

Making Friends for God: Lesson #1 — Why Witness

Memory Verse

1 Timothy 2:3, 4 (NKJV) *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”.*

Sharing Faith: Then and Now; 1993 to the Present

Barna Study - A growing number of Christians don't feel any personal responsibility for sharing the good news. In 1993, 10 percent of Christians agreed “converting people to Christianity is the job of the local church”—as opposed to the job of an individual (i.e., themselves). Twenty-five years later, three in 10 Christians say evangelism is the local church's responsibility (29%), a nearly threefold increase. Yet the most dramatic divergence over time is on the statement, “Every Christian has a responsibility to share their faith.” In 1993, nine out of 10 Christians who had shared their faith agreed (89%). Today, just two-thirds say so (64%)—a 25-point drop.

Almost half of Millennials (47%) agree...that it is wrong to share one's personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith.

“Mission is primarily the work of God. He is employing all of the resources of heaven to save our planet. Our work is to cooperate joyfully with Him in His work of saving lost people.”

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Providing Opportunities for Salvation

Luke 19:10 (NKJV) *for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.* **From beginning to end this is the message.**

James 5:19–20 (NKJV) *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

We have the incredible privilege and the awesome responsibility, as well as the eternal joy of participating with Christ and cooperating with Him in His mission. **We are now the body of Christ in the world.**

- Children are not afraid to make friends. Friends will divide your sorrow and multiply your joy.

Making Jesus Glad

One of the greatest motivations to share Christ's love is the knowledge that witnessing brings joy to the heart of God.

Luke 15:6–7 (NKJV) *And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. A lot of people love their pets more than humans.*

Luke 15:8–10 (NKJV) *“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ ¹⁰ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

Luke 15:22–24 (NKJV) *“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.*

Matthew 25:40 (NKJV) *And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ Bread, water, clothes, visit, nursing.*

Isaiah 62:5 (NKJV) *For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.*

Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV) *The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

Growing by Giving

John 7:37–38 (NKJV) *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”*

Dead Sea, or Galilee?

*“God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy,—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,—we must participate in His labors for their redemption.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 142.*

“Those who would be overcomers must be drawn out of themselves; and the only thing which will accomplish this great work, is to become intensely interested in the salvation of others.”— *Education*, p. 207.

Luke 6:38 (NKJV) *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*”

1 Timothy 4:16 (NKJV) *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

“Unselfish work for others helps make our characters like Christ’s. It brings peace and happiness. It gives us a strong desire to be more helpful. There will be no room in our lives for laziness and selfishness. If we exercise our faith and other Christian graces, we will become strong in our work for God. We shall see the truth clearly. Our faith will keep growing, and we will pray with greater power. God’s Spirit will move upon our hearts, helping us develop characters that will honor Him. If we give ourselves in unselfish service for others, we are most surely working out our own salvation.” – *Steps to Jesus*, page 79

Mark 6:41 (NKJV) *And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all.*

Mark 6:41–43 (NKJV) *And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. ⁴² So they all ate and were filled. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.*

Faithfulness to Christ’s Command

Acts 26:17–18 (NKJV) *I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*’

1 Timothy 2:3, 4 (NKJV) *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”.*

Acts 13:47 *For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”*

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

Ezekiel 33:11 (NKJV) *Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’*

Deuteronomy 5:28–29 *“Then the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me: ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. ²⁹ Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!’*

Hosea 11:8 (NKJV) *“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.*

Motivated by Love

Isaiah 41:8 (NKJV) *“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.*

2 Corinthians 5:14 (NKJV) *For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;*

2 Corinthians 5:18–21 (NKJV) *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

1 John 4:10–11 (NKJV) *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

“Love must dwell in the heart. A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heart-love for his Master. Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 425.