



2020 2Q Making Friends for God: Lesson 1 Why Witness?

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

We are starting a new quarter on witnessing and we received this email this week:

Hello.

I am just learning about God's design laws vs. imposed laws. I've been sharing these new ideas with my extended family of Adventists on the West Coast. Everyone seems to be experiencing a tremendous blessing of peace and renewed joy with this fuller understanding. I am so grateful to have found your website.

My question: I am a nurse consultant for the state of California's intellectually disabled population. I would say most of my 500 coworkers (social workers) have placed their trust in me from day one, precisely because I am a nurse, and I feel the weight of responsibility that comes with such trust. Because I have a private office, there are several coworkers that I have built up a warm personal relationship with over the past 3 years of employment. They regularly stop by and ask me questions about God (at least until we were sent home in March for shelter in place requirements). Most are from a Catholic background. I am saddened to think that I did not have a more expanded picture of God to share with them until recently. Now on extended lockdown at home and working full time remotely, the questions from coworkers are coming in again. I have been reading everything Dr Jennings has written, thankful for the timing (more time to read while on lockdown). One thing I haven't quite been able to find the right new words for is the inevitable question of WHY ARE YOU A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST? My old answer would have been along the lines of level 4 understanding :(

Now I want to be able and ready to share an answer in 30 seconds (one trip up the elevator basically is all the time I get), AND in a longer, more detailed response (over phone or text), that is designed to get them thinking in a positive way towards God AND the Adventist church that I love. I'm having trouble articulating both in brevity, and I don't want to overwhelm a coworker who is merely curious. Suggestions welcome. Thanks so much.

So, how would you answer her question? And if you are not an SDA, then substitute your denomination in there and consider, how would you answer as to why you are a member of whatever denomination you belong?

My answer would be something like this: First, I don't take the view that salvation is found in organizational affiliation, but in a trust relationship with Jesus Christ. With that being said, I am an SDA because I have found the most comprehensive and accurate understanding of reality that



integrates Scripture, science and experience harmoniously together to provide substantive answers to all of life's big questions. In other words, the integrated views I have learned are the most consistent with reality and makes the most sense when compared to all other religions and denominations that I have examined.

And then I would be ready to give multiple examples for the inevitable follow up question they will ask—can you give me an example of what you mean? I would invite them to a longer discussion and likely start with design law and the example of love and liberty. Then I would go into the Great Controversy and why the Scripture takes the focus it does on the human family tree etc. What God's goals are and how they are only accomplished in hearts and minds, not in books somewhere.

Why witness?

- To benefit people—ultimately for salvation and eternal life

Who is benefited by witnessing?

- Both those who accept the truth and those who share the truth

Are any people harmed by witnessing?

- What happened to Pharaoh when Moses witnessed to him? Why did this happen to Pharaoh? Does that mean Moses should not have witnessed to him?
- What did Jesus say about the cities in His day having had His witness to them? That their guilt would be greater than Sodom's. Does that mean Jesus should not have witnessed to them?
- So they are not harmed by the witness of truth—they are harmed by the rejection of truth, the witness of truth gives them opportunity for healing and eternal life—even if they reject it.

What happens if we witness because we want to get the most baptisms in the conference? Do we risk witnessing with wrong motive and perhaps not even witnessing the truth?

- Jesus told the religious leaders in His day that their witness caused their converts to become twice the son of hell than they themselves were, why was that?

What is the primary goal of witnessing?

- Is the goal to get people to accept right doctrines—only as necessary for healing their hearts and minds? Our question could be metaphorically asked about a sick person—is our goal to get them to accept the right understanding of their disease?
- Is it to get them to join a particular denomination?
- Is it introduce people to Jesus and have them open their hearts in trust to Him so that they are turned from God's enemies to His friends?
- Will all of God's true friends agree on every point? Did Paul and Barnabas agree over John Mark (Acts 15:36-41)?
- Did Paul and Peter agree on associating with uncircumcised people, at least initially?
- Did Paul say that people *must* agree on what foods to eat or what days to treat as special?
- But what did the Apostles all agree on? Jesus is Lord and God's character and methods of love. Salvation is healing of hearts and minds through a trust relationship with Jesus.



Should we witness to every person?

- What was the purpose of telling the disciples to shake the dust off their feet?
- What did Jesus mean when He said not to cast our pearls before swine?

Are there different ways to witness and if so what are some of the different ways?

