

LESSON

1 Follow the Pattern

If you wanted to build a house, what would be the first step? Before you can start the work, you must have a plan. You must decide how many rooms you want and where to put the doors and windows. You need a pattern to help you as you build.

In the Old Testament we read that God told His people to build a place to worship Him. He gave them a plan. In fact, He told them seven times to be sure and follow His plan exactly. When they obeyed Him, the building was completed, and God was pleased.

If we want to win people to Jesus Christ, we need a pattern, or plan. God has given us the plan in His Word. We see this plan in Jesus' life and ministry and through the example of early Christians. As you learn about God's plan, you will be able to apply it in your own ministry of sharing the good news about Jesus Christ. This is personal evangelism.

The Plan

- A. God's Plan
- B. Christ's Life
- C. Early Christians' Example

The Goals

1. Explain what is God's pattern for personal evangelism.
2. List ways in which Jesus showed us God's plan for personal evangelism.
3. State how the early Christians can be our example in sharing the good news about Christ.

A. GOD'S PLAN

Goal 1. Explain what God's pattern for personal evangelism is.

Have you ever wondered why God created the universe: heaven and earth, stars and seas, mountains and valleys, and, of course, man? God has a plan for everything. Nothing was created without purpose. Right from the beginning, even before man's creation, God's purpose was to share all He has and is with man. This is the true pattern of personal evangelism—sharing what we have!

In deciding to create humankind (Genesis 1:26), God shared with man His personal being, His own nature. This was good news, that God would share himself with man. God then gave to man all that He had created. Later, in the Garden of Eden, God came down and walked with that man—Adam. There was perfect understanding between them.

The sharing love of God did not stop with Adam. When man sinned, God introduced the good news of the coming Savior. In Genesis 3:15 is the first announcement of this good news. God,

talking to the serpent, Satan, says, “He [Jesus] will crush your head.” God was implying that He would send His Son Jesus to defeat Satan.

Yes, God’s sharing love knows no limit. John writes, ““For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”” (John 3:16) This well-known verse is the heart of God’s own pattern for personal evangelism. His love is a personal, giving, and sharing love for all people, including you.

Application

Choose the phrase that best completes each sentence. Circle the letter in front of your choice.

- 1** God showed His plan of personal evangelism by
 - a)** walking with Adam.
 - b)** putting Adam in a beautiful garden.
 - c)** sharing His own nature with Adam.

- 2** When Adam sinned, God continued to share himself with humans by
 - a)** giving us His Son Jesus.
 - b)** punishing the serpent.
 - c)** being sad.

- 3** Why did God want to share himself and His Son with all people?

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Check your answers to these exercises now.



B. CHRIST'S LIFE

Goal 2. List ways in which Jesus showed us God's plan for personal evangelism.

Man has sinned. Sickness, sorrow, wars, and even death have come as a result. Although God could no longer walk with humankind as He once did, He still had a plan to continue His sharing work with people. That plan was to send us Jesus.

Speaking about His own work and mission, Jesus said:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18–19)

Jesus taught us the pattern of personal evangelism by His own example. He made no distinction among people. He received well-educated people like Nicodemus and some Greek scholars. He went to stay and eat with sinners. Lepers came to Him, and He healed them all. Even demon-possessed people came to Him, and He set them free. He took time to be with children, and soldiers and widows found help from Him. Who would ever accuse Him of being indifferent to people who needed His help?

Jesus had one goal: to do the work and the will of the One who sent Him. The apostle Peter, speaking about Jesus' life and ministry, said, "He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (Acts 10:38). God was working in Christ, forgiving sin, bringing people back to himself.

Christ was willing to make many sacrifices to accomplish His Father's plan. First, He left His home in heaven, His throne, His glory, to come down to us. He was born in a manger because those He came to help did not receive Him. But His greatest sacrifice was willingly giving His life on the Cross. It was not until then

that Jesus cried out, “It is finished” (John 19:30). This was a cry of completion. His work was done. The pattern for personal evangelism—sharing the good news—was forever made clear.

