



Unit 2: Blessing Others

Bless others by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples

Welcome to the *Blessing Others* Bible Study!

God is the source of all *blessings*. To be *blessed* is to experience true happiness and well-being through a faith relationship with God, secured by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. In Christ, our sins are forgiven and heaven is our destination. With that in mind, how can we bless others?

The greatest way to bless someone is by helping them know Jesus Christ and grow in their relationship with God. Even as blessed believers, we still face struggles and areas of bondage—like addiction, unforgiveness, or fear—but Jesus is the one who gives us victory (John 16:33).

When God called Abraham, He told him that “*all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*” (Genesis 22:18). That promise, and the reason all people and nations would be blessed through Abraham was because the Messiah, who brings salvation, would be born through his offspring.

As believers, we are spiritual children of Abraham and heirs of that same promise (Galatians 3:29). This promise becomes personal when we share the good news of Jesus with others. We bless people by giving them the knowledge of salvation and an opportunity for a loving relationship with God.

The goal of Unit 2 is to equip and inspire you to bless others by sharing the gospel and making disciples. In the weeks ahead, we will explore practical tools, key definitions, and action steps to help you build God's kingdom—one life at a time. If you are already sharing Christ and making disciples, we pray these lessons will stir your heart and mind toward continued faithful action.

Kathleen Skaar
Executive Director¹

“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Genesis 12:3

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Lesson 1
Preparing to Witness

Day One

Why Share the Gospel?

Reinhard Bonnke (1940–2019) was a German evangelist who God used to lead over 78 million people to salvation through gospel campaigns. As a young boy, he felt the Spirit of God speak to his heart, “Reinhard, one day you will preach My gospel in Africa.”²

Definitions: The Greek word for “good news” is translated *gospel* in English. It refers to God’s saving activity through the life, ministry, and death of His Son, Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, *salvation* is defined as being saved or delivered from the consequences of sin by Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. To experience *salvation* or be saved from God’s wrath and the eternal fires of hell, a person must believe in, and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The gospel is the universal solution to humanity’s deepest problem—our sin and separation from God. It addresses both our personal wrongdoing and inherited sin nature. This is good news not just for the people in Africa, but for everyone in the 237 countries and territories³ around the world today.

When Reinhard heard God speak to his heart, he could not wait to tell his father. His father was a pastor and served God faithfully. Certainly, he would be excited that God was moving in his son’s life. When he saw his father, Reinhard raced to meet him.

“‘Father, Father God spoke to me in church today and said I must preach the gospel in Africa!’ I must have appeared to him like a bouncing puppy yapping out my excitement.”

In his biography, *Living a Life of Fire*, Bonnke recalled his father’s reaction:

He did not seem to understand. He dismounted from his bicycle and asked me to repeat it. Then he looked at me with a puzzled and somber expression. ‘Your brother Martin will be my heir, Reinhart. He will be the preacher of the gospel in this family.

It was like a shower of cold water. “But Father, God has called me to preach in Africa.”

He scowled.—“How do you know that God has called you?”

Disappointment darkened my heart. His tone of voice spoke louder than his words. It told me he was in deep doubt about my claim. I thought he would understand how important it was that I heard directly from God.

My mind searched for a way to explain to him the reality of it. What evidence did I have? Jesus had not visited me personally. Nor had I selected a scripture verse from a box of promises like Mother when she received a word from God about crossing from Danzig to Copenhagen [World War II]. I didn’t hear an audible voice either. All I had was the evidence of my heart, and I was not eloquent enough to put it into words to please him.

² Reinhard Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire* (Jupiter, Florida: Harvester Services, Inc., 2019), 72.

³ <<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/how-many-countries-are-there>>(accessed 1/6/2023)

On this day I began to understand that I had two fathers. An earthly father and a heavenly Father. Until that moment, I had assumed they spoke with one voice. After all, my father was a man of God. A minister of the gospel. Jesus had appeared to him in person.⁴

Later Reinhard would recall, “It was nearly crushing for me to realize that God might speak to me and my earthly father would not know it, but that’s how it happened.”⁵

Read Ephesians 4:11–12 and answer questions 1–3:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.
Ephesians 4:11–12

Definitions: An *evangelist* is one who preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Preaching* is publicly proclaiming or declaring the truth and sacred message of Christ. *Evangelism* is communicating the message of God’s salvation and mercy to sinners.

1. Why did Christ give certain jobs or agencies, such as evangelist to individuals (v. 12)?
2. Do you have a special calling to be an evangelist? Yes No Maybe (Underline One)

Definition: A *calling* is a summons from God toward a particular course of action. It may involve a profession, talent, gift, or mission. God’s *calling* is usually accompanied with a strong inner impression or impulse toward the activity.

