

Models of Ministry to Muslims

Section Two

The Discovery Lessons

Lesson Thirteen Sharing Your Faith with Muslims

Technical notes

Story 3424 words = 20 minutes

Lesson: 2123 words = 13 minutes

Discussion Questions

Story

Hello, my name is Abdalla and this is my story. Every word of it is true.

I was born as a Muslim, in an Arab family in the country of Jordan. When I was young my father used to tell us stories about his youth. As a young Arab teenager, my father had traveled to Israel where he found work with a Jewish man. In those days, before the 1948 war, Arabs and Jews lived peaceably side by side. The Jewish man, Mr. Shlown owned two businesses. Father worked as a laborer for fifteen years for Mr. Shlown and the two of them became good friends. Those years left a deep impression on my father as he discovered that Muslims, Jews, and Christians all worshipped one God and were all good people. After fifteen years, my father was loved and respected by the Shlown family, but he wanted to return to his home country of Jordan and raise a family.

Father moved back to Jordan, bought some land, and settled down. Then the wars began and the Shlowns and my father lost touch. Many long years later Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel and as soon as the borders were open, old Mr. Shlown sent one of his sons across the Jordan River to look for my father. He found us, but Father had already died. Of course, Mr. Shlown was now very old himself and a short time later he died. When we received the news, I traveled to Israel to represent our family at his burial.

Right from the beginning of my childhood, I knew my father had been affected through his contact with people other than Muslims. Most of the people in our village had never met a Christian, let alone a Jew. Village life was simple, and everyone in the village knew everyone else's business. Our world was small, and we were happy raising our crops and interacting together with friends and family.

My father's life experience was broader than most in the village and because of that many people looked up to him. Before the troubles in 1948, there were no enemies. The Jews and Arabs lived side by side like any other people. However, after the war, even the people in our little village began to think in terms of enemies and friends but my father never saw it that way. Although he was a simple man, he grasped that there were far greater things involved and that given the right circumstances, we could all live in peace again.

When my father came back from working with the Shlowns in Israel, he had a pocket full of cash. It wasn't a great amount of money, but compared to others in the village he was rich. With this money, he purchased land on the edge of our village, which is known as Um Qais. This village is situated on the top of a hill in the north of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In ancient times, our village was known as Gadara. Christians around the world know of this ancient town as the place where Jesus cast demons into pigs. While we knew that our village had a history, most of us

knew nothing of this Bible story. Um Qais was simply home, and we lived in a house my father built with the money he brought back from Israel.

My father built his house on a large rocky place on our land. He marked out a central courtyard and around this he built a series of rooms, each with a door opening into the courtyard. One room was the kitchen, another the reception room, and others were bedrooms and storage rooms. Over the years, he added rooms until there were eight in all.

I was born in 1957 and my father gave me the name Abdalla, which means “the servant of God.” I was the fifth child in our home but only the second son. My older brother, Abdul Karim, and I became very close. When we were not busy with our studies, we would play in the fields or try our hand at basketball. We made a simple wire hoop and the village boys would gather at our house to play on the rocky ground.

We were not wealthy, but we never considered ourselves poor. My father had used all his money to buy land and to build our home. After this, we lived as farmers. We worked the fields and lived off the land. The atmosphere in our home was usually good, and we children loved our parents and they loved us. While we lived very simply, we were well known in the area. Our last name was Hawatmeh and we were part of the larger Hawatmeh tribe, and the leaders of the tribe respected my father.

Each day life in our village was much the same. We would rise at daybreak and, shortly afterward, we would sit down to the inevitable breakfast of olives, olive oil, yogurt, and freshly baked bread from our oven. Mother would rise early in the morning to make the dough and fire up the old clay oven. She would rake away the ashes from around the oven and place hot coals against the clay walls. Then she would pack hay over the coals, and in a short while the oven would become very hot. Next she would roll out the dough and place it in the oven. After a few minutes, it would become soft bubbly bread. Using a long wooden fork she would retrieve the bread and serve it to the family.

After breakfast, we would fetch our cows and wait near the road for the village shepherd to pass by. As the shepherd walked through the village he would gather cows from each home and take them to the surrounding hills. In the evening, the shepherd would again pass by our home and return our cows.

As soon as the shepherd gathered our cows in the morning, my mother started shooing the children out of the house. Abdul Karim and I would head off into the fields to play for two hours before we needed to head for school.

After school was out, we children would rush home to see what Mother had cooked for our afternoon meal. We never grumbled over our food because we always thanked God for what we got from the farm.

Our home always had a religious atmosphere. We were Muslims but not fanatical Muslims. We children worshipped like my father and mother did. Islam was our religion, and everyone we knew in the village was Muslim.

Islam is a religion of works. Every good Muslim has many religious things that he does, such as praying five times a day. We, however, took our religion in stride. We were faithful at the mosque for Friday prayers, but since we were often at school and my parents were busy with the farm, we usually only prayed the morning prayers.

Most people did their religious duties without question but, at an early age, I started to ask my father questions. My father was not a very scholarly man, but he could read and write. His schooling had been minimal and now that he was old he didn't bother much with books. "Son," he would say. "There are many things we should not understand in the Qur'an. We just have to believe. If we believe in God, then He will help us understand."

To be honest, I never really believed in some of the things I heard at the mosque. They were hard to understand, especially for a ten-year-old boy. Most of the other boys around me simply accepted Islam as their religion and went about being boys, but I wanted to know and understand what we believed and why we were doing what we did. Now as I look back on those days I can see that the Lord was with me, even when I was young. My questions at that time set the foundation for the search for truth that was to consume me in later years.

Despite my curiosity about religious things, no one else in our home seemed interested in learning more about religion. We were Muslims, we did our religious duties, and that was enough. Then something happened in our home that was to change the course of our lives.

It all started very innocently when my father decided to build a special room onto our house. When the room was finished, Father announced that this room was to be a place of refuge. It was to be used for whoever might come through the village and need a place to rest. We were to welcome people who were in hunger or in need and make the room available to them. In the years that followed, a number of people came to our home because this room was available.

