THE APOSTLES

Their Lives and Messages

PositiveAction
FOR CHRIST

The Apostles: Their Lives and Messages Teacher's Manual
By Frank Hamrick

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First edition by Frank Hamrick
Edited and expanded by Christa Lord
Managing Editor: C.J. Harris, Ph.D.
Designer: Shannon Brown

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Introduction

Who were Christ's Apostles? Maybe you can rattle off a list of names or even a few facts about these people, Jesus' prominent followers. You may have heard about their expansive missionary work, miraculous healings, or explosive sermons. But as you study their service to Christ, it's easy to forget that these men weren't always saints.

God didn't use these people to do great things because they were the best He could find. In fact, if you examine their lives closely, you might question why God would pick these men at all. Christ chose a thief, a terrorist, a murderer, social outcasts, uneducated fishermen, and utter nobodies—people that many of us would overlook and avoid.

But God had a plan for His Apostles, just as He does for each believer today. He taught them, encouraged their simple faith, and led them to spread the gospel. As you study the great accomplishments of the early church, you won't simply admire the work of the Apostles themselves, but rather the power of their God.

The purpose of this study is not only to give students a greater knowledge of the Apostles' lives, but also to give them a view of Christ's transforming, enabling power in action.

We pray this study will be a blessing and a challenge to you and your students as you watch God's grace at work.

Frank Hamrick

Teacher's Manual Components

Teacher's Lesson

Each lesson begins with a list of objectives highlighting the main purpose of the lesson's material.

Next you'll find the main biblical texts. These can be read to the class before the lesson but may serve you better if you read them during the lesson. You'll want to read these passages ahead of time to familiarize yourself with the content and take notes.

The teacher's lesson begins with an introduction, which briefly reviews the previous lesson and gives a preview of the current lesson's topics.

Next comes the main body of the teacher's lesson, which includes teaching material, discussion questions, contextual information, and application sections.

Student Manual Facsimiles

The teacher's manual includes facsimiles of the student manual pages. Here you'll find the teacher's lesson outline with answers filled in the blanks.

Quizzes

Optional quizzes are provided with this study. If you don't want to offer quizzes as a graded component, consider using them for review at the beginning of class time, or let students take them home to use as a study tool.

Extra Resources

In the back of this teacher's manual, you'll find some extra resources to enrich the teacher's lessons.

Appendix: Review

This study ends with an optional review. You may wish to hold an informal question and answer time as part of the review. After finishing Lesson Fifteen, ask the students to bring any relevant questions to your next meeting. Collect the questions earlier if you want to prepare answers ahead of time.

You may wish to encourage your students to discuss the answers to these questions. They will learn more by figuring out the answers themselves than simply by hearing a lecture.

The review also contains short answer and true/false questions, as well as suggestions for games. If you choose to do review games, consider getting small rewards ahead of time as incentives to participate.

Glossaries

Both the teacher's manual and student manual contain glossaries for people, places, and terms. Frequently encourage students to look up unfamiliar words.

Maps

This section provides two maps—one depicting notable places during Christ's ministry, and the other showing places related to Paul's life and ministry.

LESSON ONE

Disciples and Apostles

OBJECTIVES

- Differentiate between disciples and apostles, while reviewing the characteristics of each
- Explore the root words for "disciple" and "apostle"
- Recognize the exclusivity of the special Apostles and their purpose for the early church
- Note the duties of Apostles

MAIN TEXT:

Matthew 10:1–8

Teacher's Lesson

Teacher's Note: This lesson is longer than the rest of the lessons in this study. It provides foundational material for later lessons, so feel free to adjust the content according to your class' needs. You can summarize sections if you find content remedial, or you can take two classes to teach if you wish to cover all the content of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Christ used special terms to refer to His followers. We'll look at what those terms mean and what they indicate about following Christ.

Read Matthew 10:1–8.

DISCUSS

This passage uses two terms to refer to two groups—disciples and apostles. What's the difference between them?

DISCIPLES

DEFINITION OF A DISCIPLE

A disciple is a learner

The word *disciple* means "a student," one who learns from a teacher. The Greek word used in the New Testament for disciple is *mathetes* (mä-thā-tā's). When a Bible scholar named Jerome translated the New Testament from Greek to Latin, he used the word *discipulus* (dĭs-kíp-u-lus), from which we get our English word disciple.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DISCIPLES

CONTEXT

During the time of Jesus, disciples were men who dedicated their time to learning from a rabbi—a Jewish teacher of the Talmud. As the central text of Judaism, the Talmud contained two parts: the written Torah—which contains the Hebrew Bible and other writings—and an oral commentary on the Torah.

Many Jewish religious leaders felt that Jesus was trying to throw out the Law with His new teaching. But Jesus said that wasn't His intention (Matt. 5:17–20). Rather, He came to fulfill the Law because He is the only person who could obey it perfectly.

A new identity

Discipleship not only required a different way of life, but a new identity as well. A disciple came to be associated with his teacher and could expect to share that teacher's reputation.

Christ made the point that people would treat His followers even worse than they treated Him (Matt. 10:24–25). He also stated that a disciple was not equal to a teacher but would become like him when that disciple had been trained (Luke 6:40).

Followers of Christ become more like Him as they learn from Him. First, we receive a new spiritual identity at salvation. Second Corinthians 5:17–18 says that we become new creatures in Christ. Our old sin nature is dead, and we're given a new nature. Second, we grow more like Christ as God continues to transform us spiritually in the process of sanctification (2 Cor. 3:18). So those who follow Christ experience a change of identity, not only externally, but internally as well.

