



DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Seven Prescriptions for an **Abundant Life**

SEVEN **EVANGELISTIC** LESSONS
for **Friendship Groups**

By Joe Aguilar



APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY of the faith in Christ Jesus



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Presentation



A second cycle of evangelistic lessons

With great joy, I present to you our **second** workbook of Evangelistic Lessons for Friendship Groups.

I chose seven passages of the Gospel written by Luke, “the loving doctor”. For this reason, the title of this workbook is **“Seven Prescriptions for an Abundant Life”**.

God’s Word brings to the life of every person who lives far from the Lord, abundant well-being of all kind: spiritual, family, emotional, or economic.

I would like to thank Pastor Joe Aguilar, who followed my selection of Biblical passages to write these lessons.

Dear pastors and leaders of Friendship Groups: you now have more experience and these lessons, therefore, will be much more useful.

We recommend:

1° Each pastor share this lesson with his leaders, “Timothys” and hostess, to prepare them.

2° Each pastor to pray and fast one day, for his team of leaders in the Friendship Groups, for God to grant them spiritual anointing.



3º Each leader, before every meeting must prepare with his “Timothy” and host, every detail in order to have an excellent evangelistic time.

4º Each leader, “Timothy” and host must pray every day and Fast one day out of the each evangelistic week, for the “strong man” to be bounded and the sinners can come to Jesus Christ.

Pastors and leaders: try to provide for every adult a workbook of lessons. Do not curtail resources when it comes to a person’s salvation.

Pastors, provide for each leader a set of the 7 DVDs of these evangelistic lessons. Each DVD provides instructions, an Interactive hymn related to the lesson and the lesson’s power point that can be shown in any TV. Make use of the audiovisual means for a more intense communication of the Gospel.

May God bless you and Grant you an excellent harvest of new believers!

Bishop Ismael Martín del Campo,
Secretary of Christian Education



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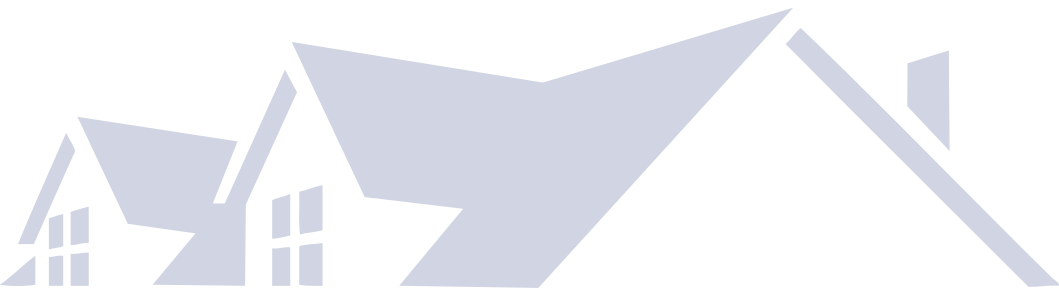
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Lesson #1

The Expression of God's Love

Ice Breaker: Besides saying, "I love you", how can you express your love to someone?

Bible Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Key Verse: Luke 1:35 (NKJV)

Introduction:

The birth of Jesus is more than just a joyous occasion that we celebrate every Christmas. It is God's love expressed to all humanity. It is a special act of God in becoming flesh to restore humanity to a state of grace greater than that of Adam and Eve before their fall. It is God becoming a Son to redeem human beings. He loves and calling them to be His children (**Galatians 4:4-5**).



The birth of Jesus is the love of God, made flesh in a manger. It is God loving humanity so much that He, chose to draw near to us as Immanuel (**Matthew 1:23**).



Luke 1:35 declares that the angel spoke to Mary saying, ***“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”*** This verse (and related verses) reveal how God expressed His love to us all in the Incarnation—the act of God becoming flesh.

Three ways God expressed His love:

1. God Conceived the Thought of Drawing Near to Us
“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you...”

a. God Worked with a Plan

God’s ultimate means of expressing His love to us was first conceived in His mind before the foundation of the world. “In the beginning”, John says, the concept of God “was the Word”, (John 1:1). God always works with a plan. God had a solution for our sin problems before sin ever entered the world (Revelation 1:8). He actually “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). He loved us before we were born.

b. God Worked His Plan

Although the concept “was with God” (John 1:1) in eternity past, the reality of God’s love was not manifested until, the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary and she subsequently brought forth her first child. The same infinite power of the Spirit that moved on the waters and framed them worked the seemingly impossible divine conception in Mary’s womb. God does not just talk the talk of love; He walks the walk. He planned His work and then worked His plan.



