



2020 3Q Making Friends for God: Lesson 5 Spirit-Empowered Witnessing

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

We received this email this week:

I'm so excited about the free resource opportunity:):):) I'm sure it is a lot of work on your end but I have been telling anyone I think will be interested:):) Thank you and Praise God for your continued commitment to share and spread this beautiful truth :):)

When I was at the conference in TX, I shared with Tim how God had led me to share "The God Shaped Heart" with the pastor of a Sunday church I attend. The Pastor was hungry for answers, for TRUTH. He got the book, studied it, and the Spirit brought the truth home, the pastor received it and he now shares these beautiful God-concepts with his congregation. Sunday, his wife shared with me that until they read that book they were lost in legalism and struggling with confusion about God's character. Their upbringing, though not SDA, had brought the same incongruent concepts. "If He is love than how can this be true"!!!!!!! (You can fill in the "this" with whatever lie the devil spins!!!!!!) She said that book saved their lives spiritually and their own personal relationship. They have both accepted this beautiful truth and are sharing it with over a 1000 people each Sunday through FaceBook. They are both so excited. She said they have never felt so free in God, Jesus and the Spirit:):):) Truly, PRAISE HIM from WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!!!!!!!!!!!! This story brought shivers and tears at the wonder of our AMAZING GOD!!!!

SABBATH

Mark 16:15 "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' NKJV

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." NKJV

What is the gospel? Good news? About what? How would you describe it?

- Salvation in Jesus? This is certainly good news—yet Revelation states that the gospel is eternal—meaning there is a good news that has always been good news and will always be good news and is directly related to salvation in Jesus—what is that?
- The truth about God—how is the truth about God eternal good news and how is that truth connected to salvation in Jesus?

What was the basis of sin? What is the core root that caused rebellion against God, disaffection—which means heart loyalty to God was broken and the heart has other attachments, desires and motives than love for God—what caused this?



Lies about God told by Satan—what then would be needed then to save sinners? Would it not be the truth about God that restores trust?

But is the truth about God that wins us to trust enough for fallen human beings to be saved, or is something more needed? What more is needed?

What about a new nature, a new heart and right spirit, a new sinless character? And where do we sinners obtain such a new heart, a new character?

Who not only revealed the truth about God to destroy Satan's lies (Heb 2:14), and said "if you've seen me you've seen the Father," but also, as a human, using only human abilities, lived a sinless life, was tempted in every way just like we are yet without sin. He never gave in to fear and selfishness but loved perfectly. And in so doing, eradicated the infection of sin, fear and selfishness, and arose in a perfected humanity—the new head of the species, the second Adam (Heb 5:8,9)

So, is there a link between the eternal gospel and Jesus?

What happens if we delete and change both of these and replace the true gospel of God's character with something penal legal payment instead?

Jesus died to save us no longer means He died to reveal truth about God to destroys lies and win to trust, and provide us a sinless human character—but instead it means He died to pay His Father a blood payment so His Father won't kill us. If this is what people present, what happens in hearts and minds?

Do you see how this false gospel removes both elements necessary for our salvation—we no longer have the truth about God, instead we have a lie that God is the source of death, **and we don't seek to have a new heart and right spirit**, instead we seek to be hidden from God because we are told we can't be righteous, we can only be declared righteous.

Further, the Spirit is the Spirit of both truth and love, truth to destroy lies and love, which is the character of God and thus what Christ perfectly developed.

So, the Holy Spirit becomes the agency of Jesus to advance the truth, destroy lies, win to trust and then administer into our hearts and minds the new motives and desires, i.e. the character of Christ.

But if we reject the truth about God then we don't seek the Spirit to heal, we instead rest secure in a legal penal solution.

So, the gospel is the good news about God: What is the power? How does the Holy Spirit work?

Here is a quote from the book, *Acts of the Apostles* about power, what do you think?



“Whereunto,” asked Christ, “shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?” Mark 4:30. He could not employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** This kingdom is to uplift and ennoble humanity. God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts and endowed with the Holy Spirit. The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless. AA 12.2

What is the power that we are to use?

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Romans 1:16 NIV84

What kind of power is in the gospel, which is the good news about God?

Here is a quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* what do you think?

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love;** and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. **God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** DA 759.1

What is the power of God that we are to use? The power of truth combined with love—and from where do we get such power?

