

LESSON 4 Share Your Experience

Many years ago, the Lord led me to an elderly man. I shared with him my experience of hearing about Jesus Christ and how He became my personal Savior.

One week later, the old man sent for me. When I went to his home, his entire family was there. He and his household were prepared for my visit. That evening a family of 16 people gave their lives to Christ. Their number has grown since, and today they meet to glorify God as a congregation!

My introduction to Christ also came as a result of someone sharing his own salvation experience with me. Do you know why I am still a Christian? It is because I have experienced Jesus personally in my own life. You can have the same reality.

We have talked about the need to be involved. Now we will see how to get involved—by sharing with others what Christ has done for us. How can we keep such good news to ourselves? We must share it with others!

The Plan

- A. Sharing at All Times
- B. Sharing Without Shame
- C. Sharing to Change People
- D. Sharing When It Costs

The Goals

- 1. State the importance of being ready to share your testimony at all times.
- 2. Identify ways people's lives are changed when we share Christ with them.
- 3. Give examples of those who have shared the good news even when it cost them.

A. SHARING AT ALL TIMES

Goal 1. State the importance of being ready to share your testimony at all times.

There is nothing that brings greater results in personal evangelism than sharing one's own experience. It is the heart of the whole task. You may have known Christ and His saving power in your life. You may have received the power of His Spirit. Christ may have done great and marvelous things for you. But unless you have shared this with others, how will they hear? And unless they hear, how can they believe and be saved?

Jesus talked to people everywhere He went. In the four Gospels, we see Him talking with people in their homes and receiving people wherever He went. He once said to His disciples, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (Mark 1:38). Later, in His ministry, Jesus sent His disciples throughout the whole world—to the ends of the earth.

Christ took every opportunity that came His way to preach and share the good news. Even on the Cross where He died, He shared the good news with the dying criminal beside him. He said, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

The apostle Paul instructed Timothy, “I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:1–2).

Paul would not let pass any opportunity to share the good news of His Lord. Even with chains on his hands and feet, he still proclaimed the good news. He stood in chains before King Agrippa and told him about Christ (Acts 26:29). He called from the prison to tell the good news of Christ to the jailer who was about to commit suicide (Acts 16:27–28).

There are some opportunities which come our way only once. Had Paul been slow to shout to this needy jailer, the jailer might have died in his sin. Likewise, we must be ready at all times to share with anyone who needs to hear the good news about Christ.

On a certain occasion, my wife and I had the great joy of leading eight people to Christ, just by sharing with them what the Lord has done for us. How could we keep silent when we have such good news to share?

Application

- 1** (Choose the two best answers.) If I miss an opportunity to tell a friend about Christ,
- a)** I may not have another chance.
 - b)** someone else will tell my friend.
 - c)** God will punish me.
 - d)** my friend may never find the Lord.

2 (Choose the best answer.) What was Jesus' method of sharing with people?

- a) He shared with them only if they came to Him.
- b) He went to them and made opportunities for sharing.

3 Where is the best place for sharing with others the message of Christ?

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B. SHARING WITHOUT SHAME

Goal 2. Analyze the value of not being ashamed of the Gospel.

Many Christians are ashamed to speak about Christ. It is true that when we share our faith with people, we may be misunderstood and some may even laugh at us. But consider how Christ was willing to suffer many hardships without being ashamed. He is our wonderful example.

Think for a moment of Jesus on the Cross. The people walking by laughed at Him. The very same people that He had fed, healed, and taught were mocking Him and celebrating His death. Yet, He was willing to die shamefully because it was the only way people could be saved.

The apostle Paul, also, was not ashamed of the Cross. He was beaten, chained, and put into prison. There, at midnight, he shared God's good news with the other prisoners (Acts 16:25).

Since Jesus was not ashamed to plead my case before God, can I be ashamed to speak about this wonderful Savior? Neither must you be ashamed to share your Christian experience, because it is the way God has chosen to draw people to himself.

Application

4 Robert wanted to tell his new friend John about Jesus and His love. But he was afraid John would laugh at him. Of what two things should Robert remind himself?

a)

b)

5 Memorize the following Scripture verse and use it whenever you feel embarrassed about witnessing for Christ.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).



C. SHARING TO CHANGE PEOPLE

Goal 3. Identify ways people's lives are changed when we share Christ with them.

Sharing Christ with people gives us first hand opportunities to witness the changing power of God. If you want people to turn from a life of sin, inward emptiness, and uncertainty, share Jesus Christ with them. Share the certainty of forgiveness and a new life. Jesus is the Living Water for those who thirst. He is the Living Bread for those who are hungry. He is Healing for those who are sick. He is Light to those in darkness. He is Father to the fatherless, the beginning and the end for all those who trust in Him. He is everything that humans need!

The apostle Paul was an educated leader within his community before he encountered the Lord. He was very involved in defending his religion and traditions, and no one expected him to turn from his father's religion. Yet, after he met the Lord personally, he abandoned his past life and surrendered to Jesus. Later, Paul speaks of his journey:

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (Philippians 3:4–7)

Paul considered everything as worthless because he met Christ. Who could ever understand such a miracle? He had a personal experience with Christ that changed him.