That room is still there to this day. Some years ago, my brothers demolished the old house so they could build a new home, but none of us wanted to demolish that room and so we left it standing. It was a special place for us, although sometimes when the room was occupied, my mother

would grumble about baking more bread or preparing extra food for these strangers. However, my father always insisted that these people were our guests. If they were our guests, they were part of our family.

One day my older sisters came rushing home from school and announced that they had met two Christian ladies who wanted to use the room. However, they did not want the room for only one or two nights. They were looking for a place to stay for three years. My sisters were so excited that they brought these Christian women to our home and the next day they were discussing arrangements with my parents. We younger kids were very curious to see these women. We had never had many dealings with Christians and certainly had never had them in our home before. They were in their late twenties, and they seemed like nice young women. They were sisters, and they had come to our village from the city of Irbid to teach school. Irbid was about thirty kilometers away and there was limited public transport. Back then, there was one broken down old bus that came in the morning and then again in the evening. Since this did not suit their schedule as teachers, these women wanted to stay in the village during the week and only go home on weekends. We kids were happy about this, but my mother said that since three years was such a long time they would have to cook for themselves.

“Of course,” they answered, “we are going to rent the room.”

My father firmly shook his head. “No,” he insisted, “we don’t rent it for money. Not that room. That room is free for whoever needs it.”

In no time, these two women moved into the room. My sisters were very excited. They felt like they had two brand new older sisters and they were so happy. It didn’t take long before these two women became part of our family. They slept in our home and, occasionally, my sisters would sleep with them in their room. Many times these two women would eat with us and my sisters would eat with them.

The special thing about these women was that they were Christians. Since we kids did not know any Christians, we had simply believed the rumors we heard about how Christians acted. We had heard that Christians were often immoral, that they drank liquor and were awful people. However, my sisters and my family could see how honest these two women were and how morally upright they acted. In addition, we heard the same report from their school where they also had a good reputation. Somehow, in their simple humble way, they left a profound impression on us all. I didn’t realize it at the time, but they were a living demonstration of what it meant to have a servant heart. My sisters were very much affected by these two

school teachers and, to this day, they still have a close relationship with them.

So my father also told us about Jews and how good they could be, and those two women influenced our attitudes towards Christians.

Finally, the sad day came when these two women finished their teaching contract and had to leave. We all said good bye and our home seemed empty after they had gone. I still remember how my sisters didn't want to eat or sleep that night. They cried all night and, in the end, my father became very upset. As a result, we all took the bus to Irbid the next morning. You can imagine how astonished those two women were when we all arrived on their doorstep the next day for a visit.

Those two women really touched our family. Their kindness meant so much to all of us. Moreover, the more I thought about those women, the more questions I had. Why were they like that? Why had we heard such bad things about Christians when we had seen only good things? Why did our Muslim leaders tell us that we should call them *kufar* or infidels? If they were *kufar*, then why did they act so much better than we did? That question became a major issue in my heart, which kept me looking for an answer for years afterwards.

Soon after this I finished my classes at the village school and started attending a secondary school in the city of Irbid. I was now a teenager and every day I traveled by bus back and forth to the city. The trip would take me about an hour since the roads were not good and the bus was even worse. However, as the cost was low and my time was expendable, it was arranged that I would travel to the city to get a better education. The school I attended was a large government school for boys. In my village, there had been no Christians in my school but now in Irbid there were three Christian boys in my class. We sat in desks wide enough for two students and a Christian boy named Fendi was my desk mate for three years. And for three years I tried to ask him questions about his religion. Fendi was from a nominal Christian background so he didn't know that much about his own religion. I don't think he cared that much about it either. Nevertheless, I was interested in learning more. In my tenth year in school the idea came to me that I should get a Bible and read it. I looked in vain in the school library and then I thought of asking Fendi.

One day I finally got up the courage. "Where can I get a Bible?" I almost whispered.

"I don't know," he replied carelessly, "maybe from a church."

I was taken aback when he said the word 'church.' I had always heard bad things about churches. Since we were Muslims and we didn't have any

dealings with churches. We didn't know much about them. The boys in the village used to talk in hushed whispers about the things that went on in churches. People would act wrongly there and do sexual things. There was alcohol in churches for people to drink and maybe, it was whispered, there were guns and people got killed there. Although we thought churches were definitely dangerous places, all the village boys secretly wanted to see the inside of one. Consequently, it took some time to work up the courage to ask Fendi if he would take me to church. When I finally asked him, he didn't seem too concerned and readily agreed to take me to a church close to our school.

At first I was very afraid. Just walking up to the church was frightening. We passed through the big wooden doors into the cool interior. Inside we sat on a long bench and watched what was going on. The church was very different from our mosque. In the mosque, we sat on the floor but, here, in church, there were seats. In the church, there were also pictures of people on the walls. We Muslims had no pictures of people because at that time images of any kind were discouraged by our Muslim leaders.

At that time, I didn't know what kind of church it was, but some years later I learned that it was a Catholic Church. As I watched, I didn't see anyone doing anything wrong. We were just sitting in our seats and a priest was at the front doing things. No one bothered about two boys sitting at the back so we just sat there. After a while, my fear passed and I started to think.

"Oh my God," I said to myself, "What were we thinking about? This is a very peaceful place. It even seems kind of godly."

As we sat there, people looked at us with kind faces and, afterward, they greeted us although they didn't know who I was. From that time on, my opinion of churches started to change. I realized that the things I heard in my village were only rumors told by people who had never been in a church. Thankfully, in modern Jordan today, most of these rumors have disappeared but, somehow, many people still consider churches as dangerous places.

My opinion of Christians was starting to change. The kind faces of those two women clearly reflected Christian love. I saw something in my friend, Fendi, and in Mr. Hijazeen, who stayed in our home. They were all Christians. They all demonstrated kindness. Therefore, I began to equate Christianity with kindness. I knew that somehow they were linked together but I didn't know how.

Soon after this, my friend Fendi and I started looking for a Bible. The only name I knew it by was 'Injil' or Gospel, so Fendi and I started asking all the bookstores for an Injil. After much searching, we found a storekeeper who could get us a copy. It was a very small book and he wanted half a dinar for it. Since I had no source of income, I had to save my daily sandwich

money. Instead of a full sandwich, I would buy only half a sandwich and I would save the other 2 1/2 piasters so I could buy my Injil. I saved my lunch money for a whole month before I had enough.