3. If you have such an evangelistic calling, how are you embracing it to build up the body of Christ?

Our calling may involve a variety of duties. For example, Timothy was the apostle Paul’s representative to several churches, and a pastor. Yet, he was still called to do the work of an evangelist.

Read 2 Timothy 4:5 and answer questions 4–5:

But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:5

4. Are you ready to face hardship in serving the Lord, as the apostle Paul says may come? (Romans 8:17) Yes No (Underline One)

⁴ Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire*, 46. Although Reinhard’s father never joined the Nazi party, he was soldier of the Third Reich and imprisoned at the end of WWII. While in prison he gave his remaining life to God to preach the gospel. At that time he briefly saw a vision of Jesus, who said, “Hermann, I am so glad you are coming.”

⁵ Ibid., 72–73.

5. What do you think Paul means when he says: *do the work of an evangelist*?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to questions 4–5 with your team next week.

God has gifted His people in different ways and with different talents. If you do have the gift of evangelism, we pray you allow the Holy Spirit to use you fully for the harvest of souls. We also pray you help others share and spread the gospel. Believers with the gift of evangelism usually have the ability to train or help others effectively share their faith.

Definitions: *Sharing the gospel* means telling or communicating the good news of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection so others can be saved from judgment, reconciled to God, and become followers Jesus Christ. *Spreading the gospel* refers to expanding the reach of this good news, taking it to a larger or increasingly wider area.

Not everyone has a special gifting for evangelism, but we are all called to share our faith. The apostle Paul taught believers that God has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 and answer questions 6–7:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

Definitions: *Ministry* is the dedication to specific activity, especially in reference to a divine assignment. It is service to God and His people. *Reconciliation* is the reestablishing of personal relations—it is a change from enmity to friendship. An *ambassador* is a diplomat sent by one country as a representative to another for a purpose or mission. A *diplomat* is a tactful and sensitive person working or dealing with other people.

6. Who reconciled believers to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (v. 18)?

7. What is the ministry and message of reconciliation (vv. 19–20)?

God has established a personal, loving relationship with believers through Christ's blood sacrifice on the cross. When we are reconciled to God, we are given the assignment of sharing this message—the gospel. To emphasize its importance to God, we are going to look at eight reasons to share the gospel, six in Day One and two more in Day Two. These reasons, we pray, will compel each of us to evangelistic action.

Why Should We Share the Gospel?

(1) Sharing or presenting the gospel glorifies God and reveals His power.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Romans 1:16. In what ways does sharing the gospel glorify God and reveal His power?

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. Romans 1:16

(2) Christ commanded and encouraged His followers to preach the gospel.

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” Matthew 4:19

Definition: *Fishing for people* is a metaphor⁶ for evangelism—sharing God’s message of salvation with sinners.

9. Read Mark 16:15–16. After the resurrection, what did Jesus command of His disciples?

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:15–16

(3) We share the gospel to give people an opportunity to be born again.

Definition: *Born again* refers to a birth from above, a spiritual rebirth (John 3:3–7) which occurs when one trusts in Jesus and is transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

10. Read John 3:3. How can we, or anyone, see the kingdom of God?

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” John 3:3

⁶ A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. It is an imaginative way of describing something by referring to something else.

(4) It is an act of love to show sinners how to be saved from God's wrath and hell.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Ephesians 5:6

11. Read Matthew 22:39. Why is it an act of love to share the gospel with sinners?

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39

(5) When the gospel has been preached to all nations and the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, Jesus will return and usher in God's kingdom.

Definitions: *Gentiles* are all people except the Jews. *Times of the Gentiles* being fulfilled means that the nations will rule until the divinely set number of Gentiles have been saved in Christ.

12. Read Matthew 24:14. When will the end of the world come?

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:14

Jesus tells us that the end will come when the gospel is preached in the whole world and when the divinely set number of Gentiles have been saved (Luke 21:24). Therefore, the more we share the gospel the more opportunities Gentiles have to positively respond and the sooner Jesus will return to set up His kingdom.

(6) Gospel activity deepens our dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

13. Read the following three verses. Explain how spreading the gospel deepens *your* dependence and relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

"With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." 2 Chronicles 32:8a

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
Romans 8:5

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #12 with your discipleship team.

—End Day One—

Day Two

Pray to Share the Gospel

We studied the following six reasons we should share the gospel:

- (1) Sharing or presenting the gospel glorifies God and reveals His power.
- (2) Christ commanded and encouraged His followers to preach the gospel.
- (3) We share the gospel to give people an opportunity to be born again.
- (4) It is an act of love to show sinners how to be saved from God's wrath and hell.
- (5) When the gospel has been preached to all nations and the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, Jesus will return and usher in God's kingdom.
- (6) Gospel activity deepens our dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now, we will look at the final two reasons Christians should share the gospel:

(7) We are given power in the Holy Spirit to share about Jesus Christ.

