

The Discipleship Wheel Illustration

Chapter Eleven Not Ashamed of the Gospel—Part Two

Last Revised: 2/10/2012

Scripture Memory

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Review

- Draw The Wheel Illustration
- II Corinthians 5:17
- Galatians 2:20
- II Timothy 3:16
- Joshua 1:8
- The Word Hand
- Philippians 4:6-7
- John 15:7
- The Prayer Hand
- Philippians 2:1-2
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- The Fellowship Tree and
The Scales of Community

I. “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel...*”

ASHAMED

1870 *epaischunomai* (ep-ahee-skhoo'-nom-ahee); from 1909 and 153; to feel shame for something: KJV-- be ashamed. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

ASHAMED (TO BE), SHAME

2. *epaischunomai* ^1870^, a strengthened form of No. 1 (*epi*, "upon," intensive), is used only in the sense (b) in the preceding paragraph. It is said of being "ashamed" of persons, <Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26>; the gospel, <Rom. 1:16>; former evil doing, <Rom. 6:21>; "the testimony of our Lord," <2 Tim. 1:8>; suffering for the gospel, <v. 12>; rendering assistance and comfort to one who is suffering for the gospel's sake, <v. 16>. It is used in Heb., of Christ in calling those who are sanctified His brethren, <2:11>, and of God in His not being "ashamed" to be called the God of believers, <11:16>.# In the Sept., in <Job 34:19; Ps. 119:6; Isa. 1:29>.#

(Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.)

A. Ashamed of the Gospel: Presentation

When we hear “not ashamed of the gospel,” the public aspect of the gospel presentation comes to mind. It can be an intimidating and embarrassing thing to personally and openly share Christ with an individual, either in private or in a public setting. It is not a sin to be nervous or intimidated by the act of witnessing. It is a sin to be embarrassed or ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

What is the difference between the two—between being nervous about witnessing and being ashamed of the gospel?

If you take your wife to a company party where you are to be toastmaster, it is one thing to be nervous about sitting at the head table with your wife where you will have to be speaking before the assembled group. It is another thing to be ashamed of being seen by your colleagues in the presence of your wife.

In the following section a topic is given concerning our witness, and then a passage or passages of Scripture are provided. First, read the topic; then reflect on your own life in the light of each verse(s). Last, record the central teaching of the passage as it pertains to not being ashamed of the gospel.

- g. What then must be accompanied by our good works?

- h. The Achilles heel of what passes for relational Christianity in some circles is that one becomes accustomed to being praised for being a good person and slowly becomes ashamed of open identification with Christ. When it is the light of Christ, it is synonymous with God in the minds of all who see.

2. **Your own witness – fragrance** (Specific knowledge and facts) (Read/Reflect/Record)

2 Corinthians 2:14-17

14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

- a. In verse 15 who is leading us?

- b. As He leads us, what are we to spread?

- c. In verse 14 what is the “aroma of Christ”?

- d. Can this “fragrance of Christ” be spread by good works alone?

- e. If for someone to smell the aroma of Christ they must have the “knowledge of Him,” what must we do?
- f. How pervasive is this knowledge to be spread in terms of our sphere of influence?
- g. For the aroma of Christ to have filled your dorm floor, your classroom, the area you live in, your workplace, your sphere of influence, what must each individual have heard who lives in this space?
- h. How is this different from the light of Christ as described in Matthew 5:16?

Matthew 5:16: *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven?*

- i. For the light of Christ to have filled your dorm floor, your classroom, the area you live in, your workplace, your sphere of influence, do the individuals who live in this space need to receive or understand any specific knowledge concerning Jesus Christ?
- j. Compare and contrast “light” and “fragrance” in our witness.

“light”

“fragrance”

Knowledge of recipients

Knowledge of witness

Positive Response

“light”“fragrance”

Negative Response

Polarizing Effect

Level of relationship

Planning

Relative Popularity

Cautionary instructions

- k. In verse 15 what are the two classifications of lost people who will receive the knowledge of Christ from you?
- l. What will be their two contrastingly different responses to this knowledge (fragrance of Christ)?
- m. According to verse 16 will the gospel, if properly presented, be appealing to all people?
- n. According to verse 16 can we fix the gospel so that it is not offensive?

- o. Reflect on the evangelistic ministry of Christ. Did He ever:
- Share the gospel at the wrong time?
 - Come on too strong?
 - Be insensitive?
 - Use the wrong timing?
 - Use the wrong illustrations?
 - Present Himself in the wrong manner?
 - In fact did Jesus Christ ever do anything wrong when it came to sharing the gospel?

