

Giving Life Away - Week 1

Owning the Mission

John 20:19-23

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retain

Rick Warren, (The Purpose-Driven Church), reports on a survey that found 89% of church members believe the church's purpose is to "take care of my needs and those of my family." Only 11% said, "The purpose of the church is to win the world for Jesus Christ."

According to George Barna, in his book called, "Evangelism That Works," most churches have only a small group of people who have a passion for evangelism. Barna asks 3 probing questions to churches like ours:

1. "Do people "own" evangelism as the heartbeat of the ministry?"
2. "Is evangelism deemed the highest priority of the church?"
3. "Have the people caught a vision for reaching nonbelievers that gives the church definition, energy and direction?"

He concludes by saying, "If not, the organization is not truly a church but is simply a group of people intrigued by religion."

How would you answer the three questions stated above?

How do you think we can change the perception of evangelism in the eyes of the average believer?

Our opening text reminds us of the mission we've been entrusted with. Sunday we looked for four statements about the this mission:

He Accepts Us – Verse 19 “Peace be with you”

He Commissions Us – verse 21 – “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”

He Equips Us – verse 22 – “He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”

He Motivates Us – verse 23 – If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

In this lesson I want to look a little deeper into two of the statements.

1. **He Commissions Us** – verse 21 – “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”

Mark 16:15-20

¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” ¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

This is God's divine call to every believer to be a part of God's Search and Rescue Team. Every Born again believer is called to GO.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

We must take the initiative:

Luke 14:21-23

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways

and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

What examples can you think of that demonstrate “taking the initiative?

2. He Motivates Us – verse 23 – If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

Romans 10:13-15

For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

In **Romans 1:14** Paul declares, “I am a debtor,” pointedly noting his sense of obligation. Why? He answers this question in **Ephesians 2:1, 12-14**.

In verse 1 he declares man is dead, **needing life**.

In verse 12, man is walking a course of destruction, **needing deliverance**.

In verse 13, man is hopeless, **needing God**.

In verse 14, man is separated from God, **needing Christ**.

Jesus concludes the evidence of man’s need when He said in **Luke 19:10** “*For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” The motivation is that we owe a debt; the free gift of salvation is not something we could earn. It cost the Father and the Son everything.

Don’t you think we should be willing to pay whatever price is necessary so that others can partake of the free gift we have been given? Why?

What an awesome privilege and blessing it is to be a Christian! However, with the privileges come responsibilities. When we realize that we are debtors because of the grace bestowed on us through the free gift of salvation, then we will understand our obligation to be an active part of God’s Search and Rescue Team. My prayer is that you will step out today.

As a group, list some ideas that you could do together that would allow you to become an active part of God's Search and Rescue Team. Once you complete the list pick one or two of your ideas and set a definite time to implement them.

Giving Life Away – Week 2

A Proper Attitude Toward Evangelism

Today we're going to focus on a proper attitude toward evangelism. In order to have the right attitude toward evangelism we must understand the value of people. When we understand that people matter to God and how much they matter to God, then our perspective will change from "have to" evangelism to "want to" evangelism.

John 3:16 says, "*God so loved the world...*" We agree with this one but we don't always own it. We hear it so much that it doesn't penetrate our lives. In actuality, this belief is the hardest one to fully absorb into our value system.

Do you believe John 3:16 to the very core of your being? If not, why not? If so, how do you demonstrate it?

Before we will ever take the initiative to reach out to those who don't know God we will have to believe they are worth our efforts. I'm not talking about the conditioned Christian response where we agree with this mentally. But what I am talking about is believing it with all our heart.

Every person has worth and dignity because they've been created in the image of God. We must see people the way God sees them – valuable and precious. What are your thoughts on this statement?

Luke 15:1-24 –The Lost Coin, Lost Sheep, and Lost Son

MAIN IDEA: Lost people matter to God - and they should matter to us as well.

1. Something valuable is missing.
2. God performs an all-out search for lost people.
3. When lost people are found its time to celebrate!

Have you ever lost something really important? Describe what it felt like and what you did to recover the lost object.

We all know the pain of losing something that matters to us – whether it is a person, or an object, or even just computer work that is lost when a computer crashes. Our stomach gets this sinking feeling, and we begin to feel a bit panicky as the realization sets in that we've really LOST something!

