

Are You Ready?

Developing a Heart that is Ready to Share the
Gospel

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Week 1

Are you ready? Are you ready to go and share the Gospel? If you are a child of God, then you are called to, and even commanded to, do just that. As we get ready to go out and share our faith, we need to prepare ourselves. Paul describes this process as putting on “the full armor of God”. This week, we are going to take a closer look at the different pieces of this heavenly armor as well as why we need each one. So, let’s get ready by getting dressed!

Day 1:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:10-12

Consider This:

1. We are strong in **God’s** mighty power and not our own.
2. The ‘armor of God’, and the truth that we will learn as we examine them, is necessary for us to withstand Satan’s attacks. (And he will attack!)
3. We aren’t fighting against people. People who persecute us, mistreat us, and make our lives hard are in need of the same salvation that we have.

As we walk the walk of Christianity, we will face resistance. Not everyone will want to hear what we have to say, and many may even hate us for it. Remembering that our fight is not with flesh and blood but with the powers of darkness, helps us see the sinner chained up in the sin. We all stumble and fall. The message of the Gospel is liberation for all of us. It is complete forgiveness that holds no record of wrong. That is why we share. We share the Gospel because of love. God's love for mankind means life and freedom for His children.

This life can be hard and, on our own, we don't have the power to stand up under the weight of all the worries and trials that we will face. But praise God! We don't need to have the power to stand all by ourselves. When we are feeling weak, scared or unprepared for whatever we are facing, we need to repeat Philippians 4:13 to ourselves, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." We don't have to have it all together. We don't have to be perfect. We just need to have love.

Understand that we are loved. God cares about our struggles and promises to give us the strength to meet them head-on so we can be victorious. He loves and cares about the struggles of our enemies too. And that is why we share. Everyone we meet is fighting a battle we can't see. We share the Gospel because it is the message of hope everyone needs to hear.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

In what area(s) do you feel the weakest?

How do you need God's strength to help you be victorious in this area?

Think of a person that you have difficulty with. Spend some time praying for this person. See them through the eyes of God's grace. Allow yourself to feel the love that God has for them. Commit to praying for them every day, and look for ways to be loving even if that love is not accepted or returned. Remember, God will give you the strength. The love you share might mean the world of difference for that person. Hate does nothing but chain and destroy. Only love sets a person free.

Day 2:

Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:13

Consider This:

1. God has given us protection against days of trouble.
2. The battle isn't ours to **win**. Jesus already won the battle for us. We are called to **stand our ground** because God has given us the spiritual weapons and protection to do so.
3. Withstanding the attacks of the enemy requires that we put forth an effort.

God knows that our days will have struggles. He knows that life will have challenges with ups and downs. That is why He gives us a strong suit of spiritual armor. Ephesians 6 tells us this armor consists of salvation, righteousness, truth, the Word of God and the Gospel of Peace. Just like a warrior doesn't go out to the battlefield in his pajamas and wait until his life is in mortal danger before putting on his armor, we need to be prepared **before** we face our enemy.

We must remember our enemy is not the person snickering at our faith. It is not the one cheating us or lying to us. Our enemy is the devil. The attacks that he throws at us are emotional and spiritual, but they hurt as much as any arrow could. That is why we need to be ready, before the fight begins. We need to fill our mind with the truth of God's word. Satan will try to convince us that we are far from capable and far from loved, but because we know the truth, we won't believe his lies. He will try to trip us with temptations, but when we cling to salvation and God's grace and mercy, his temptations fall flat.

As we go out and share the Gospel, we will come under attack. We will be tried, tempted and teased. That is why we need to ready ourselves. The world needs to hear the Gospel, but Satan will do everything to keep us quiet. If we are dressed in God's armor, and prepared for the fight, we will be able to stand in the power of God.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Thinking of the pieces of armor that God has given us (faith, salvation, righteousness, truth, Word of God, and the Gospel), which one (or combination) offers you the most help for what you might experience when sharing the Gospel?

Knowing that Jesus has already won the battle takes a lot of pressure off us! We need to understand that we can't make someone accept the truth of God's word. How does this truth help 'prepare' us to share the Gospel?

What are some ways you can (or do) prepare to withstand the attacks of Satan?

Day 3:

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace.

