

Enlarge the Harvest!



**Lutheran Hour
Ministries**

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Leader's Copy

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Introduction

Welcome to ENLARGE THE HARVEST! a Bible study that will take a look at the task of sharing Jesus with others, and some of the practical challenges that arise when we attempt to be a witness for Jesus Christ.

ENLARGE THE HARVEST! has been formatted to blend Scripture passages along with an array of discussion questions. Some of the best Bible studies are those where participants are encouraged to share their thoughts fully and freely, and where God's Word provides both the truth and the understanding on the issues being examined.

Feel free to allow the discussion to wander, and for ideas to be exchanged. Your role as a Leader will be to *facilitate* the discussion. (You do not need to be a Bible scholar, or to have all the answers, so relax!) After discussion has wandered for a time, look to the Scripture passages to draw you back into the outline, and to keep you on target.

Phrases typed in **brackets** are provided as a help to you, and do not appear in the Participant's Copy. If you feel that you are in need of additional guidance or help, please consult your pastor. I have not included answers to all questions presented. This was done purposely in order to prompt discussion, reflection, and to avoid total reliance upon this manuscript.

I hope you enjoy this study as much as I have enjoyed preparing it for you! May God equip you to be an effective witness for Jesus. And may His Holy Spirit guide your steps as you seek to ENLARGE THE HARVEST!

Rev. Mark D. Wiesner

Enlarge the Harvest!

2 Corinthians 9:10 [Theme verse.]

*¹⁰ Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will **enlarge the harvest** of your righteousness.*

Lesson 1:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to be Generous!

(2 Corinthians 9:6)

Lesson 2:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Be Decisive And Cheerful!

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

Lesson 3:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Abound!

(2 Corinthians 9:8)

Lesson 4:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Sow the Seed!

(2 Corinthians 9:10)

Lesson 5:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Share Your Riches!

(2 Corinthians 9:11)

Lesson 6: *Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Supply the Needs of Others!*

(2 Corinthians 9:12)

Lesson 7: *Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Be Obedient!*

(2 Corinthians 9:13)

Lesson 8:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Be Bold!

(2 Corinthians 10:2)

Lesson 9:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Fight!

(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Lesson 10:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Boast (Within Limits)!

(2 Corinthians 10:12-13)

Lesson 11:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Be Jealous and Afraid!

(2 Corinthians 11:2-3)

Lesson 12:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Give (Free of Charge)!

(2 Corinthians 11:7)

Soli Deo Gloria!

Lesson 1:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to be Generous!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 9:6

⁶ *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

Introduction

A common truth states, “You will get out of something whatever you put into it.” Little investment reaps little rewards.

Q. Give some examples from life when this axiom is true. (Do not limit your responses to the financial field.)

[When learning a new skill. Such as: practicing a musical instrument, rehearsing a part in a play, or developing an athletic skill. This is also true with many relationships: marriage, friendships, etc.]

Q. Can you name some instances when this axiom is not true? That is, when putting forth much into something can result in a smaller return on your investment? (Do not limit your responses to the financial field.)

[Actually, the same examples can be used! Sometimes we put forth great effort into learning a new skill, or into a relationship, and it doesn't work out. This, of course, can be very frustrating.]

Q. If so, what are the factors that can influence the return in a negative way?

[The problem may have been in the other person: They didn't desire the relationship, or they had other issues that were in the way. The problem may have been within ourselves: We lacked the ability, or we lacked understanding. Or the difficulty may have been in circumstances: The timing was wrong. There were too many outside influences, etc.]

Q. So what are the principles that aid us in knowing when to invest generously, and when to invest sparingly?

[You have to come from a solid foundation, knowing that the information/ability you have is reliable, trustworthy, capable to the task or relationship. Also, to assess the openness, ability, desire on the other end. And finally, to consider the external factors that might influence the outcome. Is this the right time, etc.]

Galatians 6:8

⁸ *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

Q. According to this Scripture passage, what is the factor that ensures a successful outcome when investing toward enlarging the harvest?

[Sowing to please the Spirit.]

Galatians 5:22-25

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Q. What does it mean to “sow to please the Spirit”?

James 3:17-18

¹⁷ *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.*

Q. What are some of the challenges that we encounter when attempting to sow to please the Spirit?

[Our own sinfulness causes us to be lacking in the fruits listed above.]

Q. How can these challenges be dealt with?

[As with all sin: By being humble before God, confessing our sin to Him, and relying on His grace to cleanse and forgive us.]

Galatians 6:9

⁹ *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Q. What additional truth does this Scripture present to us?

[Not to become discouraged. But to remain faithful, dedicated to the task. He *will* cause a harvest to be gathered!]