2. God Decides to Share in Our Likeness

“...that Holy One who is to be born...”

a. The Infinite God Becomes Small for Us

God had expressed Himself to humanity in many different ways, but now He expresses Himself in Jesus, the Son (**Hebrews 1:1-2**). God entered this world, born of a woman, in order to redeem a fallen human race. This was, as the apostle Paul writes, the love of Christ that surpasses all comprehension (**Ephesians 3:19**).

b. Jesus Identified with Us

If you could identify with any group of people in the world, who would it be? Would it be the rich, the strong or the popular? Well, God could have chosen to come into this world any way He wanted, including in the form of an angel, but He loved us so much that He chose to become flesh and blood like us. He humbled Himself. He wanted to relate to us (**Hebrews 2:14**). God's first role was spirit but now He takes on substance, form and humanity. One that can be seen, heard, touched, and observed (**1 John 1:1**). Jesus understands our temptations and weaknesses (**Hebrews 4:15**).





3. God Draws Near to Save Us *"...will be called the Son of God."*

Jesus Christ Was Born to Save

Some people draw near to others for selfish purposes, to see what they can get. However, Jesus sought us out to give, namely eternal life. The angel told Joseph ***"Mary will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"*** (Matthew 1:21). Jesus, the Son of God, was born to serve, not to be served, to save everyone who is lost (Luke 19:11).

Conclusion: Jesus Christ, the Son of God was born to become the physical expression of God's love on earth. When God speaks in the New Testament He speaks with the voice, mind, heart, and soul of Jesus Christ. The beloved disciple, John, marveled at the expression of God's love as he wrote, ***"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"*** (1 John 3:1 NIV) Wow! Can there be any doubt that God really loves us?

STEPS FOR GROWTH:

- a) Why do people find it hard to express love?
- b) Discuss a time when someone demonstrated love to you?
- c) How does it make you feel to know that God wants to draw close to you?
- d) What can you do to respond to God's expression of love?



Lesson #2

The Fruit of Repentance

Ice Breaker: When was the last time you had to ask for forgiveness and what did you do?

Bible Reading: Luke 3:1-20

Key Verse: Luke 3:8 NIV

Introduction:

One of God's great gifts to humanity is the gift of repentance. It is the first response of faith to the call of God and essential for salvation. Many people think that repentance is simply saying, "I'm sorry", but the Bible clearly states that there are two kinds of sorrow: the sorrow of this world and godly sorrow (**2 Corinthians 7:10**).



The sorrow of this world can come as a direct result of us failing to meet our own expectations, being caught in bad behavior, or punishment as a result from an incorrect or sinful behavior. Regardless of the



source, worldly sorrow produces shame, guilt, pain, depression, and even death. However, godly sorrow occurs when we respond correctly to the convicting and convincing power of the Holy Spirit and produces deliverance, freedom, and joy. Although godly sorrow can be unpleasant, true repentance will prompt us to acknowledge our sin and turn from it to God (**Acts 26:18-20**).

John the Baptist preached to the multitudes that came to be baptized: ***“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham” (Luke 3:8 NIV).***

Luke 3:8 (and related verses) reveal to us three characteristics [fruit] of true repentance.

1. A Change in How We Think

“...do not begin to say to yourselves...”

a. It All Begins in the Mind

God wants us to change our view of sin and righteousness. True repentance begins in the mind because our perspectives determine who we really are (**Proverbs 23:7**). The Holy Spirit convicts sin as we are confronted by what God reveals in His Word. The first to turn from sin is our mind. John says, ***“Don’t think that you are safe because of your family line.”***

b. Take Full Responsibility

False repentance tends to blame other people, situations, or things for one’s behavior and refuses to accept responsibility for one’s actions. When you truly repent, you do not blame other people or situations for your wrongdoing instead, you respond