Ephesians 6:14-15

Consider This:

1. Belt of Truth: Just like a belt keeps us from losing our pants, truth keeps us from losing our faith.
2. Breastplate of Righteousness: According to [NIV Compact Dictionary of the Bible](#), righteousness is two-fold. It is both a “right” relationship with God and a “right” relationship with man. Having the right relationships protects our heart.
3. Feet Fitted with Readiness: We should always be prepared to step out and share the Gospel of Peace.

When Paul described the armor of God, he listed the “Belt of Truth” as the first part of our protection. A belt does more than just pull our entire look together. It holds it all together. The same is true of God’s truth. As we prepare to go out and face the world, to share our faith with everyone we meet, we need to be strapped in by truth.

The lies of this world don’t come at us with warning labels and cautionary advertisements. They are propagated by nice people who appear to know what they are talking about. They are encouraged as socially acceptable and even healthy for our lives. The truth stands firm against those lies. God’s truth calls a sin a sin, not because God wants to keep us from having fun, but because He wants to keep us from the pain and destruction caused by sin. Without the truth, we would fall for every lie.

In addition to God’s truth, we are also given the “Breastplate of Righteousness”. A right relationship with God and mankind, protects our heart, the core of our character. As we share the Gospel, we need to guard our heart by maintaining right relationships. The way we respond to both God and man will either draw others toward the Gospel or push them away.

As you share the Gospel, remember 1 Corinthians 13. This passage reminds us that our message means nothing if it isn't drenched in love, a natural bi-product of righteousness. Our feet are not ready to go out and spread the Gospel if they are not clothed in God's love and mercy, so make sure you are dressed for success.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

The lies that Satan tempts us with always come wrapped up in pretty paper. It is so easy to allow ourselves to believe the pretty decoration doesn't hide pain and hurt. How can you use the truth of God's word to help you turn away from the temptations in your life?

Why do you think having a right relationship with God protects us?

Describe the 'right' relationship we should have with others? (both saved and lost)

Day 4:

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:16-17

Consider This:

1. Satan will still attack us, but our shield of faith quashes those attacks and protects us from true harm.
2. Our salvation protects our thoughts and knowledge. No matter what, we cling to the cross because only the cross saves our souls. A snug helmet leaves no room for ego and pride.
3. God's word is the only offensive weapon that Paul gives us. In the spiritual battle we face, we don't fight with our own words but God's. It's His battle to win.

As we prepare to share the Gospel with the world, there are some things that we are called to do. In Paul's description, we are told to "take up" three things: our shield of faith, our helmet of salvation and our sword of God's Word. Consider a Roman soldier of Paul's day. Even in their moments of leisure, they would wear their belt, breastplate and shoes. However, at the sound of battle, they would quickly grab their sword and shield and make sure their helmet was secure, before running out to face the enemy. The same is true for us.

We should be always clothed in righteousness and truth and always be prepared to go out and share the Gospel. But, we must also be ready to fight the spiritual battle that we will do doubt face. The devil doesn't want us to tell people about the freedom and forgiveness of the cross. You can be sure he will attack us to keep us from doing just that. Therefore, when we go into spiritual battle, we need to grab our weapons.

We are protected by our salvation. Nothing can take away God's free gift! Our faith prevents those attacks from truly harming us because we know God is in control. However, it is

only God's word that we fight with, and only against the spiritual forces behind the attacks. We stand on God's promises, prepared to fight the devil while showing love for the world. When we walk in a faith that holds tight to our salvation and stands on God's word, that is when we are ready.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Consider the most resent attack in your life (perhaps you are even going through one now), how can you use your faith as a shield to protect your heart?

One of the biggest lies Satan tells us about our salvation is that we must earn it or even that we could lose it if we fail too many times. God's word makes it very clear that we could never be 'good enough' to earn what God has given us for free. How does the truth of your salvation help protect your mind from those thoughts?

Be purposeful with God's word. Write out reminders and even memorize scriptures that will help you when you are tempted in a specific area. It is your defense and your weapon. Use it!

Day 5:

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:18

Consider This:

1. Prayer should be interwoven throughout our day and our lives. Are you happy? Pray. Are you worried? Pray. In all occasions, pray.
2. There is no prayer that the Lord doesn't delight in hearing. We can pray about anything, in "all kinds" of ways. There is no magic formula that will insure God hears our prayers. He listens to each mumble or eloquent *heart felt* request.
3. We must never forget our brothers and sisters in Christ who are going through their own struggles.

