

STREET LIGHTS: LETTING CHRIST SHINE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

"LIGHTING MY NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH SERVICE"

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Life - I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes. Romans 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

I have only one life, so the one I live is the one I have to give away. I can't clone myself in order to have two lives, one to live and the other to donate.

To complicate matters further, I sometimes think my life is for the most part already spoken for. I have virtually no life left to give away to fulfill *any* purposes. After all, I give away a big chunk of my life to sleeping and eating, dressing and driving. My employer wants a piece of me, my family wants a piece of me, my church wants a piece of me, and I'd like a piece of me every now and then, too. So, it seems, I have to figure out how to do *two* things with my *one* life. Live it and give it away.

The trick to that lies in the ability to do two things at once *a la* Paul, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1Co 10:31). That being the case, I need an attitude adjustment; I have to start seeing the routines of the life I live as *occasions* rather than *distractions*. My employment isn't a distraction. It doesn't distract me from giving away my life it occasions it. I simply have to figure out how to give away my life to fulfill God's purposes at work. And the same goes for

my family and my leisure. I have to give away my life to my family to fulfill God's purposes and give away my life to my leisure to fulfill God's purposes. Giving away my life to fulfill God's purposes isn't a matter of doing *more* with my life as much as doing *differently* with my life.

A Difficult Situation

There's a house on your block that's an eyesore. The yard isn't well kept; it's overgrown with weeds that don't get mowed as often as needed, and the shrubs could use trimming. What's more, the house itself is in need of repairs—not major repairs, nothing that a handyman couldn't fix in an afternoon. A gutter has pulled loose from the fascia and is sagging badly. All it would take to repair it is a hammer, some gutter spikes, and a ladder.

You don't know who lives there. You've never seen anyone working in the yard—duh. In fact you seldom see a car come or go. You thought maybe the house was a vacant rent house, but the other night when you drove past, you noticed the lights were on. So you're pretty sure someone lives there, and you're pretty upset with the guy. On one hand, it's not your house; if its owner doesn't care how it looks, why should you? On the other, the place sticks out like an ugly sore thumb and is bringing property values down in the hood.

step 1

LOOK CLOSELY – observe what you are reading.

Luke 9:1-9

1When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. 4Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. 5If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them." 6So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

7Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed, because some were

saying that John had been raised from the dead, 8others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. 9But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" And he tried to see him.

- Note what this passage has to do with Giving Away My Life.

- Before you decide what it means, look closely at what it says.

*Circle the words "power" and "authority" in v. 1.

*Underline the words "he gave them," "he sent them," and "he told them" in vv. 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

*Circle the word "no" in the string of negatives in v. 3.

*Box the word "so" indicating *result* in v. 6.

*Circle the word "tetrarch" in v. 7.

*Box the word "because" indicating *reason* in v. 7.

*Bracket the names in vv. 7, 8.

*Box the word "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 9.

step **2** **THINK CAREFULLY** – interpret what you have read.

• Recognizing the message of the passage

Luke 9:1-9 is divided into two paragraphs. "It is probably legitimate to combine these two parts since Luke may have intended Herod's question to be viewed against Jesus' Galilean ministry as it reaches its climax in the sending of his men to preach and to heal, the very things that Jesus has been doing since Luke 4" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 140). The first one, verses 1-6 is about the equipping and sending of the Twelve to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick throughout Galilee. Jesus called them together and gave them power and authority to drive out demons and cure diseases, the same power and authority that he had exercised from the beginning. Power is the ability to accomplish a task, and authority is the right to use it. He had used power and authority to authenticate his message. Remember how he answered the question John's disciples asked him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (7:20) "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor," he said. (7:22) The Twelve would now use that power and authority to authenticate their message about him. Up until this time the disciples had been apprentices in training. Now the time had come for them to take a more active role in Jesus' ministry, and before long they would have to assume a much greater role. Soon Jesus would commission them to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19, 20). But even before they were commissioned, they were to make disciples; that's what disciples do. Like their teacher they make disciples.

