



LIVING  
*and* TELLING

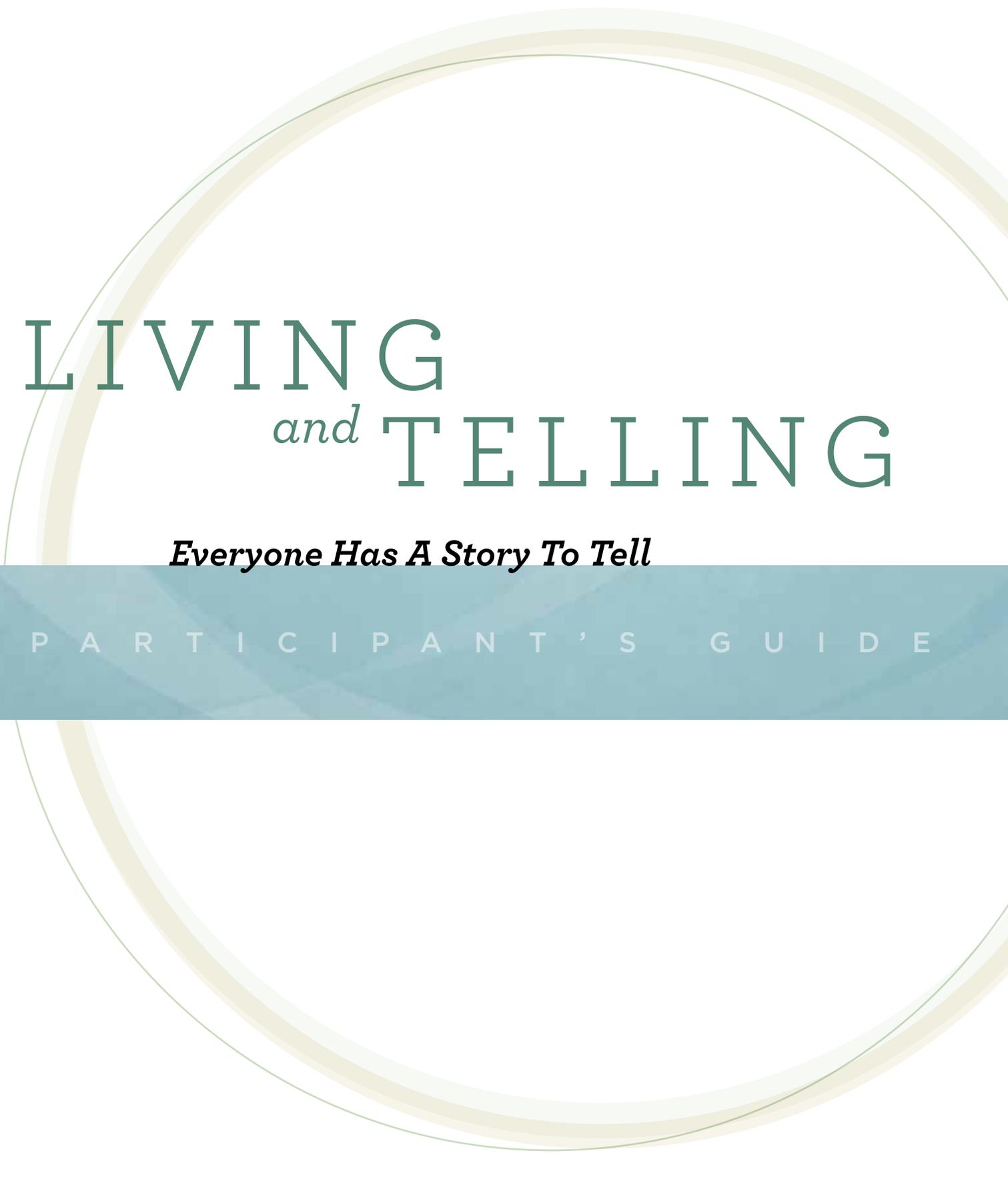


# LIVING *and* TELLING

***Everyone Has A Story To Tell***

P A R T I C I P A N T ' S G U I D E





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ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND GREAT THANKS GO TO DAN ALLENDER, AUTHOR OF TO BE TOLD: KNOW YOUR STORY, SHAPE YOUR FUTURE, WHOSE MATERIAL GREATLY INFLUENCED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIVING AND TELLING CURRICULUM. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR HIS PERMISSION TO UTILIZE THE CONCEPTS IN HIS BOOK TO TEACH OTHERS HOW TO SHARE THEIR STORIES.

# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to Living and Telling! It is our great privilege to help you share your faith in Jesus Christ with others – even with family and friends. I have met so many people through the years who would love to do that – but don't think they can!

Well I have good news for you. You can! And it is so much simpler and easier than you think.

You see, you have a story to tell. Did you know that? From the moment you took your first breath, your story on this earth began. Ever since that moment, your life has unfolded as a series of stories that, taken as a whole, describe who you are.

When you entered into relationship with Jesus Christ, you got caught up in the great story God has been writing throughout time. You have a part to play in it. Your part, as Jesus commands in His Great Commission, includes introducing others to God's great story and inviting them to be a part of it.

Stories have been important to every generation, but they are particularly treasured now. Whereas earlier generations thrived more on facts and figures and the use of reason, today's generation has come to value more the different perspectives and experiences each person brings to this world.

So how can you be most useful to God in spreading His story?

The first step is to learn to live the Christian life with God's power, not just in human strength. As you do that, you will be experiencing stories people will want to hear about.

The second step is to learn how to share about those experiences -- life to life. As we experience God, we develop stories to tell – some where we succeeded – others where we are still learning. And the people you encounter will be very interested in hearing what has worked for you – even if it involves a relationship with God. Eventually, they will think, "That's what I want."

The third thing to learn is what to say then. We will show you a very simple and effective way to share the gospel and to guide people toward a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

You may say, "I don't even know where to begin." That's okay. We'll take you through each step. And along the way, as you're learning to tell about what Christ has done for you, we'll help you think about how to connect that with the needs of others.

You'll also begin to plan specifically to share with people in your daily life. And you'll be equipped to overcome the normal barriers Christians face.

Does all this seem out of reach for you? It shouldn't. It was Jesus who said that the Holy Spirit would give us power to witness for Him. It was also Jesus who told stories to illustrate spiritual truth. Really, you could not be in better company as you embark on this journey.

Pray that God will use our time together to help shine the light of Jesus Christ to all around you.



# 1 The Power of Story

## ICEBREAKER

Write a paragraph revealing something about yourself personally. Use at least five of the words from this list in your paragraph. Share your paragraph with your group.

success	love	insecure	mother	forgiveness	childhood	dream
significance	belong	pleasure	awards	betrayal	peace	purpose
abandoned	fun	hurt	father	alcohol	ideal	self-worth

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## GOALS

*After Session One You Will:*

- **UNDERSTAND** why connecting to others through stories—God’s story, their story, and your story—is one of the most effective ways in relating your faith and relationship with God to others.
- **DISCOVER** your life motivational themes are and how they’ve guided you and others in your relationship with God.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF STORIES

1. Stories are found throughout \_\_\_\_\_.

2. God is writing \_\_\_\_\_ with you each step of your life.

He knew you before you were born. (Jeremiah 1:5)

He created you wonderfully. (Psalm 139:14)

He has wonderful plans for your life. (Jeremiah 29:11)

He has good works for you to accomplish. (Ephesians 2:10)

He is with you every step of your journey. (Matthew 28:20)

3. Your story is unique and special because you were created in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 1:27).

