



Living Proof: Evangelism

How the Series Works

There are twelve sessions in this series, and we recommend you cover them in 12 weeks.

In a Group Setting

If you are going through Living Proof in a small group, you can expect each session to last approximately 90 minutes. Here's an outline of a typical session:

- Welcome with prayer
- View an approximate fifteen-minute DVD segment
- Discuss the segment and worksheet questions
- Close in prayer

As an Individual

If you are going through this on your own, we urge you to link-up with another Christian to assist and challenge you after you have viewed each DVD segment and completed the worksheet questions.

The DVD segments are no dull lectures; they are full of memorable characters and humor.

Meet the Cast



Bill and Jackie Warner – *Bill* is a 43 year-old middle manager. He was raised a nominal Christian, but discovered when he was 30-something how good the Good News is. His wife, *Jackie*, has been a serious Christian for all of her adult life.



Gerry and Linda Sanders – *Gerry* is on a fast track to the top of a Fortune 500 company. He had a bad experience with Christians when he was young and wants no part of it. *Linda*, his wife, seems to be content in this second marriage, but the emptiness of money and career are beginning to get to her. They are Bill & Jackie's brand new neighbors.



Steve Lunsford – *Steve* is the facilitator of the group. He's an engineer in his late 40's and has been committed to lifestyle evangelism for many years. Steve's hope is to train this complex group to reach their friends with the Gospel.



Walt and Anne Ridgeway – *Walt* works for a multi-national computer technology firm. He's a long-time Christian but also a recovering alcoholic. His wife, *Anne*, spends two mornings each week as a volunteer at the high school.



Hayden and Delores Bishop – *Hayden* is a partner in a law firm and an elder in his church. He's biblically mature, but has a habit of alienating people by his abrasive outlook on life. *Delores*, his wife, has endured a lot from him, but has mellowed rather than hardened. She's seen and heard it all and still loves Jesus.



Marjorie Calloway – *Marjorie* is a mid-level manager in a printing company. Her mother was a great lady of faith, but Marjorie sampled the world for a lot of years before she returned to the foundation her Mom laid for her as a child.



Nick Piracas – *Nick* is the youngest member of the group and still recovering from a shocking divorce 2 years ago. He came to Christ in college and spent some time with a parachurch missions team in Central America, but he's not all that grounded in the Bible.



Phil Rasouske – *Phil* was Gerry's closest friend and drinking buddy in Viet Nam, where Gerry nicknamed him "Raz." When he comes to stay with the Sanders, Bill and Jackie are in for a rude awakening.

The Culture Gap

The purposes of this session are:

- To examine the difference between Christian and non-Christian cultures in North America
- To discover why these differences can become barriers to communicating the gospel
- To start learning how to get past those barriers

1. What are some of the big differences between the values of believers and non-believers?

How, then, do we identify with non-believers?

2. What do we have in common that makes it possible for us to reach unbelievers with the good news of Jesus Christ?

Guilt creates openness to the Gospel. Why?



3. In Session 1, there were several philosophical statements made by individuals. Explain why it might be difficult to discuss the Gospel to someone who believes these statements:

- a) Gerry: "I'll be fine. I'm better than this. There's only one thing I need and it's tall and cold and I want it right now."
- b) "Life is just going from experience to experience."
- c) "The right job equals success, period."
- d) "My truth is as good as your truth. If you think you can claim any special knowledge, you're not just kidding yourself, you're dangerous."

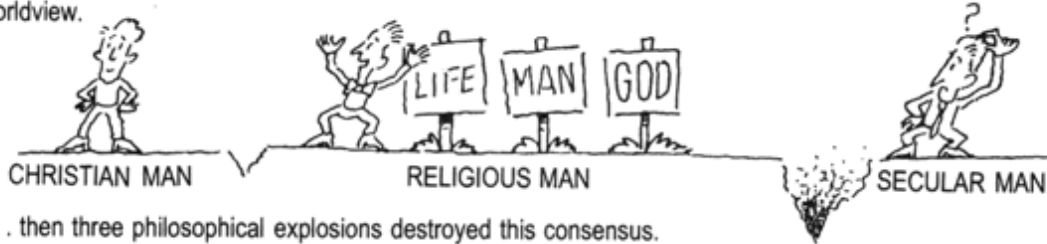
4. What might make a guy like Gerry receptive to the Gospel despite his worldview and values?

"Man is made in God's image; therefore he has a natural receptivity to the truth of the Gospel. All evangelism is predicated on this fact."
-- Jim Petersen, Living Proof

Going Deeper

A hundred years ago, believers and unbelievers in Western culture agreed about most of the basic issues of life. Almost everybody believed God existed, was a Person, had created the world, and had established certain moral standards reflected in the Bible. But a cultural gap began to crack that consensus, and it's been widening ever since.

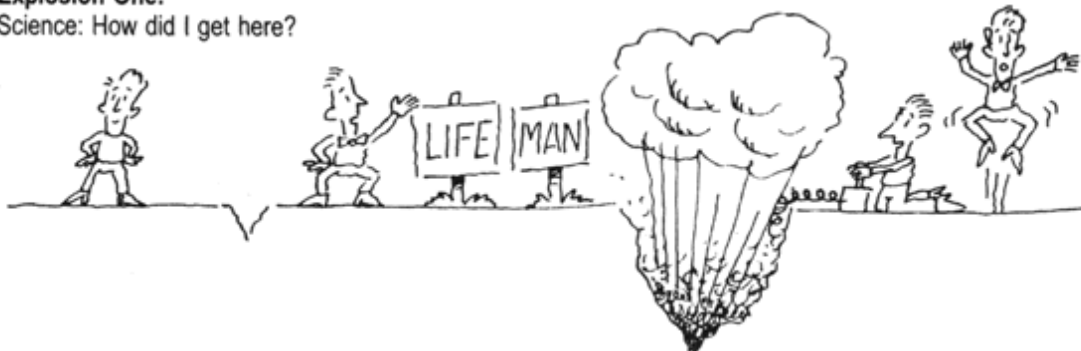
80-100 years ago, Western culture had a consensus on the basic issues of life. . . . There was a unified worldview.