- Preaching
- Teaching
- Ministering—healthcare, helping after disaster, helping in times of need, feeding, clothing, comforting, --in other words all acts of compassion and service
- Books, blogs, articles, pamphlets
- Movies
- Lectures, videos, Bible study classes
- Preaching on the street corner
- One on one Bible study
- Witnessing at work or in the elevator
- Sharing what God has done for you personally
- Living our lives in ways that reveal God's principles
- Others?

Can we think we are witnessing for God's kingdom but actually be witnessing for Satan's kingdom?

Can we proclaim the name of Jesus while promoting the principles of Satan?

- What if we were to pass laws requiring people to be baptized or else get punished?
- What about laws to worship at all or in certain ways?
- What about laws that give preference to people who believe certain things about God?
- What about laws that restrict people from sharing their beliefs about God?
- What about any merging of church and state?
- What about the crusades using violence in the name of God's kingdom—how about using violence in society today, rioting and destroying property to promote God's kingdom?
- What about using the power of the state to minister to people in need, such as taxing people to create social programs to help those in need? Why is this not part of God's kingdom?
 - Is it God's methods to take by force from people who don't want to give? Jesus said regarding taxes to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God. He didn't argue against the state taxing and neither am I. I am making the point that Jesus made—paying taxes is not giving to God, and the state doesn't do God's work or the church's work, regardless of what they do with the money.
 - Will forcing people to give what they don't want to give result in greater love in their hearts?
 - Is the primary purpose of God's kingdom to give people food for their body or clothes or housing? Or is the primary purpose to give people eternal life?
 - When Christians in love see people in need and bring relief, food, clothing, adoption, shelter, does this create opportunity for the person to learn about Jesus? Will some inquire—why are you doing this? And will the answer that God so loved the world He



gave His only Son and He has so loved us that we follow Him in loving others, impact souls for God's kingdom when it is accompanied by acts of service? But what if we take out the Christian, the church, the love of God and insert the state—the state that is vigilantly godless?

- What happens in the process of charity, of helping those in need, when we remove the compassion, the kind person, the caring people, and insert an agency, a bureaucracy, a monthly disbursement of money detached for all human contact?
- What happens if the money, clothing, food, shelter is given in a relationship with someone who cares about the person who is receiving it—a person that becomes part of their life?
- What happens when the orphan is not put in a state-run institution, in foster care in which the foster-parents are given money from the state to take care of them, but the orphan is adopted by families who love them and who sacrifice their own resources to provide for them?
- When Ruth and Naomi were without food, how did God's system provide for their food? They could get free food, but how? They had to glean for it. Is there a difference between gleaning, working in the field to gather your own food and having it given to you with no effort? What difference does it make on the heart, mind and character of the person in need?
- God's system was to connect people with people, social justice of individuals who have it in their hearts to love their neighbors, to show hospitality, to give opportunity, to rescue, to feed, to clothe. There is nothing in God's system of people paying taxes to create state agencies who become impersonal machines to take from those with no interest in the needy and give to those without. This is a corruption that instills resentment in those taxed, and no gratitude in those who receive; it instead it instills a sense of entitlement and causes division in society rather than bringing people back into unity. Think through the difference that happens when people help people directly and remove the agencies of government.
- God is always working to heal hearts and minds, restore the image of God in people. Satan is always working to destroy hearts and minds and efface the image of God in people. Human systems always corrupt—and it is most insidious when the human system purports to be helping people—but in actuality it damages.

Did I just say that the state should not have any social programs? No—I did not. I said the church (Christians) should recognize that the state cannot do the work of the church and if we promote social justice through the state we ultimately use the methods of Satan, undermine God's kingdom and promote the kingdom of the beast.

Can you be an effective witness to something you don't personally know or understand?

Read first paragraph, "God's great longing..." thoughts?

Can there be salvation without transformation? Or does God's plan of salvation actually mean healing, recreation, regeneration, restoration, transformation?



What do you think of this statement: *If we are not being transformed we are not being saved?*

From what are we being saved? We are being saved from sin—sinfulness, the condition of being out of harmony with God and His design for life. Thus, salvation heals our hearts, minds, characters such that we are being transformed in how we think, feel, and act—away from fear and selfishness and toward truth, love and freedom.

But, the penal legal lie, the theology based on human law models, that operate like human governments, is that we are being saved from the punishment that God must inflict. Thus, in this legal lie salvation and transformation are different.

But in reality, they are one and the same.

What is the difference between the sacrifices in paganism and the sacrifice of Jesus?