Christ has tasted death that you and I may live. He has paid our debt to God. Christ, the Lord of lords and King of kings, walked on this earth as a servant with nowhere to lay His head. He did this because He loved us. Is there any good news better than this? Certainly not!

Application

4 Circle the letter in front of the true statements about Jesus.

- a) He was sent by God.
- b) He cared about people.
- c) He did not help everyone who came to Him.
- d) His power was limited.
- e) His goal was to do God’s will.
- f) He was willing to sacrifice.

5 Why was Jesus willing to give himself for us?

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C. EARLY CHRISTIANS’ EXAMPLE

Goal 3. State how the early Christians can be our example in sharing the good news about Christ.

Christ came to tell us about God and His love. Wicked men crucified Him, but He did not remain in the grave. He came back to life, rose from the grave, and is now sitting at His Father’s right hand in heaven.

God’s plan for sharing the good news did not stop with Christ. Christ passed it on to the apostles and to His disciples. He told them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). This command is not only to a

group of selected people such as the apostles, the evangelists, the deacons, the pastors, or the teachers. This command is for all of us.

How did Jesus send His disciples out? Praying to His Father, Christ said, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). God sent Jesus with a mission and with power and authority. He sent Him to all people—not to condemn or judge, but to set people free. This is the mission Christ has passed on to us. Isn’t it wonderful to realize that we are God’s messengers?

Consider Peter as he talked about this same Jesus on the Day of Pentecost. The story is recorded in Acts 2:14–39. See him standing before the crowd, sharing Christ with others. Listen to him as he talks before his judges. Now follow him to the house of the Roman officer, Cornelius, a man who was seeking God. You will see him once again sharing his testimony about Christ with other people. (See Acts 10:34–43.)

The book of Acts gives many details about the apostle Paul. Follow Paul in his travels and listen to him. He would speak of no one but Christ, and Him crucified. The ever-burning desire of the apostle Paul was winning people to Christ and sharing his personal Christian experience with others.

Paul was willing to suffer in order to share this good news. He was thrown into prison, beaten, chained, hungry, lonely, and forgotten by his co-workers. But none of this stopped him from sharing the good news with others. If he could not speak, he would write his message or have someone write it for him. He did this until the day he could say, “I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:6–7).

When Jesus revealed himself to the Samaritan woman, she hurried back to her people and shared with them what Christ had done in her life. (See John 4:5–29.) In times past in Africa,

when a hunter killed an elephant, he would run back home and announce the good news to all. When the Americans landed on the moon for the first time, radio, television, newspapers spread this good news—by all the mass media—to all people everywhere. It is the nature of people to want to share good news. Should not you and I, who have far greater news, share the good news of God’s salvation?

Application

- 6** What did the apostle Peter, the apostle Paul, and the Samaritan woman have in common?
- a)** They were educated people.
 - b)** They wanted to share Christ with others.
 - c)** They wanted people to respect them.
- 7** Why did the early Christians have such a desire to share the good news about Christ with other people?

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By their testimonies and witnessing, the early Christians were able to share the good news about Jesus with all of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the entire Roman Empire. The believers went everywhere. They preached and shared their Christian experience with all people. It was actually the unbelievers who saw them speaking, living, and acting like Christ that gave them the name *Christian*, which means “like Christ” or “followers of Christ.”

The early Christians had such love for Jesus and were so thankful for what He had done for them that they could not keep from telling the good news. We want to share with others what Christ has done for us for the same reasons: because we love Him, and we want to give His love to others.

Check Your Answers

5 Because He loves us

1 c) sharing His own nature with Adam.

6 b) They wanted to share Christ with others.

2 a) giving us His Son Jesus.

7 Because of their love for Christ and for others

3 Because He loves us so much

4 a) True

b) True

c) False

d) False

e) True

f) True