

Share Your Faith

Passages: Acts 20:28; Rev 5:9–10; Jn 3:5; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27; Jn 15:1–6; Jn 10:1–18; 1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:18–19

Memory Verse

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
1. The Bible teaches us how to share the faith, light, and truth of God. 2. The Bible teaches us what it means to share our faith through our good works.	1. God is light. 2. God is truth.	Allow God to transform us into His vessel by sharing our faith, sharing the truth, and doing good works.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Share Your Faith – Paul
- B. Share the Light – Jesus Christ
- C. Share the Truth – Philip
- D. Share Your Faith Through Good Works – Cornelius and Lydia

Life Application

God Can Transform Us into His Vessel

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God has commanded all of us to love not only God but also the people around us. The single greatest way to really share this love is by sharing the truth and the light of Christ through a transformed life.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

When we own something of great value, we tend to want to tell others about it. Do we feel just as compelled about spreading God's word? Jesus Christ clearly told us in Acts 1:8 that we are His witnesses. It is a mission of the true church, so we have the responsibility to share our faith. However, do we share our faith because Jesus Christ commissioned us to, or do we truly feel the grace that God has given us? Do we have a deep understanding of how important it is to share this grace with others? When we understand and treasure the grace that God has given us, we are more willing to share the same peace and joy that is obtained through the precious truth. Let's take a look at several people who treasured the grace God gave them and study how God used them to share their faith in different ways.

A. Share Your Faith – Paul

Saul was picked by God to spread the gospel to the Gentiles. But he didn't start out as a zealous worker for God. In fact, Saul was so famous for his persecution of Jesus' followers that Ananias worried about God's command to baptize him (Acts 9:13–14), and the members in Jerusalem "were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). But God chooses each person for specific reasons. Saul's qualities, for example, seemed to prevent him from ever becoming a follower of Christ. But God put these very same qualities to use for His purpose. Let's take a look at these seemingly conflicting qualities.

1. He was a fanatic

Before his conversion, Saul was determined to arrest Christians and persecute them in any way possible. He gave his approval when Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 8:1), and even asked the high priest for permission to imprison believers as he saw fit (Acts 9:1–2). Although Saul was incredibly zealous in his work, it was a severely misplaced zeal. The Lord Jesus was able to transform this fanaticism into an undeterred faith that lasted to the end of Paul's life. After his conversion, he preached tirelessly, making many missionary trips to spread the word of God.

2. He was persistent

Saul was quite persistent when it came to what he believed was the right thing to do (Acts 8:3). When we are stubborn, it is usually hard for us to submit to God's will. However, after Saul's conversion, he allowed the Lord Jesus to turn his hard-nosed personality into something very valuable: Paul became one of the most resilient missionaries. Despite death threats, shipwrecks, and imprisonment, he never gave up.

3. He was well educated

Saul was educated as a Pharisee under a highly respected teacher, making him a very knowledgeable person. Of course, his understanding of God was incorrect, and it seemed impossible for him to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior. But on the road to Damascus, his understanding was literally transformed by the Lord (Acts 9), and his education was put to excellent use for the Lord (Acts 9:22; 23:6–7). Today, many well-educated people often have a difficult time accepting God because belief is based on faith, not on what they logically know or can prove. But from Paul's example, we see that God can use even the most educated and logical personalities to share His message of love and salvation.

After Paul experienced God's transformation, he felt compelled to share his newfound faith at any cost. Even qualities that seemed to be in the way of God's work were transformed into useful gifts for the

Lord. Let's read what Paul wrote about his transformation:

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

(1 Timothy 1:12–15)

God can use some extreme personalities and unexpected people for His work! Despite Paul having proclaimed himself as the chief of all sinners, God turned his skills into mighty assets in preaching the gospel.

B. Share the Light – Jesus Christ

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” (John 8:12)

We all know why Jesus Christ was sent to serve. Unlike Paul who was later converted, the Lord Jesus came into this world with one mission in mind: to do the work that God sent Him to do. There were many people who were unhappy with those He associated Himself with. But Jesus Christ pointed out that healthy people do not need a doctor. It is the sick who are in need of healing, and His mission was to help the sick: those rejected or looked down upon by society, who had no hope. People who really needed Him. Let's take a look at some of the people He shared the light with:

- Tax collectors (Lk 19:1–10)
- Prostitutes (Lk 7:36–50)
- Lepers (Lk 5:12–16; 17:11–19)
- The physically handicapped (Mt 20:29–34; Mk 7:31–37; Lk 5:17–26)
- The demon-possessed (Mk 9:14–20; Lk 4:31–37; Lk 8:26–33)

All these people have one thing in common: they were rejected by society. But more importantly, they needed the hope and light of life. We know that this world is full of sin, the darkness that leads to death. But it is especially bleak for those who seem to have no hope. Jesus Christ understood that God's work meant shining the light of life for these people.