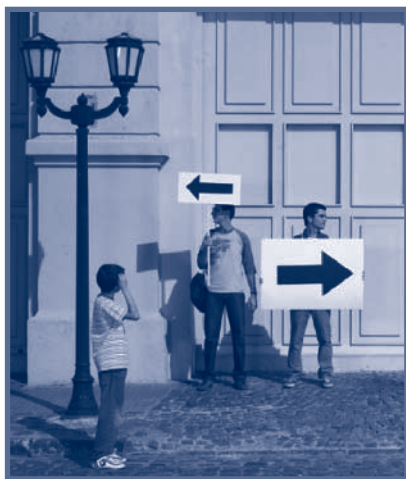
like King David and say, ***“I acknowledge my sins. Against you [God] and you alone, have I sinned. I have done what is evil in your sight” (Psalm 51:3-4).***

2. A Change in How We Feel

“What shall we do?” (Luke 3:10, 12, 14)

a. Our Character is Revealed by Our Attitude

We may be convinced in our minds about sin and that we need to repent, but true repentance does not stop there; it continues with the heart—the core of our emotions. It is possible for our hearts to have the wrong attitude towards what God says in His Word about sin. Instead of complaining about God’s strictness, we thank Him because the ***“law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 19:7).***



Repentance, then, is an act of will. We make a voluntary decision to forsake sin. When true repentance occurs, you see a willingness to change and make restitution for a wrong behavior.

b. Our Character is Revealed in Our Emotions

The Psalmist revealed his character when he wrote, ***“The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart” (Psalm 19:8 NLT).*** Those who truly repent experience joy because their relationship is restored with Jesus Christ. People



with worldly sorrow cannot experience joy because they do not admit their guilt and ask for forgiveness.

3. A Change in How We Act

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

a. God Enables Us to Change Our Behavior

When our thoughts and feelings change about sin and righteousness, God enables us to break away from sinful habits and desires. John the Baptist told the people that the fruit of repentance would be seen in their generosity. He told the tax collectors that instead of defrauding people repentance would produce honesty. In addition, he told the soldiers that they would stop intimidating people and show contentment. Our lifestyles can prove that we truly turned from sin to a forgiving God.

Conclusion: Repentance is not a one-time event; it is something Jesus calls us to do repeatedly until He returns. Every person needs a repentant heart, for it is tender, soft and pliable, and responds quickly to godly sorrow when confronted with God’s Word.

STEPS FOR GROWTH

- a. Why is it not enough to feel sorry for our sins?
- b. What role does attitude play in the process of repentance?
- c. Have you taken time to confess your guilt to God in the last month?



Lesson #3

Overcoming Temptation

Ice Breaker: What food or dessert is the hardest for you to resist? Why?

Bible Reading: Luke 4:1-13

Key Verse: Luke 4:13 NKJV

Introduction:

Temptation is the devil's greatest weapon. His purpose is to seduce you away from doing God's will and to pursue an easier path. All human beings have a sinful nature that resists God. Without the Spirit of God, it is impossible to fight off our spiritual enemy. However, every time you resist Satan's temptation your faith becomes stronger.



Luke 4:13 says, "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."

Jesus resisted Satan and his temptations. He used the weapons of the Spirit and the Word of God to fight off temptations to



resist the will of the Father. When the devil saw that Jesus could not be tempted, he left Him. Those same weapons are available to us today. Anyone who submits his or her life to the will of God and resists the devil will see him flee (**James 4:7**).

The Bible warns us to not be ignorant of how the devil works because this gives him an advantage over us (**2 Corinthians 2:11**). One of his tactics is to attack a person as soon as they hear God's Word and try to steal it from his or her heart (**Matthew 13:19**).

Luke 4:1-13 reveals to us three basic areas of life where the devil will tempt us and how to resist him through the Spirit and Word of God.

