



C L A S S

Discovering My Life Mission

TEACHING GUIDE

C L A S S



S H A R E

Class 401: Discovering My Life Mission — Teaching Guide

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FORMATTING KEY:

TEACHING SCRIPT

(material for the teacher to say)

TEACHING TIP

(material for the teacher to keep in mind)

PARTICIPANT NOTES

(material in the participant's guide)

TEACHING TIP

Welcome to the teaching guide for change to Class 401! Here are two or three tips for you as you begin.

- The class is filled with great information about God's purpose for our lives and the opportunity we have to reach people through our testimony and the PEACE plan—but that is not the most important part of the class. The most important part is the commitment class participants make together at the end. Keeping that commitment in mind will cause you to teach in a different way. Instead of teaching information, you'll find yourself teaching towards a commitment. Instead of exercises in discovering personal strengths, you'll find yourself leading people to discover God's call in their lives. Think of it like a wedding ceremony—the pastor may do some teaching about marriage in the ceremony, but it is teaching that points to the commitment the couple will make.
- In this teaching guide, class participant material is in black, and the material in blue is for you to teach.
- The teaching material is from Pastor Rick Warren. We've kept it with his personal references as a model for you, knowing that you'll often need to change those references to fit yourself and your church. We've kept the material in spoken form, so the grammar isn't as you'd have in a book.
- As you go through this class, you'll notice that sometimes Rick moves through the material quickly, and at other times he stops to take longer on a point and tell a story. This pacing is very intentional because it's one of the things that make a long class more interesting. As a teacher, this means that you'll need to resist the temptation to add a story to every point and instead move through a section sometimes more quickly.

CLASS 401

Welcome

Welcome to Class 401. You made it. Congratulations!! Before we dive in, let's review where we've been.

TEACHING TIP:

Get the people involved from the beginning by asking if they can remember something from each of the classes—and to shout it out. Maybe even give them a piece of candy if they get a right answer.

Class 401: Discovering My Life Mission is the fourth of Saddleback's foundational classes. Congratulations on making it around all the bases!

- In Class 101, you committed to being a **Member** of God's family.
- In Class 201, you committed to the habits for spiritual **Maturity**.
- In Class 301, you committed to having a **Ministry** in our church.
- In Class 401, you will begin to discover your **Mission** in the world.

You're going to find there's a lot already filled in on this class syllabus. I have so much material to share with you, you'd be here 'til morning if we filled it all in.

TEACHING TIP:

This is a great place to calm people's fears by letting them know that this isn't about sending them to Africa. Mission is something that starts in our own neighborhoods—that begins where we are.



YOU ARE HERE

INTRODUCTION

The Basis for Class 401

I was created to FULFILL God's purpose.

Proverbs 16:4 says:

The Lord has made everything for his own purposes.

PROVERBS 16:4 (TLB)

God had a purpose for bringing you here today because he wants you to better understand his purpose for your life. Write this in with me:

God PLANNED his mission in my life before I was born.

God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:10 (GNT)

Circle "already prepared." God planned your life mission even before you were born.

TEACHING TIP:

Since the Scriptures are more powerful than any other part of the outline of this class, one of the best things you can do is take time to read them well. Remember, you're never telling the truth in purer form than when you read from the Bible. Yet it's easy to fall into the trap of reading a passage quickly to get to your point. Equally distracting is reading so dramatically, it sounds like you're an actor in a Shakespearean play. Don't just read Ephesians 4:13; communicate it! Remember to do the following:

Read slowly. (But not too slowly.)

Read naturally. (Let your personality shine through.)

Read clearly.

Emphasize key words.

Read passionately. (When you know you mean it, your listeners will know too.)

Make the reading of this passage an expression of your love for the Lord.

My life mission has both:

- Universal elements (what God calls every Christian to do)
- Unique elements (what God custom-designed me to do)

There are parts of your life mission that apply to every Christian, and there are parts that apply uniquely to you and were custom designed by God for you to do. We are all called to share our faith with others and to meet the needs of a hurting world. But we are unique in who we can best share with and where we feel most called to tell our stories.

My **PRIMARY GOAL** in life is to fulfill the mission God has for me.

The Bible teaches us this:

The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me—to tell people the Good News about God's grace.

ACTS 20:24 (NCV)

Regardless of what else God wants you to do with your life, if you are a believer, he has an assignment for you.

Fulfilling God's mission in my life brings **GLORY TO GOD**.

Jesus said in John 17:4:

I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

JOHN 17:4 (NIV)

I don't know a more important topic than what we're going to talk about in this class: discovering and developing your life mission, your life purpose in the world.

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS

That I commit the rest of my life to being a messenger of God's Good News to other people—using my time, talents, and treasures for his kingdom—regardless of where it leads or what it costs.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:9:

We make it our goal to please him.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:9 (NIV)

What is our goal? To measure up to God's plan for our lives. Look at 2 Corinthians 10:13:

Our goal is to measure up to God's plan for us.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (TLB)

SESSION ONE

Understanding God's Mission

To discover God's mission in the world, you must first understand:

1. God's overall purpose in creating human beings.
2. Jesus' mission in coming to earth.

TEACHING TIP:

This section on “Why God Created Us” should take about 10 minutes.

WHY GOD CREATED US

Let’s review God’s purpose for creating us. He never does anything without a purpose. God always has a reason, always has a purpose for everything he does. The Bible says that we were created for four reasons:

1. We were made to have a **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**.

Genesis 1:26 says:

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.”

GENESIS 1:26 (NIV)

Why did he make us in his likeness? We are unlike any other creation. We’re not like the animals. Human beings are unique in that we’re made in God’s image. What does that mean? We have a spirit. As a result, we can communicate with God who is the Spirit. You’ll never see a dog praying; you’ll never see a cow giving thanks for its food. We have an ability to communicate with God because we are made in God’s image. So we have a moral conscious, we have the freedom to choose our behavior, and most important, we have the ability to talk with God.

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 1:4-5:

Long ago, even before he made the world, God chose us to be his very own through what Christ would do for us . . . His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us.

EPHESIANS 1:4-5 (TLB)

Even before you were born, God had you in his mind and planned to adopt you into his family. He wants a long-term relationship with you. You were made for relationship. So when people don't ever develop a relationship with God, they have missed the very reason they were created. God's plan for you is older than the plan for the earth. Before he even made the earth, he had you in mind. That's what I call long-range planning! That's how much you matter to God.

2. We were made to **BECOME LIKE CHRIST**.

We read in Romans 8:29:

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

ROMANS 8:29 (NIV84)

When God made Adam and Eve, the very first temptation that Satan gave to human beings was, "If you eat the fruit you'll be gods." That has been the temptation ever since. Satan never tempts you to be like him. Satan tempts you to think that you're God. That is the oldest temptation. You are never going to be a god. But the Bible teaches that you can become godly. What does that mean? It's having his character; it's having the love of God, the joy of God, the peace of God, and the patience of God. You're never going to be God or even a god. But you can become like God in character, and that's what God says His goal is. From the very beginning, he predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.

Read Romans 8:29 in The Message paraphrase:

God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.

ROMANS 8:29 (THE MESSAGE)

Here are God's first two goals for your life: have a relationship with him and become like him—specifically like Jesus Christ.

3. We were made to **SERVE HIS PURPOSE**.

Ephesians 2:10 says:

God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to live our lives doing.

EPHESIANS 2:10 (NCV)

At Saddleback we call this the purpose driven life, living a life that is built on the purposes that God created us for.

4. We were made to **LAST FOREVER**.

One day your body is going to wear out and your heart is going to stop. But that's not going to be the end of you. You're going to go on. There's an eternal warranty on your life. Human beings were made to last forever. You're going to last forever in one of two places: heaven or hell. Because you know Christ, you're going to go to Heaven. We were made to last that way. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:11:

He has planted eternity in the human heart.

ECCLESIASTES 3:11 (NLT)

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 1:10:

This was his purpose: that when the time is ripe he will gather us all together.

EPHESIANS 1:10 (TLB)

If you want to know how the world's going to end, there it is right there. God tells you clearly. He's going to gather all of his children together to be with him in Christ forever.

We're made to have a relationship with God; we're made to become like Jesus Christ; we're made to serve God's purpose while we're here on earth; we're made to last forever.

Here's the bottom line: This life is preparation for eternity. It's the warm up act, the dress rehearsal, the kindergarten that lasts 60, 70, 80 years before you go into the real show.

Obviously, if you fully understand this (what we just covered) it's going to dramatically affect how you live. When you realize that this world is not all there is— – in fact, this is kind of the get-ready stage, the kindergarten stage; that eternity is going to go on for millions and billions of years—; you only spend 60, 70, 80 years or so here on earth – when you realize all that a lot of things lose their importance. They just don't seem that important when you put them in perspective of eternity. Who's going to care about who won the World Series a hundred years from today, much less a thousand years from today? And yet it's a big, big issue for people. Who's going to win the Super Bowl? Who cares in light of eternity? We're made to last forever.

“THIS LIFE IS
PREPARATION FOR
LIFE IN ETERNITY.”

TEACHING TIP:

The teaching of the Mission of Jesus & Why It Must Matter should take about 25 minutes.

The second thing we need to look at as we consider your mission in the world is Jesus' mission on earth.

THE MISSION OF JESUS

The Bible tells us that God sent Jesus to earth because we got ourselves into a mess we couldn't get out of. We were all made to have a relationship with God, but by our own selfish choices, we have severed that relationship. By our own decisions to go our own way instead of God's way, we've broken off the relationship. The Bible says that relationship is broken and there is disharmony, not harmony, between God and man. And sin has caused that.

The Problem: Our sin has broken our relationship with God.

*Your iniquities have separated you from your God
and your sins have hidden his face from you.*

ISAIAH 59:2 (NIV84)

But because God planned all this in advance, God already saw this coming. And he thought it through. Before any of us ever sinned, he knew we were going to sin, so he figured out the plan to take care of that too. He knew that in giving you the freedom to choose, you were going to make the wrong choice. So even before you made the wrong choice, he already had the solution.

God's Solution: He took the initiative to bring us back to himself.

*For God loved the world so much that he gave his
only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall
not perish but have eternal life.*

JOHN 3:16 (TLB)

God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 (TLB)

This is what Jesus Christ came to earth to do. That was his mission.

Let's get a little bit more specific. What did Jesus come to do specifically? The Good News is, we don't need to doubt. We don't need to have any questions in our mind because Jesus spelled out his mission clearly in a number of ways. Circle the parts of his mission in these next five verses:

What Was Jesus' Life Mission?

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

LUKE 19:10 (NIV84)

Circle "to seek and to save that which is lost."

This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people the truth.

JOHN 18:37 (NCV)

Circle "to tell people the truth."

I came to give life—life in all its fullness.

JOHN 10:10 (NCV)

Circle "to give life."

I have come as a Light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer wander in the darkness.

JOHN 12:46 (TLB)

Circle "to shine in this dark world."

*I must tell the Good News about God's kingdom. . .
This is what I was sent to do.*

LUKE 4:43 (ICB99)

Circle "tell the Good News."

We can see clearly what Jesus came to do: seek and save the lost. Tell people the truth. Give life. Shine in the dark world. Tell people the Good News about the kingdom.

You may be thinking, "This is great but what does this have to do with me and my mission?"

Your life mission and Jesus' life mission are very intertwined once you become a Christian. Let me give you ten reasons why Jesus' mission on earth has to matter to you.

WHY JESUS' MISSION MUST MATTER TO ME

Ten Facts That Motivate Me

1. If I want to be like Jesus, **HIS LIFE MISSION** must determine **MY LIFE MISSION**.

Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17 and said:

[Jesus prayed to the Father] In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world.

JOHN 17:18 (THE MESSAGE)

God is the mission giver; we don't make it up or dream it up. It is there for us to detect and discover as we seek God in prayer. Each of us has a unique SHAPE that gives us clues into how God has prepared us to join his historic global mission.

2. Jesus **EXPECTS ME** to continue his mission.

In fact, this is not an option, this is not a suggestion, this is not a possible good idea if you've got any spare time to fit this into your schedule. This is commanded. If you are a Christian, you are commanded to fulfill the mission of Christ.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, he had a physical body. Everything God did on the earth, he did in Jesus's physical body. Today Jesus is not here physically with us. He's here spiritually. He's here in a spiritual body. What is that spiritual body of Jesus Christ called? The church. Where is the church today? Wherever Christians are. So Jesus Christ, when he was here on earth, was confined to one space. Today Jesus Christ is here in a spiritual body, literally all around the world. He can be at more places at once because he's not limited to a physical body. He's here in a spiritual body. Who is the spiritual body of Christ? You are, I am, we are. We are the body of Christ.

When my three kids were very small and I really wanted them to get something, I wanted them to remember my instructions, I would repeat them several times. Are any of you parents familiar with this technique? It's like they don't get it the first time. So if it's really important as a parent you have to say it over and over and over.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, he said something that was so important, he stated it five times, in five different situations, in five different ways. In fact, he did it once in each of the four Gospels and once in the book of Acts. These are called the Great Commissions. You may think there's only one great commission. Actually there are five. One in Matthew, one in Mark, one in Luke, one in John, and one in Acts. I'd like for you to read these five great commissions with me. Why are they called the Great Commissions? Because they're the greatest things you can build your life around.