That means you \_\_\_\_\_ God uniquely.

4. Your personal story has shaped your life and your relationships:

How you experience \_\_\_\_\_.

How you relate to \_\_\_\_\_.

Bottom line, stories enable us to \_\_\_\_\_ well with others.

5. We are called to enter into the stories of others.

We can help others learn from their own stories.

We can teach others about the great story of God.

Entering the stories of others is our vital mission. (Matthew 28:18-20)

When you enter the story of others, you are on sacred ground. Walk carefully and listen well. It is important to not judge but reflect their story back to them so they know you are truly listening.

### MOTIVATIONAL THEMES

And that's possible because of our own stories. Stories enable us to connect with others because most life stories fit within one or more of the **following five Motivational Themes**.

**THEME 1:** Peace / Satisfaction / Freedom from Anxiety

**THEME 2:** Success / Significance / Ultimate Purpose in Life

**THEME 3:** Love / Belonging / Acceptance

**THEME 4:** Forgiveness / Sense of Worth / Freedom from Insecurity

**THEME 5:** Happiness / Pleasure / Enjoyment

### REFLECT AND DISCUSS

1. Which one or two of the five motivational themes 'jumps out at you' immediately?

2. What is one word that describes your "attitude" growing up?

*Stories make up more than 70 percent of the Bible, and it is in the stories of our lives that we can spot God's handiwork.*

*-Dan Allendar*

3. What is a moment or event in your story that has particularly shaped who you are today?

4. You are uniquely and wonderfully made. That means you have a story to share. What is at least one way your story reveals God?

5. Even though the content on the five Motivational Themes may be very new to you, what do you at least suspect might be the strongest motivational theme in your story? Even if it's a guess, select one. How does this Basic Motivation express itself in your life?

6. Is there a person in your life, past or present, whose story revealed God to you?

### LISTENING TO OTHERS' STORIES

The challenge presented in Living & Telling is to enter into the stories of others and connect them with our stories and ultimately connect them to God's story. It's a lot simpler than it might sound after one session. You're going to learn how to do that step by step each week of this course. But that comes later. The important thing this week is for you to really begin entering the stories of others. You will do this by listening to the stories of others and noticing what seems to be of concern to them at this time.

### FIVE IN FOCUS

- Write down the names of five of your friends or acquaintances who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Next to each name, make a first attempt at identifying a recurrent motivational theme in his/her life. You might have to guess, which is perfectly acceptable at this time.
- Before you meet with your group again, commit to praying for each person daily.
- We find that our sovereign God often orchestrates our lives so that we intersect with people on our prayer list in ways that allow us to ask questions about their stories. These are chances to start identifying potential motivational themes in their lives. Pray for such divine appointments with the people on your Five in Focus list.

## SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OUR ACQUAINTANCES

NAME

MOTIVATIONAL THEME (YOUR BEST GUESS)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### /// CLOSING CHALLENGE

In the next week:

- Pray for all five people on your Five In Focus list.
- Make time to talk with at least one of them—and listen to them closely.
- Pay attention to your theme and look for the theme in others.

*My story is important not because it is mine, God knows, but because if I tell it anything like right, the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is also yours ... It is precisely through these stories in all their particularity, as I have believed and often said, that God makes himself known to each of us most powerfully and personally. If this is true, it means that to lose track of our stories is to be profoundly impoverished not only humanly but also spiritually.*

-Frederick Buechner, *Telling Secrets*

# 2 Your Spiritual Story

## ICEBREAKER

- Were you able to discern which of the basic life motivations themes currently seemed strongest in one of your FIVE IN FOCUS friends?
- Did this enhance the way you prayed for the person?

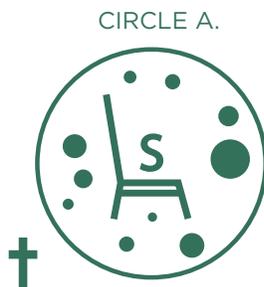
## GOALS

After Session Two You Will:

- **LEARN** how this “source” can motivate, help and encourage you as you seek to relate your story and your faith with others who are not yet believers.
- **HAVE** assurance that God delights in you and has forgiven you of all your sins.

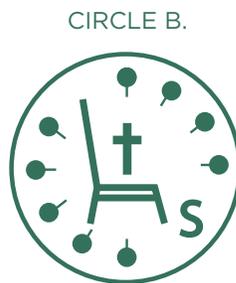
## A SHIFT IN STORYLINE

These three circle diagrams depict three different lives. The array of various dots represent all interests, activities, troubles, worries and plans of the lives depicted by the circles. Everybody on planet Earth can be described by one of these three circle diagrams. Locate yourself. Which one best describes your life at this moment?



### Self-Directed Life

- S** - Self is on the throne
- t** - Christ is outside the life
- - Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration



### Christ-Directed Life

- t** - Christ is in the life and on the throne
- S** - Self is yielding to Christ
- - Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan



### Self-Directed Christian Life

- S** - Self is on the throne
- t** - Christ dethroned and not allowed to direct the life
- - Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

Reflect and discuss this question with your neighbor:

*Which of the other two circles would be best prepared for “telling” the gospel to the person described by Figure A...and why?*

### ENGAGE

1. We used to be the hero of our own stories (CIRCLE A), but when we come to faith, the hero becomes someone else, the Lord Jesus! Our life begins to show more fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-discipline). Jesus Christ is on the throne, ruling, directing and empowering the life! Peace (from the Prince of Peace) that passes all comprehension reigns! (CIRCLE B)
2. We’ve all known and/or noticed church people who wear the Christian label but are often grouchy, negative, complaining, bitter, gossiping, bending the truth, etc. Are they truly Christians? If a Christian does not display the qualities of a Spirit-filled, Christ-centered Christian life, then there must be another category of Christian besides the Christ-centered one!
3. Yes, there definitely is another type of Christian—the self-centered and directionless Christian—because we do not always live fully surrendered lives. In this case, self is on the throne again, and discord, frustration, and chaos reign again too. (CIRCLE C)

### ENGAGE

In what ways did you find yourself returning to the old storyline of your life after you came to faith in Jesus? When we harbor unconfessed sin, our lives begin to look like circle three (CIRCLE C), and God’s victory, joy, and peace drain from our lives. We know there is a better way—we’ve tasted it! But we seem stuck back on the throne of our lives, like that defeated third circle. Is there a way back to a close walk with Jesus?

## “THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT DIFFICULT...IT’S IMPOSSIBLE!”

II Corinthians 6:14

Isaiah 59:2

## /// SPIRITUAL BREATHING (ANALOGY TO PHYSICAL BREATHING: EXHALE AND INHALE)

### EXHALE = Confession (Biblical confession has three ingredients)

- A. Agree with God about the \_\_\_\_\_ in my life (be specific)
- B. Agree with God about His \_\_\_\_\_ for forgiveness and cleansing (God’s promise of 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”) This is a promise of unimaginable dimension. It means that in the eyes of God we are totally clean and forgiven that very moment in time we confess.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_. (Biblical repentance is a “turn-around”, from going my way to going God’s way.)

## ENGAGE

### CREATE A LIST

On a separate sheet of paper, make a list of all the sins (words, deeds, attitudes, or thoughts) that, at the present moment, hinder your fellowship with God.