Story

One story about the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in northern California (early to mid 1800s) gives this account: John Sutter was only one of a few hundred people living in California. He had a large ranch, and was in need of a sawmill. He sent one of his workers to scout out the area along the American River. While surveying the region, the worker discovered many deposits of gold along the surface. A crew was sent to dig, seeking the location of the mother lode. The first crew was unsuccessful, and soon abandoned their search. Later, another crew would reinitiate the excavation. After digging only 6 inches, they hit the mother lode. It was one of the richest discoveries of gold in California, and helped to kick off the infamous gold rush that the region is famous for.

Q. What do you think were the factors that prompted the first crew to give up their search? (List them.)

[Fatigue, depleted funding, discouragement because they were not seeing immediate results from their efforts, the pressure of other work to be done, second guessing themselves. These are just some ideas. Focus on the items listed by your group!]

Q. How would you address these same problems, in a witnessing context, when attempting to enlarge the harvest of God? (Review each item individually.)

[Fatigue - Pace yourself. Pay attention to your personal needs and provide for them. Depleted funding - Fund raising? Approach the appropriate church board for funds. Discouragement / Second-guessing - Keeping grounded in the Word of God. Also, daring to keep pressing onward. Faith! (The conviction of things not seen.) Encourage one another on to good works! Pray. Select prayer partners.

Galatians 6:10

10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Q. “As we have opportunity...” What are the opportunities that you personally have to share Jesus with others? What about *new* (recently opened up) opportunities?

Q. What opportunities does your congregation have?

Q. We usually think of sharing Jesus with the unsaved. What about those within your own congregation? Is there someone in your midst who needs an encouraging word, and to be reassured of God’s love for them?

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to **Be Generous!** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church.* For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Consider the people within your sphere of influence. Who is going through a very difficult time right now? How might you be **generous** toward them, and thereby sow to please the Spirit?

Lesson 2:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to be Decisive and Cheerful!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 9:7

⁷ *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Q. Which two attributes in the above Scripture passage do you consider to be most crucial when witnessing for Jesus, to be decisive or to be a cheerful giver?

Q. Why?

Q. When is being **decisive** needed for enlarging the harvest?

[Our commitment and determination are essential when we begin to second guess, or shy away from the task. A decisive attitude prompts us to hold on to and trust the truth that we know. To trust in God and His Word.]

Q. When is being a **cheerful giver** needed?

[When the individual is in need of encouragement, or a compassionate response.]

Q. Which of these two attributes would you say is the easiest to display? Why?

Deuteronomy 15:7-8

⁷ *If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother.* ⁸ *Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs.*

Q. As we seek to enlarge the harvest of God through cheerful giving, whom do the Scriptures direct us to consider?

[The poor.]

Q. What actions, if any, does your congregation already take to assist the poor in your community?

Q. What are some new or additional things that can be done?

Q. How would “decisiveness” be needed in such a project?

[There are often many reasons *not* to do something. But it is our decisiveness and determination that keeps us open to the possibilities, as well as looking for ways to make it a reality.]

Q. Is this a project that your congregation is ready to take on? Would YOU participate?

Deuteronomy 15:10

10 Give generously to Him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.

Q. What is the corresponding blessing that God promises to those who attend to the poor and needy among us?

[God will bless our work, including other things that we put our hand to.]

Q. Share with the group a time when you assisted someone less fortunate than yourself, and afterward you felt just as blessed by the experience as they were (if not more!).

2 Corinthians 8:10-12

10 And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

Commentary: Paul commends the Corinthians for not only their immediate response to the crisis in Jerusalem, but also for the spirit in which they participated. He urges them to now complete this good work they had undertaken.

Q. When people are decisive and intentional in their giving, it doesn’t matter how much they have to give. God uses the gift to accomplish His purposes! What would you say to someone who says, “What can I do? I have so little to offer?”

[God will take our gift, no matter how small, and use it for His glory! Biblical example: The small shepherd boy, David. All David had was a sling, a few small stones, and a heart that was willing to trust God! God used David to slay a fearsome warrior and giant!]

[Case in point:]

Mark 12:41-44

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. 43 Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to ***Be Decisive and Cheerful!*** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Be ***decisive! Cheerfully*** offer assistance to someone less fortunate than yourself.

Lesson 3:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Abound!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

Q. It has been said that you can have “too much of a good thing.” Do you believe this is true? Can someone have too much fun? Can you have too much love? Too much forgiveness?

[Yes. You can have too much fun – when it interferes with your responsibilities. You can have too much love – if that expression of love is unhealthy, or does not take into consideration the needs of the other person. You can have too much forgiveness – if it is a situation when the person should be held accountable and their sin not overlooked.]

Q. What qualifies something as being “too much”?

[When it violates boundaries, and/or results in dysfunction or harm.]