First, Darwin and other scientists challenged the idea that God created the world. Believers and unbelievers began to differ over a basic question of life: **“How did I get here?”** Scientists and teachers began to apply the scientific method to just about everything, including God, and a new idea took hold: we can know only what we can scientifically test and verify. Since God wouldn't stand still to be weighed and measured, they convinced themselves He was imaginary.

Explosion One:

Science: How did I get here?



Second, scientists declared that people were simply the product of chance and natural selection. If that's true, then the purpose for our existence is up for grabs. We aren't here because a loving God created us with a plan, so philosophers opened up a second question: **“Why am I here?”**

Explosion Two:

Philosophy: Why am I here?



As people questioned their origin and purpose, a third explosion widened the cultural gap even further. If the God of the Bible no longer gave us existence and purpose, then the Bible's moral standards should be scrapped too. People asked a third question, **"How then should I live?"** This issue has burned for decades, until by now most people are convinced that the absolute truth (including moral truth) does not exist. Right and wrong have been replaced by doing you own thing. Self has become god.

Explosion Three:

Moral Behavior: How then should I live?



So What?

What difference does all this make to us, who base our lives on biblical truth? It makes this difference: We need to be like the men of Issachar if we want to draw people to Christ.

We want people to answer, "How then should I live?" by saying, "I should live by following Jesus Christ." But there is no way a person can come to that conclusion as long as his answers to the first two questions are that of our culture. Those answers are so deeply rooted that they are not open for discussion; they're mostly unconscious. They are of the "everybody knows..." variety.

Human beings are shaped to the core by their culture. Whether we are taking the gospel to the Japanese or the secularized guy next door, we have to communicate in a language he can understand. We have to take his basic assumptions into account – things like relative truth being the only truth, having no eternal purpose in life, and god being a social construct.

Reaching our neighbors is a cross-cultural experience. Their assumptions and values are as foreign to our biblical view as those of a tribe that worships ancestors. If we presume that people are people and talk to our coworkers about repentance, we are in for a shock. That word isn't even in their vocabulary.

Built-in Receptors

Is it hopeless, then? That's often our first sense when we find ourselves surrounded by people we do not understand. We may prefer to ignore cultural differences, because we don't know how to work with them. But besides being shaped by their culture, all people have two other things in common that make them susceptible to the gospel no matter what their culture: **They are made in God's image, and they are fallen.**

Man is created in God's image. God has made man unique, significant, and godlike in certain ways. He is able to relate to God as a person to Person. He is conscious of himself and is able to make moral choices, and there is something within him that keeps him struggling with the riddle of his own consciousness – until he acknowledges God. That struggle is a built-in receptor for spiritual truth.

Man is fallen. When he fell, three calamities occurred:

- He came to know good and evil.
- His life became futile.
- He died.

The knowledge of good and evil shifted man from God-centeredness to self-centeredness (Genesis 3:5, 22). Self-centeredness gave birth to guilt. Guilt alienates. Man was estranged from himself, from others, and from God. We can count on guilt being within everyone we try to reach with the gospel, and that feeling prods him to seek a resolution for it.

Futility makes life a pointless struggle (Genesis 3:17-19, Ecclesiastes 2:22-23). We expend our lives just managing to exist, and then it is back to dust. But the desperate pain of futility drives us to the question, "Why am I doing all this?" and urges us to seek reconciliation with a God who gives meaning to life.

At the Fall, man died in every sense of the word. In his relationships and in his spirit, it was sudden death. His physical death was slower. Man resists death with everything he has. He is obsessed with fear of it. He just cannot make peace with the idea of mortality. Why? Because God has set immortality in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This flight from death and longing for endless life provides another receptor for the gospel.

These built-in receptors provide common ground between believer and unbeliever and give us hope that even stubborn hearts can be reached. We can face our neighbor's cultural barriers, knowing that they are not the whole story.

If we are to be effective ambassadors for the true King, we must understand and care about the people to whom we are sent. Grieve for them. They have been trained since birth to believe falsehood and are surrounded by those who agree with them, but their beliefs are a dead end. It will take something drastic for them to turn their back on what “everybody” believes. It will take something drastic, like a love that understands.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapter 1-6.

Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism*, introduction, chapter 3.

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, introduction, chapter 1.

Richard Peace, *Small Group Evangelism*, chapter 1.

Rebecca Pipper, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, chapter 1.

NOTE:

¹Os Guinness, *The Gravedigger File* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), pages 52-53.

Our Spiritual Resources

The cultural gap between believers and unbelievers is not the only barrier that challenges us. Even more formidable is the spiritual gap between unbelievers and God. But we're not left to our own abilities. In this session, we will:

- Explore what this spiritual gap is
- Identify the resources God uses to bridge the chasm

According to the video, non-believers are in a spiritual prison.

1. From what you have seen in the video and your own experience, what is it like to live in a spiritual prison? For instance, what happens to a person's

- Sense of right and wrong
- Priorities
- Relationships
- Perception of reality
- Self-esteem

Non-believers don't necessarily see that they are in a spiritual prison and often aren't interested about the good news that Jesus came to rescue them from that prison. So because they are blinded by Satan, they can be reached only through spiritual power.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovering of the sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:18-19

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

2 Corinthians 4:4

2. What spiritual resources has God given us to reach them?

3. What do you think it means in practical terms to rely on “a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” in reaching non-believers (1 Corinthians 2:4)?

4. In your experience, how does the Holy Spirit go about convicting someone, as John 16:8 describes?

You have seen that the believer’s presence and prayers comprise two of God’s resources for reaching the lost. To start the process, develop a “Ten Most Wanted” Card listing those unbelievers whom you would like to come to Christ. Don’t worry if you can’t think of ten individuals immediately. God will bring the rest to mind over the next coming weeks.

TEN MOST WANTED

CBMC MISSION: To present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to business and professional men and to develop Christian business and professional men to carry out the Great Commission.

Pray for the Lost

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

“The prayer of a righteous man
is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Going Deeper

Telling the Truth



Repeatedly in the book of Acts, a believer stands up in a public place, proclaims the truths of the gospel and up to 5,000 people accept Christ. The same thing happens today in evangelistic crusades. It even happens one-on-one in encounters on airplanes and in college dormitories.