As we take a look at these 3 stories, what we're going to notice is Jesus driving home a very important point about how God feels about people just like us. As I read through these verses now, be looking for the common elements that come through.

Luke 15:1-3

Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.² And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."³ So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

Lost Sheep - If one of you owned 100 sheep and you realized one was lost, what would you do? You'd leave those 99 in the open country and go searching for the lost one until you found it! Then when you find it – you'd put it up on your shoulders and bring it back to the fold. When you did, you'd gather all your friends and say, "Let's celebrate – I've found my lost sheep!"

I tell you that just like this, there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people already saved.

Lost Coin - Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. What would she do? Even if it were dark, she'd get up, light a lamp, and sweep the entire house and search for it until she found it! Then when she finds it she calls all her friends and neighbors and says, "Let's celebrate - I found my lost coin!"

In the same way, I tell you, the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner repents of his sins.

Lost Son - There was a man who had two sons. The younger one asked for his inheritance, received it and left home. He squandered his inheritance on wild living. After he'd spent everything, he found himself in a desperate situation: penniless, hungry, and alone.

He managed to find work tending to a herd of pigs, and he was so hungry he longed to eat some of the food he was giving to them! About this time he remembered how well his father's servants lived back home. So he got up and made the journey home again.

As he was finally walking up the road approaching his Father's home, his father saw him and was filled with compassion and love for him. He ran to him and embraced him. His father put a robe on his son, sandals on his feet and a ring on his finger and started a celebration because his son was lost and is found!"

All 3 stories tell the same message. Unlike the religious people, Jesus was saying lost people matter to God. We know this because of the 3 common elements of these stories:

1. In each story, something of great value was missing.

- The sheep was a significant part of the livelihood of the shepherd.
- The lost coin - 1 tenth of the woman's wealth! Vital to the old woman's survival -and it goes without saying that the lost son was of great value to his father.

When people are separated from God by sin, He feels the loss, and his love still says, "Even though you are way off track, you still matter to Me!"

How can we apply this truth in a way that would positively affect our personal evangelism efforts?

2. That which was missing was important enough to warrant an all-out search.

-When the shepherd discovered he'd lost a sheep, he did something drastic - he left his other sheep unattended for a time so he could go out and search for that sheep.

-When the woman discovered she'd lost 10% of her savings, she lit a lamp immediately and searched diligently till she found it

-The father whose son left of his own choice and squandered everything he had, still scanned the horizon day after day hoping for his wayward son to appear. And when he does he appears, he runs to meet him.

The point is, when you really value something and it is lost - you just naturally want to search for it.

Jesus is teaching us that God values people so much that he searches for those who are lost and separated from Him. In fact, Jesus' own life mission statement is this:

Luke 19:10 “*for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*”

John 3:17 *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

This is why Jesus came! To reach out to lost people and love them and provide the way for them to be saved! As God's representative on earth He did exactly what the shepherd, the woman, and the father in these stories did: he valued lost people enough to go where they were and find them!

How can we apply this principle in a way that would positively affect our personal evangelism efforts?

3. Retrievals result in rejoicing!

- The shepherd retrieved the sheep and celebrated!
- The woman rediscovered her coin and celebrated!
- The son came home and the father celebrated!

As Jesus told it, He tells that around the throne of heaven, the angels of God rejoice when one person who has been lost is found! These stories of Jesus teach us that lost people matter to God. He values people so much that he pursues us.

Share ideas on how to pursue lost and hurting people:

Giving Life Away -Week 3 What's Your Style? – Part 1

Mark 16:15-20

¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” ¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Picture in your mind the stereotypical evangelist: an animated, extroverted, finger-pointing preacher of hellfire and brimstone. Does this describe you? Should it describe you?

Many Christians dismiss the subject of evangelism because they can't handle the thought of street comer preaching or door knocking. They have committed themselves to church attendance, fellowship and prayer, but the thought of evangelism brings fear, what a tragedy for the church and the lost. The way to conquer this is to understand that there are as many different styles of evangelism as there are evangelists.

What is it going to take for the life-changing message of the gospel to penetrate our world?

We need to do whatever we can to make sure there are many “doors” into our church, but the most important thing we can do is to use these doors to “**go**” out into our mission field. When Jesus gave us our final marching orders, He challenged us to “go and make disciples of all nations...” (**Matthew 28:19**).

What do you think Jesus meant when he commission us to go and make disciples of all nations?