1. The Temptation to Pride

Luke 4:3 – ***“And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’” NKJV***

a. Take the Easy Road

The devil told Jesus, ***“If you really are the Son of God, prove it satisfying your physical need your way.”*** We are all tempted to meet legitimate physical needs with illegitimate or unnecessary means. After all, food, shelter, love, and companionship are real needs and we have always done it our way.

b. God's Word and Way Are Most Important

Luke 4:4 says that Jesus answered the devil, ***“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’”*** “Devil, there is a higher law than our physical needs, and that is the Word of God.” Jesus' point is that our needs must be met God's way, and not our selfish, easy ways. Use the Word and tell the devil, ***“God is able to supply all of my needs.”***



2. The Temptation of Power and Wealth

Luke 4:7 – “Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” NKJV

a. You Can Have it, and Have it Now

The devil told Jesus, ***“I can give you power and worldly glory if you worship me.”***

The love of power and money tempts all of us to compromise godly and moral values. Satan wants you to believe that he controls power and material rewards and that you can only have it if you serve him and do it his way, and you don't have to wait. He wants you to believe that power and money is what really matters. However, that is a lie!



b. Power and Wealth God's Way is Most Important

In Luke 4:8 Jesus tells the devil to get lost because ***“it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”*** You cannot serve both God and power and money (Matthew 6:24). Use the Word and tell the devil, “I will accept Jesus’ challenge to trust Him and serve Him always and He will exalt me in due time, according to His will.” Resist the devil’s quick-fix solutions and pick God’s way.

3. The Temptation for Popularity

Luke 4:9 – “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.” NKJV



a. Visions of Greatness

The devil took Jesus in a vision to the ***“highest point of the temple”*** and challenged Him to put God to the test. Go ahead, the devil says, ***“Shoot for the stars. Nothing will happen to you and you experience immediately popularity.”*** This temptation appeals to pride and self-exaltation. It literally says, “Prove that you really are calling me by exalting me or by delivering me out of this problem or situation.”

b. God’s Way is the Way of Humility

Jesus once again quotes the Scriptures to the devil: ***“It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’” (Luke 4:12 NIV)***. Instead of trying to manipulate God, Jesus teaches us to ***“humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God”*** and He will exalt us in due time (***1 Peter 5:6***). Give all your worries and cares to God, for He really cares for you.

Conclusion: Jesus always taught His disciples to answer temptation with God’s Word. Seek to be filled with God’s Spirit and search the Scriptures. Through His Word, God will remove all fears and doubts regarding God calling you to do His will. Surrender your life to Jesus, resist the devil’s temptations and, for the time being, he will leave you.

STEPS FOR GROWTH:

- a. Which of the three temptations mentioned do you battle the most?
- b. How have you faced temptation in the past?
- c. What lessons have you learned today about dealing with temptation?



Lesson #4

The Power of Jesus to Give Life

Ice Breaker:

What would you consider the greatest display of power?

Bible Reading: Luke 7:11-17 NIV

Key Verse: Luke 7:14

Introduction:

Jesus' travels took Him to a small town called Nain. Its inhabitants would forever be impacted by the confrontation between Life and Death. Death brought mourning to a widow and Life turned the widow's pain into great joy. The One who has the power of life and death was moved to compassion and reached out to a powerless woman in distress.

Through this miracle, Jesus demonstrated that He is willing to reach out and demonstrate His power to all levels of





society: the rich and the poor, the famous and the forgotten, men and women. His power is available to all who are willing to believe in Him. The world today is the open coffin wherein lie all those who are dead in their many sins (**Ephesians 2:1**). He is reaching out and interrupting spiritual funeral processions every day to demonstrate His power to give abundant life.

The Bible story of Jesus raising the son of the widow teaches the following three basic lessons about the Power of God:

1. The Almighty God is Moved by Compassion

Luke 7:13 – “When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, ‘don’t cry.’” NIV

a. A Hopeless Situation

The widow’s only son was dead. There was no hope for him to live again. Emptiness and loneliness had already set in. However, that was not the only hopeless situation. Without any social aid available and no children to provide for her, all hope of living had died with her son. Who cares for the hopeless and despondent? The answer is Jesus does.

b. Hope for the Hopeless

Jesus, motivated by compassion, always initiates contact with the one in need. The One capable of meeting the need steps in and says, **“Don’t cry.”** When we say these words, although we mean well, the cause of the pain is not removed. Jesus can rightfully express them because He is the only one who can wipe away every tear (**Revelation 7:17**). Only He has the ability to give life in a hopeless situation because He is the Resurrection and the Life (**John 11:25**).



