

7

ANDREW: ACTIVE WITNESS



*What's the best sales pitch
you've heard?*

QUESTION #1

#BSFLsecondnature

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE **115**

THE POINT

Christ-centered living chooses invitation, not indifference.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

“What will it take to put you behind that wheel today?” Buying a car is an uncomfortable experience for most people. We feel the pressure of walking around the sales lot, test driving cars, and then sitting down with a salesperson who goes back and forth to check with the sales manager on the finer points of negotiation.

A lot of our discomfort comes in knowing that the salesperson, no matter how good he or she may be at small talk, has one goal in mind: closing the deal.

Many Christians view evangelism in the same way—except they are the salespeople. They think they must do everything they can to move a person from point A to point B, closing the “faith deal” with a prayer.

Andrew clearly stood against this philosophy. Virtually every time we see him in the Gospels, he’s introducing someone to Jesus. Andrew knew that the true power of evangelism comes not with persuasive arguments from us, but simply in providing an introduction to Jesus. That’s because Jesus is more than capable of doing the rest.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

John 1:35-42

³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹ He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

Andrew was one of two disciples present when John the Baptist testified that Jesus was “the Lamb of God.” That statement was enough for Andrew and his companion (who was probably John, the one who wrote this Gospel). Although they had been followers of John the Baptist, they went with Jesus to hear what He was teaching. After these two disciples spent several hours with Jesus, Andrew emerged with a life-changing confession: “We have found the Messiah.”

Let’s not miss the gravity of this statement. For generations upon generations, God’s people had been waiting on the Chosen One—the Messiah. The people had come to believe that the Messiah would be a political leader whom God would raise up to throw off the oppression of the Roman government. At this point, Andrew most likely had no idea that he, like everyone else, wasn’t grasping God’s true intentions. The Messiah would not deliver the people in a political way; He would do something far better. Rather than merely saving the people from Rome, He would save the people from their sin and death.

How did someone introduce you to Jesus?

QUESTION #2

Nevertheless, the first thing Andrew did when he knew he'd found the Messiah was go to his brother Simon and invite him to come and see Jesus also. In fact, almost every time we see Andrew in the Gospels, he was doing this same thing: inviting people to see Jesus.

Notice that Andrew offered no clever pitch or persuasive argument—just a simple invitation for Simon to come and encounter Jesus for himself. There's a sweet kind of freedom in Andrew's actions. In order for us to feel that same freedom of invitation, two things must be true about us:

- ▶ **We must sincerely love those closest to us.** Without exception, the best thing we can offer our loved ones is Jesus. People might not know it; they might not even like it. But if we truly love those closest to us, then we're responsible to invite them to encounter the One who is for their eternal good.
- ▶ **We must believe Jesus is truly compelling.** Based on his own encounter with Jesus, Andrew was convinced that Jesus was truly compelling on His own. He had no need for a clever presentation or sales job; he only needed to make an introduction, and then Peter would see for himself.

What can we learn from the examples of John the Baptist and Andrew in this passage?

QUESTION #3***John 12:20-22***

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

During the Passover festival, Jewish people from all over the known world gathered in Jerusalem. Also among them were God-fearing Gentiles who had come to worship. Like many others, they wanted to see Jesus.

We aren't told why these people approached Philip with their request—but it's interesting that Philip went and found Andrew. Maybe all the disciples had become accustomed to Andrew's introductions. They knew Andrew was never shy about introducing new people to Jesus, and here was another chance for him to do so.

Like Andrew, we should always take the opportunity to connect others with Jesus, especially when the people seeking Jesus have genuine questions. Many of us have a problem, though. We're rarely in places where we come into contact with people in whom the Spirit of God might be working. With our lives so full of people just like us, we may never have the opportunity to meet those who might have questions about life and faith—questions only Jesus can answer.

We must intentionally fight against that trend for the sake of the gospel. We must intentionally put ourselves in situations where we know we will encounter people who are not Christians.

- ▶ Talk with your neighbors on a walk instead of being silent.
- ▶ Talk to the person next to you at the gym instead of using headphones.
- ▶ Talk with other parents at your kids' sporting events.

These are simple choices we can make, but each one is driven by faith. We take these active steps because we believe God is constantly at work in us and throughout the world—and that we are God's chosen means to spread His message of good news.

What questions might a nonbeliever have about Christ?

QUESTION #4



John 12:23-26

²³ And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

Andrew, faithful to his character, introduced these people to Jesus. Interestingly, Jesus didn’t ask them why they came to Him or what questions they had. He didn’t inquire about their social positions, their families, or their occupations. But He did provide a good deal of clarity about what it means to follow Him.