The Bible tells us that we are **salt and light** to the world. As salt, we're to give *taste* to a bland world, we're to work as a moral *antiseptic*, and we're to make people *thirsty* for Jesus. As light, God chooses to use us to *dispel* darkness, to give *guidance*, and to *reveal* Jesus to others. Every Christian occupies some kind of a pulpit and preaches some kind of a sermon every day.

Contagious Diversity

Not only must we have a good handle on the different *stages* of evangelism, it's also helpful to understand the different evangelistic *styles* that God has given to each of us. It takes all kinds of Christians to reach all kinds of non-Christians. **All people cannot witness the same way, but all people can witness some way.** Just as its freeing to understand that God wants us involved in some phase of the evangelism process with our pre-Christian friends, so too, it is very liberating to understand how God has wired you evangelistically. Once you figure out your evangelistic style, you'll have greater freedom to make an eternal impact in the lives of those around you.

How has the church's perception of evangelism hindered people from sharing their faith?

Are you comfortable going door-to-door and sharing the Gospel message? If not, how do you share your faith with others?

Remember this: Evangelism is *taking the initiative, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to help a person move one step closer in the process of coming to saving faith in Christ*. If God uses you to help someone take the next step toward Christ, you are successful in evangelism!

With the above statement in mind, what can you do to help someone you know take one step closer to Christ?

It's time to get rid of the shame associated with witnessing. It's time to be free to be who God has made you to be! Can you imagine what would happen in this community if we were all unleashed to communicate the gospel message in a way that is a perfect match for who we are?

If we don't want evangelism to be a low priority here at VCC, then we must understand that God wants to use each one of us in the greatest mission ever given – to reach lost people with the life-changing message of Christ. Instead of starting a program and trying to get each of you to fit into it, God wants to start by helping you discover the role He has designed for you to fill. Friend, God knew what He was doing when He made you! He custom-designed you with your unique combination of personality, temperament, talents, background, and spiritual gifts and He longs to harness and use these in His mission to reach this messed up world.

All people cannot witness the same way, but all people can witness some way.

During the next three messages, we're going to look at the way God equipped six people in the New Testament to fulfill different outreach needs. In the process, we'll discover six biblical styles of evangelism. As we go through these, ask yourself which one most closely resembles who God has made you to be.

Six Evangelistic Styles - Style Biblical Example Text

1. Confrontational - **Peter Acts 2**
2. Intellectual - **Paul Acts 17**
3. Testimonial - **Blind Man John 9**
4. Interpersonal - **Matthew Luke 5**
5. Invitational - **Samaritan Woman John 4**
6. Serving - **Dorcas Acts 9**

Giving Life Away – Week 4 What’s Your Style? – Part 2

Six Evangelistic Styles - Style Biblical Example Text

1. Confrontational - **Peter Acts 2**
2. Intellectual - **Paul Acts 17**
3. Testimonial - **Blind Man John 9**
4. Interpersonal - **Matthew Luke 5**
5. Invitational - **Samaritan Woman John 4**
6. Serving - **Dorcas Acts 9**

Principles related to these 6 styles:

- 1. The key is to discover your style and begin using it.**
- 2. It's likely that you will use a combination of approaches depending on the situation.**
- 3. Remember that no style is better than another.**
- 4. You will need to rely on others to help you.**
- 5. Each style has some inherent weaknesses and blind spots.**

The world is made of a variety of people: young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, urban and rural, with different races, personalities, values, political systems, and religious backgrounds. Somewhere, throughout this diverse population, there is someone who needs to hear the salvation message from someone just like you.

Six Evangelistic Styles:

1. Confrontational Style - "You Crucified the Wrong Man!"

Acts 2:36-41

³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Peter exhorted and challenged them. He confidently charged in and hit them with a frontal assault. It was so effective that three thousand souls were saved. Some people will only be reached when they are confronted.

Traits and Cautions

People with the confrontational style exhibit some common traits.

- Are confident
- Are bold
- Are direct
- Skip small talk and get right to the point
- Have strong opinions and convictions

If this approach describes you, let me give you a few cautions.

- Be sure to seek God's wisdom so that you'll be appropriately sensitive and tactful.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to restrain your desire to come on strong in every situation.
- Avoid judging or laying guilt trips on others who have a different evangelistic style. Remember that **all people cannot witness the same way, but all people can witness some way.**

Why is this style of evangelism necessary?