The second one, verses 7-9, is about Herod's musings regarding the identity of Jesus. When the disciples left, Jesus also departed and ministered for a time in Galilee, and together they attracted a great deal of attention. In fact, their activities were even discussed at the highest levels of government. Jesus was gathering followers. Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, was perplexed regarding Jesus seeing that no consensus had emerged regarding him. Some thought he was John raised from the dead, but Herod dismissed that notion. Others thought he was Elijah or another prophet; neither of which Herod found convincing. He tried to see Jesus, but Jesus was evidently not interested in seeing him (cf. Lk 13:31, 32).

Luke 9:1-9 is about Jesus for sure. Word of him had spread all the way to Herod—even "the tetrarch heard about all that was going on" (v. 7). And all that was going on indicated that Jesus was no ordinary man. But it is about the disciples, too. "They are no longer passive observers of Jesus in his mission; they have progressed to the point that they can be active participants" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 215).

The Message of this Passage

It's not enough for Jesus' disciples to know about him and his mission; disciples have to take part with him in that mission.

• Digging deeper into its meaning

v. 1 *the Twelve* Jesus chose twelve men from among his disciples to be apostles (cf. Lk 6:12). Luke calls them "The Twelve" (see 6:12; 8:1; 9:1, 12; 18:1; 22:3, 30, 47).

v. 1 *power and authority* Jesus had the power to heal (cf. 4:40; 5:17; 8:46) and to exorcise demons (cf. 4:41; 8:28, 29). He endowed the Twelve with that power and gave them the authority to exercise it. "Jesus has made his messiahship known in Galilee in Luke 4-8. Having been anointed by the Spirit (3:22; 4:1, 18), he has gone about in the 'power of the Lord' (5:17), healing, exorcising, and forgiving sins.

During this time his disciples have been in training. Now it is time for them to take a more active role in Jesus' ministry, for the day will come when they will have to assume a much fuller responsibility" (Evans, 140). One author calls this the Twelve's "first missionary journey" and "a rehearsal for their future mission as witnesses to Jesus throughout the world" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 269). Another writes, "The apostles' mission conforms to Jesus' mission and is an extension of it" (Tannehill, 1:215). How fitting that Jesus concluded the great commission with these words "And surely I am with you always" (Mt 28:20); it was his mission!

v. 2 **sent them out** Two by two according to Mark 6:7, which makes v. 4 more understandable.

v. 3 **take nothing** They had to learn that God would meet their needs even as they had to learn that Christ would meet people's needs through them. They needed to know what they could do through Christ.

v. 5 **shake the dust** "When Jews returned home from a Gentile country, they would shake the dust off their feet to signify their breaking ties with the Gentiles. In this way the Twelve signified that certain Jewish townspeople were like Gentiles who would not listen or believe" (John A. Martin, "Luke" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 228; cf. I. Howard Marshall, *Luke*, NIGTC, 351). This symbolic act indicated reciprocal rejection: the ones who rejected the apostles would themselves be rejected by the apostles.

v. 8 **heard** News of Jesus' ministry reached all the way to Herod Antipas who ruled over Galilee (tetrarch = ruler over a fourth part; cf. the popular, less precise "king" in Mt 14:9 and Mk 6:25) due in part to the preaching of the Twelve according to verse 6.

v. 8 **Elijah** Talk of the kingdom of God fueled the widely held expectation that Elijah would return in the last days in fulfillment of Malachi 4:5. Jesus said that Elijah had come in the person of John the Baptist (see Mk 12:13; cf. Mt 11:13, 14; 17:11, 12).

v. 9 **who then is this** Herod's question looks backward to the disciples' question (see 8:25; cf. 5:21; 7:20, 49) and forward to Peter's answer to it in v. 20. On the disciples' question one author points out, "The disciples' inability to answer this question leaves an unresolved tension in the narrative and alerts readers to look for developments in the disciples' understanding" (Tannehill, 1:214).

v. 9 **see** Herod's desire was prompted by curiosity at best or more likely malice (see 13:31), not by faith. Like father like son (Mt 2:8).