All believers and followers of Christ receive the Holy Spirit into their lives at the time of their spiritual rebirth (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13–14). The gift of the Holy Spirit was first poured out on Jesus' apostles and followers ten days after His ascension into heaven, on the day of Pentecost. Scripture records that *they were all together in one place. . . . All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:1, 4).

While all believers possess the Holy Spirit, the question becomes: how much of our lives does the Holy Spirit possess? Since we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), we have a responsibility to maintain the fullness of the Spirit in our lives.

Our primary responsibility is to submit to the Holy Spirit's presence and purpose. This involves relinquishing control and fully surrendering to His guidance—which is ultimately the same as surrendering to God.

Read Acts 1:8 and answer questions 14–15:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my [Jesus] witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Definition: A *witness* is someone who has seen something happen or has personal knowledge of an event. In the context of faith, being a witness involves affirming one's beliefs through words or actions. When we are *witnesses* for the Lord Jesus, we share the truth of His life, death, and resurrection. We tell others how we have come to know Christ and how they can, too. By our words and actions, we publicly declare that we belong to Him, and He to us.

14. When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, what were they to receive?

15. What was the power to be used for?

16. Pray that you and your discipleship team are always filled with the Holy Spirit and always be faithful witnesses for the Lord Jesus. I have prayed. Yes | No (Underline One)

The Spirit's power may not always manifest through miracles, signs, or wonders in a witness' life, but it should be evident in the possessor's character. We should see the Spirit reflected through qualities like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). Are these fruits of the Spirit abounding or lacking in your life?

Witnessing to others can be humbling and discouraging. When Reinhard Bonnke grew up, married, and finally arrived in South Africa, it was difficult. This was his calling and he was ready to go. He tried working with several churches but it did not go well. The church leaders were not interested in truly following the Lord, nor changing in any way—they were exhibiting signs of a dead church. So Reinhard began preaching in the streets.

I began to take my accordion to the streets and play and sing to gather a crowd. I would take up a spot near the market and at bus stops, any place where people were likely to be passing. Eventually people would gather to hear the nice-singing German boy with the blonde hair and blue eyes. Then I would take up my Bible and launch into the ABC's of the gospel very quickly before they could get away.

At the end of my first sermon at a bus stop in Maseru, a tall, thoughtful young man stepped forward. I'll never forget him; his name was Michael Kolisang. He wore a colorful blanket wrapped around his shoulders. It was the popular fashion for [among] Basuto tribesmen, those who still worked with cattle. He spoke to me through my interpreter. I want this Jesus you have just preached. I want Him."

What better response could I ever want to a sermon? "I want this Jesus you have just preached." I thought, maybe it will be this way every day in Maseru! Little did I know it was beginner's luck, pardon the expression. After that day I preached many sermons and saw no response.

I took him into the front seat of my Volkswagen microbus. With the interpreter helping from the back seat, I led him through the salvation scriptures. Then I prayed with him to accept Jesus as his Savior. Michael Kolisang has been at my side ever since. He is today a Bishop in Lesotho, pastoring a thriving congregation of thousands, overseeing several other churches and running a nationwide Christian radio station called *Jesu Ke Karabo*.⁷

Reinhard took Jesus' directive to be His witness seriously, as did his convert, Michael. From the time of Jesus' first disciples, believers have faithfully witnessed to the world. This brings us to the eighth and final reason why we should share the gospel.

(8) There are many who have taken Jesus' directive seriously in sharing the gospel.

⁷ Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire*, 192–193.

The apostle Paul is a prime example in the Bible of someone who took Jesus' directive seriously. In Acts 20:24 below, Paul uses the metaphor of a race to describe his life of faith. His goal was to remain faithful to God and obedient to the mission Jesus had entrusted to him. Paul understood that his life of faith would end with his death, but as long as he lived, he was unconcerned about the hardships he faced—his sole focus was on sharing the good news of God's grace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Read Acts 20:24 and answer questions 17–18:

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.
Acts 20:24

Definitions: *Testify* is to bear witness—to make a solemn statement based on personal knowledge or belief for the purpose of establishing truth or facts. *Grace* is God's divine power and love in action to undeserving people (Hebrews 12:15). The pinnacle of God's *grace*—Jesus.

17. How did the apostle Paul view His life when compared to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ?

18. What was Paul's only aim in life?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1 and answer questions 19–20:

Follow my [Paul's] example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

19. How are *you* following Paul's example in testifying to the good news of Jesus Christ?

20. What is keeping *you* from following Paul's example in sharing the gospel?

Review the following eight reasons we should share the gospel and answer questions 21–22:

- (1) Sharing or preaching the gospel glorifies God and reveals His power.
- (2) Christ commanded and encouraged His followers to preach the gospel.
- (3) We share the gospel to give people an opportunity to be born again.
- (4) It is an act of love to show sinners how to be saved from God's wrath and hell.
- (5) When the gospel has been preached to all nations and the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, Jesus will return and usher in God's kingdom.
- (6) Gospel activity deepens our dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- (7) We are given power in the Holy Spirit to share about Jesus Christ.
- (8) There are many who have taken Jesus' directive seriously in sharing the gospel.