2. Intellectual - Think it Through

Acts 17:2-4

² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

Paul often used the intellectual approach of evangelism. He conversed with the intellectuals and debated with the philosophers of Athens. Paul was highly educated, extremely intelligent, and capable of putting together well thought out arguments. He knew that some people needed to grapple with the tough questions before they could come to faith in Christ.

There are at least four principles from Paul's style that we can apply today.

1. **Be Courteous.** If we want to follow Paul's lead, the first thing we need to do is to be considerate and civil. Look at verse 22: Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Mars Hill and said, "*Men of Athens! I perceive that in all things you are very religious...*"

How could the lack of this characteristic hinder this style of evangelism?

2. **Be Contemporary.** In the first part of verse 23 we see that Paul looked for ways to establish some common ground with his listeners. When he was *courteous*, he broke down barriers; when he was *contemporary*, he built bridges to the heart of his audience.

Notice verse 23: "*For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD*

In verse 28, we see that Paul quotes their own poets to make his point. People who utilize this evangelistic style love to study the culture so that they can make connections with their listeners.

How could the lack of this characteristic hinder this style of evangelism?

3. **Be Courageous.** I want you to notice how bold Paul was in verses 23-30. Look at the last part of verse 23: "*Therefore, the One you worship without knowing, I am going to proclaim to you.*" The phrase "**without knowing**" really means "*in ignorance*." It's as if he is saying, "*You admit there is a God you don't know. I happen to know that God and I'm going to tell you about Him.*"

In verses 24-25, Paul gives them a theology lesson, courageously speaking of God as the Creator and the Giver of all things. He then establishes the fact that God is near enough for us to reach out to Him so that we can find what we're looking for. Verse 30 shows us the depth of Paul's courage: "*Truly,*

these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."

How could the lack of this characteristic hinder this style of evangelism?

4. Be Christ-Centered. Those with the intellectual style of evangelism are masters at communicating Christ in a relevant way.

Look at **verse 31**: "*Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*" Paul did not hold back from speaking of an inescapable day of judgment. He did not shrink from speaking the truth about the resurrection of Jesus, even though he knew that many of his listeners would not want to hear it.

How could the lack of this characteristic hinder this style of evangelism?

There were three reactions to Paul's intellectual reasoning of the gospel that day. In **verse 32** we read that some were **contemptuous (Scornful or sneering, disapproving)**. Others were **curious** and wanted to hear more. **Verse 34** tells us that a number of others were **convinced**.

Here are some of the traits normally found in people who use the intellectual approach:

- Analytical and Logical
- Inquisitive
- Enjoy debating

There are also some "blind spots" or cautions that you should be aware of:

- Avoid getting stuck on academic points.
- Remember that attitude is as important as information.
- Be careful about becoming argumentative.

Giving Life Away – Week 5 What's Your Style? – Part 3

Six Evangelistic Styles - Style Biblical Example Text

1. Confrontational - **Peter Acts 2**
2. Intellectual - **Paul Acts 17**
3. Testimonial - **Blind Man John 9**
4. Interpersonal - **Matthew Luke 5**
5. Invitational - **Samaritan Woman John 4**
6. Serving - **Dorcas Acts 9**

3. Testimonial - "He Changed My life"

John 9:25, 32-33

²⁵ *He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”*

³² *Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.* ³³ *If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”*

This chapter records Jesus' healing of the blind beggar. He was well known to the community, and because of what happened to him, became the center of a controversy. The neighbors questioned him and the religious leaders as to whom healed him, and how could a godly man heal someone on the Sabbath. Finally they asked him one last time what he thought about the one who had healed him.

Vs 25 - *He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”*

He further expands on his explanation in **Vs 32-33.**

Testimonial style evangelists neither confront nor intellectualize. They simply tell the story of Christ's miraculous work in their life. They simply say, "I was spiritually dead, but now I live. Jesus changed my life and He will change yours too." Typically these types of evangelists have a dramatic story to tell.

How can this style of evangelism influence people to receive Jesus as Lord and savior?

What do you see as a possible hindrance to this style of evangelism?

4. Relational - Interpersonal - Live It Out

Mark 5:19

However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”

This is the story of the demon-possessed man that dwelt among the tombs. When he came in contact with Jesus he was delivered. When Jesus was about to leave that country, this man was so overjoyed because of what happened to him that he wanted to go with Him.