What is the purpose of all pagan sacrifice? To do something to the deity—to pay legal debt, to assuage wrath, to propitiate anger, to merit mercy or buy forgiveness.

Sadly, Christianity has embraced this idea of paganism, but substituted Jesus' blood for other blood. It is all a lie. The sacrifice of Jesus was not to change God or change God's law, or pay a legal payment. Jesus' sacrifice was to destroy sin, Satan, Satan's power and provide the remedy to heal human beings thus restoring all who trust God back into harmony with God and give them eternal life.

So, what happens when we go out and witness the following:

- You are a sinner and condemned to death
 - Or, have you struggled with fear, doubts, heartaches, uncertainties, loneliness? Do you long for peace, love, joy? Those are symptoms of a terminal condition we didn't choose, but for which God has provided a cure. We are all born in fear and selfishness, but God has a remedy that takes away our fear. You don't have to take it, but you will continue to suffer and ultimately die of this sin-condition.
- God is required by holiness and righteousness to punish sin
 - Or, God is love and love cannot be forced. So God will never force you to be with Him, to love Him, to accept Him. But you have a condition that without remedy results in death. God offers you eternal life, to cure you, but if you refuse, God loves you enough to give you the freedom to say no—but if you do then you will die eternally.
- The punishment for sin is execution by God to die eternally or eternal torture in hell
 - Or, God will let go all who don't want to be with Him, crying as He does, but since He is the source of life all who are permanently disconnected from Him die—no eternal torment, just non-existence. Why? Because they choose to die rather than live in God's presence—God does not inflict this on them.
- God loves you too much to just leave you to be punished so God sent His Son, who is perfect, sinless, innocent and punished His Son instead of you.



- Or God loves us too much to let us die of this condition, so He sent His only Son to take the condition upon Himself and cure it offering us a free remedy.
- If you don't accept Jesus' legal payment or Jesus' blood to pay God for your sins then God, despite already punishing an innocent being for the sins of guilty, will still punish you for the same crime.
 - If you don't accept Jesus into your heart to transform and heal you back into harmony with how God built life to operate, then the natural result is you solidify yourself into being out of harmony with God's design for life and the only result or outcome is eternal death. God sadly gives you the freedom to choose death rather than life.
- But hey, this God who punishes the innocent and who will inflict torture and punishment upon you if you don't love Him—He really loves you. So, you want to come to church with me this weekend?
 - Do you see how much God truly loves you that He has provided everything for your eternal healing, health, happiness and eternal life—but He would never force you and if you truly don't want life, God will sadly let you go. But my God respects your individuality and would never force you to do anything. Would you like to learn more about my God and visit my church sometime?

Do you see the evil that has been foisted upon the world by teaching the Bible through the lie that God's law works like human law? This is the Roman lie.

What a difference it makes to present the truth.

SUNDAY

The first sentence of the first paragraph states, "God provides opportunities daily for people everywhere to know Him."

I couldn't agree more, the lesson references what Paul says in Romans 1:20:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

What does this mean?

Can you find anything in nature—without Scripture—that instructs one on:

- Baptism?
- Sabbath worship?
- Tithing?
- Communion?
- Accepting the blood payment of Jesus for the payment of sins?



What, then is being taught by Paul? Is Paul in any way teaching a legal religion or is Paul saying God's nature and qualities are those of the Creator and as such are built into reality—they are not like man-made rules—they are protocols upon which life works. And any person is able to look around and see how this reality works.

Consider Jesus' parable of the sower in Mark 4:13-20—what is revealed in that parable?

"Don't you understand that this illustration demonstrates that God's kingdom operates upon natural law — design protocols for life? If you don't understand this, you will misunderstand all my illustrations.¹⁴The farmer plants the words of truth into the hearts of people.¹⁵Some people have hearts that are hard and callous, like a road, and they don't respond to the truth when it is presented. They hear the truth, but they don't consider it seriously: Satan distracts them with some temptation or problem, and the truth is forgotten.¹⁶Other people have hearts like gravel—shifting and unstable: they respond with excitement to every new idea, but nothing takes root.¹⁷And since the truth doesn't take root in their hearts, they only stay involved briefly. As soon as the truth requires some sacrifice or actual work on their part, they quit and move on to their next emotional fix.¹⁸There are other people, who have minds like soil filled with weeds and thorns. They hear the truth,¹⁹but the thorns of worry and fear, or the weeds of seeking healing of heart in fame, fortune, or other earthly desires choke out truth and love, and make their hearts desolate.²⁰But there are those whose hearts are like fertile soil. They hear the truth, comprehend it, love it, embrace it, nurture it, choose it, and build on it; and it heals, transforms and renews them, causing them to produce fruits of righteousness even more than a hundred times what was planted in them." Mark 4:13-20 The Remedy

What is described in the parable a legal process or a process of actual healing and transformation? What laws do seeds and plants operate upon? Why did Jesus use such illustrations?