- 21.** List two reasons to share the gospel from the above list that are most meaningful to you.
- 22.** If you can you think of any valid (acceptable) excuse for *not* sharing the gospel, please explain.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #14–22 with your team next week.

If you are already sharing the gospel regularly, well done! Your obedience and discipline are making an eternal impact. The rest of this unit is designed to help you sharpen your skills, grow in confidence, and inspire others to join you in testifying about Christ.

If you are not sharing the gospel regularly, take heart—you are not alone. Many Christians struggle with where to start, what to say, or how to approach others without damaging or straining relationships. This lesson will offer you encouragement, practical tools, and ideas to help you move forward in faith.

No matter where you are on your journey, the first and most important step is prayer. We must bring this worthy mission—leading others to Christ—before the Lord. While every opportunity to share will be unique, the next section includes a set of prayers we can—and should—lift up to the Lord regularly as we seek to bear witness together.

Action Step

- 23.** Pray the following prayers for yourself and your discipleship team every day for seven days. In addition, pray these aloud with your team members. I will pray: Yes | No (Underline One)

Prayers for Sharing the Gospel

Pray and remind God of the truth of His Word.

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3–4

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” Romans 10:13–15

Pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you how to share the gospel and be ready for any situation.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26

Pray to recognize that the harvest is ready, and to respond with urgency—resisting complacency and spiritual laziness.

Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.'
John 4:35–38

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Romans 13:11

Pray to be strong, courageous, and bold in living out and sharing your faith daily.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Ephesians 6:19–20

Pray for God to show you who to share the gospel with, and for their hearts to be open to receive it.

One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.
Acts 16:14

Pray that those who hear or read the gospel will experience true salvation in Jesus Christ through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

... he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:5–7

24. Which of the above prayers for sharing the gospel resonates most with your current need, and why?

—End Day Two—

Day Three ***Faithful Witness***

In Days One and Two, we explored eight compelling reasons to share the gospel. We also began praying for God to grant us opportunities and success in sharing, testifying, proclaiming, and preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the Lord has already placed individuals on your heart, and you feel ready to tell them about our Savior. Please go forward, trusting the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you in presenting the gospel.

However, for those wanting more assistance, we are going to examine methods to help you both in identifying who to talk with, and how to share the gospel. We begin with a simple question—*Who do you know?* Most likely, the first people who come to mind will be family and friends.

It is debatable whether or not it is easier to talk with family members and friends or with strangers. Family and friends know us the best, our strengths and weaknesses. Since they know our weaknesses, we may be concerned they will think of us as hypocrites since we do not always live up to Jesus' standard. In addition, we may be fearful of putting close relationships at risk by discussing different beliefs and opinions.

Definitions: *Hypocrisy* is the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not correspond or fit. *Hypocrites* are those who engage in *hypocrisy* by pretending to have certain virtues, values, and beliefs but do not follow what they promote.

Our fears of being labeled a hypocrite or of disrupting relationships are among the tools Satan uses to keep us silent. Do not let his tactics work in your life. Be honest with your family and friends, letting them know that you, like all believers, are a work in progress. No one is perfect.

When we fear upsetting relationships, we must remember that genuine love for our family and friends means caring deeply about their eternity. That kind of love should outweigh our desire for their approval. Jesus came into the world to testify to the truth—and as His followers, we are called to do the same.

25. Read John 18:37. When the Jewish leaders took Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to be executed, what reason did Jesus give Pilate for His coming into the world?

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” John 18:37

After Jesus stated that He had come into the world to testify to the truth, Pilate responded with, “What is truth?” This question was not sincere, as Pilate did not wait for a reply; instead, he immediately went outside to speak with the Jewish leaders. His question may have been reflective, but it could also have been sarcastic or contemptuous. Whatever Pilate's exact frame

of mind, his response ultimately reflected unbelief. As the Roman governor, Pilate did not accept Jesus' words that He had come to testify to the truth.

By choosing not to stand with Jesus and the truth, Pilate aligned himself with the world and the Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus' claims. Pilate is not merely a tragic historical figure trapped by political pressures; he had a choice—just as everyone who hears the truth of the gospel does. People either believe and follow Jesus, or they reject Him and align with the world.

Jesus exemplified what it means to be a faithful witness. As God's true witness, He stood firm, proclaiming the truth even to death on a cross. So . . . what is truth?

Jesus answered this in John 14:6: *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* Truth is not just a concept; it is a Person. Jesus is the truth—God's full and final revelation of Himself. To know the truth is to know Jesus, to believe in His words, His identity, His death, and His resurrection.