Another person who changed as a result of meeting Jesus was Zacchaeus. Though a rich man, Zacchaeus was also a thief because he charged more taxes than was required. But when he met Jesus, he had a personal experience and was completely changed (Luke 19:1–10). Without Jesus' prompting, Zacchaeus offered to repay those he had robbed. He even repaid more than he had stolen.

Moses had been brought up in a palace and was taught about all the knowledge of Egypt. He was mighty in words and deeds. Through circumstances, he left the life he once knew. But later, Moses saw the glory of God, and he was willing to change. There is transforming power in a personal experience with God.

The power of the gospel is equally transforming. Paul writes, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is indeed true. A personal meeting with Christ will bring both outward and inward change in people.

My hometown pastor, whom God had used mightily, died while I was in Bible school. Something amazing happened on the day of His burial. Many people had come, both Christians and non-Christians. Two of his enemies also came. They would never speak to one another or shake hands. Yet that day for the first time in over 20 years, they shook hands over the grave of

this man of God. That was wonderful to see, for true forgiveness had taken place. It reminded me of a far greater change that took place between God and humanity after Christ’s death on the Cross. Whether we live or die, our testimony can change lives.

Application

6 What is the best way to get a person to leave wrong beliefs and accept Christ?

- a) Explain that his or her beliefs are not good.
- b) Explain that his or her life is sinful.
- c) Show all the wonderful things Christ will do for him or her.

7 When we say that Christ is Living Bread for those who are hungry, what do we mean?

- a) He will never let us be hungry.
- b) He satisfies the hunger or desire deep within us to know God.
- c) If we have no food, He will provide it through a miracle.

8 List at least three ways your life has been changed because you know Christ.

- a)
- b)
- c)



D. SHARING WHEN IT COSTS

Goal 4. Give examples of those who have shared the good news even when it cost them.

Sometimes sharing our Christian testimony is costly. The first Christians in Burkina Faso, Africa, were made to suffer for their faith in Christ. Some of them are still alive and faithful to Christ, but many of them were cursed and cut off from their families. This is very hard for an African. To be cursed and cut off means to be considered as dead. No one in their family or village

communicated with them. For many, going to church on Sunday required fasting, since they were not given food if they went to church.

But the Christians in Burkina Faso were faithful to Christ even when it cost them many hardships. Because of them, I, too, have experienced Jesus Christ in my life.

Consider, also, three Hebrew young men in the Old Testament. (Read Daniel 3:8–25.) These three men decided to serve God no matter what happened. They faced difficult decisions and hardship, and because of their testimony before the king, they were thrown into a burning furnace. The young men had chosen to die rather than deny their faith in God. They set the example, so we also can be inspired to share our Christian faith and life.

Sharing cost God His Son. To share His great love with humankind, God sent us His only Son. Because Adam and Eve sinned and every human thereafter sinned, there was no other way for God to have fellowship with humans. But because of His love for us, He gave up His only Son to die for all humankind.

Sharing cost Jesus His life. Jesus knew many hardships. The prophet Isaiah called Jesus a Man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3). During His ministry, Jesus was faced by people who wanted to kill Him. But there was no other way for Him to save people from sin. So He took upon himself our sin. He knew what it cost to face death, to be separated from God. But because He loved us, He paid with His life for our salvation.

Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). There is a price to pay if you really want to share with other people your Christian experience. You may lose friends and family, but do not let any hardships keep you from sharing your faith. Remember what Christ was willing to do for you. This will help you to share Him with others, no matter what it costs.

Application

9 Do you think God suffered when Jesus was crucified?

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10 Why was Jesus willing to suffer?

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11 Do you know someone who has suffered in order to be a Christian? How has that person suffered?

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12 How can these examples help you in sharing the good news about Jesus?

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Now that you have completed the first unit, you are ready to answer the Unit One Evaluation. Review the previous lessons, then follow the directions on the Unit One Answer Sheet. You should complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for corrections.

Check Your Answers

- 1 a)** I may not have another chance.
d) my friend may never find the Lord.
- 7 b)** He satisfies the hunger or desire deep within us to know God.
- 2 b)** He went to them and made opportunities for sharing.
- 8** Your answer
- 3** There is no **best** place. We can share Him anywhere!
- 9** Yes, I believe God suffered just as a parent suffers when his or her child is hurting.
- 4 a)** Jesus was not ashamed to die for our sins.
b) We must not let ourselves be ashamed to talk about Jesus, because this is the only way God has chosen for people to know about Him.
- 10** Because He loves us so much, He wanted to make it possible for us to be saved from sin.
- 5** Now that you have learned this verse, ask God to help you never to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ.
- 11** Your answer
- 6 c)** Show all the wonderful things Christ will do for him or her.
- 12** When we realize that others are willing to suffer for Christ, it gives us strength to serve Him whatever the cost.



Lessons

- 5 Understand the Task**
- 6 Overcome the Barriers**
- 7 Consider Your Approach**
- 8 Expect Rewards**