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# ACTIVATED

Activated Basic Course 6 • Share Your Faith

## CALLING OF AN AMBASSADOR

The worth of a soul

## All Things to All People

Reaching people  
where they're at

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The age-old  
question



# activated

ACTIVATED BASIC COURSE 6 • SHARE YOUR FAITH

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

### CALLING OF AN AMBASSADOR

A story is told of William Gladstone (1809–1898), a famous Christian who was England's prime minister four times and one of the most prominent British political leaders of the 1800s. As he went up the steps of the parliament building, he often would stop and share the good news about Jesus with the little newsboy there.

But one day as he and his secretary were going into parliament, another newsboy rushed up to them, exclaiming, "Please, sir, the boy who sells papers here was run over by a carriage yesterday, and he's badly hurt. He's going to die, and he's asking for you to come and get him in." The prime minister questioned, "What do you mean, 'get him in?'" The lad replied, "You know, get him in to heaven!"

Gladstone's secretary, however, protested, "You don't have time to visit a dying newsboy! You know how important your speech is. It could change the course of history."

Gladstone hesitated only a moment, then said, "One immortal soul is worth more than my speech in parliament." So off to the little garret he went, where the newsboy lay crushed and dying on a rough mat in the corner. With tears streaming down his face, Gladstone led the boy in a prayer to receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior. The newsboy looked up into the great man's face and whispered, "I knew you'd come. Thank you for getting me in." Then he closed his eyes and went to be with Jesus.

You and I may not be part of an earthly diplomatic corps, but no matter who we are or where we're from, if we have Jesus, we are called to be *His* ambassadors. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21), and the apostle Paul wrote, "We are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20 NLT). May we each be faithful to our calling to bring the gospel and the love of Christ to as many people as we can.

For more information on *Activated*, visit our website or write to us.

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# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

BY MARIA FONTAINE

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR WITNESS IS YOUR LOVE FOR JESUS AND THE LOST**, and having the faith that the Lord will work through you as you reach out to share the good news with others. We each have unique opportunities for sharing the gospel with people and making a difference in their lives. In doing so, we are changing our part of the world! If just one person's life is changed through our witness, that person can in turn go on to reach others.

We each have a precious treasure—we have the truth. We have experienced the wonderful gift of salvation and a personal relationship with Jesus. We have the privilege of sharing God's truth and love with others.

While communicating the good news of salvation in person with someone is ideal, giving someone a gospel tract or other Christian literature to read is also a very effective method of sharing the gospel. When you don't have time to enter into conversation with someone, a tract can be a fruitful way to convey God's love and truth.

Even if you feel inadequate in your witness and you are not able to answer every question people may ask, even if you can't recall a lot of scriptures by memory, you can still share the good news with others. Of course, it

is important to build your knowledge of God's Word by studying the Bible to become a "good worker who correctly explains the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15 NLT).

It is also important to learn as much as you can over time about the foundations of your faith. Your faith will be strengthened by studying God's Word, and you also need an understanding of the Bible to help those you reach to come to the Lord and to grow in their faith. You want to be able to share scriptures when people ask questions so that you can "be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

But it is important to remember that God is the one who does the work through you (Philippians 2:13). You have to do your part to share the message and the truth, but then it's the Lord's Spirit that works in people's hearts and brings them to a knowledge of truth.

Jesus has commissioned us, as Christians, to preach the gospel in all the world to everyone (Mark 16:15 NLT). May Jesus give you the courage, vision, and faith to reach your part of the world with the good news.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■





# AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

BY PETER AMSTERDAM



AS CHRISTIANS, we are called to put our faith into action and reach out to weary and troubled hearts, the disadvantaged, downtrodden, and needy. Jesus came to serve, and we are called to do likewise. Serving those in need is a beautiful way to express our faith. The underprivileged, the needy, and the hungry need to know they are loved and cared about, that they are valued. God values them, and as Christians, we do as well.



Serving in orphanages, visiting the sick, ministering to prisoners, digging wells, teaching the underprivileged, participating in medical camps, advocating for the oppressed, and so much more, are valuable ways to make the world a better place and to bring the Spirit of Jesus into the lives of those in need.



Saint Augustine once said: "What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like."



