

Pathway

PERSONAL CHRISTIAN GROWTH SERIES

Set aside a special time each day to go through a *Pathway* study. Even if you miss a day or two, don't skip those studies. Begin again where you left off! Each daily study is designed to take only 10-12 minutes, or longer ... it's up to you! Be honest with yourself. This is a private time just between you and God.

Introduction — *Telling Others*

Are you convinced that being a Christian is the greatest thing that ever happened to you? If you are, then you'll also know that the best thing you can do for anyone is to tell him or her about Christ. But sometimes it's hard. You don't know what to say. Or, you feel awkward bringing Christ into a conversation. This practical *Pathway* series offers help, encouragement and advice to help you fulfill the greatest responsibility in the world - telling others about the Lord.

DAY ONE — Telling Others

Talk to God: Talk with the Lord today concerning your own feelings about telling others what Christ means to you. Remember that He knows you and loves you. You can't hide anything from Him.

Verse to Think About: *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so ... (Psalm 107:2).*

I Just Gotta Share It!

I don't remember what first drew Mike to church a year or so ago. But shortly after he started attending our youth group, he trusted Christ as his Savior. Mike changed. All of a sudden, his life had new meaning. He started living to please God.

I noticed Mike started telling everyone at school about the Lord. Almost everyone knew he had become a Christian. I started thinking that maybe someone should burst Mike's bubble a bit. Perhaps I should tell him that the rest of us didn't witness like he did. I mean, I always figured that my reputation at school would suffer if I broadcasted my faith in Christ. Mike has a lot to learn, I told myself. *Later, he'll be embarrassed about all this.*

But looking back, what a lesson Mike taught me! The greatest thing in the world had happened to him — and he had to share it! Christ was important to me, too, or at least I thought He was. Yet, come to think of it, not one of my school friends would have ever known that I was a Christian.

What about you? ***Do you consider (and live like) becoming a Christian is the greatest thing that ever took place in your life?***

___ No, actually I don't.

___ I know I should, and wish I did. But I can't say that I do.

___ It's pretty important to me.

___ Yes! It's the greatest thing in my life!

For many teens saved years ago, what Christ has done for them has perhaps lost its excitement. Many so-called committed Christian guys and girls aren't so enthused about the Lord that they want to share Him with their friends. Often new Christians, like Mike, slow down and stop telling everyone about their new life in Christ.

What do you think are the biggest hang-ups for teens when it comes to telling others about Christ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

There are a lot of excuses for not witnessing.

"I don't know what to say."

"It's awkward bringing God into a conversation."

"My friends would think I'm strange."

This week, you'll look more closely at these reasons and what you can do about them. But first, there's something more important to consider. **ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IS THE GREATEST THING THAT EVER TOOK PLACE IN YOUR LIFE?** Don't you want to share what Christ has done in your life?

What does Jesus Christ mean to you personally? ***Give some thought to this question and write your answer here.***

A Look in the Book: Mike loved the Lord. It was his natural, uninhibited response to tell others. The same was true for the Apostle Paul. Jesus Christ had become Paul's life. Paul makes a bold statement which shows his attitude concerning witnessing. ***Read Romans 1:16.*** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Write it in your own words. _____

The Apostle Paul wasn't ashamed of his new faith in Christ. It was the greatest thing that had ever occurred in his life! He wanted to share the news with everyone around him! What about you? Do you consider being a Christian to be the greatest thing in the world?

DAY TWO — Telling Others

Talk to God: Talk with the Lord about your need for His strength and guidance as you tell others about Him. Ask Him to help you accurately present the gospel. Thank Him for the wonderful salvation He has provided for you.

Verse to Think About: *Ye have not chosen Me [Jesus says], but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you (John 15:16).*

What if I Blow It?

Tony and Becky were great friends at school. As long as talk revolved around classes, Becky's cross-country team or Tony's soccer, everything was fine. But when the conversation turned to the weekend, dating or life outside of school, Becky squirmed.

Becky wanted to share with Tony why she was different, and why she didn't want to attend wild parties with the other kids. But when she tried to explain that she was a Christian, the words sounded like an excuse. How could she explain that she loved the Lord and wanted to please Him? She wanted to tell Tony about her faith in Christ, but where should she begin? What if it all came out wrong, and she turned Tony off?

So in time, Becky just eased away from the friendship. That way, she didn't have to risk saying the wrong thing.

Have you ever been in a similar situation? Perhaps you wanted to share your faith in Christ, but didn't know how to go about it. **Describe what happened to you and how you felt.**

No Christian is perfect. But Jesus has given us the wonderful privilege of bringing our lost world — our friends — to Him. God doesn't require perfection in your life for you to be an effective witness.