Finally, the day came when I could return to the store to buy my Injil. However, when the storekeeper put the book in my hands, I was disappointed.

“Why doesn’t it have the word Injil written on it? What does ‘New Testament’ mean?” I asked.

The storekeeper looked puzzled. “I don’t know,” he replied and turned back to his work. He was simply a storekeeper and didn’t care. Over his shoulder he said, “This is what you wanted and I got it for you. I have nothing other than that.”

“OK,” I replied tentatively. “Thank you.” I was a bit disappointed but when Fendi, who was waiting outside, saw my face he soon had words to cheer me up.

“The New Testament,” he explained, “means ‘after Christ.’ After Christ was born this Gospel was produced.” So I accepted that and started reading in it that very afternoon. However, I also decided that I should tell my father what I had done. That evening, I waited until Father was home from the fields and was sitting alone.

“Father,” I said carefully, “I have been saving for a whole month, and today I bought an Injil.”

Thankfully, he didn’t seem too concerned. “I guess it’s better than buying some other books,” he replied. “You can read it, but don’t read magazines that could spoil your schooling, OK?”

I don’t think my father ever realized how much impact that book would have on my life or the lives of our family. If he had, he might have taken it from me that day and destroyed it.

Lesson

How long does it take to explain the Gospel to someone? Could you do it in ten minutes or less? Explaining the gospel to a Muslim usually takes longer than just a few minutes. Muslims have many objections and misunderstandings that have to be overcome first. But even after this, it often takes a long time to fully explain the gospel message.

Those who have grown up in a non-Muslim society often fail to understand how different a Muslim thinks from others. Muslims have no concept of the fall of mankind, little idea of the flow of history, and often many misunderstandings about God. They will often listen to our explanation of the Gospel, but totally misunderstand what we are talking about.

In the *Ministering to Muslims Course* (Course two of this three set series) students were introduced to a six steps to spiritual maturity, starting with those who are not interested in the Gospel, and ending with those who are Christian leaders. Please remember that the terms that are used are not an expression of any particular theological position. Rather, they are an attempt to analyze what is happening in the mind of the person you are trying to deal with. The six steps were:

1. Not Interested
2. Somewhat Interested
3. Seeker
4. Convert
5. Disciple
6. Leader

Whenever you meet someone, you can begin to assess his or her spiritual development, and then target your ministry accordingly. Your aim should not be so much to immediately lead the person to Christ but rather to move him or her along from one stage to another. You will become excited as you see people move forward from one spiritual plane to the next. Before we look at the Discovery Lessons and the Freedom from Shame lessons we want to quickly review the six steps.

Not Interested People

Not Interested People are simply those who have no interest in what Christians have to say. The world is filled with *Not Interested People*. In some cases they are not interested in religion. They simply want nothing to do with what they perceive as religious. Most Muslims on the other hand are interested in religion, but not Christianity because they think they know all about Christianity, and are convinced that it is wrong. Lies, misunderstandings, self-righteousness, and pride often bind them in their ignorance. Whatever the reason, you will come across many people who are not asking for the Gospel, and do not respond when given an opportunity to learn more about Christianity. If people are not interested in our message, we need to carefully consider how we are packaging our message, and what sort of impression we are making on our audience. Everyone seems to have opinions about Christianity, but many Muslims never had much interaction with a real believer. You must seek to interact with these people by challenging their opinions, world-view, and their closed-thinking or false understanding about Christianity.

Sometimes when we minister to a person they allow us to speak about Christ. Some evangelists frequently ask people how they can pray for them. After talking a bit with the person and getting to know a bit about them, they then tell them that they like to pray, and ask them if there is a need that they can pray for. Surprisingly, many people open up to this kind of request.

The Camel Method introduced in the beginning of these lessons can be used as a tool to open religious discussion with Muslims. If you tell them that you are reading the Qur'an, they will immediately warm up and you can begin using the Camel Method.

As evangelists we should never hesitate to speak to Muslims about prayer, fasting, or our relationship with God, with shopkeepers, hairdressers and others whom we meet during the day. Some evangelists use jokes to speak to strangers. Imagine waiting for a bus, and asking the people there if they would like to hear a joke? Then begin:

A biology professor gave his students an exam on the birds they had been studying. On the exam he had pictures of birds, with everything covered up except the bird's legs. He asked the students to identify which birds were which. One student got very irritated and threw his paper on the teachers desk. As he was leaving the teacher stopped him and asked him, "What is your name?" The student lifted his pant leg and said "You guess."

After everyone chuckles, the evangelist goes on to say. It's hard to identify a bird by its legs, but the Bible tells us that God knows everyone of us. In the gospels, Luke 12:2 it says"

"There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs."

Before God created the world we read in Ephesians 1:4 that He chose us to be there for his Glory. God can never be taken by surprise. He knows what we are going to say even before we say it. Before we ere born He knew what miserable failures we would be and he loves us. He still loves us with unlimited love. That's why I enjoy reading the gospels. It tells us so much about God and his love. Does each of you have a gospel? If you want one, I have an extra copy.

This is similar to the approach Jesus took when He used parables and proverbs to speak to people. Surprisingly, He usually did not explain his stories. He spoke in order to make people think. He would simply say things, and wait for people to come to Him later for an explanation. Few of us would ever imagine dealing with people like that. We want to give a short, concise, total presentation of the Gospel. This however, should not be our goal with people who are *Not Interested*. Rather, we should rather seek to provoke questions, rather than answer them.

Many *Not Interested People* never move to the next stage. They refuse to consider the things of God. Since there are so many people in the world today who have never heard the gospel, we should probably be looking for those who become interested.

If you see a response, you should follow it up. When a person comes to you with a spiritual question, he or she has started to move to the next spiritual stage. You can now rejoice because a spiritual battle has been won. Such a person is now moving on to being *somewhat interested*.

