

Women & More

Light to the Lost

Lesson 7: **October 16, 2014**—*influence*

A cryptic inscription on a western tombstone reads:

Remember, friend, when passing by,
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, soon you will be.
Prepare for death and follow me.

A passer-by added these critical words:

*To follow you I'm not content
Until I know which way you went!*

The flu is contagious, that's why every fall I get my shot at INTEGRIS Grove Hospital to be inoculated against it. The flu is not something we want to catch, so we'll suffer sticks to keep from getting it. And that's a good thing. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is something we want to spread: we share it in our actions and in our words, and we want it to be caught! Charles Spurgeon said, "Light physical is said by Solomon to be sweet but gospel light is infinitely more precious, for it reveals eternal things, and ministers to our immortal natures."

Whitaker Publishing's introduction to *Let Go*, by Francois Fenelon, says: "Through reading this book we are going to school at the feet of a truly great saint, to catch by contagion something of his intimate companionship with God." Fenelon himself said, "Disconnection is not an option for followers of Christ. In terms of ministry, people are everything to us because they are everything to Christ. Our job is to learn how to be healthy, sanctified connectors with a lost world, people in need and the Body of Christ."

Bible teacher, M. R. DeHann asked, "Does our identification with the Savior and His message encourage others to want to join the cause? Our commitment needs to be strong enough to be contagious." Daniel in 12:3 said, "*Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever.*" Someone said, "Get usable and God will wear you out!" See, there is a fair amount of 'going' involved in following Jesus!

Pastor and theologian Sam Storm, in comment about the church at Philadelphia, wrote: "[Their] lack of resources, money and manpower proved no obstacle to [their] accomplishing great things for the kingdom of God...A mini-church with a mega-Christ makes them big in the eyes of Him whose opinion is the only one that matters." Influence of Scripture 2 Timothy 3:14—"*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.*"

Matthew 5:14-16 ***“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*** Spurgeon again: “No sooner is there a good thing in the world, than a division is necessary. Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them, let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines or deceits of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest and bold in their Lord’s work.” Proverbs 4:18-19 ***“The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. 19But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.”***

In Matthew 18:12-14 Jesus describes the worth of one lost soul in His *Parable of the Lost Sheep*—“What do you think? ***If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?*** 13*And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14***In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.**”

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.”* We must rejoice when the gospel is being shared; when God’s word is proclaimed, and people are coming to faith in Christ Jesus. We must tell and retell, with the authority of Christ and His Holy Spirit, or it is just our opinion! Thomas Boston said, “Seek to preach the words of the Living God, and not your own.”

Sarah Young in *Jesus Calling* said, “I chose to pour My Light into you, so that you can be a beacon to others.” And Charles Spurgeon said, “Talk ye of all the wondrous works of the Lord, ye who make mention of His name, keep not silence, neither by day, nor when the sun goeth to his rest.”

Numbers 11:26 describes two Spirit-led men who were prophesying in the camp of Moses, and Joshua was jealous for his leader and said in verse 28 *“Moses, my lord, stop them!”* Verse 29—*“But Moses replied, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them.’”* Just before this happened God had told Moses to bring together 70 of the elders of the people and have them stand around the Tent of Meeting. Verses 25-26—*“Then the LORD came down in the clouds and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again.*

26*“However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the others, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.”*

In the Old Testament, God's people were told to impress upon and talk about His commands unceasingly; they were to tie them, bind them and write them. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 said: "*These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. **7**Impress them on your children. **8**Talk about them*

- when you sit at home and
- when you walk along the road,
- when you lie down and
- when you get up.

*sTie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **9**Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."*

When talking about how the Lord will not be listened to, we must be about acting like our Lord—so they will see and “hear” our actions. Jonathan Edwards said, “She’s not listening to anything but your actions.” Psalm 78:4 “*We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the*

1. *praise worthy deeds of the LORD,*
2. *his power and*
3. *his wonders he has done."*

Psalm 78:28c “*I will tell of all your deeds."* And Edwards added: “...by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

Jesus’ walk and talk was a powerful witness—John 3:1-18. And He told us in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:12-48 to 1) be “salt-seasoning”; 2) go public with our faith; 3) let people ‘hang out’ with us, and 4) walk our talk and talk our walk, remembering that “*The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it*” 1 Thessalonians 5:24. The Holy Spirit is responsible for conviction and conversion!