THE FIVE COMMISSIONS OF JESUS

COMMISSION 1:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

MATTHEW 28:19-20 (NIV)

COMMISSION 2:

You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.

MARK 16:15 (TLB)

COMMISSION 3:

This message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me.

LUKE 24:47 (TLB)

COMMISSION 4:

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.

JOHN 20:21 (NIV)

COMMISSION 5:

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

ACTS 1:8 (NIV)

Jesus says it five times in five ways in five settings. It's as if Jesus is saying, "Get it?" I really wish we had time to look at these five great commissions in depth. But we don't. If in your own study you go back and look at these, you'll find that in these five, they cover where we're to do it, when we're to do it, why we're to do it, and how we're to do it. You will find in these five commissions the mandate for life, the message for life, the method for life, and the motivation for life. But the point that Jesus is making is, "My mission must matter to you." You're commanded. If I am a Christian, my mission is not optional. It's either I'm obedient or I'm disobedient.

3. Sharing the Good News is my **RESPONSIBILITY**.

You must warn them so they may live. If you don't speak out to warn the wicked to stop their evil ways, they will die in their sin. But I will hold you responsible for their death.

EZEKIEL 3:18 (NCV)

He's saying the people around me who are headed for hell, if I let them go to hell by not telling them, I'm responsible. The people around me who are headed for hell, if I let them go to hell without warning them, guess who's responsible? Me. I can't let somebody else be responsible for the people closest to me. You can't let anybody else be responsible for the people closest to you. They are in your life for a reason.

**“IF I'M A CHRISTIAN,
JESUS'S MISSION IS
NOT OPTIONAL!”**

4. Sharing the Good News is a **PRIVILEGE**.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 says:

And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favor and be reconciled to him . . . This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18–20 (TLB)

I remember going to the United Nations when Billy Graham was speaking to all the United Nations' ambassadors at a banquet. And I remember presenting the Good News, the plan of salvation, to all the ambassadors from around the world. Saddleback was hosting the delegation from China. When I went there I could have been in awe of all these ambassadors because they represent great nations—China, England, Russia, Brazil, all the major countries of the world. One hundred eighty-four different countries were in the room that night. But I am an ambassador of something even more important. And so are you. I am an ambassador for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to represent Him.

Paul says in Romans 1:16:

I am not ashamed of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes.

ROMANS 1:16 (NCV)

5. I'm **GRATEFUL** for what Jesus has done for me.

Too often we forget how good the Good News really is.

In Ephesians 2:12 Paul says:

Remember that in the past you were without Christ . . . You had no hope, and you did not know God.

EPHESIANS 2:12 (NCV)

It was a miserable life. We were hopeless and we did not have God. Today, because we DO have Christ in our lives, we DO have hope. We're grateful for that. Paul says that gratefulness gives him a sense of obligation to share it with others:

For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world.

ROMANS 1:14 (NLT)

I'm grateful for what God's done for me. If I had the cure for cancer and I didn't share it, that would be criminal. If I had the cure for AIDS and didn't share it, that would be criminal. When I know the way to know Jesus Christ and to know God and get into heaven—and I don't tell it to the people who live by me—that's criminal.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:14:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14 (NIV)

Circle "Christ's love." God has never made a person He didn't love. Everybody matters to God. And because God cares about people, we must care too. So we're grateful for what God has done for us.

6. People are **HOPELESSLY LOST** without Christ.

Jesus is the only One who can save people. No one else in the world is able to save us.

ACTS 4:12 (NCV)

Jesus is the only way to heaven; people are lost without Christ. So we have to share it.

As Romans 10:13-14 says:

Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them.

ROMANS 10:13-14 (NCV)

Somebody's got to tell them. God could write the Good News in the sky but He's chosen instead to use you and use me. That is a privilege. And God wants us to share the Good News because people without Christ are hopelessly lost.

Telling the Good News is my duty—something I must do. And how terrible it will be for me if I do not tell the Good News.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:16 (NCV)

7. God wants **EVERYONE** saved!

1 Timothy 2:4 says:

[God] wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4 (NIV)

Circle "all people." He wants everybody to know Him. Every human being.
2 Peter 2:9 says:

[God] does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants all people to change their hearts and lives.

2 PETER 3:9 (NCV)

God wants us all to know him in a personal way.

8. I will be **REWARDED** for eternity.

Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord, which he promised to his people.

COLOSSIANS 3:24 (ICB)

There are rewards for leading people to Christ—eternal rewards.

9. God's **TIMETABLE** for history hinges around us completing Jesus' mission!

People are really interested in the end of the world. They're thinking, "Is Jesus Christ coming back?" They're all upset and wondering what they should do. Particularly unbelievers who don't know the Bible get a little nervous about this.

It's interesting that Jesus is very clear about when he is and when he is not coming back. First look at this verse:

The Good News about God's kingdom will be preached in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come.

MATTHEW 24:14 (NCV)

Circle "nation." The word "nation" doesn't mean a political state like we have today, like the nation of Egypt. In those days there weren't such things. There were people groups. For instance, today in the nation of Egypt, there might be a hundred different people groups. In America there are thousands of different people groups. In Los Angeles alone there are people speaking 224 different languages. So this "to every nation" means "ethnic"—to every ethnic group. Jesus Christ is not coming back until the Good News has been shared to every ethnic group, every tribe, and every language in the world.

Right before Jesus Christ ascended back to heaven, he met with his closest disciples. This subject was on their mind, "Lord, when are you coming back?" Obviously they wanted to know when he was coming back.

Look at Acts 1:6-8:

Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

ACTS 1:6-8 (NIV)

This is a very profound passage of Scripture. Notice that when the disciples asked him a prophecy question, "When are you coming back? When is the Second Coming?" Jesus didn't want to talk about that. He said, "It's none of your business." When they wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus wanted

to talk about missions and evangelism. That's how important this is. They asked, "Lord when are you coming back?" He's getting ready to leave so that's a natural question. He says, "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons but go out and witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world." He says, "It's none of your business so drop the issue. Instead of focusing on when I'm coming back, I want you to focus on taking my message to the whole world because then the world is going to come to an end."

He's saying don't focus on prophecy. Focus on the purpose for which I left you here on earth. What is that? Your mission.

Let me spare you some fruitless speculation: When is Jesus coming back?

In the first place, anytime somebody sets a date, you can know that's wrong. Because Jesus said in Matthew 24, "*No man knows the day nor the hour, neither the angels nor the Son of man but only the Father which is in heaven.*" Jesus said, "Even I, while I'm here on earth, don't know when I'm coming back." If Jesus didn't have it figured out, you're never going to figure it out either. If somebody says, "He's coming back on 'this' date," you can know for sure, he's not going to come back on that date because no one knows the day or the hour.

But we do know what has to happen first. "*The Good News about God's kingdom will be preached into all the world to every people group and then the end will come.*" If you want Jesus Christ to come back, just go out and start witnessing. The moment the last person receives Christ—who Jesus knows is going to receive him—then Bam! It's over. And nobody knows who that person is or when it's going to be.

10. I will **BE GLAD** when I see people in heaven.

Luke 15:7 says:

I tell you there is much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart.

LUKE 15:7 (ICB)

Did you know that every time somebody steps across the line, they throw a party in heaven? When someone gets baptized, they are publicly saying to the whole world, "I'm not ashamed to say I'm a believer in Jesus Christ." And the moment they said "yes," they threw a party in heaven.

When you get to heaven and you see people you had a hand in bringing there, you're going to be glad you did it. You're going to be glad that you took the time, that you moved against your fear and in love shared the Good News with your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, your friend, your relative, your neighbor, the person you work with or go to school with or who lives next door—and even that stranger God brings into your life by chance. When you see them in heaven you're going to be glad you shared with them. They're going to be glad you did too.

Knowing this, what should be my response to my life mission?

“**KNOWING ALL THIS,
WHAT SHOULD BE
MY RESPONSE?**”

I should do everything I can to fulfill it. Paul says in Acts 20:24:

I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus—the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness.

ACTS 20:24 (GW)

TEACHING TIP:

We usually refer to this assignment as something that they can fill out later as they review these notes.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: GOD'S MISSION

Review the notes from Session One. In your own words, write out what you see as God's mission in the world. Refer to what you discovered from the Scriptures and the notes, as well as your own paraphrases of key Scriptures. And use one or two verses you'd like to commit to memory.

CLASS 401

SESSION TWO

Communicating God's Story

To share what God has done in your life with other people, it helps to:

1. Know the Good News.
2. Write your story in four parts.
3. Learn how to fish for people.
4. Build a bridge of friendship.

TEACHING TIP:

This review of the Message of the Good News should take about 6 minutes. It's a great section to give someone who you are training to teach 401.

The Message of the Good News

If someone asked you to explain the Good News of Jesus, would you be able to confidently respond? Rate yourself: How confident are you in communicating the Good News to someone who asks about it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very nervous			Adequate				Confident		

The universal part of your life message is the Gospel, the Good News. It's how we can be saved and forgiven and begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The moment you trust in Christ, you're called and commissioned to be a messenger of the Good News to people who haven't heard or responded to it yet.

What is the essence of the gospel? What is the Good News?

Here are five Bible truths. If you remove any one of them it ceases to be the full gospel. Let's review these quickly together:

What Is the Good News?

1. God became a man so **I COULD RELATE TO HIM**.

It is the Good News about [God's] Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who came as a human baby, born into King David's royal family line; and by being raised from the dead he proved to be the mighty Son of God, with the holy nature of God himself.

ROMANS 1:3-4 (TLB)

2. Jesus died for my sins so I DON'T HAVE TO .

It is this Good News that saves you if you firmly believe it . . . that Christ died for our sins. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:2-4 (NLT96)

For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 (TLB)

3. Jesus destroyed death so I COULD EXPERIENCE ETERNAL LIFE .

[Jesus] destroyed death, and through the Good News he showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed.

2 TIMOTHY 1:10 (NCV)

Circle "the way to have life." That's what your family members who don't know Christ need. That's what your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends need. They need the way to a new life.

4. Salvation is a free gift so I DON'T HAVE TO EARN IT .

People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God gave Jesus as a way to forgive sin through faith.

ROMANS 3:24-25 (ICB99)

5. It is based on faith so **ALL I HAVE TO DO IS
REPENT AND BELIEVE** .

Repent and believe the good news!

MARK 1:15 (NIV)

The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, “Those who are right with God will live by trusting in him.”

ROMANS 1:17 (NCV91)

“**MEMORIZE
THESE FIVE
BASIC TRUTHS!**”

I want to encourage you to memorize these five statements, the Gospel in five statements: God became a man so I can relate to Him; Jesus died for my sins so I don't have to; Jesus destroyed death so I can have eternal life; salvation is a free gift so I don't have to earn it; it's based on faith so all I have to do is repent and believe.

TEACHING TIP:

If you'd like to show the class a tool for sharing their faith, such as *The 4 Spiritual Laws* or *Steps to Peace with God* booklets, this would be a good place.

SHARING MY STORY

TEACHING TIP:

This section on “Sharing My Story” should take about 10 minutes.

God clearly tells us that He has a message for us to give to others.

*But you are the ones chosen by God . . .
God's instruments to do his work and
speak out for him, to tell others of the
night-and-day difference he made for you.*

1 PETER 2:9 (THE MESSAGE)

Have you had Jesus Christ make a night and day difference in your life? Yes.
Every one of us. The Bible says:

*He has given us this message of restored
relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are
Christ's representatives.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19–20 (GW)

“A PERSONAL STORY IS ONE
OF THE MOST PERSUASIVE
FORMS OF COMMUNICATION.”

A personal testimony is still the most powerful form of communication today. The most powerful form of persuasion. Madison Avenue still uses personal testimonies. You see it on television all the time. “I’ve tried Tide. You ought to try it too.” “I use this stuff for ring around the collar and I no

longer have ring around the collar.” Why do they use that? Because it’s still the most powerful form of communication, the personal story.

The Bible Is Full of Testimonies

DAVID

Come and listen, and I will tell you what he has done for me.

PSALM 66:16 (NCV)

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.

JOHN 4:39 (NIV)

THE MAN BORN BLIND

I don’t know whether he is good or bad . . . but I know this: I was blind, and now I see!

JOHN 9:25 (TLB)

That may be your testimony: “I don’t have it all figured out. I don’t know all the ins and outs. I don’t have all the theology down. All I know is Jesus Christ changed my life.” That then is a testimony. You don’t have to have it all figured out. You don’t have to be a Bible scholar. All you have to say is, “Jesus Christ made a difference in my life.” And tell them what difference He made.

PETER AND JOHN

We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.

ACTS 4:20 (NLT)

PAUL

On six different occasions (Acts 22–26) Paul used his personal testimony to share the Good News with unbelievers.

JESUS

Even Jesus spoke by personal testimony.