This is an important point for today. When we think it’s our chief aim to “close the deal” for potential Christians, we might be tempted to soften the reality of what it looks like to follow Jesus. Instead, we must be faithful to describe the Christian experience as Jesus did, encouraging would-be disciples to count the cost:

- ▶ **Following Jesus is a pathway of self-denial.** In these verses, Jesus described His own death as a grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, but then produces a large crop. If we would follow Jesus and invite others to do the same, we must recognize that He calls us to the same life of self-denial He lived. In Jesus’ words, we must hate our lives in this world.
- ▶ **Following Jesus is the pathway to life.** True enough, we will lose things as we follow Jesus. Following Him will cost us relationships, ambitions, and possessions. But everything we may lose pales in comparison to what we certainly gain: true life, true joy, and true satisfaction.
- ▶ **Following Jesus is the pathway to being with Jesus.** Why does following Jesus lead to life? Because *following* Jesus is the pathway to *being* with Jesus. At the same time, we need to remember there’s no such thing as a casual relationship with Jesus. He is Lord of all—and nothing less.

How would you describe the challenges and benefits of following Christ?

QUESTION #5

A TIME OF INVITATION

Listen to the song "Down to the River to Pray," by Alison Krauss. As you listen to the song, listen also to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to reveal the names of people you can invite to meet Jesus.

Family members

Friends

Neighbors

Acquaintances

LIVE IT OUT

What steps can you take to be like Andrew this week? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Say thanks.** Who introduced you to Jesus? Call or write and express your gratitude to that person.
- ▶ **Make time.** In your current schedule, what opportunities do you have to interact with people who are not Christians? If none, re-evaluate how you can make room for those crucial introductions.
- ▶ **Make the introduction.** Are you confident enough in Jesus to introduce someone else to Him? Think of one specific person who needs that introduction, and resolve to make it when you see that person this week.

Andrew, the active witness, shows us that evangelism is nothing like selling cars. Instead, simply inviting others to see Jesus should be second nature to those who deeply love and treasure Christ.

My thoughts



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



GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE

BY MARK KELLEY

Lauren Chandler had good reason to thank God. “Most of my life was pretty charmed,” she says. “I grew up in a home where my parents loved Jesus and each other, loved my brother and me. My life had a natural flow where things just kind of worked out for me.”

In 1999, Lauren married Matt Chandler, a passionate young preacher who would become lead pastor of one of the fastest growing churches in America, the Village Church in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The willowy, blue-eyed blonde would be a Dove-nominated singer-songwriter and an in-demand speaker at dating

and marriage conferences. She and Matt had two beautiful children, and she was pregnant with their third.

Then she suffered a miscarriage. And another one right after that. Lauren's world was crashing in on her.

"I had always thought, *Things will just work out for me because I trust God,*" Lauren admits. "But this was very painful. This wasn't supposed to happen to me."

When she became pregnant after the second miscarriage, Lauren found herself filled with fear, not knowing then that she would carry this child full term. "I was afraid the same thing would happen," she says. "And the Lord just confronted my fear. He showed me I believed God is good because He blessed me instead of believing God is good no matter what—that He loves me and will do good for me no matter how things might appear to me."

It's hard to be thankful in difficult times if we equate easy times with God's blessing, Lauren writes in her new book, *Steadfast Love: The Response of God to the Cries of Our Heart*. In the book, she mines Psalm 107 for life-saving truths about God's covenant-keeping love—an anchor strong enough to hold through life's worst storms.

"We have this confidence in God, whose love never changes," Lauren says. "We may think, *How can this be good?* Yet, we can cry out to God, 'I don't understand this, but I want to trust You. No matter what is going on, I am going to trust that You are good, that whatever You bring into my life is something that ultimately will be for my good.'"

When people put their trust in a false anchor—like thinking they can work out their own problems—those anchors invariably give way, Lauren explains. But when people realize God's steadfast love is an anchor that will hold fast in any storm, it gives them a deep peace and confidence that allows them to thank God even in the hardest times.

Learning that lesson from the miscarriages was crucial for Lauren because she and Matt were about to face an even more severe trial.

"I had always thought, *Things will just work out for me because I trust God, but this was very painful.*"



I Still Will Trust You

On Thanksgiving morning 2009, a seizure threw 35-year-old Matt to the floor. Tests at Baylor University Medical Center showed a mass in his brain's right frontal lobe. The seven-hour surgery to remove the malignant tumor was followed by an arduous course of radiation and high-dose chemotherapy.

Even though most patients with that kind of cancer aren't likely to live long, Matt's scans are still coming back clean—no sign of cancer in his body seven years later!

Lauren's heart overflows with gratitude for that gift, but she is careful not to take it for granted. "Every time Matt gets into the MRI machine, I say, 'Lord, You have shown me Your goodness no matter what, and I trust You. I know we do not deserve positive results, but You have been so kind to give that,'" Lauren shares.

