

# Lifestyle Witnessing

## • Lesson One •

### Begin with God's Word

1. A place to start
2. A message to speak
3. A power to share

## Worship

Read responsively 1 John 3:1-3 and the hymn "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (CW 432:1-3).

A: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

**B: I am Jesus' little lamb; Ever glad at heart I am,  
For my shepherd gently guides me, Knows my needs and well provides me,  
Loves me ev'ry day the same, Even calls me by my name.**

A: Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

**B: Who so happy as I am, Even now the shepherd's lamb?  
And when my short life is ended, By his angel hosts attended,  
He shall fold me to his breast, There within his arms to rest.**

A: Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

**B: Day by day, at home, away, Jesus is my staff and stay.  
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me, Into pleasant pastures leads me;  
When I thirst, he bids me go Where the quiet waters flow.**

**Prayer:** Precious Lord, we know about your love for us. Forgive us for the times we have neglected you. Lord, daily we have experienced your patience with us. We thank you for that and now ask of you another favor. Bless us as we study your Word. Help us grow to know, love, and serve you better! For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.

## Introduction

Two things are true about evangelism. First, we need not agree on *how* to tell others about our Savior. The opportunities are too many and too personal to demand a one-size-fits-all program. Second, we don't need guilt to motivate us to tell others about Jesus. After all, Jesus came to set us free from guilt. Our witness to this truth is prompted by joy. God will,

by his grace, bring to himself in heaven everyone he has chosen. What a thrill to think he might use us to do it!

First and foremost, witnessing requires faith in Christ. When our Lord gives us Christ, we want to know more about him. We want others to have him too. Telling others about our joy in Jesus is as natural as telling them that our team won the championship. Equipping ourselves to share our joy is equally as natural.

A key to witnessing is prayer. During the course of this study, ask God to help you grow to become a better witness. Ask him to keep your eyes open for opportunities to witness. Ask him to let the joy of salvation permeate your life. Most of all, pray for the people who will hear your message and witness Christ living in you.

## Studying God's Word

### A place to start

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

1. What does the word *reconcile* mean? Now think of different situations in which you have used the word *reconcile*.
2. Compare the way you use the word *reconcile* with how Paul uses it in verse 18.
3. According to verse 19, God wasn't just reconciling us to himself. He was reconciling the world to himself through Christ's life and death. How does that affect our witnessing?
4. Think of everything you know about the role of a government ambassador. How is the role of a government ambassador like or unlike our role as Christ's ambassadors?
5. Just how does one *implore* someone on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God?
6. Verse 21 has been called the great exchange verse. Try putting it into your own words.

**His Word in My Life**

The Christian life is a gift and a time of growth. We receive God's gift at Baptism when the Spirit works faith in Jesus and washes away sin. From then on our lives are about growth. Yet even when we struggle with inconsistencies and character flaws, we are forgiven children of God. How does that truth help you as a witness for Christ?

The Holy Spirit causes us to grow closer to Jesus through the Word and sacraments. In your experience, how has your closeness to Jesus affected your witnessing?

An unbeliever tells you, "I don't know about all this forgiveness stuff. I know some guys who are drinkers, womanizers, and vulgar speakers, but they say they're Christians and they're forgiven. I don't get it, but I don't think I like it." What do his comments indicate about your role as an ambassador for Christ?

*Witnessing starts with God. He makes us new creatures through faith in his forgiveness. He makes us his ambassadors with a message to share.*

**A message to speak****Read John 1:29.**

1. This event occurred after Jesus was baptized. Before this John might have called Jesus my cousin or the carpenter from Nazareth. Now he calls Jesus "the Lamb of God." What has changed?
2. The Old Testament priests continually sacrificed lambs as payment for sin and as God's way of communicating forgiveness. Identify some differences between the lambs they offered and the Lamb of God.
3. Imagine you're one of John's followers. You've never met Jesus, but you know John. Why would you follow Jesus?

**His Word in My Life**

Imagine talking with a friend who isn't a Christian. What's the difference between these two approaches?

- A. "Jesse, are you saved? You are if you believe what Jesus has done for you."
- B. "Jesse, Jesus loved you enough to die for you. Really! God is at peace with you. Take him at his word."

Martin Luther said, “Even if the Bible had said, ‘Martin Luther has been redeemed by the blood of Christ,’ I would never have been sure of it.” Why do you think he said this? (Hint: Look again at verse 29.)

At an open forum at church, one person says, “I think we should get more involved in supporting mission work in other countries and do more to help our sister mission churches in town.” Someone else says, “I’m all for it, but we’re too small right now. We need to put our efforts into building up this church. Then we can give more service to others.” What would you say?

*Our Lord has a big vision for his church. Let’s ask him to make ours just as large! An opportunity to announce God’s good news comes with every person we meet.*

## A power to share

**Read Romans 1:16,17.**

1. Complete this sentence in as many ways as you can: The gospel is . . .
2. Complete this sentence as many ways as you can: The gospel . . .
3. The Greek word Paul uses for “power” sounds very much like our word *dynamite*. How does God’s choice of that word affect your view of witnessing?
4. The Bible tells us that the gospel reveals “a righteousness from God.” Which meaning do you think gets to the heart of what this phrase is speaking about?
  - a. The gospel emphasizes God’s perfect sinless condition.
  - b. The gospel emphasizes our status before God because of Jesus’ perfect life for us.

## His Word in My Life

In Bible study class, it’s easy to agree that we are not ashamed of the gospel. But when we’re on the front lines witnessing to others, it’s not always so easy to make that claim. When might we be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel?

The gospel itself is God's power for salvation. Still, we spend countless hours and dollars planning a strategy for outreach and trying to attract unchurched people to our church through advertising, church programs, and even architecture. If the gospel is the power, why put so much effort into outreach methods and strategies?

The Bible uses terms like *witness* and *ambassador* to describe us but doesn't call us *salespeople*. Why not?

*Nothing in this world is more powerful than the revelation of God's gift of righteousness. This week, remember to thank God for revealing that this gift is yours by faith alone. Ask him for help to overcome any shame you might have in sharing it.*

## Summary

What great things we have seen and heard. We build our witness on all we have seen and heard through the eyes of faith.

## Witnessing Activity Report

A key component in this study is a weekly witnessing activity. Those who wish can commit each week to seek out one opportunity to verbalize their faith or set the stage for future witnessing. When this group comes together, we'll share reports about our witnessing activities for the week. Have some fun with this. Don't lay any guilt on yourself. Begin where you are and grow. The opportunities are everywhere.

## Life with God

- Day 1: Pray about your commitment to a witnessing activity this week. As you read each Scripture reading, ask God to send you a witnessing opportunity.
- Day 2: Read Luke 15:1-10.
- Day 3: Read Luke 14:15-24.
- Day 4: Read Matthew 5:13-16.
- Day 5: Read John 17:13-19.
- Day 6: Plan your witnessing activity report for the group.