Spurgeon said of those who love God: “The love which they felt towards the Lord was not a quiet emotion which they hid within themselves in the secret chamber of their souls, and which they only spoke of in their private assemblies. ...it was a passion with them of such a vehement and all-consuming energy, that it was **visible in all their actions, spoke in their common talk, and looked out of their eyes even in their commonest glances."**

“All the world’s answers are right in this little book,” said Billy Graham, pointing to his pulpit Bible, “I’m giving what the Bible says and the Word of God has its own built-in power to penetrate the human heart.” 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20—“*For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? **20**Indeed, you are our glory and joy."* The Lord Jesus Christ is the author of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit is its interpreter!

TO INFLUENCE is to **affect**, to **alter** and to **sway**—used 6 times in Scripture:

•Affect God—Job 35:6 (Elihu to Job) “*If you sin, how does that **affect** him (God)? If your sins are many, what does that do to him (God)?*”

•Affect men—Job 35:8 (Elihu to Job) “*Your wickedness **affects** only a man like yourself, and your righteousness only the sons of men.*”

•Alter—Psalm 89:34 (Ethan the Ezrahite speaking for God) “*I will not violate my covenant or **alter** what my lips have uttered.*”

•Swayed—Jesus won’t be—Matthew 22:16 (Pharisees’ disciples and Herodians trying to trap Jesus) “*...we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You **aren’t swayed** by men, because you pay no attention to who they are.*” And Mark 12:14—“*You **aren’t swayed** by man, because you pay no attention to who they are.*”

•Swayed—John the Baptist won’t be—Luke 7:24 “*After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: ‘What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed **swayed** by the wind?’*”

•Swayed—weak-willed women are—2 Timothy 3:6 “*They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and **are swayed** by all kinds of evil desires.*”

Beth Moore on Paul’s conversion in Galatians 1:15 said, “The seed may take awhile to germinate, but the rabbi from Tarsus would never escape the witness of Stephen.” Stephen’s piety even in the face of death made an indelible impact on Saul who would become Paul. The influence of a wife unto salvation for her husband in 1 Peter 3:1-2 “*Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands **so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over** without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.*”

Max Lucado says that our universe is God’s preeminent missionary. “*The heavens declare the glory of God*” (Psalm 19:1). Look at a few of the amazing ways the heavens witness beginning in Psalm 96

v 11 —heavens rejoice
—earth be glad
—sea resound

v 12 —fields be jubilant
—trees of the forest sing for joy

Ps 97:1 —earth be glad
—distant shores rejoice

v 6 —heavens proclaim His righteousness

Ps 98:7 —sea resound (again)

v 8 —rivers clap their hands
—mountains sing together

Ps 99:1 —earth shake.

In 2 Kings 5 when Naaman is told by a messenger of Elisha to wash himself seven times in the Jordan River to be cleansed of his leprosy, he became angry—enraged. He wanted Elisha himself to stand in front of him and pronounce him clean. So many will remain uncleansed, unforgiven, sinners still, because they don't want to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, they want to be pronounced clean. ►Our witness to **Lost People**—Dr. Larry Lowes describes it this way:

“We don't get all we go after,
but we get some we went after
because we went after those we didn't get.”

Be available—an illustration from teaching high school girls days: “One day I saw a sad water faucet, so I asked it, “Water faucet, why are you so sad?” The faucet replied, “I've failed you today; I've not quenched your thirst, or washed your hands, or done anything for you today.

“Oh, you 'pour' water facet,” I said, “please understand that I don't want you to turn yourself on and make a mess. When I need you, I'll turn you on myself. I want you to be available to me. When I touch you, I want you to be ready to respond. If you'll be available and usable, I'll be pleased with you.” Psalm 18:28 “*You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.*”

Psalm 22:30 “*Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the LORD.*”

Psalm 119:130 “*The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*”

♥A Christian's purpose is said to be "to know Him and to make Him known."

—**Learn to see lost people as Jesus sees them**—Matthew 9:36 “*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*”

—**Be prepared—know how to share the gospel**—Many people say they would like to have opportunities to witness, but they don't have the slightest idea where they would begin if God did open a door. 1 Peter 3:15 “***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 Corinthians 9:22b “*To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.*”

—**Know how to help someone pray to receive Christ as Savior and Lord:** Dear Jesus, I know that I have sinned and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins (repent) and ask You to forgive me and to take over control of my life. I commit myself to You as Lord. For us to be light in darkness it's going to take some sacrifice like it did God when he sent his Son, Jesus, who said in Matthew 10:6—“*Go rather to the lost.*”