

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-27 Purpose: Sharing God's Plan

The last four lessons of this course focus on communicating with the goal of helping people share the gospel with a purpose in mind. This first lesson deals with what God wants people to know. So your first purpose in spreading God's truth is so people will know God's love and his plan for them. God wants us to know he has a plan for our individual lives as well as a plan for the whole world. When people know the plan they can become fellow laborers with God to accomplish that plan.

Have you ever made a plan to do something that will last? Perhaps you helped plan and build a house. Perhaps you organized a team to help the poor. It is exciting to begin an important project; it is even more exciting to see it completed. God has a plan for this world, and this lesson speaks about a special day when he revealed that plan to his family.

After Jesus rose from the dead he appeared to various groups for 40 days. Then, just before he ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples a command. He told them to stay in Jerusalem until they had been clothed with power from on high. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4-5, 8).

So 120 believers—men and women—had prayed for ten days, until the Jewish Feast of Harvest or "Pentecost." When the day of Pentecost came, the disciples were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. They all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together. They were amazed, because each one heard their own language being spoken. They asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that each of us hears them in our native language?" For the first time people from 12 countries were hearing the wonders of God in their own language! Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

Your young men will see visions; your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ...
And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:1-21)

The key words in this passage are those of Peter just before he quotes what Joel said. Here they are again, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” The crowd was asking, “What is this?” Peter was pointing out, “This is that! This is what Joel had foretold!”

Peter explained that God was revealing a new plan, but the plan had been foretold by a prophet long ago. Peter quoted the words of the ancient prophecy that was being fulfilled that very day. It is God’s promise to pour out his Spirit on all people, not just priests and prophets. God wants people to know that he doesn’t have any “special” people. God is fulfilling his plan to draw all nations to himself. He will no longer work just through the Jews. He shows this by giving his Spirit to all his people, so that all who are lost can hear the message of life through Jesus.

Joel spoke of that day that was still far in the future from his day. The Day of Pentecost or Harvest, was the day God began a worldwide harvest of souls, of people who were lost. Harvest begins a time of joy for both people and for God. It is often referred to as the birth of the Church.

If people fail to respond to this message, another part of Joel’s message will apply to them. It is a message of judgment. After the message of Jesus has gone to all the earth, this judgment will be on all the earth. The key truth of Joel’s message is in the last verse. Anyone who calls on Jesus as Lord will be saved. God wants all people to know his truth.

This Spirit-inspired spreading of the truth will be done by the church. This is God’s plan. He will use all kinds of people, the young and old, both men and women, to do his work. This message will be proclaimed by all believers to all people who are lost. Joel’s message reveals that God will partner with his people and empower them to do his work. God’s purpose is the salvation of all people who will believe.

This story is **important** because it shows what God wants all believers to know—that they can participate with God in his great plan to reach all people with the message of salvation. As you know God’s plan for yourself, you can help others to see their place in God’s plan too.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God’s people can know his plan and see it moving forward, when they are filled with his Spirit and empowered as witnesses.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. What happened to the 120 believers on the Day of Pentecost? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “They all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them,” you answered correctly.
2. Who did the prophet Joel say God’s Spirit would be given to? [Pause]

A. If you said that the Spirit would be given to both young and old, and both men and women, you are correct.

3. What is the message that God wants us to know from the day of Pentecost? [Pause]

A. If you said God will partner with his people to do his work and see his plan accomplished, as on the day of Pentecost, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the story and tell it to someone who has not heard it before. Then ask them this question, “Why do you think God wants to use Spirit-filled people to share his message with the world? Is he not strong enough to do his work without us?” Answer: God wants us to have the experience of his power working through us to show his great love. He wants us to share in the joy of seeing people saved and delivered.