

# Sharing Our Faith

## One Relationship at a Time

Learn how to purposefully bridge relationships with those in your everyday life who do not know Christ. Discover how to share your faith by following the model of Jesus in sharing your life with others.

A Ladies for Jesus Bible Study by Kelly Dixon

*You are the salt of the earth . . .*  
(Matthew 5:13a)

*You are the light of the world . . .*  
(Matthew 5:14a)

*. . . open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.*  
(John 4:35c)

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Your Name

## Introduction

There are two groups of people who do not like the thought of Christians sharing their faith.

Group #1: Christians

Group #2: Unbelievers

Christians dread the idea of having to go out to share their faith. It isn't because we are not convinced of the truth of the gospel, but instead it is because we fear the unknown and ultimately the rejection of man.

Unbelievers dread the idea of someone trying to convince them that they need to make a change in their life. They don't like their personal life being invaded and thus they place a wall up immediately.

So how do we as Christians overcome our fear and at the same time be gentle in sharing the love of Christ? How do we make unbelievers comfortable enough to allow us into their lives? How do we nurture others into seeing the truth of their sinful nature and the need for Jesus Christ as their Savior? The answer is simply: we must follow the lead of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. With a gentle touch and a genuine interest in the lives of those whom He came into contact, Jesus reached out His hand of love and touched lives. He is calling for us to do the same today. As His hands, feet, and mouths, Jesus is calling for us to submit to His Spirit so we can be strengthened to fulfill the great commission.

In this class we will take eight sessions to review materials I have obtained from these books:

1. *Matthew Manual: Sharing the Good News of God's Love with the People in Your Life*  
(by Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the My Hope with Billy Graham program)
2. *You were Born for This: 7 Keys to a Life of Predictable Miracles*  
(by Bruce Wilkinson, Author of *The Prayer of Jabez*; with David Kopp)

Each one of these books will aid us in having a better understanding of the call the Lord has given to us as Christians and how we will fulfill that call. The call of the Great Commission should not be one we back away from in fear or one we carry around guilt from because we are not fulfilling it. It is a call that we should look at as a way for the Lord to strengthen our faith in Him as we share our faith with others. A call to a life of joy!!

*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

May the Holy Spirit guide us through these classes as we strive to understand more about sharing His love. May He generously pour out His wisdom and may we overflow this wisdom and His love into the world so all will feel His presence; a presence that they will long to have as a part of their lives in a personal and heart convicting way.

Your Sister and Fellow Servant of Christ,

*Kelly Dixon*

**Notes about Object Lessons:** Each class leads with an object lesson. If you would like a list of suggestive object lessons, please contact Kelly Dixon at [kelly@ladiesforJesus.com](mailto:kelly@ladiesforJesus.com). Otherwise, you are encourage to come up with your own.

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# The Effective Christian Life

(Class #1)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

Every Christian is responsible to live a life that glorifies God (1 Corinthians 10:31) and to be a true ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20) for Him. Most Christians want to be used of God. For them it is not enough just to know they are on the Christian pathway. They want to be faithful and effective. The question is, how? Where do we start? What is involved?

## Memory Verses:

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

*For the wages of sin is death,  
but the gift of God is eternal life  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans 6:23 (NIV)*

In this class, we will explore some of the key principles to effective Christian service. Perhaps the first answer can be found by looking at the life of Philip, who introduced the Ethiopian official to Jesus Christ in Acts 8:26–38. In this passage we can see five important principles:

**First**, God SOVEREIGNLY worked out all the details involved in Philip's effective witness to the Ethiopian. He will do the same for you.

**Second**, Philip's LIFE witnessed to Jesus Christ. He was chosen as a worker in the early church because of his character (Acts 6:3–5). A good life not only glorifies God but is a powerful witness to the world. Our lives should demonstrate that we know Him.

**Third**, we find the HOLY SPIRIT vitally involved in Philip's life and ministry. "The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it'" (Acts 8:29). The Holy Spirit is the One who makes our lives attractive (Galatians 5:22–23). He is our teacher and guide. He gives us boldness and courage to witness. Our responsibility is to be yielded fully to all the wonderful resources of the Holy Spirit. Philip was led to someone already prepared.

**Fourth**, you will note the important part the SCRIPTURES play in telling another person about Jesus Christ. The Ethiopian was reading Isaiah 53 and asked Philip to explain the passage. Philip took the same passage, which deals prophetically with the crucifixion, and "told him the good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Philip knew the Scriptures and was prepared to explain the Gospel. If we are going to be effective Christians, we too must gain a working knowledge of the Scriptures to help others.