A new way of life

Disciples in Jesus' time sacrificed many comforts to follow a teacher. They often traveled with a rabbi and supported him in material ways.

Christ taught that His followers must meet certain requirements. They must give Christ priority over family (Matt. 8:21), home (Matt. 8:20), and personal gain (Matt. 19:21–22). A disciple must be prepared to endure hardship and even death (Luke 14:27).

> **APPLICATION**
>
> A growing believer in Christ will have a hunger to know God personally. There's a huge difference between someone who simply knows about God and a person who knows God personally. Which type of person are you?

A new purpose

Christ said that a true disciple would abide in God's Word (John 8:31). This meant that a disciple would continue to practice the master's teaching, allowing it to change his heart.

Disciples learned so they could one day teach other disciples. They weren't supposed to soak up the rabbi's teaching and then do nothing with it. Christ knew the time would come when He would no longer instruct His disciples personally, so He trained them and then commissioned them to teach His words to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

> **APPLICATION**
>
> What are you doing with your knowledge of God? Are you teaching it to others? Do you remain in God's Word and allow it to transform your life?

EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLES

Moses' Disciples

Some Jewish religious leaders referred to themselves as Moses' disciples (John 9:28). They rejected Jesus because His teachings conflicted with their beliefs.

John the Baptist's Disciples

Andrew and the unnamed disciple followed John the Baptist before they met Jesus (John 1:35, 40). John's disciples appear several times in the Gospels (Luke 7:18, 11:1; John 3:25, 4:1). They understood that John taught about the coming Messiah, but some seemed reluctant to believe that Jesus actually was that Messiah.

Jesus' Disciples

When we talk about Jesus' disciples, we usually think of the Twelve Disciples. But Jesus had other disciples besides the Twelve. Some followed Him openly, and some followed secretly, like Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38).

- John 6:66—Many of Jesus' early disciples left because they couldn't accept what Jesus taught about Himself.

- Luke 8:1–3—Many women followed Jesus and supported Him.
- Luke 24:13–14—Cleopas and an unnamed disciple learned from Jesus after the resurrection.
- 1 Cor. 15:6—Paul states that after His resurrection, Christ appeared to over 500 followers at one time.
- Acts 6:1—Luke writes that after Jesus' resurrection, many more people followed Christ.

CONTEXT

Even though Christ chose all men as His most prominent Apostles, the lessons we learn from the apostles apply to women as well as men.

While the Twelve Disciples were all men, many women followed Christ throughout His ministry (Matt. 27:55; Luke 8:1–3; Acts 1:14). The culture of Christ's day restricted the activities of women, such as not allowing them to attend religious training or to give witness in court. So it must have been amazing that this Jewish Rabbi, Jesus, reached out to them, taught them, and held discourse with them (Matt. 14:21; Luke 10:39; John 4).

Women also took part in the activities of the early church.

- They prayed (Acts 1:14)
- They received instruction (Luke 10:39; 2 John 1)
- They prophesied and taught (Acts 2:17; 21:9)
- They served others (Acts 9:36; Rom. 16:1)
- They worked alongside Paul in the gospel (Phil. 4:2–3)

While Christ didn't formally appoint women when He chose the Twelve Disciples, He still gave them the same Holy Spirit and used them in various capacities of ministry and in spreading the gospel.

Therefore, the lessons that Jesus taught to the Twelve Disciples apply to both men and women. We can appreciate Christ's inclusivity in both His teaching and commissioning (Gal. 3:28).

Over time, the disciples of Jesus changed from mere students and followers. The word *mathetes* is last used in Acts 21:16. The term *Christian* began to replace *disciple* in the early church, beginning with the believers at Antioch (Acts 11:26). These people were no longer students of a teacher. They made up a movement that followed Jesus.

Several New Testament writers refer to believers as *adelphos* (ä-del-fós), meaning "brothers and sisters." As the body of Christians grew, they became family.

[Teacher's Note: In this study, Christ's special apostles will be denoted as "the Apostles" and His chosen twelve as the "Twelve Disciples."]

APOSTLES

Look again at Matthew 10:1–2. Christ addressed this group of followers as disciples and apostles. What is an apostle?

DEFINITION OF APOSTLE

"Sent one"

The word *apostle*, like disciple, is a transliteration—not a direct translation—of the Greek word *apostolos* (ä-pó-sto-los). It means "a messenger or delegate who is dispatched on a mission." (Definition from Strong's Concordance, G652.)

> ### CONTEXT
>
> A translation uses different words that share the same meaning. A transliteration means making up a new word that sounds like the foreign word and assigning the same meaning to it.
>
> Translation: *Discipulus* = student
>
> Transliteration: *Discipulus* = disciple
>
> Translation: *Apostolos* = sent one
>
> Transliteration: *Apostolos* = apostle

Apostolos Denoted God's Messengers

Writers of the New Testament used this particular word to refer to people who were trained personally by Christ and who were given special gifts to use for a limited time.

However, this word also applies in a general sense to any messenger sent by God for a specific mission.

- **Christ (Heb. 3:1)**

  Christ, "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," was sent out by God to conquer sin and death, and to teach about Himself.

- **Jewish preachers (Luke 11:49)**

  God commissioned special people to preach to the Jews, such as John the Baptist.