A simple prayer, uttered with a heart that believes, changes the world, not because there is power in the moving of our lips, but because the God who hears our prayers is all-powerful. Prayer is the duty of every Christian. James encourages us when he said, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. *The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*" (James 5:16 emphasis added.)

We have such a privilege to be able to approach the throne of God with our petitions. There is no formula that we have to follow. Hannah prayed with a fervent and silent whisper. Elijah prayed with a desperate and broken heart. The man in the temple prayed anguished prayers of repentance. Peter prayed with confidence. Prayer isn't an assignment we need to stress over. There is no grade system for the way we cry out to our God. A prayer is simply our heart speaking to His. If we don't ask, we will not receive. So, we ask. We praise and we thank the Lord for His many blessings. And most importantly, we believe that He hears our prayers. God doesn't care if they are whispered in a hallway or sung from behind the steering wheel. His desire

is that our desire would be to call out to Him for all our needs. That is why we pray in **all** times, in **all** ways, and for **all** our brothers and sisters. God is listening. What are we saying?

Questions to Touch Your Heart

When you think of prayer, what comes to mind?

Do you have a special place for time that you pray or do you simply pray sporadically?

Do you feel like the way you approach prayer satisfies your desire and calling to pray? If it does, wonderful! How can you help others reach their goal of a better prayer life? If not, don't worry! Many people find having a set time and place helps them, especially when they are just starting to develop a great prayer life. How could you create a routine that helps train yourself to make prayer part of the fabric of your day?

Week 2

We are all dressed and ready for spiritual warfare. Our feet are “fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace”. But what do we say? How do we say it? How do we get over the fear of rejection? The world needs the message that we know. I wish that I could tell you that every person you shared the Gospel with would welcome your message and be grateful for your willingness to share it, but the Gospel has been rejected by men from the beginning. Peter described Jesus as “the living Stone – *rejected by men* but chosen by God and precious to him”. (1 Peter 2:4) Perhaps that makes sharing the Gospel feel like a lost cause or at least a doomed exploit, but never forget that you and I would not be here, in the freedom of God’s kingdom, if the Gospel had not have been shared with us.

Perhaps, you struggle with not knowing what to say or how to say it. That’s okay too. That is why we *prepare* and *get ready* to share. This week, we are going to be talking about why sharing our faith is so important. We are going to be exploring the very message that sets the captives free and getting our hearts and minds ready to answer the call and “go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Day 1:

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

John 3:16-18

Consider This:

1. God’s love for us is so great that He sacrificed His son for our lives. And yet, too often we still doubt that He cares about our struggles.

2. Condemnation has no place in the life of a child of God.
3. Salvation is born of a choice to believe.

“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.” This beautiful and simple explanation of salvation makes John 3:16 the most recognizable scripture in the Bible. If we share no other message with the world, we will have shared enough. God is love and His actions are motivated by love. He asks nothing more from us than our belief, and for that, Jesus gave up his life.

We are imperfect. We are broken, used, expendable in the world’s sight, but we are precious and priceless to our Creator. God doesn’t ask that we reach a level of worthiness – His love sees us as beautiful even when we are smudged with sin. Joshua Loth Liebman put it like this, “God hears no sweeter music than the cracked chimes of the courageous human spirit ringing in imperfect acknowledgment of His perfect love.”

The message that Christ died to give us, the message that we are called to share, is love. No life goes unnoticed. No breath uncounted, no tear ignored, no smile forgotten. The God who spoke the world into existence loves us more. That love defines our salvation. There is nothing we can do to deserve it. There is nothing we can do to earn it or repay it. All He asks from us is that we believe in the perfect love and final sacrifice of His son, Jesus. The message is simple. Don’t complicate it, just share.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Try to image how big the love of God is for YOU. List all the blemishes you see in yourself and allow God’s love to change the way you view your weakness.

God loved us before we knew what love was. He loved us when we were saturated in the grime of sin. If He loved us so much then, we should never think that He loves us any less when we stumble now. Forgiveness doesn’t condemn. Think of a person you need to forgive. How can you show that person God’s uncondemning love and forgiveness?

Day 2:

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight.

Colossians 1:19-22

Consider This:

1. God is pleased when we are reconciled with Him. Our salvation makes Him happy.
2. It is our choice to be either enemies of God or His children.
3. God sees us as holy because of Jesus' sacrifice – not anything we have done or could ever do.

