

SERVING GOD AND WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Many privileges are given to the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and among these are:

- i. Serving God, and
- ii. Witnessing for Christ.

Describing these as privileges is quite deliberate because that is exactly what they are. Consider for a moment the honour God bestows upon sinful men and women by entrusting them with working for him. He is the Creator of the whole universe. He is surrounded by myriads of spotless angels who, day and night, serve and please him. Yet God still stoops down to us, and, as we follow his Son Jesus, he calls us into his service to do his will. In this world, many seek to be linked with the mighty and famous, and are so pleased when men of rank acknowledge them. But the Christian believer is honoured far above all that this world can ever offer us, for Almighty God calls us his servants.

Linked with this, is the other privilege, that of telling others in our needy world that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners. It has often occurred to me that Jesus could have chosen to do this entirely on his own, or used angels instead. However, in his grace, he calls us to share in this work with him. An honour indeed!

This study booklet will serve as an introduction to these two privileges. Sometimes the passages from the Bible have been printed in full, but on other occasions just the references are given. Therefore, to gain the most from this booklet you will need to read it with your Bible by your side so that you can follow for yourself the verses to which you are referred.

It is my prayer that this booklet will help you to understand more clearly what God has said about serving him, and witnessing for Christ. But to stop at only understanding this would be to fall short. Having understood what God has said, we must then go and do what he has said.

May God help us all to serve him with all our hearts, and to be eager to tell others about the Saviour.

Derek French
October 1994

PART 1 : SERVING GOD

Chapter 1 Every Christian A Servant Of God

The Bible teaches a thrilling truth about every Christian believer. Every follower of Jesus has the privilege of serving God. The disciple of Jesus is in the employment of the King of the Universe.

What a marvellous truth that is! There is none more powerful or richer than God. There is no one more kind and good to all his servants. Job security in his service is guaranteed. And the wages are amazing. Life now and heaven to come.

We must stress again that the Bible teaches that every Christian believer is a servant of God. This is not something reserved only for a favoured few, it is shared by all who believe. Serving God is not something only preachers or evangelists or missionaries engage in. It is right to say that every true believer is in full time Christian service.

Consider these words in 1 Thessalonians 1:9: “... *you turned from idols to serve the living and true God.*” Note that this was true of all the believers in Thessalonica, for this letter of Paul’s was written to the whole church. They were all servants of God. Once these people had served idols, now they were living to please God. This meant that whatever they did at work, at home, when relaxing, when in public view, in private, with fellow believers or amongst unbelievers, in everything they did, and wherever they went, they were serving the Lord. The challenge of this is summed up so well in Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*” Our whole life has got to be lived so as to please God.

Added to this we also have Paul’s testimony in Acts 27:23: “... *God whose I am and whom I serve.*” When he wrote to the Church at Rome he said (Romans 1:1), “*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ...*” Also in his letter to the Philippian church he wrote – this time linking Timothy with himself – in Philippians 1:1, “*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus...*” And then addressing his friend Titus he declared (Titus 1:1), “*Paul, a servant of God...*”

This great apostle considered himself to be no more, yet also no less, than a servant or slave of God.

Chapter 2 Saved In Order To Serve

The Bible teaches that one of the great blessings of knowing Christ as our Lord and Saviour is that we can now serve God. While serving God is not the only reason why Christian believers have been saved from their sins, it is a very important benefit.

In Hebrews 9 a comparison is being drawn between the sacrifices of Old Testament days, and Jesus’ sacrifice when he died on the cross (Hebrews 9:14): “*How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*” In other words, the death of Christ on our behalf had this purpose in view, to make us servants of God.

Because we are followers of Jesus, our daily work becomes service given to him. It may be at home or in a place of employment. We may work alone or with others or have those who work for us. In all this we are to serve Christ.

Chapter 3 All Our Work Is To Be Done For God

Consider Paul’s words in Colossians 3:22-4:1: “*Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the*

Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favouritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know you also have a Master in heaven.” There is a similar passage in Ephesians 6:5-9: *“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him.”*

We need to grasp this truth because it will affect our lives powerfully for good and make them useful to the Lord. The key is found in the words, *“as working for the Lord”* in the Colossians passage, and, *“serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord”* in the Ephesians passage. This gives great dignity to our daily work, for every believer is in ‘full time’ Christian service.