Notice he says in John 3:11:

Listen carefully. I'm speaking sober truth to you. I speak only of what I know by experience; I give witness only to what I have seen with my own eyes. There is nothing secondhand here, no hearsay.

JOHN 3:10-11 (THE MESSAGE)

There is nothing secondhand here. No hearsay. Even Jesus is speaking from personal experience which is called your testimony. Not only do we have examples of this in the Bible, but we are commanded very clearly to share our testimonies with the world.

We Are Commanded to Share Our Testimonies

Let the whole world know what he has done.

PSALM 105:1 (NLT)

Every day tell how he saves us. Tell the nations of his glory; tell all peoples the miracles he does.

PSALM 96:2-3 (NCV)

What's the big deal? Why should I have to tell my story? Why don't we just have professionals do this? Why should I share about the difference Jesus made in my life? There are six values to your testimony that make it very powerful:

The Value of Your Personal Testimony

1. **UNIQUE** : There's no other in the world just like it.

You are the only one who can give your testimony. If you don't tell other people what's happened in your life, that story will never be heard on the face of this planet. If you don't tell your unique story of how you came to

know Christ, no one will ever hear it.

2. **PERSONAL** : You can share from your heart.

3. **100% YOURS** : You are the greatest authority on it!

It's difficult to argue with a testimony. You say, "This is what happened to me." How do I argue with that? It happened to you and you know it happened.

4. **MEMORABLE** : People love to hear personal stories and they remember them.

5. **RELATIONAL** : People connect with experiences.

It builds a relational bridge. When you tell your story, "This is what I was like before I became a Christian, and here's what happened afterwards. Here's the thing I'm still struggling with," people think, "Oh, I see what you mean!" People relate to it a whole lot easier and a lot quicker.

6. **EFFECTIVE** : In our postmodern world, it may be your most effective witness.

A lot of people today aren't going to listen to the Bible. They don't accept the Bible. They don't believe the Bible is completely true. They think it's true if you want to believe, but it's not true if you don't want to believe it. Many people today don't even believe there's such a thing as truth. "There's no absolute truth. Whatever's right for you." They may not even accept the Bible. If you start quoting from the Bible, they shut down. But they'll listen to your story. And so you can share it.

You are actually far more affective in witnessing than I am as a pastor. When I share as a pastor, I'm considered the paid professional. They say, "We expect him to talk about God. He's a pastor." I'm the paid professional. But when unbelievers hear you talk about Jesus, you're the satisfied customer. Who has more credibility? Paid salesmen or satisfied customer? No question about it. You have a stronger testimony than our pastors. Why? Because we're paid to do this. We're the professionals. That's what we do

full time. They say, "You're a religious person, a 'holy man.'"

The Bible says that your testimony is a powerful tool and nobody can say it's wrong because it's your story. There's no such thing as a bad testimony. You are a witness whether you like it or not.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:15:

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

1 PETER 3:15 (NIV)

Circle "for the hope that you have." We are to share our hope. Faith is what you believe. Hope is the benefit of it. You're to share what difference it's made in your life. People don't care if you're a Christian or not. They say "So what?" Before they know how you became a Christian they want to know why you became a Christian. They want to know "what difference does it make. Is there any solution to any problem that might help me? Is there any advantage of becoming a Christian? Are there any benefits of becoming a Christian? What's the purpose of it?" Share the hope.

TEACHING TIP:

This section on "The Four Parts of My Story" should take about 15 minutes.

In this session, I'm going to share with you how to write out your testimony based on three different scenarios about when you came to Christ. Some of you came to Christ as grown adults. Some of you came to Christ as children and then kind of walked on the wild side and came back to God. Some of you came maybe as a young person or child, and you've lived for the Lord basically your entire life. Depending upon where you came from, you're going to have a different kind of testimony.

Here are the four parts of your testimony if you became a Christian as an adult:

THE FOUR PARTS OF MY STORY

IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AS AN ADULT:

1. What my life was like **BEFORE** I met Christ.

- What were some common circumstances an unbeliever would identify with?
- What was your attitude that an unbeliever would identify with?
- What was most important to you?
- What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life (sports/ fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/ alcohol, having fun, entertainment, popularity, hobbies, etc.)?

2. How I **REALIZED** I needed Christ.

- What significant steps led up to your conversion?
- What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God?
- How did God get your attention? What motivated you?

3. How I **COMMITTED** my life to Christ.

- What specifically did you do?
- Where did it happen?
- What did you say in your prayer? Be specific.

You didn't just wake up one day and all of a sudden you were a Christian. When did you step across the line?

You can grow closer and closer to the Lord, but there is a day that you step across. You may not know when that day occurred. But there was a point when it clicked in your mind whether you know that date or not.

4. The **DIFFERENCE** it has made in my life.

- What benefits have you experienced or felt?
- What problems have been resolved?
- How has Jesus helped you change for the better?
- How has it helped your relationships?

IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AS A CHILD BUT WALKED AWAY OR NEVER GREW UNTIL A DEEPER RECOMMITMENT AS AN ADULT . . .

If you became a Christian as a child but you walked away from Christ and never grew until a deeper recommitment as an adult (and many of you have done that), here's what you do. You use the same four steps but you start with the time just prior to your recommitment.

Use the same four steps with this modification:

- Use the time just prior to your recommitment.
- Give some examples of how you were trying to meet your own needs without Christ but it wasn't working.
- Describe what caused you to realize you needed Christ directing your life and how you made a full commitment to him.
- Explain how Jesus is currently meeting the deepest needs in your life.

IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AS A CHILD AND NEVER STRAYED . . .

Use the same four steps with this modification:

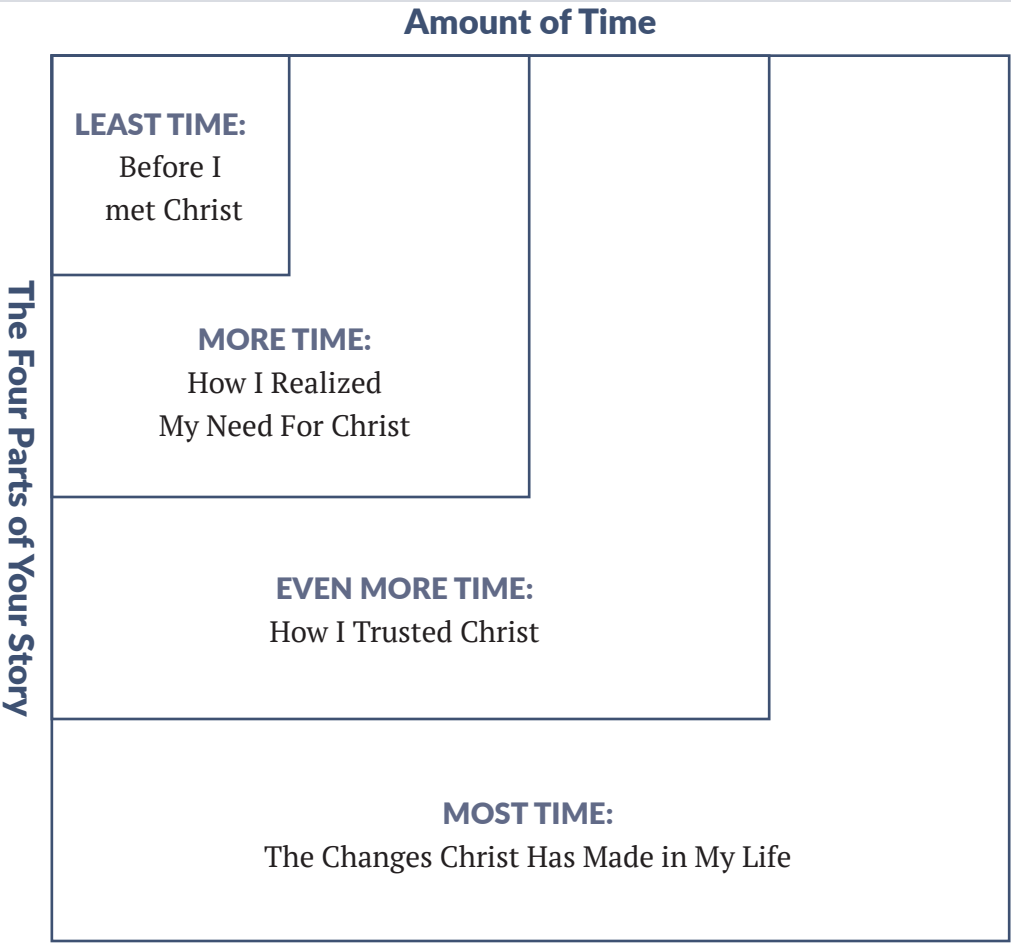
- Point out some deep need or common problem that you see other people trying to resolve.
- Point out how unsuccessful their attempts are to meet their own need.
- Explain why you never experienced that problem by trusting Christ early in life. Don't say the exact age. Continue with steps 3 and 4.

Don't say the exact age you became a believer. If you say, "I accepted Christ when I was 21," a 17-year-old kid goes, "Whoopee! I've got four more years!" On the other hand, if you say, "I accepted Christ when I was nine years old," they'd say, "You were just young and didn't know what you were

doing.” Don’t tell them the exact age. It doesn’t make any difference. What matters is how it has made a difference in your life now.

Here is a picture of how long each part of the testimony should be. I’m going to teach you how to give a testimony in 90 seconds to three minutes. It doesn’t have to be real long to be effective. You want to spend the least amount of time on what you were like before you became a Christian. Some of the testimonies you hear, it’s 90 percent of all the big, bad, evil, nasty, evil sins they did before they became a Christian and then “Now I’m saved! Thank you!” That’s not a testimony. That’s a brag-amony—bragging about what a big sinner they were. The whole purpose of the first point is saying you were just like anybody else. You’re trying to say you’re on common ground, identifying with other non-believers.

Then you spend a little bit more time on Part Two: How I realized I needed Christ. Then you spend a little bit more on Part Three: How I committed my life to Christ. Then you spend the most part of your testimony on the differences it made, the fourth part. That’s how you’re going to do your testimony.



Guidelines for Story Preparation

Don't use religious terms or clichés or broad generalities. Ask, "If I were an unbeliever, would this make sense to me?" After hearing and reading hundreds and hundreds of testimonies in my lifetime, I have discovered that one of the biggest weaknesses of testimonies is that we tend to get lazy and we use over worn, worn out Christian clichés in our stories that unbelievers would never, ever understand.

TRANSLATING CHRISTIAN WORDS

A cliché lexicon

CHRISTIAN TERM

WHEN TALKING WITH UNBELIEVERS

"Blessed"

"Happy"

Don't ever use, "I was blessed." What in the world does that mean? Can anyone describe what a blessing is? Say, "I was happy."

"I was Born Again"

"I was given a fresh, new start"

Don't say, "I was born again." They might say, "Were you reincarnated?" Say, "I was given a fresh new start."

"I was Saved"

"My life changed at that moment"

Don't say, "I was saved." They'd say, "Were you drowning?" Say, "My life changed at that moment."

"Jesus is my Lord"

"He's the Manager/CEO of my Life"

"I put Jesus in the driver's seat."

Even to say, "Jesus is my Lord," people don't know what that means. We live in a democracy, not a feudal system. We don't have lords and ladies, kings and queens, counts and vassals and serfs. We don't go around saying, "My lord." Instead of saying, "Jesus is my Lord," say, "He's the manager of my life . . . He's the CEO."

“I repented”**“I changed my mind” (a mental U-turn)**

Don't say, “I repented” because they might think of a guy holding a sign saying, “Turn or burn!” or it simply won't make sense because it's not an everyday word. Instead say, “I changed my mind” or “I made a mental U-turn” because that's what the word for repent (“metanoia”) in Greek means – to change your mind.

“I had sinned”**“I knew I'd blown it”****“All are sinners”****“Nobody's perfect. No one bats 1000”**

Even don't say, “I sinned.” Why? Because people define sin differently. I had a guy tell me a sin was anybody who doesn't salute the flag. That was a sin for him. Just say, “I knew I'd blown it.” Instead of saying, “All are sinners,” say, “Nobody's perfect . . . Nobody bats 1000.” If you call somebody a sinner, they put their defenses up. If you say, “Nobody bats 1000,” everybody agrees with that.

“I felt convicted”**“I realized that . . .”**

Don't say, “I felt convicted.” They'd say, “Did you serve time?” Don't say, “I felt convicted,” say, “I realized that . . .” That's a non-Christian way.

“The Holy Ghost”**“God's Spirit”**

Instead of saying, “The Holy Ghost,” and they say, “Casper?” say, “God's Spirit.”

Phrases to Avoid in a Testimony to Unbelievers

"I just praise the Lord for . . ."

"Now I am so blessed."

"Hallelujah!"

"Amen!"

"It was glorious."

"I was convicted."

"The Lord laid on my heart."

"I was called."

Never criticize another church or denomination.

See **Appendix A** for *"Twelve Tips to Effectively Share Your Testimony."*

Let me share my testimony with you.