2. Compassion is Followed by Action

Luke 7:14 – *“Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, ‘Young man, I say to you, get up!’” NIV*

a. A Demonstration of Power for Today

Jesus will go to great lengths for people. As a Jew, He should not have touched the coffin because it would defile Him. However, the holy, sinless Jesus speaks the word with power and takes the deadness that defiles and turns it into life. Jesus looks at all humanity that is spiritually dead with eyes of compassion and offers them the **“power to become the sons of God”** if they would only believe (**John 1:12 KJV**).



b. Hope for Tomorrow

What Jesus did for this young man, He will one day do for all His people who have been born again. There is coming a day when everyone will hear the command from the powerful voice of the Prince of Life to arise and they shall come out of the graves victoriously to the resurrection of life (**James 5:28-29**). This is a hope that will not disappoint you.

3. God’s Power brought forth an Awesome Response

Luke 7:16 – *“Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has risen up among us’; and, ‘God has visited His people.’” NKJV*



a. The People to be Feared God

The Lord and His goodness as well as the Lord and His greatness, deserve to be feared. The power that Jesus demonstrated affected everyone. Genuine life consists of fearing God and obeying His commands (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**). Why fear? The people realized that Jesus was no ordinary man; this was none other than Almighty God in their midst.

b. The People Praised God

The supernatural work of God should elicit praise from everyone. Jesus' miracle led people to the conclusion that God had shown up to redeem and to save people (**Luke 1:68-69**). The correct response to God's visitation is worship (Exodus 4:31). When spiritually dead people are raised to life by the divine power of Jesus Christ, we must glorify God for His marvelous works among men.

Conclusion: When Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain, He revealed to us His power and what He can do in our world today. Not only can He heal the sick and raise the dead, He can give hope and life to anyone in need, including those who are far from God.

STEPS FOR GROWTH:

- a. How do you think the widow felt when Jesus raised her son to life?
- b. Do you believe Jesus still has the power to perform miracles today?
- c. What would your response be to a supernatural work of God in your life?



Lesson #5

Enter through the Narrow Door

Ice Breaker: At one time did you pass up an opportunity and later regretted it? What would you do differently today?

Bible Reading: Luke 13:22-35 NIV

Key Verse: Luke 13:24

Introduction:

Many people ask questions like, "Who or how many people will be saved?" Such a casual question may arise from curiosity and not because of a practical personal interest. The fact of the matter is that no one really knows how many people will be saved. So, really, the question people should be asking is, **"How can I be saved?"**



Somebody asked Jesus, **"Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"** Although Jesus does not directly answer the question, He does give us a few insights as he expresses sadness



that only few people will be saved, that many will not be able to enter through the door, and that many will resist His love and will not respond until it is too late.

Luke 13:22-35 talks about at least three barriers or obstacles that will hinder many from entering through the door and being saved.

1. No Sense of Urgency

Luke 13:24 – “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door...” NIV

a. Entering through the Door is not Their First Concern

Athletes that compete, literally **“strive or agonize”** to gain the victory. Therefore, Jesus says that we should strive, make every effort, to enter through the door of salvation. We need to be diligent and make it our first and chief business to overcome our sinful ways and endeavor to make it into heaven.

b. The Door is Narrow

There is only one entrance into heaven. Jesus said, **“I am the door” (John 10:8)**. He also said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6)**. Once you find the entrance, knock, and Jesus will open. Whatever the reason for the difficulty to get in, it is well worth straining to get in.

2. The Cost is too Great

“...because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.” NIV

a. Entering through the Door Takes a Struggle

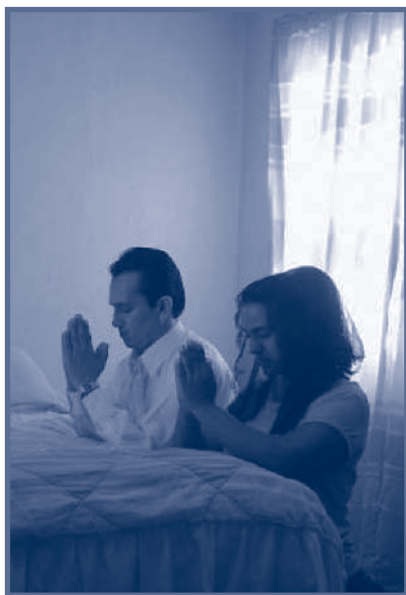
The Bible says, **“We must go through many hardships to enter**



the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). To enter through the door, people must repent and change their lifestyles. It is a struggle to turn from a sinful lifestyle to God. Many want to go to heaven, as long as it does not cost them anything, especially obedience and submission to God’s way of life that is clearly outlined in the Word of God. However, heaven is worth every effort.