This is a personal activity. You will not be asked to share this information with anyone.

Now write **1 John 1:9** across that list and then destroy it, thus claiming God's promised forgiveness and cleansing from sin. You are now declared **clean** and **forgiven** in God's eyes, and your fellowship with God flows unhindered!

### INHALE = Appropriation (Taking possession of...claiming a promise of God for myself according to two biblical promises)

According to:

A. A COMMAND: Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Holy Spirit.*

This verse is about influence i.e. "I want you to be totally influenced by my Holy Spirit. Like a drunk man is influenced by alcohol...your walk, your talk and your thought life".

B. A PROMISE: 1 John 5:14, 15 *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have (present possession) what we asked of Him.*

C. THANKSGIVING: Give thanks to God for His love, forgiveness and fellowship.

## ENGAGE

### /// MY SPIRITUAL STORY

#### REFLECT AND WRITE

Spiritual Breathing is a simple concept. But there's a lot to think about in light of our own stories. Look at the following two questions, and select one of them to serve as a thought-starter for you. Then write some personal reflections about your spiritual adventure, from the time you first understood your need for God (including a description of how you asked him to take up his rightful place in your heart) to your current walk with him. Include a few of the lessons you've learned along the way.

1. How much time do you think should pass between Spiritual Breaths? How will you use the principle of Spiritual Breathing to help others experience the joy of intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus?
2. If you should become aware that you have been living in the third circle (self-directed Christian) how do you regain the experience of the 2nd circle?

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# 3

# Experiencing God's Story

*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.*

—John 3:16-17

## GOD'S STORY

In this Living & Telling course, we've been talking about entering into other peoples' stories. In the first session, you were challenged to listen closely to their stories in order to better understand what motivates them. Last session, the focus was on your spiritual story. This session focuses on the story of how God redeems people.

## ICEBREAKER

- Did you practice Spiritual Breathing this past week?
- How did the discipline of confession show up in your life this past week?
- How did you experience renewed fellowship with God after confession?

## GOALS

*After Session Three You Will:*

- **BECOME** more comfortable and confident in sharing God's story at the appropriate time
- **THINK** through your story of how God's story impacted your life so you can share it with others.

But before we walk through God's story with them, it should be noted that this may not happen best until we first relate our story of salvation to the basic life motivation that is strongest in them.

We need to remember that the Holy Spirit goes with us and before us.

## ENGAGE

(Allow 10 minutes for this exercise.)

As you think about the people on your FIVE IN FOCUS list, write a few thoughts of what you have observed or questions you can use to discover their motivational theme and needs.

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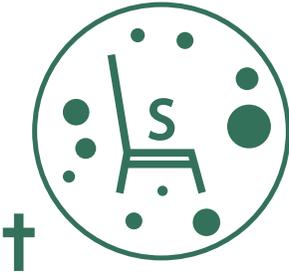
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Then share with each other how you would finish this sentence...

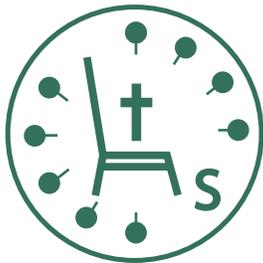
*I have watched my friend attempt to meet the basic needs and motivations of his/her life by \_\_\_\_\_."*

**THESE TWO CIRCLES REPRESENT TWO KINDS OF LIVES:**

Which circle best represents your life?



**Self-Directed Life**  
**S** - Self is on the throne  
**t** - Christ is outside the life  
 • - Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration



**Christ-Directed Life**  
**t** - Christ is in the life and on the throne  
**S** - Self is yielding to Christ  
 • - Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

**THE FOLLOWING EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST:**

*You Can Receive Christ Right Now By Faith Through Prayer  
 (Prayer is talking with God)*

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

*"Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

**HOW TO KNOW THAT CHRIST IS IN YOUR LIFE**

Did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said that He would come into your life and be your friend so you can know Him personally. Would He mislead you? On what authority do you know that God has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word.)

## THE BIBLE PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE TO ALL WHO RECEIVE CHRIST

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13). Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life, from the very moment you invite Him in. He will not deceive you.

### ENGAGE

(Take 10 minutes to practice ‘closing the deal’ with a partner.)

### FOUR KEY QUESTIONS

1. What was my attitude before I took Jesus Christ seriously?
2. Why did I say “yes” to Jesus Christ?
3. How did I say “yes” to Jesus Christ?
4. What difference does Christ make in my day-to-day life?

### CREATING SOUND-BYTES

1. We often don’t have time to tell our whole story.
2. We need to be prepared to relate short, interesting pieces of our stories when given the opportunity.
  - They should be specific.
  - They should be honest.
  - They should be free of jargon.

### ENGAGE

1. What was my attitude before I took Jesus Christ seriously? Does my answer help others identify with me? Is my motivational theme evident?
2. Why did I say “yes” to Jesus Christ? Does my answer indicate an intentional process of decision? Is it evident how that decision connects to my motivational theme?
3. How did I say “yes” to Jesus Christ? Would someone else know how to say “yes” from this description?
4. What difference does Christ make in my day-to-day life? Is the difference clearly because of God’s work and not my own? Have I connected the changes in my life to my motivational theme? Have I avoided making the Christian life sound perfect and trouble-free?

Take 20 minutes to think about your responses to the four questions. Write some words or phrases to the four questions, then share and evaluate them with one another in your group.

**THIS IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE WORKING ON YOUR LISTENING SKILLS. MAKE SURE YOU ARE NOT THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO SAY OR JUST SAID WHEN THE OTHER PERSON IS SHARING.**

## **/// CLOSING CHALLENGE**

### **FIVE IN FOCUS**

In session 1, you chose five people for your Five in Focus card. You also made a decision to begin listening to their stories more actively. This week, seek out one other person and read aloud—or share from memory—your sound-byte answers to the four key questions. Don't worry about having a polished or professional presentation. Just share from your heart. This will give you a sense of what parts of your story you need to think through more clearly and share God's story if appropriate.

“Indeed, each reference to the filling of the Spirit in Acts is to do with witness: in 2:4 the believers “filled with the Holy Spirit” declared “the wonders of God” [v.11] in the language of “every nation under heaven” [v.5]; in 4:8 Peter “filled with the Holy Spirit” preaches to the Sanhedrin, and in 4:31 “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly; “ in 6:8 Stephen (as one of those “full of the Spirit” in 6:3 and 5) goes on to witness through preaching[7:2-53] and , subsequently, “full of the Spirit” [7:55], witnesses through his death [7:54-60] - note that martyr in Greek means witness; in 9:17 Saul is “filled with the Holy Spirit” in preparation for his ministry; in 11:24 Barnabas is “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and witnesses to Elymas [13:10-12]; and in 13:52 Paul and Barnabas are “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” in response to the persecution which their witness provokes in the first place.”

**SUCCESS IN WITNESSEING IS SIMPLY SHARING CHRIST IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND LEAVING THE RESULTS WITH GOD.**

### **JOHN 3:16 ASSURANCE**

If you ever struggle with the assurance of your salvation, this simple activity will encourage you. Perhaps the most famous Bible verse in modern culture is John 3:16. You might have it memorized. If not, look it up, and write it out on a note card. But in place of the word “world” write your name; when you come to the word “whoever” (or whosoever), again write your name. Offer a prayer of thanks to God that this verse applies not only to the whole world—but to you.