**Fifth**, the Bible is a record of God working mightily in and through the lives of ordinary people. Our responsibility is to step out in FAITH and trust God to use us.



## Grasping God's Word – What to Say

To be effective in God's work, you must allow God's Word to fill your mind so you will know what to say, and to change your life so that you become someone He can use.

Romans 10:17 → **Hear**

Deuteronomy 17:19 → **Read**

Proverbs 2:1-6 → **Study**

Psalms 119:9-11 → **Memorize**

Joshua 1:8 → **Meditate**

## Grasping God's Hand – Power to Say



### Legalism or Love

- Two Basic Human Needs:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Four D's that Road Block – *We can put up road blocks by being . . .*
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Two Important Don'ts
  - Don't play \_\_\_\_\_ in other's lives.
  - Don't \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- God's Solution
  - Romans 5:5 – God's love is poured out into our heart through His Holy Spirit.
  - 1 Peter 4:8 – Allowing God's love to permeate through us will cover a multitude of sins and allow us to love deeply.
  - Colossians 3:12-14 – Clothe our self with Christ – compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We do this so we can bear each other and forgive one another. This can only be done through putting on God's love so we can bind together in unity.

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### Further Group Discussion

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What do people want?                      What will they do to get it?                      Once obtained, what next?  
 After people obtained what they feel they really want, they find that there is still a void.

The thing that is missing is **a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!**

We are called to show the people in our lives how our personal relationship with Jesus Christ has changed *our* lives.

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

John 14:6 (NIV)

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# The Looks

(Class #2)

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This week's object lesson reminds me . . .

## Memory Verse:

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

As we begin to share our faith there are five steps we can take – we will call these *The Looks* :



**LOOK AROUND** and identify friends, neighbors, co-workers, fellow students, and family who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Write their names on your prayer list.



**LOOK UP** and pray every day for each person on your list. Ask God to open their hearts so they can see their need for Him. Pray that He will strengthen your relationship with them and that they will accept your friendship in their lives.



**LOOK OUT** for opportunities to build your relationships with these people. Spend time with them. Be transparent about your relationship with Christ, so that your friends can see the difference He is making in your life. God's Spirit will help you.



**LOOK FORWARD** to sharing your life with them and to the day they may see their need for Christ as their Lord and Savior. Invite them out for coffee or over for a meal. Let them experience life with you and look forward to spending time with them. The more they see your life with Christ the more they will long to have the same relationship with Christ as you have displayed.



As you look forward to each and every opportunity God gives you to share more about Him to them, prepare your heart for sharing and for the opportunity to ultimately bring the message of salvation to them. Prepare your own story by using this model:

- Tell what your life was like before you received Jesus. (30 seconds)
- Explain what caused you to turn to God. (30 seconds)
- Share the circumstances of how you received Him into your life. (60 seconds)
- Repeat the prayer you prayed to receive Jesus Christ. (30 seconds)
- Explain how your life has changed since Jesus became your Lord and Savior. (30 seconds)

Once you share your story, ask if they would like to have the kind of hope you have. Invite them to do what you did and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Tell them that they can ask Jesus to be the leader of their lives, simply by repentance. They can turn to God through prayer. Prayer is just talking to God. Because He's God, He hears everything we think and say. Those who want to make a decision can repeat after you as you read the following prayer:

*“Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from running my own life, and now I ask You to run it. I invite You to come into my heart and life. I trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' Name, amen.”*



**LOOK AFTER** those who give their lives to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith. To look after someone means to not just lead them to the saving knowledge of Christ and then give them a Bible and disappear from their lives.

Your relationship with your new brother or sister has only just begun. You have a lot more to share with them as you encourage them to remain faithful to their commitment and grow in Christ. We will talk in detail about this in the last class. Meanwhile . . .

**Invite them to church and your Bible Study.** If you do not have a Bible study you attend and you don't know of one you can attend, then invite them to come over weekly so you can study the Bible together. As you purposefully build more relationships for Christ, you may start your own Bible study group. ☺

Teach them basics about the Bible.

- a. Help them find the books of the Old and New Testaments.
- b. Read with them in the gospels about Jesus' life, miracles, and teachings.
- c. Teach them how to read a portion of the Bible and apply it to their own life.

**Help them learn to pray.** . Your prayers should be simple and brief, so your friends do not feel overwhelmed by your prayers.

