

For the PEARL series, our weekly “Sermon Based Discussion Guide” comes out of our PEARL Devotional Guidebook. These will not be directly based off of Jeff’s messages for these five weeks.

Attached is this week’s devotional followed by the Group Discussion Guide.

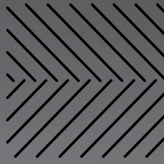
PEARL *Guidebook*

THE COMPASS CHURCH EVANGELISM DEVOTIONAL

DEVOTIONAL
WEEK 2



THE **COMPASS** CHURCH
thecompass.net



Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7B-9



What's Your Motive?

Maybe it was a neighbor offering to help with a chore. Or an invitation to share a meal. Perhaps it was making a phone call or sending a caring text – just to check in, after hearing some difficult news. If you've been on the receiving end of such a kind and caring gesture from a believing brother or sister, then the practical love of Christ made its way into your world. And there's a good chance it might have even made you want to reciprocate. Sharing the love and Good News of Jesus in real and practical ways can, and should, be contagious. With that in mind, it's also a good idea for each of us to check our motives, whenever we're planning to carry out the command to share the Good News to the world. Asking ourselves, "What's the real impetus, deep down in our heart?"

Do we want to simply check off a box on our proverbial Christian to-do-list?

Are we trying to impress someone?

Do we think that doing enough "good things" makes up for other ongoing sin in our lives?

Nobody wants to feel like they were someone's evangelism "project," so we are wise to ask God to help us have a heart for the lost that moves us into action purely from godly compassion. Without love behind it, your Gospel won't feel like Good News. *1 Thessalonians 2:4-5* reminds us that God empowers us to share the Gospel, but He alone tests our motives.

"On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness." Another translation puts it this way: "And God is our

witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money!”

1 THESSALONIANS 2:4-5

At the same time, if we're waiting for 100% pure motives, we could be waiting a mighty long time. Theologian John Piper puts it this way:

“Don't wait for a feeling or love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God. It is not primarily out of compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God.”

So, the bottom line? Perfect conditions and purely unselfish reasons aren't necessary for us to move forward in telling others about Jesus. Not only that, but *not sharing* our faith merely because we want to ensure we have no competing motives, could keep us from reaching those in our sphere of influence...if we're not careful.