- p. Yet, what was the response of the world, of mankind to Christ?

John 1:10-11: *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.*

John 7:1: *And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.*

John 7:25: *Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?"*

John 19:15: *They therefore cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."*

- q. Was this response to the gospel limited to the Jew's response to the unique ministry of Christ?

Acts 21:30-31:

30 *And all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together; and taking hold of Paul, they dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.*

31 *And while they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.*

Acts 14:19: *But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.*

Acts 25:3: *requesting a concession against Paul, that he might have him brought to Jerusalem (at the same time, setting an ambush to kill him on the way).*

- r. Given that reality, will we ever be able to fix the gospel?

- s. In light of this, according to 2 Corinthians 2:16 (page 4), are we adequate for the task of witnessing?

- t. In 2 Corinthians 2:17 (page 4), what then is our application?

- u. In 2 Corinthians 2:17 (page 4), do we try to fix the gospel?

- v. What are the two requirements given to us in verse 17?

Character Trait:

Action:

- w. As you reflect on this passage, you find that for God, a Christian with (1) a proper knowledge of the gospel, (2) a sincere heart and (3) an unashamed willingness to speak up is qualified to witness. How is this freeing for the Christian?

In the following section a topic is given concerning our witness, and then a passage or passages of Scripture are provided. First, read the topic; then reflect on your own life in the light of each of the verse(s). Last, record the central teaching of the passage as it pertains to not being ashamed of the gospel.

3. **Your own witness – proactive** (Speaking out publically for Christ)
(Read/Reflect/Record)

Mark 8:38: *"or whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

2 Timothy 1:7-8

7 *For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*

8 *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,*

2 Timothy 1:12: *For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

2 Timothy 2:15: *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*

4. **Our own witness – reactive** (Confidently responding to either direct questions or public statements which question your faith)
(Read/Reflect/Record)

Proverbs 22:20-21

20 *Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge,*

21 *To make you know the certainty of the words of truth that you may correctly answer to him who sent you?*

Colossians 4:5-6

5 *Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.*

6 *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*

1 Peter 3:15: *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;*

5. **By others** (Your response to the public witness of others when it is looked on in a disparaging way by the world) (Read/Reflect/Record)

2 Timothy 1:8-9

8 *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,*

9 *who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,*

Galatians 2:11-14

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- 6. It will always be viewed as foolish** (Your response to the prospect of being laughed at or looked down on because of your witness)
(Read/Reflect/Record)

1 Corinthians 1:18-21

18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, 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, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

B. Ashamed of the Gospel: Content

Just as serious an issue but not as commonly thought of or addressed is the tendency of man to not only be ashamed of the gospel in terms of its presentation but also in terms of its content.

I can remember as a young Christian hoping against hope that in the course of my witnessing, "If only they will not bring up the seven day creation" or "If only they will not bring up Paul's statements on women." In fact, when embarrassing aspects of the gospel came up, such as election or the virgin

birth, I would often gloss over them and even “fix” them. These were the embarrassing parts of the Word of God. Why distract from the good stuff or dwell on these issues unduly. The best thing to do was to avoid them and, if they came up, divert the attention of those I was talking to as quickly as possible. It was a good thing for God that He had me because He had included all sorts of embarrassing information in the Word of God that would keep people from being saved.

Can you believe my audacity, my pride? Yet, if we are honest with ourselves, most people have aspects of the gospel, the Word of God, that they are ashamed of. While we disparage cults like the Mormons because they withhold offensive things from people until they have them “hooked,” we as Christians many times decide certain issues which God the Holy Spirit has intentionally included in His divine revelation to man must be withheld in order to not confuse the issue.

In the following section a topic is given concerning the aspect of the gospel that tends to cause embarrassment; then a passage or passages of Scripture are provided. First read the topic, then reflect on your own life in the light of each verse(s). Last, record the central teaching of the passage as it pertains to not being ashamed of the gospel.

1. The specific teaching of a seven day creation (Read/Reflect/Record)

Genesis 2:2-3

2 And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Exodus 20:11: For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Hebrews 4:4: *For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works,"*

2. A personal God who is our creator (Read/Reflect/Record)

Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Genesis 1:27: *And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

3. Identifying man's problem as sin (Read/Reflect/Record)

Isaiah 53:6: *All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.*

Romans 3:10-12

10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;

11 There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God;

12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one."