- **Missionaries (2 Cor. 8:23)**

  The word *missionary* indicates a person who is on a mission, like "visionary" refers to someone with a vision. In this verse, apostolos refers to those sent out by Paul to preach the gospel—Timothy, Titus, Silas, Barnabas, and others. These men had a mission to tell people about Christ and salvation.

  So from these verses, anyone commissioned by God for a specific mission can be called an apostle.

But God chose specific apostles to meet certain qualifications. He gave them special gifts to do their jobs.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOD'S SPECIAL APOSTLES (ACTS 1:12-26)

Now let's look at the special Apostles that Christ chose for a specific job. As the young church began to form after Christ's ascension, the Twelve Disciples assumed a special role devoted to ministry and preaching. These men had received teaching directly from Jesus and had followed Him closely. They witnessed firsthand the resurrection of Christ from the dead and His ascension into heaven.

Read Acts 1:12–26. In the company of many believers gathered together, Peter called for someone to fill Judas's place. He outlines three qualifications for this Apostle.

- A witness to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21–22; 1 Cor. 9:1)
- A follower and disciple of Christ, from His baptism to His ascension (Acts 1:21–22)
- One chosen directly by God (Matt. 10:1–2; Acts 1:23–24)
  Jesus personally called the Twelve Disciples. In Acts 1, the Apostles used an unusual method in which God chose Judas Iscariot's replacement.

CONTEXT—CASTING LOTS

What's the deal with "casting lots"?

Casting lots was a cultural practice that God sometimes used throughout the Bible to indicate His will to people. Unlike witchcraft and heathen divination—which God severely condemns (2 Chron. 33:6; 2 Kings 17:17; Micah 5:12)—casting lots was more like picking names from a hat. This practice occurred mainly in the Old Testament, and Acts 1 is the last recorded instance of it in the New Testament.

So why did the Apostles use this method to pick a replacement? There are several things to keep in mind when considering this question:

- The Apostles were not instructed by God to cast lots.
- No precedent for picking replacement Apostles existed as of yet. This was all new to them. At this point, the Holy Spirit hadn't come down on these believers. But the Apostles needed direct instructions from God.
- The Apostles and accompanying believers prayed before and during the choice. They were seeking God's will directly and asking Him for an answer to a specific question. Proverbs 16:33 states that God controls even the casting of lots, so they believed that God would reveal His will through this method.

With the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there's no need for casting lots today. God uses Scripture (Ps. 119:130), the counsel of other believers (1 Thess. 5:10–12), and the Holy Spirit to guide us in decision-making (John 14:26).

GOD GAVE SPECIAL GIFTS

God granted unusual abilities—such as healing and casting out demons living in people (Mark 3:14–15)—to further mark these special Apostles.

To Christ's Apostles (Matt. 10:5–15)

During Jesus' ministry, He commissioned His Twelve Disciples, and seventy-two other Apostles (Luke 10:1, 14–20), to preach, heal, and cast out demons.

To Apostles in the Early Church (Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:27–28)

Later, God gave these gifts to other Apostles, including Paul and many in the early church.

[Teacher's Note: The purpose and cessation of the sign gifts is covered in Lesson 14.]

DUTIES OF ALL APOSTLES

God commissioned the Apostles for a specific job. While the Apostles fulfilled these responsibilities in a special way, God commands us to fulfill them as well.

To Witness (Rom. 10:14–15)

The apostles had a mission to preach about the Messiah and His resurrection from the dead. Christ gave them a plan to follow right before His ascension, found in Acts 1:8.

The Book of Acts reveals that the apostles started in Jerusalem, moved into the surrounding area (Judea), then into Samaria, and finally spread out into most of the known world. Some went westward through Turkey to Italy, France, Spain, and England. Others moved southward to Egypt and Ethiopia. Some went north into what is now Russia. And others moved east through Mesopotamia to Babylon, Iran, India, and China. Within their lifetimes, the apostles spread the gospel and started churches in much of the whole known world.

To Authenticate Doctrine (1 John 4:1–6)

Another duty of apostles was to test, or authenticate, doctrine. We must compare everything we hear to God's truth. The Apostles performed a special role in validating truth by recording Scripture under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The imperative of correcting false doctrine shows up in a number of Paul's writings. He instructed the overseers to preach truth and remain on guard against false teachers, as some of these teachers would come from inside the church itself (see Acts 20:29–31).

Today, we benefit from the Apostles' work. Note the following verses:

- Ephesians 2:19–22—The Apostles founded the church.

- Acts 2:42—The early church followed the doctrine that the Apostles taught, instead of following the Apostles themselves. The Apostles did not set up a system of priesthood over the church, and certainly they did not want to replace Christ's leadership.

DISCUSSION

Thinking about how our church today is derived from the early church, why do you think it was important that the Apostles didn't hold office in the early churches?

Roman Catholic teaching holds that the Apostles did rule over churches; in fact, they claim that Peter was the first pope—ruling over the churches of Rome—and that Thomas ruled over Indian churches. But there is no biblical proof of this. If the Apostles had indeed held office, danger would arise in the form of upholding an institution—and ultimately, tradition—instead of preaching Christ's gospel. No tradition, organization, or system is more important than preaching Christ.

To Remain Loyal to God (2 Tim. 2:1–7)

Finally, God expects His apostles to be loyal, willing even to die for Him. This doesn't mean we are fanatic, martyrdom crazies who enjoy suffering. But as bearers of God's truth, we can expect opposition and persecution as we live for God and share His love.