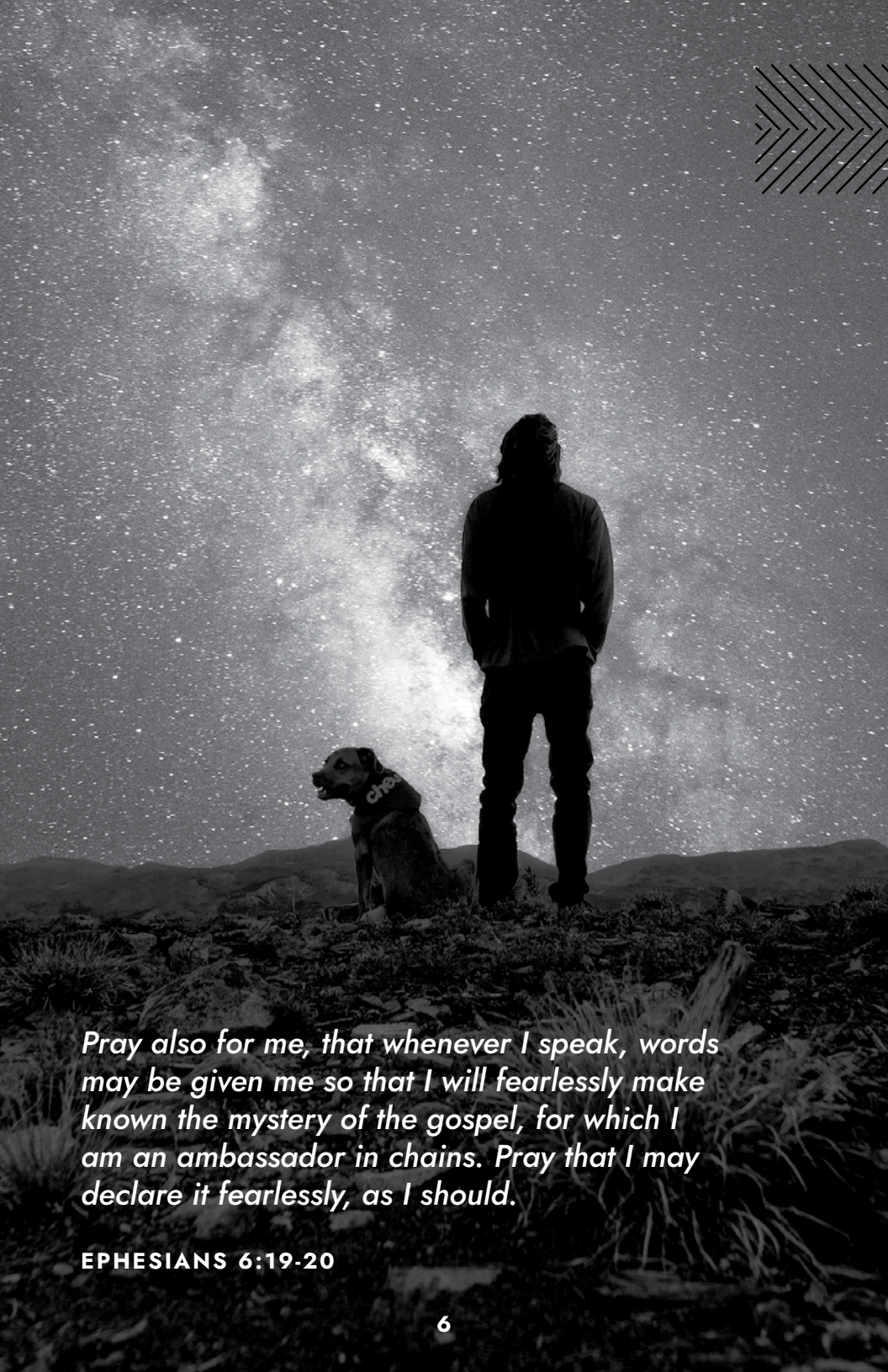
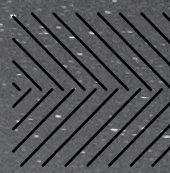
Week One examined how evangelism is a command, not a suggestion. And *James 4:17* tells us, “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.” Let's let God's heart for each one of us and our love for others, no matter how imperfect, be all the motivation we need.

REFLECT

1. When you think about sharing your faith, what fears or concerns do you have about it?
2. What are some of the reasons you want to share your faith with others? What led you to learn more in this study?
3. Who comes to mind as someone who's shared God's love for you in real and practical ways? Ask God to bless that person and/or to serve as an inspiration for you to share your faith with others.

PRAY

Ask God to grow your heart for the lost so you're moved to action from godly compassion. Pray for God to increase your faith, to help you do the good you know He's called you to do, especially if you don't feel like doing it. Invite the Lord to help you move forward in obedience, even when your deepest motives feel a little bit selfish.



Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

EPHESIANS 6:19-20

WEEK 2 | DAY 2

Have You Started Praying?

In looking at this passage of *Ephesians 6:19-20*, two words seem to stand out:

1. *Whenever*
2. *Fearlessly*

“*Whenever*” implies a regular, frequent occurrence. In other words, Paul speaking about the Lord became part of a natural rhythm in his life, no matter what dire circumstances he faced. (In this case, Paul was writing a letter to the church at Ephesus, straight from a Roman prison where he was wrongly held captive.)

The word “*fearlessly*” is also translated as “with boldness” (NASB). Plus, it’s used twice here. We can think of that as God’s way of underlining His Word, long before the days of pixelated bold fonts or colored ink. *Who couldn’t use a little more boldness and less fear in our role as an evangelist?*

And yet having a regular rhythm of sharing the Gospel with minimal fear doesn’t just happen on its own. It takes our personal prayers, plus asking for prayer from other believers.

Chances are that through the course of this study, God will bring people to mind who desperately need to hear about Jesus — *from you!*

The Holy Spirit can remind you of the people in your life who need to know how God loves them unconditionally and how He very much longs to see them gain not just eternal life, but also a full, satisfying, and abundant life here on earth. (See *2 Peter 3:9* and *John 10:10*).