God rejoices when we believe in Him. He sees us sinking in our sin and wants nothing more than to save us from ourselves. 2 Peter 2:9 reveals, "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God is love and love is patient and kind. Humanity has chosen to pull their hearts from God's care. We have walked away from the truth and convinced ourselves that we are in control even though our lives are but a moment and a breath. We fight. We hate. We kill and we rebel in every way that tickles our fancy, but still God loves. Still, He waits. Still, He calls to us, and sent His Son to die for us.

Those of us who have been saved by God's grace must never forget that it is *only* God's grace that kept us from drowning in our sins. It is only mercy that makes us holy in His sight. We are no better than the one who still struggles in their sin. We are no better than the one who still revels in their rebellion. We have merely accepted God's love which motivates us to walk in the same love. God loved us when we were far from lovable, and He calls us to do the same. We cannot force those who are drowning to grab the lifeline that we throw, but if we do not throw it, we are surely condemning those that Jesus died to save. To love the lost with the same love that God loves is to help others join you on the solid rock that saves. Can you make room in your heart for the lost?

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Why do you think that our salvation makes God happy?

God doesn't force us to believe in Him. Why do you think it is so important that we *choose* to place our trust in Him?

When our service to the Lord is motivated by a desire to repay Him for His sacrifice, we miss the point of God's grace and mercy. What difference does it make to you that you can never *earn* God's salvation? How does that affect the way you view others who are still lost in their sin?

Day 3:

This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:9-12

Consider This:

1. God's love for us isn't dependent on our feelings towards Him.
2. We who were created in His image should love in His love.
3. The world can't see God, but they can see us reflecting His love to them.

The love of God is immeasurable. It is almost beyond our comprehension. It touches everything and reaches even the most hardened sinner. We love because His love has transformed us into His image. Why do we go? Why do we share the Gospel with others? Because He went. He loves, and He never gives up on us.

Many of the cathedrals in Italy are decorated with beautiful paintings on their ceilings. Unfortunately, for many people, craning their neck to see these masterpieces proves painful and to some, impossible. To ensure that everyone can view the beauty nestled just above their heads, one cathedral placed a number of perfectly positioned mirrors on the ground. These mirrors reflect the magnificent artwork just above them.

We are God's mirrors. So many live their lives without ever looking up. Some don't even know there is anything to see just above them. Our job, as God's mirrors on the ground, is to reflect an accurate image of God to the world. If we are broken and dirty by sin and hatred, we can't reflect the truth of God. People will have a hard time seeing Him through our smudges and cracks. When we are washed by grace and forgiveness of God and we daily allow Him to fill us

with love and polish our lives with His word, then we can reflect the true light and love of God. We go because He sends us, but we need to go prepared so that we love with God's love and reflect His truth, not our insecurities.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Why do you believe it so important that love is not a response to love from another but rather a free gift initiated by God?

What are some ways you can love with God's kind of love?

Think about your reflection of God. What are some areas that you feel need a little bit of polishing?

Day 4:

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8

Consider This:

1. Christ died for the ungodly. The broken, bruised and rebellious were on his mind as he willingly took up his cross.
2. God's love isn't a common love. It is extraordinary and extravagant.
3. God didn't require that we clean up our act before offering us salvation. Neither should we demand perfection of the lost we minister to.

Grace sees through the scars of our past. Mercy looks past all the bad choices and destructive habits. When God looked at humanity and decided to send His son to die to make us clean and restore our relationship with Him, He didn't send a list of requirements that needed to be filled first. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) As mirrors reflecting the love and mercy of God, we too must learn to offer grace without strings attached.

The patience of God understands that we often take two steps forward and one step back as we are learning and growing in our Christian walk. Others need to see that practiced out in our lives. As we go and share the Gospel of peace, we must remember that perfection... our perfection... was never one of the requirements. In fact, we have nothing to do with the offer. We can show this to the world when we lift each other up instead of condemning.

When we encourage without casting judgment, others get a glimpse of the care God has for us when we struggle and fall. We are no better than the one who finds Jesus while they are behind bars. We are no worse than the one who grew up knowing the love of God. Sin is sin and grace looks through that sin and loves anyway. The Gospel that we share needs to be a message of peace between God and man because of HIS love, not our good works.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

When you see a Christian struggling with sin, how can Romans 5:6-8 change the way we view that brother or sister?