Living our faith and following in Jesus' footsteps means putting faith into action and caring for others in every possible way, and doing so as unto the Lord. We reach out to those who may be impoverished, afflicted, and in need of God's healing balm and hope for the future. We search out those who may be healthy and wealthy, but who are weary, troubled, and lost. We are moved by the plights of those who are persecuted, ostracized from society, or marginalized.



No matter what the circumstances, we try to discern how to best be an example of God's love. It is part of being the light of the world and the salt of the earth as we shine God's light of love and truth upon those in need and demonstrate God's love in action (Matthew 5:14-16). We strive to become like Jesus, having His heart for people, and being moved to do what we can to





improve their lives, both spiritually and practically. We walk as Jesus walked. We follow the Master.

What we do for others—our service, our prayers, our giving—we do for Jesus. We don't do it for recognition, for monetary gain, or to advance in society. We do all that we do, in any ministry or giving of our time, to glorify the Lord.

As [2 Corinthians 5:20](#) says, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." We are representatives of Christ. We are citizens of heaven, and we represent the kingdom of God. We're on temporary assignment on earth to represent our country, our king. It's a great honor to be an ambassador, and we have a responsibility to conduct ourselves accordingly.

We represent the Prince of Peace and we are tasked with giving His message to the world. And what is that message? The second half of the verse clearly presents the message that we are to give: "We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."

There are millions, even billions, of people who do not know God personally, who have never heard of Jesus and who have no knowledge of the gift of salvation and the treasure of eternal life that awaits them at their acceptance of Jesus as their Savior. Our privilege is to share that good news, to introduce people to Jesus, and ultimately, to bring as many people as possible to heaven with us.

May we each be an active and worthy ambassador of Christ. We represent the most spectacular realm in the whole universe—the kingdom of God. It is truly a privilege to serve as one of God's ambassadors, and we can and should convey Jesus' love, care, and compassion in everything we do, whether small or great. By "taking the form of a servant," Jesus set the greatest example of service this world will ever see ([Philippians 2:7](#)).

Our love for Jesus moves us to serve others on His behalf. It motivates us to be His ambassadors in whatever situation we find ourselves. It compels us to



assist those in need, and to provide hope and healing to those with broken hearts.

We can be His hands to help and touch, His mouth to speak the truth and give encouragement and hope, His eyes to convey compassion, His feet to walk alongside a weary soul, and His arms to help carry their heavy burden. We do this for Him, as unto Him, because we are trying to do what He would do if He were here. We have the recorded example of Jesus' life on earth that shows us how much He loved us. We know from the Bible how compassionately He interacted with people in His day.



Jesus has entrusted us with the responsibility of passing on His personal, unconditional, all-encompassing love to our fellow man and fellow woman, to those who share the planet with us today. Let's *be* like Jesus. Let's *love* like Jesus. Let's open our hearts to others on Jesus' behalf. Let's be clear conduits for God to heal and save this needy and broken world.



PETER AMSTERDAM AND HIS WIFE, MARIA FONTAINE, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■





# ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

BY UDAY PAUL

**THE BIBLE TELLS US**, “Do not be shaped by this world” (Romans 12:2 NCV). It also tells us to “become all things to all people” so that by all means some might be saved (1 Corinthians 9:22). At first glance, these instructions may seem contradictory, but they can actually complement each other. God does not want us to conform to ungodly attitudes, no matter how prevalent they may be, but He does want us to be attuned to society in ways that enable us to better show His love to others and bring them closer to Him.

The apostle Paul was a good example of this kind of flexibility as he worked to spread Christianity to a great variety of people. When addressing a predominantly Jewish audience in Antioch, for example, he reminded them of the history of Israel from the time of Moses to the time of David, and then he showed how Jesus had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah (Acts 13:14–49). But when Paul spoke to the Areopagus council in Athens, made up of sophisticated Greeks who would not have been interested in hearing a history of the Jewish people, he began by referring to an altar he had seen in the city, which bore the inscription “To an Unknown God.” Then he quoted Greek poets to show

that the attributes of this god—creation, providence, and judgment—were fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 17:22–31).

