will be an act of OODA Loop. Ideally, one should not view OIA and OODA Loop as new concepts but as defining the actions that are second nature in normal circumstances and sharpening those actions for the purposes of the Gospel.

Additional Notes:

- Ultimately, the goal of the GOSPEL Acronym is not memorization of the Acronym and its tactics. The primary goal of the Acronym and its accompanying training is mastery. Meaning that one has such familiarity with the Gospel, mastery of its core basic principles that one can competently present the Gospel in its entirety, discern if the Gospel is being preached, and give counsel that is in line with Scripture.
- The GOSPEL Acronym is supplementary to reading and knowing the Bible. Without sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures, the Acronym is useless. However, the more Scripture that believer knows, the believer will more effectively and instinctively wield the tactics of the Acronym. The goal of the Acronym and its principles is to “know the way broadly and see it in all things” (Jocko Willink), meaning that Acronym helps the believer to see the teachings, principles, and application of Scripture in all areas of life.
- One should not take this training to mean “everything presents/contains the Gospel message.” The GOSPEL Acronym and its accompanying training are meant to give a believer insight as to how one could transition from an initial subject to presenting a doctrinally sound proclamation of the Gospel. A lack of discernment renders GOSPEL Acronym useless.
- The GOSPEL Acronym is not to be deemed as the best or superior in any way. The Acronym is an effective tool that is completely optional to one’s faith. What is most important is that one knows God, has faith in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, is guided by the Holy Spirit, and lives in such a way that reflects the truths of Scripture and biblically defined Christian character.
- The GOSPEL Acronym is not meant to be exhaustive in its theological depth. Rather, it is best to view the Acronym as a launching point to begin exploring, discussing, understanding, and applying more technical and complex theological matters.
- Understanding and training with the GOSPEL Acronym and its accompanying tactics, OIA and OODA Loop, should not be isolated influences. One who is sufficiently trained in using the GOSPEL Acronym should have an enhanced ability to assess and engage all life circumstances in a God honoring manner.
- Have fun with the learning and becoming skilled with the GOSPEL Acronym. Knowing the GOSPEL Acronym and its tactic ought to help the believer be more versatile, creative, and adaptive in how they present the Gospel and other theological topics. Play with its concepts and make them your own.

Review

The GOSPEL _____ is a gospel _____ and _____
_____ tool using six theological principles drawn from Scripture.

A believer equipped with sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures and the tactics of the GOSPEL Acronym will be capable of advancing the Kingdom of God in any situation, be it _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, etc.

The **GOSPEL** _____

G-

O-

S-

P-

E-

L-

The GOSPEL _____ uses the Filipino Martial Arts concepts of

_____, _____, and _____

Angles: _____

Flow: _____

Attributes: _____

Deploying Acronym:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

The two underlying methodologies used by the GOSPEL Acronym are

_____ and _____

OIA

_____ - Gathering of information

_____ - Processing and properly understanding the gathered information

_____ - How to use the gathered and processed information once it has been properly understood

This methodology is best suited for _____ conversations and circumstances

OODA Loop Cycle

_____ - Awareness “ _____ ”

_____ - Understanding “ _____ / _____ ”

The _____ of _____

Positive Positions:

_____ - Acting in line with one's well-being, beliefs, agenda, and/or convictions

_____ - Stepping away to better position one's well-being, beliefs, agenda, and/or convictions.

Neutral Positions:

_____ - Abstain from acting and gather more information

_____ - Involuntary/instinctive/impulsive reaction

Negative Positions:

_____ - Excessive/irrational focus or fortification of one's position, view, decision or desire

_____ - a lack of clarity or capability.

_____ - Crashing of OODA Loop Process

_____ - Judgment “ _____?”

_____ - Influence “ _____”

_____ - Repeat as needed until a _____ has been _____.

This methodology is best suited for _____ conversations and circumstances.