What are some ways you can show the uncommon love of God to the people God has placed in your life?

What can you do to help, not criticize or condemn, a Christian who is struggling with sin or temptation?

Day 5:

I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:16-17

Consider This:

1. Sharing the Gospel is the power of God revealed through love. We should never be ashamed.
2. Every person who lives on this earth was given the same offer of salvation through belief in Jesus. God sees no color nor race. His offer is for all.
3. Salvation cannot be earned. It must be received and lived out in and through faith.

We don't share the Gospel to make ourselves rich or to accumulate mobs of fans and supporters. We should never share out of obligation or in order to meet a quota for the day. We share because it is a powerful message of hope for which we will never be ashamed. Salvation is a message for **all** of mankind. It isn't a gift reserved for a certain few. It isn't set aside for people who fit in with a certain appearance or behavior. In fact, who we are has nothing to do with the measure of love God offers. Christ came to save the lost. He didn't wait until we were found to offer us salvation.

If God died for sinners of all shapes, sizes, former beliefs or behaviors, who are we to choose whom to share the Gospel with? Christianity isn't a cookie cutter faith. We are all different and unique in the path we took, but saved by the same grace. We have an exceptional privilege to share the Gospel with **all** the world. God didn't pick and choose who could come to the cross. We must not ever get in anyone's way of reaching it.

Why do we go and share the Gospel? We go because no one is saved without the grace of God. We cannot earn our right to enter into the kingdom. There is no soul that has traveled too far for God's love to reach. There is no life too stained by sin that cannot be washed clean as snow with just one drop of Christ's blood. And that is why we should never be ashamed to share the Gospel.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

What are your biggest obstacles in sharing your faith?

How can you move past these hindrances?

What would you say to a person who thought they were too far gone to change the direction of their life and follow Jesus?

Week 3

This very short journey into preparing ourselves to share the Gospel is just about over. Now, it is time that we get ready, get set, and GO! Sharing our faith can be intimidating. It may even make you feel uncomfortable. Perhaps you will ruffle a feather or two, but what if you don't? There is no soul on this planet that God does not desire to see with Him in eternity.

Unfortunately, as Jesus said in Matthew 9:37, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." It is time we got to work. God places us each exactly where He needs us. The friends, coworkers, neighbors, and even the people we meet while we are out and about in our daily lives, are unique to us. No one else has the exact same circle of influence than you. That is what makes your life so important. Your story is unique; your outreach is unique; your message of hope through Christ is universal. There is no more time for delay. We are prepared and ready. Now, let's go!

Day 1:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Romans 10:14

Consider This:

1. Many people in this world have never heard the Gospel. People in your own neighborhood have never truly heard the story of Jesus.
2. Many have heard but never listened because the Gospel wasn't told in a way they would understand.
3. Many want to believe but need someone to show them that God's love is real.

How will they ever know if we don't go?

Many of our friends and neighbors are missing something very beautiful from their lives. They struggle to understand the meaning of their existence. They buckle under the weight of the injustices of this life and are drowning in hopelessness of the finality of death. Meanwhile, we hold the key to joy in midst of sorrow, peace in the middle of the storm and life that doesn't end with this body's final breath. How will they ever know freedom, love and mercy exists if we don't show them what we have hidden in our heart? How can this world understand the message of the Gospel if we don't show them? A simple word, a selfless gesture of our faith, may just be the key that unlocks their hardened heart. We will never know if we remain silent.

As we go out into the world and share the truth that we believe so deeply in our heart, we don't need to beat the world into submission. We have only to look to Jesus' earthly ministry to see the key to sharing our faith. We must simply walk in love; share of ourselves; gently teach what we know and allow our steps to be directed by our God. That is how the world will hear and believe. It isn't *our* words that change the world. God has already done the hard part. All we have to do is share what have seen and experienced. After all, "Can a faith that does nothing be called sincere?" (Jean Racine)

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Think about the people in your life. God has placed you in their lives for a reason. Spend time praying for the people in your life and look for opportunities to share the Gospel with the people God puts in your path. Does anyone specifically come to mind? How can you share your faith with them?

Spend some time thinking of how you first came to know the Lord. What about the circumstances of your life drew you to the truth?

How can you be deliberate in sharing your faith? (Look at the example of Jesus for some clues.)