From the indwelling Spirit, that is why the Bible teaches, “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord” (Zechariah 4:6).

Why doesn't God use compelling power?

What impact does force, threat, coercion have upon a person?

- Increases fear
- Decreases trust
- Increases resentment
- Decreases love
- Leads to either loss of individuality or rebellion

What impact does the power of truth and love have upon a person?

- Decreases fear
- Increases trust



- Forgiveness of wrongs and eradication of resentment
- Increases love
- Leads to restoration of individuality, development of self-governance, confidence and growing up into the full stature of Christ

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5 NIV84

What weapons do we wield? Truth and love, how do we wield them?

Can people think they are promoting the gospel and actually be promoting a false gospel?

Gal 1:8 “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” NIV84

What happens if we accept a different version of the gospel? The law of worship and exertion, we are changed by our worship and practices. If we persist in promoting a false gospel we become hardened in alienation to God and the truth. If we are lovers of the truth, we may have ideas or beliefs that are not true, because we are finite and growing, but we are sensitive to truth and grow in truth as we are able to comprehend it. So it isn't about knowing all things correctly, it is about loving and growing in truth, rather than holding to views that are not true when truth presents.

Consider the implication of this historic quote from *Acts of the Apostles*:

Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude. AA 50.1

Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, **why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it?** The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. **For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God.** Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should they pray that God will baptize His chosen ambassadors in mission fields with a rich measure of His Spirit. **The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the proclamation of truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give.** AA 50.2



Do we ask for the Holy Spirit with real desire to receive Him into our lives?

What would cause us to value the Holy Spirit so little?

- Perhaps being frightened by the fear of false spirits? The Bible tells us to test the spirits, perhaps movements that smack of fanaticism, emotionalism, that claim to be the movements of the Spirit of God frighten us into not seeking the true Spirit of God?
- Perhaps accepting a legal theology in which one falsely believes salvation is in claiming a legal blood payment to have one's heavenly record books adjusted—thus no real need for the Spirit, the payment is being made in heaven.
- Perhaps anti-trinitarian teachings that propose that there is no Holy Spirit, that there is only God the Father and the Father is omnipresent, and we can ask for the Father's presence into our lives, but we don't seek the presence of the Holy Spirit because we don't believe He exists?

What happens if we reject or don't accept the Holy Spirit, what is the problem with valuing little the Holy Spirit?

Here is one view of the importance of the Holy Spirit, from *The Desire of Ages*, do you agree?

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome **all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.** DA 671.2

Do you agree? What is the danger of rejecting the Holy Spirit?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "With the promise..." Why was it good for the disciples and for us that Jesus leave and send the Holy Spirit?

What is it that Jesus, the Father and the Spirit actually want for us?

They want our healing, our restoration to righteousness, and what does that require for each of us? That we are each, fully persuaded in our own minds. We each must be convinced of the truth, must



come to trust God for ourselves, must surrender our own hearts to God for ourselves, which means we each must strive in life with temptations, hurts, heartaches, trials, and wrestle out for ourselves these issues in a relationship with God. Thus, sending the Spirit allows each of us individuals access to God in a way that Jesus's physical presence would not. It enhances our engagement in thinking, weighing, and choosing instead of just seeking the expert with the answer to tell us what to do.

God doesn't want us to have the obedience of a well-trained dog, that sits and waits until the master says jump. God wants understanding friends that intelligently agree with Him and freely choose to live in harmony with Him and His methods. This requires that we do more than say, "God you tell me what to do and I will do it." God wants us to understand for ourselves what is right and wrong and to choose the right.

What kind of help does the Holy Spirit give? How does the Holy Spirit work?

- Reveals truth to people in ways they can comprehend
- Brings convictions—of sin, of duty, of longing for something more, of not being satisfied with the disease of sin
- Brings hope, brings comfort, brings love
- Leaves completely free to decide for oneself and when we choose truth the Spirit provides power to follow through with the choose.
- The Spirit also brings gifts and abilities to enable us to succeed in fulfilling any calling God has placed upon us

MONDAY

An Empowered Church—what does that mean to you?

What does empowered mean? What kind of power?

What is the church? Is it denomination? Is it church invisible?

Does the Holy Spirit restrict His activity to specific denominations?

The Holy Spirit seeks to work on every human heart—the work of convicting of sin and bringing people to salvation—this is not the same as being empowered by the Spirit.

Are there any *requirements* to receive the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit?

