



WITNESS Sermon Study Guide

Week 5: Giving An Answer Lance Blythe

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Are You Ready?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-16

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

We are called to always be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Jesus. This is how we bear witness to His name. So—are you ready?

For many of us, this question prompts some anxiety and doubt.

What if I get it wrong?

What if I offend someone?

What if I don't have the answers?

What if I blow it and lose the opportunity for good?

One of the biggest barriers to having spiritual conversations with those around us is the fear that we're just not ready. But sharing our faith isn't about having everything figured out. In fact, if you believe that Jesus is Lord, then you have everything you need. If you have enough to believe, then you have enough to speak. You are ready!

1. What are some of the anxieties you have about sharing your faith?
2. Can you think of a time when these fears held you back from sharing the hope you have with others?



The Role of the Holy Spirit

Read John 14:15-27 & 16:7-15

The Holy Spirit is the true agent of change and conviction in people's hearts. This is His work. Ours is to live with gentleness and respect, seeking to love, serve and be ready to give an answer for the difference people see in us.

When we understand this, it helps to focus our thinking about faith conversations. The goal is not to convince people with a perfectly packaged argument or pressure-filled persuasion; that approach sets us up for a win-loss mentality. Instead, the goal is to embrace the kind of relational conversations that might lead to consideration. Sharing our faith is an opportunity to bless someone, and like the giving of a gift, there are no strings attached.

1. How does Jesus describe the role of the Holy Spirit in John 14:26 and how does this influence your approach to witnessing?
2. Why is gentleness and respect important when discussing faith with others? What does this look like practically?

Interestingly, when we look at the ministry of Jesus, we find this is the approach he often takes. Jesus loved to engage in genuine, relational conversation with people, offering food for thought and an invitation to explore. We see this in the story of Nicodemus.

Nicodemus: A Journey of Faith

Read John 3:1-21

In a world that often celebrates instant transformation, we may tend to think of coming to faith as a lightning-bolt moment, like the Apostle Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-19. But for many people, faith is more like a slow sunrise rather than a flash of lightning.

Nicodemus had this kind of transformation. A Pharisee like Paul, he wasn't struck down in an instant. Instead, he took his time to consider and explore—first bringing his questions to Jesus at night, later defending him in front of the Pharisees, and finally, seeking to honour Jesus as a king after His crucifixion (John 3:1-21; John 7:50-52; John 19:38-42).

Like Nicodemus, many people in today's culture come to faith through a process of questioning, considering, and experiencing moments of God's love over time. As



witnesses to the hope we have in Jesus, we get to be a part of the journey, and that's worth preparing for.

1. Do you relate more to Paul's sudden conversion or Nicodemus' gradual journey of faith? Why?
2. What are some moments or experiences that have shaped your faith over time?
3. Rather than thinking of evangelism like a full meal that needs to be served all at once, Doug Pollock's book, *God Space*, talks about the idea of a "spiritual appetiser"—a digestible offering that invites people to taste and see the goodness of God. What's one "spiritual appetiser" you could offer to someone who is exploring faith?

Faith Conversations Don't Need to be Intimidating

Your story is a powerful tool for sharing the gospel. Take some time to reflect on these key questions and consider how you can be prepared to give an answer for the hope you have in Jesus. Then pray for one another and invite the Holy Spirit's help for the week ahead.

1. Is there a moment in your life when God made a lasting impression on you?
2. If you had to sum it up, why do you follow Jesus?
3. How has God changed you?
4. What does spirituality mean to you?