# 4 Your Unspoken Story

## ICEBREAKER

In session 2 you were asked to begin the practice of Spiritual Breathing on a daily basis. Share your answers to the following questions with your group:

- To what extent was Spiritual Breathing a challenge for you to incorporate as a part of your everyday life?
- How might Spiritual Breathing affect your relationships at home and at work in a new and fresh way?
- To what extent has Spiritual Breathing become an automatic response to your awareness of sin in your life? If this spiritual discipline has not fully landed in your “good habit” system, ask God for his help with this vital discipline.

## GOALS

*After Session Four You Will:*

- **SENSE** the joy and fulfillment of a consistent daily walk with God.
- **LEARN** two key spiritual principles which will invigorate and energize fellowship and growth in the Christian life.

## TWO KEY SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

### A. The first key spiritual principle: Cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Living a Life of \_\_\_\_\_. (Hebrews 11:1)

1. The Apostle Paul had a \_\_\_\_\_. Philippians 4:12
2. Paul's secret was obviously the \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Giving thanks in all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18) is an acknowledgement of God's \_\_\_\_\_. It is also an act of \_\_\_\_\_. (Philippians 4:6-7)
4. Faith is \_\_\_\_\_ to God (Hebrews 11:6).
5. God's response to faith is to deliver the \_\_\_\_\_ of God which will \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

## THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

One bit of evidence that you have yielded control to the Holy Spirit is the degree to which gratitude is part of our attitude.

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 5:15-20

## ENGAGE

“There is no circumstance, no trouble, no testing, that can ever touch me until, first of all, it has gone past God and past Christ, right through to me. If it has come that far, it has come with a great purpose, which I may not understand at the moment.”

—Alan Redpath

**The famous Bible Teacher of the 19th century, Matthew Henry, responded to the traumatic experience of being robbed by writing the following:**

“I am so very thankful. First, because I was never robbed before...second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life...third, because although they took everything I had, it wasn’t very much...fourth, because it was I who was robbed and not I who robbed.”

## ENGAGE

### **B. The Second Key Spiritual Principle: Be Prepared for Spiritual Battle.**

*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. 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. 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. 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.*

—Epesians 6:10-17

How do we ‘put on’ this whole armor of God? View and insert the missing word(s).

Belt of truth. Who is truth? \_\_\_\_\_ said “I am the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)

Breastplate of righteousness. Who is righteous? “\_\_\_\_\_ Christ, the righteous one”. (1 John 2:1b)

“Feet fitted with the gospel of peace.” And He (\_\_\_\_\_) will be called, prince of peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Shield of faith. Faith in whom? “Righteousness from God comes through faith in \_\_\_\_\_ Christ.” (Romans 3:22)

Helmet of salvation. Who is salvation? “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Romans 4:12) (The name \_\_\_\_\_)

Sword of the spirit...the word of God. “The word became flesh (\_\_\_\_\_) and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14)

1. The Armor of God is a description of the Lord Jesus Christ

2. When Jesus Christ is on the ‘throne’ of a person’s life, that person is ‘wearing the full armor of God’ because Jesus is the armor! (Spiritual Breathing)

### ENGAGE

You have given a lot of prayerful thought to your Five in Focus list and have studied the Motivational Themes chart in a previous session. One of the keys to connecting with anyone you meet, no matter how alike or different you think they are from you, is having stories that correspond to each of the five motivations—even the ones that are not your primary motivation.

In the Motivational Themes chart below, write a single word in the second column that describes a specific need you had at the time. In the third column, write a sentence or two of how God met your need.

	<b>MOTIVATION</b>	<b>YOUR NEED</b>	<b>GOD’S ANSWER</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b>	Peace		
<b>Theme 2:</b>	Success		
<b>Theme 3:</b>	Love		
<b>Theme 4:</b>	Security		
<b>Theme 5:</b>	Joy		

Have you noticed that you have more than a story to tell? You have stories to tell! Next session you are going to connect your stories to the needs of your friends on your Five In Focus list.

## /// CLOSING CHALLENGE

Continue to pray that God gives you an opportunity for in depth sharing with at least one person from your FIVE IN FOCUS list. Visualize and create in your mind one specific opportunity to meet with a friend to listen and to share your story.

# 5 Sharing Your Story

## ICEBREAKER

Return now to the activity you did at the very beginning of this course. You marked your responses on a series of potential fears and obstacles in sharing your faith (Appendix A). Share some of your responses with the group.

## GOALS

*After Session Five You Will:*

- **MAKE PROGRESS** in dealing with fear of talking with others about God.
- **LEARN** how to naturally and comfortably transition from listening to others' stories and sharing your story into telling God's story.

## TAKE A STAND AGAINST FEAR

Fear keeps us focused on ourselves

Love transfers our focus to God and others

### 2 Corinthians 5:9-16

**v. 9** *"so we make it our aim to please Him"*

What is your goal?

**v. 11** *"we fear the Lord"*

Our works will be judged, therefore this a healthy fear. The result is "we persuade men."

**v. 14** *"for Christ's love compels us"*

What drives you? When was the last time the love of Christ compelled you to do anything?

**v. 15** *"no longer live for themselves"*

Who are you living for?

**v. 16** *"no longer regard others from a worldly point of view"*

A changed perspective. Do you see people as God sees them? As lost?

## BUILDING BRIDGES

God has given us a great honor by naming us as His \_\_\_\_\_.

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

—2 Corinthians 5:20

### Bridge Builders do three simple activities:

1. Bridge builders \_\_\_\_\_ for needs.
2. Bridge builders \_\_\_\_\_ through stories.
3. Bridge builders \_\_\_\_\_ meet needs by sharing God's story.

There is no lack of \_\_\_\_\_ for sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

The most obvious way to discover opportunities is to open our eyes and ears to discover the needs all around us.

After listening to someone's story and having identified their motivational theme or needs, we need to make a transition from their story to our story or someone else's story and eventually to God's story. The following transition statements and questions show that you have listened and seek their permission to share either your story or God's story.

### A great transition statement follows the same outline as bridge building in an abbreviated form:

Shows you have **LISTENED** because you are able to \_\_\_\_\_ what you heard the person say.

*"What I heard you say is going on in your life right now is ..."*

**CONNECTS** to the person by showing you \_\_\_\_\_ what they are experiencing because of moments in your own life.

*"I know that must have been tough because of a time when ..."*

Offers **HELP** by asking if you can share a \_\_\_\_\_ from your life.

*"Can I share what helped me when I went through ... ?"*

**TIP:** Not every connecting story has to be your personal story. You can still listen, connect, and help by using someone else's story that better connects.

*“I have a friend who went through something very similar ....  
Can I share what helped them?”*

As you listen to transitions others have used, write down some key phrases that will help you build your own transition statements.

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**WHAT** kind of questions would you use to identify the needs and motivations of others? (Refer to Appendix G)

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**WHAT** kind of transitions would you use to connect your story to theirs?

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**HOW** would you make the transition to introduce God's story?

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Appendix G contains some questions you can use to find out where someone is spiritually. You can add your own questions that would be helpful in identifying their needs and motivations. There is space at the bottom of Appendix G.

### /// REFLECT AND WRITE

You have written your story throughout this course and shared it several times. Review all your notes. Highlight things you really like. Think of things you might have left out. Think of things that you might want to delete.