Prayer is the critical ingredient to that recipe for success.

It's worth noting that this passage directly follows Paul's instructions about using the whole armor of God when we're fighting spiritual battles (see *Ephesians 6:10-17*). And wrestling someone from Satan's grip, right into an eternal connectedness with God. There's no greater spiritual battle than that!

Once you've buckled the belt of truth, added the breastplate of righteousness, covered your feet with the gospel of peace, put on the helmet of salvation, grabbed the shield of faith, and picked up your word-of-God-sword of the Spirit, it's time to pray ... and pray hard.

In *Ephesians 6:18*, Paul tells the Ephesians to "pray at all times, and on every occasion." (Doesn't that sound like the concept of "whenever" to you?) Next, he instructs them to pray for him to fearlessly explain God's plan for Jews and Gentiles alike. While he could have asked for prayer to remove his chains and alter some awful circumstances (again, he was writing as a prisoner in Rome!), Paul asks for God to give him the right words to help other people know Jesus.

Let this serve as an example for us to pray for God to help us boldly share our faith. No matter what kind of personal "chains" we might be in, whenever the chance to speak comes up. And let's ask others to join us on this journey, through their prayers.

Maybe that's an accountability partner, someone in your group, a friend at school, or your spouse. It doesn't even have to be an in-person friend, maybe it's that friend who moved away. The one who has always been an encouragement to you. The key is to prepare your heart for evangelism and begin by praying.

Not sure where to start? Here's a sample prayer you could customize for your situation:

Lord, I need Your help. I want to share my faith more with other people in my life: my friends, neighbors, co-workers, family, and loved ones. Help me to have the right words, whenever I speak. Help me to share my faith fearlessly. Bring to mind another friend who can pray for me and alongside me on this faith journey.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

REFLECT

1. Try crafting a "Top 10 List" of people in your sphere of influence who need Jesus. Keep it in a place where you can pray over it regularly, and ask that God opens their hearts to know Him personally.
2. There is no limit to creative ways God might want to use you to introduce others to a relationship with Jesus. Ask three believing friends to share their faith story with you.
3. Who in your life might be someone you could invite to pray for boldness when you share your faith?

PRAY

Pray for boldness in your encounters with those who aren't close to God right now.

The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

JOHN 4:9-10



WEEK 2 | DAY 3

How Did Jesus Show Compassion?

She could have been home that day resting, but she found herself out in the middle of the day, a time when most people probably would have avoided the public square in the high heat. But perhaps that was her intention ... *Just slip in and slip out. Grab the water from the well and head home. Try to avoid making eye contact. Then maybe nobody will notice me?*

We can picture the Samaritan woman from John chapter 4 plotting her pathway to minimal interaction in her community. We don't know her full story, but as someone who'd already been married five times, now living with a new boyfriend (*John 4:18*), we can guess she might have been avoiding any unwelcome shame from her neighbors.

We can also imagine her surprise when she came face-to-face with the actual Messiah.

“The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’ Then Jesus declared, ‘I, the one speaking to you – I am he.’”

JOHN 4:25-26

It's safe to say, up to this point she knew *about* Jesus. But this day would forever change her story, she was actually meeting Jesus in real life. Through a personal encounter with the God of the Universe who intentionally came to see her that day, right in the middle of her mundane.

Jesus crossed a number of cultural and physical boundaries in this conversation. Let's take a closer look at four lessons Jesus shared:

First, He traveled out of His way.

Going through Samaria wasn't the typical route for someone to go from Judea to Galilee, but *John 4:4* tells us He purposefully went that way. Sometimes we, too, need to "go out of our way" and break from our usual routine to introduce someone to Jesus.

Second, He crossed cultural boundaries.

In this encounter, we not only see a man speaking to a woman (very unusual for the time — the disciples were "shocked" in *John 4:27*) but also a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman. Based on thousands of years of bad history together, Jews and Samaritans didn't exactly get along. Samaritans were considered "less than" by Jewish people. Maybe we don't have any ancient ancestral conflict with someone, but perhaps we come from different cultures or backgrounds. This could even be as simple as a Cubs fan sharing the Gospel with a White Sox fan ... or a shy introvert introducing Jesus to an outgoing extrovert.