2 Corinthians 9:8

⁸ *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

Commentary: The Greek word for “abound” (used twice above) is *perisseuo*; which means to possess something in such abundance that it overflows. It exceeds all expectations, requirements, or needs.

Q. Does God ever give us too much of a good thing? (Read the passage again before answering!)

[It depends on your definition of “too much.” According to the Biblical definition outlined above, yes He gives us grace to the point of over abundance. He gives us more than enough. God’s abundance, however, does not result in harm. For He knows our needs and provides accordingly. He will not give us a snake when we ask for a loaf of bread.]

Q. Why would God give us too much?

[Because He loves us – Because He is able to – Because it is His choice/will – To grant us encouragement that He is able to provide for us – As a witness to others.]

Q. Knowing that He gives us too much grace, what does that mean to you?

[That no matter what my sin or my need, His grace abounds all the more! There is no circumstance or need that is beyond His ability to redeem!]

Commentary: Notice that God causes us to overflow with His grace so that we, in turn, overflow in good works.

Q. What exactly is a “good work”? Give some examples.

[What do the following passages from **2 Timothy** tells about good works?

2:20-21

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. ²¹ If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Both passages indicate that good works are built on Jesus Christ, and the truths of Scripture. We honor God by honoring His commandments and His Word.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Q. What does it mean that we will “overflow” with them?

[That we will be inclined toward them all the more, and even beyond what the circumstance requires.]

Q. Does your church do “more than enough” good works?

Q. What would you say is the link between doing good works, and God enlarging His harvest?

[We are witnesses of His truth. Furthermore, those who honor God and walk humbly before Him reap the blessings of His grace.]

Philippians 4:14-19

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the Gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Q. Paul writes of the support he received from the Philippians; support that no one else stepped up to provide. Their lone act made it possible for his work to continue and, thereby, countless more would receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What ministry or missionary efforts are in need of your financial assistance? (Notice: In verse 18 Paul states that he not only received “full payment,” but “even more” as he was supplied with the gifts they sent. The rule of abundance continues!)

[Why not consider Lutheran Hour Ministries along with the others submitted?]

Q. What does Paul say God will do for those who dare to abound in giving financial support so that His harvest may continue to enlarge?

[That He will meet all our needs.]

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to **Abound!** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Choose an organization (other than your church) that is active in mission outreach services and make a contribution. **Abound** in your giving by making a regular contribution!

Lesson 4:

***Enlarge the Harvest! –
By Daring to Sow the Seed!***

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

Q. Is there such a thing as a “sure thing”? That is, can you ever know that something is completely guaranteed? Give some examples.

2 Corinthians 9:10

10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

Q. God promises to give us a sure thing. He *will* supply us with seed (His Word), and he *will* enlarge the harvest. What does this mean for us as sowers of the seed?

[That we are guaranteed success.]

Q. Specifically, if God provides us with the seed, what reassurance does that give us about the seed?

[That it is sufficient for the purpose, and will accomplish whatever God intends.]

Q. And if God is the One who causes the harvest to grow and enlarge, what assurance does that give us about the prospect of growth?

[That the enlarging of the harvest and the growth of God’s kingdom is not dependent upon us. This is His work to accomplish!]

Q. How then would you answer someone who says, “I’m afraid to share Jesus with others. I’m not a theologian. I don’t know what to say. I’m afraid I will mess things up.”

[I would encourage them not to worry. Because it isn’t about them; it’s about God! Just keep focusing on what God has said and promised. Trust in Him to work from there.]

Isaiah 55:10-11

10 “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

11 so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

Q. What do we learn about God’s Word from this Scripture?

[Again, that God’s Word always accomplishes whatever He desires.]

Q. So, if God’s Word *always* accomplishes what He desires, what is there to dissuade us from sharing it?

[Nothing. The only thing we have to fear is fear itself!]

Q. If God’s Word is a sure thing, then all explanations as to why we do not share it must be personally based. What is your greatest difficulty in being a witness for Christ? What is it that makes you most uncomfortable?

Q. Do you think the disciples ever felt that way? What got them past it? How is it that they were able to become bold witnesses, and even die a martyr’s death for Jesus?

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then He told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 He who has ears, let him hear.”

18 “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the Word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the Word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the Word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the Word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Q. What did the seed do in each circumstance?

[It began to grow.]

Q. If the seed always causes growth, how does the parable explain the different outcomes?

[According to the different soils – and how the seed was received or trusted.]

Q. So what does this say to us when we worry about how *we* will personally effect the outcome of our witness?

[To trust God's Word to cause growth. And to pray that it will be received with an open and trusting heart. The matter is really between God and the person receiving the Gospel.]

Q. Which of the aforementioned soils describes *your attitude* toward being a witness and talking with others about Jesus?