Telling the gospel message is essential, but often it doesn't work the way we just described. Sometimes when we tell our coworkers about Jesus, they stare at us blankly and warn the boss that we're religious fanatics. We get the treatment Paul got in Athens (Acts 11): ridicule and a cold shoulder.

Does that mean we should write our coworkers off as children of darkness? No. There is another aspect of reaching the lost. We can call it *affirming* or *showing* the gospel. It is the process of being living proof of the biblical message. We affirm or demonstrate the truth of Christ by our lives.

Telling the truth works among the prepared. In Acts 2, the Jews and converts to Judaism have been prepared by the whole of Old Testament history: They know about the true God's character, His justice, and His promise of a Deliver. In Acts 8, the eunuch has been involved with Judaism. In Acts 10, Cornelius has believed in the true God for some time. In Acts 15, the Philippian jailer is prepared by a miraculous encounter with God's power. But in Athens, Paul is up against people with no preparation to understand the gospel, so his message falls flat.

Showing the Truth

Showing is how people get prepared for telling. God can prepare a heart through special circumstances or even miracles, as with the Philippian jailer. But most often God chooses to use ordinary relationships and experiences. He uses His people.



God raised Israel to be a light to the nations (Exodus 19:6, Deuteronomy 4:5-8, Joshua 4:24, Isaiah 41:12). The idea was that when the surrounding nations saw how just and pleasant a society Israel was, they would be attracted to the God who set up that society. But Israel failed to be light, lapsing into the immoral ways of their neighbors. After God disciplined them for immorality, they failed again to be light because they turned their liberating laws into harsh, hypocritical legalism. Then the Father sent Jesus to be the true Light, to demonstrate how a person of God would really live. And when Jesus left the earth, He passed His commission onto His team: "You are the light of the

world.... let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14,16).

That’s affirmation. Being living proof that the Father really is who He says He is, that Jesus really is the Son who frees people from slavery to self, that the Holy Spirit really can transform a life. This kind of showing is not a substitute for telling; if we never explain the gospel in words, people will never understand it enough to submit to Christ. But showing is an essential preparation for telling. People will buy our words when our actions back them up.

How can we grow in being living proof? There are no shortcuts. We need to contemplate the great truths of the gospel – how utterly the Father loves us, how secure our hope for our future is – until they begin to alter us at the core. But we don’t have to wait until we are great saints to be light for our friends. People will notice even the small, slow changes in our ability to love, to serve, to forgive others, to forgive ourselves.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 13, 14, 20

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapters 2, 4, 5.



Session 3

Mini-Decisions

In this session we will:

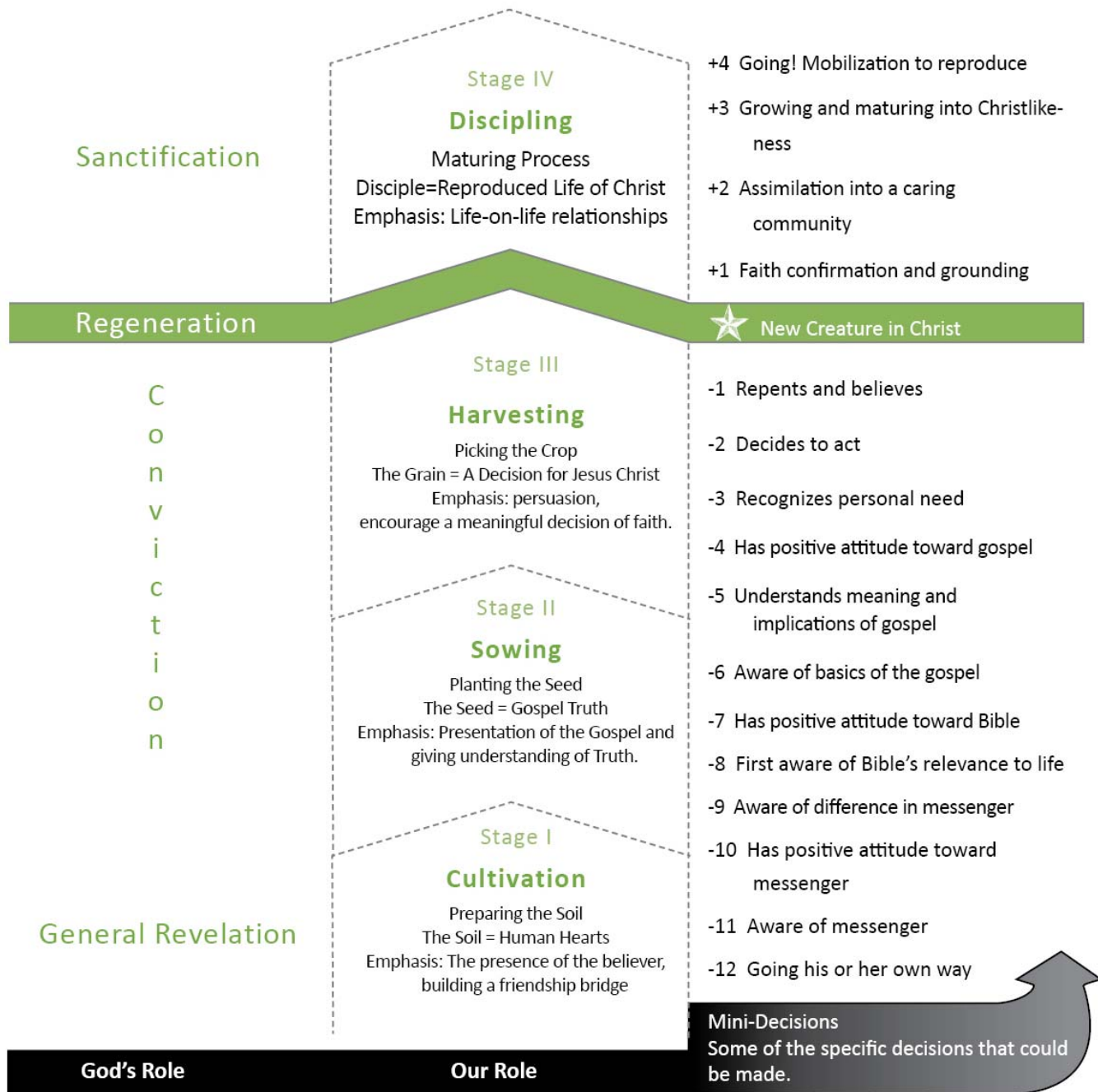
- Show why it's crucial to view evangelism as a process rather than an event or action
- Explore the parts of this process
- Find that coming to Christ is really a series of "mini-decisions" on the way to conversion

1. After watching Session 3 entitled "Mini Steps", how would you define evangelism?

2. Steve used restaurant tableware to illustrate to Bill the process of Gerry making "mini decisions." Using the chart on the next page, "A Four-Phase Process of Lifestyle Evangelism," where would you put Gerry on this scale?