Living with an attitude of gratitude isn't automatic, however. One thing that keeps Lauren from forgetting God's grace is living in relationship with Christians who bear one another's burdens. "Being in community with people who . . . maybe I'm not struggling but they are. I get to step in with them, caring about and praying for them," she explains. "Coming alongside them in their struggle helps me be grateful, not because I pity them, but because I remember how God has been faithful to me and how He continues to be faithful."

She remembers the example of the three Israelites who refused to worship the Babylonian king even when he threatened to throw them into a blazing furnace. Faced with unimaginable pain, the men told the king: "If the God we serve exists, then he can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up" (Dan. 3:17-18, CSB).

As her husband is drawn out of the MRI machine, Lauren continues her prayer: "God, I believe You will deliver us, but even if You don't, even if the results of this MRI are not what we hoped and prayed for, You are still good, and I still will trust You."

In Good Times or Bad

Right before Matt's cancer diagnosis, God took Lauren to the Book of Job and highlighted for her that when Satan wanted to afflict God's servant, he had to get the Lord's permission.

"It showed me that anything the enemy could do in my life was simply him being a pawn in God's hand," she recalls. "I realized God would use for my good whatever the enemy meant for evil. It taught me we can see God's hand in hard times."

It's hard to be thankful in difficult times if we equate easy times with God's blessing.

Even when good things are happening to us, pride can blind us to the opportunity to thank God, Lauren adds. "We don't see them as graces in our lives. We think we did it," she admits. "We want to be the ones who are strong, who have the answers, who can do everything—when really we are needy; and it's a beautiful thing to be needy."

In good times or bad, we can live in thankfulness when we let Scripture remind us of God's steadfast love, Lauren encourages. "God is faithful in the trial, and He is faithful in the peace times," she says. "Lord, help me remember that You are good, that there are so many things in my life to be grateful for—even things that seem inconvenient and frustrating and disappointing. Even in those things, Lord, help me be grateful."

Mark Kelly is a freelance writer in Marietta, Georgia. Hear the full interview with Lauren Chandler on Mark's website, godsrevolution.net.

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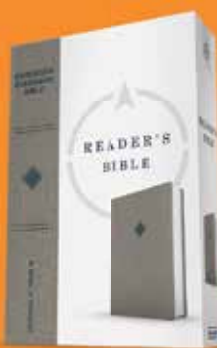
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COMING IN WINTER

Jesus Changes Everything

SUGGESTED FOR
THE WEEK OF

December 3	Session 1	<i>Jesus Calls</i>	<i>Mark 1:14-20</i>
December 10	Session 2	<i>Jesus Teaches</i>	<i>Mark 4:1-9</i>
December 17	Session 3	<i>Jesus Rules</i>	<i>Mark 4:35-41</i>
December 24	Session 4	<i>Jesus Saves</i>	<i>Luke 2:4-20</i>
December 31	Session 5	<i>Jesus Heals</i>	<i>Mark 5:22-24,35-43</i>
January 7	Session 6	<i>Jesus Provides</i>	<i>Mark 6:34-44</i>
January 14	Session 7	<i>Jesus Corrects</i>	<i>Mark 7:5-15</i>

Made for Something More

January 21	Session 1	<i>I Am Wonderfully Made</i>	<i>Psalms 139:1-6,13-18</i>
January 28	Session 2	<i>I Am a Child of the King</i>	<i>Galatians 4:1-7</i>
February 4	Session 3	<i>I Am a Minister</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 3:4-12</i>
February 11	Session 4	<i>I Am a Priest</i>	<i>1 Peter 2:4-10</i>
February 18	Session 5	<i>I Am Just Passing Through</i>	<i>1 Peter 2:11-17</i>
February 25	Session 6	<i>I Am a Light</i>	<i>Ephesians 5:8-14</i>

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SECOND NATURE

THE DARK SIDE

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The Dark Side

Satan is real and he is powerful. The presence of evil throughout our world attests to that. But we should not lose sight of an even greater truth: Jesus is greater—and He is victorious! There is a dark side to our world, but the light of Christ has overcome the darkness.

Jeremiah Johnston is Professor of Early Christianity at Houston Baptist University and President of the Christian Thinkers Society. He is the author of *Unanswered*.



Second Nature

We often pick up habits and traits from people without realizing it. Those habits and traits become second-nature for us. This study explores seven men and women who exhibited godly traits that were second-nature for them—and they can be second-nature for us as we live Christ-centered lives.

Michael Kelley serves as the Director of Groups at LifeWay Christian Resources. Michael is the author of *Boring: Finding an Extraordinary God in an Ordinary Life* and *Wednesdays Were Pretty Normal*.

Coming Next Quarter

Jesus Changes Everything is a seven-week study on the Bible's teaching on the ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. The study is written by Robby Gallaty, Senior Pastor at Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee.

Made for Something More is from Jordan Easley, Senior Pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, Tennessee. The study explores six traits that will identify those who are living in Christ.