• Answering Interpretive Questions

1. To whom did Jesus give power and authority to drive out demons and to cure diseases?

2. The Twelve were commissioned to preach the kingdom of God. What do you suppose they were telling people?

step **3** **RESPOND WISELY** – apply what you have read.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Family Activity** (for those who have a family living at home)

Serving others creates a great opportunity to tell them about Jesus. Serving with others can also create the same opportunity. Share with your neighbors about Operation Christmas Child. Invite them to participate in the project. They can either put together their own box, or better yet, allow everyone to bring various items to your home. Over dessert the neighborhood families can assemble the boxes. Your own family will experience the combination of serving others, living in community and enjoying family!

- **Home Group Discussion** (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group)

Read Luke 9.1-9. Look closely at verse 2. What does that mean for the disciples? In what ways were they an extension of Christ to those around them? What are some practical ways you might be the "hands and feet of Jesus" to those who live on your "street?" Try to think of a specific action to take this week, and let's talk next week about how you took that step. Together, pray specifically for your neighbors by name.

- **iconnect+ Focus** (for those involved in our youth iconnect+ Ministry)

How can students, who is still under the authority of their parents and in school, follow Jesus' instructions to leave everything behind in order to invite others into His kingdom? Spend some time this week talking to your parents about this. maybe, instead of leaving everything behind to go somewhere, you just need to find some time in your busy schedule to serve others. how would you like to serve? How can your family, igroup or homegroup join you in that?

- **Community Intentionality** (for those with a desire to reach out in their community)

There's a good chance that you'll never find an opportunity to serve in your neighborhood if you don't look for an opportunity to serve in your neighborhood. With that in mind this week's suggestion is simple; you don't have to do anything but look for an opportunity to do something. Think about your neighbors; scout your neighborhood. Are there any widows, older couples, single parent families, households in need that you can serve?

“Lighting My Neighborhood Through Service”

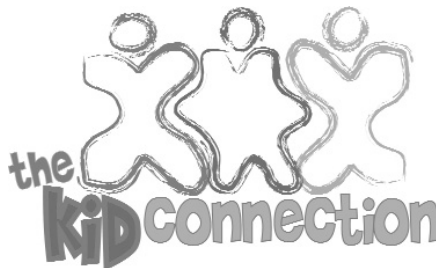
(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

step 4 Connect the **FAMILY**.

Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

Throughout dinner go the extra mile in serving the kids (i.e. completing the kids' dinner responsibilities, asking if they need anything, etc.). Read Luke 9:1-6. When the disciples served the towns by healing their sick, the people became more willing to hear the good news about Jesus. Tonight the kids were much more open to talk about the scripture because they had been served first. Serving others often gives the opportunity to tell others the story of Jesus.



Pray it!

Pray God's will for your child by praying scriptures. Insert your child's name in the blanks as you pray.

Father, I pray _____ will give his body to You because of all You have done for him. Let him be a living and holy sacrifice-the kind You will find acceptable. Help _____ to realize this is truly the way to worship You. Ro 12:1 (NLT)

Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

Giving Away My Life - I give away my life to help with God's work.

Memory Verse- "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Mt 5:16

Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

Explain the "Good News" the disciples were preaching.
Why did Jesus give the disciples power to cast out demons and heal the sick?
Why were the disciples instructed not to take anything on their journey?
Why would a town refuse to welcome the disciples if they were telling good news?

Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

It's one thing to be nice to those around you; it's another thing to go out of your way to serve them. Allow each family member to choose an act of service they can do for a neighbor they have been praying for. When the act of service is completed, write a note that says, "I am glad God made you my neighbor!"



Challenge

Kids preschool through sixth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for each discipleship activity completed.

Family completes **Experience It** _____ Child memorizes kid-friendly **Core Competency** _____
Family participates in **Live It** _____ Child memorizes **Memory Verse** _____

Kids can earn extra tokens on Sunday morning by:

Bringing a friend to **The Kid Connection** _____ Completing **KIDZ Bulletin** _____
Child's name _____ Parent's signature _____

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.