The Apostles certainly experienced opposition, but by God's grace, they stuck to their mission. Christ foretold the sufferings of the Twelve (Matt. 20:23). Although the Bible does not record all of their deaths, eleven of the Twelve Disciples died martyr's deaths, according to tradition.

God will not necessarily call all of us to die for Him, but He does call us to live for Him. Sometimes it seems like dying for Him would be easier. God commands us to hold fast; He will give us all the help and strength we need to be loyal to Him.

These Duties Are for Every Believer

God instructs all of His "sent ones"—that is, all believers—to carry out the duties of apostles. Review the following:

- Apostles must witness
- Apostles must test doctrine
- Apostles must remain loyal to God

APPLICATION

As a believer, are you fulfilling your duty to give out the good news about Christ? Do you test all teaching against what God says in His Word? Do you show loyalty to God, choosing to obey Him rather than sin?

CONCLUSION

All believers are apostles—that is, messengers and representatives of Christ, on a mission for God. We have a duty to witness, to ensure the purity of biblical teaching, and to remain faithful to Christ.

We are also disciples. When we follow Christ, we have a new identify, way of life, and purpose.

In the next lesson, we'll begin studying the lives and ministries of Christ's special Apostles, beginning with the life of Andrew.

LESSON ONE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A learner or follower

2. Sent one, messenger

3–5. In any order: A new identity, a new way of life, a new purpose

LESSON ONE QUIZ

Disciples and Apostles

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer

1. What is the meaning of "disciple"? _____

2. What does "apostle" mean? _____

According to Lesson One, what are the characteristics of disciples?

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

LESSON 1

Disciples and Apostles

MAIN TEXT:

Matthew 10:1–8

TEACHER'S LESSON OUTLINE

- Disciple
  - Definition of a Disciple
    - A disciple is a ***learner***
    - From *mathetes* (Gr.) and *discipulus* (Lat.)
  - Characteristics of Disciples
    - A new ***identity***
      - Christ stated that people would treat His followers worse than they treated Him (Matt. 10:24–25).
      - When trained, a disciple will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40).
    - A new way of ***life***
      - Christ has priority over…

        - **Family** (Matt. 8:21)
        - **Home** (Matt. 8:20)
        - **Personal gain** (Matt. 19:21–22)
    - A disciple must be willing to endure **hardship** and **death** (Luke 14:27).
  - A new **purpose**
    - A true disciple will **abide** in God's Word (John 8:31).
      - Allowing God's Word to transform the heart
      - Teaching God's Word to others

- Examples of Disciples
  - Moses' Disciples (John 9:28)
  - John the Baptist's Disciples (Luke 7:18)
  - Jesus' Disciples (John 6:66; Acts 6:1)
- Apostles
  - Definition of Apostle
    - "**Sent one**"
    - A **messenger** or **delegate** who is dispatched on a **mission** (Strong's Concordance)
    - From *apostolos* (Gr.)
  - *Apostolos* Denoted God's Messengers
    - **Christ** (Heb. 3:1)
    - **Jewish preachers** (Luke 11:49)
    - **Missionaries** (2 Cor. 8:23)
- Qualifications for God's Special Apostles (Acts 1:12–26)
  - A **Witness** to the Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 9:1)

- A ***Follower*** and ***Disciple*** of Christ (Acts 1:21–22)
  - From Christ's baptism to His ascension
- One ***Chosen*** Directly by ***God*** (Matt. 10:1–2)

◉ God Gave Special Gifts

- To Christ's ***Apostles*** (Matt. 10:5–15)
- To Apostles in the ***Early Church*** (Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:27–28)

◉ Duties of All Apostles

- To ***Witness*** (Rom. 10:14–15)
  - Christ commissioned His followers to preach the gospel all over the world.
- To ***Authenticate*** Doctrine (1 John 4:1–6)
  - Apostles ensured the purity of doctrine and tested all teaching against God's words.
- To Remain ***Loyal*** to God (2 Tim. 2:1–7)
  - Christ expected His apostles to be willing to die for Him, if necessary.

◉ These Duties Are for ***Every*** Believer

LESSON TWO:

Andrew

OBJECTIVES

- Note Andrew's background and discipleship
- Appreciate Andrew's ministry of bringing people to Jesus
- Examine motives and methods for witnessing

MAIN TEXT:

John 1:35–42; John 6:8–9; John 12:20–22

Teacher's Lesson

INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson, we studied disciples and apostles, noting the characteristics and duties of each. Christians today are both disciples and apostles, as we learn from Christ and fulfill His commission. We also looked at special Apostles and their qualifications and roles in the early church.

This lesson covers the life and ministry of Andrew, one of the first disciples called by Jesus.

ANDREW

Andrew is mentioned only twelve times in the Bible. We don't have accounts of Andrew preaching great sermons, doing miracles, or writing books. Most of the time, the Gospel writers refer to him only as Simon Peter's brother.

Though we may not consider Andrew's ministry particularly outstanding, his life made a great impact on the spread of the gospel. He is honored today as a national patron saint in Scotland, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia. Geographical landmarks, churches, and schools are named for him. But even more important

than receiving recognition from earthly institutions, Andrew has a place of honor in the future, New Jerusalem (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30).

ANDREW'S BACKGROUND

From Bethsaida, on the Northwest Shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44)

Andrew and Simon Peter grew up in Bethsaida on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. They both fished for a living.

News of John the Baptist must have spread into Galilee because both Andrew and an unnamed disciple traveled to Bethany (Bethabara) where John was preaching.