3. What are some of the obstacles between Gerry and a decision for Christ?

"The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. What a relief to discover that this responsibility is assigned to Him, rather than us!" -- Jim Petersen, Living Proof





4. Having placed Gerry on the mini-decision scale, why do you think he rejected Bill's invitation to see a musical at church?

5. Looking at the three phases of coming to Christ, which phase do you see taking the most time and why?

6. Choose one person you are praying for their salvation and tell where you think they are in the process of coming to Christ?

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapter 16, 19

Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism*, chapter 4

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapter 1-2

Richard Peace, *Small Group Evangelism*, chapter 2

Finding Common Ground

A blind person in prison can hardly be expected to initiate a friendship that will lead toward Christ. It's up to us to make the first move. In this session, we'll

- Start learning how to cultivate by taking the initiative and developing common ground with unbelievers
- Look at reasons why we resist making friends with unbelievers
- Explore way to overcome those barriers

1. What are some of the average ways common ground was established in this video?



2. What keeps believers apart from unbelievers?

3. What keeps unbelievers apart from believers?

4. Despite barriers, how is it possible for us to make real friendships with unbelievers?


5. What do you think Jesus would have done in Jackie's situation at her party?

“Frequently the unsaved are viewed enemies rather than victims of the Enemy. Spirituality is viewed as separation from the unsaved. The new Christian is told he has ‘nothing in common’ with his unsaved associates. Quite frankly, I have a lot in common with them: a mortgage, car payments, kids who misbehave, a lawn to mow, a car to wash, a less-than-perfect marriage, a few too many pounds around my waist, and an interest in sports, hobbies, and other activities they enjoy. It is well to remember that Jesus is called ‘a friend of sinners.’”

*-- Joe Aldrich,
Life-Style Evangelism*

6. How do you feel when you make a friendly overture toward someone and the door is slammed in your face?

7. How do you think God views people who do their best to build a friendship and pray for their friend, but fail to win the trust needed to take the next step?




“Most of us fear that who we are inside just isn’t enough. So we cover up our honest questions and doubts thinking we won’t sound spiritual. But in doing this, we forfeit our most important asset in evangelism – our real person. Not to accept our humanness means we lose our point of authentic contact with the world... When we get a good look at Jesus, we will see that it is not our humanity we need to fear.”

-- Rebecca Pippert, Out of the Saltshaker and into the World.

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it on a its stand, and it give light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16



Going Deeper

Friendship 101

If you ask believers why they aren't building friendships with the unbelievers at their workplaces, in their neighborhoods, or among the parents of their kids' friends, they will often reply, "I've tried, but we have nothing in common." It can seem true. Believers are interested in spiritual matters or issues at church, while unbelievers may be indifferent to anything of eternal significance. The topics that interest non-Christians may seem shallow to those of us with a deeper perspective. However, the fact is that we have a lot of things in common with unbelievers.



Family

We may have children. If your children are grown, maybe you know of young couple who would appreciate your taking an interest in their children.

Work

If you are a professional, you might make connections with others in your profession. If you are a secretary, seek out other secretaries with whom you can go to lunch or after-work aerobics. If you are a mechanic, seek mechanics. There's no law that says lawyers and mechanics can't be friends, but if you're afraid of having nothing in common, look for people who are guaranteed to share similar interests.

If you work with someone, you have something ready-made in common. It's sad that so often workplace socializing stays on the surface level. Christians need to develop the art of drawing people out. You may feel afraid of grilling people with questions about themselves; it seems nosy. But most people enjoy talking about themselves, their families, where they grew up, where they've lived, and so on. Past history is usually a safe subject and can lead to surprising connections: "You used to love fishing? Wow, so did I! Let's go fishing sometime."

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 5, 6, 12, 17

Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism*, chapters 3, 10

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapters 6-8

Richard Peace, *Small Group Evangelism*, chapter 3

Rebecca Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, chapters 6-8

Being a Good Testimony

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world.” That is great, but how are we that light? Session 5 focuses on:

- Exploring what being a good testimony is and isn't
- Illustrating how to be a good testimony when asked to participate in any activity we think is wrong, at least for us
- Learning the first step in articulating our biblical worldview, or in other words, beginning to “raise the flag” that we base our life decisions and actions on scripture



1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. How does Paul say he makes his life a good testimony to unbelievers?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. How do these verses apply to Paul's strategy of being a good testimony?

Being a good testimony requires balance between living with grace (unconditional and forgiving love) and living with truth.

“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Grace. Grace entails living among people with very different values without making them feel judged. We can maintain our good testimony when asked to participate in an activity we believe is wrong by:

- Expressing our personal choice simply without explanation (and perhaps suggesting an alternative)
- Not using our faith as an explanation for abstaining
- Not imposing our choice on the unbelievers.

Truth. To help unbelievers move from -10 to -8 (First Aware of Bible’s relevance to life – see A Four-Phase Process of Lifestyle Evangelism diagram from Session 3) on the decision scale, we begin by “raising the flag” which identifies ourselves not as someone who abstains from things but as someone who gets a lot of great ideas from the Bible. That’s a positive testimony!



3. How did Bill and Jackie demonstrate a good testimony in this segment?

4. Why is it crucial to avoid connecting faith in Christ with abstaining from certain activities?

5. What worth can you see in identifying ourselves as “people who get valuable insights from the Bible” rather than “Christians” or as “members of such-and-such church”?

Summary

To function effectively among unbelievers:

1. Know what God's Word says about moral standards.
2. Know what you personally can and can't handle.
3. Based on these facts, determine what your personal standards really are.
4. Challenge your comfort zone, but stay within your boundaries.
5. Develop a way to say no gracefully.