Read Revelation 1:5–6 and answer questions 26–29:

*. . . and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,
6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.* Revelation 1:5–6

Definition: The word *faithful* is characterized by dependability, constancy, and reliability—therefore a *faithful* person is dependable, constant, and reliable. A *faithful* person inspires trust.

26. Who is described as the faithful witness (v. 5a)?

27. What has Jesus made believers by freeing them from their sins (v. 6a)?

28. As a kingdom and priests, what are we called to do (v. 6b)?

29. What are some ways that *you* personally serve Jesus' God and Father (v. 6)?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #26–29 with your team next week.

Recall from Day Two that a witness is someone who sees something happen or has personal knowledge of it and affirms it through words or actions. In the Christian faith—and for all of humanity—Jesus is the original witness. He was with God from the beginning and serves as the divine and holy witness to everything about God and His plan to save a dark and sinful world (John 1:1–14).

Jesus affirmed and revealed the truth of God through His pure life and sacrificial death for humanity's sins. His witness encompassed the reality of both heaven and hell: those who trust in Him are saved from God's wrath, while those who refuse will face eternal separation in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15, 21:8).

This message of heaven and hell is central to our witness and service to God. Jesus offered His body as a sacrifice to cover humanity's sins, and we offer our lives as a living sacrifice to communicate the truth of His perfect, priestly act. As our eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ continues to intercede for us, making our witness possible and powerful.

Our service to God includes praise, thanksgiving, and good deeds, but it also involves priestly responsibilities. Just as Christ mediated (intervened) for us with God, we should mediate for others by telling them how to be forgiven and the way to have a personal relationship with God. In God's kingdom, a priest helps others come to know and obey Him.

Throughout His life, Jesus taught God's ways—even when it was difficult, inconvenient, and ultimately deadly. Because Jesus is the faithful witness, believers will enjoy eternity with God in perfect joy. Should we not share the truth of Jesus Christ so that others might also experience eternal happiness with God?

John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the One who comes from heaven. Taking a humble position, John identified himself as merely one from the earth, recognizing that only someone from heaven can speak of God with firsthand authority. As God's eternal Son, Jesus not only has seen and heard from the Father—He is one with Him.

Read John 3:31–36 and answer questions 30–31:

The one [Jesus] who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³ Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴ For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. John 3:31–36

Note: There are a few interpretations for the second part of verse 32: *but no one accepts his testimony*. First, it could mean that at the time John the Baptist was testifying about Jesus, no one was accepting it. Second, no one in the sense that few people were accepting of Jesus' testimony to become His disciples. Third, no one can accept Jesus' testimony except by the Spirit.

30. How can Jesus testify to what He has seen and heard about God (see John 1:1, 8:58, 17:5)?

31. What has the one who accepts Jesus' testimony certified or confirmed (v. 33)?

Although believers today are not eyewitnesses to Jesus as the first disciples were, we still have a story to tell—our personal testimony. When we choose to follow Christ and surrender our lives to His Lordship, we are able to bear witness to others by sharing our experience of His transforming grace.

This experience is simply how we came to know Christ and how He changed our lives. The change is important. No Change—No Jesus. No Jesus—No Change. Our personal testimony or witness is one way to share the gospel with others by explaining our conversion experience. It may be a plain or dramatic event. It is not the experience that matters but that there was a specific point in time when we confessed our sins placed our trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Do not worry if you cannot remember the exact date. However, you should remember the prayer or event when you personally acknowledged the truth and began following Christ. Even if you made your commitment to Jesus as a child, you should have some recollection of this occasion.

Definition: *Converted* is defined as changing from one form or character to another. The Greek word that is translated *convert* in the New American Standard (NASB) and other Bible translations is *strepheo* (στρέφω). It means to turn and change inwardly. The New International Version (NIV) of the Bible uses *change* to translate the Greek word, *strepheo*.

Five Steps to a Personal Testimony

So, how do you tell your story about following Jesus? These five simple steps will help you share your testimony in a way that is clear and meaningful.

1. The Opening

Choose a central theme to frame your story. Reflect on what your life revolved around before you knew Christ (e.g., relationships, reputation, success). Briefly describe how this influenced your life and eventually led you to seek God.

2. Your Life Before Christ

Describe what your life was like before coming to Christ, but avoid dwelling on or glorifying past sins. Share just enough detail related to your theme to illustrate your need for Christ. Consider these questions:

- What aspects of my life before Christ might resonate most with non-Christians?
- What did my life revolve around? Where did I find security, identity, or happiness?
- How did those things ultimately disappoint me or fall short?

3. How You Came to Christ

Share the details about why and how you became a Christian.