- a. You may need to teach them phrase-by-phrase how to pray—you say a phrase, and then they repeat after you.
- b. Teach them the Lord's Prayer, how to give thanks for their food, how to pray when they wake up and when they go to sleep, and how to pray when they face a problem during the day.

**Help them understand repentance and restoration.** Christians may fail or fall into some sin. New believers need to learn that when we fail or fall, we can come to the Lord Jesus in repentance, and He will help us recover so we can again walk in God's pathway. Teach new believers that they can recover, even after a sin (1 John 1:9). Help them get up again (Galatians 6:1).

**Tell them about the work of the Holy Spirit.** He draws us to Christ, He gives us faith to believe, He gives us the desire to live in purity and to know God, He gives us strength for each day, He gives us gifts for Christian service, and He intercedes for us when we do not know what to pray. Help the new believers become aware of God's work in them through the Holy Spirit. (See John 14:15–27.)

**Introduce them to other Christians.** You will help the new believers in some things, while God will use other Christians to help them in other things. Through prayer, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and Christian fellowship, new believers can be strengthened until they grow in Christian maturity—and then they can bring their family, friends, and neighbors to Christ. (See Colossians 1:28.)

*Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.  
Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow,  
will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.*  
Psalm 126:5-6

*As we discussed the five looks, these individuals came to mind . . .*

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## God Powered Opportunities

(Class #3)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

Jesus tells us in John 14:12-14,

*Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Jesus walked with the people and performed miracles on a daily basis. He gently showed them their need for Him. While the miracles He performed probably brought authenticity to His teachings, the showing of a loving hand through those miracles brought clarity to their need. Jesus said, ***whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these.*** Don't miss that important part. We have been called to be Jesus' hands in doing miraculous works here on earth. He has given us the power to do so.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-18. How should we look at those around us? (v. 16)

What does this Scripture tell us about those who are in Christ? (v. 17)

Who does this for us? What did He give us? (v. 18)

God has created us anew so that we can be reconciled to Himself through Christ AND so we can minister of that reconciliation.



**Are you ready to allow God to minister through you?**

### **Empowered to Share your Faith in a Miraculous Way**

When we received Christ as our Savior the Holy Spirit (the Helper) was given to us by our Heavenly Father.

Jesus said in John 14:15-17,

*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

Look at the following verses and list what they have to say about the Holy Spirit, His role and His power.

Ephesians 1:13 ~

John 16:7-15 ~

Romans 8:26 ~

Acts 1:8 ~

**The Holy Spirit has been given to us to strengthen us in our walk AND to empower us to share our faith!!**

## Empowered to Do Good Works

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*  
Ephesians 2:8-10

God has prepared good works for us to do. Did you know that those works are all centered on the sharing of His love to the world? If that is the case, then we should be performing miraculous works every day. In your everyday life, consider how the following could be an effective way of doing good works that share Christ.

Taking a friend to work who doesn't have a car.

Taking someone to lunch who seems to be depressed.

Donating your *good* clothes to a friend who just got a job.

Cleaning out your closets to see what can be used in doing good works.

Fixing an acquaintances' car that is broke down, even though you hardly know them.

Paying for a family to eat at FEAST even if they don't attend want to a class.

How can the above examples be a "miracle" in someone's life?

By doing these things, how will it show the love of Christ to them?

*The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.*

**Titus 3:8**

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### *Further Group Discussion*

Did you know that God is in the miracle delivery business? Did you know that *you*, as a follower of Christ, have been called to be the deliverer of these miracles by sharing your life and ultimately sharing your faith?

What miraculous power have you experienced lately in sharing your faith?

How can you be more proactive in looking for opportunities God has placed in your life for sharing your faith?

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13) . . . And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)*



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# Sharing God's Heart for People

(Class #4)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

## Memory Verse:

*But God demonstrates  
His own love for us in this:  
While we were still sinners,  
Christ died for us.  
Romans 5:8 (NIV)*

In Acts 13:22 we see where God says,

*I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart;  
he will do everything I want him to do.*

Recall David, he was not exactly a poster child for a follower of God. On his list of sins was adultery and murder. But the special thing about David was his heart of repentance; a heart that would seek to please God. Note how God said that David would do everything God wanted him to do. David made mistakes, but even in those mistakes he had a heart that would seek to please God.