- You don't understand the whole witnessing thing; how it's done or why it's done.
- You are initially inspired to be a witness when you are introduced to the idea, but the enthusiasm quickly fades when you think of being put down or persecuted for playing that role.
- You feel too overwhelmed by life's responsibilities (ie. making money and paying your bills) and so it is difficult to find the time or energy for being a witness.
- You are inspired about being a witness for Jesus, and you actively participate in sharing Him with others.

Q. If you answered yes to one of the first three, what would you say is the solution?

[To trust God's Word and promise. To step forward in your witnessing opportunities, trusting in His grace to meet your needs.]

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to **Sow the Seed!** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Sow the seed by sharing the Gospel with someone this week!

Lesson 5:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Share Your Riches!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 9:11

11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Q. The Scripture begins by professing, “*You will be made rich in every way . . .*” How do you understand these words? What does it mean that we will be made rich?

[The previous verse said that God would increase the harvest of our righteousness. So, we will be rich in spiritual knowledge and understanding. That is, in our understanding of His grace and His promises.]

Q. It has been said, “You cannot share what you don’t possess.” How does this truth relate to sharing Jesus with others?

[If my own faith in God is weak, it will be difficult to talk confidently and convincingly about Him.]

Q. Why is it crucial, therefore, that before Paul talks about giving generously to others he first affirms that we will be made rich by God?

[Because we share with others from the grace that we ourselves have received.]

Q. What does this say about the whole witnessing lifestyle?

[That it begins by being aware of the mercies and blessings that God has poured upon your life. To know your own need, and the grace of God that saved you.]

Q. If someone is not being generous with others or sharing Christ with them, does that mean that God has not made them rich in righteousness?

[No, God’s grace overflows in abundance for every believer.]

Q. Then how would you explain them not reaching out to enlarge the harvest?

[Perhaps they are distracted by temporal concerns and worries.]

1 Corinthians 1:4-5,7

⁴ I always thank God for you because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in Him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge . . .

⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

Q. In this cross-reference verse, the Apostle Paul again thanks God for the grace He has poured upon the Corinthian believers, and validates how they have been “*enriched in every way.*” In what ways has this grace been manifest in the Corinthians?

[In their speaking, knowledge, and spiritual gifts.]

Q. Would you say that God has enriched your congregation with speaking and/or knowledge? Explain.

Q. Has God given *you* special abilities in speaking and/or knowledge?

Q. If you answered “No” to the previous question, does that mean that God has not called you to be his witness/evangelist? That is, would you say that God had not intended for you to serve His kingdom in this way?

[The command to make disciples has been given to all Christians. We have been called to declare the wonderful deeds of our Savior, who has brought us out of darkness and into His marvelous light! -1 Peter 2:9]

2 Timothy 4:5

⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Q. Many theologians believe that the young pastor Timothy did not have the gift of evangelism. Nevertheless, Paul instructs Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist.” If we do not have the gift of evangelism, does that release us from the call to serve God in this way?

[No. As with Timothy, we are still called to be His witnesses, and to confess Him before men. We may not be gifted in this way, but nevertheless we are to *do the work* of an evangelist. Again, God is the One who brings about growth anyway — not our personal giftedness.]

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to ***Share Your Riches!*** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church.* For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Share your riches by using the particular gifts God has given you to bless another:

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:6-8)

What is your gift? How can you use it in a new and creative way? (Need help? Ask your pastor!)

Lesson 6:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Supply the Needs of Others!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 9:12

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

- Q.* Paul introduces a new thought: Not only does serving others result in supplying their needs, but additionally results in an overflowing expression of thanks to God. Who in your life would you like to inspire to give thanks to God? Why did you pick that particular person?
- Q.* What is the particular need in this person's life that you can meet in order to prompt this reaction?
- Q.* God's grace has a way of multiplying and continuing to expand! Apart from a spirit of thanksgiving, list other ways in which supplying the need of another can ripple out.

[Providing an example of service to others. – Encouraging others to serve in this way. – Experiences of faith to share with others later in life.]

2 Corinthians 8:13-15

¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

- Q.* In the previous chapter Paul shows that when we give to others, we also receive (. . . *your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need.*.) Share with the group a time when you were personally blessed by aiding or assisting someone else.
- Q.* Is it more blessed to give than to receive? Explain.

Q. Reread verse 15. Do you think the Christian community (ie. your congregation) should live according to a communal standard whereby all share their possessions with one another?

Q. Interact around the following Scripture passages, bearing in mind the previous question:

Acts 2:44-45 And all the believers were together and had all things in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

1 Corinthians 12:26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Q. At the very least, what do these passages say about Christian fellowship within the body of Christ?

[That no man is an island unto himself. The Christian community is interconnected and interdependent.]

Exodus 16:15-21

15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.” *16* This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’”

17 The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. *18* And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed.

19 Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.” *20* However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. *21* Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away.