Going Deeper

What Makes a Christian Different?

A person who lives in faith, hope, love, and truth sows life in all of his relationships. That person is the light of the world and the salt of the earth.



Faith

Believers are betting their lives on Jesus and His promises.

Hope

Believers don't need to fear the present or the future. Since Jesus was raised from the dead, we have confidence that we, too, will be raised to eternal life. Because He ascended to the Father and even now defends our case, we are secure in the Father's love for us. We can run to Him at any time with our needs and concerns. Because we know that Jesus will return to bring justice, we need not despair over the threat of nuclear war, oppression, or environmental calamities.

Love

We love because we are loved. We are free to love because we don't have to focus our energy on protecting ourselves from hurt or earning someone's approval.

Grace

God treats us not as we deserve, but with forgiving, patient love. That is grace. We treat others with the grace we have received when we look past a person's sins to see what God wants to do in his life. People aren't use to grace; they're use to either condemnation or indulgence. To be treated with grace is to taste redemption. Have you ever found yourself being accepted and understood when you expected and deserved the opposite? It's overwhelming.

Truth

The world muddles through without moral absolutes. Self-centered coping strategies keep backfiring, but the more we live by biblical truth, the more our families and work reflect a wholeness and integrity for which the world wants an explanation.

We must be sure that the truth we endorse is God's truth, not religious tradition or the values of our culture. We must ask ourselves, "Where did I get my opinions on finances, success, marriage, child-raising, business, time-use, sex, people, pleasure, education, progress, society, sports, politics, and religion?" It will take some work to find out what the Bible says about all of these issues, but the work is infinitely worthwhile. And once we trace our values back to God's Word, communicating our faith becomes vastly easier. We can discuss any subject, and the conversation will naturally turn to the good news.

Hope is attractive because it produces joy, peace, self-control, and endurance. Love and grace are what all people thirst for. The stable life that comes from living by the truth is a powerful testimony to the truth of our faith.

Do we fall short? Of course. But if we are truly pursuing God and meditating on the shocking truths of the gospel, our life will be transformed more and more into this pattern.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 9-11.

Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism*, chapters 1.

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapters 3.

Can We Please Everyone?

We've seen that to be effective among unbelievers, we have to know how to say no gracefully to activities we think are wrong. But how do we decide what's right and what's wrong? What do we do about the other believers who are watching our activities with unbelievers? In this session we will:

- Identify the desire to fit into Christian culture as one of the main reasons we resist involvement with unbelievers
- Come to personal Bible-based convictions about our lifestyle
- Learn how to live out those convictions without alienating unbelievers or sanctioning their behavior, and
- Learn the next step in expressing our biblical view naturally, that is, asking questions of unbelievers.

The Bible says there are three types of activities:

- Those that are right
- Those that are wrong
- Those that are “disputable matters” (Romans 14:1)

1. Define “disputable matters.”

2. In the video, the group developed a list of disputable matters.

What are some disputable matters that could be barriers for you for reaching the lost?



3. An unbeliever asks you to an R-rated movie that has sex scenes which you know would cause you to lust. How would you handle it?

Read Galatians 2:11-16

4. What did Peter do when the men came from James?

5. What did Paul think of that decision and why?

Going Deeper

Love and Self-Control

The early Christians were constantly forced to make decisions about disputable matters. In the course of dealing with many hot issues, the Apostle Paul prescribed two principles for handling them.

The Principle of Love

Jesus said God's permanent law boiled down to two commands: Love God with your whole being and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:34-40). So Paul told believers, "He who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). Hence, whether evaluating whether to do something not plainly commanded or forbidden in the Bible, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this reflect my love for God? Does it show that I love something else more? Can I thank God for this?
- Does this reflect my love for other people (my family, fellow believers, unbelievers)? Does it show a disregard for them? Does it please me at someone else's expense?

"When Peter came to Antioch, I (Paul) opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

"When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

"We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ."

Galatians 2:11-16

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Paul made it clear that by *love* he didn't mean a vague feeling. So we can ask ourselves, "Will doing this build up my non-Christian friend, drawing him toward Christ, or will it confirm him in a life apart from Christ?"

We must also be concerned with what will build up fellow believers. Paul knew there were weak Christians who, when they see you doing something they think is wrong, will be tempted to imitate you despite their misgivings. For instance, say a friend of yours has found that he is overindulgent in watching sports on television. He has watched them to exclusion of his family and his walk with God, so now he avoids them completely. Watching TV sports is no problem for you, but it would not be loving to watch them with this friend. We must ask ourselves, "Will doing this build up another believer, or will it tempt him to do what is wrong for himself?"

"Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me'—but I will not be mastered by anything."

1 Corinthians 6:12

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training ... I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

1 Corinthians 9:25,27

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves. Love never fails."

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

"Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

Romans 15:2

Paul also had run-ins with another kind of weak believer: the Pharisee. When this person sees you doing something he thinks is wrong, he is not tempted to imitate you. On the contrary, he is tempted to complain and judge. Paul voluntarily limited his freedom when the first weak believer was around, but he refused to give into the Pharisee. He graciously explained his conviction to them and pursued peace with them, but he would not conform to their standards. The gospel and the love for the lost was at stake.



The Principle of Self Control

Paul's other principle was self-control or moderation. Paul enjoyed lawful pleasures, but he would not let them take him over. Anything that threatened to become an addiction was out. He wouldn't use a drug that fogged his mind and will. He wanted to be free to give up anything in a heartbeat, if it hindered the gospel in some situation.