It is a great encouragement to know that nothing escapes the attention of God. He sees it even if men never notice it, and he will reward us for the faithful work we do. Even if we have got the lowest job on earth and our task is most menial as far as men are concerned, in God’s sight it is

now of the highest significance. It is of great value to him, and, therefore, this elevates all our work whatever it may be. It might be cooking, washing, cleaning, digging in the fields, carrying water, working in an office or shop or factory or hospital. Whatever we may be engaged in is now considered by the Lord as service done for him.

As well as elevating all our work, this also brings with it a great challenge. When we follow Jesus there is not even a minute in our Christian lives that excuses us from serving the Lord. There are no days off, no holidays, and no period of retirement. We serve Christ when we are fit and healthy and when we are unwell. We serve him when young and when old. These requirements apply to us whether we are employed by someone else or if we are the employer. Christian servants as well as masters are covered by the same high standard. At work Christians will be honest and not steal from their employer or cheat their workers. Christians will be truthful, when they could get away with lying, because they know God sees them.

Chapter 4 Christ Is Our Master

The Christian believer has one Master, Christ. He is our Saviour and Lord.

Colossians 1:18 tells us: *“And he (that is Christ) is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”* The Lord Jesus is to have the top place in every part of our lives. And this is emphasised again in Philippians 2:10-11 where it tells us a day is coming when *“... every knee will bow, in heaven, on earth,*

and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” True Christians delight to express that submission to Christ’s Lordship here and now. And it is not difficult for believers to view Jesus as their ‘boss’, because he is such a lovely, glorious, living Lord. He has loved us, died for us on the cross, and made us his people. He now lives in heaven to plead or intercede for us as Christians. He is able to sympathise with us in all our trials, trials which very often come to us even while we are obediently serving him. And one day he is coming back to take us to himself and to present us as his people without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish. (See Romans 8:34; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Ephesians 5:25-27.)

As Lord, Jesus is permanently in this position of loving authority over us. He will never give up or forfeit this position. Therefore we should never act as if he was not our Lord. If we truly love Christ we will want to serve him in all we do or think or say.

Remember, the Lord is our only Master, we cannot have two (Matthew 6:24): *“No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”*

Chapter 5 The Right Attitude To Serving God

By this we mean the attitude that is to characterise the way we serve the Lord. True Christian service is living for the Lord wholeheartedly, with determination, delight and

urgency. It is not so when we serve hesitantly, reluctantly, rebelliously, with grumbling and complaint.

a. The example of Paul

Consider the example of Paul (Romans 1:9): *“... God whom I serve with my whole heart...”* Even towards the end of his life, when he was chained up in prison, Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21, *“For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”* Or consider his words in Galatians 2:20: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”* Added to this is the long list of things he suffered for the Lord Jesus Christ which is found in 2 Corinthians 11 and 12. Yet he never grumbled or complained or served in a half-hearted way. Instead, he lived to serve Christ who had so loved him and rescued him from his sins. So this same attitude of serving God in a wholehearted way is to be true of every Christian believer today.

b. The example of Jesus

Our greatest example is the Lord Jesus himself, because he delighted in and was determined in his service to God. Consider these passages:

Mark 10:45: *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*

Hebrews 10:5-7: *“Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do*

your will, O God.’” Indeed, the Lord Jesus wanted to do nothing else.

John 4:34: “*‘My food’, said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.’”*

As the time drew near for him to lay down his life on the cross, we read this about Jesus (Luke 9:51): “*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.*” His whole life was given over to this one thing of obediently serving his Father, and he did just that.

John 17:4: “*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*” Then in great triumph on the cross he cried out (John 19:30), “*It is finished.*”

Total obedience is the mark of a servant, and was certainly true of Jesus. This is how Paul describes it in Philippians 2:8: “*... he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross.*”

So Christian believers are to spend their lives in joyful, determined, obedient service to the Lord all the time (Ephesians 5:15-16): “*Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*” For the Christian believer not a second is to be wasted. Further, there is also to be a sense of urgency in this work. The time available to serve the Lord is getting shorter every hour. We are getting nearer to the end of time (2 Peter 3:10): “*... The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by*

fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” Added to this our own lives are getting shorter and the time available for us to serve the Lord is getting smaller by the minute. Therefore, our motto is to be, “We serve the Lord”.