Francis Xavier (1506–1552) also lived the “all things to all men in order to win some” principle. In order to relate to the Indian people who considered humility a virtue, he wore shabby attire and traveled on foot. When he later visited Japan, however, he found that humility was not considered a virtue and poverty was despised, so he adapted his dress code accordingly. Xavier did what was needed to present Jesus in the most relatable way possible to the people he wanted to reach.

Jesus Himself “became all things to all people” when He left the grand halls of heaven and the intimate fellowship that He shared with His Father to come to earth in human form (Philippians 2:5–7). He did this so that He could better relate to us, better understand our problems and weaknesses, and sacrifice Himself for the forgiveness of our sins (Hebrews 2:17). Jesus calls us to follow His example and manifest our love for others by reaching people where they’re at with the gospel message.

UDAY PAUL IS A FREELANCE WRITER, VOLUNTEER, AND TEACHER BASED IN INDIA. ■





# NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH

BY MARIA FONTAINE

GOD'S GREAT LOVE AND GRACE REACHES OUT TO ALL HIS CREATIONS, and He didn't create some people that He loves less and others that He loves more. He didn't label people of one race, ethnicity, class, or culture as the most favored, and the rest as less so. God shows no partiality ([Acts 10:34](#)).

As Christians, we are called to love all people regardless of their background, social standing, or any other characteristic. Jesus died and gave His life for *all* humankind. He has shown the greatest love possible by dying for each of us.

God loves all humankind equally, and He gave His Son for each one. The Bible tells us that "greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)). In God's love for all His creations, He yearns that every person would come to repentance and accept His free gift of salvation through Jesus. Jesus died for all people, and He is not willing that any person should perish, no matter who they are ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).

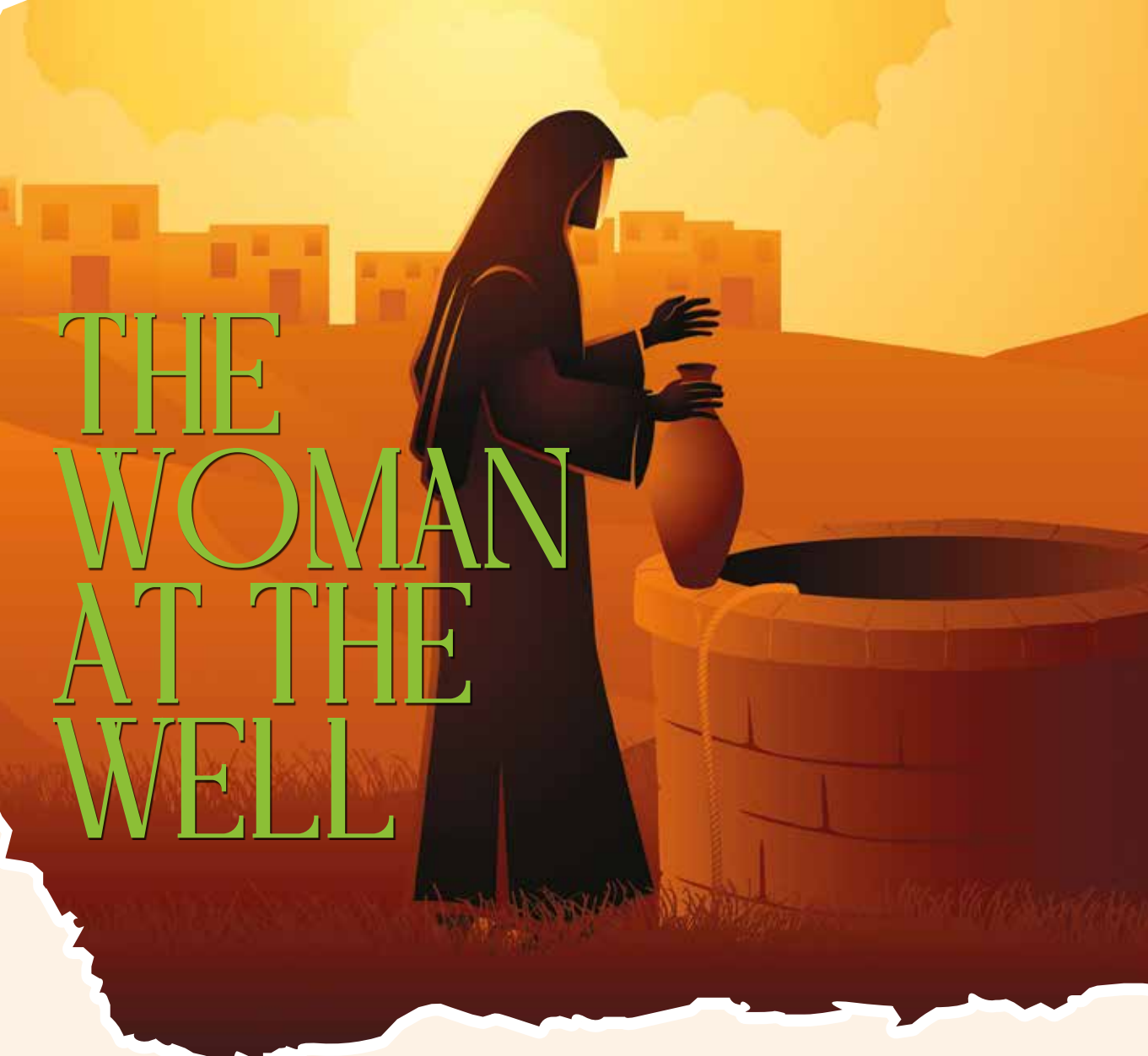
"Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). And when we align our lives with God's vision for humanity, we too can look past the differences in other people to see their inestimable worth and dignity as unique individuals