b. Entering Requires a Relationship with Jesus

Many people want the benefits of knowing Jesus without having a relationship with Him. Relationships take time and effort. They just cannot seem to put Jesus on their schedules. They know people that know Jesus, but they do not know Him personally. Jesus, tired of hearing excuses, will one day say, “I don’t know you or where you come from.” Only a true love for Jesus will produce the change that will save a soul from death.



3. Not Ready to Enter “But you were not willing!”

a. There is No Guarantee That You’ll Have Another Opportunity

We see two aspects of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’s nature in Luke 13:22-35. We see a loving God who longs to bring people into the protection of His Kingdom. We also see a just God who opens the door of opportunity for a time, then He slams it shut and does not open it again.



The door was open, but they did not care enough to enter right away. Luke later writes that the door was shut because they did not recognize the time of their visitation (**Luke 19:44**). How sad to have God visit you, but not recognizing it until it is too late to act upon it.

b. Enter While You Can

We must enter into His kingdom while we can, because there will come a time when it will be too late to respond. Time is of the essence. Today ***“is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2 NIV)***. Our life is but a vapor, here today and gone tomorrow. Do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today!

Conclusion: Jesus is commanding us to find the door of salvation and once we find it to try very hard to enter through it while it is still open. Salvation should be our top priority. Regardless of the cost, we must be willing to pay it. Oh, to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”

STEPS FOR GROWTH

- a. What does it mean to you that one day the door of salvation will be shut?
- b. When will it be too late for a person to enter through the door of salvation?
- c. What are some reasons that people give for not giving their lives to Jesus?
- d. What struggles are you going through to walk through the door?



Lesson #6

All People Matter to God

Ice Breaker: Have you ever lost something very valuable to you only to find it again? Describe how you felt when you found it.

Bible Reading: Luke 15:1-7 NIV

Key Verse: Luke 15:4 NKJV

Introduction:

A parable is a short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth. Jesus tells this parable in response to religious critics who despised Him for associating with tax collectors and sinners. ***“He not only tolerates them”*** they complained, ***“He actively welcomes them to eat at His table. Her treats them like old friends.”*** While they considered it disgraceful to keep such company, Jesus welcomed and invited sinners to receive God’s grace and repent of their sins.

Jesus was criticized because the critics could not appreciate His real motive of reclaiming lost people. As harsh as it may sound, criticism actually brought out the best in Jesus. His respond helps us understand his passion for the lost and value system. In this parable, God compares the value assigned to a lost sheep to a sinner who is lost without God and without hope.



Luke 15:1-7 reveals three profound truths about the high value God places on people.

1. Every Last Person Matters to God

Luke 15:4 – ***“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost...?” NKJV***

a. The Ninety-nine Matter to God

The high value that God places on people is revealed in the



verse of Scripture that is most known by people around the world: ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).*** The Hebrews valued sheep because they provided wool and meat. God values people because they were created in His image and belong to Him.

b. The Lost One also Matters to God

God does not want to lose even one person (**Matthew 18:12**). His will is that every last person would come to repentance and be saved (**2 Peter 3:9**). The Hebrew shepherd would leave the rest of the flock in the care of skilled helpers while he searched for the one that was lost. Please note that fault is not placed on the one who goes astray for the Bible says that we we’ve all strayed away from Him: ***“We all like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).***



2. The Lost Person Matters so Much that an Intense Search is Made

Luke 15:4-6 – “...until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home.” NIV

a. Every Effort is Made to Find the One Who is Lost

Like the Hebrew shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, gave His all to find lost humanity. He came to ***“seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10)***. The parable is teaching us that lost people really do not have the ability to find their way home. Therefore, the Good Shepherd sacrificed even His very life to make an all out search for the lost. ***“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:5 NIV)***.

b. Every Effort is Made to Save the One Lost

Once the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he is so reluctant to lose it again. The Good Shepherd takes the broken, discouraged, disoriented, and frightened one, places it on His strong shoulders of protection, and brings him/her into the safety of His church. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is ***“able to keep us from falling and to present us before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy” (Jude 1:24)***. The parable is not about correcting the lost sheep but about the joy, the shepherd has in finding his sheep.