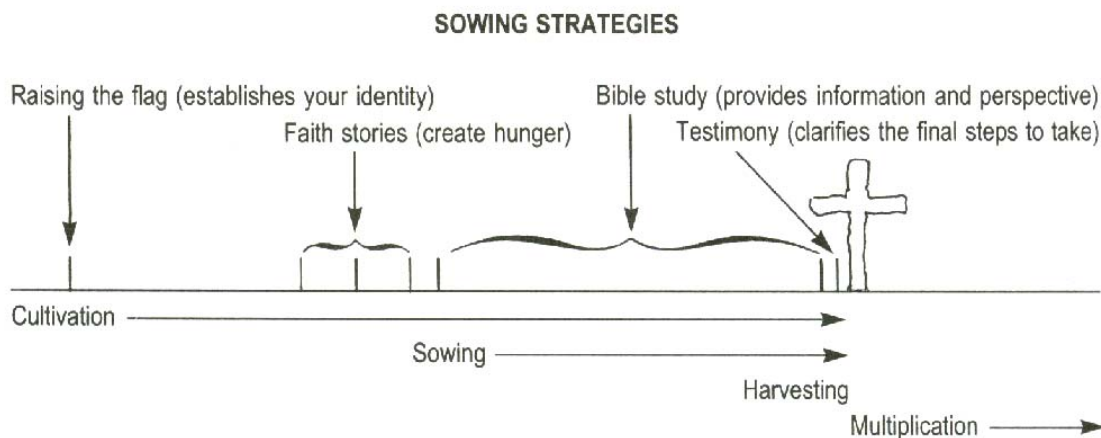
Session 7

Strategies for Sowing the Word

Thus far, we've been cultivating a friendship with an unbeliever. That's crucial, but if we never draw him or her to consider the Bible and what it says about Jesus Christ, we haven't done our job in freeing that person from prison. Yet we can stop a friendship cold by suddenly preaching a sermon and calling for a decision. Our friend may have a lot more mini-decisions to go through. So how do we start sowing the Word in a way that someone at -10, -9, or -8 can handle? In this session we'll look at three sowing strategies:

1. Raising the flag,
2. The faith story,
3. Suggesting a Bible study.

As you watch, ask yourself this question: How does each sowing strategy work?



Four principles of Raising the Flag:

- It should happen as a natural part of the conversation.
- It may create an opportunity (to tell your testimony and ask your friend for a decision) that you should not take advantage of unless the non-Christian clearly asks you to do so.
- If it takes more than 30 seconds, you're probably saying too much.
- Its purpose is to establish your identify as a member of God's family, not as a member of some religious denomination.

1. Bill told a faith story about how he discovered business principles in the Bible. How did that story affect Gerry? What mini-decisions did he make?

2. What made the story work? What principles for telling faith stories can we draw from Bill's example?



3. Bill didn't invite Gerry to investigate what the Bible says about business right away. Instead, he said, "One of these days, if you want, I'll show you some stuff Tom showed me." It was only later that he asked if Gerry wanted to set a time to do it. What do you suppose dropping the vague suggestion "one of these days" accomplished?

4. Why do you think Gerry failed to show up?

5. Why might a study on business be a better start for Gerry than heading straight for a study on Jesus?

6. What aspects of sowing strategies strike you as easiest to do? (Raising the Flag, Faith Stories, Bible Study). Which do you feel you can handle?

Going Deeper

Write a faith story. A faith story is a direct way to talk about the presence of God in your life. While less than a full testimony, it's instead an anecdote about God's love and grace in one specific instance in your life – how He got you through a difficult time, how His blessing came at just the right time. Think of a time in your life when a biblical truth made an impact on you. Write the story out or just jot some notes, but make sure it is in the language an unbeliever will understand. No King James English, no Christian jargon (sin, righteousness, salvation, works, grace, Holy Spirit, etc.). The whole story should take less than 2 minutes.

Many people find it very hard to think of something God has done or taught them. Planning a faith story is a great chance to remember that you really have made some progress down the road with God, even if you are a beginner in faith.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 18.

Joe Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion*, chapters 10.

Rebecca Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, chapters 9-11.

Time and Teamwork

In this segment, three strategies are introduced to overcome our stifling schedules and fragmented lives in order to have some time to focus on evangelism.

- Clarify our priorities;
 - Integrate evangelism into the activities of our lives; and,
 - Team up with other believers whose gifts compliment ours.
1. After watching the video, which of the following statements best reflects your current feelings regarding focusing on lifestyle evangelism:
 - Frustration: I don't see how I can integrate evangelism into my schedule.
 - Hope: I'm beginning to see a glimmer of how it will be possible.
 - Confidence: I'm sure I can fit reaching the lost into my schedule.
 - Other:

 2. What team strategies for evangelism did the video recommend?

 3. Below are some of the gifts needed to reach the lost. Check off the ones you think you have.
 - Meeting and making contacts with unbelievers
 - Hospitality
 - Building relationships
 - Praying
 - Explaining biblical ideas in secular language
 - Leading discussion
 - Organizing and coordinating details

- Serving:
 - Meeting people’s physical needs
 - Listening when someone hurts

Going Deeper

An Illustration

One day, a couple of years after Mario had become a Christian, he and I were reminiscing. He asked me, “Do you know what it really was that made me decide to become a Christian?” Of course, I immediately thought of our countless hours of Bible study, but I responded, “No, what?”



His reply took me completely by surprise. He said, “Remember that first time I stopped by your house? We were on our way someplace together, and I had a bowl of soup with you and your family. As I sat there observing you, your wife, your children, and how you related to each other, I asked myself, ‘When will I have a relationship like this with my fiancée?’ When I realized that the answer was ‘never,’ I concluded I had to become a Christian for the sake of my own survival.”

I remember the occasion well enough to recall that our children were not particularly well-behaved that evening. In fact, I remember I had felt frustrated when I corrected them in Mario’s presence.

Mario saw that relationships with Christ bind a family together.... Our family was unaware of its influence on Mario.

We tend to see the weaknesses and incongruities our lives, and our reaction is to recoil at the thought of letting outsiders get close enough to see us as we really are. Even if our assessment is accurate, it is my observation that any Christian who is sincerely seeking to walk with God, in spite of all his flaws, reflects something of Christ.

(Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, p. 119)

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 13-15.

Rebecca Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, chapter 12.

Guiding through the Scriptures

By now you've teamed up, integrated unbelievers into your lifestyle, and made some friends. You've attracted them to a biblical outlook through faith stories and natural discussions about life issues. You've brought up the idea of looking at a Bible study, and after a while, they've agreed.

Now, what? This session and the next will equip you to face that situation by focusing on:

- Choosing what to study,
- Establishing a nonthreatening, nonreligious atmosphere, and
- Avoiding Christian jargon.