When we are called to share our faith, we must look at the people in this world through the eyes of Christ. God has a plan for their life and He wants us to share in His desire for them to discover that plan. In this class, we are going to talk about how we can make God's agenda and heart for people our own. In implementing these lessons, we will be allowing God to deliver through us a miraculous sharing of His love for people to anyone at any time.

## Surrender: Let Go and Let God Work

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.  
Psalm 37:7*

Did you know that when this verse says "be still" it doesn't mean you should play the freeze game and look around for someone to tag you making you mobile once again? Rather, this being still is the opposite of fretting and it means we should **surrender** ourselves before the Lord.

Surrendering your life means:

- † Following God's lead without knowing where He's sending you;
- † Waiting for God's timing without knowing when it will come;
- † Expecting a miracle without knowing how God will provide;
- † Trusting God's purpose without understanding the circumstances.

You know you are surrendered to God when you rely on God to work things out instead of trying to manipulate others, force your agenda, and control the situation. You let go and let God work. You don't have to always be in charge. Instead of trying harder, you trust more.

When we consider sharing God's heart for people, we must surrender ourselves to His agenda. We must prepare for the inevitable collision between our preferences and God's by yielding our rights in advance.

**Consider how Jesus displayed His heart for people in the following scenarios.** How would you have been tempted to not take time for these collisions of God's agenda with yours?

Jesus' path collides with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10):

Jesus' path collides with a Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-26):

Jesus is interrupted by Friends of a Lame Man (Mark 2:1-12):

Jesus's night is interrupted by a visitor, Nicodemus (John 3:1-21):

Surrendered hearts show up best in relationships. You are not self-serving, you don't edge others out, and you don't demand your rights. Jesus displayed this when He had collisions with those in Scripture who did not necessarily work into His agenda for the day. However, even though God has a heart for His people and He uses people (Christians) to share that heart, one of the biggest challenges to sharing the love of God is . . . well . . . people! This challenge can show itself in two ways:

1. People **who do know** about the love of Christ ~ us. We can cause a challenge by not yielding to God and by forcing our own agenda upon people.
2. People **who don't know** about the love of Christ. By human nature we are selfish people who like to control our own lives. We push away concepts of a God who loves us because it doesn't allow us to control the day to day tasks of our lives. Even though we feel like our circumstances are out of control, we still want to be the ones with our hands on the steering wheel.

### **Don't tell me I might have to change my belief about people!**

If we go into our day wearing our **preferred people** sunglasses, we will miss a significant percentage of God's agenda to share His love with people. Many times as Christians we talk about how we want to serve God and share our faith, but we put on these preferred people sunglasses which allow us to pick and choose the person. But one of the ways we serve Christ is by serving others that *He sees* needs to know about His love.

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*  
**Colossians 3:23-24**

Remembering whom you serve lies at the heart of sharing God's heart for people. See in every face the face of Christ. Serve Him in "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40). Put His heart and His agenda for people first. That's how sent ones stay in motion for a lifetime with the right motives and right priorities toward the right destination for God.

### **So what keeps us from sharing God's heart for people?**

If sharing God's heart for people unlocks a sustainable life of delivering God's love, what keeps so many of us from doing it? There are at least three common wrong beliefs that stop well-intentioned sent ones from getting far in sharing God's love. See where you find yourself in each set of these statements:

#### **Choosing the appointment God has for me:**

*Belief A:* If I'm busy doing good things, I'll be less likely to miss sharing God's love.

*Belief B:* Since I can easily miss sharing God's love even while I'm busy doing good things, I need to stay alert for God's direction.

#### **Understanding the people problem:**

*Belief A:* I should serve others if they are worthy and grateful.

*Belief B:* I should serve others because I'm serving God and showing His heart for people. Whether or not I feel they are deserving or grateful is irrelevant.

#### **Sustaining a lifestyle of sharing God's love:**

*Belief A:* Once I experience God's love, my new way of life will sustain itself. I won't have to worry about personal motives and priorities getting in the way of God's plans.

*Belief B:* I can sustain a lifestyle of sharing God's love only by having God's heart for people, putting God's plans ahead of mine, and serving "as to the Lord."

*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*  
**1 Peter 2:9**

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# Partnering with God's Spirit

(Class #5)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

**Memory Verse:**

*And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Romans 5:5 (NIV)

So far we have established that we have been sent on a mission and we need to develop God's heart towards people. When we come face to face with the reality of this mission, the next daunting question is, "How exactly are we supposed to deliver a supernatural message when you are so completely human?"

When faced with the challenge of delivering God's heart for people, the following verse is good to remember.