Brother of Simon Peter

John and James—a set of brothers who would also become Christ's disciples—lived in the same region and partnered with Andrew and Simon (Luke 5:10).

A Disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35, 37)

Andrew and the unnamed disciple had followed John the Baptist and identified themselves as disciples (John 1:37). They had a desire to understand John's message about repentance and the coming of Someone who was even more significant than John. People came from different regions all over Israel to hear John preach. After hearing the message, many repented and were baptized (Matt. 3:5–6).

One day, John startled his listeners with an announcement: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the world's sins!" John identified Jesus as the One he foretold. The Father's voice and the Holy Spirit's descent on Jesus gave evidence to Jesus' deity.

In response to John's words, Andrew and the unnamed disciple left John immediately to learn more about Jesus.

APPLICATION

Andrew had a desire to learn, and he was committed to finding the truth. Are you committed to learning about God? Do you spend time with God through the Bible and prayer?

ANDREW'S FAITH

His Discovery of the Messiah (John 1:41)

The two disciples followed Jesus and inquired where He was staying. Andrew had found a new teacher, and he and the other disciple stayed with Jesus until the next day.

After observing and learning from Jesus, Andrew identified Jesus as the promised Messiah. Such news could not be kept quiet. First, Andrew went to inform his brother, and he brought him to see this Messiah.

CONTEXT

The Messiah was Israel's promised deliverer. The Jews had awaited this deliverer for long centuries. Prophets talked about Him, and people longed for the freedom He would bring.

Although Old Testament prophecy implies the deity of the Messiah, the title of Messiah didn't necessarily indicate deity among the Jews in Jesus' time. So when people identified Jesus as Messiah or Christ, they weren't necessarily identifying Him as God (Matt. 22:42; John 4:25). Although Peter confessed Christ as God (Matt. 16:16), the disciples didn't seem to understand Jesus' deity until His resurrection.

Many would have probably thought Andrew's claim about the Messiah incredible. How could a poor, lowly fisherman from Galilee suddenly discover the long-anticipated Christ—the one whom the religious leaders had spent long years seeking? But Andrew's brother listened to him and went with him to see this Messiah.

His Call to Discipleship (Matt. 4:18–19)

Shortly after baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist was arrested by Herod (Matt. 4:12; 14:1). Jesus traveled to Galilee to preach. In Galilee, He called the first disciples.

Read Matthew 4:18–19. Instead of catching fish, Andrew would learn from Jesus how to fish for people.

ANDREW'S MINISTRY

Brought His Brother to the Lord (John 1:41)

After meeting Jesus, Andrew immediately told Peter about this new Rabbi. Peter listened to Andrew and came to meet Jesus. Though he didn't know it at the time, Andrew's actions ignited Peter's journey of faith and impacted the ministry that Peter would have later in life.

APPLICATION

Andrew could have overlooked Peter, but Andrew wanted him to meet this Messiah. When we understand that only Jesus has the power to save us, we'll desire to share that good news with others.

It can be difficult to share Jesus with unsaved family members. But the greatest love you can show them is to relate what Christ has done for you, and to live in a way that demonstrates God's work in your life, by God's grace. We never know how God may use us to impact the lives of others.

Brought a Young Boy to the Lord (John 6:8–9)

Jesus and His disciples later traveled to the town of Bethsaida in the region of Galilee. People recognized them there, and a large crowd followed them.

Despite His weariness, Christ compassionately healed the sick and taught them (Luke 9:10–11). As the end of the day and the time of Passover drew near, the disciples told the Lord to send the people away to get their own food. Christ used this opportunity to test His disciples' faith, so He gave them the responsibility of feeding the crowd (Matt. 14:16).

The disciples were taken aback at such an impossible task. Philip quickly calculated the expense and logistics, concluding that even 200 days' worth of wages wouldn't feed such a crowd.

Andrew told them about a boy he'd found who had five loaves of bread and two fish—not that such a small amount of food could really help. Despite his small faith, Andrew approached Christ and brought someone to meet Him.

Brought Greeks to the Lord (John 12:20–22)

It was Passover, and Christ and His disciples were in Jerusalem. A group of Greeks came to Philip, asking to see Jesus.

At the Greeks' request, Philip may have remembered Christ's instructions to His disciples in Matthew 10:5—not to go to the Gentiles, but rather to work among the unsaved Jews. Philip went to Andrew, and they went to tell Jesus about the Greeks. Christ accepts the faith of the Greeks by stating in verse 26 that those who follow and serve Him will be rewarded by the Father. Christ goes on to say that after He is exalted, He will draw all people to Himself (v. 32).

CONTEXT

Christ focused on reaching the Jews at this point of His ministry (Matt. 10:5–6). However, even in the Old Testament, God accepted people's faith in Him regardless of their race or nationality. After Jesus' ministry on Earth, God emphasized that the gospel was for all people, not just Jews (Matt. 15:21–28; Acts 9:15; 10:34–35). God evaluates people based on their faith, not their background or ethnicity.

Andrew's Continuing Witness

Though we don't have any more biblical data on Andrew, church historians write about his ministry after Christ's ascension.

Eusebius recorded that Andrew carried the message of Christ to the barbaric tribes of Scythia, in what is now southern Russia (the area around the Black Sea).

Concerning Andrew's death, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* notes that "he preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground." This type of cross has become known as Saint Andrew's cross, taking the form of an X.