Becky's problem was that she depended on herself for the ability to witness. She wasn't focusing on the Lord for the strength, and words and confidence to share His gospel message. Becky was worrying more about the outcome, rather than being obedient to Christ's command in Mark 16:15: ... *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

A Look in the Book: What about you? When you think of witnessing, are you trying to do it on your own? **Look up these encouraging verses. After each verse, write the main point about witnessing that you get from it.**

Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

1 John 4:4: *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

2 Timothy 1:7: *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

God doesn't ask you to be a professional speaker before you begin telling others about His love. He doesn't require that you go away to Bible school before you try to explain your faith. Rather, He just asks that you be obedient to Him and share in your own clear, accurate way what Christ means to you. It is important, though, to know the Word, so you can share it with others.

Take time to think of people you know who need Christ. Write their names below to help you remember to pray for them this week.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY THREE — Telling Others

Talk to God: Talk to God about people in your life who need Him as personal Savior. Ask God for a willing heart to live for Him. Pray that others will see Jesus in you and want Him as Savior in their life, too.

Verse to Think About: *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Peter 2:12).*

Living the Life!

Sue and Melinda sat on the edge of their beds in their cabin. The girls had been friends for several months and were beginning to know each other well. But this was Sue's first experience with Melinda's church youth group.

"Melinda, remember when I told you I think my parents are such hypocrites?" Sue asked, "Remember how I told you I didn't want any part of their religion?"

"I remember. Why?"

"Well," Sue continued, "I told you that because I'd heard from kids at school that you were religious. I didn't want you to be pushing anything on me."

Melinda sat silent.

Sue went on. "I was always waiting for you to start telling me to go to church or something. But you didn't. You were just my friend. I waited for you to show signs of being weird, or something. But instead you've just been so much fun! You never judged me, even though I'm involved in things you won't do.

"Then ... finally, you invited me to this retreat. I've been listening all weekend to what the speaker has been saying. I don't understand it all, but I'm ready to ask some questions. Do you mind if I ask about what you believe and why you're different?"

Lifestyle evangelism means personally demonstrating Christ's love through your everyday living. This is one of several ways to share your faith. **Write below how you think Melinda had put into practice lifestyle evangelism over the past several months with Sue.**

Melinda figured it was wiser not to start by outright witnessing to Sue. She decided to just let her actions speak for her. **Do you agree or disagree with this tactic?**

___ Agree ___ Disagree

Lifestyle evangelism is:

1. **A result of a disciplined Christian life.** It's a result of a Christian walking close to the Lord. Remember, actions speak louder than words.
2. **Effective!** Jesus set the example for us. Get to know a person and meet him or her where he or she is now!
3. **Ordinary conversation prompted in your heart by the Lord.** You don't hide who you are. Rather, you show who you are through Christ.

A Look in the Book: *Grab your Bible and read John 4:7-29, 39-42.*

Through your actions and words, sometimes you can witness about Christ to someone in one afternoon. Or, it may take months, or a year, before the Lord will give you the right opening. But the common ingredient in any situation is letting people see Jesus in YOU.

Have you ever heard the saying: "Your life is the only Bible some people will ever read"? What does your life look like? Are you guiding people to Christ, or away from Him? You can't take your friends with you to heaven. You can, however, gently and lovingly lead them there!

Hiding It in My Heart: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).*

Notice from your reading how Jesus spoke to the woman at the well. **Write how Melinda did something similar:**

Jesus met the woman where she was - in her "lifestyle" at the well.

Jesus got to know the woman. He asked her about herself.

Jesus let the woman realize her need for Him on her own.

Jesus was there to help the woman find the answers she needed.

DAY FOUR — *Telling Others*

Talk to God: Could you tell someone about your faith in Christ? Ask God to give you a real desire to know Him and how to explain what you believe. Spend time working toward this goal.

Verse to Think About: ... *Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).*

What to Say!

From the very beginning, I thought my stepfather was strange. I had no idea what my mom saw in Rod until one weekend when I got stuck fishing with him. Rod was all into fishing and tried patiently to teach me everything he knew. He bought us a great lunch at this cafe, and I guess we were beginning to have fun.

But during lunch he dropped his bombshell on me. (Remember, I said he was strange.) Rod said it just like this: “Son, tell me about your religious beliefs.”

I said, “What?”

And he said, “I said, Son, tell me about what you believe. I’d like to know. You go to church, and seem pretty well-rounded and decent, not to mention popular. So, tell me what you believe about God.”

I stumbled all over the place. I tried to tell my stepfather that I believed in Christ, and that He had made a difference in my life. I wanted to tell him how much Christ meant to me as my Savior. But I don’t think those actual words ever came out. To tell you the truth, I have no idea what I said before I finally changed the subject to how interesting the color of the lake was that day!

Imagine that you are Jeff for a moment. **Write what you believe about becoming a Christian, and what the Christian life involves.** Go ahead. Unlike Jeff, you’ve got all the time you need!

A Look in the Book: Jesus said in 1 Peter 3:15: ... *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you ...*

Can you explain what you believe? Today and tomorrow you’ll spend time thinking through the pure, simple gospel message.

It is the basis for your Christian faith.

It is the answer for the hope that is within you.

It is your reason for living.

It is your promise and confidence for eternal life.

Take a look at the following verses which explain the gospel message. After each statement, change it to “I” and rewrite it below. (See Number 1 for example.)