(For further study see also 2 Corinthians 9:12; Hebrews 3:5; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Revelation 7:15; Romans 16:1; Romans 1:1; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. Cf. 1 Samuel 12:24.)

Chapter 6 Serving the Lord Means Bearing Fruit

One of the great purposes of God in salvation is that we might be like Christ (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.*” The Bible also teaches that this likeness to Jesus will not be perfect until Jesus comes again (1 John 3:2): “*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he (i.e. Jesus) appears, we shall be like him, for we will see him as he is.*” So, from the time we begin to follow Jesus, until the time that he comes again, there is a process going on in our lives to make us more and more like Jesus. We call an aspect of that process ‘fruit-bearing’. The likeness of Christ’s character will be seen in us in an increasing manner.

Believers are appointed to this by Jesus himself (John 15:16): “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.*” This fruit is called ‘**the fruit of the Spirit**’. We find it

described in Galatians 5:22-23: *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law.”* Notice ‘fruit’ is in the singular. In other words, all of this list is to be produced in the believer’s life.

We see these things in perfection when we look at the Lord Jesus Christ – it is to be like him. In order to bear this fruit we must remain in Christ. (John 15:5-6): *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”* This means we must stay close to Christ, depend on him, talk with him, and be faithful to him all through our lives.

Further, it is this fruit in our lives that indicates what we are. For example, bananas do not grow on coconut palms but on banana plants. So the fruit of the Spirit can only be produced in true Christians, because it is only in true Christians that the Holy Spirit lives (1 Corinthians 6:19): *“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body.”* Equally, bad fruit indicates a diseased tree, and bad spiritual fruit indicates a sinful and lost heart (Romans 8:5): *“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”* Some examples of this bad fruit are found in Galatians

5:19-21: *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

It is when we become followers of Jesus that our sinful hearts are transformed, and we begin to bear good fruit and display obedient and changed lives – it is this that brings glory to God.

PART 2: WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

Chapter 1 Witnessing Described

Imagine discovering that you are dying from a terrible illness, but then you meet a doctor who says he is able to cure you. You receive the treatment and amazingly you recover, are completely cured and have a bright future. This is so wonderful, and you are so thankful, that you want to tell everyone you meet what has happened to you – your family, friends, work colleagues, indeed, when you get an opportunity, even complete strangers. You want them to share your joy. And, of course, when you learn of someone else with the same dreadful illness you want to tell them of the cure as soon as you can. You would want to bear witness to all that had happened to you.

Now, witnessing for Christ is just like that. Having received the Lord’s salvation, the forgiveness of sins – which is far greater than recovering from an illness because, before being saved you were going to hell, but

now are going to heaven – you now have new life and hope and such joy that you want to share this good news with everyone. You want to tell them what Jesus has done for you. And because everyone else in the world is a sinner and in need of the Lord’s forgiveness, you want them to know about him so that they also may become his followers. This is what it means to witness for Christ. It is to tell others about him. And this leads us on to our next chapter.

Chapter 2 The Message We Are To Tell

God has wonderfully recorded for us all the details of this message in the Bible. The twelve disciples of Jesus, or ‘apostles’ as they are sometimes called, were actual eyewitnesses of his life and ministry. They were commanded to tell us about Jesus and were promised the special help of the Holy Spirit to do this as we can see from John 15:26-27: *“When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”* They saw Christ and wrote down the details of his life, words, death, resurrection and ascension in the Bible. So they testify to us about the Lord Jesus.

In a similar way Christian believers are to share with others the wonderful truth which they have experienced in their own hearts that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners. We are not to parade ourselves. That would make us guilty of pride. But we are to tell people about Christ, and what he has done. Jesus has told us the message we are to share in

Luke 24:46ff: *“... This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things...”*

This is the most wonderful message the world has ever received. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. So the Christian believer is to tell others about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, urging them to repent of their sins and place their trust in him so that they too may have eternal life.

Chapter 3 Why Christian Believers Must Witness About Christ

There are two main reasons why the followers of Jesus are to tell others about him.

a. We are commanded to do this

The Lordship of Christ is a very important factor in the life of every Christian. And evidence that he is our Lord is seen by our obedience to his commands. And Jesus has commanded all his followers to be his witnesses.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, *“... 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.”* So he expects us to tell others about him wherever we go, even to the furthest parts of the world.

