

## SESSION 5

# A PASSION TO SHARE THE GOSPEL



*What marketing methods are least likely to persuade you?*

**QUESTION #1**

#BSFLbrokenvessels

*God calls us to share the gospel.*

## THE PASSAGES

2 Corinthians 5:11,14-21

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Everyone who has ever developed a product or service looks for the ideal way to get people to purchase it. Sure, a company can get a lot of mileage out of a catchy marketing slogan like Nike's® "Just do it,"™ but what they ideally want is a marketing campaign that just takes off on its own.

- ▶ **Person-to-person marketing.** Friends tell their friends about recent purchases and why they like them.
- ▶ **Viral marketing.** People see a product video or image online and they share it on social media.
- ▶ **Evangelism marketing.** The business world has grabbed the word "evangelism" from the church to describe people who are so sold on a product or company it is all they use or talk about. (Know anyone who is an "evangelist" about his iPhone®?)

Telling others about Jesus has nothing to do with marketing, but it does involve persuasion. In 2 Corinthians 5, the apostle Paul wrote about persuasion. His focus, however, was not on what he did to persuade others; his focus was on what persuaded him to share Christ with others. Let's consider what persuades us to share Christ.

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## 2 Corinthians 5:11

**11** Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

### KEY WORD

**terror** (v. 11)—A reverential awe for God, in light of His perfect holiness, righteousness, omniscience, and omnipotence, that leads a person to live in obedience to Him.

You've probably seen one of countless posters hung in businesses and offices: a dramatic picture with a stirring quote meant to offer inspiration and motivate us to be harder workers or better people. They might generate nice thoughts, but do they truly motivate us?

Motivation drives everything we do. Psychologists define motivation in two ways: extrinsic and intrinsic.

1. **Extrinsic motivation** is what causes us to do something to get an external benefit. For example, when a student wakes up at 4:30 a.m. to deliver newspapers, he is not doing it for the exercise! He is doing it for the extrinsic motivator: money. Or consider the girl who takes a “selfie” of herself cuddling her pet. If her motivation were really about the snuggling, she would not have posted that picture on the Internet. She likely did it for the extrinsic motivator: getting “likes” and attention from her online friends.
2. **Intrinsic motivation** is what prompts us to do something for internal satisfaction, without any regard for receiving anything from another person. For example, the parent who wakes up early to cook breakfast for her family is not doing it to receive a parent-of-the-year award! She does it out of love and appreciation for her family. Or consider the person who arrives early every Sunday to unload a trailer and set up chairs so that his church can meet in a rented school cafeteria. He is

motivated intrinsically, out of his love for the gospel and his desire to serve his church and provide an opportunity for the community to experience the grace of God.

What motivates us to share the gospel with others? Paul pointed to an intrinsic motivator: “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” Paul was not referring to the kind of fear that is marked by terror; nor is it the type of fear associated with phobias, such as a fear of clowns or snakes. Rather, Paul was talking about the type of fear that arises out of deep respect. Many a person has felt this respectful fear when standing before a judge.

In the previous verse, Paul made a reference to a far greater judge: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). We will all stand before Christ to be judged. Our sins were judged on the cross, and Christians need not fear a loss of salvation because those sins—the basis for eternal judgment—have been completely removed. But believers will stand before their Savior regarding how they lived as His children.

Reverential fear—deep, loving respect—motivated Paul to live to please Christ. Our same fear should motivate us to do the same today. And we do please Him when we “persuade men.”

**How can the fear of the Lord be a good motivator for our witness?**

## **QUESTION #2**

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### **2 Corinthians 5:14-17**

**14** For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

**15** And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

**16** Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

**17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

When I was engaged to my wife, I wanted to do something special for her on Valentine's Day, but I was a student on a very limited budget. I couldn't afford the cost of a restaurant, so I cooked our own gourmet meal! What made it particularly special for her was that I took the time to make it, even though I had never done this!

What compelled me? Love! The same love that compelled me to work at a fast-food sandwich shop all summer so that I could afford an engagement ring for her. The same love that compelled me to move across the country so I could live in the same city where she lived.

Love compels us to do great things—like share the good news of Christ. Several things stand out in this passage that are a part of the message of Christ, truths Paul was compelled to share:

- ▶ **Christ died for all** (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Every one of us has sinned. The penalty for failing to live in total obedience to God is death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23), but Jesus willingly took upon Himself the death we all deserve (Heb. 2:9).
- ▶ **Christ was raised for all** (2 Cor. 5:15). God raised Jesus from the dead, and all who believe and trust Jesus will be granted eternal life (John 11:25-26; Rom. 6:5-9).
- ▶ **We can live for Christ** (2 Cor. 5:15). Christ comes to dwell in His followers; we are not on our own, but He gives us His Spirit to help us live and bring glory to Him (Rom. 8:14-17).
- ▶ **We are made new in Christ** (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus doesn't just remove what kills (our sin); He gives us a fresh start, a new life (Eph. 2:10).