- Repentance—will we receive the Holy Spirit if we remain unrepentant?
- Repentance leads to humility, i.e. the overthrowing of selfishness and pride—a willingness to be taught, led and changed
- Develop a heart that loves truth
- Loves God and others
- What about some level of truth about God?



Will God send His Spirit to us if we are not lovers of truth, if we cling to false views of God? In other words, will God empower us with His Spirit to take a message to the world that misrepresents Him?

I received this email this week from an online lister, C.K. Lester sharing two quotes from EG White, one of the founders of the SDA church:

I saw these quotes in a video I watched this week.

"There is to be in the [Seventh-day Adventist] churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, **but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance.** In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, **they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations they will oppose the work.** "Why," they say, "should we not know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?"—The Review and Herald Extra, December 23, 1890.

Of note: "Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations..." Ha! God's laws are not like man's laws!

"**The third angel's message will not be comprehended,** the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory."—The Review and Herald, May 27, 1890.

Do you see how many who cling to imposed law, and teach God is the source of inflicted death for law breaking, and Jesus must pay the penalty to the Father are actually rejecting the Three Angels Message and the power that comes from the Spirit of God?

What about this, could a person or group fail to advance in the truth by clinging to actual truth from a previous generation, truth that was truth for its time, but is no longer truth for today?

For instance:

- Accepting the Old Testament Scriptures and following what they teach but rejecting Jesus as Messiah, so teaching people to be converted to Judaism of the Old Testament variety without Jesus—would that be truth for today?

Consider this quote from *Acts of the Apostles* p. 61:

The enemies of the disciples could not but be convinced that Christ had risen from the dead. **The evidence** was too clear to be doubted. Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts, refusing to repent of the terrible deed they had committed in putting Jesus to death. **Abundant evidence that the apostles were speaking and acting under divine inspiration had been given the**



Jewish rulers, but they firmly resisted the message of truth. Christ had not come in the **manner that they expected**, and though at times they had been convinced that He was the Son of God, yet they had stifled conviction, and crucified Him. In mercy God gave them still **further evidence**, [this is the third time in this paragraph that the word “evidence” is used. Notice, not declaration, command, claim, proclamation, order, directive, but evidence, and evidence requires something that proclamations do not—our contemplation, reasoning, understanding and then agreement! And rejecting evidence has a damaging impact that rejecting claims or proclamations do not. When we reject evidence, we turn off the brain regions of thinking, reasoning, contemplation and we cling to non-evidenced based beliefs. This damages the mind and makes it harder to think and discern in the future. But rejecting claims doesn’t do that because they are just claims, meaning opinions, not facts, not truths and rejecting them doesn’t damage the mind especially if one is waiting for evidence.] and now another opportunity was granted them to turn to Him. He sent the disciples to tell them that they had killed the Prince of life, and in this terrible charge He gave them another call to repentance. But **feeling secure in their own righteousness**, the Jewish teachers refused to admit that the men charging them with crucifying Christ were speaking by the direction of the Holy Spirit. {AA 61.1}

What evidence was presented? Why didn’t those church leaders accept the inspiration of the Apostles? What did they use to reject the inspiration of the Apostles? Did they use the OT Scriptures that supported their preconceived ideas and expectations? Do we see this happening today, religious leaders, study for years teaching certain viewpoints and having certain expectations, and resisting any advancing truth that doesn’t meet with their expectations?

- What about teaching the truths Martin Luther presented and clinging to his understanding? While Luther moved forward in truth, he was coming out of deep darkness and did recover all Bible truth and to only advance as far as Luther means we are still 500 years behind where truth has advanced. The Spirit isn’t going to empower us to go backward.

Consider this quote from *Christ Triumphant* p. 331:

We are not to set our stakes and then interpret everything to reach this set point. [which means we are not to go to Scripture to prove what we already believe and have been taught is true] Here is where some of **our** great Reformers have failed, and this is the reason that many who today might be mighty champions for God and the truth **are warring against the truth...** [Many within our denomination are warring against the truth—why? Because they have their preconceived ideas and use the Bible to prove those ideas true, rather than learning from the Bible.] **God designs we should be learners**, first from the living oracles, and second from our associates. This is God’s order. {CTr 331.2}

The Word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. **We are to receive no one’s opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures.**



[this is something I actively encourage everyone to do with what we teach!] Here is divine authority, which is supreme in matters of faith. {CTr 331.3}

If we want to be empowered the Holy Spirit, do we need to repent, have humble hearts, love the truth, love God and others, but also be willing to grow in the truth?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Throughout the book of Acts....” What about receiving the strength to face trials and challenges in a hostile culture?