Explain your story in a way that helps others see how they, too, can come to know Christ. Even if they are not ready to take that step now, God may use your story and your explanation of the gospel to draw them closer to Him in the future. As you prepare, reflect on these questions:

- When was the first time I heard the gospel, and what were my initial reactions?
- When and why did my perspective on Christ begin to change?
- What final struggles did I experience before accepting Him?
- Why did I ultimately decide to accept Christ (or surrender my life fully to Him)?

4. Your Life After Coming to Christ

Describe how Christ has transformed your life, especially in ways that connect to your theme. Focus on changes in your character, attitude, and perspective, rather than only on behavior. Be honest—while life is still challenging, share what is truly different now. As you prepare, reflect on these questions:

- How is my life different now? List specific changes in character, attitude, and outlook.
- What drives me now? What purpose do I live for?
- Although my life is not perfect, how does knowing Christ help me face challenges?

5. The Closing

Conclude with a statement that ties your story back to your theme. If you would like, end with a Bible verse that reflects your journey and new life in Christ.⁸

Note: If you were born again at a young age, your testimony might include how your relationship with God has helped you avoid negative, life-altering situations as you matured.

Action Step

32. Pray for guidance and wisdom, then use the “Five Steps to a Personal Testimony” above to write, type, or record your personal testimony. If writing or typing, use a separate sheet of paper. Ensure that the gospel message is clearly presented, avoiding excessive detail—attention spans are often shorter today. Prepare both a longer version (3–4 minutes) and a shorter one (30–60 seconds) so you are ready to share your story in a variety of settings.

Accountability: Share your long and condensed personal testimony with your team.

—End Day Three—

⁸ <<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/share-the-gospel/what-is-a-christian-testimony.html>>(accessed 1/30/2023)

Day Four

Who to Tell about Jesus

In Day Three, we talked about the fear that can come with sharing the gospel with family and friends—especially when we are worried it might strain the relationship. But we were reminded that their eternity matters more than our discomfort or fears. That does not mean we jump in without thought—we approach with prayer, love, and care. After all, Jesus did not force His way into anyone’s life. He walked with patience, always leaving room for personal choice.

In Unit 3: *Christian Leadership*, we will learn more about Jesus and how we can imitate Him. For now, read the four Gospels and you will get to know Christ better and what He expects of His disciples. People, including family, do take notice of our lives. If we are truthful, kind, and loving—they will be more interested in hearing what we have to say. So let us all work on our personal and everyday character witness.

For example, in 1995 as soon as I arrived home after a women’s retreat, I immediately told my husband, Anders, that I had prayed to receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I explained the importance of my decision and how he might pray to receive Christ also. He was not convinced.

Since then, Anders has told me that he wanted to see if my decision to follow Christ would make any difference in my life. After observing positive changes, he gave his life to the Lord about six months later. The point is, sharing the good news is important—but so is letting God work in us so that our lives reflect the message we communicate.

Read Philippians 2:3–5 and answer questions 33–36:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:3–5

33. What should we do out of selfish ambition (rivalry) or vain conceit (pride, boasting) (v. 3)?

34. How are we supposed to value others (v. 3b)

35. Should we look after other people’s interests (v. 4)? Yes No (Underline One)

36. What mindset should we have in our relationships with others (v. 5)?

It is in everyone’s best interest to know Christ as their Savior and Lord, have their sins forgiven, know God the Father, be led by the Holy Spirit, and enjoy eternal life. However, even though our message saves lives, we must still be careful to share it with respect and sensitivity.

Read 1 Peter 3:15–16 and answer questions 37–38:

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1 Peter 3:15–16. (In this context “revere” (v. 15) means to treat as holy and set apart into the realm of the sacred.)

37. Because we revere Christ as Lord, what should we be prepared to do (v. 15b)?

38. How should believers give their answer or reason for their hope in the gospel (v. 15c)?

Even when we share the good news with gentleness and respect, we may not always encounter the same courtesy from those we engage with. Earlier, the apostle Peter encouraged believers not to fear threats or be frightened, assuring them that even if they suffer for doing what is right, they are blessed (1 Peter 3:14). This principle remains true for us today.

It can be tempting to remain silent out of fear, but doing so succumbs to the devil’s schemes. By keeping us quiet, the enemy aims to hide the truth from those he has ensnared. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak through you, relying on God for strength, protection, and the right words.

While we must be ready to give an answer to everyone, we should also take the initiative in sharing the gospel with those who are lost. The question then becomes: *Who can I share the gospel with?* It makes sense to consider the people you know, as we often have better opportunities to share the gospel with those familiar to us.

Who to Tell about the Gospel

Who do you know?

Start with the people you know—your circle of family and friends. We could call this your range or sphere of influence. These are the relationships or people you have the ability or opportunity to reach and impact in a positive way.

Action Step

Look at the following classes of people and the following three categories:

The **A** category will include those who are non-Christian.