*And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:19

We usually attach this verse to material things, but as God sends us out He will equip us to do what we need to do. When it comes to sharing our faith, He has given us His very own Spirit. However, there is something very important we must do for His Spirit to use us effectively in delivering His message.

***We must partner with the Holy Spirit by pre-committing to cooperate with Him at every opportunity to accomplish God's work.***

Consider this question,

*Would you rather have Jesus living as your next-door neighbor or the Holy Spirit dwelling in you as He already is?*

Many hesitate in answering this question because it feels as if it requires them to choose between God and . . . God! However, Jesus has already answered this question for us.

***But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.***

John 16:7 (NASB)

Jesus tells us that He would rather be dwelling in us than walking with us. Hmm . . . This makes me ask myself, "How much am I allowing God's Spirit to infiltrate my life? Am I allowing Him to be my indwelling Guide or am I just 'walking' through the steps of being a Christian and not partnering with His Spirit to lead me?"

## How does the Spirit Work?

How do God's Spirit and God's servants work together, practically to deliver His message to the lost? Consider these ways that the Spirit does what we cannot do during our encounters with our mission.

***The Spirit knows the other person.*** The Spirit, who "searches all things" (1 Corinthians 2:10) has intimate, complete knowledge of everyone, including the people He sends us to for sharing our faith. He knows what they are thinking when they woke up, what happened to them at work yesterday, and what secrets they plan to keep until they die. He knows what will go straight to their heart.

***The Spirit knows us.*** The Spirit also knows our strengths and weaknesses, our fears and limitations, and leads us purposefully to a person who needs to know Christ. He isn't an impersonal force moving objects around on a chessboard. He is a *personal* God who knows everything about us, loves us perfectly, and can perfectly match us with the right person at the right time to deliver the right message.

**The Spirit guides us.** Jesus said, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:3) How do we experience this guidance? Responding to the guiding of the Spirit should become a natural process to us. As one who has asked God to send you and you are passionate in sharing His heart for people, you must be confident in knowing He will instruct you in knowing what He wants.

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go;  
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.  
Psalm 32:8*

The Spirit will guide us while we are in motion to serve God. The New Testament uses words like “led,” “compelled,” and even on rare occasions “were forbidden” to describe how the Spirit communicates God’s heart to His servants. Our part is to begin doing as much as we know He wants from us and then keep expecting further guidance.

**The Spirit speaks of the Father and Son.** Everything the Spirit does is directed by God the Father, and it’s for one purpose: to accomplish God’s Will and to bring glory to Jesus.

**The Spirit empowers us.** Three times in Acts 4 the disciples are described as sharing the gospel with boldness. Recall that these were the same men who cowered in fear when Jesus was arrested. What changed? The Father had sent the Spirit and they had experienced His power. We have the same Spirit working powerfully through us!

**The Spirit does the miracle.** We are partnering with the most powerful – God Himself. He is the one who is delivering salvation to the world through His Son. We are simply blessed to be invited into partnership with Him.

**But we do the work!** We should look at our part in this way, “100 percent Spirit, 100 percent me.” We are to do the work, and the Spirit empowers us to do it. At the same time, He works in the hearts of those who need Him. If you are guided to witness, to show compassion, to help the poor and needy, or to give of your resources, then your part is to open your mouth, your heart, your wallet – to get started. The Spirit will give you boldness, guidance, information, and everything else you need in the process.

## Refreshing Our Minds about the Spirit

When we consider the role the Holy Spirit plays in sharing our faith, we must look at our core beliefs about the Spirit. Nothing changes what we do like changing what we truly believe. Since beliefs determine our actions, see if you recognize your beliefs or unstated assumptions in these common misconceptions:

### My understanding of the nature of the Spirit:

*Belief A:* God’s Spirit is too elusive, impersonal, and unpredictable for me to connect with in a practical way to share my faith.

*Belief B:* The Holy Spirit is real, personal, and knowable, and I am invited to understand who He is and how He works, including in the area of sharing my faith.

### My feelings and the Spirit’s purpose:

*Belief A:* The primary purpose of the Spirit is to help me feel spiritual or close to God, especially when I worship.

*Belief B:* The primary purpose of the Spirit is to help me accomplish God’s agenda on earth.

### My self-reliance versus partnership with the Spirit:

*Belief A:* I can probably accomplish everything God wants me to do today by my own faithful efforts and discipline.

*Belief B:* I can accomplish everything God wants me to do today only by partnering with the Spirit.