Every person is invaluable to God. He wants everyone to receive salvation through Jesus, and He rejoices when they do. God is no respecter of persons. Everyone, no matter what their worldly status, is a sinner before Him in need of His love and redemption. A Christian's responsibility is to preach the gospel to everyone, especially to those whom He brings across our paths.

Every nation on earth has people who need Jesus. In every city and every neighborhood there are people who need Him. *You* can be an instrument to bring Christ to them. They need the unconditional love of God. They need Christians who can not only help them find salvation in Jesus, but walk alongside them on their path in Christian growth. Whoever God brings across your path, whoever He calls you to reach, be "ready in season and out of season" to share the good news with them ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)).—*Peter Amsterdam*

created in the image of God. We can learn to love our neighbors and do our part to bring peace to the world by asking God to give us His love for others. The Bible says, "Christ left us an example, that we should follow His steps" ([1 Peter 2:21](#)). ■



# THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

ALTHOUGH MOST OF US HAVE HEARD THE TERM “GOOD SAMARITAN,” we may not be aware of who the Samaritans were and the enmity that existed between the Jewish people and the Samaritans. This enmity was rooted in history.

In the year 720 BC, the king of the Assyrian Empire had invaded Israel and carried the ten northern tribes away as captives to the land of Assyria. He then brought in foreign people to inhabit the cities of northern Israel where the Jews had once lived, which then became known as Samaria. (See [2 Kings 17:22–34](#).)

Many inhabitants of this region were descendants of the northern kingdom of Israel, but they had intermarried and assimilated into the non-Jewish culture of the people who came to settle there. These people came to worship the God of the Jews, but they did not consider Jerusalem to be a holy city, nor did they worship in the Jewish temple there. For them, Mount Gerizim in Samaria was the holiest spot where God was to be worshipped, and they built a temple atop it. Because the customs and religious worship of the Samaritans were different from theirs, the Jews avoided associating with them.





On one occasion, while traveling in Judea, Jesus decided to return to His home province of Galilee. The shortest, most direct route between Judea and Galilee was through Samaria, but since the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans, they would make a long detour around Samaria to avoid crossing through their land. But to His disciples' surprise, Jesus ignored such conventions and led them straight through Samaria.

After Jesus and His disciples had walked through Samaria for many miles over rough and rugged terrain,

they arrived at Jacob's well, which the patriarch Jacob and his sons had dug nearly 2,000 years earlier.

The thirsty, travel-weary band gathered round the well to slake their thirst, but they had no jug to draw water with and the well was over 100 feet deep. They were also out of food. Half a mile ahead lay the Samaritan city of Sychar, so it was decided that the disciples would go there to buy food. But Jesus was weary from the journey, so He stayed behind and sat by the well to rest (John 4:5–6).

Shortly thereafter, a woman came down the road carrying an empty water jug. As she approached the well, she was surprised to see a stranger sitting there. She looked at him suspiciously and thought, "Obviously a Jew." Hoping he wouldn't bother her, she prepared to lower her bucket into the well.

