

B.L.E.S.S. Practices - Be Sharing Study Guide

Session 5: Reviving the Lost Cause

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SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: When we share our story of coming to faith in Christ with our neighbors, we show them the greatest blessing of all: a new life with Jesus.

Head Change: To know that God has called us to be a blessing to our neighbors.

Heart Change: To feel inspired to bless our neighbors by inviting them to follow Jesus.

Life Change: To do at least one of Dave's B.L.E.S.S. practices every day.

OPEN

Who first told you about Jesus? What was their approach to sharing the good news with you?

It's rare that we begin following Jesus without first being introduced to him by another person. For many of us, someone, whether a friend or a stranger, told us the good news and how it impacted their life, and, by God's grace, we believed.

As we seek to bless others, we'll often be invited to share how God's good news has blessed us. In this session, Dave will show us the privilege and the importance of telling others what God and his gospel have done in our lives.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Dave Ferguson's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

When sharing our stories, what three parts did Dave encourage us to include?

What two commitments did Dave challenge groups to make?

Watch Session 5: Reviving the Lost Cause (12 minutes).

REVIEW

Dave described his friend Michael as "the kind of guy who would never walk into a church on his own." **Do you know anyone like that? For what reasons would you say they are unwilling to go to a church?**

Dave used the story of his friendship with Michael to illustrate the B.L.E.S.S. practices in action. He prayed, listened to Michael's story, ate with him, served him, and finally shared his own story of becoming a follower of Jesus—a process that Dave said took at least three years. **In what ways does the relatively slow process of Dave's B.L.E.S.S. practices differ from common assumptions about evangelism? What can we do to develop patience for the sometimes-long work of evangelism?**

It was during the normal rhythms of life—in their case, cross-country and track meets—that Dave and Michael became friends. **What places and activities do you regularly attend with others? Who are the people that you normally see there? What could you do to begin building relationships with them?**

After praying for, listening to, eating with, and serving Michael, Dave got to share his story and the good news of Jesus with him. **Have you ever shared your story of coming to faith in Christ with anyone? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what could you do to share your story in your relationships?**

When it comes to sharing our story, Dave suggested we do it in three parts: our life before Jesus, how we met Jesus, and our life since meeting Jesus. **What was your life like before you met Jesus? How did you meet him? What's different about your life now that you follow Jesus?**

In what ways is it encouraging to recount these parts of your story?

In this session, Dave challenged us as individuals and as a group to make two commitments. The first commitment was to use one B.L.E.S.S. practice every day. **What could you do to ensure you do one of these practices every day? Who could you recruit to hold you accountable? What do you think might change about your relationships if you do one or more of these practices each day?**

For more information on B.L.E.S.S. practices, check out the bonus session at the end of the series.

The second commitment Dave encouraged us to make is to hold each other accountable each time we meet by asking, "Who did you B.L.E.S.S.?" **In what ways might having accountability encourage and motivate you to be a blessing to your neighbors?**

Dave closed this session by reminding us that evangelism is not meant to be an awkward conversation, a memorized formula, or even a set of trick questions we use on strangers. Instead, it can be routine conversations we have with others in the normal rhythms of our lives. **In what ways does Dave's vision of evangelism grow your confidence in your ability to share the good news with others? How will you implement the B.L.E.S.S. practices into your everyday routine?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

For an example of how simple it can look to share your story, Dave referenced a well-known story in the Gospel of John. Read John 9:13–25.

After some questioning, the healed man told his questioners specifically what Jesus had done for him—he testified to Jesus's goodness and power. **What has Jesus done for you? How has he proven himself to be good and powerful in your life? Be specific.**

The healed man, after recounting some of his story, was met with skepticism and doubt. **Have you ever faced a similar backlash after telling your story? What are some healthy ways we can respond to those who find our story and the message of Jesus hard to believe?**

After a while, the healed man's questioners returned and asked about his understanding of who Jesus is. He responded in two ways. First, he confessed that there were some things he didn't know about Jesus. **In what ways is the man's reply—"I don't know"—instructive for us as we share the gospel? How does having the option to say "I don't know" in a conversation about faith sit with you? How do you think others will respond when we say, "I don't know"?**

Secondly, he responded by telling a bit more of his story before and after meeting Jesus: "I was blind, and now I can see," he said. Though few of us can identify with this man's story physically, there is a spiritual component to his words that is true of each of us who now follow Christ. **Consider how his words apply to you. In what ways were you "blind" before being awakened by Christ? What can you see now that you were once unable to see? How could you communicate these when you share your story with others?**

It's important to note that sometimes people may inquire about our stories with sincerity and other times, like in this story, their motives may be questionable. In either case, we can still share the good news of Jesus and the real difference he's made in our lives. **What could you do now to ready yourself to share your story and invite others to follow Jesus?**

LAST WORD

Evangelism is not a lost cause. It is the passion of God the Father, the mission of God the Son, and the commission given to those indwelt by God the Spirit. As Christians, it is our privilege and responsibility to bear witness to the savior of the world by sharing the good news he brings.

As this series ends, consider what it means that the story of God and his good news is a story you've been welcomed into. And consider how you can create opportunities to share that story with your neighbors and friends and invite them to receive the fullness of life that Jesus offers.

DEEPER WALK

Pray: Continue praying for eight of your neighbors. Pray that God would give you the patience and resolve to build long-lasting friendships and that, one day, you'll have the opportunity to share the way Jesus has changed your life story for the better.

Share: When the opportunity arises, whether it's a concise rendition like the healed man in John 9 or a longer narrative, share what your life was like before you met Jesus, how you met Jesus, and what your life is like now that you know and follow Jesus.

He Gets Us: In one of the Bonus Sessions for this series, Dave introduces us to the #HeGetsUs ads that have been running on TV. In that Bonus Session, he gives tips on what to do when we're with friends or neighbors and one of those ads pops onto the screen. At the conclusion of this session, go watch the #HeGetsUs Bonus Session and follow Dave's advice. Pray that God will use those opportunities to spark productive conversations about Jesus with your neighbors.

BLESS Practices- Be Sharing Message Slides

Romans 5:10

"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

Ephesians 4:11-12

"And he gave ... the evangelists, ... 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry..."

A. The Story of God

B. Your Story

C. Their Story

A. The Story of God

God Created

God Rejected

God Promises

God Appears

God Sends

God Restores

Action Item:

"Would you like to read John 1 and then meet up to discuss?"

B. Your Story

John 9:25 "I was blind, but now I see!"

1. I'm not smart enough.

Matthew 10:19b-20

"...for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

B. Your Story

1. I'm not smart enough.

2. I don't want to make waves.

B. Your Story

1. I'm not smart enough.

2. I don't want to make waves.

3. The waters are being muddied by "Christians".

Revelation 3:15-16

"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, ... I will spit you out of my mouth."

C. "Their" Story

1. Tangible- Is it real?

1 Corinthians 9:22b-23

"I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

C. "Their" Story

1. Tangible- Is it real?

2. Desirable- Is it attractive?

C. "Their" Story

1. Tangible- Is it real?

2. Desirable- Is it attractive?

3. Plausible- Is it true?

1 Peter 3:15-16

"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Top Three Rebuttals:

1. I'm an atheist.

2. If there is a God, then why so much suffering?

3. How narrow-minded to say there is only one way to God.