Somewhat Interested People

When a person who was not interested begins to show interest in learning about Christianity; he has moved on to becoming '*somewhat interested*.' This is often a real work of God. Often this stage begins with a simple curiosity. Perhaps they will ask us "Do you pray?" or "Do you fast?" The evangelist should carefully answer these questions so that they lead to other questions. For instance we may answer, "Yes, I fast, but Christians fast differently than Muslims." This kind of response encourages further questions. This is an art that every Christian should learn when witnessing. By giving answers that provoke further thought, the evangelist can encourage the person to seek out answers. If the evangelist tries and explains everything at once, it is often too much for the listener. When asked "Do you fast?" the evangelist should not begin a long explanation about how Christians fast. This is not what the person asked about, and a long answer might only turn them away. A short answer that introduces something they don't know about can create further curiosity and further questions leading them deeper and deeper into Christian truths.

At this point most Muslims must face the objections and misconceptions that are common among Muslims. For instance they must deal with issues such

as: Has the Bible been changed; do Christians believe in three gods; God would not let a prophet be shamed or die like Jesus did; and other objections. It is at this point that some of the lessons from the Camel Method come in useful.

Many Muslims, once they become interested in knowing more about Christianity, slowly become aware of their own spiritual needs. They may compare their lives to that of a Christian. They may compare their lives to what they feel is their own religion's goal of spirituality and perfection, and start seeking ways of attaining this. Sometimes *Somewhat Interested People* begin to delve deeper and deeper into their own religion, as a response to the claims of Christ. From the outside this can look like a spiritual step backwards, when it is actually the natural outcome of their spiritual hunger. If you as a Christian turn to your Scriptures when challenged, shouldn't we expect Muslims to turn to their own religion to seek answers there? Seekers usually start in the places where their families and religious leaders tell them they will find answers. Once a *Somewhat Interested People* has turned their attention to Christianity to see if it has answers, this person has moved much closer to becoming a *seeker*.

SE - Seeker

A seeker is someone who has heard parts of the Gospel message and now feels that he or she must reconcile the difference between Islam and the claims of Christianity. Here we are not using this term as a theological statement of any kind. We are simply trying to represent the mindset of those who have arrived at the point where they are wrestling with what they know of Christianity on one hand, and the teachings of their religion on the other. Obviously both cannot be right. At this point, the seeker is taking the initiative, rather than being drawn along by the evangelist. Usually a *Not Interested Person* takes no initiative, and thus the evangelist must work at penetrating the walls that the person has surrounded themselves with. *Somewhat Interested People* takes some initiative in response to promptings by the evangelist and dialog is entered into. The *Seeker* however, takes the initiative and strives to discover which of the two viewpoints is true. When messenger feels that someone has become a true seeker, they should work hard to arrange the circumstances so that the seeker can learn in a student-teacher relationship. Muslims understand the teacher-student relationship well, and it is very useful in presenting the claims of the gospel. There are two options here. One is that the evangelist takes the seeker to a teacher or the evangelist himself moves into the role of teacher. Whatever the

arrangement, the teacher needs to be able to spend sufficient time with the *seeker* to give him or her, a clear presentation of the Gospel.

Most Muslim cultures are oral cultures. Few people read more than the morning newspaper. If they want to know something they turn to those who have knowledge rather than read books. Everyone has opinions but usually only those who have studied have knowledge. As the world is full of rumors and lies, most information cannot be trusted unless it comes from a trusted source, such as a teacher. This is why the teacher – student relationship is useful.

When witnessing, personal testimonies are useful in that they are accounts of what has happened in an individual's life. There is no greater expert on a life than the person living it. However, when the topic moves beyond personal experience to that of truth or theology, the seeker usually wants to get his information from an established reliable source. Therefore the evangelist must either be able to present himself as an authority, or introduce the seeker to someone else who is. It is usually easier to introduce someone else into the relationship as a religious teacher. This way the evangelist can maintain the relationship that he or she has with their Muslim friend.

It is important for the teacher to have two things in place. He must have a sense of direction whereby he can systematically cover the basics of the gospel so that the Muslim gets a complete picture of Christianity. He must also demonstrate some authority as he speaks on the Bible and the Christian faith. The Muslim seeker is looking for answers and he wants them from an authority.

It is our moral duty to give the seeker the best Gospel presentation possible; something that is understandable and communicates the Gospel clearly.

In the next couple of lessons we will look at two tools that can be used to communicate the gospel: The Discovery Lessons and the Freedom from Shame lesson.

Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion A

1. Can you write a short outline of things you would share if you had a short period of time, say fifteen minutes to share the gospel with someone?

2. Make a list of some of your friends. Decide where they are at in their relationship with Christ. Not Interested, Somewhat Interested, Seeker, Converts, Disciple, Leader
3. How many Not Interested people do you meet in a typical day? What are some creative ways that you can demonstrate to them the love of God? Can these people see you as a spiritual person? Start praying about ways that you can demonstrate or verbally share something of your spiritual life with the Not Interested people in your life.
4. Are there any Somewhat Interested people in your life? Who? What sort of things do you talk about? Are you always prompting them or do they open discussions? What are some ways that you can continue to encourage these conversations, and lead them to more questions, without you always being the one to initiate the religious conversations?
5. How does this chapter describe Seekers? What makes them different from Somewhat Interested People? Do you have any seekers in your life?

Lesson Fourteen

Introduction to Discovery Lessons

Technical notes

Story	4243 words = 25 minutes
Lesson	Words 2256 = 15 minutes
Discussion Questions	4 questions
Discover Lesson Intro	1070 words = 5 minutes
Memorize	
Practice Session	

Story

I was very pleased to have my very own copy of the Ingil, or gospels. But when I started reading I discovered that the New Testament wasn't anything like I had expected. Lots of things in it puzzled me. Right from the beginning, I found it a simple book with simple language. Our Muslim Qur'an is written in difficult ancient language. It took a lot of thinking to understand the Qur'an. The New Testament was different. Not only was the language understandable but the subject matter was easy as well. It seemed more like a storybook than a religious text. I was expecting God to be speaking directly like he did in the Qur'an. What I found, however, was a nice story of how Christ was born and the places he went and the things he did. Everywhere he went there were people around him who saw what was happening and they simply wrote the events down.