"Will you give me a drink?" Jesus asked.

Surprised, the woman looked at Him. "How is it that you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" she asked (John 4:7–9).

Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that said to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water!"

The woman replied, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get this 'living water' from?" Perhaps seeking to put this Jewish stranger in His place, she added, "Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and his herds?" (John 4:10–12).

Jesus responded by saying, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I give him shall *never* thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life!"

Now here was an extraordinary statement! Not quite sure if she understood Him, she answered, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming all the way here to draw water" (John 4:13–15).

Jesus unexpectedly replied, "First go call your husband, and come back," to which she replied, "I have no husband." Jesus then said, "You are right when you



say you have no husband. You have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband” (John 4:16–18).

The woman was shocked! How could this total stranger know such details of her private life unless He was a prophet? She decided this would be a good person to ask the most disputed religious question of the day.

“Sir,” she said, “I can see that you are a prophet.” She then pointed to the temple atop Mount Gerizim and said, “Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

Jesus replied, “Believe Me, the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem. But the time is coming—and has now come—when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:19–24).

The woman was astonished at His answer. “How wonderful,” she thought, “if we could just worship God in our hearts wherever we are!” She then proceeded to ask a greater question about the long-awaited coming of the Messiah.

“I know that the Messiah is coming, he who is called the Christ. When he is come, he will tell us all things.”

Jesus looked into her eyes and said, “I who speak to you am He” (John 4:25–26).

The woman looked at Jesus in amazement. Could He really be the Messiah, the Christ?

Just at that moment, Jesus’ disciples returned from town, and they marveled that He was speaking with a woman. As they approached, the woman left her water pot and ran back to the town.

When she arrived at the marketplace, she called out excitedly, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Can He be the Christ?!” (John 4:28–29). Seeing her conviction and enthusiasm, many people believed her account that she had spoken with the long-awaited Messiah.

Before long, Jesus’ disciples saw a large crowd of people rushing toward them, the woman in their midst. The people urged Jesus to stay with them and teach them. Jesus agreed to do so, and the Samaritans, rejoicing, led them back to Sychar.

For two days, Jesus taught in their city, and hearing the beautiful words of truth He taught, many people came to believe in Him, and remarked to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; for now we have heard for ourselves, and we *know* that this man is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world!” (John 4:39–42).

On the last day, as Jesus and His disciples were preparing to continue their journey to Galilee, a multitude from the city gathered to bid them farewell. The Samaritan woman bid Jesus farewell with a smile of joy, for now she fully understood the meaning of His words that day at the well, and a spring of living water welled up in her soul.

From this beautiful story in the Gospel of John, we learn that Jesus broke with the traditions of His day to reach lost and lonely souls with God’s love and truth. Not only did He look past the cultural, ethnic, and religious differences of the Samaritans so He could offer them the truth, He also looked past the sins of the woman at the well and saw a soul that earnestly longed for God’s love. This story teaches us that God’s love and salvation in Jesus are for all people. “For God so loved the *world* [and every person in it] that He gave His Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). ■



# SHARING YOUR FAITH

BY LI LIAN

SHARING OUR FAITH IS SOMETHING THAT MANY OF US FEEL WE SHOULD DO BUT SOMETIMES DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START. Here are some helpful tips.

**Ask meaningful questions.** Asking specific questions helps steer the course of the conversation. Jesus often started His teaching by asking a rhetorical question. “He said to them, ‘Which of you...?’” (Luke 11:5).

**Listen to the answers.** Listening to people enables them to open up and share about their lives and the current issues they are facing. “Everyone should be quick to listen” (James 1:19 NIV).

**Be adaptable.** Finding out about the people we interact with will help us better understand them and relate the gospel to them. “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

**Tell a story to illustrate your point.** Jesus was an expert at using parables and stories to capture His audience’s interest and teach a lesson (Mark 4:2). There are times in

a conversation where “This reminds me of a story I once heard...” can lead to a deeper discussion and witness.

**Use current events and happenings.** Throughout the New Testament, Jesus referred to local happenings when answering people’s questions, which enabled Him to bring out God’s perspective on the situations. (See Luke 13:4.)