Q. In Exodus we have the account of the Israelites’ wandering in the desert, and the manna God provided in order to feed His people. Why do you think this Scripture reading has been inserted here? What is the connection between these passages, and 2 Corinthians 8:13-15?

[God does provide our needs. Sometimes He accomplishes this through the caring and generosity of our fellow believers.]

Q. What was God teaching His people by allowing them to collect only one day’s ration of manna at a time?

[To each day rely on Him for their every need.]

Q. Would this also be true of those who gave up their wealth in order to aid those who had no financial means? Explain.

[Yes, because their confidence was in God not in their possessions to meet their needs.]

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to ***Supply the Needs of Others!*** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Dare to supply the needs of others by giving some of your possessions to those in need. (For example: Donate some of your newer clothes to the local shelter or Goodwill.)

Lesson 7:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Be Obedient!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 9:13

¹³ *Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.*

Q. Paul states that men will praise God because the Corinthians' *obedience* accompanies their confession of Jesus. What does their personal obedience to God have to do with it? Does our personal lifestyle choices influence how the Gospel is heard or received? Explain.

[Yes, our personal lifestyle choices impact the message we communicate. If we are calling others to be humble before God and trust in His mercy, yet our own lives demonstrate an attitude contrary to this, it takes away from our credibility. People are less likely to listen to our message, or to trust it.]

Q. Can I have an effective witness without having my own spiritual house in order?

[Again, God is the One who works through His Word to create faith, and to sustain faith, in the heart of the individual. We seek to have our own spiritual house in order so as not to discredit the message, and to avoid creating any barriers to receiving the message.]

Isaiah 1:18-20

¹⁸ *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; ²⁰ but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

Q. The Lord speaks through His prophet Isaiah and relates beautiful images of grace: our scarlet sins will be white as snow, and though red as crimson they shall be like wool! But then comes a word of counsel from the Lord. How would you sum up this statement (verses 19 and 20) in your own words?

Q. Does this Biblical truth also apply to our witness? In other words, if we are willing and obedient to God's leading, will we meet with success? Explain.

[Yes, absolutely. But the way we measure success, and the way that God measures success, may be quite different.]

Q. How would you define "success"?

[We tend to measure success according to the individual's response, or according to measurable goals that focus on the *number* of responses. God measures "success" according to our faithfulness to Him, and the honor we ascribe to His Word. We obediently sow the seed. It is God's working that will cause that seed to grow, to multiply, and to enlarge His harvest.]

Q. What is the significance of Isaiah dwelling upon the grace of God before discussing our need to be willing and obedient to Him? What is the connection between the two?

[It is the grace of God that paves the way, and empowers us, to be obedient to Him.]

Hebrews 5:7-10

⁷ *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission.* ⁸ *Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered* ⁹ *and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him* ¹⁰ *and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Q. What do these verses say about Jesus' faith in the grace of His Father?

[Though He had occasion to cry loudly and to be filled with tears, He continued to trust His Father as the One who could save Him from death.]

Q. How was this a necessary part of His obedience?

[It gave Him strength, assurance, and hope so that He could face the trials before Him.]

Q. Jesus obeyed His Father (and trusted His grace). The end of verse 9 shows this line of obedience continuing, as we would obey Jesus (and trust His grace). When we witness to others, what are we inviting them to do? What is it that we want from them?

[To trust the promises of God. To be humble before Him, regardless of their circumstances, and to trust His Word. To confess their sinfulness, and to trust Jesus as their Savior and Redeemer.]

Philippians 2:4-9

⁴ *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* ⁵ *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,* ⁷ *but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.* ⁸ *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

⁹ *Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name ...*

Q. In this section of Scripture we hear such descriptive terms as: “*look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others,*” and “*made himself nothing,*” and “*the very nature of a servant,*” and “*humbled himself*” and “*obedient to death.*” Will these things be a necessary component of being a witness for Jesus?

[Yes. We are making our own interests, fears, and concerns secondary. And the opportunity to witness to another primary.]

Q. Revisit each of the phrases quoted in the question above and discuss how they could be relevant in a witnessing situation.

Q. What was God’s response to His Son for having done these things?

[He exalted His Son to the highest place.]

Q. Does this mean that we are earning God’s approval?

[Not at all. We honor God with our lives not to *become* His child, but because we already *are* His child. He delights in His children’s faithfulness.]

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to ***Be Obedient!*** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church.* For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Reflect upon your life. Is there an area where you need to ***be obedient*** to God, but have been avoiding the issue? Could this issue be detracting from your witness for Jesus? Resolve now to be humble before God, confess your disobedience to Him, and pray for forgiveness.

14 “If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”
(2 Chronicles 7:14)

Lesson 8:
Enlarge the Harvest! –
By Daring to Be Bold!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 10:2

² *I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.*

Q. Ecclesiastes says that there is a time for everything under heaven. Generally speaking, when is it time to be bold in life? (List them.)

