

Lesson 2: Being a Witness, Part 2

As you may recall, in Lesson 1 we covered the “what” and “whom” of being a witness, and we also delved into the “how” of witness by preparing your testimony. Now we’re going to continue looking at the “how” of being a witness, but this time we’ll focus on bridging to the Gospel (the good news).

Bridging to the Gospel

Read John 4:1–26 and discuss the following questions:

- If you had to boil it down, in which verse does Jesus share the essence of the Gospel with the Samaritan woman?
- How did Jesus get from an everyday conversation to this point? In other words, how did He “steer” the discussion?
- In verses 16–18, Jesus is very direct with the Samaritan woman. What was His purpose in being so direct?

The exchange you just read in John 4 shows us something about Jesus’ evangelistic method. In this passage, we see that He successfully bridged all the way from an apparently mundane request (“Give me a drink” in verse 7) to explaining that He was the Messiah—the Savior of the world.

There are three elements of Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman that we would be wise to imitate so that we can bridge effectively to the Gospel.

JESUS GOT TO THE POINT

One of the striking elements about this narrative is how quickly Jesus took the conversation to a spiritual level (see verse 10) and how He continued to direct the conversation back to critical issues even when the Samaritan woman sought to avoid them (verses 13, 14, 21–24). As a result of Jesus’ focus, her religious perspective came out.

Consider that there are many instances in conversation, such as when someone is sharing something important about themselves, or asking a significant question, that we can insert our testimony. Since you now know how to share it in three minutes or less, you might simply say, “Let me take just a few minutes and tell you my story.”

Certain questions work very well after you have shared your testimony, but they often are appropriate in other situations as well:

- “What religion do you follow?”
- “What would you say is your religious perspective?”
- “What are your spiritual beliefs?”
- “Do you feel like you have a good relationship with God?”

Often a person will respond by suggesting that all religions are more or less the same. Instead of disputing this point, consider agreeing with him by saying that we are all trying to deal with the same basic problem: the separation between us and God.

JESUS SHOWED THE WOMAN’S NEED

In verses 13–15 of the narrative we studied, Jesus made a spiritual offer (“living water”) to the woman at the well, but she interpreted the offer in physical terms, hoping to save herself the trouble of drawing water repeatedly from the well. So Jesus pointedly used the brokenness in the Samaritan woman’s life to demonstrate that her spiritual need was the issue that should most concern her (see verses 16–18).

Once you have a sense of a person’s religious perspective, follow with another simple question:

- “In your way of thinking, how does a person deal with the separation between himself and God?”

Other forms of the question might be:

- “In your belief system, how does a person get to heaven?”
- “How does a person have his shame removed before God?”

Be aware that most people—if they believe indeed there is a God—will be under the impression that the gap between God and man can be dealt with by a combination of certain religious rituals and good deeds. It’s amazing how widespread the belief is that being right with God is a matter of doing the right things.

- Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What would this passage say about this common notion?

If the person with whom you are speaking believes he can bridge the gap between himself and God through his own effort, consider asking this follow-up question:

- “How does a person know if he has done enough good?”

This question is great for showing how religious systems don’t really provide their followers with any certainty of salvation.

JESUS GOT TO THE GOSPEL

After all of the preliminary matters that Jesus and the woman at the well discussed, He revealed Himself to be the Messiah, or the Savior (verse 26). Jesus was presenting Himself as the solution to the woman’s “lostness,” and she understood the message and shared it with many others (see verses 28–30, 39–42).

After the person has explained to you how his belief system proposes that a person can get to heaven, you’ll want to present Jesus as the true solution to the person’s separation from God. To do this, say something like, “Thanks for sharing that with me. I believe something a little different...”

At this point you would go directly into the Three Circles Gospel presentation, which we'll cover in our next lesson. Because you have helped the person understand that he does not have a good solution for his separation from God, your Gospel presentation will present a clear contrast, as it will emphasize Jesus Christ and the assurance of salvation that is available by grace through faith in Him.

Looking Forward

PRACTICING YOUR GOSPEL BRIDGE

Take some time in your group now and practice bridging to the Gospel. Have fun with the exercise! Take turns playing the role of different people with a variety of worldviews. You'll see pretty quickly just how versatile and effective this bridging method is.

SET GOALS AND PRAY

In Lesson 2, you worked through the story of the evangelistic encounter Jesus had with the Samaritan woman. You learned about a Gospel bridge that takes a similar approach to Jesus' method by getting to the point, showing the person's need, and getting to the Gospel.

Now it's time to set goals and pray for success. Take a moment and ask God what He would have you do in light of today's lesson, or perhaps even in light of our previous lesson. Be as specific as possible, perhaps choosing something like this:

- "I'm going to try out the Gospel bridge with my coworker Jim."
- "I'm going to follow up with Janet on that comment she made about not liking organized religion."
- "I'm going to share the Gospel bridge with a fellow believer at my gym."

As we suggested last time, make sure to share your goals with the others in your group so you can ask each other next week about how you did. As you close the meeting, take some time to tell God how great He is, and then ask for the power of His Holy Spirit to be with you all as you seek to be His witnesses.