In the following space refine your story so that you can share it with others in a conversation using the four questions:

**WHAT** was my attitude before I took Jesus seriously?

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**WHY** did I say yes to Jesus?

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---

**HOW** did I say yes to Jesus?

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---

**WHAT** difference does Jesus make in my day-to-day life?

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---

### /// CLOSING CHALLENGE

There are opportunities all around you.

**Are you willing to enter the stories of others, caring and listening in order to connect and help?**

Go back and practice telling your story with a couple of added transition statements. You can practice with a close friend, a family member or in front of the mirror.

# 6 The Story Continues

LISTEN, CONNECT AND HELP

*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

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

—Acts 1:8

## GOALS

*After Session Six You Will:*

- **UNDERSTAND** better how the various concepts taught in the Living and Telling fit together.
- **START** making it your lifestyle to listen, connect and help.

The Living & Telling course has covered a lot of ground. Some of the material might have been very familiar to you and some of the material might have been quite new.

## REVIEW

1. The Spirit-filled life (Spiritual Breathing) is crucial.
2. Resultant life-change becomes visible and attractive.
3. Today “story” is usually the best way to connect with people.
4. First we need to learn about “their story” by asking questions and listening.
5. As we listen we want to find common ground with them and sense their needs (which may motivate them to listen and take action).
6. To connect well with people’s needs it is helpful to be able to tell about how God has met similar needs in your life or someone else’s life.
7. In summary, we have learned how to experience a closer walk with God (Living) and how to talk about that with others (Telling).

### /// ENGAGE

Write down at least THREE things you learned during this course in the space provided and share with a few others around you at least one of those lessons.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### /// LISTEN

1. When we listen, we demonstrate sincere care.
2. When we listen, trust begins to build.
3. Listen for:
  - Common ground.
  - Concerns or needs.

### /// ENGAGE

Share an experience when someone really listened to you. How could you tell the other person was truly listening? How did that make you feel?

### /// CONNECT

1. We can connect to other people's stories through three avenues.



- Through our own story
- Through others' stories
- Through God's story

2. Our story is usually the most useful place to start.
3. But other people's stories can help us connect when we lack a specific experience.
4. Sharing our stories and other people's stories about God's work in our lives can lead to a natural transition:
  - a. Have you ever experienced a relationship with God like that?
  - b. Would you be interested in hearing how you can?

### /// HELP

1. These connections are \_\_\_\_\_ to provide people the help they need through a relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. If you have connected well, they will probably be interested in how that happened in your and other people's lives. You have become a credible source of help.
3. When they give \_\_\_\_\_ by saying they want to hear more, you have the freedom and positive setting to be able to share the content of the "Knowing God Personally" booklet, which explains the gospel (introducing them to God's story).
4. Be sure you have made clear from the booklet what is involved in deciding to follow Christ, then, at the end, invite them to respond.
5. Be sure to \_\_\_\_\_ them, answer their questions and show them what the next steps should be.
6. If possible, involve them in growth and worship with a group of Christians—and keep praying for them.

### /// APPLY

1. What \_\_\_\_\_ do you think you have?
2. What needs/motivational themes do you detect? If you aren't sure, what could you tastefully ask to find out?
3. What things in "\_\_\_\_\_" (or possible "others' stories") match up with that and show powerfully how God can meet that need?
4. How can you clarify in telling "God's story" (the gospel) that they must truly commit their lives to Christ, putting Him in charge of their lives in order to see change?
5. When could you \_\_\_\_\_ to take the initiative with this person?

### ENGAGE

6. Share your thinking above with one other person in the group just now and pray for each other—for love and for boldness.

**Successful witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.**

## A FINAL THOUGHT

In this course, we've covered a lot of ground together as a group. We've learned about our stories and how to connect to other people in their stories. But what is foundational is the "living" portion of the Christian life.

If we don't live and enjoy the Christian life, we will have little to share with others about the meaningful, life-transforming story of God. Nor will we be as likely to share it because it won't be radiating from our lives and catching other people's attention.

So it all begins with living. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul asks us to "live a life worthy of the calling [we] have received." This is a high calling, and we will need the help of the Holy Spirit to accomplish it. That is why it is important, as we learned earlier, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to walk continually in that fullness through the practice of spiritual breathing.

In addition, living the Christian life is about practicing love. Jesus taught us that the two commandments that matter most are that we love God and love others. You see, when we love, we're motivated to do good. We communicate a spirit of authenticity and approachability. And in a world full of great hate, our love for God and others can be a sharp contrast to what the world offers, and it will attract people to us and, in turn, to Jesus Christ.

Although it is of primary importance to live the Christian life and love others, it's likely others won't come into relationship with Jesus if we don't tell them about it. This is where the "telling" part of this course becomes important. We've learned that sharing our faith with others through the power of storytelling is crucial.

Stories surround us every day and have always been a vital part of the human experience and how God communicates with us. But they're valued in today's culture even more than before. There's been a shift we've experienced in recent years from a reason-based culture to a relationship-based one. Generally it is through relationships and experiences that we gain access to a person's heart, not just through the presentation of well-thought-out arguments, as may have been the case in previous generations.

So we've learned how to do this. We've learned about the core elements of story with motivational themes. We've completed several story workshops to put together the pieces of our own stories. And we've prayed for and shared with the Five in Focus. We've even explored the fears that often keep us from sharing God's story with them, and we've learned how to build better bridges to those conversations. In the end, we've learned that telling comes down to practicing three important steps: listening, connecting and helping.

This is the way we build bridges to God's story. In summary, it's about living and it's about telling. And all of that leads to a life of eternal significance.

## APPENDIX A

# FEARS AND OBSTACLES

Rate yourself in the following areas that commonly hold Christians back from sharing the gospel with others.

### WHEN IT COMES TO SHARING MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST WITH OTHERS:

1. I am afraid I will say the wrong thing. (Fear of failure.)

				
STRONGLY RELATE	SOMEWHAT RELATE	SOMETIMES RELATE	RARELY RELATE	NEVER RELATE

2. I am afraid the person I want to share with will pull away from me because I have made them feel awkward. (Fear of rejection.)

				
STRONGLY RELATE	SOMEWHAT RELATE	SOMETIMES RELATE	RARELY RELATE	NEVER RELATE

3. I am afraid my life doesn't measure up like it should for someone who shares the gospel. (Fear of hypocrisy.)

				
STRONGLY RELATE	SOMEWHAT RELATE	SOMETIMES RELATE	RARELY RELATE	NEVER RELATE

4. I am afraid I will be asked questions on matters of faith I don't know the answers to. (Fear of not having enough knowledge.)

				
STRONGLY RELATE	SOMEWHAT RELATE	SOMETIMES RELATE	RARELY RELATE	NEVER RELATE

## APPENDIX A

# FEARS AND OBSTACLES

5. I have honestly never had a desire to witness. (Lack of passion.)

				
STRONGLY RELATE	SOMEWHAT RELATE	SOMETIMES RELATE	RARELY RELATE	NEVER RELATE

6. I am so busy with my family and church that I really don't have time to meet with non-Christians.

				
STRONGLY RELATE	SOMEWHAT RELATE	SOMETIMES RELATE	RARELY RELATE	NEVER RELATE

- What personal fears and obstacles do you believe you have already worked through and overcome?

- Are there any obstacles and fears that are still holding you back from sharing your faith?