As I read, lots of questions formed in my mind. I had heard things about Jesus that weren't in this book. No matter how much I searched, I could not find anywhere that Jesus spoke as an infant. It simply wasn't there. I had heard that Jesus had performed miracles when he was a young child but that also wasn't there. The story of Jesus' birth was different. The Qur'an told us that his mother Mary fled from her family and went into hiding because she thought she had brought shame on her family when she was pregnant without a husband. I didn't find any of this in the Bible.

Instead, I found that Joseph, Mary's fiancé, was there. He stuck with her and, moreover, he got his instructions from God. The story in the Bible made more sense to me. If she heard the voice of the God, why would Mary need to be afraid? If she accepted God's will, why did the Qur'an tell us she felt shame?

Even at a young age I was becoming aware that there were conflicts and discrepancies between the Bible and the Qur'an. I was anxious to

resolve these conflicts so I started to read little bits from both of them and think about them.

One day I asked my friend, Fendi, “Why was Jesus born in a cave? Why wasn’t he born like any of us?”

Fendi thought for a moment and then replied, “Maybe his father didn’t have any money to go to a hotel.”

That made sense to me. I was a village boy. The cave beneath our house was better than a hotel. In the wintertime it was warm and in the summer time it was cool. The hay was always clean and soft. In fact, I preferred being in our cave to living in our house.

Soon I started debating in my mind between the things I knew about Islam and the things I was reading in the Bible. I realized that it didn’t make sense to debate, however. In the Bible, the facts were clear. In the Qur’an, they were not.

I wanted to study more, but as a young boy my days were filled with schooling, working on the farm and activities with friends and family. In the end, it took me two years of occasional reading to complete the gospels of Matthew and Mark and half of Luke.

But the questions continued. Matthew’s Gospel told me who Jesus’ father was, who his father’s father was, and so on. I was expecting that it would say God took Mary as his wife and had a son. After all, that is what Christians believed, wasn’t it? However, the Bible didn’t say this.

I was also puzzled about other things. Why would a great king like Herod want to kill a baby? It seemed to me that he could wait until Jesus was a young man and then simply put him in jail. After all, Herod was a Roman king. He could do anything.

Those questions were like seeds in my brain and my heart. “What am I reading?” I often wondered, “Is it a new truth?” I had always understood that the Qur’an was given to make the Bible clearer, but it seemed to me that the message in the Bible was already clear and complete.

This question plagued me for some time. I hadn’t read very far, but everything I had read seemed so different. The more I read the Bible, the more the Qur’an seemed doubtful. The more I read the Qur’an, the more the Bible seemed doubtful.

One day I approached my father, “Father, if you wanted to judge what is in the Qur’an, who or what would you refer to?”

He thought for a minute and then replied “I guess I would refer to God. And perhaps the other books before, like the Injil or the Torah.”

“Why,” I asked, “are we judging the Bible through the Qur’an then? The Qur’an came later. The Qur’an is not the base; it’s the last one. The

Bible is the base because it came before. If that is true, why are we judging the old by the new?" Father never had an answer for this.

All during this time I never ceased praying as a Muslim, but I started thinking more while I was praying. "Is what I am doing the true way?" When I was a child, I never understood fully what I was doing, but I believed it to be true. Now that I was a teenager, I understood more, but I wondered if it was really true.

One day, I decided to talk to my oldest brother, Abdul Karim. He was a young man who used his mind a lot. He was studying to become a mechanical engineer and my high school was close to his industrial school. So one day I paid him a visit. I didn't know what to say or how much to tell him, so I ended up telling him that Fendi and I had visited a church together. He listened but he never commented. He simply told me to take care of myself wherever I went. He also insisted that I tell my father.

It was our family code. Every night we would sit with Father and tell him what was happening in our lives. I never talked much with my younger brothers because they were a lot younger than I was, but I could talk about this with my father. It was also helpful that my sisters spoke favorably of Christians. Whenever we would talk about people, they would say that Christians were better and remind us of those two women. My mother, on the other hand, never bothered herself with our questions. She would simply say, "Go talk to your father."

Talking with Father was easy. He was a kind man and he never rebuked us. Usually he would give us an easy answer, so I wasn't very afraid. When I told him that I had gone to church with Fendi, he simply thought for a while and then he looked at me and said words I will never forget. "If you go into a church, son, remember that it is a place where God is worshipped. You should behave as if you are in a mosque. Do what your heart tells you to do, but do it out of obedience to God. Don't go to church for any other purpose."

The answer relieved me. I could pursue my search. However, I realized that I could not find my answers from my father. He was a simple man, and I had never heard him comment about theology. He never told me that the Bible was corrupt or that Christ was not crucified. These things I heard from other Muslims in the village. My father simply wanted his sons to act honorably and be upright.

"If you are going to be around Christians," he told me, "then remember how you should behave in their midst. Make sure you don't misbehave or say anything immoral." That was the end of that.

When I was a child, my family taught me how to practice our religion. They told us how to clean and wash ourselves before prayer. Having a clean

body is very important to a Muslim. One should never pray to God unless one is clean.

In the morning, we would rise and eat and then the men would go to the mosque to say the morning prayers. Muslims pray five times a day, but life on the farm made it hard to attend prayers at the mosque. Sometimes Father would stop his work in the field to pray, but when we boys returned from school, we were usually busy and there never seemed time for prayers. Father would return from the fields at sunset, and mother would have a meal ready for us to eat, so there was no time for prayer then. My little brothers never prayed much at all. On Fridays, however, we males would visit the mosque for noon prayers and during the holy month of Ramadan, we would go to the mosque and pray long prayers in the evening.

My father and mother also taught us how to function as Muslims. We learned how to read the Qur'an and how to chant it. They tried to teach us how to love our neighbors, but we boys weren't very good at this. We were always in trouble with the neighbors. Islam was simply our religion. We didn't do it out of religious fanaticism; we just did it naturally as everyone else around us did. We believed it was right, so we did it together.

However, in my last year of high school, I was never sure if Islam was right or wrong. I was slowly becoming a skeptic. I took a lot of notes and started to compare them. I was troubled. I knew that the kindness I saw in Christians was somehow part of what I read in the Bible. It puzzled me, but I had to be careful that my Bible reading didn't interfere with my studies, especially my final exams. In Jordan, the final exams at the end of high school are very important. The grade I would get would mark me for life. If I did well, then there was a future for me. If I did poorly, then finding any work other than menial labor would be difficult.