TEACHING TIP:

This is where you share your three-minute testimony that models everything you have just taught. Remember that simple is better. You want them to feel that this is something they can do.

TEACHING TIP:

With both the Listening for Learnings exercise and the “Part A: Developing my Story” that follows, encourage people to just get started by filling in a few ideas. Tell them that if they can’t think of any learnings right away, it’s okay to leave this one blank for now. And let them know that if they can just check a box or two in the one that follows, it will really help as they prepare to write a first draft of their story.

LISTENING FOR LEARNINGS

As the teacher shares his/her story of God's plan for their life, reflect on the following questions:

- What did I like about this person's approach to sharing God's story in their life?
- What words or phrases grabbed my attention?
- What was the overall theme I heard come through?
- What can I learn from this person that could help me be more effective in sharing God's story in my own life with others?

Write down what stands out or helps you with ideas for sharing your own story with others.

Part A: Identifying the Testimony Theme(s) of My Life

DEVELOPING MY STORY

Use the following form as a guide to write your story. Check the following themes that are dominant in your life.

My life before Christ

Worries/Anxiety
 Guilt/Shame
 Anger/Temper
 Emptiness/Lack of purpose
 Grief
 Stress/Burnout
 Low self-esteem
 Poor health
 Disappointment
 Insecurity
 Regrets
 Discontent/Always busy
 Fears
 Loneliness
 Addictions/Habits
 Self-centeredness
 Despair/Depression
 Cheap thrills
 Boredom/Unmotivated
 Fear of death
 "Something was missing"
 Bitterness and resentment
 Pain of rejection
 Marriage problems
 Financial problems
 Business problems

My life with Christ

Inner peace
 Forgiveness
 Self-control, patience, and love
 Purpose in life
 Comfort and joy
 Power for living
 Significance to God
 Strength to rise above
 Trust in God's good plans
 Confidence and security
 A second chance at life
 Contentment and peace
 Faith to face my fears
 God's always with me
 Power to change
 Love for others
 Hope for living
 Real and lasting joy
 Adventure with God
 Assurance of Heaven
 Sense of completion
 Freedom from my past
 God's unconditional love
 Changes in my marriage
 Changes in my finances

See **Appendix B** for helpful ways to lead your testimony into a conversation.
 See **Appendix C** for additional suggestions on preparing your testimony.

What were some common circumstances an unbeliever would identify with? What was your attitude that an unbeliever would identify with? What was most important to you? What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life (sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/alcohol, thrill seeking, pleasure, entertainment, popularity, hobbies, etc.)?

HOW I REALIZED I NEEDED JESUS

What significant steps led up to your conversion? What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God? (Choose a theme from Part A.) How did God get your attention?

HOW I COMMITTED MY LIFE TO JESUS

What specifically did you do to entrust your life to Jesus? Where did it happen? What did you say to God? What do you remember the most? Be specific.

THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE IN MY LIFE

What changes do you see God beginning to do in your life? Give current examples from the last two weeks of how God is working in you and what God is saying to you.

TEACHING TIP:

The two sections on Fishing in my Pond and Building a Bridge should take about 30 minutes.

FISHING IN MY POND

Jesus' very first words to His disciples are in Matthew 4:19:

Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!"

MATTHEW 4:19 (NLT)

Following and fishing go together. If you're not fishing, that means you're not following. He says, "If you follow Me, you're going to be fishers of men." If you're not fishing for people, if you're not doing any mission, you are not following Jesus Christ.

Nobody's taken more classes on evangelism than me, and most of the classes I've taken make witnessing seem like hunting. I have never liked to hunt. If you're a hunter, great! God bless you! But it's not the best model for witnessing; it's not the picture that Jesus gave us. Evangelism is not being a salesman. Many of you think, "I'm not a salesman." You don't have to be. The best definition of witnessing is not being a salesman; it's being a matchmaker. You're introducing people to Jesus Christ so they can fall in love.

Jesus already loves them but he wants them to love him. And when they understand how much He loves them, they will. Let me point out some contrasts between hunting and fishing because Jesus intentionally, I think, chose fishing.

HUNTING VS. FISHING

Aggressive

Based on confrontation

"Go out there and shoot them"

Uses "one size fits all" bullet

Take your best shot and it's over

Scares off the animal if you miss

More gentle

Based on attraction

"Get them to nibble on your bait"

Allows you to try all kinds of lures

Reeling in a fish requires give and take

You get more than one chance

In hunting, you take your best shot and it's over. Take aim and bam, and it scares the animal off if you miss. In fishing, reeling in a fish requires give and take, and you get more than one chance. If they don't bite on the first nibble, they come back around, swim back around, and nibble again—come back and nibble again.

The animal has no choice

The fish gets a choice

Here's my favorite difference: In hunting, the animal has no choice. But in fishing, the fish gets a choice. He chooses whether to eat the bait or not.

Must be a skilled shot

Anyone can put bait into the water

In Jesus' day, they only used nets for fishing. Today, we have many methods for fishing, including bass boats with built-in sonar equipment!

With the picture of fishing that Jesus gave us, there are three keys to spiritual fishing:

Three Keys to Spiritual Fishing

1. Identify my **POND** .

Jesus said in Acts 1:8:

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.

ACTS 1:8 (NCV)

Notice this verse tells us not only what to do but where to do it.

First, it tells us to be a witness. In a courtroom, a witness is somebody who just shares from experience. You're not asked to be an attorney. You're not trying to argue or persuade. There are those who are called to do that. But God doesn't expect you to argue anybody into heaven. He does expect you to share what's happened to you. Anybody can do that.

Then He tells us where. He says, "*In Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria and in every part of the world.*" We'll look at this more in depth in a minute. For now, Jesus is telling some people who lived in Jerusalem to start where they were and then go out to everyone else.

My circle of influence is "my fishing pond." God holds me most responsible for the people I already have relationships with. Where do I start? **Those closest to me!**

Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.

MARK 5:19 (NCV)

Have you noticed with the apostles, that many of them were related? Andrew went and got his brother and led Peter to Christ. James and John were brothers. Philip brought his friend Nathaniel. Then you go to co-workers. Paul converted Priscilla and Aquilla who were fellow tent makers. In Matthew 9, Matthew holds a party for other tax collectors to introduce them to Jesus. He was a tax collector. Some of you could have a party for realtors or accountants or whatever your profession is.

Then there are people who just cross your path. When Jesus met the woman at the well, he was just going to get a glass of water. He was thirsty. He stopped for refreshment at the fast food place. He asked the waitress for a drink and starts up a spiritual conversation with her.

Have you ever thought about how many people just come across your path on a normal day? People you just bump into—baristas, servers, checkout persons, bank tellers, all these people. I estimate maybe five or ten of those a day. These are people you never really get to know but at some moment in your life you have a common ground with them, and you could take advantage of it and at least invite them to church. The Bible has a lot of examples of this. Philip was out hitchhiking one day and he talks to the guy and tells him about the Lord.

But it starts with the people closest to you. How many of you came to Saddleback Church because you were told about it or invited by somebody else? Basically, 100 percent of you. Many of you accepted Christ here and many of you are going to heaven because somebody cared enough to tell you.

Question: Who have you cared enough to tell? Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you? You are the only Christian some people know. And God has intentionally put nonbelievers around you because he cares about them and he wants them to know Him. We must care because God cares. There are people all around you who need to hear the Good News. You need to make a list and invite them. Think of the names of some friends, some neighbors, some co-workers. There are two conditions: (1) people you care about, and (2) people who don't know Jesus.

“THE PERSON MOST ON
MY HEART TODAY IS
.....”

List the names of people in your sphere of influence and how you associate with them (such as immediate family, relatives, close friends, work associates, neighbors, and so on).

NAME	RELATIONSHIP
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. **THINK** like the fish in my pond.

You've got to know what they're like in order to reach them. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:

To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. . . . To those who are without the law I became like a person who is without the law . . . To those who are weak, I became weak so I could win the weak. I have become all things to all people so I could save some of them in any way possible. I do all this because of the Good News and so I can share in its blessings.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:20-23 (NCV)

What do you need to know? Two or three things: what are their interests, needs, and hurts? The Bible says over and over again that Jesus knew what people were thinking. No wonder he was so effective. He knew their needs. He knew their interests. He knew their hurts.

TEACHING TIP:

These two exercises we generally refer to briefly, giving time to fill in a few things as we're talking, and then move on with the teaching.

MAKE A LIST OF COMMON-GROUND AREAS YOU HAVE WITH THE PERSON MOST ON YOUR HEART TODAY.

- Common Experiences
.....
.....
- Common Interests
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- Common Needs
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.....
- Common Hurts
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Two principles: Before you can share the Good News you must find common ground with that friend, that relative, that co-worker that you know. You've got to find common ground. Two, before you can reach them you must be able to relate to them. That's why you're a better witness at reaching your best friend than anybody else.

NINETY PERCENT OF EVANGELISM IS THE ART OF ASKING QUESTIONS!

Make a list of questions that will show you care and could lead to more conversation with the person most on your heart.

3. Remember that fish get **HUNGRY AT DIFFERENT TIMES** .

Some are hungry in the morning, some are hungry at night, some are hungry in the middle of the day, sometimes they're not hungry at all. The Bible says:

*Be wise in the way you act toward those
who are not believers.*

COLOSSIANS 4:5 (GNT)

This is called receptivity. How open are they to the Good News?

It is important to realize that people go through a process in coming to faith in Christ, and they must be approached differently depending on where they are.

Sometimes people are very open to the Gospel, and sometimes very closed to it. Sometimes they'll talk to you about it, and sometimes they don't want to talk about it at all. Their receptivity changes. It's important to realize that people go through a process to receive Jesus. They have to be approached in different ways, depending on how receptive or non-receptive they are.

The parable of the soils is a good example of this. Jesus says in Matthew 13 that a guy goes out to sow seed and it lands on four kinds of soil.

THE PARABLE OF SOILS (MATTHEW 13): FOUR KINDS OF RECEPTIVITY

- 1. Hard soil = The defensive heart
- 2. Shallow soil = The impulsive heart
- 3. Soil with weeds = The distracted heart
- 4. Good soil = The receptive heart

Fact: Some people are close to making a commitment to Christ, while others have a long way to go!

Key: Effective evangelism relies on assessing how receptive a person is and then helping them take the next step.

If you're a farmer, where do you want to sow most of your seed? In the good soil. You don't want to waste it on people who aren't receptive. God is responsible for making people receptive. You are responsible for scattering the seed on good soil. So here is a fact: Some people are close to making the commitment to Christ in your life while others in your life have a long way to go. Effective evangelism relies on assessing how receptive a person is and then helping them take the next step.

Examples of Levels of Spiritual Receptivity from the Bible

Here are some verses out of the Bible that talk about spiritual receptivity:

Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness.

ISAIAH 46:12 (NIV84)

[Jesus with an unbeliever] Realizing this man's understanding, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God."

MARK 12:34 (TLB)

He has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were very far away from him, and to us Jews who were near.

EPHESIANS 2:17 (TLB)

Now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.

EPHESIANS 2:13 (NLT96)

My work was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos' work was to water it, but it was God, not we, who made the garden grow in your hearts.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:6 (TLB)

Based on what I've just shared with you, you need to understand that evangelism is a process. Sharing the Good News with other people is a process of moving people through the stages. You respond in different ways based on the process.

People move through these stages at different speeds. Some move really quickly. Some it takes years. It's different for different folks.

People often require multiple exposures at each stage before moving on. By the way, some of you wonder why—even though weekend services are designed for seekers—we don't give a "come forward" invitation, a Billy Graham-styled invitation every week. Or why I don't lead in a prayer of commitment and really press people to accept Christ every single week? I'll tell you why: We have found it is more effective to draw the net every few weeks than to continually draw it week after week after week. Why? Every time an unbeliever says "no," their heart gets harder. And if you press them before they're ready to make a decision, if they say "no" ten times before they say "yes," you're making it easier for them to say "no" than "yes".

If you went to a grocery store and all you went for was milk, and every time they said, "Here! You must buy steak!" But I just came for milk. "No, you must buy steak. Today is the day for steak! You may not have steak tomorrow. It may not be on sale. Today is the day for steak. You must buy steak today." Do you know what you'd do? You'd stop going to that grocery store.

What we've found is, if a person comes for the first time to ask somebody to change a 40-year lifestyle on the basis of a 40-minute message, that's asking a lot. So we don't. We recognize here that evangelism is a process. A lot of people come and they say, "That makes sense. I like what that guy's saying. It seems logical. I'm not saying 'no,' I just need some time to think about it. I'm not saying, 'no,' I'm just not saying, 'yes.' I just need some time to think about it." I will often say, "Take the time to make the right decision." I'm confident that if they really think about it, they will make the right decision. God is working in their hearts.

What we do is every week on Sunday morning, is to present what it means to live the Christian life. We hold it up. Even when we're not talking about evangelistic things. We might be talking about Christian growth things. They're not all messages for those who haven't yet believed. But even with those, we present to an unbeliever in a way that they say, "That makes sense. Oh, that's what a Christian is." I pray and wait for God's timing, and about every third or fourth week, we'll draw the net. And it may be that we have 30, 40, 50 people come to Christ on one weekend.