Do we see this in the world today?

Do we see hostility to the truths of God’s kingdom?

Is there fear in our society of speaking the truth as one understands it?

Which of the following is in harmony with God and which is in harmony with Satan?

- When we hear ideas that we believe are wrong we speak the truth in love but leave people free to disagree
- When we hear ideas that we believe are wrong we use intimidation, coercion, threats of various kinds—canceling speakers, firing people from their jobs, shouting them down—to ensure such opinions are silenced?

From Acts 17:23-34:

About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. 25 He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: “Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. 26 And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. 27 There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29 Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. 30 Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.



32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33 The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. 34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” (NIV84)

Why didn’t these workers want to listen, to reason, to consider?

You will notice this—when truth is on one’s side then we want to engage people, to reason, to examine, to present evidence, to persuade. But, when we don’t have truth we want to silence, to intimidate, to shut down voices or views that don’t agree with ours.

Truth *always* wins over lies in the minds of those open to the truth.

But those who don’t have the truth and don’t want the truth will not be persuaded by it, and don’t want any presenting it. The truth itself is offensive to them, because it exposes their lies, wrongs, falsehoods.

Jesus said,

“Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.” (Jn 3:19-20 NIV84)

What kind of methods are being used today by the cancel culture? Would we say that one of the methods is economic coercion—if people speak out against what they like they seek to get them fired, canceled or their products or companies boycotted?

Hmmm....does anyone have concerns that Bible prophecy may be being fulfilled right before our eyes?

He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, **so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark**, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. Rev 13:15-17

What is being described, what methods? Coercion, force, intimidation and economic pressures and sanctions. Hmmm....are these the methods of God? Do we see the enemy at work when we see such methods being employed?

Do we have the courage and strength to speak the truth in love—to warn people against embracing the methods of the world, to not get a mark in their hand by going along with and practicing the methods of the world, and to not get marked in their forehead by believing those methods are righteous.



WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about witnessing—what is the central theme of Scripture?

- There is a God in heaven who created the universe
- This Creator God is love and created all things in sinless perfection—without disease or defect
- Real love requires real freedom, so God did not create His intelligent beings as robots or puppets, but gave real freedom.
- This freedom was abused and lies were told about God, and lies believed break the circle of love and trust resulting in fear and selfishness.
- God’s design for life was broken, love and trust was displaced by fear and selfishness stemming from believing lies. This is a terminal condition that damages God’s design for life.
- God’s laws are the design laws He built life to operate upon and deviation damages and destroys.
- God so loved us that when humankind became infected with fear and selfishness He did not abandon us but sent His own Son to reveal the truth to destroy the lies and win us to trust, and to cure the condition by procuring the remedy that heals all who do trust.
- This remedy is freely available to everyone and will heal all who trust God.
- What is the Remedy – the perfection of Jesus Christ, the truth revealed about God first that wins to trust and then in trust a new human character we receive by the indwelling Spirit such that our hearts actually change and we have new desires and new motives.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “A careful study...” Where do you see the gospel struggling today to overcome cultural bias?

Or, how is cultural bias obstructing the gospel?

What about the culture that there is no God, that we all just evolved from lower life? Why is this idea appealing? What was the historic alternative? What kind of God did the Dark Ages church present? What about today is Christianity presenting a God worthy of our worship or is much of Christianity infected with a false god that functions no different than a tyrant?

What other cultural biases obstruct the gospel?

Does racism have any place in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What does it mean that in Christ there is neither Jew or Greek?

If we have ideas promoted today that divide people on the basis of race, is that from God?

Does the Bible divide people? What are the camps the Bible divides people into?



The metaphors are:

- Wheat and tares
- Sheep and goats
- fruitful and withered vines
- pure woman and harlot

But these are metaphors of what reality? God's people are the righteous versus Satan's people who are the wicked, which divides people by what? Character! Do we have the character of Christ or the character of the enemy?

When we focus on nationality or race or gender what are we not focusing upon? Character and thus we divide on issues that incite more conflict, hate, fear, selfishness and obstruct God's plan to bring all people under one head Jesus Christ.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

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/>