The **B** category includes those who show little indication of faith in Christ. They say they are Christians but their lifestyle and actions make you wonder if they have a head knowledge of who Jesus is but have never been born again.

The **C** category includes those you know as professing Christians. They acknowledge faith in Jesus Christ and are following Him faithfully.

Definition: *Professing Christians* are those who openly declare or state their faith in Christ.

Pray and then, using your phone, computer, or any other contact source, begin compiling your lists. Refer to the categories below and use separate pieces of paper as needed. This may take some time, so do not feel pressured to complete it in one sitting—it may take several days or even a week. Once you have finished, start lifting those people up to the Lord in prayer.

This will be a lifelong venture, as there are billions of people who need to hear the gospel. While we cannot preach to the entire world—no evangelist, no matter how renowned, has ever accomplished that—we can focus on serving the people God has entrusted to us. Therefore, it is important to keep our lists up to date by regularly adding new names.

Family

Immediate Family (a person's parents, brothers, sisters, spouse, and children)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

39. Name(s):

Extended Family (relatives such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

40. Name(s):

Distant Family (relatives who are not closely related such as great uncles, aunts, 2nd cousins)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

41. Name(s):

Friends

Close Friends (included in your inner circle of friends)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

42. Name(s):

Casual (friends you see from time to time)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

43. Name(s):

Church (community of people you know and attend church together)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

44. Name(s):

Acquaintances

Work or School (people you are friendly with at work or school but not outside of those environments)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

45. Name(s):

Neighborhood (people who live in your neighborhood and with whom you speak to either often or occasionally)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

46. Name(s):

Clubs and Activities (people you know through various business, hobby, sports, ministry, or other activities or organizations)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

47. Name(s):

Professionals (people whose services you use such as doctors, dentists, hair stylists, manicurists, lawyers, accountants, etc.)

A. Non-Christian B. Little indication of faith in Christ C. Professing Christian

48. Name(s):

Accountability: Be prepared to show your lists #33–48 with your discipleship team.

Some of those in your discipleship team may have larger lists than others. The number of people on your lists is not as important as your actively praying and stepping out in faith to share the good news of Jesus the Savior. In lesson 2, *Sharing the Gospel* we will cover various ways to tell others about the life-changing news of Jesus Christ. However, our confidence is not in a particular method, but in God who will lead and guide us in every aspect of our witness.

We also can also share the gospel with people we do not know—strangers. This does not take a list because we do not know these people or when we will come into contact with them. We just need to be ready to share the gospel with them as God places them in our lives. It may be through business, a telephone call, on social media, at the grocery store, or while waiting for an appointment.

It is a question of staying open to how God is working around us. For instance, I was in a doctor's waiting room one day absorbed in reading the news on my phone when the Holy Spirit convicted me of missing opportunities to share the gospel. Simply, I was ignoring the people around me while giving undivided attention to an electronic gadget.

What if I put my phone down, prayed, and looked for a divine opportunity from the Lord? I obeyed the Spirit's prompting and soon noticed a teenager in the waiting room with me. We started a conversation and I learned that he had the day off from high school and had driven his grandfather to the doctor's office. I did not have the time to bridge into spiritual things and the gospel because a few minutes later his grandfather had finished with the doctor and they were ready to leave. However, because we had chatted for a short time, it was easy to hand him a gospel tract on his way out and ask him to read it. He said he would.

Not all of you will be comfortable talking with strangers. In fact, some of you may be quite anxious about social situations. Still, with care and practice this is a good way to make new friends and tell them about Jesus Christ.

Use wisdom in speaking with strangers. For our own safety, we should choose conversations in public places and protect our personal information. Use common sense and as always, pray and let the Holy Spirit lead you.

Definitions: A *tract* is a short or condensed written essay (treatise) on a particular subject. A *gospel tract* covers the subject of salvation through Christ Jesus. Gospel tracts may have been used as early as the 13th century.

Check with your pastor or other staff members regarding your church's outreaches to the lost. This would give you fellowship with like-minded believers and regular opportunities to share the gospel. As with all things, be sure to pray for God's will and purpose for your involvement.

—End Day Four—

Day Five

Small Talk Leads to Spiritual Talk

It is better to open a conversation with small talk and let your small talk lead to spiritual talk. Our small talk helps both parties to relax and find things in common. It is easier for someone to listen to truth from someone they feel at ease with.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines “small talk” as “conversation about things that are not important, often between people who do not know each other well.” Whether you love or loathe small talk, it’s not as “small” as you might think.

Our brains process loads of information during a conversation, but most of those informational inputs are nonverbal. It’s actually not the content of small talk that makes it significant. It’s everything else: tone, body language, our rate of speaking, emotional mood and more.