[When our authority is being challenged, when we are being threatened physically, when standing up for what we believe in, etc.]

Q. What is likely to happen if one is not bold during each of these circumstances?

[Review the answers above, and/or the answers given by the group, and discuss what the likely outcome will be if one's response to the situation is not "bold."]

Q. Is this true in a witnessing circumstance as well? Is there a time when it is crucial for us to be bold?

[Yes. Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him, that he might "*speak boldly, as I ought to speak*" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. – Ephesians: 6:19-20]

Q. How do we assess when to be bold, and when to be long-suffering, with someone we are witnessing to?

** Read the following two stories:

John 2:13-17

¹³ *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴ *In the temple courts He found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.* ¹⁵ *So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.* ¹⁶ *To those who sold doves He said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a market!"* ¹⁷ *His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for Your house will consume Me."*

John 4:7-26

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give Me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to Him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.”

¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can You get this living water? ¹² Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” ¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” ¹⁶ He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” ¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” ²¹ Jesus declared, “Believe Me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us.” ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am He.”

Q. Compare and contrast these two stories. How are they alike? How are they different?

[Alike – Both are in a context of worship, and discuss the appropriateness of true worship.
Different – In one situation Jesus is quite harsh, asserting discipline – while in the other He is patient and long-suffering in His approach.]

Q. Why was Jesus harsh in one setting (making a whip, turning over tables, yelling), and very patient in the other (calmly discussing, asking questions, inviting)?

[Jesus was harsh in the setting where He dealt with someone within the family of God, and because they had willfully abandoned obedience to God in order to pursue personal gain. Jesus was patient with the woman because she was outside of the family of God, and He was sharing the grace of God based on her particular circumstance. She was inquisitive, curious, questioning – not challenging the authority of God.]

Q. Again, how do we assess when to be bold, and when to be long-suffering, with someone we are witnessing to?

Q. How was Jesus bold in both settings?

[He was bold in the temple by asserting authority, and standing firmly upon the Word of God. He was bold with the woman at the well because she was someone that Jews would have considered undesirable, and not to be associated with. Jesus cared for her, though others would have rejected her.]

** Read the following two Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

2 Corinthians 13:2-4, 10

2 I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, 3 since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. 4 For to be sure, He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in Him, yet by God's power we will live with Him to serve you.

10 This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Q. What role does boldness play in the Church?

[To affirm truth, to discipline, to speak of the grace of God, and to build others up.]

Q. Is it appropriate to express this type of boldness with those outside of the family of God?

Q. When is it appropriate? At all times, or just under certain conditions?

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to **Be Bold!** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church.* For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Is there someone you know whose circumstance is requiring a Christian brother/sister to intervene, **be bold** with them, and confront them on some sin? Pray for them. Then consider the opportunity you have to be the one to address the matter!

Lesson 9:
***Enlarge the Harvest! –
By Daring to Fight!***

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³ *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.* ⁴ *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.* ⁵ *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Q. “Is it okay to fight?” your child asks you. Before you answer him/her, what questions are you likely to ask?

[“Why are you asking?” “What’s going on?”]

Q. Upon asking these questions, what are you looking to determine?

[Who is involved? What are the circumstances? How did things start? Is my child at risk in any way?]

Q. Under what circumstances would you give your son/daughter permission to fight?

[If they are at risk.]

Q. Under what circumstances would you not only give your permission, but would go so far as to instruct your child to fight? When is fighting the best option?

[In extreme circumstances. To defend themselves. Or, if someone is attempting to kidnap them and they see an opportunity to get away.]

Q. According to the Scripture above, Paul states that we are engaged in a fight. What kind of a fight is it?

[Against arguments, pretensions, views that oppose the Gospel.]

Q. Is there a time to have this fight and a time not to?

[Yes, there is a time for everything under heaven.]

Q. What is the criterion for knowing when to wage the war and when not to?

[Is the person at risk spiritually? Is this a good time to talk about this situation, or would another time be more prudent? Will my witness be heard, or will it immediately be attacked/discredited and lead only to an emotional exchange that will not result in a productive end? If so, then perhaps another time would be better.]

Q. When talking with someone about Jesus, how can a person “take captive a thought” and “make it obedient to Christ”?

[Begin by listening to their point of view. Ask questions to clarify. Share what the Word of God says on the matter. Affirm these Biblical truths, if possible, by sharing personal life experiences that demonstrate the Biblical truth.]

Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Q. For many the most intimidating thing about witnessing is not knowing what to say, or being fearful that we won't do it right. What was Paul's greatest fear, as gleaned from the passages above?

[That he would not be bold and confident in His profession of faith.]