Many of us tend to make quick judgment calls as to who can or cannot be saved. We may believe that it is useless to preach to a strong Buddhist or to someone who is an alcoholic, for example. But Jesus Christ shows us that God's salvation transcends social norms and prejudices. Our job is not to judge, only to plant the seeds, because where the gospel ends up growing is up to God, not us.

C. Share the Truth – Philip

Although there are not many passages in the Bible that mention Philip, the few that do offer important lessons about how to share the truth. Let's read Acts 8:26–38.

1. He was sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit

“Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’” (Acts 8:29–30). We often believe that we need a certain personality in order to be able to preach the gospel. But we can learn from Philip that the determining factor is whether we are

sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit. We can ask God to help us keep our ears and eyes open for anyone who may need to hear the message of salvation, whether they are people we know or chance encounters in our lives.

2. He evangelized one-on-one

“And [the eunuch] said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:31). It is not always easy to preach to another person. There seem to be many barriers: language differences, lack of courage, or lack of biblical knowledge, for example. We also hesitate to preach to strangers or to people of other faiths, or are too busy with work and family. But one-on-one evangelism is the most effective way to bring someone to the Lord. Because Philip spoke face-to-face with the eunuch, he was able to directly answer his questions concerning the passage in Isaiah. And it was those answers that moved the eunuch to request baptism. Spending time with someone personally gives us the opportunity to share testimonies and make Jesus Christ real, more than a distant message preached on the pulpit.

3. He preached without prejudice

Before meeting the eunuch, Philip had successfully taken the gospel to the Samaritans, a people whom the Jews normally hated and disdained (Jn 4:9; Acts 8:5–8). And when Philip saw that the Holy Spirit had moved him to preach to an Ethiopian of high status, he did not hesitate (Acts 8:27). Today, we often convince ourselves that certain people can’t be preached to for various reasons. And once we have made that determination, we don’t bother preaching to them. But we really do not know who is hungering for God’s salvation, so we should not hold on to personal prejudices about the people around us. God is the one who determines when any one person can be converted, no matter who this person may be.

D. Share Your Faith Through Good Works – Cornelius and Lydia

A genuine Christian is someone who shares their faith through their good works. After we are baptized, we should practice doing “good works” (Tit 3:1), share with others (Eph 4:28), and meet “urgent needs” (Tit 3:14). Paul wrote in Galatians 6:10 that when “we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Let’s look at two examples in the Bible of those who shared their faith through their good works.

1. Cornelius

Cornelius was a centurion stationed in Caesarea, the capital of Rome. He was the captain of around 80–100 soldiers, and had the huge responsibility of enforcing the law. Yet the Bible tells us that he was a God-fearing man who always prayed. He was full of good works and gave alms generously (Acts 10:1–8). By giving alms, he was being generous towards the poor, showing his impartiality or lack of prejudice. His household also joined him by praying and seeking God. His acts of service, devotion, and fervent prayers became “a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4). God saw his genuine love and the longing of his heart, and as a result, saved Cornelius and his household. So we can see that Cornelius’ faith showed in the following good works:

- He was a worshipper of God, and a devout man before the Lord saved him and his household.
- He gave alms generously to the people.
- He prayed to God always.

2. Lydia

Lydia came from Thyatira, a rich town known for its trade and purple dye (Acts 16:11–15). She was a seller of purple cloth in Philippi, and she attended prayer meetings in the city. She had not been saved yet when she met Paul and Silas, but she listened to the gospel and her mind and heart were opened. She immediately entrusted her life to God and was baptized, along with her family, making Lydia and her family the first European converts to accept Jesus Christ. She even provided a place for Paul to have a temporary home (Acts 16:15). So, in summary, we can see her faith in these good works:

- She was a devout worshipper before the Lord saved her and her household.
- She honored the Sabbath by worshipping with a group of other women.
- She opened her heart to accept the gospel as it was preached by Paul.
- She showed hospitality by insisting that Paul and Silas come to stay at her home.