That is intentional. We recognize that people move through the stages at different speeds, and they need multiple exposures to make their decision. You probably didn't come to Christ the very first time you heard the Good News. You probably had to think about it a little bit. That's okay.

Here's the problem: a person can get stuck at any stage, and the number one reason they get stuck is fear.

Every stage requires a different response by me. That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6:

*My work was to plant the seed in your hearts, and
Apollos' work was to water it, but it was God, not
we, who made the garden grow in your hearts.*

1 CORINTHIANS 3:6 (TLB)

You need to figure out what stage people are in and then take the appropriate steps.



**EVANGELISM IS HELPING
PEOPLE DISCOVER HOW
GOD IS ALREADY AT
WORK IN THEIR LIVES.**

SAM WILLIAMS



God's fingerprints are all over our past if we'll just look. Some people just need a little help recognizing that it's been God. God's been up to something in their lives. Evangelism is helping them see that. Often these people don't even know that it's been God or that God is the one they're looking for.

HOW TO BUILD A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

A Plan for Sharing Your Faith

Good friendships are usually intentional, rather than accidental. Developing friendship with unbelievers often requires going the extra mile, taking some risks, and moving outside your comfort zone. With our busy lifestyles, this takes planning. If you don't plan to cultivate friendships with unbelievers, you'll find that you never have the time to do so.

*We should make [our] plans—
counting on God to direct us.*

PROVERBS 16:9 (TLB)

Step 1: Become AWARE of the unbelievers God has placed in your life.

- Make a list of them by name.
- Realize that they are your responsibility.
- Assess each person's level of spiritual receptivity.
- Discover and write down their interests and needs.
- Look for areas of common ground that you can build on.
- Figure out what kind of testimony each person would respond to.

Step 2: Commit to PRAYER.

- Use your list to pray daily for your unsaved friends.
- Pray that God will draw them to himself (John 6:44).
- Pray that God will remove their spiritual blindness (2 Corinthians 4:3–4).
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will make their heart receptive (John 16:8–13).

- Pray you'll get the opportunity to share a clear witness (Colossians 4:3–5).
- Pray that God will give you wisdom in what to say (James 1:5).
- Pray the Holy Spirit will use the words you say (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Step 3: Show you CARE.

- Treat everyone with respect as people, not as “prospects.”
- Be a genuine friend. Help them in practical ways.
- Be a good listener. It is a great way to show love.
- Make service your aim, not recruitment.
- Invite them into your home.
- Consciously focus your concern on meeting their needs.
- Go out of your way to love them until they ask you why.
- Accept people as they are, without being judgmental.

Step 4: Be ready to SHARE.

- Identify yourself as a positive, joyful follower of Christ.
- Share a testimony when the occasion naturally arises. (It will!)
- Never force the Good News. Be patient. God is working!
- Use crisis situations to show why we all need God.
- Ask questions that lead to spiritual discussions.
- Give them appropriate message CDs, downloads, podcasts, or books to read.
- Concentrate on the essential. Don't get sidetracked by hang-ups.
- Invite them to a service at church.
- Offer to lead them in a prayer of commitment after sharing the Good News.

CLASS 401

TEACHING TIP:

If you're coming back from a meal here, this is a great place to make some announcements.

**SESSION
THREE**

Living on Mission for God

To engage daily in what God is doing around the world, you must first understand:

1. The spiritual state of the world.
2. The vision and strategy of The PEACE Plan.
3. What it means to live "Personal PEACE."

TEACHING TIP:

The next section on "What the World Needs Now" should take about 20 minutes.

TEACHING TIP:

This section should take about 20 minutes

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW

God has always been interested in reaching the entire world.

We're talking about God's global plan for Your Life: about becoming a world-class Christian. God's plan has always been global. He's always been interested in the entire world. Jesus said in Mark 16:15:

[Jesus said] *Go everywhere in the world, and tell the Good News to everyone.*

MARK 16:15 (NCV)

Circle "everywhere" and "everyone." That means no place is off limits. The Bible says in Mark 10:13, a verse about the Second Coming:

The Good News must be told to all people.

MARK 13:10 (NCV)

You don't have to be a pastor, teacher, missionary, or even an adult to take the Good News to other countries. The Bible clearly points out that it is **every believer's responsibility** to be a world-class Christian.

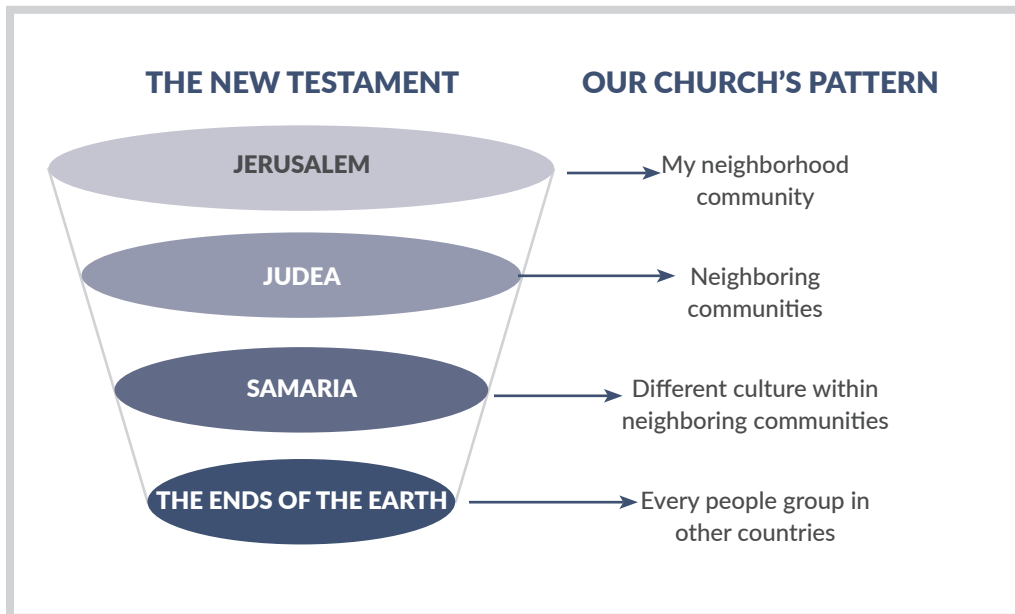
It's not just for super saints or missionaries or pastors, but we are all called to be on-mission.

We are all called to be ON MISSION.

Let me give you three definitions:

MISSION TERM	DEFINITION
Mission	The task of the church to fulfill its five biblical purposes as given in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission: worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry.
Evangelism	Introducing people to Jesus Christ, or sharing the Good News.
Missions	Fulfilling the five biblical purposes of the church in a different culture than your own.

Look at this picture of what Jesus commanded us to do in Acts 1:8:



But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

ACTS 1:8 (NIV)

We talked about this, but I want to cover it again. What does this mean?

What is your Jerusalem? The disciples were in Jerusalem when Jesus said this to them. So he's saying you start where you are. Your Jerusalem is where you are. Your Jerusalem is this town you live in and this sphere of influence and the relationships you have. Your network. You start where you

are. Your Jerusalem is your family and friends, your coworkers, the people who are closest to you.

Then you go to Judea. Judea was like the county next door. Jesus says you go to people who are nearby and that means you're to go to people, like, in Orange County, in Southern California.

Then He says, you go to Samaria. Samaritans were ethnically and culturally different from the Jews. Now Jesus is saying I want you to go to people of different culture who live near you. Maybe they have a different language, a different ethnic background. Do you know anybody who has a different language than you do? You do if you live in Southern California. All around us God has brought the world to Southern California. You don't have to go very far to get to your Samaria. Those are people who speak different than you, whose cultural background is different than yours.

You start in your Jerusalem, your family and friends.

Then you go to your Judea, the people around you, say, within driving distance.

Then you go to your Samaria, people who are different from you but who are still in your sphere of influence.

Then he says go all around the world. Of course, with airplanes and the Internet, that's literally possible.

God holds you responsible for the people you already have a relationship with. So first you start with the world around you—this is your Jerusalem. In the inner circle is yourself. You've got to make sure you're a believer. Then the next circle out is your immediate family. The next circle out is your relatives. The next circle is your close friends. Then your neighbors and business associates. Finally, your acquaintances. Who do you start first with? Those closest to you. God holds you responsible for the people you already have a relationship with. First you start with your own family and friends. Then you go to all the world.

God desires for **all** people to come to know him. In today's world, we have so much technology that it's easy to assume that everybody in the world has the opportunity to hear about Christ, but that just isn't true.

The Truth is . . .

“THERE ARE PLENTY OF
PEOPLE IN THE WORLD
READY TO HEAR THE
GOOD NEWS.”

The Problem is . . .

“THERE ARE NOT
ENOUGH PEOPLE
READY TO GO
AND TELL THE
GOOD NEWS!”

See the problem isn't the harvest, it's the lack of harvesters.

Jesus said to his followers, “There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them.”

MATTHEW 9:37 (NCV)

People are ready to receive Christ. There's a way to do it. What's missing is our reluctance to take that next step.

Romans 10 says:

Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them; and before someone can go and tell them, that person must be sent.

ROMANS 10:13-15 (NCV)

When Jesus told his followers to go to the whole world, they were probably overwhelmed. It's a big world, especially if your only means of getting there is on foot. Or by donkey. That's basically what they had. Those were the options when Jesus said, "Go to the whole world." You've got foot. You've got donkey. And maybe you've got ships in the Mediterranean. That's it. So, it was probably overwhelming when he said, "I want you to go everywhere, to everyone."

Today we've got planes, trains, and automobiles. On top of that we've got radios and television and Internet and cell phones and all kinds of other stuff—"It's a small world after all!" Now, thanks to the Internet, the world has gotten even smaller. Jesus may have had the whole world in his hand, but you, like no other generation in history, have the whole world at your fingertips. You can now literally take the message to millions of people all around the world from your bedroom. We have tools today that no other generation of Christians have ever had. God has never withdrawn the Great Commandment or the Great Commission, but with Internet and digital communication and air transportation to practically every part of the planet, we have an opportunity like no other generation.

God has called us to go to every part of the planet, and the task has gotten a whole lot easier because our world is shrinking. You can actually get to the other side of the Pacific faster than you can get to the Oregon border by car. It's just not that big of a deal going global anymore. You could go globally on a short-term missions trip.

We go because God has called us to go. And we go because we have the answer to what the world desperately needs.

I call this the PEACE Plan, God's answer to the five global evil giants.

TEACHING TIP:

Because Rick's story is so crucial to the beginning of the PEACE plan, instead of keeping this all in Rick's own words, we've given you some words below to lead into your reading of Rick's own telling the story. Some would rather read the long quote, others would rather tell the story as something that happened to Rick. Do whichever fits you best as a teacher!

Some of you are saying, "Where did this whole idea of The PEACE Plan come from anyway?" It started back in May of 2003 when Rick and Kay Warren were invited to South Africa. Kay was invited to come minister to orphans who had lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS. She went to go meet with churches that were ministering to people who either had HIV/AIDS or were orphaned by it. Rick went to South Africa to teach the Purpose Driven Church training conference for pastors. Now they actually simulcast it and broadcast it to 400 different sites across the continent of Africa. But during that time, they trained about 85,000 to 90,000 pastors during that three-day period. Rick thought, "That's a pretty good workweek and this was worth my time." He thought this was why he went to Africa, just to train pastors. But God had another idea. Let me read the rest of this story in Rick's own words:

"After that conference was over, I said, 'I want to just meet some typical, ordinary, average pastors. Take me out to a village. Take me out to the jungle, the bush . . . somewhere where I can meet some pastors of ordinary churches.' We drove a long distance and finally we came to this little church. It was actually a tent church. Literally a tent. Inside it was a church of 75 people—50 adults and 25 children who'd been orphaned by AIDS. So, we've got 50 adults taking care of their own kids plus 25 other kids who don't have parents any more. Those 25 orphans were actually living in that tent.

"This pastor didn't know that I was coming. So, when I pulled up, I didn't expect him to greet me. But as we got out of the car, this young African pastor came walking up to me and he said, 'I know who you are.' I'm in the middle of Africa and I don't even know where, and he says, 'I know who you are.' I said, 'How do you know who I am?' He said, 'You're Pastor Rick. I get your sermons every week.'

"I said to this young pastor, 'I don't understand this. You're here in a village and you don't even have water or electricity. How in the world are you getting my sermon every week?' He said, 'The nation of South Africa is actually beginning to put the Internet in every post office. So once a week I

walk an hour and a half to the nearest post office. I download your sermon and then I go back to my church and I preach it.' Then he said, 'You know, Pastor Rick, you are the only training I've ever had.'

"When I heard that, something broke in my heart. I thought, 'God, I will give the rest of my life for guys like that. Guys who are serving God with all their hearts, and they have so little when we have so much. We have so much freedom and so many resources and so much money and so many wonderful people and staff and researchers and things like this. How can I help these people more?'