1. From the video, consider which of these do's and don'ts should be emphasized in a Bible study?

Do's

- Limit discussion to pre-determined period
- Food
- Light atmosphere to allow someone to feel good about joining in
- A leader facilitates discussion
- Understand what is written as much as possible
- Discuss answers in plain vs. theological terms
- Use the same translation
- Pray for the participants
- Expect God to work
- Any question or opinion is ok
- Ask more questions than give answers
- Start with one of the Gospels

Don'ts

- Don't be a biblical scholar or Bible answer man
- Don't try to defend God
- Don't require everyone to agree



- Don't assume the Word means anything other than in the context it is written
 - Don't conduct the study like a Sunday School. It is an exploration not an explanation of the Word of God
2. Review the mini-decision list (pg 14). Which decisions are you trying to help your friends make as you look at the Bible together?

“Keep working on your relationship between meetings for Bible Study. Don't talk about religion or the Bible at those social times. You don't want your friend to start thinking you have a one-track mind and have stopped caring for him as a person. Talk about what interests him.”

Jim Petersen, Living Proof

3. How should these goals affect the way you handle the Bible study with them?

4. Steve offered this principle: “Jettison the jargon.” What did he mean?

5. Why is this crucial?

6. Do you feel you could handle leading or co-hosting a group like Bill's?



For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 18-20,22.

Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism*, chapter 9.

Richard Peace, *Small Group Evangelism*, chapters 4-8.

Sparking Interest with Questions

In this session, we shift from attracting unbelievers to looking at how to appropriately ask questions (based on the biblical model). In this session we'll discover:

- Why asking questions is better than telling an unbeliever,
 - How to ask good questions so that the unbeliever can discover the Bible for himself,
 - How to handle the unbeliever's questions in a way that maintains an atmosphere of safety and honesty.
1. No one could ask questions as could Jesus. He was the ultimate teacher. Read Luke 6:6-11 and Luke 9:18-21 and discuss what Jesus accomplishes by using a question instead of simply giving an answer.

 2. From the video, what are the four ways to field questions based on the CASH acronym?

3. The video suggested two other ways to field questions:



4. Walt suggested another principle in regards to asking questions. Explain it.

5. Read John 3:1-9. Now make up a question to launch the discussion of the passage. What observations did Nicodemus make about Jesus? What spiritual matter was confusing to Nicodemus? Why do you think Jesus insists one must be born again before he can see God's kingdom?

Going Deeper

Answering Questions

Acceptance

When a non-Christian begins to study the Bible with you, one of his biggest unspoken questions will be, "To what degree can I express what I really think about this person? How will he react if I express my true doubts and questions?" The person will first send out some rather safe trial questions. How you react to these questions will affect the quality of communication from then on.



If you respond with dogmatism or defensiveness (both signs of insecurity), the unbeliever will quickly understand the rules of the game and proceed accordingly. He will either play by your rules or disappear, but if you show an attitude that **encourages doubts and questions to surface**, you will be much more effective. He will get a chance to voice questions he has never had a chance to raise before. It almost doesn't matter whether you have a clue how to answer the question, as long as you respond with acceptance.

Discernment

There are two kinds of questions: honest and dishonest. Dishonest questions intend to trap or embarrass the answerer or to protect or justify the asker. Honest ones are for real learning.

Jesus answered questions according to their intent. When the lawyer asked Him, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus knew it was a test, an attack, and He deflected it with another question. When the lawyer proceeded with a self-defense question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with a story. But Jesus had all the time in the world for people with honest questions like his disciples.

It's often hard to tell the motive behind a question, but a good test is to ask *yourself* (not the questioner), "What difference will it make if I answer this question? Will this person accept my answer and build on it? Is this question really a statement of rejection?"

If the person asked the question simply to push you away or trap you, then you are wasting your time answering it, but often an unbeliever will start with trap and defense questions to see what you will do. So even when you discern that the question is not meant to be answered, you should still respond accordingly.



If a question is honest, the person is usually willing to wait for an answer. He won't mind if you say, "That's a good question, but I don't know how to answer it at the moment. Let me study it this week, and I'll show you what I find out next time we get together." A person who wants to trap you will usually want an answer right away, but since that answer won't make any difference anyway, it doesn't matter if you don't know the answer.

Writing Down Questions

Questions that arise from the Bible discussion are usually honest and should be treated as they come up. Since nobody has all the answers, inevitably some questions will arise that you can't answer. That won't bother the other person if it doesn't bother you. To say, "I don't know, but I'll try to find out," will build, rather than undermine, credibility. Write down those questions and come back with answers when you have them.

Questions **unrelated** to the text require a closer look. If they are diversions to gain space, then give the person that space and let the Holy Spirit, not you, nail him.

An easy way to deflect defensive questions is to say, “Now that’s an important question and we’ll get to it. Let me write it down.” Have the person repeat it so you can record it. This communicates that you are taking the person seriously. As you begin your next session, be sure you place that piece of paper on the table. This says, “I’ve not forgotten your question. We’ll get to it, and if you have more questions, they’re welcome, too.”

Taking Questions in Sequence

The other reason for writing down questions is that sometimes they can’t be answered out of sequence. (For example, how can you discuss the justice of a God whose existence is in doubt?) Frequently, the question “Who is Jesus?” needs to be answered before answers to other questions make sense. Explain this to your friend, and keep the list of questions handy to show you haven’t forgotten them.

Of course, sometimes a particular question is really blocking someone’s progress toward Christ. In that case, you need to give answer to clear the road. Even an incomplete one may do the job.

Sticking to the Bible

When studying with people who don’t believe the Bible, it’s crucial to consistently use nothing but the Bible. Your position is, “You don’t accept the Bible’s authority? That’s understandable, but we’re not here to discuss my opinions. We’re here to let you judge the Bible for yourself. So when you ask a question, I’ll try to restrict myself to showing you what the Bible says about it.” Any other position undermines the Bible’s authority, but this position lets the Bible function as the supernatural resource that it is.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 21 and appendix A.

Making the Decision

When someone is clearly attracted to Christ, it's tempting to push for a decision, but most people have to travel a long road before they are ready to commit themselves to Christ. After all, they must begin to change their whole worldview, beliefs, and habits. This process can be long and disappointing, since you are dealing with people who are spiritually dead. In this session we will:



- Explore the role of the emotion, intellect, and will in the conversion process.
 - See how to recognize which of these three is at work by a person's questions.
 - Learn when to give your testimony.
 - Consider when to push for a decision and when to back off.
1. Have you ever known someone who made an emotional or intellectual commitment to Christ, but who didn't seem totally sold on it? If so, what was the person's spiritual life like?

