

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – June 9, 2024
Theme: Strengthening Our Faith Topic: Being an Effective Witness
Main Text: 1 Peter 3:15

Key verse: *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” (1Peter3:15 NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 28:19-20, our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. The process of disciple-making starts with being a witness of Jesus Christ. A witness can be defined as “one asked to be present at a transaction to be able to testify to its having taken place” or one that gives evidence”. Anyone who has neither met Christ (as The Word of God), nor known Him intimately having studied, carried out His commands, or encountered Him through an active prayer life cannot be an effective witness of Him. Becoming an effective witness of Christ takes training and labor. Christ labored in prayer over His disciples and trained them for over three years including practical assignments in preaching and miracles (e.g., Luke 10:1-24). As we observe from the lives of the disciples and will see again from the Scriptures we will study today, effective witnessing for Christ is rooted in a right relationship with Him and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- (a) Read 1 Peter 3:15-16 What does the scripture mean by “sanctify the Lord God in your heart (the NLT version may be more helpful here)? (b) Read Acts 19:14 – 20 What does this teach us about the importance of relationship with Jesus to witnessing? (c) Discuss why it is easy to fall into the trap of false witnessing nowadays.**

To be an effective witness for Christ we need to “set (Him) apart in our hearts as Lord”. 1 John 1-6, the Apostle underlines that “we proclaim ...whom we have heard and seen”. This is not the witness of someone who was unsure of himself or what he was saying concerning Jesus. We must have the same level of conviction to be effective witnesses of Christ. We witness to whom we know. Our main text calls on us to “always be ready to give a defense..” The word translated “defense” is “apologia” from which we derive “apologetics”. Apologetics is sometimes regarded as being reserved for theologians and pastors, but Peter is saying that we should all practice apologetics. In this context it simply means that a believer must understand what they believe, why they are a Christian, and be able to articulate their belief humbly, thoughtfully, and biblically. That confidence with meekness can only come from knowing the one in whom we believe through spending time in communion with the Spirit through study, prayer, fellowship, and obedience.

- (a) Read Acts 1:8 Discuss what changes come upon a person that receives power from The Holy Spirit. (b) Read Acts 2:4,14,37,41 . Discuss what these passages teach us about witnessing for Christ. (c) From the Acts 2 reading, name 5 signs that follow effective witnessing.**

We learn from scripture that witnessing for Christ is a spiritual activity driven and empowered by the Holy Spirit. To be an effective witness, we must not then be casual or carnal about it. Witnessing is rather an activity, orchestrated by the Holy Spirit to bring the listener to recognize and accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ and thereby be saved. The Holy Spirit gives supernatural ability, boldness, and a willingness to step forward. When witnessing is effective, the Word pierces hearts, those witnessed to are motivated to act, and the Church is added to. There is a saying that we should “preach the gospel and all times and, when necessary, use words”. This is not suggesting that words are less important. Rather, it echoes Peter’s instructions to us to live carefully among unbelievers because our actions may spark interest (1Peter 4:4) and may even, by God’s grace, win some over to the faith (1 Peter 2:12;3:1-2). Words are very, very important but the words need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and our actions should back up our, not words. In that way we will maintain a good conscience (1 Peter 3:16) and be effective witnesses of the Lord.

- (a) Read Matt 5:14-16 Discuss practical ways to shine the light by witnessing for Christ in (i) the Church community (ii) our family, and (iii) work environment.**

Prayer: *Lord, please help me to be an effective witness of Jesus Christ. Fill me daily with the Holy Spirit so that my witnessing will be effective in adding to the church daily*