Q. Who is most likely to put up an obstacle to our witness, according to verse 12? What/who was intimidating him?

Q. What does Paul ask of the Ephesians?

Q. As we wage the war of the Gospel, and prepare to witness to others, what can we do to best prepare ourselves for the battle?

[Pray for boldness of speech. Trust in the Word of God. Remain focused upon the Gospel message.]

1 Corinthians 1:18-19

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

Q. What insights does this Scripture give toward understanding the unbeliever’s perspective, and what their initial response to our message might be?

[The Gospel may seem foolish or too easy to those who don’t trust it.]

Q. What insights does it offer pertaining to the focus of our message?

[To remain firm in your conviction, trusting in the power of God.]

Q. According to your understanding, why is the Gospel so difficult for the “intelligent” to understand? What is there about the Gospel that so defies human reason?

Q. How would you answer such an objection?

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to **Fight!** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Dare to **fight** for the soul of an unbeliever this week. Listen to their concerns or hesitations about Christianity, and then “take captive” the issue for the sake of the Gospel!

Lesson 10:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Boast (Within Limits)!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 10:12-13

¹² We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. ¹³ We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.

Q. Is it wrong to boast? Explain.

[Not if kept within certain limits.]

Q. Why do we need limits on boasting? What are the pitfalls of boasting?

[Because there are things we know nothing about. Or, we take credit that is not ours to receive.]

2 Corinthians 10:14-16

¹⁴ We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the Gospel of Christ. ¹⁵ Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, ¹⁶ so that we can preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory.

Q. What are the limits that Paul places on boasting? How do we know when we have gone too far?

[He keeps only to those things of which he was a part.]

Q. Why is boasting not allowed beyond these limits? What are the difficulties you could foresee?

[Taking credit for something you didn't do. Getting the details/information wrong. Providing an account that is not accurate and/or misleading.]

Q. Is there a good side to boasting? That is, are there times when boasting *should* be done?

[Yes. Because it provides you with an opportunity to highlight the grace of God in your personal circumstance. You can testify to His mercy and goodness.]

2 Corinthians 10:17-18

17 But, “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” 18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

Q. Paul gives us a definite boundary for boasting. Give some examples of how someone can “boast in the Lord.”

Q. Why did Paul add the words of verse 18? How do these words speak to our *motivation* for boasting?

[To not seek the approval or praise of man. But to look to God, the One whom we serve, for commendation.]

2 Corinthians 11:21-30

. . . What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Q. Paul was in a situation whereby his authority as an Apostle was being challenged. Why in a moment where he needed to prove himself would Paul focus on everything that he was *not*?

[He “plays the game.” If others want to point to their “qualifications,” Paul notes that his far excel past theirs. Then he turns the argument on its ear and says “these things are nothing.” His argument raises the question, “If my qualifications don’t matter, then what does?” This paves the way for stating that it is the grace of God and His accomplishments that matter!]

Q. How might this strategy be employed in witnessing to others?

[We can confess that it is not our accomplishments or qualifications that make us heirs of an eternal kingdom. We are made heirs by grace, through faith.]

Q. Why is this an effective approach?

Q. If someone took this approach with you, how would you respond?

(Paul tells us why he boasts in his weaknesses!) —

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Q.* What is the connection between our weaknesses and Christ's power?
- Q.* What are the weaknesses in your life's story that also demonstrate the power of God? (Please share with one another, as you feel comfortable doing so,)

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to ***Boast (Within Limits)***! And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Boast (within limits) about Jesus this week! Identify a time when you were weak, but God's grace was strong and carried the day! Share your testimony with someone.

Lesson 11:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Be Jealous and Afraid!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

² *I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him.* ³ *But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

Q. Do you normally consider *jealousy* and *fear* to be positive attributes? Explain.

[No, we tend to reference them in a negative light.]

Q. What is “godly jealousy”?

[Caring enough regarding a person’s relationship with Jesus that we become concerned if they are drawn to pursue other loves apart from Jesus.]

Q. Is there such a thing as “godly fear”? If so, what is it?

[Yes. The book of Proverbs says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Godly fear is honoring Him above all things.]

Q. In what ways, if any, are jealousy and fear helpful to being a witness for Jesus?

[Jealousy – As it would speak to the passion and concern that we have for others’ relationship with God.
Fear – That we would trust in God above all things.]

2 Corinthians 11:4

⁴ *For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.*

Q. What is our primary goal in witnessing to people?

[To point them to Jesus.]

Q. How will you know if you have truly met this objective? What criterion will you use to assess your success (or lack thereof)?

[That I was able to keep my focus upon Jesus, His death, His resurrection, His love for us.]