4. Exclusive nature of the gospel (Read/Reflect/Record)

John 14:6: *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."*

Acts 4:12: *And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."*

5. The doctrine of election (Read/Reflect/Record)

John 15:16: *"you did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."*

Romans 8:29-30

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 8:33: *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies.*

6. The doctrine of grace (Simplicity) (Read/Reflect/Record)

Ephesians 2:5: *even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*

9 *not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*

7. The doctrine of the blood of Christ (Read/Reflect/Record)

Ephesians 2:13: *But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

1 Peter 1:18-19

18 *knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,*

19 *but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

8. The doctrine of the virgin birth (Read/Reflect/Record)

Matthew 1:18-23

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.

20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

9. Jesus, the miracle worker, not just the teacher (Read/Reflect/Record)

Acts 2:22: "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know."

10. The suffering and physical death of Jesus (Read/Reflect/Record)

Acts 5:30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross."

Hebrews 2:9: *But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

11. The bodily resurrection of Christ (Read/Reflect/Record)

Matthew 28:5-7

5 *And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.*

6 *"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.*

7 *"And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."*

12. Hell: The consequences of rejection is eternal judgment and torture (Read/Reflect/Record)

Luke 12:5: *But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!*

Hebrews 9:27: *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,*

13. Authority and the Inspired Word of God – Use of the Word of God in Witnessing (Read/Reflect/Record)

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12: *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

1 Corinthians 1:17-21

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.

18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, 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, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

A. Ashamed of the Gospel: Appeal

Still others are ashamed or embarrassed by the appeal which comes with the gospel presentation.

As long as it is a straightforward presentation of facts, they are comfortable. Others are comfortable if it takes on the form of telling someone off or winning an argument. But to appeal, to beg, to beseech, to persuade, now that is embarrassing. It is viewed as beneath the intellectual dignity of the gospel. Some have come to confuse the loftiness of the message and the authority of the Word with the bearer of the message—namely, themselves. It is beneath them to beg, to beseech, to appeal, to persuade. The best thing for many of us is to share the gospel as quickly as possible, get it out of the way and move on. “Whew, glad I got that over with.” But is that the expectation of God? Besides the dissemination of information does He expect us to make an earnest appeal? Does He expect us to continue on and try to persuade men to come to Christ? If it is not beneath God nor inconsistent with God’s divine nature and dignity to appeal to us, then it should not be beneath God’s ministers to do the same.

As you read the passages below reflect on the Holy Spirit’s expectation of our gospel witness. Is it to be beneath us to beg, beseech, appeal and persuade?

In the following section a topic is given concerning the Holy Spirit’s expectation of our gospel witness; then a passage or passages of Scripture are provided. First read the topic, then reflect on your own life in the light of each of the verse(s). Last, record the central teaching of the passage as it pertains to not being ashamed of the gospel. (Read/Reflect/Record)

Jeremiah 38:19-20

19 *Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I dread the Jews who have gone over to the Chaldeans, lest they give me over into their hand and they abuse me.”*

20 *But Jeremiah said, “They will not give you over. **Please obey the LORD in what I am saying** to you, that it may go well with you and you may live.”*

Luke 14:23: *“And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and **compel them to come in**, that my house may be filled.’”*

Acts 2:40: *And with many other words he solemnly testified and **kept on exhorting them**, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"*

Acts 18:4: *And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and **trying to persuade Jews and Greeks**.*

Acts 19:8: *And he entered the synagogue and continued **speaking out boldly** for three months, reasoning and **persuading them** about the kingdom of God.*

Acts 26:27-29

27 *"King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."*

28 *And Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you **will persuade me** to become a Christian."*

29 *And Paul said, "**I would to God**, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."*

Acts 28:23: *And when they had set a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, **and trying to persuade them** concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.*

1 Corinthians 9:19-22

19 *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, **that I might win the more.***

20 *And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law;*

21 *to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.*

22 *To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that **I may by all means save some.***

2 Corinthians 5:11: *therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, **we persuade men**, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.*

2 Corinthians 5:20: *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we **beg you on behalf of Christ**, be reconciled to God.*

2 Corinthians 6:1: *And working together with Him, **we also urge you** not to receive the grace of God in vain--*

II. *...for it is the power of God for salvation...*

A. Does your testimony witness to the power of God or to your own efforts and experiences?

1. When you share the gospel, do you feel your summation or paraphrase of a verse is better than quoting the verse itself? Do you feel like you can “fix” the Bible?
2. Do you feel that quoting the Bible is too religious and just a little bit embarrassing?
3. When you share the gospel, do you fix the content to make it more palatable? Are the rough edges of the gospel presentation a little bit embarrassing to you?
4. Do you have complete confidence in the power of the gospel for salvation or is it just a good starting point?