3. Extreme Rejoicing Occurs When the Lost Person is Found

Luke 15:7 – “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” NIV

a. A Party is Thrown in Honor of the Found Sheep

It is party time! It is time to celebrate because someone very valuable to God was lost and has been found. The lost sheep is the sinner and the ninety-nine are the righteous. This is the answer to the religious critics. This is why Jesus became a friend of sinners, to seek them out and rejoice when He finds them and brings them into His church.

Conclusion: There is a celebration for every person who was in danger and has been rescued. Who celebrates? All of heaven rejoices. The following parable says that both Jesus Christ and the angels rejoice: ***“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10 NIV).***

STEPS FOR GROWTH:

- a. Whom did Jesus come into this world to save?
- b. How does it make you feel that we are all very valuable to God?
- c. In your own words, describe the kind of party that is thrown in heaven every time someone repents and gives his/her life to Jesus Christ.



Lesson #7

The Meaning of the Crucifixion

Ice Breaker: The cross was a symbol of torture among Romans, what comes to your mind when you hear this word?

Bible Reading: Luke 23:26-49 NIV

Key Verse: Luke 23

Introduction:

Sometimes a ray of light illuminates the darkest and most depressing scenes. Our passage of Scripture begins with such a scene. A murderer is released and Jesus is sentenced to die by crucifixion. Therefore, Jesus begins to drag His cross on His flogged body down the Via Dolorosa to the place of His execution, finally arriving at the place called the Skull.

There they crucified Him, along with two other criminals, and raised Him up in plain sight for everyone to see. He endured the cross for six long agonizing hours, enduring a slow and painful death. Moreover, He did it just for us!





The ray of light in this dark hour is that the message of the cross was the power of God for salvation (**1 Corinthians 1:18**). The cross is at the very heart of the Gospel. For this reason the Apostle Paul determined that nothing was as important as knowing the crucified Lord Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:2**).

Luke 23:26-49 brings to light three important truths regarding the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

1. The Cross Represents Forgiveness

Luke 23:34 – “Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” NIV

a. Jesus Chose to Forgive His Enemies

Forgiveness is choosing to no longer hold something against a person. Jesus chose to forgive all responsible for His execution. He forgave the calloused soldiers, Pilate, and all the Jewish leaders.

b. Jesus Chose to Forgive All Sinners

He also chose to forgive you and me, just as He forgave the thief. It was all of our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. ***“We deserve to die for our evil deeds. Jesus didn’t do anything worthy of death.”*** The repented criminal confessed his faith in Jesus Christ and received assurance of salvation. He did not have to be baptized because baptism was not required for salvation during that critical time. However, Jesus commanded that after His death and the birth of the church, everyone needed to believe and be baptized to be saved (**Mark 16:16**). Understanding clearly Jesus’ command, Peter commanded everyone to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (**Acts. 2:38**).



2. The Cross is Offensive to Those Who Perish

Luke 23:35 – “But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.’” NKJV

a. The Cross Caused People to Mock and Hurl Insults at Jesus

Two groups mocked Jesus on the cross: the rulers and the soldiers. ***“If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”*** One of the thieves on the cross next to Jesus insulted Him saying, ***“Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”*** This did not surprise Jesus because He had heard something similar when the devil tempted Him: ***“If you are the Son of God...”***



b. The Cross Reveals that We Can’t Save Ourselves

The Apostle Paul says, ***“the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJV)***. There is no one that can be saved based on his or her own merits. If we could save ourselves, then Christ’s death on the cross was the biggest mistake ever. Our good works are not sufficient. Salvation comes by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross (***Ephesians 2:8-9***).