"It was a profound shaking in my life. I went out that night and I sat down on the ground, out under the African sky, and I said, 'Ok God, what else do you want me to do? What are the other big problems in the world?' I knew that leadership training was a big problem because we've been doing this for 20 years. The last twenty years we had trained over 400,000 pastors from 162 countries. So, I know about how to train leaders. But I said, 'What are the other problems in the world? These are what I call the Global Giants, the Goliaths, the problems that are so big nobody's been able to solve them. What are the problems of the world that affect billions of people, not just millions, but billions of people? A lot of problems affect millions, but what are the biggest problems on the planet?'"

As Rick began to think about all the places he'd been around the world, all the people he'd talked to, he came to realize five things kept coming up over and over and over and over. These are the five global giants. These are the five biggest problems on our planet.

TEACHING TIP:

This section on the Five Global Giants should take about 11 minutes.

THE FIVE GLOBAL EVIL GIANTS

1. Spiritual EMPTINESS .

That's the biggest problem in the world. Billions of people live without hope.

They don't know that they're not an accident. They don't know that they were made to last forever. They don't know that this life is preparation for the next. They don't know that God made them for His purposes. He has a plan for their lives. They don't know that Jesus Christ died for them so that their past can be forgiven, so they can have a purpose for living, so they can have a home in heaven. That's the greatest news in the world. But most people in the world don't know that. So they're empty.

I've talked to a lot of people who feel like Solomon in Ecclesiastes:

*Everything is meaningless, utterly meaningless!
What do people get for all their hard work?
Generations come and go, but nothing really
changes . . . Everything is so weary and tiresome!
No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied.
No matter how much we hear, we are not content.*

ECCLESIASTES 1:2-11 (NLT)

By the way, it is our spiritual emptiness that causes all the CONFLICT.

2. Lack of **SERVANT LEADERS**.

- The world is full of great leaders who lead out of **self-serving motives**.
- The world is in need of great leaders who lead out of **others-serving motives**.

Jesus says in Mark 10:32:

*You've observed how godless leaders throw their
weight around, and when they get a little power
how quickly it goes to their heads."*

MARK 10:42 (THE MESSAGE)

It is the root cause of so many other problems.

Spiritual empty leaders think their followers are just for them and not vice versa. Jesus said leadership is all about serving. He said if you want to be great, learn to be the servant of all. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The goal of leadership is not to see how many people help you, but how many people you help. We talked about how the world is full of little Saddams, that their whole goal is just to get reelected or to get in a position of power and hold on to it and to feather their own nest. What we have is a shortage of godly, unselfish, compassionate leaders in every area of life.

Without wise leadership, a nation falls.

PROVERBS 11:14 (NLT)

That's true in every area of life. Without wise leadership, your business is in trouble. Without wise leadership, your family is in trouble. Without wise leadership, a school is in trouble. Without wise leadership, a church is in trouble. Without wise leadership, a community or any organization is in trouble. Because everything rises and falls on leadership.

You can see that, without leadership, people just kind of drift through life without direction.

So the people wander about like lost sheep. They are in trouble because they have no leader.

ZECHARIAH 10:2 (GNT)

The world desperately needs leaders—with compassion, conviction, character, and courage—to unselfishly serve others instead of themselves.

3. POVERTY .

- 3 billion live on less than \$2/day.
- 1 billion people live in slums.

The Bible describes it like this:

Their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become as dry as a stick. Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food.

LAMENTATIONS 4:8-9 (NIV)

For example, in Rwanda, half the population lives on less than a dollar a day. How in the world are you going to make it in the twenty-first century if you only make a dollar a day? So, billions of people live in extreme poverty.

4. DISEASE .

- Out of an estimated 35 million people living with HIV, 56 percent of them are girls.
- Nearly 1 billion people do not have access to clean water.
- Each day 17,000 children die from preventable or treatable disease.

Prophets who spoke long ago, before my time and yours, predicted that war, starvation, and diseases would come to many nations and powerful kingdoms.

JEREMIAH 28:8 (TEV)

We have billions of people today still suffering from diseases like malaria and typhus and yellow fever and polio and measles and mumps—and all kind of things that we know the cure for. In fact, we discovered the cure in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—and it's now the twenty-first century. That's unconscionable. It's because we don't have the leaders with the character and the competence and the conviction and the compassion and the spiritual maturity to say, "Enough is enough." We're going to eradicate this. We're not going to go another decade with people suffering from something we know how to cure.

5. ILLITERACY .

- Nearly 1 billion people are still illiterate.

Half of the world cannot read or write. Billions of people have had little or no education. Without the ability to read and write, how are they going to survive in the twenty-first century? We talk about all the excitement of the global economy and the Internet and how information is accessible and so easy now. But if you can't read and write, the Internet is worthless to you. And so is everything else that is written. If you have no skills and no training and no hope of it ever happening, life looks pretty bleak.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

HOSEA 4:6 (NASB)

As followers of Christ, we must care about these problems because God cares about them!

Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself, and God gave us the work of telling everyone about the peace we can have with him. God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. In Christ, God did not hold the world guilty of its sins. And he gave us this message of peace.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19 (NCV)

God not only cares, he wants to act. God has put into the hands of the church the power to battle against these five global giants.

- No government agency or organization is big enough to solve these problems.
- Only the church is big enough.
- Only the church has the moral authority.
- We have the promises of God to do this.

I believe that God gets the most glory when we take on the biggest problems. When David takes on Goliath, people go, "Yay God!" God gets glory when the church takes on the problems.

The church is the Body of Christ, Jesus calls us to do and be what he would do and be. Look with me at the PEACE plan and how the church can attack these five global giants by following Jesus' model of ministry and mission.

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C

E

P

TEACHING TIP:

This section on the PEACE plan should take about 15 minutes.

E

JESUS MODELED AN ANSWER TO THE GIANTS: THE PEACE PLAN

The **PEACE strategy** is clearly seen in the life of the Lord Jesus as he fulfilled the mission God had sent him to accomplish.

P LANT CHURCHES that promote reconciliation.

A

That's the first step. The first global giant is spiritual emptiness. So the "P" of PEACE is Plant new Churches. It all starts with God's family because God has not promised to bless our plans. He hasn't promised to bless your plans. He has said, I will bless My church. He's said,

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

MATTHEW 16:18 (NIV)

So any plan has to start with the church. Jesus uses his church to spread the message that he can give us peace with God and peace between each other.

C

2 KINDS OF RECONCILIATION ARE POSSIBLE THROUGH JESUS:

- Jesus promotes peace by ending our conflict with God:

God reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18 (NIV)

- Jesus promotes peace by ending our conflict with each other:

E

Together as one Body, Christ reconciled all groups to God by means of his death, and our hostility toward each other is put to death.

EPHESIANS 2:16 (NLT)

HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE RECONCILIATION?

EQUIP _____ servant leaders.

What kind of leadership model do we need to take all around the world?

Certainly not the American one. You read a lot of business leadership books today, and they're based on manipulation, based on self-motivation, and based on me getting you to do just what I want you to do. It's very self-centered. We don't need an American model of leadership, we need a perfect model. And there's only one perfect model of leadership—Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in John 13:

*I (Jesus) have set an example for you, so that you
will do just what I have done for you.*

JOHN 13:15 (TEV)

Paul talks to Timothy, who he had equipped to be a leader, about what to do to continue to equip servant leaders.

*Pass on what you heard from me in the whole
congregation to reliable leaders, who are competent
to teach others.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 (THE MESSAGE)

Notice the process in that verse. He says, "I give it to you. Now you give it to other leaders who are reliable and competent to pass it on to others." From one to the next to the next. That's multiplication.

Some of you are saying, "I don't know that much. How can I do this? How can I equip leaders? I don't even think I'm a leader."

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You know a whole lot more than you think you do. If you've been around this church for even just a year or two, you already know more than a lot of pastors around the world. Because there are some pastors who are so poor, they don't even own a Bible. You have been blessed here with solid Bible teaching. You've been fed and taught for months or maybe even years. And believe me, the average member of this church knows more about God's purposes for life than a lot of Christian leaders do around the entire world. And God wants to use you.

E

“JESUS WAS THE
PERFECT EXAMPLE
OF A SERVANT
LEADER!”

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HOW CAN YOU HELP EQUIP SERVANT LEADERS?

.....
.....

C

A SSIST the poor.

If you see someone in need, and have the means to do something about it, but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God's love in you? It disappears!

1 JOHN 3:17 (THE MESSAGE)

E

The third global giant is extreme poverty. So the “A” in PEACE is Assist the Poor. If I were to ask you, “Does God have favorites?” you’d probably say, “No. I don’t think God has favorites. He treats everybody equally.” And you would be wrong. Because the Bible very clearly states that God does have favorites. God’s favorites are the poor. Why? Because they are the ones who get stomped on. They get ignored. They get bypassed. And God says if you care about My favorite people, the poor, then I’m going to take care of your needs. God blesses those who bless the poor.

In fact, God says that the acid test of your Christianity—the acid test of your religion, the acid test of your faith—is not how many Bible verses you memorize. It’s not how often you say, “Praise the Lord!” It’s not how often you go to church. The acid test of your faith is how you treat people in unfortunate circumstances. James 1:27 says:

What God considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering.

JAMES 1:27 (TEV)

If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord—and he will repay you!

PROVERBS 19:17 (NLT)

Assisting the poor is not just giving a fish, it’s also teaching to fish—and then teaching them to sell a fish!

One study showed that **600 million poor** could create self-supporting jobs IF they only had access to small loans of \$50! Often all the poor need is a small loan—capital to start a business! When you make less than \$1 a day, \$50 can change your life!

HOW CAN YOU HELP THE POOR?

.....

.....

P

E

A

C

E

P

C ARE for the sick.

The fourth global giant is pandemic disease. So the “C” in PEACE is Care for the Sick. Jesus had a ministry of caring for the sick. He cared not just about people’s souls, but He cared about their bodies. In fact the Bible tells us:

Jesus went to every town and village preaching the good news, teaching everyone, and healing every disease and sickness.

MATTHEW 9:35 (AP)

E

A number of years ago in the tsunami in southeast Asia, Saddleback Church gave 1.6 million dollars to help that tsunami relief, and it was all given out through local churches in caring for the sick and assisting the poor. 240 thousand people died in that tsunami. The generosity of the world opened up, and it was all pouring into Southeast Asia for a period of time because 240 thousand people had died.

But did you know that we have a tsunami literally every eight days in the world? According to the United Nation’s statistics, 30 thousand children die every single day of preventable diseases. That means every eight days, 240 thousand children die needlessly. That’s a tsunami every eight days. Whose responsibility is that? As Christians we must care.

A

You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

LUKE 6:36 (NLT)

C

Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

EPHESIANS 5:2 (NIV)

E

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CARE FOR THE SICK?

.....

.....

E DUCATE the next generation.

Jesus cared about children. He said:

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

MATTHEW 19:14 (NIV)

The fifth global giant is illiteracy. So the second “E” in PEACE is Educate the Next Generation. If you want to be about the kingdom of God you’ve got to care about the next generation. In fact, Jesus said it would be better for you to drown in the deepest part of the sea with a millstone tied around your neck than to hurt one of these little ones. So part of our calling is to educate the next generation. Christianity is always just one generation away from extinction. What was passed on to this generation must be passed on to the next.

So the next generation will know, and all the generations to come—Know the truth and tell the stories, so your children can trust in God.

PSALM 78:6-7 (THE MESSAGE)

Educating the next generation is not all about building school buildings. You don’t need a building to train people. But you do need curriculum. And you do need someone to teach. That’s what the PEACE Plan is doing as we reach out and train other churches to do the same in educating the next generation.

Teach the children how they should live, and they will remember it all their lives.

PROVERBS 22:6 (TEV)

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION?

.....

.....

TEACHING TIP:

This section should only take one or two minutes.

*MY PERSONAL PEACE PLAN***SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS = PLANT CHURCHES
THAT PROMOTE RECONCILIATION****WHAT I CAN DO...**

- Believe that God could use me to host a new small group! Begin praying for two couples (or four people) who do not have a relationship with Jesus. Invite them to my new small group. Curriculum resources can be found at **PastorRick.com**.
- List and pray for three people who do not know the Lord.
- Seek opportunities to share the Good News through my testimony.
- Invite and bring someone to a weekend service.

EGOCENTRIC LEADERS = EQUIP SERVANT LEADERS**WHAT I CAN DO...**

- Invite two Christian couples (or four believers) to share the responsibility of my small group or start their own small group. Encourage them to pair up as spiritual partners to grow in God's five purposes for their lives.
- Help a believer take their next steps with God in their spiritual journey.
- Give someone a copy of the book *The Purpose Driven Life* for discussion.
- Meet with someone over coffee to share what God is doing in my life.
- Invite and bring them to my small group.

POVERTY = ASSIST THE POOR

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Pray for people in my spheres of influence that are in financial need.
- Ask God to make me aware of people living in poverty around me and commit some of my time, talent, and money (beyond my tithe) to assist these people on a regular basis.
- Seek to help people in practical ways through job searches, budget planning, or assisting in debt reduction.
- Teach people a new skill or provide tools through classes or training.