B. The “Powerful Testimony”

1. What comes to mind when you hear this phrase?
2. If you were invited to hear a testimony and it was introduced as “a really powerful testimony,” what would you expect to hear?

POWER

1411 *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is); from 1410; force (literally or figuratively); specially, miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself): KJV-- ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

ABILITY, ABLE

1. *dunamis* ^1411^ is (a) "power, ability," physical or moral, as residing in a person or thing; (b) "power in action," as, e. g., when put forth in performing miracles. It occurs 118 times in the NT. It is sometimes used of the miracle or sign itself, the effect being put for the cause, e. g., <Mark 6:5>, frequently in the Gospels and Acts. In <1 Cor. 14:11> it is rendered "meaning"; "force" would be more accurate. Cf., the corresponding verbs, B, 1, 2, 3 and the adjective C. 1, below.

(Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.)

3. Do you view these testimonies as more able to reach the lost than the corresponding “weak” testimonies?

4. I sometimes hear people say, “I don’t really have a powerful testimony.” What do they mean by this?

5. How does the term “powerful testimony” and the resulting devaluation of the testimonies of those who were raised in Christian homes devalue the power and authority of the Word of God, the gospel of Christ?

6. In-so called powerful testimonies, the Word of God is often replaced by lengthy descriptions of sin and the word “power” is often, in reality, dramatic. How does this reduce the confidence of the average Christian in the Word of God and power of the simple gospel?

7. Why do we think of someone who lived in sin and degradation as being more evident of the power of the gospel than someone who was diligently and obediently raised in the faith by God-fearing parents and, as a result, never experienced the sin and degradations of this perverse generation?

8. According to Ephesians 2:1-3 what traits do we all share?

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

9. This is called the Doctrine of the Depravity of Man. One aspect of this depravity is that we are all spiritually dead.
 - a. Is someone who dies peacefully in their sleep less dead than someone who is horribly maimed and burns to death in a car wreck?
 - b. If you were to come upon these two individuals some five hours after they died, which would be easier to raise from the dead?
 - c. Although one may visually seem more dead than the other, although one's death may visually seem uglier than the other, although raising one may seem to be more difficult than the other, in reality they are both equally dead; and the miracle of one would be the same as the other. This is true as well with our spiritual death and rebirth. The salvation of some may seem to be more powerful than the salvation of others, but in reality they are equal in power. We were all equally dead.

- d. In ancient times the buried bodies of enemies were often dug up, burned and the ashes cast into a river. Did this make them more dead?

- e. After your death, if this were done to you, would it be more difficult for God to raise you up than for someone who was embalmed and buried in a tomb?

- f. How does this apply to so-called “powerful testimonies”?

- g. In truth, we all have powerful testimonies. In truth, we all lead gross and disgusting lives before we came to Christ, some in culturally acceptable ways and some in culturally unacceptable ways; but Ephesians 2:1-3 was equally at work in us. It may **seem** to the naked eye to be less or more powerful, but the spiritual reality is that all testimonies are powerful. In fact, the “powerful” testimony is often instead of “powerful” a dramatic description of sin which appeals to our curiosity and desire for the emotional excitement which accompanies it, while the “mundane” testimony is instead a clear representation of God’s plan for the family and a “powerful” testimony of the Word of God at work in multiple generations.

C. Given the reality of the Doctrine of the Depravity of Man, are there those you feel are beyond the power of God for salvation?

There are times when we are embarrassed of the gospel because we simply feel that the target or audience is beyond the power of God for salvation. We wish it were not so, but to tell the truth we are a little ashamed of the gospel’s ineffectiveness as it pertains to these individuals or people groups. The gospel, having been proven in our eyes to be impotent in the face of these people or individuals, is safely hidden and protected from embarrassment as are we. Why needlessly expose the weakness of the gospel and our own weakness in associating ourselves with it by seeking to witness to the unreachable?

In the section below consider the class of people or individuals given in the topic. Then reflect on your own attitude towards the power of the gospel as it pertains to this class. Last, record your own reflections. Are you ashamed of the gospel in terms of its inability to touch certain people?