Andrew was an ordinary guy—just an average fisherman who chose to follow Jesus and believe Him. Andrew didn't make headlines, but his service to Christ was more valuable than the world's greatest achievements. He gained eternal rewards for eternal work—bringing people to Jesus.

SHARING JESUS WITH OTHERS (ROM. 10)

Andrew didn't share Jesus with others out of duty—he naturally led them to find what they were seeking.

Definition of Witnessing

Witnessing means to tell others about something you have experienced. For example, a lawyer in a court case might call on a witness to tell what they saw happen when the crime was committed. To share Christ, you don't have to be a profound teacher or eloquent evangelist. You can simply tell others about how you met Christ and decided to believe Him.

Motives for Witnessing

- **To share the gospel with those who have never heard (Rom. 10:14–15)**

  God used early church missionaries to carry the gospel all over the known world. But now, 2,000 years later, many people have still never heard the gospel—even people in our own neighborhoods.

  People naturally sin, and their sin condemns them to spend eternity in hell (Rom. 6:23). Jesus provides the only true way of salvation to deliver them from those consequences (John 14:6). In order for people to hear about Jesus as Savior, someone must communicate the gospel to them.

- **To fulfill Christ's commission (Matt. 28:16–20; Acts 1:8)**

  Jesus instructed His disciples to teach others what they had learned and observed during His ministry. Even though Jesus spoke this command to the disciples with Him, His words apply to every believer (John 17:20).

- **To glorify God (John 17:20–26)**

  The gospel shines the spotlight on God. The act of sharing the gospel communicates praise for God, because we are telling people about our amazing God.

Methods for Witnessing

Witnessing requires intentional communication. A Spirit-controlled life will transform the heart, but relying on behavior alone to share the gospel isn't enough. We need to actively communicate to people.

Different methods of teaching are more efficient for different types of people. Be prepared to talk if someone expresses interest in your faith, but make sure to be considerate and appropriate (1 Pet. 3:14–16). For example, if you are on the job, make plans to meet with the person later on, instead of taking up work time to have a conversation.

APPLICATION

If you are willing to let God use you as a witness, He will give you opportunities. Even though you aren't responsible for how people respond to the gospel, you are commissioned by God to share it with them. Pray for God's grace to have courage and discretion in witnessing.

CONCLUSION

Andrew experienced something amazing in Christ, and he couldn't keep something so wonderful to himself. His witness came naturally from his own experience with Jesus. The real question is not, "Why should I witness?" but rather, "How can I *not* witness?" When we meditate on the amazing gift God has given us—and how amazing God Himself is—we'll be filled with a natural desire to tell others about it.

In the next lesson, we'll study Andrew's brother, Simon Peter.

LESSON TWO QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Fishing

2. To share the gospel with those who have never heard, to fulfill Christ's commission, to glorify God (Any)

3–5. Any order: Peter, some Greeks, a young boy

LESSON TWO QUIZ

Andrew

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer

1. What was Andrew's former occupation? _____

2. Name one motive for witnessing. _____

List three people or groups that Andrew brought to Christ.

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

LESSON 2

Andrew

MAIN TEXT:

John 1:35–42; John 6:8–9; John 12:20–22

TEACHER'S LESSON OUTLINE

- Andrew's Background
  - From ***Bethsaida***, on the Northwest Shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44)
  - Brother of ***Simon Peter***
  - A Disciple of ***John the Baptist*** (John 1:37)
- Andrew's Faith
  - His Discovery of the Messiah (John 1:41)
    - Andrew ***identified*** Jesus as Messiah.
    - He ***brought*** Peter to see the Messiah.
  - His Call to Discipleship (Matt. 4:18–19)
- Andrew's Ministry
  - Brought His ***Brother*** to the Lord (John 1:41)
    - He found Simon immediately after he spent time with Jesus.
  - Brought a ***Young Boy*** to the Lord (John 6:8–9)

- Brought ***Greeks*** to the Lord (John 12:20–22)

◉ Andrew's Continuing Witness

- Carried the Gospel into ***Southern Russia*** (Eusebius)
- Died a Martyr's Death by Crucifixion on an X-Shaped Cross (Foxe)

◉ Sharing Jesus with Others (Rom. 10)

- Definition of Witnessing
  - Witnessing means to tell others about something you have ***experienced***.
  - Example: a witness in court
- Motives for Witnessing
  - To share the gospel with those who have never ***heard*** (Rom. 10:14–15)
    - Our sin ***condemns*** us to hell (Rom. 6:23).
    - Christ is the only true ***way*** of salvation (John 14:6).
  - To fulfill Christ's ***commission*** (Matt. 28:16–20; Acts 1:8)
  - To ***glorify*** God (John 17:20–26)
- Methods for Witnessing
  - Witnessing requires ***intentional*** communication.
  - Relying on ***behavior*** to share the gospel isn't enough.

LESSON THREE

Simon Peter the Fisherman

OBJECTIVES

- Examine Peter's background
- Explore Peter's struggle with faith and doubt
- Recognize that the character of God provides the key to dealing with doubt

MAIN TEXT:

John 1:35–42; Luke 5:1–11

Teacher's Lesson

INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson, we studied Andrew's ministry of bringing people to Christ. The first person he brought to Christ was Simon Peter, his brother.

Though Andrew stays in the background, his brother Simon Peter impulsively charges to the front. Peter makes the top of the list of apostles. It seems like he was first in everything he did—preaching, loving, and making mistakes. Yet God used Peter's passion and changed him into a humble, Spirit-filled servant.