Third, He got very personal, very quickly.

Speaking about uncomfortable topics and addressing her sin directly, Jesus didn't mince words, and He didn't waste time. We don't always know how long we'll have to share the Good News with someone, so we need not be afraid to address the real, eternal issues at hand, even if they see it as foolishness at first. (See *1 Corinthians 1:17-18*.)

Finally, Jesus spoke with grace and compassion.

This approach certainly wasn't very typical for that period in history. Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the religious and political leaders of the day, were heavy on "following the law" and very light on extending grace. They thought following man-made rules and rituals could lead to salvation, and all sin deserved harsh punishment. But rather than condemning the Samaritan woman for her prior sins, Jesus addressed her with kindness and offered her living water and eternal life.

Jesus' example reminds us to go out of our way to reach the lost, acknowledge our differences (but not let them hinder us), embrace the tough conversations, and extend true compassion, knowing that God went out of His way to extend His grace in rescuing us, too.

As *Ephesians 2:8-9* reminds us, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

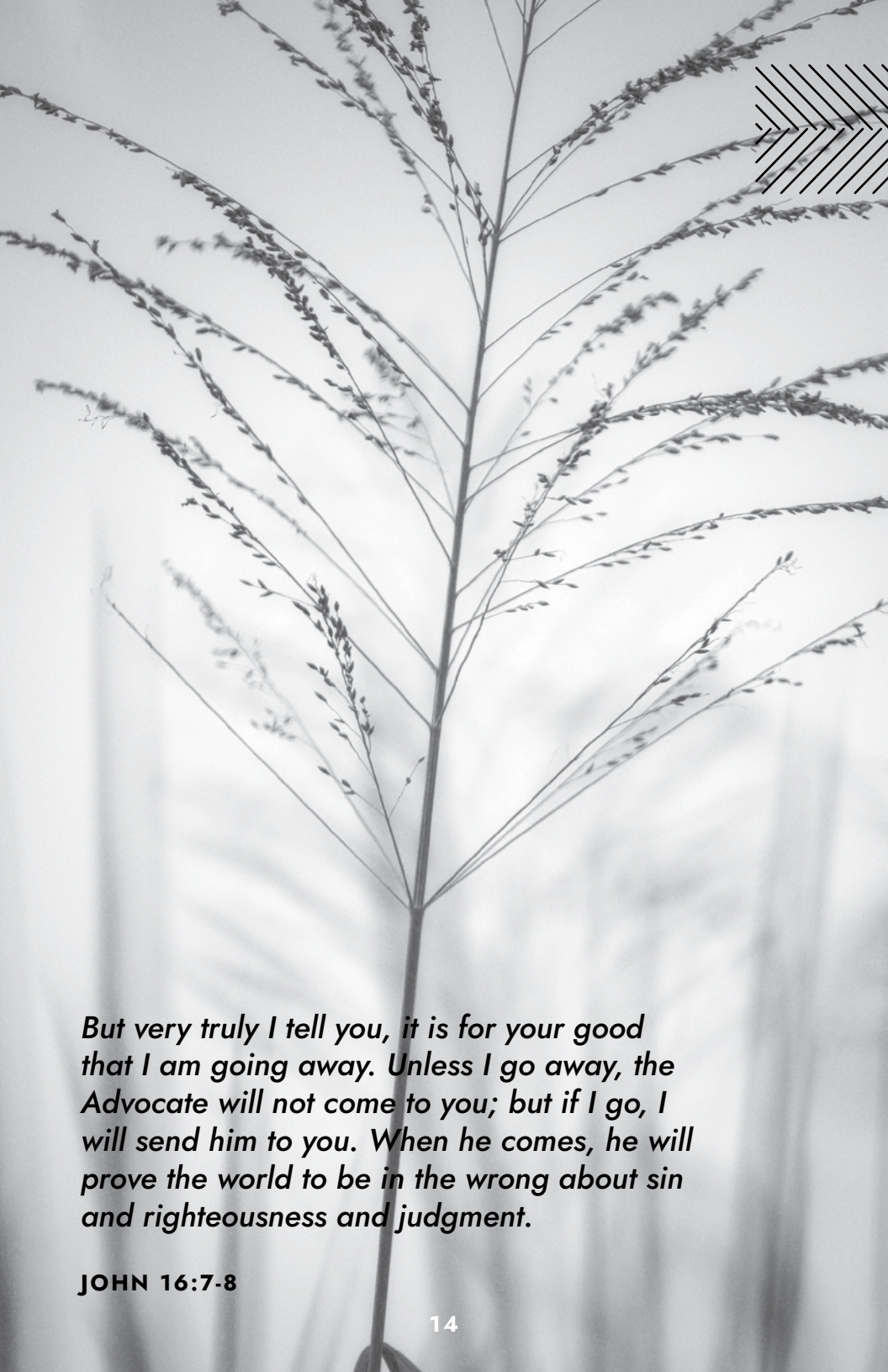
In the end, not only was the Samaritan woman’s life forever changed, but so was her entire village. “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’” (*John 4:39*) May our influence on others’ lives be equally as compelling!