Both Cornelius and Lydia accepted God’s sovereignty and salvation. But they also showed their faith through their good works, both before baptism and after receiving Christ into their lives. Both had a heart that was open to the gospel, and showed their faith through their works! Do you know that we are also God's partners in the ministry, just like Cornelius and Lydia? When we help those in need, we become more like Christ. Jesus Christ was a sacrificial giver because He gave His very life for us! His life on earth teaches us that the most Christlike thing we can do is to show our faith through good works.

Proverbs 11:25 teaches us: “The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” Luke 6:38 also teaches us, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” One of the ways we can show our faith is through our good works. As Cornelius and Lydia demonstrated, God blesses those who are generous with others. Both the giver and receiver are able to receive God's precious salvation.

Check for Understanding

1. **What were Paul’s three qualities that at first glance seemed to prevent him from being qualified to serve God, but were ultimately used by God for His purpose?** He was a fanatic; he was persistent; and he was well educated.
2. **Name a few types of people whom Jesus reached out to, whom society rejected or looked down upon.** Tax collectors; prostitutes; lepers; the physically handicapped; the demon-possessed.
3. **What three things can we learn from Philip’s evangelism?** He was sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; he evangelized one-on-one; he preached without prejudice.
4. **What kind of good works did Cornelius do that became “a memorial before God”?** His constant prayers, his pursuit of God, and his generous alms for the people.
5. **In what ways did Lydia share her faith through her good deeds?** She was a devout worshipper who honored the Sabbath; she opened her heart to accept the gospel; and she showed great hospitality towards Paul and Silas.

Life Application

God Can Transform Us into His Vessel

Sometimes, it’s hard for us to imagine what kind of work we can do for God. Maybe we think we are too immature or have too many “bad” qualities for God to even bother using us. But from this lesson, we learned that God uses all sorts of people in interesting and unexpected ways. God can transform us into

a usable vessel, just as He changed Saul into one of the most successful missionaries.

For example, God can turn our addictions into a thirst for God's truth or transform our materialism into a passionate love for lost people. Whatever the case, only God can make it happen. But we also need to believe in His transformative powers. If we convince ourselves that there is no way God could ever change or use us, we aren't letting God in to do His work. During Saul's conversion, he became obedient and did not resist the Lord Jesus. Similarly, we must also be "transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Rom 12:2). Think about the following questions.

1. Do you have a "bad" quality that is hindering or preventing you from fully participating in God's work? For example, you may get angry easily or are too involved with school to put God first. How can you let God transform this "bad" quality into something useful?
2. Do you have a sense that God wants to change you more deeply than you've allowed Him to? Share your thoughts. If you feel that God wants to use you, but you aren't sure how to accept His will or to submit to it, what's the next step you should take?
3. Do you feel like there is something you need to sacrifice in order to be able to work for God?
4. What do you think sharing the gospel involves, and how can you ensure that you keep getting closer to that level of evangelism?

Testimony—Sharing My Faith in a Whole New Way

Do the people around you see that you are a follower of the Lord Jesus? There have been many testimonies where the parents or family members of new believers object to their attendance at church. But because of the believers' transformation and unwavering faith that is demonstrated through their love, the objections slowly subside. Let's read the following testimony together.

I was baptized when I was 16 years old. It seems so long ago but the memory still remains. My parents are worshippers of ancestors, to a small degree. However, when I was introduced to the True Jesus Church, the work of God was working so mightily within me that I wanted to get baptized and be a Christian. The day I got baptized is one I will never forget. The weather was so cold, and the water was freezing, but because of the love of God, that didn't stop me. I wanted to be fully cleansed from my past sins and be called a child of God. My parents were so busy working that they didn't attend my baptism. They didn't oppose my decision to become baptized, so I thought they approved of my choice to be a Christian.

After I got baptized, persecution came. My parents stopped me from going to church and wanted me to refrain from church worship. But the more they opposed, the more I wanted to attend church services. Therefore, secretly, I went with other church sisters. Thankfully, God gave me the precious Holy Spirit one week after my baptism, so I didn't feel so alone and without power. On a few occasions, I was late coming home after the church service, and my parents shut the door and forbade me from entering the house. Not only was I left outside in the cold for about one hour or so, (I got baptized in October), my parents would start saying very nasty words about going to church. Many times, I was hit and abused with whatever objects my parents could pick up around the house because of my religious convictions.