1. *Romans 3:23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

EVERYONE IS A SINNER.

“I am a sinner.”

2. *Romans 6:23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

THE RESULT OF SIN IS DEATH — SEPARATION FROM GOD FOREVER.

3. *Romans 5:8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS TO SAVE US FROM SIN’S PENALTY.

4. *John 1:12. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.*

John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

RECEIVE JESUS AS SAVIOR AND BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED IN YOUR PLACE.

Jeff needed to know how to explain his beliefs to Rod. He could have said something as simple as this:

“I’m a Christian. That means I’ve put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ. He died in my place on the cross and paid the penalty for my sin, so I could have eternal life in heaven. Now with God’s help, I want to live my life to please Christ.”

Read through that paragraph a couple of times. Then, try to paraphrase the words to make them your own. Be prepared for the next time you have an opportunity to share what Christ means to you!

DAY FIVE — Telling Others

Hiding It in My Heart: Take time to memorize these salvation verses today.

... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ... (Acts 16:31).

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

The Gospel Plain and Simple

Annette didn't know for sure what to think. Becoming a Christian sounded just like what she needed and wanted. But was it really as easy as her friend, Tom, had made it sound? He had explained it so well. Salvation meant to be a part of God's family, to have her sins forgiven, to spend forever in heaven, and to know God was with her.

Annette opened the sheet of paper Tom gave her. He had written an outline for her to review. Then he told her that under each point, she should look up the verse and write what it said to her. Then, Tom said, the gospel would be more personal to her. It would help her make a decision. **(You do the same. Number 1 is done for you as an example.)**

1. **Everyone is a sinner.** *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Romans 3:12).*

This means me, too. God sees me as a sinner.

2. **You can't do anything good to make God forget your sin.** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).*

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3. **Jesus has already paid the penalty for your sin when He died in your place on the cross.** *But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8).*

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4. **God asks you to believe (trust) Him to take away your sin and give you eternal life.** *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name (John 1:12).*
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If you've ever had the joy of explaining the gospel to someone, you may have felt at a loss for words. But if someone is really open and interested in listening to you, that's no time for you to become confused.

You must trust God to help and equip you with the words you need. But explaining salvation to someone, and hopefully leading him or her to Christ, is something for which you must be prepared. The gospel message is simple. Even a young child can understand it. Don't let the message become difficult and cluttered. As much as possible, stick to the basics YOU had to realize and believe yourself. Just share where you've been and how the Lord saved you.

One of the most effective ways of witnessing is to tell what happened to you, and how you were saved. Share from your own heart. ***In the space below, write your own testimony of salvation in a way that you might explain it to a friend.*** Remember, focus on the basics.

DAY SIX — Telling Others

Talk to God: Thank God for the Holy Spirit who shows people their need of Jesus Christ. Ask Him to help you always do your part in reaching others for Him.

Verse to Think About: *Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Ephesians 3:20).*

When Your Job Is Done

Estee and John sat near the back of church staring forward. It was Mother’s Day, and the pastor was preaching about Christian mothers.

Fourteen-year-old Estee was thinking how unfair life seemed. All her friends at church had Christian moms. They all seemed so nice and interested in their daughters. Why couldn’t her mom believe in Christ and become a Christian, too? Estee hated coming to church alone with her brother.

Eighteen-year-old John was thinking about his mom, too. John’s mind was on how long he’d been praying for her. Ever since he and Estee had been saved three years ago, they’d prayed for their mom. She never seemed interested in anything to do with the church, though. Once she had told them, “God let your father die. I don’t want any part of religion. You can believe what you want, and I won’t stop you. But please leave me alone about it.”

It really hurt John and Estee that their mom didn’t know the Lord. They both felt like they’d been praying for her salvation a long time.

Is there someone close to you who doesn’t know Christ? Perhaps it’s a family member or friend. Maybe it is the parent of a friend. **How does it feel to realize that this person chooses to reject Christ? Write your feelings here.**

A Look in the Book: Even though you can pray for an unsaved person for years, saving people is God’s business, not yours. God commands you to tell others, but it is the Holy Spirit who shows a person his need for Christ. **Read John 16:8.** *And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

This verse is talking about the Holy Spirit. “Reprove” means that He will show people the gospel in a way they can understand it. Then people either accept or reject the message of Christ.

When you pray for your unsaved friends and family members, you are being obedient to God. When you share the wonderful truth of Jesus Christ with them, you are fulfilling His command. When you are a demonstration of His love, you are pleasing the Lord. But you can only do YOUR part. Convincing the person of his or her need is God’s job. Be faithful in sharing the gospel; and leave the rest to Him.

On My Own: For many people, it’s hard to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in witnessing. **Talk to your pastor, youth pastor, or another Christian leader you respect. Ask him to help you further understand how the Holy Spirit works to convict a person of his or her sin and need of Christ. Write your findings here.**

Earlier this week, you wrote your personal testimony of salvation. The best way to become comfortable witnessing is to frequently review what the Lord means to you! **Take time now to write again how you might lead a friend to Christ, using your personal testimony of salvation.**