When Christ calls you to Himself, you're never the same again. Paul certainly knew this firsthand. When he encountered Christ on the road to Damascus, his life's trajectory was radically altered. When Christ called Paul to Himself, Paul immediately stopped living for himself. He spent the rest of His life declaring the gospel—Jesus' death and resurrection! When Christ calls you to Himself, everything changes! "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

**What are the basic truths of the gospel every person needs to hear?**

### QUESTION #3

Sharing the gospel of Jesus is not a religious act or a spiritual task to check off of a list. Sharing the gospel is the natural overflow of experiencing Christ's love in our lives. We were broken vessels—broken by our sin—but Christ took our sin and brokenness upon Himself. He died for you and me "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

So boldly share the gospel of Jesus Christ! Declare that He has died and has risen from the dead. Proclaim that He is alive and well, and is in the business of changing lives. Share this gospel out of the love of Christ that compels you.

**How does the love of Christ change our view of the world and the people we encounter?**

### QUESTION #4

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## 2 Corinthians 18-21

**18** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

**19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

**20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

**21** For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

### KEY WORD

**reconciliation** (v. 18)—Meaning “exchange” in the sense of restoring to favor, in the New Testament it refers to being changed from God’s enemy to friend through Christ.

As we read in verse 17, when we are in Christ, we become new creations. God saved us and gave us a new identity. Our past does not matter anymore, since God has wiped the slate clean! Consequently, we are reconciled to God.

Reconciliation is needed when two people are at odds with each other, but we were more than just “at odds” with our Creator. We rebelled and made ourselves God’s enemies, but God would not leave us there. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Rom. 5:10). Jesus removed the barrier—sin—and made it possible for harmony and peace to be established with God. Reconciliation happens when hostility ceases between former opponents, the relationship is restored, and they are bound together through mutual love.

We are reconciled to God! This is surely good news, but sadly, for many Christians, their understanding of the gospel ends here! They see the great benefit of the gospel for themselves but fail to see we have been charged with sharing this opportunity for reconciliation.

*It is our ministry.*

Because of this ministry, Paul called us ambassadors for Christ. The principal duty of an ambassador has not changed since Paul's day. An ambassador represents his country on foreign soil. When a United States ambassador speaks to a foreign government, it is the United States speaking!

In the same way, we represent Jesus. We are the ambassadors of King Jesus in a place that is not our true home. We are to live in such a way that when people see us, they see Jesus. As Christ's ambassadors, our words—right or wrong—are a reflection on Him. That's why Paul said, "as though God did beseech you by us."

God's plan to save the world includes you and me. If you are a follower of Christ, God has given you the ministry of reconciliation. If you are a new creation in Christ, God has commissioned you to share that same message of reconciliation with others (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). You are an ambassador for Christ, and God wants to use you to share the gospel with others.

## DIGGING DEEPER



### RECONCILIATION

Bringing together of two parties that are estranged or in dispute. Jesus Christ is the one who brings together God and man, with salvation as the result of the union. The idea is of a change of relationship, an exchange of antagonism for goodwill, enmity for friendship. Attitudes are transformed and hostility ceases.

In the restoration of relationship between God and humanity, reconciliation occurs with an unexpected twist. God, the injured

party, takes the initiative (2 Cor. 5:19). This initiating action from God is contrary to expectations. The removal of alienation, created by man's sin, is the work of God. The Bible never portrays man as reconciling himself to God or God being influenced by humans to reconciliation. When Paul admonishes his readers in 2 Cor. 5:20 to "be ye reconciled to God," he is telling them to receive gratefully the reconciliation that God has already achieved in Christ.

"Reconciliation," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. eds. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1368-69



So go! Share what God has done in your life. Talk about your life before Christ. Share what your priorities were and how you used to make decisions without Christ. Then talk about the moment you realized your ways were insufficient. Share how everything changed when you confessed Jesus as your Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:9-10). Be His ambassador and carry out the ministry of reconciliation.

**What are some ways we can participate in the work described in these verses?**

**QUESTION #5**

# AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

*Use the prompts below to create a job description for yourself as an Ambassador of Christ in your community.*

Job Title: Ambassador for Christ

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Job Location:

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Primary Duties:

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Key Benefits:

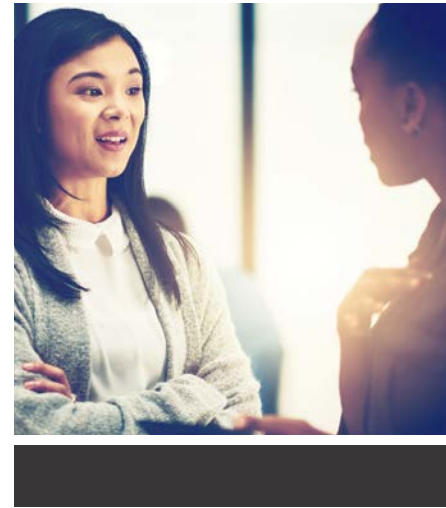
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# LIVE IT OUT

What steps can you take to share the gospel this week? Consider these applications:

- ▶ **Begin with prayer.** When you wake up in the morning, get on your knees and ask God to work through you. Tell Him, “Here I am Lord, please use me to be a blessing to others today. Help me to be Your ambassador today.”
- ▶ **Learn to share.** Talk to your pastor or a leader in your church to get some practical tips for sharing the gospel. Consider using the inside front cover of this book as you talk to another person about Jesus.
- ▶ **Share.** Ask God to grant you one opportunity this week to be a blessing to others and share the gospel with them in both words and actions.

God has blessed you to be a blessing. God wants to work through you to see His kingdom come in your neighborhood, workplace, and city. Are you ready to go?



Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLbrokenvessels**