

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2020: *Making Friends for God: The Joy of Sharing in His Mission*
Lesson 11 “Sharing the Story of Jesus”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 2:1–10; 1 John 4:7–11; Mark 5:1–20; Hebrews 10:19–22; Galatians 2:20;
1 Corinthians 1:30.

Memory Text

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus: The Basis of Our Testimony
- III. The Transformative Power of Personal Testimony
- IV. Telling the Story of Jesus
- V. Testifying With Assurance
- VI. Something Worth Testifying About
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. What was the decisive factor in your decision for Christ? What tipped the scales in your particular case for God? How normative is your personal experience for others?
2. “Nothing argues more eloquently for the power of the gospel than a changed life. [...] Truth presented in the context of a changed life makes all the difference. When Christ is the center of every doctrine, and each biblical teaching reflects His character, those we are sharing the Scriptures with are much more likely to accept His word.” (Sabbath afternoon)
3. What if someone tells you: “Ok, that’s how it happened for you, but that isn’t how it is for me. Why should your experience dictate how I follow Jesus?” How would you respond in an individualistic and pluralistic society?

4. Sunday's lesson teaches us that our personal testimony needs to be about how Jesus changed our lives (Ephesians 2:1-10). Monday's lesson uses the sons of Zebedee as examples of that.
5. Tuesday's lesson illustrates the power of personal testimony on one (Mark 5:1-17) or two (Matthew 8:28-34) demoniacs and the impact their testimony had on their immediate environment. (N.B. Why are Matthew & Mark telling these stories?)
6. Wednesday's lesson emphasizes the importance of personal assurance of salvation as a prerequisite for successful personal testimony. Thursday's lesson encourages us to focus on what Christ did for us rather than what we felt we had to give up to follow him.
7. "If we do not have the personal assurance of salvation in Jesus, it is not possible to share it with someone else. We cannot share what we do not have ourselves." (Wednesday's lesson) Do you agree with this statement?
8. What percentage of members would you estimate have the assurance of salvation? If a significant number of our people believe that their salvation is somehow connected with the level of sanctification they are able to achieve before the close of probation, can their witnessing efforts be received as offering something of value? In what ways can we encourage and support our members so that their witness to others is authentic and effective?
9. Why is the "story" of Jesus significant in Christianity? How is it different from the story of Buddha or Mohammed? Why is Jesus the best revelation of God? Who was he, what did he do and why does it matter?
10. Is the ultimate reality friendly or antagonistic towards us? Earthquakes, floods, epidemics, catastrophes take a high toll on human lives. Wherever we go—to a desert, to the North or South Pole, to cosmic space—our existence is in real danger due to the damaged environment in which we live.
11. It is easy to conclude that nobody cares, that this universe is not a friendly place, and that ultimate reality is antagonistic or not positively inclined towards us. Yet Christianity maintains that there is a God, who is a God of love, a good God, who is like a gentle Father to us. How do we know? Based on observation alone, it can be hard to believe.
12. How can we see the larger, radical and urgent picture of Jesus that the Bible writers present? And how can we participate today in bringing God's healing rule to bear on our world?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Unthinking, mechanical worship is an utter insult to our intelligent, gracious God. And it doesn't do us any good; it destroys us, to simply do these things because we're supposed to. And if we Adventists, when we're asked why we do something or don't do it, and all we can say is, "Well, because God said so, and I believe it, and that's all there is to it," that's something learned by rote. Or worse, if "it's a requirement of the church, and if the church says so, I do it, and that's all there is to it." That doesn't do any good, and it's not much of a testimony, is it? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Isaiah, recorded 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I've spent some forty years concentrating on that subject, trying to equip myself to use all the tools for determining whether the Bible can be trusted and whether we can confidently understand the meaning. But all I can say is I am absolutely convinced. But don't believe it because I say so. God wouldn't do that! I can only bear my testimony. I believe that God can indeed be trusted. I don't mean in some general way. I mean he can be trusted specifically in those areas where he has been accused. He can be trusted never to be arbitrary, or vengeful, or exacting, or unforgiving, or severe. But he doesn't expect us to come to that conclusion without evidence. Even his existence, his character, the truthfulness of his word, are all established by a great amount of evidence. And it is evidence that appeals to our reason. Now this is God's way of restoring trust, and a God like that surely can be trusted! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way of Restoring Trust" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

The ultimate issue is about God. Can our God be trusted? Is he arbitrary, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe? Has that been answered? Do we find the evidence a sufficient basis for our trust? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, #16, recorded December 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/23MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus. . . . In Him there is inexhaustible fullness. . . . {AG 235.5}

God has given us every facility, every grace. He has provided the riches of heaven's treasure, and it is our privilege to draw continually from this capital. {AG 235.6}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

God sent His Son into our world to break the power of Satan, and to emancipate the will of man. He sent Him to proclaim liberty to the captives, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free. {OHC 104.3}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. {Mar 77.4}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. {TMK 338.4}

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life.

The very expression of the countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. Those who are truly Christians are bound with the chain of love which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God. {1SM 337.2}

Transformation of character is the testimony to the world of an indwelling Christ. The Spirit of God produces a new life in the soul, bringing the thoughts and desires into obedience to the will of Christ; and the inward man is renewed in the image of God. Weak and erring men and women show to the world that the redeeming power of grace can cause the faulty character to develop into symmetry and abundant fruitfulness. {PK 233.2}

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12. This power is not in the human agent. It is the power of God. When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ. {COL 314.5}