3. The Cross Represents Death

Luke 23:46 – “He [Jesus] breathed His last.” NKJV

a. Death to Worldly Influence

The cross has always been a place of suffering and death, so it should not surprise us that it represents death for us today. Jesus endured the shameful death of the cross so that we can die to the world [renounce it] and have victory over all of its influence. Paul said, ***“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14 NIV).***





b. Death to Our Sinful Ways

When we repent of our sins, we die to our old lifestyle and sinful ways, which includes our self-centeredness and sinful desires (***Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24***). All of us who are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into his death. We are buried with Jesus Christ through baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (***Romans 6:4-5***).

Conclusion:

The cross of Jesus became our cross and His death our death. The good news is that if we die and are buried with Jesus in repentance and baptism, we will also live with Him. That means that his victory is our victory and His resurrection is our resurrection into a new life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ***Admit it we all really want this!***

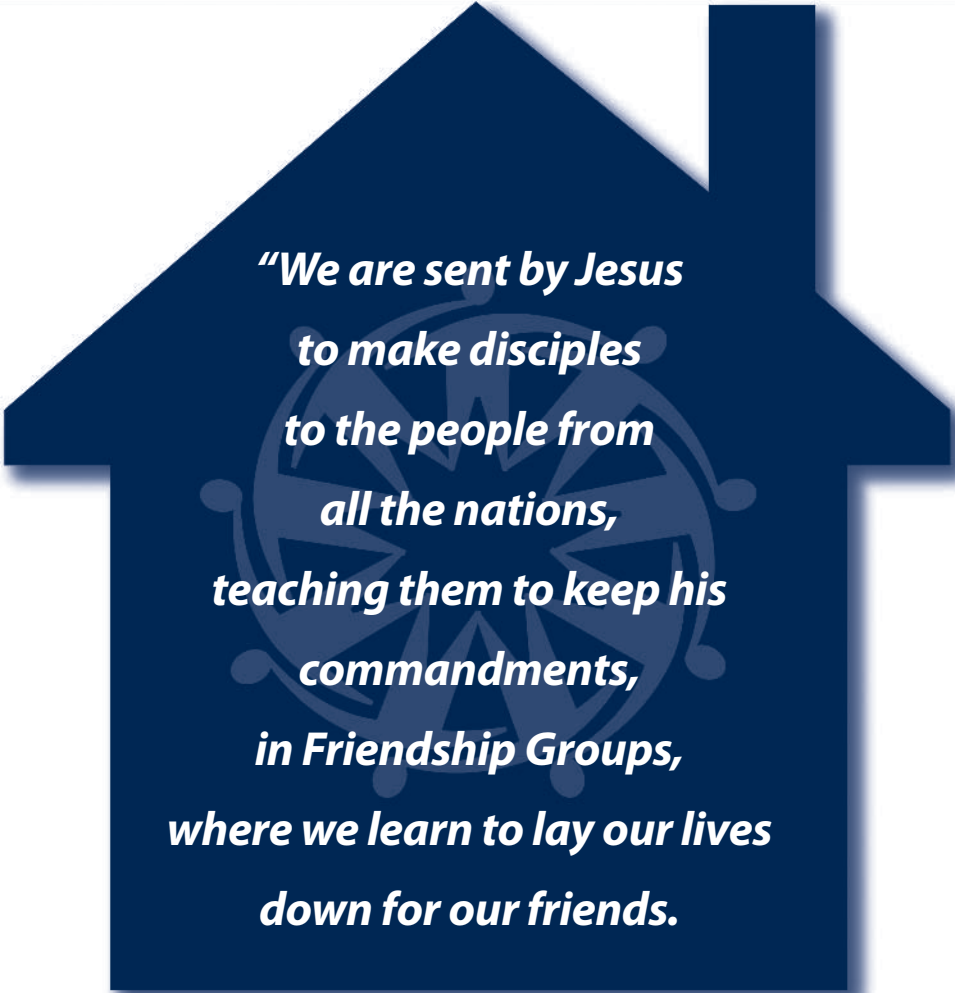
STEPS FOR GROWTH:

- a. How does it make you feel to know what Jesus suffered for you?
- b. What does it mean to be crucified to the world?
- c. What does it take for someone to be saved today?



Motto

*Remind the group that the goal is
for all to memorize the motto*



***“We are sent by Jesus
to make disciples
to the people from
all the nations,
teaching them to keep his
commandments,
in Friendship Groups,
where we learn to lay our lives
down for our friends.*”**



Notes





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