**Share your personal testimony.** Explaining how you found Jesus or how God worked in your life makes the Christian faith a practical, living, real-world experience. The apostle Paul frequently shared his conversion story as part of his witness. (See Acts 26:1–23.)

**Use gospel literature.** A tract or other Christian literature is an effective way to share a witness with people you encounter throughout your day (2 Timothy 4:2).

**Be kind and gracious.** Not everyone will understand or accept what you believe, but it will be easier for them to consider if your speech is kind and gracious. “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Colossians 4:6).

**Bring them to a decision.** Everyone should be given a chance to know Jesus as their personal Friend and Savior. Sometimes a person receives Jesus on the first meeting, other times it can take years before the person is ready. While the decision is theirs to make, we can do our part to offer them the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

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# WHAT IS TRUTH?

BY MARGE BANKS

**STANDING IN THE JUDGMENT HALL OF ROMAN-CONTROLLED JERUSALEM**, face to face with Jesus, the prophet of Galilee, the procurator Pontius Pilate asked what was to become one of the most famous questions of all time: “What is truth?” Pilate apparently failed to realize that the answer was standing right in front of him. The Bible tells us that “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17), and Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Today we live in a world of relativism, where it would seem there are no absolutes. Relativism alleges that truth is subjective, elusive, changeable. Politicians utter promises they can't or don't intend to keep; spin doctors mislead; the world's commerce is driven by greed at the expense of integrity; history is revised; news reports are frequently biased, sensationalized, or otherwise distorted; modern entertainment blurs the lines between reality and fantasy; the Bible is viewed as mythical, irrelevant, and inappropriate for today's needs.

People may imagine what they will, disparage as they will, and try to make reality conform to their own

desires and agendas, but that doesn't change the truth. As Mohandas Gandhi put it, “God is, even though the whole world deny Him. Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.”

Those who close their minds to that reality unwittingly fulfill some of the saddest words in the Bible: “[Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:10–11). Even many sincere seekers of the truth look first in the wrong places. While they explore new forms of spirituality or take a psychological route toward self-improvement, for example, like Pilate they miss what is right in front of them: the liberating truth and love of God, which He freely extends to them.

But those who read the Bible with open minds and believing hearts will find what they've been searching for—answers to life's deepest questions and love vast enough to fill the deepest void—the truth. “If you abide in My word,” Jesus promises, “you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31–32). ■

Truth is timeless. Truth does not differ from one age to another, from one people to another, from one geographical location to another. The great all-prevailing Truth stands for time and eternity.—Billy Graham

FEEDING READING

# THE BIBLE ON TRUTH



TODAY THE MEANING OF THE WORD “TRUTH” has often come to refer to either “something honest or factual,” or to someone’s personal worldview. In the following verses of the Bible, truth is used in the deeper sense of “a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality.”

### **We should seek truth.**

Psalm 25:5: Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

1 Timothy 2:3–4 CSB: This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

### **God’s Word is truth.**

Psalm 119:151 NKJV: You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth.

John 17:17: Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

### **God has promised to reveal His truth to us.**

John 8:31–32: So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 16:13: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

### **Jesus is truth.**

John 1:14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 14:6: Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

### **Truth is pervasive and timeless.**

Psalm 119:160 NKJV: The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

Psalm 100:5 NKJV: For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations. ■

### PRAYER FOR THE DAY

## **Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace**

Dear Jesus, thank You for the privilege of being called to be witnesses of the truth of Your salvation and love to a lost and desperate world. It is a priceless calling to serve as ambassadors for the King of the universe.

May we be compelled by Your love to help each lost soul that crosses our path to have the opportunity to find salvation and rest in Your arms (2 Corinthians 5:14). Embolden each one of us with Holy Spirit power to do our part to reach the world for You. Make us instruments of Your peace to spread Your love and hope in our neighborhood, workplace, and community. Amen.



A hand is shown watering small green seedlings in a field. The background is a soft-focus green landscape. A large green leaf is in the upper left corner. The title 'THE RESULTS' is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below it, the author's name 'BY MARIA FONTAINE' is written in smaller, black letters.

