

Church of God

Sunday School

THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX — WITNESSING



DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** We are to be God's representatives (Ephesians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:4).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Witnessing is telling others what you know to be true (Acts 1:8; Acts 22:15).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** God's Spirit will help you in witnessing (John 15:26; John 14:26; John 16:13).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Wisdom is necessary when witnessing (Proverbs 11:30; Colossians 4:5).
- ❑ **Friday:** God wants you to witness (Psalm 107:2; Matthew 28:19).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Preparations are needed to be a good witness (Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:12).

MEMORY VERSE: *"For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."*

—Acts 22:15

In December 1776, Benjamin Franklin became America's first ambassador to France (at the time this position was called the Minister of America). The Americans were in the midst of the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. Benjamin Franklin acted as a representative of the United States, successfully persuading France to aid the Americans in their fight for independence. Benjamin Franklin quickly learned the language and was said to have "displayed an uncanny knack at politics and persuasion." For nine years, Franklin lived in France, becoming a "beloved resident." Just as the people of France loved Franklin, he loved them as well. (Source: PBS.org)



The word *ambassador* means "an authorized messenger or representative." In the United States, ambassadors are appointed to personally represent their country while living in another country for a certain amount of time. It is important that ambassadors have good communication skills (know the language of the country they will be living in, know how to talk to people, be able to positively talk about the United States and its positions on important issues, and be a good listener). Many times the ambassador will be talking to people who have never visited the United States, and their impression of the American people and country can be greatly influenced by that representative from the United States.

Ambassadors for Christ



In Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus, he wrote, "I am an ambassador" (Ephesians 6:20), and when writing to the church in Corinth, he wrote that "we are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20). When Jesus lived here on earth, He told the people, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49). Jesus was sent by God; He was God's representative (or ambassador). What was Jesus sent to do? He was to do "the will of the Father" (John 4:34; John 5:30). (Read John 6:40 to see what God's will is.)

After Jesus returned to Heaven, He entrusted the responsibility of doing the Father's will to all who are saved. He has "entrusted [us] with the gospel" (1 Thessalonians 2:4 AMP). We represent another country (or kingdom; John 18:36). As ambassadors for Christ, our behavior and words represent our King—His character, His laws, His purpose. This can also be called *witnessing*.

"Thou Shalt Be His Witness"

Before returning to Heaven, Jesus told His disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). What does it mean to be God's witness? To witness is defined as "to bear in mind, to remember, to testify." One cannot be a witness of an event they know nothing about. The disciples had spent much time with Jesus, seeing the miracles and hearing His sermons. They were "eyewitnesses" (Luke 1:2). However, being a witness was not limited to this, as the Apostle Paul was told by Ananias to "be [God's] witness unto all men of what thou has seen and heard" (Acts 22:15). How could Paul be a witness when he did not physically see all that Jesus had done? Acts 1:8 tells what is needed before someone can become a witness: "the Holy Ghost."

Before you can witness, you must BE a witness. When you are saved, God's Spirit comes to live in your heart, making you a witness and then giving you the power to witness through your life and through your words. When you allow God's Spirit to work through you, you are showing others their need of a Savior (John 16:8). God's Spirit (also called the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth) will "testify" of Christ (John 15:26), "teach you all things" (John 14:26), and "will guide you" (John 16:13). Without God's Spirit helping you, you cannot truly witness to others.

Why Should I Witness?

There are many arguments for why a Christian cannot witness, or tell others about Christ. Some excuses are: "I don't want to offend anyone" or "Everyone has their own beliefs" or "People just do not care." While it is true that "he that winneth souls [must be] wise" (Proverbs 11:30), often Christians let fear prevent them from saying anything about the Lord. Is there something or someone who is very important in your life? Something that made a great impact on you or someone who made a great change in your life? If so, have you ever talked about it, have you ever shared it with others? If you spend time with someone, no doubt, it will not be long until you will begin to see what is important to him or her. It will become evident from his or her conversation. For Christians, salvation and living for God is the most important thing in their life—it is their life. So, why is it so hard to tell others about it?

Psalms 107:2 says, "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so . . ." Jesus commanded all Christians to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19 AMP). In John 14:21 Jesus revealed that true love for God is shown by obeying His commands. The most important reason the Christian should witness to others is because it is the will of the Father (an ambassador does the will of the one who sent him). "The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed" (Hudson Taylor). Another reason you should witness is because there are people who want something different. The Bible says, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few" (Luke 10:2). A poll was taken of Americans who used to attend church services. In that survey, 20 percent said they would start going to church again if someone would just talk to them about spiritual matters. A third reason for witnessing is found in Jesus' warning concerning people who are ashamed of Him (Luke 9:26).

How to Witness

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to witnessing for Christ is not understanding how to do it. Some might have tried it once or twice, and it went so badly that they never tried again. It is needful that every Christian give some thought and preparation for witnessing before an opportunity comes along. An ambassador must be a citizen of the country he is representing. Likewise, you must be a citizen of Heaven (Philippians 3:20 AMP), or be a Christian. Just as an ambassador must know what he is representing (the country and its president), you must have some knowledge of the One you represent. This comes through prayer and Bible study (1 Peter 3:15). You cannot have hidden sin (Philippians 2:15), for if you do, it will hinder your witnessing.

Keep in mind that your actions speak louder than your words. There is an old saying: "What you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you are saying" (Ralph Waldo Emerson). Avoid foolish quarrels (2 Timothy 2:23-24). Watch your attitude when people treat you badly. Do not just repeat what you have heard your parents or pastor say. Study and ask questions so that you know and are persuaded what you believe is true (2 Timothy 1:12). Work to be patient with others, and very importantly—become a good listener. "People do not care what you know until they know that you care" (Theodore Roosevelt). Above all, ask God to teach you and to lead you. "Lead me to some soul today, O teach me, Lord, just what to say. Friends of mine are lost in sin and cannot find their way."



Bible Quiz



1. List some qualifications one needs to be a good ambassador:

2. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ?

3. What is the will of the Father, according to John 6:40?

4. What does it mean to be a witness?

5. What is the first thing one needs before witnessing to others?

6. What are reasons someone might give for not witnessing? (Can you think of any not listed in the lesson?)

7. How can you overcome hindrances to witnessing?

8. What two things spoken of in Proverbs 29:25 and John 12:43 can be a hindrance to witnessing?

9. What three reasons are given in the lesson as to why you should witness?

10. How can you prepare for witnessing?



Look for everyday experiences that might be an opportunity for witnessing. How did Jesus do this with the Samaritan woman in John, Chapter 4? Who spoke first? Did it matter?

Write down three things that hinder you from witnessing:

What are some ways you can overcome these?

Conversation Starters

(Things you might do or say to start a conversation with someone about God)

- Reading your Bible during study hall
- Walking away from gossip
- Refusing to cheat on a test
- Refusing to let someone copy your homework
- Listening to Christian music
- Always having a cheerful, positive attitude
- Taking time to help someone who is unpopular
- "Do you go to church?"
- "What gets you through the hard times?"
- "Do you believe in God?"
- "Do you have a purpose in life?"
- "What do you imagine God is like?"
- "What are your goals in life?"
- "Is God important to you? Why?"

Philip's Opportunity

Read Acts 8:26-40. Why did God choose Philip? How did Philip approach the Ethiopian (verse 30)?

PHILIP'S QUALIFICATIONS

- Knowledge of God's Word
- Boldness
- Compassion
- Obedience
- Enthusiasm
- Sensitivity to God's Spirit

Are these qualities working in your life?
If not, how can you develop these qualities?

Have you ever avoided opportunities to witness? Would preparation have made a difference?