Q. Do you think that today, as in Paul's day, people put up with "other gospels" too easily? Explain.

[Yes. The Bible says that in the end times people will run after other teachings, and be attracted to those things that say what they want to hear. – 2 Timothy 4:3]

Q. What are some of the "other gospels" or messages that are attracting people today?

Q. Why are these other messages such a draw? What are the needs that they are addressing?

Q. How does Scripture address these needs?

2 Corinthians 11:6

⁶ I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

Q. Many people shy away from witnessing because they don't have the words, or wouldn't know what to say. Paul admits that he is not a trained speaker. In the face of this confession, however, he states that he is relying on "knowledge." What knowledge is he talking about?

[That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.]

Q. Do we have this knowledge? Do you find this knowledge to be helpful and/or comforting to the task of witnessing?

Ephesians 3:4-6

² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Q. According to this Scripture, what is the unique *knowledge* that Paul referenced in the previous reading?

[That Jesus did not come for the Jews only. But all who call upon Him shall be saved!]

Q. How can this truth be applied in a witnessing context?

[God loves them, no matter who they are or what they have done. He loves them and wants them to be saved. No exceptions!]

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

- Q. Paul found his encouragement in the fact that our God is rich in mercy. Furthermore, Paul rejected the temptation to package the Gospel in a way that others might find more attractive. He let the Word stand for itself. Do you think this would be easy or difficult to do in a witnessing context?
- Q. When do you think the temptation would be at its greatest to compromise or re-package the Word?
- Q. What should we do in those moments?

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to ***Be Jealous and Afraid!*** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church.* For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Dare to be ***jealous and afraid*** for an acquaintance that isn't saved. Pray regularly and without ceasing for them. Fight the temptation to compromise the Gospel in the hopes of somehow making it more "appealing" to them. Trust the Spirit of God to work through His Word and your witness!

Lesson 12:

Enlarge the Harvest! – By Daring to Give (Free of Charge)!

Opening Prayer

Our dearest Savior, Jesus; You are the Lord of the harvest! And You have urged us to pray that workers be sent into Your harvest field (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2). We therefore ask that You would raise up Your people, O Lord, and send them forth, armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Your Word is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, ENLARGE THE HARVEST of Your kingdom by Your Holy Spirit. May countless souls be brought to faith, making them ready to join the joyful procession that will enter into Your presence and sing unending songs of worship and praise! Equip us, through the study of Your holy Word, that we may be prepared to be Your witnesses. Inspire us onward in the mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church*. For this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 11:7

⁷ *Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the Gospel of God to you free of charge?*

Q. Paul makes it clear that he did not expect any kind of personal benefit or payment for bringing the Gospel to the Corinthian Christians. What are some self-serving reasons why a person may seek to enlarge the harvest?

[Thinking that they are gaining the approval of men or God. To enlarge the church family so that there are more people to serve on boards, or to offer money in the plate. To prove their own piety or religiosity.]

Q. Do these things, then, illegitimize the effort? In other words, should the person be discouraged from reaching out with the Gospel because their motives are not pure; or should they be encouraged to continue because it is still a good work they are doing and it is resulting in others coming to faith?

2 Corinthians 11:8-9

⁸ *I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.* ⁹ *And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.*

Q. Why was it important to Paul for the Gospel to be offered *freely*, without any form of compensation or personal remuneration?

[So that nothing could detract from his message; including an accusation related to his motives or purpose.]

Q. Why does he use the negative term “robbed” to describe the support he gleaned from other churches?

[Because it was not their responsibility to pay for the ministry at another congregation. The Corinthians should have taken responsibility in this matter instead of expecting someone outside of their fellowship to do it for them.]

Q. Do you think the brothers from Macedonia, and the other churches, who lent the support to Paul would have said that he had robbed them?

[No. They obviously were generous, supporting the cause of the Gospel because of their faith.]

Q. What is Paul's attitude, therefore, regarding the fiscal responsibility associated with being a witness and/or doing the work of an evangelist?

[That the responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel, and offering financial support toward this end, rests individually with each congregation.]

Q. Do you agree? Explain.

1 Corinthians 9:18-19

¹⁸ What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the Gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it. ¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

Q. What did Paul consider his reward for the hard work and sacrifices he made?

[The joy of giving freely.]

Q. Would that do it for you?

Q. How did Paul make himself a slave?

[Becoming a servant, looking out for the interests (spiritual, eternal) of others.]

Q. Is that really necessary to be a witness for Christ?

Q. What role does personal sacrifice play in being a witness for Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Thank you, dear Jesus, for the insights we have gained from Your holy Word today. We know that Your Word never returns to You empty, but always accomplishes that which You desire! (Isaiah 55:11) Equip us to ENLARGE THE HARVEST – By Daring to **Give (Free of Charge)!** And forever inspire us in *Bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church.* For this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Challenge

Give (free of charge) of your time and resources to help another person this week. Do not accept any payment or amenities for your efforts.