1. Too wicked (Read/Reflect/Record)

1 Timothy 1:15-16

15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

16 And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

2. Too powerful or influential (Read/Reflect/Record)

Philippians 4:22: *All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.*

3. Too dangerous or threatening (Read/Reflect/Record)

Philippians 1:12-14

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

4. Too fanatically devoted to another religion (Read/Reflect/Record)

Acts 9:1-22

1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;

4 and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*"

5 And he said, *"Who art Thou, Lord?"* And He said, *"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,*

6 *but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do."*

7 And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one.

8 And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, *"Ananias."* And he said, *"Behold, here am I, Lord."*

11 And the Lord said to him, *"Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,*

12 *and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."*

13 But Ananias answered, *"Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem;*

14 *and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name."*

15 But the Lord said to him, *"Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;*

16 *for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."*

17 And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, *"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized;

19 and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,

20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, *"He is the Son of God."*

21 And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, *"Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?"*

22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

5. Too remote (Read/Reflect/Record)

Acts 1:8: *but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

Rev 5:9: *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."*

6. Too intellectual, philosophical (Read/Reflect/Record)

Acts 17:16-21

16 *Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols.*

17 *So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.*

18 *And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. And some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities"-- because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.*

19 *And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?"*

20 *"For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; we want to know therefore what these things mean."*

21 *(Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)*

Acts 17:34: *But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.*

1 Corinthians 1:19-21

19 *For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."*

20 *Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*

21 *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

7. Too Spiritually Oppressed (Read/Reflect/Record)

Luke 8:29-34

29 *For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert.*

30 *And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him.*

31 *And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.*

32 *Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.*

33 *And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.*

34 *And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country.*

8. Too Wealthy (Read/Reflect/Record)

Luke 19:2-9

2 *And behold, there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax-gatherer, and he was rich.*

3 *And he was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.*

4 *And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.*

5 *And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."*

6 *And he hurried and came down, and received Him gladly.*

7 *And when they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."*

8 *And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."*

9 *And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham."*

9. Too Intimidating (Read/Reflect/Record)

Acts 16:27-33

27 *And when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.*

28 *But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!"*

29 *And he called for lights and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas,*

30 *and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

31 *And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."*

32 *And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.*

33 *And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.*

10. Too Familiar (Read/Reflect/Record)

John 1:40-42

40 *One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

41 *He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).*

42 *He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).*

III. *...to everyone who believes...*

EVERYONE 3956 *pas* (pas); including all the forms of declension; apparently a primary word; all, any, every, the whole: KJV-- all (manner of, means), alway (-s), any (one), X daily, + ever, every (one, way), as many as, + no (-thing), X thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

ALL 1. *pas* ^3956^ radically means "all." Used without the article it means "every," every kind or variety. So the RV marg. in <Eph. 2:21>, "every building," and the text in <3:15>, "every family," and the RV marg. of <Acts 2:36>, "every house"; or it may signify "the highest degree," the maximum of what is referred to, as, "with all boldness" <Acts 4:29>. Before proper names of countries, cities and nations, and before collective terms, like "Israel," it signifies either "all" or "the whole," e. g., <Matt. 2:3; Acts 2:36>. Used with the article, it means the whole of one object. In the plural it signifies "the totality of the persons or things referred to." Used without a noun it virtually becomes a pronoun, meaning "everyone" or "anyone." In the plural with a noun it means "all." The neuter singular denotes "everything" or "anything whatsoever." One form of the neuter plural (*panta*) signifies "wholly, together, in all ways, in all things," <Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 9:25>. The neuter plural without the article signifies "all things severally," e. g., <John 1:3; 1 Cor. 2:10>; preceded by the article it denotes "all things," as constituting a whole, e. g., <Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9>. See EVERY, Note (1), WHOLE. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.)

A. Who have you given up on?

Think through the people you know. Are there any that you feel are just beyond your ability to win for Christ? They are just so wicked, so depraved, so evil, so lost that it is just not going to happen and would be embarrassing to even try. Are you ashamed to share Christ with these people? Are you ashamed of the gospel's inability to reach them? Do you really believe that the gospel is for everyone?

What about categories of people who live in their sin and depravity. Are there some you would rather go to Hell than be saved?

Homosexuals
Drug Addicts

Mass Murderers
Satanists

Pedophiles

What would your response have been to:

Paul?

The Demonic?