SIMON PETER THE FISHERMAN

PETER'S BACKGROUND

Name and Family

Read John 1:35–42.

Simon Peter lived with his brother, Andrew, in Galilee. Peter's Hebrew name was Simeon. But because Greek was a predominant language of the day, the Greek form of his name—Simon—is used in the Gospels.

Peter and Andrew's father was named Jonah, sometimes spelled Jonas (Matt. 16:17).

From Bethsaida

Bethsaida was a town on the north side of the Sea of Galilee, near the city of Capernaum (John 1:44). The region of Galilee lay in the northern part of Israel. Peter was identified with this region by his northern accent (Matt. 26:73; Mark 14:70).

Later Lived in Capernaum

Peter and Andrew later moved to Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29). Because Peter's mother-in-law lived there, Peter may have moved nearby when he married.

A Fisherman

Many people in Galilee made a living by fishing. Peter was fishing when Christ called him to be a disciple (Luke 5:3). John records that Peter and several other disciples went fishing after Christ rose from the dead and appeared to them (John 21:3).

Religion and Education

- **Followed Jewish Law**

  As a Jew, Peter would have followed the Jewish law (Acts 10:14). Like many other Jews around him, Peter already knew about God and His commands.

- **No formal education (Acts 4:13)**

  Acts 4:13 tells us that Peter was unlearned, meaning that he hadn't pursued a higher Jewish education. However, he was educated and trained by Jesus Himself, more than adequate qualification for his ministry.

APPLICATION

The hours you spend with the Lord are more crucial than any educational degree or qualification. We should certainly use every opportunity to learn and train for the Lord's service, but we must realize that God does not use education as a prerequisite for serving Him. He looks first for a surrendered, humble attitude.

God didn't pick Peter for his education. Instead, He recognized Peter's humility and willingness to serve.

PETER'S CALL

To Meet Christ (John 1:41–42)

Andrew's claim of discovering the Messiah prompted Peter to meet Jesus. At that meeting, Christ gave him a new identity and a new name (v. 42).

- **Christ gave Simon a new name—Cephas, meaning "Rock".**

DISCUSSION

Jesus gave Simon the name of Cephas (kā-fə̄s). So where does the name Peter come from?

"Peter" comes from *petros* (pé-tros), the Greek word meaning "a rock." The Aramaic version of that word is *Cephas*. So the name "Simon Peter" means "Simon the Rock."

Those who knew Peter probably wouldn't have picked that word to describe him. The qualities of rock—stability and dependability—hardly seemed an appropriate description of Peter's impulsive, passionate character. Yet Jesus knew the change that would occur in Peter, and He had a plan for him. Later, Christ said that Peter would be foundational in building the church (Matt. 16:18–19).

To Discipleship (Luke 5:1–11)

- **Peter personally witnessed two miracles.**

A few days passed between Peter meeting Jesus and his call to discipleship. During this time, Peter may have traveled with the Lord to Galilee as Jesus taught and healed people.

Peter witnessed a miracle in his own family. Jesus supernaturally healed Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38–39). After spending time with Jesus and experiencing His message and power, Peter had a lot to think about.

After this, Christ came to the shores of Galilee where Andrew, Peter, James, and John were fishing. When Jesus joined Peter in the boat and told him to catch fish, Simon protested. They'd been fishing all night and hadn't caught a thing. But Peter did as Jesus said and caught more fish than the boats could handle (Luke 5:7).

Immediately, Peter recognized the divine nature of the miracle, as well as Jesus' authority. He responded by confessing his own sinfulness.

Fishing provided an apt metaphor for Peter's future ministry. Jesus told Peter than instead of fish, he would catch people. Peter became a disciple and followed Jesus from that point onward.

- **Peter was a close disciple (Mark 9:2).**

Peter became one of Jesus' most prominent disciples. He is mentioned first in lists of the Twelve Disciples, and he eventually assumed a leadership role in the group.

Peter—as well as James and John—interacted with Jesus at times without the rest of the disciples. They accompanied Jesus when He raised a girl from the dead (Mark 5:37). They were also present during Jesus' transfiguration (Matt. 17:1) and Jesus' prayer before His arrest (Mark 14:33).

God doesn't tell us why He selected these three men and allowed them to experience these special moments.

APPLICATION

God's fellowship with us doesn't depend on our merit, but rather on our heart attitude. Do you want to experience special moments with Christ? Then abide in God through prayer and Bible study. Intimacy with God demands time and effort.

PETER'S CONFLICTED TRUST

Peter loved Jesus, but he struggled between fear and trust. This struggle is evident in Peter's responses to Christ's identity, power, and mission.

In Christ's Mission

- **Peter's misunderstanding of Christ's kingdom (Matt.19:27)**

Many of the Jews believed that the promised Messiah would free them of Roman tyranny and restore the kingdom of Israel. It took Jesus' closest disciples a long time to understand that Jesus came to introduce a spiritual kingdom, not a political revolution. Immediately before Jesus ascended into heaven, Peter still inquired if Jesus would restore Israel at that time (Acts 1:6).

Peter also misunderstood his own role in Christ's kingdom. Throughout Christ's ministry, the disciples were eager to learn more about their future rewards. They argued about rank in Jesus' kingdom, and James and John tried to reserve seats next to Jesus in the future. Though Christ explained the suffering they would face, the disciples were eager to hear about their future rewards.