During my last year of school, I read the Bible very little. My whole life was focused on studying and getting a good mark in my exams. I knew that if I did well, then I could go to university. If I did not do well, then people would think of me as a failure for the rest of my life.

Finally, the days came when I could start my exams. I was 17 years old and young for my grade because I had been promoted ahead when I was in seventh grade. I was very apprehensive about my exams but I felt I had done quite well in them. I had to wait though, as sometimes weeks or months would pass before the marks were released.

Then the day came when the government released our marks. All across the country on the same day, the marks of the students were publicly posted. Those who did well would be offered the chance of further studies; those who did not would stay in the village.

When the marks were finally posted, I was very happy. I had made an excellent grade in English. In fact, I was number one in the whole kingdom of Jordan in English that year. I always liked English, and I was proud of my accomplishments. My math marks were my lowest as I always struggled with mathematics. Overall, my scores were quite high and I was pleased.

A short time later, I discovered that there was a scholarship available for me to study in America. I was so excited. The Jordanian government received four scholarships that year for engineering students to travel to America, and I qualified for the defense engineering scholarship. It was a fantastic opportunity. I could go to America!

Two weeks later I received a letter to inform me that it had been arranged that I would study at a place called Mississippi State University. I was very pleased and my family was all excited and very proud of me. The future looked bright and promising, and with great excitement, we boys got out our maps to locate all the places that I would travel to.

(PAUSE)

I had never been in an airplane before. I had never even been to an airport before. As a young boy, I had seen airplanes flying high overhead and I had stared at the long streak of white that stained the sky for an hour or so afterward. I had wondered what it would be like to fly. Now that I was leaving, I was so excited. I felt like an astronaut leaving for the moon. There was a lot to do to get ready. My father made sure that I had a new set of clothes. My mother sewed money into little sacks to put around my waist. We all thought that there were people in America who would steal your money.

When it came time to leave the village, a crowd gathered to see me off. Almost everyone was there. More than 30 men and women piled into cars and accompanied me to the airport in the capital city of Amman. People were excited that I was traveling. I was not just going to the capital; I was going to America! It was a big deal, for me and for them. I remember four or five cars in a convoy, traveling together to the airport. Everyone stayed for a long time to see me off. The men hugged me and the women kissed me, and all too soon I had to pass through the gates to board the plane.

Taking off and leaving the ground was exciting and terrifying all at once. Soon, however, things settled down and I had time to think a bit. Then a very strange feeling started to come over me. I was sad as I looked down from the airplane and saw Jordan dropping away in the distance. The words loomed in my mind. "I will not come back the same." It was a bit terrifying. I knew that my mind and heart would change. As I sat there, I wondered if

my family would like me when I came back. How much would I change? My family wanted me to stay as normal as they were. I was a village boy and they wanted me to come back and fit into village life as their families had done for many years. However, I knew that I would not return the same. It was 1977 and I was starting out on a new venture in life.

When I arrived in New York I wanted to see, touch, taste, and experience everything. One of the first things that caught my fancy was a candy store with a wonderful display of American chocolate bars and little boxes and rolls of gum and candy. I wanted to walk up and buy something using my English. I had learned all about English in Jordan. I had the best grade in the Kingdom. I could read and write and do grammar; I had studied Shakespeare and all of the best English writers. I could say many clever things. However, standing there in front of the candy shop, I realized that I hadn't learned how to buy a chocolate bar. All I could do was blurt out, "Give me this" in my heavy Jordanian accent. The high flying young student from Jordan had just crashed to the ground.

A few days later I registered at the State University. It was arranged for me to start with a three month course called Introduction to Engineering. Being in America was so exciting. Everything was new: the houses, the trees, and cars, the food and, especially, the people.

In the beginning, I had nothing to do except work on my English and explore my new world. I never went to church but I passed many churches traveling to and from school. I was so busy studying and enjoying life that I didn't have much time for religion. I made new friends and, with them, I started visiting the local pubs and the other places where the university students hung out.

Sometimes I was homesick and I would seek out some of the other Arabs living on campus. Although I wasn't very religious, I did miss praying in the mosque. I also missed having fun there. Once, my brother and I had been sitting at the back of the mosque secretly eating peanuts during the prayer service. We were quietly cracking the peanuts and hiding the shells under the edge of the carpets. Sometime later, the Mullah discovered what we had done. He told my father that it had been his kids had had been sitting at that spot. My father simply replied, "They are just kids. What's the problem?" He didn't even punish us. As I thought about things like this, I missed my father. He was such a kind man.

The holy month of Ramadan was another time I missed my family. Ramadan is the Muslim month of fasting. During the daylight hours, Muslims refrain from eating food, drinking, or even smoking. Once the sun is down, however, everything changes. During the day, we would fast but

when evening arrived, my mother would prepare a feast with specially prepared food. Every night, we would either have guests or we would visit others and eat with them.

At the end of the day, we would sit and wait for the Mullah to start the call to prayer from the mosque. At that moment we would begin to eat. Often we would sit around the table ready to pounce on the food as soon as we heard the sound from the mosque. Our home was some distance from the mosque, so someone would have to wait outside to watch until he or she saw the Mullah come out onto the roof of the mosque to give the call to prayer. Then we knew for sure that it was time to eat. No one wanted to fast one minute longer than was necessary.

In America, there was no Ramadan and there was no fasting during the day and feasting at night. I missed this special part of our life. Once I even had to laugh as I remembered an occasion when we kids thought that the Mullah was late and we cursed his mother and father. My father overheard us and he became very upset with us.

As I missed my family, I thought back on all the good things that had happened to me. One time, on the 27th night of the month of Ramadan, something special happened. The 27th night of Ramadan is a special night of prayer when Muslims remember the revealing of the Qur'an. Every single member of my family would stay up all night and pray and ask God for something special. Islam teaches us that if, from a pure heart, you ask God for anything, on that night, it will be answered.

On one occasion, my mother was praying and asking God for good health. I was young, so I asked God for two and a half piasters (about 50 cents.) My mother rebuked me. "Son," she said, "ask for something more. Ask for good health; ask for long life."