### My suitability to partner with the Spirit: lament

*Belief A:* God will probably not have a need for me to share my faith today, because I’m not specifically trained or gifted.

*Belief B:* The Spirit is available equally to all who know Christ. God desires for me to share my faith by partnering with His Spirit.

*“The more you purposefully partner with the Holy Spirit, the more He will release His power and intentions through you.” ~ Bruce Wilkinson (You were Born for This, pg. 91)*

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# Taking Risks of Faith

(Class #6)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

Along our journey of sharing our faith we will come to the point where we have to take a risk of faith. We have to go beyond being passive in our approach to taking a risk in order to show God to those we are sharing our faith with in our lives. **A risk of faith is a purposeful action you take, in spite of discomfort or fear, to exercise your faith during the time you are sharing God's love.** When you are faced with an unbridgeable gap between what you can do and what God clearly wants done, you take a risk to act anyway, depending on Him to come through. When God supernaturally bridges the gap, He enables you to share His love and demonstrate His glory.

## Memory Verse:

*I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart.*  
Mark 11:23 (NLT)

## Unbelief Hinders Us in Sharing God's Love

Unbelief is a sin that hinders us from sharing God's love because it is a road block of the flow of God's love through us. In Matthew 17:14-20, Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy, who the disciples could not. The disciples asked Jesus, "Why couldn't we cast out the demon?" Look up the Scripture reference and list Jesus' answer below.

According to Jesus, the amount of our faith is directly related to the likelihood of us showing His miraculous power to the world. Therefore, unbelief must hinder in our sharing of God's love.

When we feel fear and do not want to take a risk of faith, then the root of that fear is unbelief in our hearts. That is why the greatest obstacle in sharing our faith is not fear but unbelief. **Unbelief is our unwillingness to believe that God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do.** There is only one way to tear down unbelief in our hearts and that is to claim the truth. We look at the feeling of fear as being a sign that we must stop doing what we have set out to do for the Lord. However, fear is a natural emotion that we must work through in order to share God's love. We don't tear down unbelief by mustering up our courage or fan the flames of emotion. We tear it down by rejecting the lies, claiming the truth, and acting on it.

## Having a Faith that Moves Mountains

Jesus was teaching His disciples and us today that real faith in God so radically changes what you know is possible that it will change what you attempt and what you accomplish for Him. There is a direct connection between what you initiate with faith and how God responds with His supernatural power. This type of faith is not a one-time step. On the contrary, it is a practice which we do daily.

Consider in Matthew 14:22-33 when Peter took a step out of the boat to walk towards Jesus. In this Scripture Peter requested that the Lord bid him to come to Him and Jesus said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and walked on water for a while because he kept His eyes on Jesus. However, as soon as he took his eyes off Jesus and he allowed doubt to rise in him, he began to sink. Jesus then reaches out to catch him and He said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Compare Peter stepping out of the boat to a baby learning to walk . . .

Jesus wasn't getting on to Peter because he stepped out of the boat. He just pointed out to Peter that faith must be conquered with every step we take.

### **Change what you think about faith and experience more of God's miraculous power!!**

As in the previous sections, consider these belief statements about faith and see what pattern you have kept in your belief about God showing His power in your life.

#### **How my faith is linked to God's showing His Power.**

*Belief A:* Faith for miracles requires me only my belief in God, not to act upon that belief.

*Belief B:* Faith for miracles requires me to exercise *my faith*. Specifically, I must take proactive risks based upon what I believe about God and what I believe He wants done.

#### **How risk unlocks an opportunity to show God's Power.**

*Belief A:* In the course of sharing my faith, I should never put myself or God in a risky situation.

*Belief B:* During an opportunity to show God's power, my risk of faith is often necessary to unlock a miracle for another person.

#### **How I should respond to discomfort or fear during an opportunity to show God's love.**

*Belief A:* When I feel discomfort or fear, it is a sign that God must not be in it or that I am the wrong person for the job. Therefore, if I feel fear, I shouldn't proceed.

*Belief B:* I should proceed *in spite of* discomfort or fear. In fact, I should reinterpret those feelings as normal and even promising in the course of showing God's love to the individual.

### **Taking Action to Move from Unbelief to Active Faith**

You can take action today to move from unbelief to active faith by applying five simple but profound steps.