Jesus gave similar instruction when he delivered the man named Legion from demon possession (Mark 5:18-20): *“As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been*

demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.' So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed." This man had the task of telling his own family and neighbours about the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to do likewise. We are to witness about Christ whether we are at home or away.

b. There is a great need to do this

Men and women are perishing, and will go to hell if they do not become followers of Jesus. And they will only become Jesus' followers if someone tells them about him (Romans 10:13-15): *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"* The questions each Christian believer has to answer are, 'Do I have beautiful feet? Am I taking the good news about Jesus to others?' The need of the lost is enormous, and we are given the privilege of telling them of the Saviour who is able to meet their need, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4 The Believers Who Are To Witness

In a sense we have answered this already, but it is so important that we need to stress it again. This preaching of the gospel is not something limited to pastors and church

leaders. It is a task entrusted to every Christian believer. All the followers of Jesus are to witness for him.

A good example of this is found in the book of Acts. There we are told of a period of severe persecution in Jerusalem after the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1): *"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."* The church leaders remained in Jerusalem, but the rest of the believers had to flee for their lives. It is interesting to read what Luke writes about these scattered believers (Acts 8:4): *"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."* All of these believers told the people they met about Jesus. Witnessing is the privilege of all believers.

Incidentally, notice how God overruled this persecution, which was intended to stop the spread of the gospel, to actually increase its effectiveness. How encouraging!

Chapter 5 Ways We Can Witness

We have a number of helpful examples in the Bible that show us a variety of different ways that can be used to share the good news about Jesus with others. Here is a selection.

- i. By telling others of our own experience of the saving love of Christ.** In John 4 we read of Jesus' meeting with the immoral woman at the well in Samaria. The result of the conversation he had with her was that she was saved. And the first thing she did was to go back into the town and tell others what the Lord had done for

her (John 4:29-30): “‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ They came out of the town and made their way towards him.” The wonderful result of this is recorded in John 4:42: “They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man is the Saviour of the world.’”

ii. By explaining a passage of the Bible. A good example of this is found in Acts 8. An Ethiopian eunuch, an important man who was in charge of the treasury of the Ethiopian Queen Candace, had been to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God. As he journeyed home he was reading from the Old Testament. Philip, a follower of Jesus, ran up to his chariot and asked the man if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian admitted that he did not, and needed someone to explain it to him. Philip joined him in the chariot and saw that the man was reading from Isaiah 53. The Ethiopian asked him if Isaiah had written about himself or someone else. Then we read in Acts 8:35: “Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.” So, too, we can witness about Jesus by explaining a Bible passage to someone.

iii. By inviting people to hear the gospel preached. In John 1:42 Andrew brought his brother Peter to hear Jesus for himself. And in verse 45 of the same chapter Philip brought Nathanael to meet Jesus. Then in Luke

5:29, Levi, who is also called Matthew, when he had begun to follow Jesus, held a great banquet and invited many of his friends and colleagues to hear Jesus preach. Also in Acts 10:24 we read of how Cornelius invited his relatives and friends to hear Peter preach about Jesus. We can do a similar thing with people we meet.

iv. By our lives. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus gave this very practical and very important instruction: “... *let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*” A life changed by the Lord Jesus Christ becomes an effective witness of the power and grace of the gospel.

This passage, and others similar to it, need to be applied to our lives with considerable care for a number of reasons.

- [a] If because of compromise with sin, our lives do not display that Jesus has changed us, then no amount of words will persuade people that Jesus really does save sinners. People will want to see the evidence; therefore, we must ensure our lives honour God.
- [b] We need to ensure that our good works are done, not that people may praise us, but to give God the glory. In other words, we must do our good works humbly and not out of pride.
- [c] Perhaps the biggest danger of all is to hide behind our good works and use them as an excuse never to speak about Christ to others. Someone has helpfully said that for the Christian, life and lip must go together. In other words, our actions must go with our words, and

when they do this is an attractive and impressive witness for Christ.