"I don't want to do that," I protested. "I'm healthy and I'm young. All I'm asking God for is two and a half piasters." To her chagrin, I kept repeating it all night. I was a bit rebellious and stubborn, and once I had declared my wish I stuck to it.

The next morning before school, I lined up in the courtyard with all the other students. That day, I was at the end of the line. After the national anthem, we all marched into class. As we walked along, we passed a place where the rainwater from the roof drained into a container where it was collected. The bottom was covered with sand and stones and, as I passed by, I looked down. To my surprise, there in the water were five half piaster coins. I was the last student in the row to enter the class and I was the only student to see the coins. I picked them up and put them in my pocket. After school I ran home as fast as I could. "Mamma," I cried out, "God gave me 2 1/2 piasters." Everyone in the family was delighted and impressed.

The two Christian sisters were living with us at the time, and they were very happy for me as well. “Wow, why didn’t you ask for more?” they teased, but I was happy. For me it was a lot of money. I kept my two and a half piasters for over a year before I spent them.

When I was in America, I missed those days and I missed my friends from the village, but I was young enough to make new friends. However, I didn’t know enough to tell good friends from bad friends and so some of my friends had a bad influence on me. It also didn’t take me long to follow the American custom of having a girlfriend. Soon I had a new circle of friends and we would hang out in bars drinking and smoking.

Occasionally, I would get letters from my father. “Abdalla,” he would write, “live for God and stay away from adultery and drinking alcohol. Stay away from evil.” Sadly, I never did. I appreciated my father a lot at that time, but I never responded to his wishes. I lied to him many times. “Father,” I would write back, “I am praying every single day.” It was all a big lie. The opposite was true. I was going to school every day and then going to the nightclubs almost every single night.

Although I was far from God, whenever I passed a church, I always felt strangely drawn to go inside. I would feel guilty. I would think to myself, “I should go in there.” But I never did.

During my second year at university, however, I started reading the Bible. I found it in the university library and I thought that it would be good for my reading practice.

But a strange thing happened. When I began reading the Bible in my room, I started feeling like I was standing in front of a mirror and God was looking at me. God could see me and He knew what kind of life I was living. God knew about the sins I was involved in. From my Muslim religion, I realized that I had a lot of bills to pay to God. I had been smoking, cursing, and drinking. I knew I needed to pay them off some day and I was afraid of what this would mean.

In Jordan I had owned a New Testament, but this time I had a full Bible. I started reading from Genesis and discovered that much of the material was quite new to me. I knew that God made man but in the Bible I discovered that God made man perfect. Man was without sin when God made him. This was very different from what I had learned from Islam. “Oh my God,” I thought. “Look at how I’ve acted. I now have sin. I have corrupted what God made perfect.”

Suddenly I felt guilty. With Islam, I had never experienced guilt. I always thought I was fine. I always thought I could make up for my shortcomings tomorrow. If I failed today, I could succeed tomorrow. I could

always pray a bit more or do more good works to balance any wrongs I had done. I had always had the hope that I could renew myself by myself, by doing and saying good things. Now I started to look at life differently. I began to see from Genesis that God had designed a way for humanity and that I wasn't living it. In fear, I continued to read the Bible. I wondered about my feelings of guilt. Perhaps it was wrong for a Muslim to be looking into Christian things. I was having some trouble with my schoolwork and I wondered if God was punishing me through my studies. The two biggest challenges to me were the English language and my Math classes. As time went by, I improved in the language, but Math was a lot harder. Somehow I had never realized that engineering was mostly Math. As I struggled with Math, I began to wonder if Math was God's way of punishing me.

One night I lay tossing and turning on my bed. I couldn't sleep so I prayed, "God, whoever you are, I know you are there. Please lead me to the truth."

LESSON: Becoming A Discover Teacher

In this lesson we are looking at some important issues to consider as you prepare to become a teacher of the Discover Lessons.

Dress

Dress is important. Teachers often hold an honored place in Muslim society. One who does not dress appropriately will soon lose the respect of the students and others in the community. How you dress on the street is important. How you dress in your home and answer the door is important. You might even have to abandon your favorite forms of dress and adopt something more formal or culturally acceptable in the land you are going to. Watch carefully how the local people look at you. What do they look at first? In some cultures people judge others by their shoes. So, missionaries there have taken to wearing formal shoes most of the time, keeping them polished and presentable. In some countries it is possible to dress very casually in the early morning, but much better clothes are worn in the evening.

Styles of Teaching

Most of us have attended school in our home countries and thus have preconceived notions of what makes a good teacher. Never forget that our opinions are based on our own culture and philosophy of education. Study

the styles of teaching used in your target culture, and adapt these to your use. Visit a local school or observe teaching taking place on television, such as from a mosque or temple. In some situations you might decide that the teacher portrays too much pride. Consider how you can portray yourself as knowledgeable without coming across as proud.

Use of Notes

Have you ever noticed that Muslim teachers seldom, if ever, use notes? The use of notes indicates two things to the audience. First, the speaker doesn't know his material well enough to speak without them and, secondly, the notes are the authority. Students may want a copy of your notes, and then, having obtained the authoritative document, don't return for further lessons. As a teacher of the Bible, it is vitally important that you use the Bible and the Bible alone. You want to communicate that the Bible is the sole source of your authority. You want the seeker to seek God in the pages of His Word. Don't introduce another authority, and refer to it more frequently than you do the Bible. If you must use notes, then write them on a small card and slip it into your Bible where you can refer to it occasionally. If the student wants some material, then he should take a Bible.

Seating

If you have never attended a teaching session in a school or mosque then make it a point to attend, or observe on television. Notice that teachers often sit, but is elevated above the audience or in a place of authority. Study your local culture so you can immediately see if there are "seats of honor" or places in the room that command more authority than others. You will need to decide for yourself if you want to or need to make use of this cultural aspect of position. You may want your guest to sit in the place of honor. After all, Jesus taught His disciples to take places of lesser authority and asked His followers to do likewise (Matthew 23:5-12).