REFLECT

1. *Romans 5:8* says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” How has Jesus met you in your sinful state?
2. When you think about the “Samaritan woman,” who comes to mind in your life as someone who needs to hear about Jesus?

PRAY

Ask God to help grow a compassionate side in your heart to reach the lost with an understanding that every one of us has fallen short and desperately needs God’s grace. Thank Him for His compassion and goodness in your life.



But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.

JOHN 16:7-8

WEEK 2 | DAY 4

What is My Role vs. God's Role? PART 1

Have you ever had a good friend, or a family member stand up for you?

Maybe it was a silly disagreement, and you knew they had your back. Or even a more serious allegation or a legal matter, and someone took your side. Whatever the circumstances, there is tremendous strength in knowing you've got someone alongside you to help fight your battle.

When it comes to sharing our faith, this is the role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit serves as an *advocate*, a helper, right alongside us when we begin to share the Good News.

By definition, an advocate is "a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person, cause, etc." As one part of the Trinity, God Himself – in the form of the Holy Spirit – helps us introduce others to have a personal relationship with Him!

In some of His last moments with the disciples, Jesus explained how the Holy Spirit would be coming to every believer after the Lord's resurrection. This would happen once Christ returned to Heaven, and would accomplish a greater good on earth, since Jesus was physically only in one place at a time.

In addition, the Holy Spirit would make it possible to fulfill the Great Commission, God's commandment to tell the whole world about Jesus. (More about that next week!)

Bill Bright, founder of college ministry Cru, was fond of explaining how success in witnessing is simply "taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God."

We see this principle found in *1 Corinthians 3:6-7*, which says, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”

In other words, we play *a part* in telling others about Jesus, but God, through the Holy Spirit at work, plays an even bigger part.

Longtime evangelist Billy Graham put it like this, “Prayer is crucial in evangelism: Only God can change the heart of someone who is in rebellion against Him. No matter how logical our arguments or how fervent our appeals, our words will accomplish nothing unless God’s Spirit prepares the way.”

Essentially that means God prepares the seed of someone’s heart, then we get to do the planting, *and* then ultimately, God is the one who makes things grow.

As we think about the ways we can share our hearts with the people around us, let’s remember that God cares more for souls of those far from Him than any of us ever could. The Holy Spirit can burden our hearts with someone who needs to know Jesus, and then later can empower and equip us with boldness to share our faith in meaningful and effective ways.

The question is, *will we let Him?*

REFLECT

1. When you hear about the Holy Spirit, what type of power comes to mind?
2. What are some ways you have seen the Holy Spirit working alongside believers?
3. How does knowing the Holy Spirit’s role give you more confidence in sharing your faith with someone?
4. If the idea of the Holy Spirit is new to you, bear in mind that *walking in the power of the Holy Spirit* happens best when we are

daily connecting with God through prayer and studying His Word. Commit to a practical game plan to pursue Him daily, even if it's in small doses.