### TAKE A STAND AGAINST FEAR

If you still feel held back from witnessing at this time, read and reread the following verse now and in the days ahead. It will help you say to yourself that even if your feelings don't encourage you to move forward, there is a force that is greater than your feelings: the love of Christ.

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*

2 Corinthians 5:14

## APPENDIX B

# MOTIVATIONAL THEMES

**T**he following questions will help you remember some stories from your life which should provide points of connection and influence with people you want to minister to. The questions are grouped by motivational theme. These themes have surfaced as typically useful points of common ground with people. Almost all people will have one or more of these themes as significant motivators for them – to listen with interest and to take action.

So it is very helpful if you have had similar needs at some point of your life and, especially, if your relationship with God has provided help for you in those areas of need. Since most of us don't have such stories in all five areas, it is also helpful if you can think of other people you know who have had these needs and have had God meet those needs. Briefly note those stories of others as you go through thinking of your own examples.

Imagine how relevant you will be in sharing with almost all people you meet if you can identify with areas in which they currently have concerns. Also imagine how interested they will be in the gospel if you can tell of how you (or someone else) has had that need met through a relationship with God.

It is then easy to transition to a presentation of the gospel with the following two sentences:

1. "Have you ever experienced a relationship with God like the one I just described?"
2. When they say "no", which very likely they will say: "Would you like to hear how you could?"

The following are specific questions, for each of the five motivational themes. Pray that God will help you remember your stories. Write a few brief notes to remind you of each story, but save writing it all out for later. After you have worked through the questions for all five groups, look back over your notes and see where you have the most dominant theme. This will probably be the most natural theme of your testimony as you would typically tell it.

However, don't discard the answers to questions from other groups. They will provide better connection points for some people.

Don't lose heart if you don't yet have too many illustrations of how God has changed your life. If you walk in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, over time your life will change and every change will give you another powerful story to tell others.

### SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

#### **GROUP ONE /// PEACE, SATISFACTION, FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY (PSF)**

1. In what ways did you try to attain PSF as a non-Christian?
2. What events left you feeling without PSF?
3. What was it that caused you to conclude that Christ meets this need?
4. How has your perspective on PSF changed since becoming a Christian?

### **GROUP TWO /// SUCCESS, SIGNIFICANCE, ULTIMATE PURPOSE IN LIFE (SSU)**

1. What events from your life would tend to characterize your quest to attain SSU?
2. What would you consider to be one of the most successful or significant events in your life?
3. What would you consider to be one of your greatest defeats?
4. How would you describe your purpose in life before Christ?
5. What brought you to the point of seeing that Christianity was relevant to your need for SSU?
6. How has your perspective on SSU changed since becoming a Christian?

### **GROUP THREE /// LOVE, BELONGING, ACCEPTANCE (LBA)**

1. Describe some of your greatest friendships.
2. Describe how your typical friendship would develop.
3. Describe your LBA before becoming a Christian. What motivated you in those relationships? How did they end up?
4. What would you consider to be one of your most difficult relationships?
5. What was it that convinced you that LBA was more of a felt need and that your real need was Christ?
6. How has your perspective on LBA changed since becoming a Christian?

### **GROUP FOUR /// FORGIVENESS, SENSE OF WORTH, FREEDOM FROM INSECURITY (FSF)**

1. What has been one of your greatest hurts? How did you respond? How has your relationship with Christ affected your response?
2. What was it that caused you to be secure or insecure before Christ?
3. Describe your view on life before Christ?
4. What attracted you to Christianity in light of FSF?
5. How has Christ affected your view towards FSF?
6. What was it that helped make Christianity more relevant to your need for FSF?

### **GROUP FIVE /// HAPPINESS, PLEASURE, ENJOYMENT (HPE)**

1. What would you consider to be one of your happiest experiences as a non-Christian?
2. What was one of your saddest experiences?
3. Describe how you sought to obtain HPE before Christ?
4. What, in relation to HPE, attracted you toward Christianity?
5. How has Christ affected your view towards HPE?
6. What was it that caused you to conclude that Christ graciously helps meet your need for HPE?

## APPENDIX C

# THE HOLY SPIRIT BOOKLET

### SATISFIED?

*Satisfaction: (n.) fulfillment of one's needs, longings, or desires*

What words would you use to describe your current experience as a Christian? Are there others?

Growing	Frustrated	Forgiven	_____
Disappointing	Fulfilled	Stuck	_____
Struggling	Joyful	Defeated	_____
Exciting	Up and down	Empty	_____
Discouraged	Duty	Intimate	_____
Mediocre	Painful	Dynamic	_____
Guilty	Vital	So-so	_____

Do you desire more? Jesus said, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him"* (John 7:37, 38).

What did Jesus mean? John, the biblical author, went on to explain, *"By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified"* (John 7:39).

Jesus promised that God's Holy Spirit would satisfy the thirst, or deepest longings, of all who believe in Jesus Christ. However, many Christians do not understand the Holy Spirit or how to experience Him in their daily lives.

### THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND AND ENJOY GOD'S SPIRIT.

#### THE DIVINE GIFT /// *Divine: (adj.) given by God*

**God has given us His Spirit so that we can experience intimacy with Him and enjoy all He has for us.**

The Holy Spirit is the source of our deepest satisfaction.

#### **The Holy Spirit is God's permanent presence with us.**

*Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17).*

#### **The Holy Spirit enables us to understand and experience all God has given us.**

*"We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us" (1 Corinthians 2:12).*

The Holy Spirit enables us to experience many things:

- A genuine new spiritual life (John 3:1-8).
- The assurance of being a child of God (Romans 8:15, 16).
- The infinite love of God (Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:18, 19).

## Life Without the Spirit

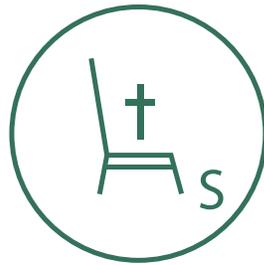
Before Receiving Christ



FAITH

## Life With the Spirit

After Receiving Christ



*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

1 Corinthians 2:14

*The spiritual man makes judgments about all things...We have the mind of Christ.*

1 Corinthians 2:15, 16

*But those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.*

Romans 8:5, NLT

» **Why are many Christians not satisfied in their experience with God?**

**THE PRESENT DANGER** /// *Danger: (n.) a thing that may cause injury, loss, or pain*

**We cannot experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us if we fail to depend on His Spirit.**

People who trust in their own efforts and strength to live the Christian life will experience failure and frustration, as will those who live to please themselves rather than God.

**We cannot live the Christian life in our own strength.**

*"Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Galatians 3:3).*

**We cannot enjoy all God desires for us if we live by our self-centered desires.**

*"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Galatians 5:17).*

### THREE KINDS OF LIFESTYLES



*“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?”*

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

» How can we develop a lifestyle of depending on the Spirit?

**THE INTIMATE JOURNEY** /// *Journey: (n.) any course from one experience to another*

**By walking in the Spirit we increasingly experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.**

Walking in the Spirit moment by moment is a lifestyle. It is learning to depend upon the Holy Spirit for His abundant resources as a way of life.

**As we walk in the Spirit, we have the ability to live a life pleasing to God.**

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature...Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 25).

**As we walk in the Spirit, we experience intimacy with God and all He has for us.**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

### THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE



Faith (trust in God and His promises) is the only way a Christian can live by the Spirit.

**Spiritual breathing** is a powerful word picture which can help you experience moment-by-moment dependence upon the Spirit.