DISEASE = CARE FOR THE SICK

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Serve someone I know who is sick: take them a meal; offer to shuttle them to the doctor; do errands or shopping for them; watch their children; send an encouraging note or call; bring them a book to read in bed.
- Pray with those I know who are physically suffering for healing, strength, comfort, and peace.
- Commit to praying daily for two weeks for that person.
- Communicate genuine concern by following up with that person.

IGNORANCE = EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Look for someone younger than me with whom I could build a relationship and mentor.
- Encourage someone around me who may be struggling as a result of a bad choice or who lacks an educational opportunity.
- Offer to tutor or support someone.
- Connect someone to a Celebrate Recovery® program.

See Appendix D for a checklist to further develop your Personal PEACE Plan

**“IT’S TIME FOR
THE CHURCH TO
BE THE CHURCH.”**

God has gone before us and set the example of what it means to live a life on mission through PEACE.

**“The Big Question is ...
AM I WILLING TO
INVEST MY LIFE
FOR PEACE?”**

TEACHING TIP:

This Section on What it Takes to be On-Mission for God should take about 30 minutes.

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE *ON-MISSION* FOR GOD

We must make 5 major shifts in our thinking.

What does it take to be an On-Mission person? To say, “I’m going to be a messenger wherever God puts me—in my business, in my school, in my neighborhood.” What does it take? We’re going to have to make five major shifts in our thinking. Everything starts in your mind. If you want to change your behavior, you’ve got to change the way you feel. If you want to change the way you feel, you’ve got to change the way you think. As we close, these are the five ways you’re going to have to change in your mind to get in on what God’s going to do in the greatest movement in the twenty-first century.

1. We must shift our thinking from **SELF-CENTEREDNESS** to **GOD-CENTEREDNESS**.

There’s nothing more important than being in love with Jesus Christ. That’s what I’m talking about here—having a relationship with him. We need audio-visual Christians who walk the walk and talk the talk. We need to say, “God, what could you do in my life if I were dead to my own desires and alive and totally committed to your purposes for my life in the world.” And move it from self-centered, my goals, my ambitions, my dreams, my needs, my thoughts, my ego, my plans . . . to God-centered, “What, God, did you put me on this earth for?” Deciding that I’m going to live the rest of my life and make it the best of my life by living for God’s agenda. Look one more time at Jesus’ command in Acts 1:8:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

ACTS 1:8 (NLT)

The number one proof that you have God's Spirit in your life—that you are filled with the Spirit, and that you are controlled by God's Spirit— is not your gifts, it's "are you sharing?" When you receive God's Spirit in your life, you will be sharing with others.

For the Holy Spirit, God's gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them. If you will stir up this inner power, you will never be afraid to tell others about our Lord.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7-8 (TLB)

If you're afraid to tell others, you don't have a problem with people. You have a problem with God. You don't love him enough. You don't realize how much he loves you.

2. We must shift our thinking from **LOCAL** to **GLOBAL**.

We're going to take it around the world because that's what God wants us to do. You may spend your life focusing on reaching the people in your family and your business and your area. But I do believe God wants you to have at least one experience cross culturally. Psalms 2:8 says:

If you ask me, I will give you the nations; all the people on earth will be yours.

PSALM 2:8 (NCV)

So pray. Say, "God, which nation do you want me to pray for. Which one do you want to give me? Which nation do you want to give to me?" Pray.

**“WATCH THE WORLD
NEWS WITH
“MISSIONARY EYES,”
AND THEN PRAY.”**

From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand which should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose in all of this was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.

ACTS 17:26–27 (NLT)

3. We must shift our thinking from **TEMPORAL VALUES** to **ETERNAL VALUES**.

One of the statistics that haunts me the most is the following: In the next year (365 days), 244 thousand Californians will die. In the next year, 2.6 million Americans will die. In the next year, 55 million people in the world will die. There is no second chance after death. There is no purgatory. There is no limbo. You're either in or you're out at that point. You don't get a second chance and the Good News is only Good News if it gets there in time. The Good News is only Good News if the 244 thousand Californians hear it before they die. It's only Good News if those 2.6 million Americans hear it before they die.

When we start talking about the eternal destiny of millions of people, a lot of stuff that has seemed important kind of becomes irrelevant. It's just not that important any more. People need the Lord.

The Bible says:

Anyone who lets himself be distracted from the work I plan for him is not fit for the Kingdom of God.

LUKE 9:62 (TLB)

What has distracted you from your life mission, your career? Your girlfriend? Your hobby? Your retirement plans? What is it that distracted you? "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" I am begging you: don't trade your life for temporary things!

No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

2 TIMOTHY 2:4 (NASB)

In Class 101, we talk about the church as a family. In Class 201, we talk about the church as a school, a place to grow. In Class 301, we talk about the church as a team in ministry. But in Class 401, we let you know that it's also an army. And God says nobody who serves in the army worries about civilian matters. All they want to do is please the commanding officer.

The Bible says:

*Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants.
Then all your other needs will be met as well.*

MATTHEW 6:33 (NCV)

I love it in The Message paraphrase:

*Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative,
God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out.
You'll find all your everyday human concerns will
be met.*

MATTHEW 6:33 (THE MESSAGE)

We shift from temporary values in our thinking to eternal values.

4. We must shift our thinking from **SECURITY**
to **SERVICE**.

91

You'll never amount to much for God if you're worried about security. The Bible says in Mark 8:35:

*Only those who throw away their lives for my sake
and for the sake of the Good News will ever know
what it means to really live.*

MARK 8:35 (TLB)

Do you know what is the dearest thing to the heart of God? The death of his Son Jesus Christ who shed his blood for you and for me. The second dearest thing to the heart of God is when His children tell others about why Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and me. The Bible says:

Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back . . . and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us.

HEBREWS 12:1 (TLB)

Question: What is it that stands in the way of you fulfilling your life mission? Whatever it is, get rid of it. We have to live in a way that demonstrates God's love. The whole strategy of a defense attorney is to discredit the credibility of a witness, and if Satan can discredit your lifestyle, you're ineffective. You need to be living in a way that realizes you're being watched by your boss, your neighbors, your relatives, your friends who don't know Jesus Christ. I shudder to think that I will stand before God one day and explain why somebody went to hell because they looked at me and used me as an excuse—"If Warren's a Christian, forget it!" Jesus said, *"If you want to be great, be the servant of all."* He said, *"I didn't come to be served but to serve."* So we shift from security being our focus to service being our focus.

5. We must shift our thinking from **COMFORT** to **SACRIFICE**.

Since God has shown us great mercy . . . offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him.

ROMANS 12:1 (NCV)

In light of all that God's done for you, you can never out give God. Jesus paid the supreme sacrifice for you. Since God's done this for you, let me ask you a very important question: Are you willing to do for the truth what cults are willing to do for a lie?

In 1938, a group of people in brown shirts formed, with their bodies, a sign for a fanatical man behind a podium in a stadium in Munich, Germany—"Hitler, we are yours." There were 100 thousand of them. They nearly took the world.

In the mid-sixties, a group of young Chinese took a book called The Sayings of Chairman Mao, and committed it to memory and said, "Mao, we are yours." And they turned the greatest country in the world of nearly a billion people upside down in a cultural revolution. It doesn't take a lot of people to make a difference. It just takes commitment.

The Bible says:

Give yourselves completely to God—every part of you . . . you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for his good purposes.

ROMANS 6:13 (TLB)

Every part of you. You want to be tools in the hands of God to be used for his good purposes. I want to remind you that Jesus Christ called grown adults to leave their businesses and follow him. When he said, “*Follow Me and I’ll make you fishers of men*,” he said it to men who owned fishing businesses. He didn’t say it to teenagers. He didn’t say it to 20-something people. He said it to people who were already actively involved in their careers. “Drop your nets and follow me.”

I believe we should teach our young people to go on-mission as much as the Mormons. I’m not going to let any Mormon out witness me! I do believe we should be doing for the truth what people will do for lies. The word “witness” in Greek is the word *martus*, where we get the word “martyr.” There is no sharing without sacrifice. And if you get serious about fulfilling your life mission, you’re going to have to sacrifice. I’m telling you now. But look at what Jesus said in Mark 10:29:

Jesus replied, “Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything . . . for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who won’t be given back, a hundred times over . . . All these will be his here on earth, and in the world to come he shall have eternal life.”

MARK 10:29–30 (TLB)

Circle “a hundred times.” That’s ten thousand percent interest. There’s no investment like the returns on investing in the kingdom of God. God promises ten thousand percent interest. One hundred times reward when you give it up for him and his kingdom and the Good News. That’s the greatest investment.

I want to close with a little self-evaluation—my life investment guide. Where are you right now, and where do you want to be in six months?

Estimate the amount of time each week that’s invested in building relationships with unbelievers. Invested in mission and ministry and maturity.

What about your talents? Am I using all my talents in my career or my hobby? Am I using any of my talents in ministry and mission?

How about your money? Am I investing my treasure in God's kingdom?
What percentage of your money is going to the kingdom of God?

WHAT WILL YOU LIVE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE FOR?

My prayer is that you will be like Paul who says,

I want to finish the race I'm running. I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus—the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness.

ACTS 20:24 (GW)

I want to challenge you to use as much as you can of whatever you've got of time, talent, and treasure to prepare for eternity. The best investment you're ever going to make isn't going to be in any stock. It's when you stand before Jesus Christ one day and He says, "Well done good and faithful servant. You were faithful in a few things. You'll be faithful in much."

"Store your treasure in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and thieves can't break in and steal. Your heart will be where your treasure is." How do you send your treasure to heaven? You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead. How? By investing it in people who are going there. That's how you store treasure in heaven—by investing your money in people who are going there.

This is probably the strangest verse and most misunderstood in the Bible. Luke 16:9 says:

Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.

LUKE 16:9 (NLT)

He's not talking about making friends for here. He's talking about making

friends for eternity. He's saying when you take your money and invest it in evangelism and missions so that people go to heaven, then you're investing it in them and they're going to heaven. And when you get there, your generosity has stored up a reward for you.

Two things you can't do in heaven: sin and witness. God did not leave you here to sin. He left you here to tell others.

There is no greater joy, there is no greater purpose, there is no greater meaning in life. The greatest thing you can do for anybody else is get them in heaven. You can't do anything more important for another person than seal their eternal destiny for eternity. Paul says:

For what is it we live for, that gives us hope and joy and is our proud reward and crown? It is you! Yes, you will bring us much joy as we stand together before our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes back again. For you are our trophy and joy.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20 (TLB)



**WHO WILL BE IN
HEAVEN BECAUSE
OF YOU?**

**THE BEST INVESTMENT IN
LIFE IS GETTING PEOPLE
CONNECTED
TO GOD.**



Question: What are you going to do with the rest of your life now that you know better? The choice is yours.

I told you in Class 301 about God's two questions on his final exam. I didn't tell you the last question. I told you the first two, but there's a third one.

The first question when you stand before God one day is, "What did you do with my son, Jesus Christ?" You know the answer to that one, "I received him into my life. I made him my Savior, I trusted him for salvation. He is the Lord of my life."

Then God's going to ask the second great question of your life, "What did you do with what I gave you?" That's the ministry question.

There's a third question God's going to ask you when you get to heaven, "Did you bring anybody with you? Did you care enough about anybody to bring them with you?"

Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you? Are you willing to say, "Lord, whatever it takes—I want you to use me in my fumbling, stumbling way"? You don't have to be a theologian. You don't have to be a Bible scholar. But you do have to share what God's done for you.

The Bible says that one day, *"Every knee's going to bow and every tongue's going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."* Everybody's going to be there, and they're all going to be saying, "Jesus is Lord." Some in praise and some in judgment. If you'd say right now, "I really, more than anything else, want to fulfill the purpose God made me for. I want to fulfill the life mission I was put on this earth to do. I've wasted a lot of years, but I'm not going to waste any more. I'm saying God, anytime, anywhere," I want to invite you to join me in prayer.

TEACHING TIP:

Remember, this time of commitment is THE most important part of Class 401.

Let's stand together. As you're standing, grab this Mission Covenant Card—and let's read it out loud together as part of our prayer of commitment,

"Having committed myself to membership, spiritual maturity, ministry, and in agreement with the Saddleback Mission Covenant, I commit the rest of my life to building God's kingdom by . . ."

- Being a Messenger of God's Good News
- Telling people about Christ's love for them
- Sharing My Testimony with Other People
- Showing people what my relationship with Christ has done in my life
- Living On-Mission and in Missions through the PEACE Plan
- Taking Christ's message of love to all people
... regardless of where it leads me or what it costs me.

Let's pray together.