PRAY

Ask God to lead you to the people whose hearts He wants to see turn toward Him, so they can know Him intimately. Pray for the Spirit to soften and open their hearts toward truth. Pray that God will empower you to walk faithfully in step with His Holy Spirit.

To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22-23



WEEK 2 | DAY 5

What is My Role vs. God's Role? PART 2

In yesterday's devotion, we took a closer look at God's role in evangelism, through the power of the Holy Spirit. And today we'll examine what our role really is: actually, sharing our faith and changing lives. While we find encouragement that God Himself is our advocate, God still uses His people to carry out His life-saving message for a hurting world.

In *1 Corinthians 9:1b*, Paul demonstrates that changed lives are the true evidence that God was at work, using Paul as an apostle. Paul asks the believers at Corinth, "Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?"

Just how are these changed lives accomplished?

We see Paul's effective strategy in *1 Corinthians 9:22-23*: "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings."

First, he suggests finding common ground with the people in our sphere of influence.

In the preceding verses (*1 Corinthians 9:20-21*), Paul mentions becoming like a Jew to the Jews when he's with Jewish people, and like the Gentiles when he's with people who didn't grow up with a Jewish background. When we go out of our way to help others feel like they belong, people notice. The NLT says "Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some." (*1 Corinthians 9:22*)

Next, demonstrate humility.

Paul doesn't have any kind of a "know-it-all" attitude here. He's flexible enough to keep on learning new things and engaging in two-way conversations so that he might save some people along the way. He also reminds those who are mature in their faith to show that they are still learning and growing (hence, "became weak to win the weak").

Third, make others feel accepted.

When Paul describes himself becoming weak "to win the weak," it's a reminder of the importance of finding commonalities with people from all different backgrounds. Whether that's a common interest or a similar struggle, look for ways to relate to those in your sphere of influence.

Finally, look for opportunities to talk about Jesus.

God gives us the chance to share our faith – we just need to be available and faithful to seize the opportunities when they come up! Of course, this is far easier said than done sometimes. In the coming weeks, we'll talk more about practical ways to help make that happen.

As humans, it can be difficult to wrap our brains around just why an all-powerful God uses us in the process of salvation. But let's remember these opportunities are a privilege, our chance to be part of making an eternal impact.

REFLECT

1. What special gifts has God given you to share your faith with others?
2. Jesus was known as a friend of sinners. (*Matthew 11:19*) As you think about your personal story, consider journaling some ways you can relate to people far from God right now. Ask yourself, how can I share my story of having Christ help me overcome the power of sin?

Group Discussion Guide

CONVERSATION KICK-STARTER

- If your group has been together for some time, ask this: Have people say the name of the person to their right or left and three things they like.
- If your group is new to meeting, discuss this: Have each person memorize the group members' first and last names. A chosen leader will point to any person and the group will have to say their first and last name. Switch the chosen "name caller" if you desire.

DEVOTIONAL DISCUSSION

- What challenged or impacted you from your reading and journaling this week?
- What from your processing this week are you feeling prompted by God to act on?

Group Facilitator | Consider picking one question from each Daily Reflection and discussing as a group.

The Bible's advice on how we should treat our neighbor is very clear. The Bible says, "Love your neighbor as yourself" eight times. Not once. Not twice. Eight times!










Loving your neighbor as yourself is so important to God that He not only repeats Himself, but also makes it a command. And it's not just one in a long list of many commands. Notice: Jesus coupled loving your neighbor along with the command to love God! (*Mark 12:30-31*)

The question is: "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:25-37*). Consider reading the passage together. In the story, Jesus defines neighbor real broadly. We will do the same.

GROUP REFLECTION

1. How have you been the recipient of neighbors' acts of kindness? Or vice versa.
2. As a group, brainstorm simple ways to love non-Christians in your sphere of influence. Consider what this could look like in your neighborhood, workplace and other places where you frequent, such as your gym, coffee shop or school).
3. Can you name eight of your neighbors? What are their names and write down some info about them and their family (Ex. They cheer for Da Bears, they have been married 25 years, they have two kids, she works for All State, etc.). Fill out this map to the best of your ability with the information of those neighbors:

WHO IS MY *Neighbor?*

4. What practical steps could you take to build more relationship with the neighbors on this chart?