1. Affirm that God is who He says He is.
2. Admit to God that unbelief is sin and apologize to Him for breaking faith in your relationship with Him.
3. Recount and remember how God has come through in the past for you and for so many others in the Bible and history.
4. Keep your eyes on Christ, not the circumstances you find yourself in or the feelings you are experiencing.
5. Pre-commit to purposefully exercising risky faith, whenever it is called for you to share God's love.

Every genuine act of faith expands your horizons for God. Before long you will find yourself actually looking for greater risk opportunities for Him because you know that God wants to show His love to this world in a miraculous way that brings Him glory. And just by knowing and experiencing this, you will be so rewarded that you will want to show God's love more and more!

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# The Goal is NOT a Prayer

(Class #7)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

As committed believers making purposeful relationships with those in our lives who do not know Christ, we may get wrapped up in getting someone to "say the prayer of salvation." However, in reality, God is after more than a prayer. He desires a true heart that desires for Him to save them from their sins. Our goal then is to get the individual to see their need for Christ. During this process many scenarios will come up in which we want to be prepared. We don't want to stand back afterwards and regretfully say to ourselves, "I wish I said . . ."

## Memory Verse:

*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone,*  
Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

In tonight's class we will talk about scenarios we may encounter so we can become comfortable and familiar with grounds that may become reality. Overall, the purpose of this class is to ultimately prepare ourselves to be available for the Holy Spirit to use us when it is time.

**Scenario 1:** Sally is a person you have known for a while, but you have never had a meaningful conversation with her besides a smile, saying hello and asking about her two boys every now and then. You decide you will up the conversation with her and ask her if she attends a church. She tells you,

**Sally:** "I don't attend church. I used to but it became too hard. I have always had the feeling that Christianity was an ideal that was too difficult for me to ever achieve. I feel like I would never be able to live up to all of the expectations, rules and demands in order to be a true follower of Christ. Being a follower of Christ places impossible demands and expectations that aren't realistic for humans. I'm not interested in being rejected or feeling like a failure again."

How do you respond?

**Scenario 2:** You decide to go for a hike on your day off and you ask John to go with you. You feel his hesitation at first, but he finally says, "Yea, sounds good." During your trip you purposefully take the conversation to the creation around you and how beautiful are the things God has made. John fidgets as you mention God and you can tell he is uncomfortable. What will you say or do to ease him and lead him into possibly opening up and revealing why the mention of God is so uncomfortable to him.

How would you respond?

**Scenario 3:** Jack, a twenty year old guy, claims to be a Wiccan witch. He believes that he is the highest power and that he chooses his own fate. Wiccans have gatherings, like cult groups. He says that "spells" work if you know what you are doing and you have the right incantations.

**Jack:** "I believe that the human body is dead from birth. From the minute that you are born your body grows, but really you are starting to die. All of your living days you are feeding your body to become a buffet for worms and insects. Life is therefore worthless. I live a depressed life. I can't believe in a God for whom there is no proof. I like being depressed and I don't want to change."

How do you respond?

**Jack:** "Where was God when my six-month-old sister died?"

How do you respond?

**Scenario 4:** Katie is 17 years old and does not believe in God.

**Katie:** "Believing in God gets in the way. I want to live my life a certain way and this God and Jesus just gets in the way. Plus the Scripture you study says that Jesus told you to count the cost before you join. I'm just not ready. I've counted and counted and counted and it's just not worth the cost. I might change my mind someday or I might be able to *afford* Christianity, but not now. I have things to do before I give up my life.

How do you respond?

**Scenario 5:** Pat, a medical student.

**Pat:** "I'm not sure why I'm not a Christian. I do believe in God, but I am just not ready for a daily commitment. I have enough commitments with getting married and with getting into medical school. There are so many rules in my life that I just don't need anymore. There are already tons of people trying to tell me how to live my life."

How do you respond?

As we lead others to see their need for Christ, we will discover that there is great hurt in the world. Hopefully after tonight's class, you will see the constant need for us to stay in God's Word so we can be prepared for administering it to a world filled with people who are hurting.



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## Follow up and care

(Class #8)

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**This week's object lesson reminds me . . .**

In our final class we will look at the importance of what we do after someone has received Christ.

### Preparing for New Believers

In our second class we discussed the five “Looks”—

LOOK AROUND, LOOK UP, LOOK OUT, LOOK FORWARD,

LOOK AFTER—which are essential as you reach the lost for Christ. Through your personal ministry and the faithful presentation of the Gospel, many people will find new life in Christ. As we prepare to evangelize, several important questions remain:



What will happen to those who respond to the preaching of the Gospel?