 2. How does the parable of the soil in Mark 4:10-20 describe what happens to people with only emotional or intellectual commitment?

3. What struck you about the way Gerry's emotions, intellect, and will interacted?



4. Over the course of his friendship with Gerry, how did Bill try to overcome resistance of each of these?

Going Deeper

The Four Soils Again

In Jesus' parable of the four soils, we can see what happens when emotions, intellect, and will are not all involved in a decision.

Some people are like the path: "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path" (Matthew 13:19). These people don't even have an emotional response to the gospel. Their only hope is for God to break up the hardness in their hearts—He does it often, and it's impressive to watch. Our chief job is to pray.

"The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away" (13:20-21). This person responds emotionally, but he does his thinking *after* making a decision. Then he has second thoughts, feels stupid for giving in to us, and avoids us. To prevent this miscarriage, we need to make sure that a person understands Christ and the commitment of faith before making a decision.

"Ignorance is a serious obstacle to faith, but it is a secondary one. The real obstacle is rebellion. God wants us to put down our guns and come out with our hands up."

Jim Petersen, Living Proof

“The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful” (13:22). This time the seed actually sprouts. Surely this time there’s life! But only the emotions and intellect are convinced. The will is still attached to other commitments: wealth and the worries of life. This person has succumbed to our evangelizing because he has no good reasons not to become a Christian, except that he just doesn’t want to. He’s run out of arguments, but he hasn’t really repented. There’s no faith, no love for Jesus, just mental capitulation. We need to make the issues clear for this person: a decision on these terms is not what Jesus is after.

“But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (13:23).

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 9, 22.

Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism*, chapter 11.



Launching the New Believer

The healthy birth of a new child of God is a time for rejoicing. But what we do next dramatically affects how fruitful the newborn will be as a servant of God. In this final session we will:

- Consider when to cut a new believer off from former associates and when to leave those relationships intact,
- Observe how to integrate the new believer into a vibrant community of believers for growth,
- Discover how to promote multiplication through the new believer's network of relationships, and
- Summarize our strategy for reaching the lost.

In Session 11, Gerry was struggling with letting Christ control his life, and Jackie was stunned to realize she was a Pharisee. In this session, we see how both resolved their issues and how the launching of Gerry as a new believer affected his unsaved friends.

1. How had Gerry's journey only just begun?



2. What did Jackie learn through her experiences with Gerry, Linda and Raz?

3. Describe how a new believer's network of unbeliever friends enhances the multiplication process.

4. The following is a list of the main points made in the series.
- a) Which ones have you found to be especially valuable insights?

 - b) Which ones still need clarification or practice?

Keys to Being Living Proof

1. There is a huge gap between the assumptions and the values of Christian and non-Christian culture. We need to take a person's *culture* into account when we bring the gospel to that person.
2. All people have *built-in receptors* to the gospel: guilt, desires for love and significance, and fear of death.
3. Unbelievers are unable to make the first move toward Christ because spiritually they are *lost, poor, imprisoned, blind, and dead*.
4. God draws unbelievers to Himself through three *supernatural resources*: the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and us.
5. Evangelism is a *process* of guiding someone, in the power of God, to make *mini-decisions* on the way to choosing for or against Jesus Christ. Our tasks in that process are to:
 - Cultivate – prepare the *emotional soil*
 - Sow – plant the seed of the Word in the *mind*
 - Harvest – pick the crop, get a decision of the *will*; and
 - Multiply – send people out to repeat the process.
6. We must make the first move toward the lost around us. We do this by establishing *common ground* on which to build a friendship. We address our friend's emotional barriers.
7. Being a good testimony is being light in a dark world and living with *grace* (unconditional, forgiving love) and *truth*. It is not flaunting our moral righteousness.
8. Early in our friendship, we need to *raise our flag* as people who base our lives on the Bible. We need to avoid raising the flag as a member of a church or denomination, or as people who abstain from fun.
9. Living among unbelievers requires that we trust the Holy Spirit to deal with their behavior, commit ourselves to please God rather than people, come to Bible-based convictions about disputable matters, and learn to say no graciously.
10. We begin sowing truth when we tell *faith stories* – glimpses of what it's like for us to be believers, glimpses of biblical outlook. These start dealing with our friend's mind.



11. To be living proof of truth, we need to be *in the process of learning and applying* what the Bible says about lifestyle – relationships, money, priorities, and so on. We don't have to be perfect; it's the direction we're heading that counts.
12. The key to fitting evangelism into busy schedules is *including unbelievers in our ongoing lives*.
13. No one has all the gifts it takes to reach the lost. We need to work in *teams*.
14. When we've won our friend's trust and have intrigued them with our biblical lifestyle, we are likely to have success in inviting them to *study the Bible* with us.
15. A Bible study for unbelievers must be relaxed, nonreligious, fun and nonthreatening.
16. The focus of the Bible study, whether topical or book-centered, is *"Who is Jesus?"* We may not be able to fix on this question immediately in a topical study, but our goal is to move toward this issue.
17. Asking and answering *questions* are our main Bible study techniques. We use launch, guide and summary questions paragraph by paragraph, at about a chapter per session.
18. When we've satisfied our friend's emotions and intellect, his or her *will* still needs to be committed. We can confront this will be making the will issue plain, telling our own story of accepting Christ, and/or using a gospel tract.
19. Normally, a new believer should *maintain contact* with unbelieving friends. Instead of burning bridges with confrontation, the new believer should become *our partner* in cultivating (loving), sowing (studying the Bible) and harvesting old friends.

For Further Reading

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, chapters 23 and epilogue.

"Probably the most dangerous thing about methods is that when they work, we begin to rely on them. We experiment with something. It works. As we become successful, we slip into thinking that continued success is a matter of just keeping the activity going. We feel that if we just repeat it long enough and hard enough, we will accomplish our goals. But when we transfer our confidence to such success-formula approaches, we are also resorting to carnal weaponry.

Our primary spiritual resources are the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Any true progress, any real spiritual victory, is gained through the power of these two forces."

Jim Petersen, Living Proof