Learning the Basics

Lesson Five  Sharing Your Faith

Introduction

As Christians our motivation for service is based solely upon our love for God.

We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19 KJV)

Our witnessing for Jesus begins in the world in which we live; in our immediate surroundings.

We must look around us and pray for God’s direction and leading in sharing the gospel with our friends, loved ones, and those with whom we serve. As we shall see in the scriptures, witnessing involves more than just speaking of the Lord. To be an ambassador for Christ requires a lifestyle compatible with our confession of faith.

Bible Study Lesson Preparation

As You Begin

Start your time in the Word with prayer! Ask God to give you His wisdom as you study through this lesson.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)

Remember, it is the Holy Spirit that will “guide you into all truth.”

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)

1 Corinthians 2:13 tells us that godly wisdom is learned through the words of the Holy Spirit: the Bible. Through prayer we can assure ourselves of profitable study as the Holy Spirit gives us godly wisdom.

When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths. (1 Corinthians 2:13 NLT)

As we study the Word of God, we can be assured that we will be drawn closer to our Lord and prepared for things to come.

You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:15-17 NLT)

Before beginning your study please read:

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places He planned to visit. These were His instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields. Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Don’t take any money with you, nor a traveler’s bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don’t stop to greet anyone on the road. Whenever you enter someone’s home, first say, ‘May God’s peace be on this house.’ If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. Don’t move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what
they provide. Don’t hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay. If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick, and tell them, ‘The Kingdom of God is near you now.’ But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—the Kingdom of God is near!’ I assure you, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day.” (Luke 10:1-12 NLT)

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord’s followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains. As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting Me?” “Who are You, lord?” Saul asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone’s voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink. Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord!” he replied. The Lord said, “Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to Me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again.” “But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon Your name.” But the Lord said, “Go, for Saul is My chosen instrument to take My message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength. Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days. And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!” All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” they asked.

“And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?” Saul’s preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn’t refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. (Acts 9:1-22 NLT)

Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don’t understand God’s way of making people right with Himself. Refusing to accept God’s way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in Him are made right with God. For Moses writes that the law’s way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith’s way of getting right with God says, “Don’t say in your heart, ‘Who will go up to heaven?’ (to bring Christ down to earth). And don’t say, ‘Who will go down to the place of the dead?’ (to bring Christ back to life again).” In fact, it says, “The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.” And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone
who trusts in Him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on Him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:1-13 NLT)

I really don’t need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving. But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don’t want to be wrong in my boasting about you. We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren’t ready after all I had told them! So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly. Remember this—a farmer who plants generously will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.” For God is the One who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, He will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words! (2 Corinthians 9:1-15 NLT)

Then He said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And He said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ You are witnesses of all these things. And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as My Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.” Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting His hands to heaven, He blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up to heaven. So they worshiped Him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God. (Luke 24:44-53 NLT)

While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children. The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crip-
nally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years. As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: “O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—You spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, Your servant, saying, ‘Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the LORD and against His Messiah.’ In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, Your holy servant, whom You anointed. But everything they did was determined beforehand according to Your will. And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, Your servants, great boldness in preaching Your word. Stretch out Your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.” After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God’s great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need. For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means “Son of Encouragement”). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles. (Acts 4:1-37 NLT)
Study Questions

1. What is a Christian witness?
   Then he told me, “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and hear Him speak. For you are to be His witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard.’” (Acts 22:14-15 NLT)

   We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3 NLT)

2. What does Jesus say I will be for Him?
   “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NLT)

3. What must a person do before he can turn from his sins and be saved?
   For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:13 NLT)

4. What must he do before he can call on the Lord to be his Savior?
   But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him unless someone tells them? (Romans 10:14 NLT)

5. If I follow Jesus as He told me to, what has He promised to do?
   Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow Me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Matthew 4:19 NLT)

6. If I tell them about Jesus, whom can I trust to convict them in their hearts?
   But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in Me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged. (John 16:7-11 NLT)

7. What is God’s will for every person?
   The Lord isn’t really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (2 Peter 3:9 NLT)

8. Will God use me to answer questions about Him to those who are seeking to know the truth?
   Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. (1 Peter 3:15 NLT)

9. What facts from the following verses could you point out while witnessing to an unsaved person?
   a. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. (Romans 3:23 NLT)
   b. But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8 NLT)
   c. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 NLT)
   d. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:13 NLT)

10. A witness shares what he has seen and heard. What facts about his life did Paul give in his testimony?
   Life before:
   Then Paul said, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. The high priest and the whole council of elders can testify that this is so. For I received letters from them to our Jewish brothers in Damascus, authorizing me to bring the Christians from there to Jerusalem, in chains, to be punished.” (Acts 22:3-5 NLT)

   Receiving Christ:
   As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” “Who are You, Lord?” I asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus the Nazarene, the One you are persecuting.” The people with me saw the light but didn’t understand the voice speaking to me. I asked, “What should I do, Lord?” And the Lord told
Bible Study Lesson Preparation Continued

“Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you are to do.” I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand to Damascus by my companions. A man named Ananias lived there. He was a godly man, deeply devoted to the law, and well regarded by all the Jews of Damascus. He came and stood beside me and said, “Brother Saul, regain your sight.” And that very moment I could see him! (Acts 22:6-13 NLT)

After he received Christ:

Then he told me, “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and hear Him speak. For you are to be His witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard.” (Acts 22:14-15 NLT)

Meditation and Memorization

Meditate on (think about) the following verses:

When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36 NLT)

You must teach these things and encourage the believers to do them. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so don’t let anyone disregard what you say. (Titus 2:15 NLT)

But if I say I’ll never mention the LORD or speak in His name, His word burns in my heart like a fire. It’s like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can’t do it! (Jeremiah 20:9 NLT)

Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. (1 Timothy 4:12 NLT)

Memorize:

You can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins. (James 5:20 NLT)