Praetorian Guard?

Read the following passage and reflect on it in terms of your own embarrassment as it pertains to the universal call of the gospel and your own embarrassment and lack of faith.

- Would you have given up on this man?
- Would he be easier to reach than the men on your list?

Luke 8:29-34

29 For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert.

30 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion" for many demons had entered him.

31 And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

33 And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.

34 And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country.

Luke 8:38-39

38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying,

39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

B. Who would you rather just go to Hell?

1. Is there anyone in your life that you would rather they go to Hell than come to Christ? From the current events of the day, who would fall into this category?

2. From the events of world history, who would fall into this category?

3. If you lived in the time of Paul, how would you feel toward him if he had executed some of those within your own home and church?

Galatians 1:13-14

13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it;

14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

IV. ...to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

GREEK

1672 *Hellen* (hel'-lane); from 1671; a Hellen (Grecian) or inhabitant of Hellas; by extension a Greek-speaking person, especially a non-Jew: KJV-- Gentile, Greek. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

GENTILES

2. *hellen* ^1672^ originally denoted the early descendants of Thessalian Hellas; then, Greeks as opposed to barbarians, <Rom. 1:14>. It became applied to such Gentiles as spoke the Greek language, e. g., <Gal. 2:3; 3:28>. Since that was the common medium of intercourse in the Roman Empire, Greek and Gentile became more or less interchangeable terms. For this term the RV always adheres to the word "Greeks," e. g., <John 7:35; Rom. 2:9,10; 3:9; 1 Cor. 10:32>, where the local church is distinguished from Jews and Gentiles; <12:13>.

(Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.)

A. What place do the Jews play in your witness?

Romans 10:1: *Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.*

1 Corinthians 9:20: *And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law;*

1. Is there any place for racial prejudice against Jews in the Christian life?
2. What are some common prejudices against Jews?
3. What is God's priority in terms of salvation?
4. What then should our heart be like in terms of the Jews?
5. Are there any latent prejudices which you need to repent of in order to be an effective witness to Jews?

GENTILES A term used by Jewish people to refer to foreigners, or any other people who were not a part of the Jewish race.

The Jews were the Chosen People of God who had entered a covenant with God. God initiated the covenant with Abraham <Gen. 12:1-7> and affirmed it repeatedly through Israel's leaders and prophets.

Because of this covenant relationship, a feeling of exclusivism gradually developed among the Jews over a period of several centuries. In early Hebrew history, Gentiles or non-Jews were treated cordially by the Israelites <Deut. 10:19; Num. 35:15; Ezek. 47:2>. Men of Israel often married Gentile women, including Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. However, after the Hebrews returned from their period of CAPTIVITY in Babylon, the practice of intermarriage was discouraged <Ezra 9:12; 10:2-44; Neh. 10:30>. Separation between Jews and Gentiles became increasingly strict; by the New Testament period the hostility was complete. The persecution of the Jews by the Greeks and Romans from about 400 B. C. to the New Testament era caused the Jews to retaliate with hatred for all Gentiles and to avoid all contact with foreigners.

(Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986.)

B. How does seeing yourself as a Greek or Gentile effect your witness?

1. Read the passage below and ask yourself how you, a Gentile, may have come to view non-Christians as Gentiles, just as the Jews did 2,000 years ago.
2. What adjustments need to be made in your life to avoid this hypocrisy?

1 Corinthians 9:21-23

21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.

22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.

23 And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

- C. In James 1:23-25** God's Word is described as a mirror which we use to see our true nature in terms of obedience. Again, in Hebrews 4:12 it is described as a sword that judges the thoughts and intentions of our heart. In the following project write a brief statement concerning your life as it is exposed to the truth of God's Word in Romans 1:16. First, read the segment and then record your thoughts.

God's Word

My Life

I am not ashamed of the Gospel...

...power of God for salvation...

...to everyone who believes...

...to the Jew first and also to the Greek

Quiet Times Alone With God—Jeremiah 15:16—Chapter 11 Theme: Not Ashamed of the Gospel
Part Two

Passage for Meditation: Mark 8:38

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: 1 Corinthians 1:18-21

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: Galatians 2:11-14

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Quiet Times Alone With God—Jeremiah 15:16—Chapter 11 Theme: Not Ashamed of the Gospel
Part Two

Passage for Meditation: 2 Timothy 1:7-9

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: 2 Timothy 1:12

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: 2 Timothy 2:15

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?