Jesus refused to let him come. **Vs 18,19** He told him to go home to his friends and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him.

Here are some qualities that people with the relational approach exhibit:

- Conversational
- Compassionate and Sensitive
- Friendship-oriented

Here are some cautions to keep in mind:

- Don't value friendship over truth.
- Don't be overwhelmed by needs.
- Be patient.

Looking at the qualities and cautions mentioned above, why is this style of evangelism effective?

How could not heeding the cautions make us ineffective?

5. Invitational - Come and Hear

John 4:28-30, 39

²⁸ *The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,* ²⁹ *"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"* ³⁰ *Then they went out of the city and came to Him.*
³⁹ *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."*

The Samaritan was an invitational evangelist. She knew she wasn't prepared to articulate the message in a powerful way. So she invited her friends to come and hear someone who could explain it more effectively.

How can we use this style of evangelism to effectively reach people?

6. Serving - How Can I Help?

Acts 9:36-41

³⁶ *At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.*
³⁷ *But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.* ³⁸ *And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them.* ³⁹ *Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.* ⁴⁰ *But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.* ⁴¹ *Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.*

One of the most endearing people in scripture is a woman named Dorcas. She tremendously impacted her city by doing deeds of kindness. She made

garments for the poor and the forgotten, and distributed them in the name of Christ. She may never have knocked on one door preaching to people. Yet through her acts of service she pointed people to the God who could transform their lives. She used her unique gifts to let her light shine.

Remember that **all people cannot witness the same way, but all people can witness some way.**

Whatever styles we flow in, we are all just one link in the chain of evangelism. We all must use our gifts and styles to expand the kingdom of God hear on the earth. Remember that there is only one you. Don't try to be someone you are not. We are all most effective, when we yield to the gifts God has equipped us with.

Which of the six styles of evangelism best describes your style and why?

Do you feel that you have more than one style that describes you? If so which ones?

Giving Life Away – Week 6 Telling His Story

Introduction of Sin Nature

Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Man was created with a free will that provided him with the freedom to fail. The God kind of love, agape, is a product of a free will. In fact, it is necessary to have the freedom of choice to exercise this kind of love. If Adam had no freedom of choice, he could not have had a willing heart to love, serve, and obey God.

When man fell in the garden he had a nature change. The result of man's fall was the introduction of sin nature, or sin consciousness. Spiritual death is separation of man's spirit from God.

Romans 3:23

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Since all mankind is of the seed of Adam, all partake of his nature – sin nature.

How does sin nature keep us from God's presence?

God's Plan For Man

Genesis 3:15 – God previews His plan to redeem man

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

God would send a Messiah to redeem man. This Messiah would be 100% God and 100% man. It would require Him to be both because He would need to have the life of God in Him to dominate the law of sin and death and to redeem man. He would need to be 100% man because that is what would give Him legal access to this physical world so He could redeem man and be His substitute. If He would be born by natural generation and not Immaculate Conception, He would be born into spiritual death and would be no different than any other man, incapable of redeeming himself. Jesus came to the earth and dominated the laws of sin and death for 3 ½ years. After 3 ½ years of dominating the laws of sin and death, Jesus yielded Himself to them.

John 10:17-18

"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Philippians 2:8

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Mark 15:37

And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

The devil fell for the plan of God that was formed in heaven before the foundation of the earth.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

On Calvary's cross Jesus paid the penalty for the sin of man. Satan loosed the law of sin and death toward Jesus. Spiritual laws are perpetual. Once this law was loosed toward Jesus it couldn't be stopped. Jesus took the full everything the law of sin and death had to offer.

Galatians 3:13

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Once he had paid the price for man's transgression, much to Satan's surprise the law of sin and death could not hold Him.

Acts 2:24

"Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."

God raised Jesus from the dead and when He did He introduced a new law called the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. From now on, anyone who will put their confidence in this law the law of sin and death must let them go, just like the law of gravity must yield to the laws of thrust and lift! When this law is put into operation it also cannot be stopped.

John 3:3-8

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

John 3:16

16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Acts 2:36-39

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Romans 10:9-10

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

John 6:35-40

35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him

who sent Me.39 “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.40 “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

How can you use the information in this lesson to lead someone to Christ?

Group Participation Exercise

As a group discuss what you have learned over the last six weeks and how you intend to implement this individually. Discuss ways to hold one another accountable so that you don't let it slip.