One time, I had received so many wounds all over my body, I was crying inside my room. My parents had already left the room and gone to sleep. But I was still weeping, not knowing why I was treated in this manner. I opened up the Bible and strangely enough, I turned to 1 Peter 4:12-13 and started to read a passage. It said, "Dear children, do not feel astonished about the trial that you are going

through as if something strange is happening to you. But rejoice, knowing that your suffering is a glorification to God.” Right then and there, I felt like my heavenly Father was speaking and comforting my wounded soul. I told myself that I needed to be strong in order to preach the good news to my parents.

The persecution went on for about three years. Every week, I was either hit or scolded. My parents even threatened to disown me. Some days, I would go to school looking like a cat who had been in an all-night brawl. Sometimes I would be dressed in long sleeves and long pants and my schoolmates would wonder why I was wearing my winter clothes even when the weather was so hot. I will never forget those days. But even with the ongoing persecution, thank God that He gave me the Holy Spirit to strengthen me. I knew I had to do something so that my parents could see the love of God. I prayed and asked God to give me His love—the unconditional love that I needed to show to my parents.

Week after week, I received more revelation from God through prayers. The message was always delivered loud and clear—more of God, less of me. How could I show more of God and less of me? I concluded that God wanted me to show my obedience and love to my parents by caring for them, listening to their problems and needs, helping them out in the shop (they had their own business), and studying more diligently at school. This was the best way to demonstrate to them why I felt so strongly about going to church: the love of Christ, manifested in me.

It was not easy, but I felt that with the help of God, the tasks didn’t seem so burdensome and hard to carry out. God said explicitly that we need to show love and our good deeds in front of everyone. We should be the light of this world. After all, no one hides his lighted lamp under a table. We need to shine like stars in the universe. Even though there were some weeks I couldn’t go to church, I knew it was only temporary. Even though I missed a lot of good sermons, I knew God was going to move my parents’ hearts and allow me to go to church again in the future.

Sure enough, God’s grace is abundant. Three years went by very quickly. My parents no longer persecuted my faith. They saw something within me that even I couldn’t explain in words—the love of God. I wanted God to transform me when I began my new faith even though the persecution was taking place. And He did! He transformed me into someone who has a lot more patience, a lot more love, and a lot more obedience. And the strange thing is that my parents saw me in a new light—a Christian, a child of God. I truly praise God for helping me and enabling me to show God’s love to my parents. May all glory be unto His name!

– P. Wong, Toronto Church

Note: The writer’s parents received the amazing grace of God through water baptism nine years after. They are in the fold and enjoy God’s grace and blessings every day!

Discussion

1. Even though this sister was severely persecuted, how was she able to maintain her faith?
2. What kind of a transformation did you see in this sister’s life?

Memory Verse

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

Meaning

Jesus calls Himself the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12) and the “light [that] shines in the darkness” (Jn 1:4–5). Like Him, we are the light of the world, and we must not hide that light under anything. But how can we let people see this light? Through our good works. The light of Jesus shines through us when our actions and our works reflect His divine nature. The phrase “good works” also refers to our deeds, actions, and attitude. When people see our “good works,” they see Jesus, and as a result, they give glory to our Father in heaven.

Conclusion

We know how much God loves us when we remember how He sent His Son to die for us on the cross. God has commanded all of us to love not only God but also the people around us. The single greatest way to really share this love is by sharing the truth and the light of Christ through a transformed life. We can show others kindness, patience, gentleness, and self-control in all that we do. May God give us the wisdom and strength to carry out His will and share our faith through our good deeds.

Lesson 12 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How do we let our light shine before men?
The light of Jesus shines through us when our actions and our works reflect His divine nature.
2. What qualities did Paul have that the Lord transformed for His purpose?
He was a fanatic; he was persistent; he was well educated.
3. "I say to you that likewise there will be more _____ in heaven over one _____ who _____ than over ninety-nine _____ persons who need no _____." (Luke 15:7)
joy, sinner, repents, just, repentance
4. What is the importance of evangelizing one-on-one?
Personally spending time with someone gives us the opportunity to answer questions directly, testify, and make Jesus Christ real, more than a distant message preached on the pulpit.
5. Consider how we can share our faith through our good works. Describe a time when you deliberately chose to perform a good deed and showed your faith as a result.
Personal answers.
6. What do you think you need to sacrifice or change to be able to share your faith better?
Personal answers.