Exhale: Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it—agree with God concerning it and thank Him for His forgiveness, according to 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1-25. Confession requires repentance—a change in attitude and action.

Inhale: Surrender control of your life to Christ, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power by faith, according to His command (Ephesians 5:18) and promise (1 John 5:14, 15).

## » How does the Holy Spirit fill us with His power?

### **THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE** /// *Empower: (v.) to give ability to*

**We are filled with the Spirit by faith, enabling us to experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.**

The essence of the Christian life is what God does in and through us, not what we do for God. Christ's life is reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be directed and empowered by Him.

#### **By faith, we experience God's power through the Holy Spirit.**

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:16, 17).

#### **Three important questions to ask yourself:**

1. Am I ready now to surrender control of my life to our Lord Jesus Christ? (Romans 12:1, 2)
2. Am I ready now to confess my sins? (1 John 1:9) Sin grieves God's Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). But God in His love has forgiven all of your sins—past, present, and future—because Christ has died for you.
3. Do I sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (John 7:37-39)

#### **By faith claim the fullness of the Spirit according to His command and promise:**

God **COMMANDS** us to be filled with the Spirit.

*"...be filled with the Spirit"* (Ephesians 5:18).

God **PROMISES** He will always answer when we pray according to His will.

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him"* (1 John 5:14, 15).

## » How to pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit...

### **THE TURNING POINT** /// *Turning point: time when a decisive change occurs*

**We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone.**

Sincere prayer is one way of expressing our faith. The following is a suggested prayer:

*Dear Father, I need You. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. I now thank You for filling me with the Holy Spirit and directing my life.*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If so, you can pray right now and trust God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

### **How to know that you are filled by the Holy Spirit**

- **Did you ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit?**
- **Do you know that you are now filled with the Holy Spirit?**
- **On what authority? (On the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word: Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:22, 23.)**

As you continue to depend on God's Spirit moment by moment you will experience and enjoy intimacy with God and all He has for you—a truly rich and satisfying life.

*An important reminder...*

### **DO NOT DEPEND ON FEELINGS**

The promise of God's Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. Flying in an airplane can illustrate the relationship among fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).

To be transported by an airplane, we must place our faith in the trustworthiness of the aircraft and the pilot who flies it. Our feelings of confidence or fear do not affect the ability of the airplane to transport us, though they do affect how much we enjoy the trip. In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

### **NOW THAT YOU ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Thank God that the Spirit will enable you:

- **To glorify Christ with your life (John 16:14).**
- **To grow in your understanding of God and His Word (1 Corinthians 2:14, 15).**
- **To live a life pleasing to God (Galatians 5:16–23).**

### **REMEMBER THE PROMISE OF JESUS:**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

## APPENDIX D

# KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY BOOKLET

*The following four principles will help you discover how to know God personally and experience the abundant life He promised.*

## 1

### GOD LOVES YOU AND CREATED YOU TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY.

#### God's Love

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

#### God's Plan

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent" (John 17:3, NIV).

... What prevents us from knowing God personally?

## 2

### MAN IS SINFUL AND SEPARATED FROM GOD, SO WE CANNOT KNOW HIM PERSONALLY AND EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE.

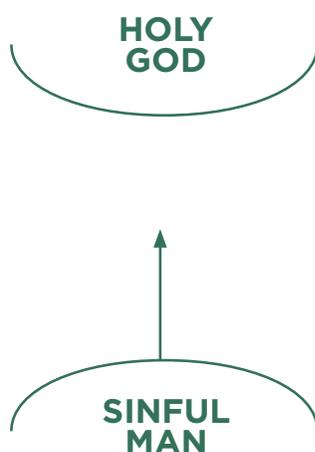
#### Man is Sinful

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

#### Man is Separated

"For the wages of sin is death" (spiritual separation from God) (Romans 6:23).



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God and establish a personal relationship with Him through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy or religion.

*The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf...*

### **3 JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY PROVISION FOR MAN'S SIN. THROUGH HIM ALONE WE CAN KNOW GOD PERSONALLY AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE.**

#### **He Died in Our Place**

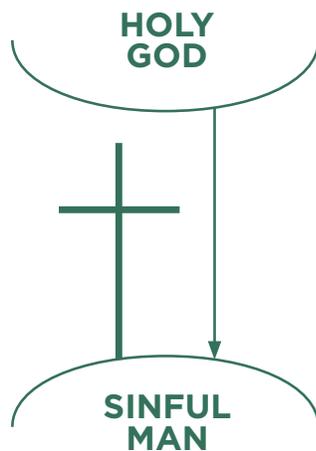
"But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

#### **He Rose From the Dead**

"Christ died for our sins... He was buried...He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred" (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

#### **He Is the Only Way to God**

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (John 14:6).



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf which separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

*It is not enough just to know these truths . . .*

### **4 WE MUST INDIVIDUALLY RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD; THEN WE CAN KNOW GOD PERSONALLY AND EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE.**

#### **We Must Receive Jesus Christ**

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

#### **We Receive Christ Through Faith**

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

#### **When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth.**

(Read John 3:1-8.)

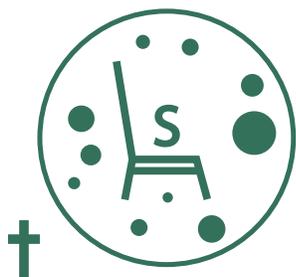
#### **We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation**

(Christ is speaking): "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20).

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us the kind of people He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

## These two circles represent two kinds of lives:

Which circle best represents your life?

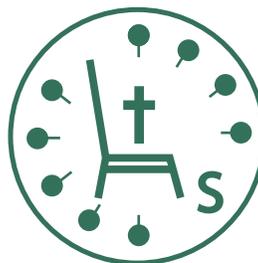


### Self-Directed Life

**S** - Self is on the throne

**t** - Christ is outside the life

- - Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration



### Christ-Directed Life

**t** - Christ is in the life and on the throne

**S** - Self is yielding to Christ

- - Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

## The following explains how you can receive Christ:

### YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST RIGHT NOW BY FAITH THROUGH PRAYER (PRAYER IS TALKING WITH GOD)

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

*“Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

### How to Know That Christ Is in Your Life

Did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said that He would come into your life and be your friend so you can know Him personally. Would He mislead you? On what authority do you know that God has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word.)

### The Bible Promises Eternal Life to All Who Receive Christ

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13). Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life, from the very moment you invite Him in. He will not deceive you.

*An important reminder . . .*

### **DO NOT DEPEND ON FEELINGS**

The promise of God's Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).



The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, we, as Christians, do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promise of His Word.

### **NOW THAT YOU HAVE ENTERED INTO A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST**

The moment that you received Christ by faith, as an act of the will, many things happened, including the following:

1. Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20 and Colossians 1:27).
2. Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14).
3. You became a child of God (John 1:12).
4. You received eternal life (John 5:24).
5. You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Can you think of anything more wonderful that could happen to you than entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Would you like to thank God in prayer right now for what He has done for you? By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.

*To enjoy your new relationship with God . . .*

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH**

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. "The righteous man shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life and to practice the following:

- G** Go to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).
- R** Read God's Word daily (Acts 17:11). Begin with the Gospel of John.
- O** Obey God moment by moment (John 14:21).
- W** Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).
- T** Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).
- H** Holy Spirit—Allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Galatians 5:16, 17; Acts 1:8).