Day 2:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey
everything I have commanded you. And surely I am
with you always to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

Consider This:

1. The invitation of the Gospel is for EVERYONE. We are all offered free and undeserved grace when we believe in Jesus.
2. It isn't enough that we share the Gospel. We must also teach others how to obey the Word of God.
3. The Holy Spirit will never leave us without His guidance. We have nothing to fear and everything to gain when we walk in obedience to God's calling.

The moment we gave our lives to the Lord began our life of service. It isn't merely missionaries that carry the calling of sharing the Gospel. Each one of us has been commissioned to seek and find the lost. However, it isn't enough that we merely tell people about the salvation found through Jesus Christ, nor is it enough that we simply live good lives. We need to share our faith, but we also need to show our faith in action and encourage others to do the same.

As we grow and learn through the study of God's word, we need to share. We need to get involved in people's lives. It's too easy to disconnect ourselves from the hands-on work of making disciples, but God has placed you in the middle of your circle of influence by design. None of us know how long we have with the people in our lives. Let's not squander that time, but instead, make the most of every opportunity to get involved in the lives of the people around us. Seek opportunities to not only share, but encourage, inspire, and train others to do the same. Never forget the words of Henry Gardiner Adams, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." We are all called to share the Gospel, but when we show the love of the Lord by investing in people's lives, we live out the Gospel for the world to see and add workers to the harvest of the Lord.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Is there someone that you know that strikes you as the *least* likely to accept the message of Christ? I would challenge you to write their name down and pray for them every day. What are some ways you could reach out to them in words and actions?

How do you teach others to live and obey God's Word?

Who has God brought into your life that you can be a spiritual mentor to? (If you are a new Christian, think of who you could go to be trained and disciple by.)

Day 3:

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15

Consider This:

1. The first commitment we need to make is in the Lordship of Jesus. He is the one calling the shots of our life. We serve Him not our own agendas.
2. Our lives need to be reflecting hope to draw people to us.
3. The Gospel should never be shoved down other people's throat. We are commanded to offer it with “gentleness and respect”.

In Matthew 11:29-30, Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” A yoke is a simple piece of farming equipment that lays across the shoulders. It enables an animal to pull and carry its load easier and more effectively while being able to be led without difficulty. Jesus is telling us that we will find rest as we work and serve the Lord. This is because He is our strength and He gives us the power to do what He calls us to do.

Sharing the Gospel is part of our duties for the Lord. Reaching the lost with God's love and mercy is a joy-filled yoke on each of our shoulders. There is fulfillment in doing what God created us to do. That is where we find true joy, peace and rest for our souls. Our lives will abound in joy as we walk in faith and complete confidence in the path God leads us. Our joy in Him will naturally draw people to us and provide an opportunity to share the Gospel.

What if we walked where God commanded us to go without hesitation? What if we lived the way He declared we should live, and loved with a sincere love that points to God? Imagine simply living under the yoke of the Lord in humble submission, with joy, peace and rest for our souls. What a powerful witness that would be. God will provide the opportunities if we humbly follow His lead.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

Are there any areas of your life that you have not given God complete control? If so, take some time to identify these areas and prayerfully ask God to help you give him the reigns. It may help to actually close your eyes and picture yourself placing them in God's hands.

Peter told us to be prepared to give an answer to the hope that we have. Prepare. Write down a response. Remember to tailor it with gentleness, humility and love.

Day 4:

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.”

Romans 5:3-5

Consider This:

1. If we never experienced times of suffering, we would never be able to persevere or identify with people who are in the middle of their struggle.
2. Life molds our personalities. Our character is forged in the fires of difficulties and polished through the prayers of perseverance.
3. Faith shines brightest for those who have endured, tested the Lord and seen His deliverance and sustaining grace in the darkest times of life. It is easier to trust what has been proven over and over.

The hardest and most painful times of our lives are opportunities to share our faith. This world can be hard and unfair. Everyone will experience difficulties and painful seasons of life. How we respond to these times reveals a tremendous amount about the strength of our faith. If integrity is what we do when no one is looking, faith is what we walk in when everything is falling apart, and people will notice.

Most times, we don't have to go farther than our own day-to-day lives to find opportunities to show people God's love and mercy. Our lives don't have to be perfect to be used to reach the lost with the Gospel. In fact, the opposite is true. If we were perfect, we would never be able to offer a faith that people could identify with. Don't be afraid to use the trials and difficulties in your life as an opportunity to point people to Christ. That is why we can rejoice in the middle of the tornados that make life challenging.