- **Peter's refusal to believe Christ's death (Matt. 17:21–23)**

Peter and the disciples refused to believe Christ's words about His impending death and resurrection. Immediately after identifying Jesus as the Messiah sent from God, Peter rebuked Jesus for prophesying that He would die and rise again (v. 22). Jesus, in turn, rebuked Peter because Peter's disbelief served Satan rather than God.

In Christ's Identity

- **Jesus washing Peter's feet (John 13:6–16)**

When Christ began to wash His disciples' feet, Peter protested. But his response quickly changed when he realized that it was essential to following Christ. But Jesus had more than just kindness in mind during this act of service. He intended it to be an example for the disciples to follow. The disciples had argued about who was the greatest, but Jesus taught them that true greatness required serving others.

- **Peter's denial at Christ's arrest (Matt. 26:69–75)**

  Peter's desire to associate with Jesus was soon tested. After Jesus prophesied that His followers would all leave Him, Peter assured Christ that even if everyone else left, he would not. Peter even promised to die with Jesus. Yet when Christ was arrested, he fled with the rest of the disciples (Matt. 26:56). He denied Jesus not once but three times that night.

In Christ's Power

- **Peter's walking on water (Matt. 14:22–33)**

  In a boat on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples were terrified to see a figure walking on top of the water. Jesus identified Himself and reassured His disciples, telling them not to fear.

  However, Peter still had fear-driven doubts. He wanted evidence that this truly was Jesus, so he requested Jesus to prove His identity by summoning Peter. As Peter began to cross on top of the water, he was fine as long as he kept his focus on Jesus. But when Peter stopped trusting the Lord, he started to sink.

  Christ rebuked Peter's decision to stop trusting Him. Peter had a little faith, but he allowed his fears to drown it out.

- **Peter's disbelief at Christ's resurrection (John 20:8–9)**

  Until Peter saw the empty tomb for himself, he did not believe Christ would rise from the dead.

Dealing with Doubt

Like Peter, most Christians struggle with faith and doubt. The key to this struggle isn't found in trying harder or ignoring our doubts—it lies in meditating on God's character.

God is true and unchanging. He will do what He says, and we can trust Him to fulfill what He's promised. He is all powerful and all knowing, so He has complete control of life.

Faith relies on trust in something unseen. If we have to witness something with our own eyes in order to believe it, we haven't really exercised faith (Heb. 11:1).

APPLICATION

How is your faith? Do you struggle with doubt? Rather than ignoring your doubts, explore them, asking hard questions while digging deep into God's Word for answers. Spend much time study the Bible and meditating on the character of God, and pray that God will grow your faith. We can fully trust God's promises because God is faithful and everlasting (Deut. 7:9; Jer. 31:3).

CONCLUSION

Despite Peter's struggles of faith and doubt, he eventually recognized that God could be fully trusted.

In the next lesson, we'll take a closer look at Peter's growing faith and his spiritual maturity.

LESSON THREE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law of a fever; the unusually large catch of fish

2. Capernaum

3–5. Christ's mission, identity, and power.

LESSON THREE QUIZ

Simon Peter the Fisherman

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer

1. Name one of two miracles that Peter personally witnessed before following Jesus.

   _____

   _____

2. In what city did Peter's mother-in-law live? _____

Name three areas in which Peter struggled with faith.

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

LESSON 3

Simon Peter the Fisherman

MAIN TEXT:

John 1:35–42; Luke 5:1–11

TEACHER'S LESSON OUTLINE

- Peter's Background
  - Name and Family
    - Hebrew Name—***Simeon***
      - Greek form—***Simon***
    - Brother—***Andrew***
    - Father—***Jonah***, sometimes spelled Jonas (Matt. 16:17)
    - From ***Bethsaida*** (John 1:44)
      - Had a northern country accent (Mark 14:70)
    - Later Lived in ***Capernaum*** (Mark 1:21, 29)
      - City where Peter's mother-in-law lived (Mark 1:29–30)
    - A Fisherman

- Religion and Education
  - Followed ***Jewish*** Law (Acts 10:14)
  - No ***formal*** education (Acts 4:13)

- Peter's Call
  - To Meet Christ (1:41–42)
    - Christ gave Simon a new name—***Cephas***, meaning "***Rock***."
      - "Peter" comes from the Greek word petros, meaning "rock."
      - Christ told Peter that he would be foundational in building the ***church*** (Matt. 16:18–19).
  - To Discipleship (Luke 5:1–11)
    - Peter personally witnessed two miracles.
      - ***Mother-in-law*** healed (Luke 4:38–39)
      - Unusually large catch of ***fish*** (Luke 5:4–11)
    - Peter was a ***close*** disciple (Mark 9:2).
      - Peter, James, and John witnessed parts of Jesus' ministry that the other disciples didn't.

- Peter's Conflicted Trust
  - In Christ's ***Mission***
    - Peter's misunderstanding of Christ's ***kingdom*** (Matt.19:27)
    - Peter's refusal to believe Christ's ***death*** (Matt. 17:21–23)
  - In Christ's ***Identity***
    - Jesus' ***washing*** Peter's feet (John 13:6–16)
    - Peter's ***denial*** at Christ's arrest (Matt. 26:69–75)
  - In Christ's ***Power***

- Peter's ***walking*** on water (Matt. 14:22–33)
- Peter's ***disbelief*** at Christ's resurrection (John 20:8–9)

- Dealing with Doubt
  - The key to this struggle isn't found in trying harder or ignoring our doubts—it lies in meditating on God's ***character***.