

Sharing faith without losing friends.

Week #1: Loving well

March 03, 2019

Sharing our love for Jesus with others is something most of us really want to do. The forgiveness we have experienced, the purpose that we have been given, and the Spirit of God leading us through this life and into the next is the best thing that's ever happened - and good news is to be shared.

Yet, bringing Christ into our relationships can be intimidating. We don't want to be misunderstood, we worry that we might lose a friendship, and we're not sure whether what we say comes out the right way at the right time in the right place to the right people ...

So, let's take a couple of weeks to learn that sharing Christ can be fun when we follow a few simple principles, beginning with the truth that God puts all sorts of people in our lives to love just like He does - unconditionally and genuinely.

Study Questions: *Jesus and Zacchaeus.*

1. What "methods" and "strategies" for sharing Christ have you seem emerge through the course of your life? Have you participated in any of them? If so, what was your experience like?
 - Galatians 5:25 says that "since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." What would change about your perception of sharing Christ if you only priority was to keep in step with the Spirit, rather than memorizing formulas or winning souls?
 - Read Luke 19:1-10. How had the Spirit prepared Zacchaeus for this day? Do you think he had any idea of what was about to happen to him?
2. When the Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses knock on your door, how do you feel about what they're doing? How do they come across to you? Is this the way to share faith?
 - What's the difference between sharing faith within a genuine friendship, versus an intentional, forced encounter? Does God's Spirit use them both?
3. Jesus looked past Zacchaeus' obvious flaws and reputation and saw something no one else did.
 - Who looked past your flaws and led you to Jesus?
 - What friend, acquaintance or family member needs you to see beyond their flaws?
 - Read Galatians 5:22-23. Which of the fruit of God's Spirit would you like to produce more of, in order to follow the Master more effectively - sharing His grace within your life-story more clearly?
4. What friendships with those who do not yet know Jesus has God provided you? What do you appreciate about your friends? How does your story mesh with their story, creating a friendship?
 - Will you pray this week for supernatural insight into what God is doing in your friendships?
 - Will you ask God to increase not only your insight about others, but insight into how He is weaving Himself into your story ... or put better, how He is weaving your story into His?
5. Pray again this week for the friend or family member that God has placed on your heart. Pray for insight, for patience, and for wisdom as you seek to be a friend who walks with Jesus and has a story to share.