Chapter 6 Witnessing Can Be Costly

It is important to keep in mind that the English word ‘martyr’ comes from the word used for ‘witness’ in the Bible. This is because it can sometimes be quite costly to tell others about Christ. Others may laugh at us, reject us, avoid us, hurt us, and even kill us for speaking about Jesus. An example from the Bible is Stephen in Acts 7. He was the first Christian martyr, and was killed because of his bold witness for Christ.

This is not to discourage us but to prepare us. It is not always the case that believers will lose their lives for telling others about Christ, but it is something we must be ready for. Whenever opposition of any kind comes to us, the Lord will be with us, as he was with Stephen, even as the angry crowd dragged him out of the town to stone him (Acts 7:55-56): *“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’”* Jesus did not desert him in his hour of need, but came to him and strengthened and upheld him. Remember also David’s statement in Psalm 23:4: *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.”* Indeed, we can also say that suffering persecution can itself bring joy to the believer. See the responses of Peter and John in Acts 5:41, and Paul and

Silas in Acts 16:25. They knew at first hand what it sometimes costs to witness for Jesus, yet they had tremendous joy from the Lord.

In addition, Jesus said in Matthew 5:10-12, *“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”* Christian believers are not living simply for the present time. We also have an eternal aspect to life. We know there is more to come beyond death and when Jesus comes again. Then Jesus will give us an everlasting reward for living faithfully, and if necessary dying, for him.

To help us overcome being afraid to witness, Jesus spoke these encouraging and challenging words: firstly, in John 16:33: *“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* Secondly, in Luke 12:8-9: *“I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of heaven.”* The glory that awaits the Christian believer will far outweigh any suffering for Christ’s sake we may have to endure on earth. Paul adds in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, *“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”* And Jesus says in

Revelation 2:10, *“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

Chapter 7 Some Essentials For Witnessing

- i. We must engage in this work being completely dependent on the Holy Spirit to use the way we live and what we say. Conviction of sin and the giving of eternal life is his work not ours (John 16:8-11; John 3:5-8). Therefore, be in much prayer for God to use you. (See Acts 4:23-31 and Ephesians 6:18-20).
- ii. We must do this work out of love for Christ and a love for lost sinners (2 Corinthians 5:11&14). Therefore, be compassionate, humble and gracious, always remembering this is how the Lord has dealt with us.
- iii. We must seek to use all the opportunities we can to tell others about Christ (Colossians 4:5): *“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”* (Ephesians 5:15-16) *“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”*
- iv. Remember there is no greater privilege than to be used by God to lead a lost sinner to Christ – it is God who saves and, therefore, all the glory is his, but he uses us, and that brings us great joy.

APPENDIX : TESTIMONIES

RENE BAKER

Rene Baker is a Christian believer aged 85. She is a widow and lives near her family in the English town of Dunstable. Rene has been a member of her local church for 67 years and was baptised in 1926, a little while after becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rene was brought up in a Christian home. Both her parents and grandparents were Christian believers. She had learned about God and Jesus from her earliest days, but it was at the age of thirteen that she trusted in the Lord Jesus to be her Saviour. In fact, it all happened one day at school as she remembered something she had learned from her Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Lockhart, and she knew she needed to entrust her life into the care of the Lord Jesus Christ, and could put it off no longer. She described what happened in the classroom like this: “On this particular day at school, it came upon me like a bright ray of sunshine, and I thought then, I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me.” When school ended that day she wanted to tell Mrs. Lockhart what the Lord had done for her. This is how she described what happened: “When Mrs. Lockhart opened the front door of her house to me, I didn’t have to say a thing. She ran and put her arms round me and said, I know what’s happened to you.” For 72 years Rene has followed the Lord Jesus and desired to serve him.

About a year after becoming a Christian believer, Rene’s father died three days after her 14th birthday. He was 39 and was ill for only 6 weeks before he died. When asked how being a disciple of Jesus made a difference at that time she said, “If I hadn’t known the Lord, and if I hadn’t had the Lord's support I really don’t know what would have

happened to me. That was the first big trial of my life. But I do feel that God spoke to me in school that day, so that I had him to lean on and to trust him when these things began to happen.”

Rene has found belonging to her local church a tremendous help. She said the church was her home and family, and fellowship with the other members is very precious. Their willingness to help her when she has been in need has become a source of real encouragement.

