

LESSON 7 The Church's Impact on the World

In the last lesson, we saw that believers have responsibilities to other believers. All believers are part of God's family. Christians have a special contact with brothers and sisters in Christ.

But the church also has a duty to non-believers. A Christian must never be so concerned about other believers that he forgets about those outside the church. In this lesson, we will look at the believer's duty to unbelievers.

Like other lessons in this study, you must apply what you learn. God is not pleased if we know what to do, but do not do it. James writes, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17). Let us apply this lesson by doing the things we are taught.

The Plan

- A. Believers Oppose Evil
- B. Believers Announce the Gospel
- C. Believers Send and Support Workers

The Goals

1. Explain how the believer can oppose evil.
2. Define the word *evangelize*.
3. Explain why workers must be sent out and supported by the church.

A. BELIEVERS OPPOSE EVIL

Goal 1. Explain how the believer can oppose evil.

Godly people should be known by their godly actions. Jesus said to His disciples, “You are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). But if salt does not do what it is supposed to do, it is worthless. He continued, “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). But a light should not be hidden—it should shine. “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

When a person becomes a Christian, he or she begins a new life. No longer must the person take pleasure in evil or sinful things, but he or she must do those things that please God. Just as salt changes the taste of food, and as light changes darkness, the Christian's godly life influences others to do good. In this way, Christians are a force against evil.

I once read the life story of a young man named Nicky, an infamous gang leader who fought and killed people and used illegal drugs. But, one day, someone told him about God's love—that he could have a new life in Christ Jesus. Nicky accepted Christ. He quit his gang and stopped fighting and killing. He also

started helping other young people who had similar problems. Nicky told them about the power of Jesus Christ and of God’s ability to help them overcome drug addiction and hatred of people.

By God’s grace, evil was defeated in Nicky’s life. But more than that, Nicky used his influence to stop evil. Nicky’s life became a light shining into the darkness of a sinful community.

Christians can restrain evil by their prayers, also. Abraham’s nephew, Lot, did not love God as Abraham did. Abraham, of course, was very concerned about his nephew. He tried to encourage Lot to serve God, but Lot wanted to live in a city that was known for its sin. Abraham prayed for his nephew, and because of Abraham’s prayers, God saved Lot from being destroyed with the wicked city. Read Abraham’s prayer in Genesis 18:22–33.

Application

- 1 Fill in the blank with the correct word.
 - a) Jesus compared Christians to and
 - b) The things that happened to Nicky show that a Christian can fight against
 - c) The life of Abraham shows that those who love God should for those who do not love God.



B. BELIEVERS ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL

Goal 2. Define the word *evangelize*.

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi concerning the duties of Christians:

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. (Philippians 2:14–16)

Paul says it is not enough just to live a godly life. We must also offer to the world the message of life. The gospel must be told in words and deed.

Jesus said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This passage is often called “The Great Commission.” Mark records a similar passage, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Here the word *preach* does not mean a formal speech before a group. It means simply to tell or announce. Not every believer can preach but every Christian can tell the gospel. Often the word *evangelize* is used, which means “to announce the good news.” Every believer must obey Christ’s words to announce the gospel and make disciples.

As we learned in the last lesson, God wants His church to grow. The early church was a growing church. Three thousand people were added to the church in a single day (Acts 2:41). Growth is normal for the body of Christ. A church that is not growing is not a healthy church.

Application

2 Choose the best answer of each two given in parentheses, and write it in the blank.

a) In Matthew 28:19, the word *preach* means
 (give a sermon)(tell the gospel)

b) The word *evangelize* means
 (announce the good news) (preach)

3 What are you doing to fulfill the great commission? When were new believers added to your group? Make a list of those to whom you should speak about Christ. Pray for each one. Speak to each one.

.....

4 Look back over this lesson and list two duties of the church.

a)

b)

C. BELIEVERS SEND AND SUPPORT WORKERS

Goal 3. Explain why workers must be sent out and supported by the church.

The church must tell the good news. In Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 is the word *go*. Sometimes Christians do not need to go far to tell the gospel message. But other times, Christians need to go to a different area. The gospel must be told in areas where there are no believers. Jesus told His disciples that “repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:47). (The word *nations* includes tribes or groups of people.) The church has a large task, but God has promised us His Holy Spirit. Jesus promised the disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

The early church obeyed by sending out workers.

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1–3)

This passage gives us a model to follow. I will list some of the principles shown in this passage.

1. The men who were sent were faithful in a ministry in their home church.
2. The decision was made after much prayer.

3. The men felt the call of God, and the church sent them.

The workers were sent by God and by the church. After the workers returned, they reported to the church. "On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).

Application

5 (Choose the best answer.) The command to go and tell the good news means to go

- a)** to all your neighbors who are living nearby.
- b)** a great distance to spread the gospel in foreign lands.
- c)** to those who have not heard the good news, whether nearby or far away.

6 Sending of workers is something which is done by the

- a)** person who goes.
 - b)** church leaders only.
 - c)** church and the Lord.
-

The church should support workers sent by the church. It would be sad if workers were sent out and then forgotten. The church must pray for its workers. Paul urged the church at Rome: "Join me in my struggle by praying to God for me" (Romans 15:30). To the church at Colossae, he wrote, "Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains" (Colossians 4:3). Workers who have been sent out are still part of the assembly. We must pray for them.

Paul also thanked the churches for sending him money. (See Romans 15:24, Philippians 2:25 and 4:15.) Workers who are sent out need money to do the work God has called them to do.

Application

7 Circle the letter in front of the correct answers. When the workers were sent out by the early church, the church

- a) supported them by gifts.
- b) continued to pray for them.
- c) criticized the results of their ministry.

8 Think about your church.

a) Write the name of a worker who was sent out by your church.

.....

b) Have you supported him or her with prayer and money?

.....

9 Do you know of a tribe or area where the gospel of Christ is not known? Write its name here.

.....

Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2).

10 Look back over this entire lesson and list at least three duties that Christians have to unbelievers.

.....

.....



Check Your Answers

10 Any three of these:

- Do good, thereby oppose evil.
- Pray for the unbelievers.
- Tell the good news.
- Send and support workers.

1 a) salt and light.

b) sin or evil.

c) pray.

9 Your own answer.

2 a) Tell the gospel.

b) Announce the good news.

8 Your own answer.

3 Your own list of names.

7 a) supported them by gifts.

b) continued to pray for them.

4 a) Do good and therefore restrain evil.

b) Announce the good news.

6 c) church and the Lord.

5 c) go to those who have not heard the good news, whether nearby or far away.