There is nothing that can ever take us away from the love and care of God. The difficulties and struggles we endure in this life are mere moments in the expanse of eternity. We should use

them to strengthen our faith, build our character and draw people fighting the same fight we are to the only true and everlasting hope for their pain – God.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

What trial or suffering do you feel drew you the closest to God? Why do you think that was?

What are the strongest parts of your personality? How can you use these traits, and the life experiences that molded them, to help others?

How can reminding yourself of how God has been there for you in the past help your faith be stronger for the next struggle you face? How can you use that knowledge to help others whose faith is failing?

Day 5:

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those
who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
Isaiah 52:7

Consider This:

1. The message of the Gospel is good news for the world.
2. The Gospel is not meant to condemn but bring peace to those in captivity. The message we share loosens the shackles of sin.
3. Considering the joy and freedom that the Gospel brings to the world should spurn our feet to *Get Ready and Go!* Someone is waiting for you to share the good news of salvation with them. How long will you make them wait?

Humanity can never repair the rift that the first sin tore in the relationship between God and mankind. The sinful desires of our heart constantly get in the way and tie us down with more and more bondage. But there is hope. There is freedom. Jesus came and died for our sins and set us free. We can't make amends for our failures, but because of the cross we don't need to.

God's gift is free and it is freeing. The struggles we face are still hard. They still hurt. But when we give our lives to the Lord, we find that we can navigate those painful paths with joy and peace. This is the freedom that we are sharing with the world. Why would we ever shy away from sharing such a wonderful message of new beginnings, joy and peace throughout whatever life throws?

Unfortunately, not everyone wants to hear our message. Not everyone is ready to accept the Gospel. That doesn't mean we can pick and choose to whom we offer it to. The Gospel is meant for everyone. God will bring the right people to cross our path. Perhaps the Gospel we share will stay a seed hiding in their heart for years before it grows. Perhaps we will see an immediate harvest. We are not in control, and our motivation should not be the *response* but our

act of obedience to share. The message we have is beautiful, life-giving salvation. Let's take every opportunity to share the Gospel of Peace.

Questions to Touch Your Heart

What part of the Gospel makes you smile the most?

How can we share the Gospel in way that brings peace and not condemnation? Why do you think that is so important?

You are ready! You are dressed in spiritual armor and set out with the message of hope and salvation. Ask the Lord for opportunities to share and be aware of them as they come.

Last Thoughts:

I honestly hope that this short Bible study has been a blessing to you. Sharing the Gospel is such a fundamental part of our Christian walk. We should never feel ashamed or intimidated to share, but too often that is exactly how we feel. No one wants to be rejected or ridiculed, but there is hope. God knows our fears and our insecurities. That is why He promises to always be with us. Sharing the Gospel doesn't need to be a large, grand gesture. It can be simple and intimate. Some people are called to stand on mountaintops and declare the coming of the Lord. Some people are called to sit beside a hurting heart and share the hope they found in Christ. There are times for loud proclamations of faith and times for sincerely and gentle encouragement. We need to be in prayer **before** we set out to share so that we will know what to do when the moment presents itself.

Our message will not always be received. That is why we need to be prepared. We need to honestly embrace the fact that we are not in control. We *serve* the Living God. We are called to be *obedient* to God's will and not our own. Perhaps that seems confining, but in truth it is liberating. It isn't our call who we share with. God will bring the right people into our lives. Therefore, if God brings a person into our lives we can have confidence that is the person we were meant to share the gospel with... regardless of their response to our message. We are not responsible for their reaction but simply for our walk of obedience. We may never know what God does with the seeds we plant, but we can rest in the knowledge that that is in His control. Adapting a servant's heart takes the pressure off of us. God's yoke is easy because He only requires obedience, not results.

The Gospel should always be on the tip of our tongue. And that tongue should always speak with grace, mercy and love. The Gospel is the story of peace and hope. It is the message of perfect love for imperfect humanity. We have more than just a duty to share. We have the privilege to tell the greatest story ever told. Never be ashamed of the Gospel because it is the key that unlocked the chains of sin in your life, and it brings freedom to every captive.

Are you ready? I believe you are. Now go and share the Gospel of Peace!