

New Identity

Lesson 4

Ambassadors

Reflections from Lesson 3

1 – What is one area you identified as needing to be strengthened as a soldier? What have you done since your last session to grow in this area?

2 – What is one spiritual victory you have experienced in recent days?

The Big Picture

Pause for a moment and think about some of the “hot spots” in the world today. What are some of the countries where there is clearly political unrest or upheaval? Over the years, these places change. Think about Cuba, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Russia, Bosnia. And the list goes on. Just open your morning paper and you can read about the latest place of conflict.

If you were going to send a representative from your country to a nation in turmoil, you would want just the right ambassador to represent you. If you were the president of our country, what are some of the qualities you would insist on seeing in the life of a potential ambassador to a war-torn nation?

The fact is, an ambassador plays a key role in any reconciliation attempt. He or she can make it or break it. Lots of highly explosive eggs are placed in that person’s basket. You can’t have an ambassador who is just a nice person, who tiptoes around tough situations and smiles a lot. But neither can you have an ambassador who is too pushy or demanding. You know, one who annoys and offends people with aggressiveness and an overzealous time line for reconciliation. Put another way, you can’t afford to have an anonymous ambassador or an obnoxious one. What we’re looking for is an effective ambassador. One who does what it takes over time to bring about reconciliation.

A Wide Angle View

1) If you had to write a want ad to find an effective ambassador and you only had the space provided below, how would your want ad read?

Desperately seeking an ambassador who...

A Biblical Portrait

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

2) You are Christ’s ambassadors entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. How does this aspect of your new identity in Christ alter the way you look at the world around you and your role in it?

Sharpening The Focus

Read Snapshot “The Anonymous Ambassador”

“The Anonymous Ambassador”

Many believers could be called anonymous kingdom ambassadors. They don't harm the cause of Christ much, but they don't help it much either. Anonymous ambassadors spend time primarily with other embassy employees. They seldom mix with the regular citizens. They feel uncomfortable around the people of the land because they seem crude, speak a different language, have distasteful customs, and hold to different values. The truth is, they prefer to stay in the warmth and familiar setting of the embassy.

3) What are some of the dangers and possible consequences of having an apathetic and anonymous ambassador in a tough political situation?

What are the dangers of having this kind of ambassador representing God in today's world?

Read Snapshot “The Obnoxious Ambassador”

The Obnoxious Ambassador

If we are honest, we have to admit there are many Christians who could be called obnoxious kingdom ambassadors – loose cannons firing like it's the Fourth of July. Ambassadors who are gung-ho about reconciliation, but they don't nurture it...they demand it! They're not really interested in getting close to people, being involved in their lives, loving them, resolving doubts, and working through conflicts. They'd rather stand in the public square, blaring out reconciliation plans over loudspeakers, and then castigate the masses for not being more responsive to an offer they can't even fully understand because it was communicated so poorly.

4) What are some of the possible consequences and dangers of having an obnoxious ambassador representing God in today's world?

Pause for a moment and put yourself in the shoes of a spiritual seeker who has just met an obnoxious ambassador. How would you feel about that ambassador and his message?

Read Snapshot “An Effective Ambassador”

An Effective Ambassador

Anonymous ambassadors are oblivious to Spirit-orchestrated opportunities to mark the lives of unbelievers. They're not praying for opportunities to mix with citizens. They're not looking for those opportunities. They're hiding out of the flow. Obnoxious ambassadors barge into private areas with or without being led by the Spirit. Occasionally they do some good. But often they do more harm.

Effective kingdom ambassadors, however pray for Spirit-led opportunities. They long to be able to discern an opportunity when it comes their way. These ambassadors ask for divine wisdom when they think an opportunity is coming. They say, “Lord, is this it? What shall I say? What should I do? Holy Spirit, take control this moment. Make me an effective kingdom ambassador.”

5) What are some possible results in the lives of lost people when you act as an effective ambassador?

Who are some effective kingdom ambassadors you have known and what make them effective?

6) Why is wisdom so important in the life of an effective ambassador?

What are some ways your group members can work together to develop wisdom in each other's lives?

7) What does it mean to be winsome in your witness?

How can you develop this trait in your life?

8) We would all agree that a good ambassador should have a growing knowledge of the Bible and the basics of the faith. To build bridges with lost people, what else must we be knowledgeable about?

9) What are some of the prevailing values in our culture to be aware of as you live as ambassadors of God's kingdom?

10) Communication skills are essential for kingdom ambassadors. What can you do to develop your ability to share your faith?

11) What practical things can you do to build bridges of reconciliation with the following groups of people?

- Neighbors
- Colleagues at work
- Social acquaintances
- Family members
- Those who consider themselves your enemy?

Putting Yourself in the Picture

People and Places

Take time to think about those people God has placed in your life who have not yet been reconciled to Him. In the coming days, pray for each one by name. Ask the Holy Spirit to perform His convicting and mind-opening work. Pray for God's love and a desire for reconciliation to touch their hearts and lives. Also, ask God for a boldness when you sense opportunities to be an ambassador of Christ to these people.

Identify the specific places God puts you in as His ambassador. Pray for a heart filled with God's love and a hunger for reconciling estranged seekers to their Father as you approach each place you go in the coming week.

A Commitment to Memorize Scripture

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20