What obstructs people from learning the truth of God as revealed in nature? How about being taught from earliest childhood that God's kingdom works like human legal justice system?

The last sentence of the first paragraph, after acknowledging that God's truth is revealed in nature goes on to say, "When we share Jesus with others, we provide them with their best opportunity to be saved."

When we present Jesus in His true light I agree with this completely.

But, has Jesus had His identity stolen? Has true historic Jesus, who perfectly reveals God to us, been replaced with Satan's mischaracterization? And has that fraudulent impersonation of Jesus been the one that has been taken to the world?

Ron Cantor, in his book [*Identity Theft*](#) does a great job of telling the story of how Jesus' Jewish identity was stolen by Romanism and that the Jesus of Christianity today is nothing like Jesus revealed. He demonstrates that the first century church was not what we think of, but was the natural



advancement of Judaism taking the Messiah Jesus to the world. In his book, he does a great job of documenting how Christianity throughout history became anti-Jewish and thus today for many people, both Jews and Muslims, Christianity has no connection to the Biblical Jesus and because of this Jesus is not a being the Jews want to hear about.

If you haven't read this book, I would encourage you to give it a read, it has some good insights.

In the second paragraph the lesson states, "In Romans 6-8, he [Paul] describes how the grace that justifies each believer also is sanctifying grace."

Why is it that justifying grace is sanctifying grace? **Because it is the exact same remedy being applied to the exact same place in the exact same way by the exact same agency that achieves both.**

Justifying means to put what is wrong right, setting it back in its proper place, sanctifying means the keeping it right and the full purification or complete healing that comes after being set right.

But under the penal lie, real justification of heart is stolen from people and replaced with the lie that they are legally declared righteous even though they are not righteous. But the Bible teaches that "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2Cor 5:21 NIV84)

Consider these historic quotes:

Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter? All cannot see in the same line of vision. You are in danger of making a world of an atom, and an atom of a world. {CTr 150.2}

As penitent sinners, contrite before God, [heart change first] discern Christ's atonement in their behalf, and accept this atonement as their only hope in this life and the future life, **their sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.** Every believing soul is to conform his or her will entirely to God's will, and **keep in a state of repentance and contrition**, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer, and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory. **Pardon and justification are one and the same thing.** . . . {CTr 150.3}

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal. . . . {CTr 150.4} **[What law lens are your reading this through? Why can God not pardon unrepented sins? What is the condition of a heart that has not repented? It's actual condition remains sinful, selfish, fear-**



ridden, God will not lie, will not give a false diagnosis, thus He will not overlook or pardon the actual terminal state of a person. But when we repent, accept Christ into our hearts, fear and selfishness are replaced with love and trust. We are set right in heart with God, this is justification and we have forgiveness of past sins through the forbearance of God—i.e. we are pardoned, because we are now in harmony with God and His design for life]

But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place: [again heart change before justification] and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul. {FW 100.1} [Why? Because it is not a legal process, but an actual state of being. It is like saying a sick person benefits when they trust the doctor and take their medicine, but they can only retain their health as long as they continue to take their medicine, following the doctor's instructions, i.e. live in harmony with the laws of health. Break the laws of health the doctor doesn't prosecute you in court, but you return to a state of sickness not wellness.]

So what is our role in witnessing God's plan of salvation? How do you tell people this truth?

Read Zephaniah 3:17

The LORD your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing." NIV84

What does this text mean to you? What do you discern of God's character?

Does this sound like a deity bent on punishing sin? Does this sound like an angry and wrathful god?

What is the motive that is required for this to be true? Love—God is love and God loves you and me, more than a parent loves a child. And parents, how much rejoicing would you have if your child was dying and you were able to save them?

Do we have other examples in the Bible that teach this truth about God?

- Parable of the lost coin
- "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**" (Luke 15:8-10 NIV84)
- the lost sheep and lost son

Other examples?



TUESDAY

Read first three paragraphs, “The Dead Sea...” What law is being described? This is the law of love, a design law built right into reality, the very foundation of life itself.

What happens when we break it?