From her earliest days as a follower of Jesus, she has desired to serve him. Many opportunities to do this have come to her. Before she was married she was a school teacher for six years in a village school. Every day she spent time with the children teaching them from the Bible about the love of Jesus. And her longing was that God would speak to the children through these Bible lessons.

Growing old brings its own difficulties, yet Rene has been conscious that God has helped her cope with this. She said, “Well, of course, the faith that we hold is given to us by God in the first place, isn’t it? Unless he maintains that faith we should lose it. And so I’m often lonely and I’m often sad, but how the Lord helps. The main way is by answering prayer. Or just praying to him. It’s such a relief to pour it all out to him. I know he hears. And when I pray, quite often I feel much better. I don’t feel so lonely or so sad. I ought not to be sad really, because such a lot of my people who’ve gone on ahead of me are in glory. They were all bought by the precious blood of the Lord: my own husband. I lost one of my daughters with cancer; Catherine

was wonderfully helped by the Lord, and she was a marvellous example to everybody really.”

Rene was asked what she would do if the Lord gave her an opportunity to serve him by answering this question from someone, “Why should I become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ?” This was her answer: “I think I would say, in the first place, you owe it to the Lord. Everything you have, everything you are, everything you are able to do is by the grace of God, whatever it is. In the second place, for your own comfort, and for your safety after this life, as well as during, you should put your trust in the Lord. And for his glory and for his praise, we are his creatures and it’s the least we can do, it’s what we owe him. I don’t know how I would have got through life without him.”

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NIGEL BROWN

Nigel Brown works as a window cleaner, and comes from the same town and church as Rene Baker. He has been a Christian believer for just six years.

Nigel’s parents are followers of Jesus, and he was brought up knowing a lot about the Lord Jesus Christ. Each Sunday he attended the meetings of the church with his parents, but when he reached the age of 16 he rebelled against all this and stopped attending the meetings. Sadly, he turned away from the things of God to what he thought were the better attractions of the world. Drinking alcohol became a major part of his life, and each night he would go from one nightclub to another. He drank very heavily for the next 10 years. He did not want to know about God at

all. Indeed, if he saw other Christian believers he would try to avoid meeting them, because in a strange way just seeing them made him feel guilty.

Throughout this period, Nigel's parents continued to follow the Lord Jesus diligently, and he could see that the Lord really did make a difference in their lives. His father was a preacher, and it was the consistency between what Nigel had heard him say from the pulpit and the way he lived his life every day that really spoke to him.

Around this time, Nigel was given a book called *'Run Baby Run'*. It was about a New York gang leader, Nicky Cruz, who became a Christian believer. Nigel could relate to many of the things this man experienced, in particular the loneliness he felt. Although Nigel had a job, plenty of money, many material possessions, and would go to many drinking parties, inside he was empty. Often he would go to a party or a pub and leave smiling and laughing with his friends, but when he got back home he would often cry bitterly because he was so unhappy inside.

After suffering for some months in this way he began to reflect on all he had heard about the Lord Jesus in his earlier years, and decided he needed to find out what it was all about. At first he tried to get right with God by his own efforts, but soon realised he could not work his way to God, so he decided he would go to hear about Jesus at a nearby church. He found that as the Bible was explained it spoke directly to his own needs. Over the next three weeks Nigel went through an inner turmoil. He came to believe in God, but could not accept that Jesus was God. So he decided to ask his father about it, which surprised his father

a great deal because of his rebellious way of life over the previous 10 years. But this is how Nigel described his father's reply and what followed: "Instead of giving me a long drawn out theological answer, he said, 'Well, don't tell me your problems, tell God.' So that night, I literally said, Jesus, if you are God, then reveal yourself to me... Then, over the week, Jesus did become very real to me, and so I knew I was on the verge of becoming a believer. But there was still a holding back. My brother became a Christian when he was about thirty, and that had a big impact on me. And I was with him the Christmas of 1987, and I said, How do you become a Christian? I'd had a couple of drinks at the time, and he didn't realise that I was really thinking a lot about spiritual things, but he told me, 'If you ask Jesus for forgiveness and you realise Jesus has died for you, and accept him and if you really mean it, then that's it.' And he carried on watching the television, and I carried on drinking. But inside, I was in turmoil. The film finished and he went outside the room, and he was obviously thinking a lot about our conversation, but he didn't want to push it. So as soon as he was out of the room, I turned the TV off, and I got on my knees and I asked Jesus to forgive me for what I'd done in the past. And that night, I went to bed and I woke up feeling free of guilt. Although I was laying down, it was like a rucksack had rolled off my back, and it's been the same ever since."

