

LET'S GO

LOVE · LISTEN · LEAD

LESSON 7 - LEAD

INTRODUCTION: Your Review of What Jesus Has Done for You (video)

- 1.) What is it about personal stories that make them so powerful?

- 2.) Stories and testimonials are a powerful way to share how the gospel has changed your life. Take a few minutes to write out your story. If time seems short, or if writing out the whole thing seems intimidating, consider sketching out the high points. For example: How you came to faith. What it was like before knowing God or having a church home. What life is like now after knowing the full forgiveness you possess in Christ? How does knowing Jesus change your everyday?

- 3.) You are probably somewhat familiar with the apostle Paul's conversion from persecutor of Christians to missionary for Christ. The Bible records two times when Paul shared his story with others. In Acts 22:1-21 he addresses the hostile mob after he had been accused of defiling the Temple, and in Acts 26:11-23 he is on trial addressing King Herod Agrippa. Turn to the last pages and let's read and compare these two accounts.

- 4.) Why is it important to tailor your story to the person to whom you are telling it?

- 5.) Agree/Disagree: Personal stories of God's grace focus too much on the person and not enough on God.

AN INVITATION (video)

- 1.) What would be some of the challenges of following Jesus in the first century?
- 2.) What do you think are some of the challenges for someone to come to your church for the first time?
- 3.) What might you do to help them overcome each of the challenges you identified?
- 4.) What challenges you most about inviting people to church?
- 5.) What might be some things you can do or remember to help you overcome these challenges?

CLOSING ENCOURAGEMENT – LET’S GO! (video)

Group Discussion: Have each person in your group share the name of an unchurched person God has brought into their life, how they will show love to that person in the near future and how they plan to lead them to the gospel. In the coming weeks, encourage others in your group by asking how their plan is going and sharing your own story.

NEXT TIME – A Bible Story for Every Occasion

Acts 22:1-21 “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.”² When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said:³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.⁴ I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,⁵ as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶ “About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’⁸ “ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked. “ ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied.⁹ My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.¹⁰ “ ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. “ ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’¹¹ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.¹² “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.¹³ He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.¹⁴ “Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.¹⁵ You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.¹⁶ And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

¹⁷ “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance¹⁸ and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’¹⁹ “ ‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you.²⁰ And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’²¹ “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

Acts 26:9-29 “I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁰ And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.¹¹ Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.¹² “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.¹³ About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions.¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’¹⁵ “Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ “ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied.¹⁶ ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

¹⁹ “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.²⁰ First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.²¹ That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.²² But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—²³ that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

²⁴ At this point Festus interrupted Paul’s defense. “You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted. “Your great learning is driving you insane.”²⁵ “I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable.²⁶ The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”²⁹ Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”