## REMEMBER

Your walk with Christ depends on what you allow Him to do in and through you empowered by the Holy Spirit, not what you do for Him through self effort. If you have come to know Christ personally through this presentation of the gospel or would like further help in getting to know Christ better, two sites are recommended.

[www.startingwithGod.com](http://www.startingwithGod.com) or [www.LooktoJesus.com](http://www.LooktoJesus.com)

If you still have questions, visit:

[www.whoisJesus-really.com](http://www.whoisJesus-really.com) or [www.everystudent.com](http://www.everystudent.com)

## FELLOWSHIP IN A GOOD CHURCH

God's Word admonishes us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together..." (Hebrews 10:25). Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. So it is with your relationship with other Christians. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Start this week, and make plans to attend regularly.

## APPENDIX E

# ANSWERING PEOPLE'S QUESTIONS

**W**e can't always predict what faith questions will be presented to us at any given moment, but we can work on being prepared to handle questions when they come. The following short guide is geared toward helping you know how to respond to questions in the moment and where to go from there..

### How do I know what to say?

We may think our greatest difficulty in sharing about Jesus is going to be answering people's questions. Probably the greater question is, are we ready to do our part and trust God with the outcome?

People will ask questions. And we may not always have an answer for them. But there is no embarrassment in admitting this and promising to find an answer for them.

Probably the best thing we can do for our relationships with those who are not yet believers, though, is to prevent ourselves from being set up as an authority in the first place. Rather than attempting to uphold an expectation that we have all the answers to life's most universal and pressing questions because we've found the greatest answer to life in Jesus Christ, we can instead choose to come alongside others as mere pilgrims traveling the path of life, just like they are.

If we allow ourselves to stand shoulder to shoulder with others, rather than setting ourselves above them as some kind of repository of all knowledge, then the pressure falls off our shoulders and we, along with those we relate to, won't expect anything more from us than honest, caring conversation.

### Why do people ask questions?

People can ask questions for a variety of reasons.

Perhaps they genuinely want to know the answer to something that is holding them back from saying yes to Jesus Christ. In this case, they are seeking information or clarification on an issue they will be eager to learn about from you.

Or perhaps they have misunderstood the message and this misunderstanding has become a stumbling block for them. They want you to set things right about the issue and will be open to having their misunderstanding corrected.

Or maybe the message is actually getting through! In this case, the question or objection can be an attempt to deflect their need to respond to God's invitation. If you can respond to their objection, this may bring them face to face with their need to finally make peace with the invitation God is offering them.

How should we answer people's questions?

First, treat everyone's questions and statements with respect. If you ignore what they say or diminish their concerns, you will communicate that you do not care about them. Instead, be a

good listener. Ask yourself, “Why might this person be saying this?” If you try to understand what has led them to believe what they do, they will be more inclined to listen to you as well.

Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit. You cannot know what is keeping someone from a relationship with God or why they’re asking the questions they’re asking, but the Holy Spirit does know and can give you discernment and guidance in the conversation.

Next, recognize that a full answer is not realistic. It is helpful to sow a few seeds for them to think about in response to their question, but you do not need to inundate them with information. In fact, giving them mere information is not going to be enough to bring them into relationship with Jesus. Information is no substitute for the personal invitation God offers.

Remember that it’s okay to say, “I don’t know.” This will add weight to the things you do know. It demonstrates that there are still things to be discovered about the world God created. And it diminishes the stereotype that Christians know everything there is to know about everything. It makes you more human. When you come up against something you don’t know, make an effort to find an answer or at least give them something more to consider.

One great way to respond to someone’s pressing question is to turn it around and ask them what they think the answer might be. This allows them the chance to challenge their own perspective and come up with alternative ways of looking at the scenario. It also grants them greater ownership of the possible solutions they do find.

Finally, talk about what Jesus has meant to you. As we’ve studied in this workbook, your story is unique to you and reveals God’s story in its own way. No one can take away that story or deny what you have personally experienced. In fact, your story is the most compelling reality someone may be given the opportunity to consider in their own journey into the great story of God

## APPENDIX F

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

**I**f you are looking for some good questions to spark a spiritual dialogue with someone who is not yet a believer, the following questions provide a great place to start.

- Where are you on your spiritual journey?
- Has your spiritual journey led you to answers for your life's deepest questions?
- Have you found meaning and purpose in your life?
- If there was a God, how would that make you feel? Would you like it or wouldn't you?
- How would you respond if you found out Jesus was God?
- What Are the things in life that give you value and meaning?
- What do you feel is your purpose in life?
- Do you think there is ultimate meaning in reality?
- If you thought it was possible to know God in a personal way, would you want to know him?
- How do you experience God?
- Do you believe in life after death?
- What do you think happens when you die?
- What do you think God is like?
- Who do you believe Jesus is?
- What does Jesus have to do with your life?
- Do you think much about spiritual matters?
- Would you share with me your spiritual story?
- What is your understanding of God?
- What is your religious background?
- What do you believe is the purpose of our lives?
- Why are we here?
- What do you think is the main problem with the world?
- Why do you think things are the way they are in the world?
- Do you believe in absolute truth?

Add your own favorite questions to the list:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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# SUGGESTED RESOURCES

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Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2002.

### **“Satisfied” and “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” Booklets**

Copies of “Satisfied” and “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” booklets can be ordered from New Life Resources over the phone or from the ministry resources online store. To order copies over the

phone, call (800) 827-2788. To order copies online, visit [www.campuscrusade.com/Tracts\\_and\\_Booklets](http://www.campuscrusade.com/Tracts_and_Booklets).

### **“Spiritual Breathing” Cards, “Five in Focus” Cards, and Curriculum Evaluation Cards**

Copies of the “Spiritual Breathing,” “Five in Focus,” and Curriculum Evaluation cards can be ordered from New Life Resources over the phone or from the ministry resources online store. To order copies over the phone, call (800) 827-2788. To order copies online, visit [www.campuscrusade.com](http://www.campuscrusade.com).

### **Additional Campus Crusade Resources**

Additional resources are available from Campus Crusade and its affiliates to assist you in sharing your faith with others. These resources can be ordered through New Life Resources over the phone or from the ministry resources online store. To order over the phone, call (800) 827-2788. To order online, please visit the specific web addresses listed next to each resource.

Bright, Bill. *Who Is This Jesus?* Orlando, FL: Campus Crusade for Christ, 2007. This full-color mini-magazine is a versatile resource for use in outreach, follow-up, discipleship, and even Bible study. To order online, visit [http://www.campuscrusade.com/Outreach\\_Strategies/witjeach.htm](http://www.campuscrusade.com/Outreach_Strategies/witjeach.htm).

Bright, Bill. *Witnessing Without Fear*. Orlando, FL: Campus Crusade for Christ, 2003. This book will equip you to share your faith with confidence as you follow the story of a quiet, shy businessman who grew into a self-assured witness for Christ. To order online, visit <http://www.campuscrusade.com/Books/wwof.htm>.

Power to Change Ministries and Leader Impact Group. *Bursting Your Bubble: A Relationship Revolution*. Langley, BC: Power to Change Ministries, 2007. This seven-week DVD series for small groups is designed to help individuals share their faith in the marketplace. To order online, visit [http://www.campuscrusade.com/Group\\_Studies/burstdvdpk.htm](http://www.campuscrusade.com/Group_Studies/burstdvdpk.htm).



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