What does God want to restore in us? His law written on our hearts and minds.

Can this be achieved by a list of rules? Then how is it achieved?

Through our experiencing God’s truth and love and being won to trust in God.

When we have been won back to love and trust in God, what instructions or prescriptions has God given us to help us grow in love?

Giving to others—and what are we to give to others?

- Tithes to God and offerings to others
- Time, energy, our own love, compassion, concern, wisdom
- Food, clothing, shelter
- Respect
- Truth

And the more you give the more you will receive. This is how our ministry works, and why we focus on giving so much away.

Read fourth paragraph, “God could have...” If God could have done it without us, why didn’t He?

What law is being described?

Is it an act of love for God to have us participate in His plan to reach others, or would it be more loving if God did it without us?

What about when we seek to help others—if we love them how much do we do for them?

Is it an act of love to do for people that which they are able to do for themselves? Why or why not?

What is meant by the Bible instructions: “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” (2Then 3:10 NIV84)

What happens to Grandma if we put her in a wheelchair when she can still walk?



What happens to a child if we carry them and never put them down?

What happens to any of us if we don't exercise the abilities God has given us?

So another trap of Satan is to get compassionate people to seek to relieve other people's suffering by doing for others what they are able to do for themselves.

Which helps a person more—giving them a handout—or giving them opportunity to develop themselves and make their own way—become autonomous?

Does that mean there is no place to give handouts? No, there are many places where it is necessary to provide food, clothing, medicine, shelter, but the goal is to do so for the least amount of time necessary to restore people to independence. This happens best when it is done person to person, rather than removing the human contact and putting governmental agencies in between.

People can love each other—institutions cannot.

Kent Johnson, one of our online listeners, came across this quote from *The Desire of Ages* and sent it to us this week:

"The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were **crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty.** Yet the Saviour **attempted no civil reforms.** He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. **He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures.** To be efficient, the **cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.**" DA 509.3

This is exactly correct—if we want true social justice we must apply God's principles, which reach the hearts of people. As soon as we insert the state into the mix we obstruct God's healing plan!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about faithfulness to Christ's command. What do you think this means?

The lesson focuses on how God wants all to come unto salvation. What commands of Christ are we to follow in helping people come to salvation?

Do you think the church is better off when governments take over functions of the church—like caring for the homeless, feeding the hungry, providing for the orphans?



Do you think as the governmental programs grow the churches become less community focused and more inwardly focused, more focused on their own doctrines, building programs, and building up membership?

Are there dangers in relying upon the state to minister to people in need?

THURSDAY

The lesson is about God's love motivating our witness.

What happens when we try to teach or share things we don't personally know?

When I experienced the freedom and peace that came when I finally came to know God as Creator and His laws as design laws—it was life transforming. My fear evaporated away and I became very passionate to see my fellow Christians who have lived under such burdens of fear, primarily from legal views of God, set free. So I began teaching these truths and more and more people have come to experiencing healing and peace in their own lives as God's design laws have been brought to bear in their lives.

FRIDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on the purpose of the church. What would you say the purpose of the church is?

The persecution that came upon the church in Jerusalem resulted in giving a great impetus to the work of the gospel. Success had attended the ministry of the word in that place, and there was danger that the disciples would linger there too long, unmindful of the Saviour's commission to go to all the world. **Forgetting that strength to resist evil is best gained by aggressive service, they began to think that they had no work so important as that of shielding the church in Jerusalem from the attacks of the enemy.** Instead of educating the new converts to carry the gospel to those who had not heard it, they were in danger of taking a course that would lead all to be satisfied with what had been accomplished. To scatter His representatives abroad, where they could work for others, God permitted persecution to come upon them. Driven from Jerusalem, the believers "went everywhere preaching the word." AA 105.2

How many church leaders today, rather than moving forward in truth, look inward and think it is their job to protect the members from ideas that are different than what the leader currently believes?

What is the problem with this?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Saturday, October 3, 2020! Come and Reason will be presenting a live in-person event at the Chattanooga Convention Center in Chattanooga TN! **Healing the Mind and Transforming the Character in a Broken World** is one-day event and will be packed with presentations by Timothy R. Jennings, Katie McPherson, Ben Bost and Kent Delhousaye. Join us to learn principles and strategies to heal the mind and heart from fear and habits that overrun our lives You'll want to book your spot soon before the event is sold out-- lunch is included in this great price! Click [here](#) for more information.

October 9-10, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH

November 6-7, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX.
More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>