# THE RESULTS

BY MARIA FONTAINE

EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE RESULTS OF YOUR WITNESS RIGHT AWAY, God has promised that His Word will not return unto Him void; it will accomplish His purpose (Isaiah 55:11). You may not see the results of your witness in this life because you don't always know if, how, or when the seeds of truth you plant in someone's heart will take root. Perhaps the person you witnessed to will eventually find the Lord due in part to something that you said, or your witness will have worked in their heart to cause them to be more receptive when another Christian witnesses to them or they read or hear about the gospel.

We can't always expect to be the sowers and the reapers, because the Lord said that some sow and some water, but it is God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Sometimes we enter into other people's labors to share the good news and sometimes others enter into ours. Sometimes we lead people to the Lord who have been a long time in preparation before reaching the point where they would yield their lives to Him. We come along at just that strategic moment when they are ready to receive Jesus, and we're able to reap due to all that has been sown and watered by others.

We may come on the scene in someone's life at the beginning stage as the sowers, where we plant the initial seed of the gospel. Or we may water the seed that was already planted in their heart by someone else. We may be answering more of their questions and sharing Jesus' love with them, and the Holy Spirit will continue to work in their heart through the witness they received. We may never see them again, but the Lord uses His Word and the love we shared with them as one more step in bringing that person to Him. Their eventual salvation will be a result in part of our faithfulness to share His love and message with them. ■



Not everyone is interested in knowing about Jesus or getting closer to God, so don't be surprised if some people don't receive your witness. It can be a bit disheartening when you reach out to people and offer them the most wonderful gift anyone could ever receive, only to have them brush you off, quickly change the subject, or even belittle or berate you. Don't give up. That person may not be ready to listen or get saved, but the next person might. If you persevere in your witnessing and in prayer, sooner or later you'll get positive results. (See the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:5-15.)

—Shannon Shayler



# WORTH IT ALL

WHEN JESUS LEFT THIS EARTH AND RETURNED TO HEAVEN, He explained that He was going ahead of us, to prepare a place for us (John 14:2)—a place where there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain (Revelation 21:4). “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9–10 NKJV). Knowing what glories, eternal joy, and rewards await us in heaven makes our present difficulties, trials, and tribulations bearable.

Our time on earth is an important part of God’s plan for each of us, but it doesn’t end here. Everything we go through now is not only making us into the men and women we need to be to fulfill His purpose for our lives, but it’s also preparation for the next life. The Bible says that as we contemplate the Lord’s glory, we ourselves are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory (2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV).

So when life is a daily struggle and you wonder whether it’s really worth it or if you’re making a difference in the world around you, remember what lies ahead. When your time on earth is over and you meet Jesus and enter His heavenly kingdom, if you have “kept the faith” you’ll receive a reward beyond description for having fought the “good fight” (2 Timothy 4:7–8).

Your heavenly Father watches over you and loves you, and everything that He allows to come into your life—whether it seems good or bad at the time—will ultimately work together for your good (Romans 8:28). If you trust Him through it, you will become a better, wiser, more loving and useful Christian—a tool in His hands, a vessel through which He can pour forth His love and Word to comfort and strengthen others and to bring lost souls to Him.

Keeping your eyes fixed on the final destination—heaven—will encourage and reassure you that the difficulties you go through in this life are worth it all. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). ■

It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus;  
Life’s trials will seem so small, when we see Christ;  
One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase,  
So bravely run the race till we see Christ!

—*Esther Kerr Rusthoi*

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

# AS MY FATHER SENT ME

As My Father sent Me, so send I you. I send you out into a world of hurt and loss, pain and suffering, heartbreak and loneliness, need and yearning, so you can give this lost and lonely world what I have given you. Freely give of My love, compassion, and understanding to those who need it so desperately.

Wherever you are and whatever situation you're in, there are people nearby who need My love. I not only want to give them eternal life, I also want to give them life more abundant here and now—love, peace, understanding, and fulfillment. I want to transform their lives both on earth and in the hereafter.

Your words of friendship and compassion demonstrate My love and concern for them, that I want to be their friend forever. For those who have few faithful friends, your sympathy and understanding touches their heart. Your peace and trust and certainty of hope in the midst of life's storms are something they yearn for. The genuine love they see in you is like sitting in front of a warm fireplace on a cold winter night.

Everyone has influence, and when you influence a person for good, that person influences others for good as well, and the ripples of My love continue outward.