Here are four benefits of small talk:

1. It enables us to find common ground and shared interests.
2. It improves active listening skills.
3. It helps us build muscles [confidence] to overcome social discomfort and improve spontaneity.
4. It lays the groundwork for transitioning into more serious, deeper topics which require a greater degree of psychological safety.⁹

People need to feel safe before discussing serious and personal topics. Those we speak to about Jesus may hold different beliefs and may even resist new perspectives—especially the truth. However, small talk can help bridge this gap, allowing us either to share the full gospel or to plant seeds that God can nurture for future salvation.

49. How comfortable are you in starting conversations (small talk) with people you do not know? Rate from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most comfortable) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (Underline One.)

50. Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in starting conversations for the opportunity to share the gospel? Yes No (Underline One) If not, why not?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to questions 49–50 with your team.

Remember, following Jesus means stepping out of our comfort zone. Believers live sacrificially, relying on God’s grace. We are not called to do anything on our own; God wants us to depend on Him so that His Holy Spirit can equip and strengthen us—even in small talk and witnessing.

⁹ Julia Korn, “Why Small Talk is Anything but Small,” *Forbes*, June 21, 2021, cited at <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/juliawuench/2021/06/21/why-small-talk-is-anything-but-small/?sh=418b4d3978b0>>(accessed 2/8/2023).

For those who feel hesitant about starting conversations, we have included the following tips to make it easier. Your discipleship team might have additional ideas to help as well. Consider taking time to practice small talk together through role-playing. In Lesson 2: Sharing the Gospel, we will cover ways to naturally bridge into spiritual conversations.

Tips for Small Talk

1. *Project a positive image. Smile. Relax.*

Make sure both your nonverbal and body language are welcoming. Also check your voice tone, rate of speech, and emotional mood. How your body functions during your encounter speaks volumes. For example, if you rarely make eye contact, you may appear uninterested or socially anxious. Crossing your arms indicates that you are defensive or not comfortable.

2. *Offer a sincere compliment.*

Your compliment could be regarding clothing, character, abilities, etc.

3 *Make an appropriate joke.*

If this is your personality, a shared laugh is golden.

4. *Ask for advice or ask a question.*

This will vary with location and situation.

5. *Make a positive comment about surroundings or circumstances.*

If nothing comes to mind, even the weather can be a good conversation starter. “It is certainly a beautiful day!” “I’m glad it’s raining—the grass needed it!”

6. *Actively listen and pay attention.*

Again, our body language plays a role here. Are we looking at the other person? Do our facial expressions display interest—or impatience or boredom?

7. *Introduce yourself.*

Names are a good way to get to know someone. It makes for a more personal encounter.

8. *Mix asking questions about the other person with sharing about yourself.*

The goal is to build common ground that keeps the conversation flowing. As the dialogue continues, you will find more opportunities to bridge into spiritual topics and the gospel.

We have been talking about what might seem like chance encounters with strangers, but in reality, these are divine appointments—carefully orchestrated by our sovereign God. Plus, with His help, we can also plan to share the gospel through intentional events, like sports activities, coffee meetups, afternoon teas, or dinner gatherings at our homes. God works in so many different ways—so be open.

We learned in day two that Reinhard Bonnke played his accordion on the streets to attract a crowd so he could preach the gospel. He was in Africa according to God's will, but his street evangelism was not bearing much fruit. So he and his wife, Anni, decided to try something new, as he describes in his book, *Living a Life of Fire*.

On Fridays, we began to hold a youth service in our home. Dolphin and Michael Kolisang helped me gather interested young people from the streets of Masaru into our home. There we would serve refreshments and I would teach them from the Scriptures, always ending with an invitation to accept Jesus. I had found a small, round coffee table at a secondhand store. Those who wanted to be saved I invited to kneel at that table in our living room. These were the most effective outreaches I saw in those early years. As the young people knelt and I led them in the prayer of salvation, I really felt the presence of God in those invitations.

After that very first Friday youth meeting, Anni and I cleaned up the house. Suddenly Anni called to me. 'Reinhard, come here and see this.'

I came into the living room. She was kneeling at the little coffee table with a wet cloth poised in her hand. But she was not using it. With her other hand she pointed to the surface of the table. When I came near, I saw that the table was covered with tears.

How the gospel touches a soul so deeply is due to the work of the Holy Spirit. We were honored to see this evidence of hearts open to the Lord of the universe. And it had happened in our living room. As the weeks passed, more and more tears stained that coffee table, corroding its lacquer finish.

To our family it was no longer merely a coffee table it became a treasure, a monument, a reminder. We called it our table of tears."¹⁰

—End Day Five and Lesson 1—

Blessing Others Lessons

Lesson 1: Preparing to Witness

Lesson 2: Sharing the Gospel

Lesson 3: Making Disciples

Lesson 4: Spiritual Gifts

Next—Unit 1: Blessing Others, Lesson 2: Sharing the Gospel

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¹⁰ Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire*, 199–200.