Nigel then joined the local church in Dunstable and has continued to grow spiritually and serve the Lord. Indeed, right from those first days of trusting in Jesus all he has wanted to do is tell others about Christ. His present job of

window cleaning means he meets around 12 to 15 people every day, and talks to as many of them as he can about the Lord whenever the opportunity arises. Quite recently one lady customer asked him what she must do to be saved. He had first spoken to her about the Lord Jesus over a year ago and clearly she is beginning to think seriously about spiritual things. He was able to tell her she needed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to trust him for forgiveness. He is praying the Lord will become her Saviour soon.

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GEOFFREY HARMER

Geoffrey Harmer has worked in the insurance industry for most of his life, but quite soon will work as an administrator with London City Mission. He became a follower of Jesus about 40 years ago.

Geoff is unable to give an exact date for his conversion because he was brought up in a Christian home and going to church was normal. He was quite happy to attend these meetings and remembers, when he was in his late teens, discussing with his father the question of faith and belief. However, Geoff had to do a period in the armed forces. His witness was not good there. It was not that he went against Christianity but neither did he have a clear testimony to God's grace in his life.

When he left the armed forces he took a job that entailed a 10-mile bus journey each day. On the bus was a Christian who started challenging him as to where he stood – was he true Christian or not? And a text came from the Bible

which simply says, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.*” He knew that either we do what is right, or do what is wrong, called sin, and he realised he needed to trust the Lord to take away his sins. Also, if Jesus was his Saviour, with his help Geoff must try to live without sinning. And he realised he did believe, he had true faith in Jesus, and that Bible verse confirmed to him that he was saved.

This made a big difference to Geoff because he realised he had to live out his Christian faith, and live as a true follower of Jesus. Also, he had a greater desire to study the word of God, the Bible, and see what it said. A little while later he was baptised and joined the church where he was living.

Since then he has had many opportunities to serve God. He has seen the need to get alongside both young people and older folk, to share the Lord Jesus with them. He tries to show them that what this world offers is only that which leads away from God to things which are wrong. He has often shown people that the Lord Jesus does have the right things to offer and can give us a good life.

His work has also brought him into contact with many people and has led to opportunities to witness about Christ. He realises it is very important for Christian believers to remember that they have a responsibility to their employers to work well, and this, too, has spoken to others about the difference Jesus has made to him. Sometimes those at work would notice both what he did do, such as working well, being honest and so on, and the things he would not do, such as being untruthful, or getting drunk. This would

often lead to conversations about being a Christian believer and the wonderful salvation Jesus gives to all who follow him.

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SUE OXBORROW

Sue Oxborrow is a young mother with three children. They are triplets: two girls, and one boy. She became a Christian believer when she was aged 15.

Though she was brought up in a Christian family and went to Sunday school and most of the church meetings, Sue realised none of these things made her a Christian. She knew the Bible taught you must follow Jesus in order to be a believer. But she kept putting it off. Then when she was 15 she came to the point of saying to the Lord that she needed him. Sue had taken a long time thinking about becoming a Christian, because she knew that once she had made the commitment to follow him, it was going to be for life, and it was a very serious thing to do. This is how Sue described what happened, "It was while one of my friends was being baptised one Sunday night, that I knew that the Lord was talking directly to me and saying that I had to give him my life. And that's when I actually became a Christian and asked the Lord into my life, even though I'd known for a long time that I was a sinner, and I needed God."

Sue was still at school, and becoming a Christian believer made a huge difference to her life there. One of the reasons why she kept putting off becoming a Christian was that she knew she would have to make a stand at school.

She would have to witness and tell people what had happened to her. And that had always frightened her as she was a quiet, inward-looking person, and found it difficult to talk about personal matters. In fact, she thought it was going to be nearly impossible, and it always worried her that she would have to tell her friends that she had become a Christian, however, when the time came, the Lord gave her the strength to do it. She was able to tell many of her friends about the Lord Jesus, and several of them came to her baptism, which was itself a time of witnessing for Christ.

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