PRAYER OF COMMITMENT



Father,

Thank you for inviting me to be your messenger of the Good News. I commit my life to telling others about Christ's love for them, sharing my testimony, and showing people what my relationship with Christ has done in my life. Thank you for how you have changed me. Give me the courage to share this change with other people. I know you have asked us to take your message to all people in all nations. I commit to living on mission through the PEACE Plan. I will be bold as I share your message, regardless of where it leads me or what it costs.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Congratulations! With that commitment, you've finished Class 401. You've gone all the way around the bases in our introduction classes. Before you leave, make sure you do a few things for me.

First, sign the CLASS completion sheet and turn it in, so that we can be sure to give you credit for this class.

Also, sign your mission covenant card—let's do that all together. Now don't turn this one in; it's for you to take home to remind you of your commitment.

Then, finish the next steps card—and take a first step now by filling that out so we can help you to start reaching out. There are some ideas for how you might get started in the next few pages of your 401 booklet.

Thanks for being here for 401!

TEACHING TIP:

This section on Next Steps and closing the class should take just 3-5 minutes.

WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS?

The PEACE Plan

READ AND SIGN THE MISSION COVENANT

- Your commitment today shows a willingness to be used by God!

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH SOMEONE IN YOUR POND

- Start with someone who knows you well and keep sharing your story.

SERVE WITH LOCAL PEACE

- Take your first step today: Visit [saddleback.com/local peace](https://saddleback.com/local-peace).

SERVE WITH GLOBAL PEACE

- Explore the different places and passions where Saddleback Church is focused. Let us know how we can help get you connected: Visit **Saddleback.com/Missions**.

FILL OUT THE NEXT STEPS CARD

- Even if you are not sure where you want to get involved, let us know today what sparked your interest.

CLASS 401

Appendices

COMMUNICATION TIPS: HOW TO SHARE EFFECTIVELY

APPENDIX A

Recognize Your Personal Style of Witnessing

Your SHAPE not only determines your ministry in the church, it also influences the style of your mission in the world!

S piritual gifts	1 Corinthians 12, Romans 8, Ephesians 4
H earth	Matthew 12:34, Proverbs 4:23, Psalm 37:4
A bilities	Exodus 31:3, 1 Corinthians 12:5
P ersonality	1 Corinthians 2:11
E xperiences	2 Corinthians 1:4, Romans 8:28

Right-brain witness (emphasizes personal experience) — “all your heart”

Left-brain witness (emphasizes facts and Scripture) — “all your mind”



LEFT BRAIN = **MIND**

RIGHT BRAIN = **HEART**

KEY: PEOPLE NEED BOTH!

SOME COMMON STYLES

- The Serving Style
- The Intellectual Style
- The Bringing Style
- The Testimonial Style
- The Literature Style
- The Confrontational Style

Don't feel guilty about styles you don't naturally use.

Don't judge others who don't use your style.

Realize that Jesus never used the same approach twice.

Twelve Tips to Effectively Share Your Testimony

1. Think through what you might say.

Everything you say should be kind and well thought out so that you know how to answer everyone.

COLOSSIANS 4:6 (GW)

Intelligent people think before they speak; what they say is then more persuasive.

PROVERBS 16:23 (GNT)

2. Ask God for help in choosing the right words.

Pray for me that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret of the Good News without fear.

EPHESIANS 6:19 (NCV)

3. Show love.

If I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or clanging bell.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1 (GNT)

“PEOPLE DON'T
CARE HOW MUCH
WE KNOW, UNTIL
THEY KNOW HOW
MUCH WE CARE!”

4. Be positive and pleasant.

A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is.

PROVERBS 16:21 (GNT)

Conduct yourself with wisdom in your interactions with outsiders (non-believers), make the most of each opportunity [treating it as something precious].

COLOSSIANS 4:5 (AMP)

A word of encouragement does wonders!

PROVERBS 12:25 (TLB)

5. Never use any put downs.

Don't expect people to act like believers until they are believers!

Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.

COLOSSIANS 4:6 (THE MESSAGE)

6. Tell stories—give examples.

People always relate better to a story.

Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.

MATTHEW 13:34 (NLT)

7. Lighten up.

The Son of man came, enjoying [life]. . .

LUKE 7:34 (PHILLIPS)

8. Be yourself; be natural; don't try to sound "spiritual."

Dear brothers, even when I first came to you I didn't use lofty words and brilliant ideas to tell you God's message.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1 (TLB)

Your speech should be unaffected and logical, so that your opponent may feel ashamed at finding nothing in which to pick holes.

TITUS 2:8 (PHILLIPS)

9. Be vulnerable and authentic.

Because we loved you, we were happy to share not only God's Good News with you, but even our own lives . . .

1 THESSALONIANS 2:8 (NCV)

We have spoken frankly to you; we have opened our hearts wide.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:11 (GNT)

Be sure that you live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27 (NCV)

10. Memorize a few key verses.

Concentrate . . . on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 (PHILLIPS)

11. Keep it simple.

I fear . . . [Satan will corrupt you] from the simplicity that is in Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:3 (NKJV)

12. Remember, the Holy Spirit is using your words.

You are not trying to convince anyone on your own.

For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true . . .

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5 (NLT)

APPENDIX B

How to Lead Your Testimony into a Conversation

1. Listen for problems or needs where Jesus has helped you.

“You know, that used to be a big issue in my life, too (or my marriage, etc.). In fact, I felt pretty hopeless (frustrated, etc.). But then I discovered something that made a major difference in my life.”

2. Refer to something in the news or on TV that deals with a common need or problem.

“Did you read about . . . ? I can identify with how those people feel. It wasn’t that long ago that I struggled with that, too. But then something happened that changed everything for me . . .”

Start with a statement they agree with or a situation where they can relate.



**IT SEEMS LIKE LIFE
IS GETTING FASTER
AND FASTER.”**

**“SOMETIMES LIFE JUST
GETS SO COMPLICATED.”**

**“LIFE DOESN’T ALWAYS
TURN OUT THE WAY
YOU PLANNED IT.**



3. Apologize to people you've known a long time but haven't witnessed to.

"Bill, I need to apologize to you. We've known each other a long time, and I consider you to be a good friend. But friends don't keep secrets—and I've never told you about the best thing that ever happened to me. I guess I was afraid of what you'd think. Anyway, . . . (begin your story)."

Each day tell someone that he saves.

PSALM 96:2 (TLB)

APPENDIX C

Preparing a Testimony

- Pray and ask God to give you the right words.
- Write it out on paper. God honors preparation.
- Keep it short and to the point. Don't lose sight of your goal.
- Be succinct. Avoid excessive, unnecessary details.
- Try to keep your testimony less than three minutes.
- Refer to experiences most people have in common.
- Share a slice of your life (a story) that they will identify with.
- Be honest about your continuing struggles. Your life is not perfect.
- Don't imply that all of your problems ended at conversion.
- Spend the most time on Part B: The Difference It Has Made in My Life (page 39).
- Emphasize why you received Christ (the benefits of doing it).
- Mention the benefit of being certain of your destiny when you die.
- Don't exaggerate or brag about pre-conversion sins.
- Don't make negative remarks about other religions or people.
- Don't mention any denomination.
- Don't quote a lot of Scripture (a maximum of one verse).
- Don't answer questions they haven't asked.
- Give concrete examples of the changes in your life.
- The more specific you are, the more dynamic it will be.
- Avoid using dates, names, and ages. It doesn't matter to them.
- Be prepared. Practice it until it feels and sounds natural.
- Read it aloud and edit it to make it conversational.
- Let a friend read it and make suggestions.
- Speak casually and informally, in a matter-of-fact tone.
- Don't dramatize or embellish your story.
- Don't share mystical experiences. Share on their level, not yours.
- Don't talk down to people. Don't sound "preachy."
- Use "I, me, and my"—not "you." It's about you—not them.
- Use humor—it reduces tension and relaxes people. Smile!
- Choose a central theme (see the list on page 45).

APPENDIX D

Becoming a World-Class Christian

A Personal Checklist to Effectively “Live PEACE”

There’s no single magic formula for what it means to live PEACE. But if God is working in your life, there are some characteristics you may recognize to help you discover his plan for you. Of course, no matter how many of these characteristics describe you today, the important starting question is: “Do I desire these things to be true in my life?”

A World-Class Christian is . . .

. . . Spiritually AWAKENED (an upward process)

- ☐ Lives in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
- ☐ Obeys the Bible as a daily disciple and personally embraces the Great Commission
- ☐ Serves through a local church, using his or her unique gifts and experiences
- ☐ Gives faithfully of time, treasure, and talent to evangelistic mission efforts
- ☐ Responds to God’s touch by praying and caring for people who need to know Christ

. . . Continually ADJUSTING (an inward process)

- ☐ Seeks to understand and remove the barriers that keep people from hearing the Gospel
- ☐ Discovers how God has uniquely created him or her to share Christ
- ☐ Changes attitudes and behaviors that may hinder sharing the Gospel

- ☐ Adapts to the variety of people and settings where Christ may be presented
- ☐ Plans ways and develops partnerships to help effectively deliver the Gospel

... Evangelistically **ACTIVE** (an outward process)

- ☐ Loves God and others by personally sharing Christ at every divine appointment
- ☐ Builds intentional relationships with people who do not know Christ
- ☐ Uses unique gifts, abilities, and vocational skills to serve and share Christ
- ☐ Invites people into settings where they will hear the Gospel in personally relevant ways
- ☐ Cooperates with other believers who are purposefully sharing Christ with targeted groups

... A passionate **ADVOCATE** (a forward process)

- ☐ Longs for the multiplication of on-mission Christians and churches
- ☐ Helps others discover their gifts and personal style for sharing Christ
- ☐ Trains others in on-mission principles through active volunteer involvement
- ☐ Sends on-mission Christians to all people and all people groups of the world

CLASS 401

Answer Key

ANSWER KEY

INTRODUCTION

I was created to FULFILL God's purpose.

God PLANNED his mission in my life before I was born.

My PRIMARY GOAL in life is to fulfill the mission God has for me.

Fulfilling God's mission in my life brings GLORY TO GOD.

THREE GOALS OF THIS CLASS

1. Understand God's MISSION for my life.
2. Communicate God's MESSAGE from my life experience.
3. To live God's PLAN through The PEACE Plan.

SESSION ONE: UNDERSTANDING GOD'S MISSION

WHY GOD CREATED US

1. To enjoy a RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.
2. To live like CHRIST.
3. To fulfill GOD'S PURPOSES ON EARTH.
4. To live FOREVER.

TEN FACTS THAT MOTIVATE ME

1. If I want to be like Jesus, HIS LIFE MISSION must determine MY LIFE MISSION.
2. Jesus EXPECTS ME to continue his mission.
3. Sharing the Good News is my RESPONSIBILITY.
4. Sharing the Good News is a PRIVILEGE.
5. I'm GRATEFUL for what Jesus has done for me.
6. People are HOPELESSLY LOST without Christ.
7. God wants EVERYONE saved!
8. I will be REWARDED for eternity.
9. God's TIMETABLE for history hinges around us completing Jesus' mission!
10. I will BE GLAD when I see people in heaven.

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?

1. God became a man so I COULD RELATE TO HIM.
2. Jesus died for my sins so I DON'T HAVE TO.
3. Jesus destroyed death so I COULD EXPERIENCE ETERNAL LIFE.
4. Salvation is a free gift so I DON'T HAVE TO EARN IT.

5. It is based on faith so ALL I HAVE TO DO IS REPENT AND BELIEVE.

SESSION TWO: COMMUNICATING GOD'S STORY

THE VALUE OF YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

1. UNIQUE
2. PERSONAL
3. 100% YOURS
4. MEMORABLE
5. RELATIONAL
6. EFFECTIVE

THE FOUR PARTS OF YOUR STORY

1. What my life was like BEFORE I met Christ.
2. How I REALIZED I needed Christ.
3. How I COMMITTED my life to Christ.
4. The DIFFERENCE it has made in my life.

THREE KEYS TO SPIRITUAL FISHING

1. Identify my POND.
2. THINK like the fish in my pond.
3. Fish my pond AT DIFFERENT times.

HOW TO BUILD A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

Step 1: Become AWARE of the unbelievers God has placed in your life.

Step 2: Commit to PRAYER.

Step 3: Show you CARE.

Step 4: Be ready to SHARE.

SESSION THREE: LIVING ON- MISSION FOR GOD

We are all called to be ON-MISSION.

THE FIVE GLOBAL EVIL GIANTS

1. Spiritual EMPTINESS.
2. Lack of SERVANT LEADERS.
3. POVERTY.
4. DISEASE.
5. ILLITERACY.

JESUS MODELED AN ANSWER TO THE GIANTS: THE PEACE PLAN

P LANT CHURCHES that promote reconciliation.

E QUIP servant leaders.

A SSIST the poor.

C ARE for the sick.

E DUCATE the next generation.

WHAT IT TAKES TO LIVE PEACE

1. We must shift our thinking from SELF-CENTEREDNESS to GOD-CENTEREDNESS.

2. We must shift our thinking from LOCAL to GLOBAL.
3. We must shift our thinking from TEMPORAL VALUES to ETERNAL VALUES.
4. We must shift our thinking from SECURITY to SERVICE.
5. We must shift our thinking from COMFORT to SACRIFICE.