Will they remain faithful to their commitment?

Will they take their place in the church?

Will they grow to become effective witnesses for Christ?

Jesus frequently spoke of sharing the Gospel as being like a farmer sowing seed. For example, in the parable of the sower in Mark 4, we learn that not everyone who hears the Good News will grow and mature; there are some disappointing results. However, we can also learn from this parable that many do respond and will grow and mature spiritually. Indeed, years of evangelistic experience have proven this over and over again.

### Paul was great at follow up!

As we think about a commitment to Christ, the initial decision to receive Christ is just the beginning. Continued spiritual growth and effectiveness will largely be determined by the amount of spiritual care and prayer given on their behalf. In fact, most of the books of the New Testament were letters of concern for young believers written by the Apostle Paul. In a real sense, they were “follow-up” letters to encourage the spiritual growth of churches and individuals. The Apostle Paul was an energetic pacesetter in the area of spiritual pediatrics—that’s the care of new believers. Consider the following verses from Paul’s letters and from Acts:

*“We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you. 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.”*

1 Thessalonians 2:6–8

*“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.”*

1 Thessalonians 3:10

*“We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.”*

1 Thessalonians 3:2

## Paul's methods and strategy were effective and fruitful.

These verses teach important strategies for our work.

**STRATEGY 1** Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Thessalonians 2:6–8)

Though it was very costly in every way—emotionally, financially, in time, in travel, in study, in writing, in criticism from others—Paul was “delighted” to give it all to see men and women come to faith in Christ and go on with Him. Often the greatest obstacle is our unwillingness to give ourselves and become involved with other people.

**STRATEGY 2** Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Thessalonians 3:10)

His prayer was earnest and persistent. Again and again in Paul's writing he tells the new believers how frequently he prayed. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3; 2:13.

**STRATEGY 3** Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Thessalonians 3:2)

When he couldn't do all he wanted to personally, he sent others he had trained to strengthen and encourage new believers.

**STRATEGY 4** Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Corinthians 2:9)

All of Paul's writings in the New Testament are in the form of follow-up letters—answering questions, encouraging, instructing, correcting.

**STRATEGY 5** Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 15:36)

When he wrote to the Thessalonians, Paul asked them to pray with him that he would have opportunity to return. Frequently on his missionary journeys Paul stopped not only to preach the Gospel to those who had never heard, but also to teach and encourage new Christians.

Paul's primary concern overall was for the growth and spiritual development of new Christians. His goal was their maturity.

*“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!”*  
Galatians 4:19–20

*“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.”*  
Colossians 1:28

The precedent is clearly set. New Christians do need care, and every effort must be made to provide it. That care should be provided by someone—and that someone is logically the person who prayed for, befriended, invited, and brought the person to meet Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God do their work, and we must do ours.

**Remember ... new Christians need someone, not something!**

*“Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you.”*  
1 Thessalonians 2:7–8



## Kelly Dixon, Author and Motivational Speaker

Kelly Dixon is an author and motivational speaker whose desire is to inspire you to draw closer to Jesus. She loves to share God's Word so that others not only learn it but experience it deeply. She teaches in a clear, precise, and concise way so that you understand what it means to "deepen your walk with Jesus." Having received and accepted the call to motivate other Christian women toward a deeper relationship with Christ, she began the Ladies for Jesus ministry; a ministry of many ladies who love the Lord and share in this desire. Kelly is married to Kermit Dixon, and they have two beautiful girls.



*Ladies for Jesus* ministry desires to inspire and equip all Christian women to deepen our walk with Christ; to devote ourselves wholeheartedly to Him; and to delight in our intimate relationship with Him. We hope that we have inspired you through fellowship, music and message to deepen your walk with Christ.

The entire *Ladies for Jesus* Leadership Team is made up of ladies who deeply love the Lord and want to experience Him more. They will inspire you as they share their gifts and life experiences with Christ. During our group sessions this team will spiritually grow along with you as they lead you in exploring the retreat's topic at a deeper level. The group sessions have been described as "fabulous" and "life changing." You definitely don't want to miss what the Lord has for us to explore in these retreats!

Check out the other Bible Studies Kelly Dixon has written for Ladies for Jesus on [www.ladiesforJesus.com](http://www.ladiesforJesus.com). Ladies for Jesus retreat topics are also located on the website. Please email [retreats@ladiesforJesus.com](mailto:retreats@ladiesforJesus.com) if you would like to book a Ladies for Jesus retreat.