Handling of the Scriptures

How does a religious teacher handle the Scriptures? If the Scriptures are your sole authority and if they are the Holy Word of God and you love and respect them, then treat them accordingly. Don't place your Bible on the floor; don't place other books on top of it; and don't write in it. Having said this, there are exceptions. I have seen Muslims marvel at a well-read Bible, which has been carefully marked. The worn, marked Bible can show the seeker how much you love and study its pages. That said, the general rule is: treat your Bible as a precious or even sacred object if you expect others to respect it.

Refreshments

Most missionaries say that it is best not to serve refreshments during the teaching time, especially if you are struggling to assert yourself as a teacher. Refreshments can be distracting; besides, most students don't drink tea while a school lesson is going on. A cup of tea offered before the lesson is possible; but clear it away before the lesson begins. More can be offered after the lesson.

Location

Whenever possible, teaching should take place in a neutral place. While it is possible to teach in a restaurant or public place, this can be fraught with difficulties and distractions. The seeker himself may be nervous about meeting in such a public place, and if he doesn't show up, the teacher must wait around for a considerable time in case he has been delayed.

If there is no suitable, neutral location, then the teacher's home is often the best place for him to meet with his students. It is important, however, to have a place where you can sit and teach, rather than lounge around. Some people object to the idea of bringing a seeker into a foreigner's home, as there may be cultural things that will overshadow the lesson, but the teacher's home is private and the number of distractions can usually be controlled. If possible, the sitting room should be as similar as possible to those found in other local homes. Often westerners fill their sitting rooms up with books, pictures, and other paraphernalia that make them feel at home, but makes their Muslim visitors feel on edge. If at all possible, a good teacher or evangelist should have prepared an easily accessible room that resembles a typical sitting room or teaching location for people from your target culture.

Number and Length of Sessions

One of the greatest difficulties you will face is getting the student to attend all the sessions. This is one reason why introducing a teacher is so useful. The teacher demands greater respect from the students because he is making an effort to come and teach. If at all possible, use a national teacher. These are usually men or women of standing in the local community.

When two missionaries work together they can use *vice-versa teaching*. In this case two Christian workers, usually in different locations, coordinate together, each one being the teacher for the other's contacts. Thus each evangelist tells his contact that he has a friend who is a religious teacher.

This teacher is willing to teach a short course on understanding Christianity (or the Gospel). If the seeker is interested, the evangelist arranges to introduce his contact to the teacher. If the seeker is not interested, then they continue their relationship, talking about issues, with the evangelist occasionally repeating the invitation to meet with a teacher. The strength of this approach is that the evangelist can act as a sounding board after each session. The evangelist can also ask his contact questions and encourage him to attend the next lesson, offering to go with him, if needed. This creates a triangle, with the contact, evangelist and teacher all relating to one another.

Even if your Muslim contact stops coming to the teaching sessions, the missionary can still approach him, because he is still his friend, and not the teacher. This is the strength of using an outside teacher.

If possible it is always best if the teacher is a national who can speak the local language well, and relate from the same cultural and religious background. On the other hand, in fanatical Muslim settings it is sometimes better if the evangelist is from another culture. Any Muslim seeking truth outside of Islam would be immediately confronted by his family and neighbors. Thus talking to a foreigner may seem safer to a Muslim seeker because the foreigner is not connected to his immediate family circle. If this is the case, the evangelist may find it advantageous to circulate through the wider community, finding those who are interested in learning about Christianity. Then, as seekers emerge, they could be passed over to a local believer (or another evangelist) who would act as the teacher.

As for the length of the lessons, evangelists over the years have struggled with the questions of “How much and how soon?” The author of the Discovery Lessons found that he could not cover the basics in less than six hours. When seekers were invited to attend a “Bible study” they often shied away, simply because of the open-endedness of the commitment and because of the thickness of the Bible. By limiting the studies to a minimal number of hours, students would more readily commit themselves to attend. Six one-hour sessions seem more palatable than an open-ended commitment.

While six one-hour sessions can be covered in a week, it is often wiser to leave a longer period of time between the sessions. The student is covering so much new material that he needs time to think about it and assimilate it. In some cases, however, teachers have successfully used three two-hour sessions. You, as the teacher, must decide with the student on what commitment he can make.

Repetition and Memorization

There is an old Arab proverb that says, “Repetition can teach a stone.” Memorization is a learning tool often used by Africans and Asians, so don’t be afraid to encourage memorization. Students can memorize Scripture verses as well as the broad outline you are covering. So don’t be afraid to ask your students to memorize. However, don’t rely solely on memorization. Many other mediums can be used. Songs, dance, drama and narratives are also useful tools. But they are only tools, and should be combined with other forms of learning so that understanding and application happen.

Adaptability

Don’t be afraid to teach someone. As you progress through the material, you will begin to assess how interested he is, and for what reasons. If he is merely seeking to gain knowledge, but is not personally interested in Christ, then the material can be presented simply as lessons on Christianity. If the student begins to respond to the material and you can see evidence of God’s work in his heart, then the material can be made much more direct. Try to be sensitive to the seeker’s questions. Someone seeking to trap you may ask you questions about Muhammad or the Qur’an, or some other Scriptures or teaching. Gently remind the student that these are lessons about the Christian faith, and return to the lesson material. You need to trust God to guide the student as he forms his own opinions about his own religion.

Keeping to the point

Know and communicate the material for each lesson and only have 2 or 3 sub points. That’s all! Memorize the outline and resist the temptation to teach too much material in one session. Remember that many of the concepts you are teaching are totally new to the Muslim student, and may be hard for him to grasp. Sometimes one simple thing you say may require hours of thinking before the student can accept it. For the Muslim, simply grasping the concept that God created a perfect creation may be overwhelming. But it is a necessary lesson, for if creation isn’t damaged then it doesn’t need fixing. This is why the Discovery Lessons spend the entire first lesson examining the perfect creation.

Who should be present?

Opinions vary between the successful evangelists. Most agreed that the best situation is one-on-one, or the student and his Christian friend (if they are doing vice-versa teaching), and the teacher.

If there are to be more, then there are several things to consider. Some teachers mention that in teaching a group, the students should outnumber the Christians so that it doesn't appear that the Christians are ganging up on them. This, in reality, is often hard to arrange. Often the teacher will want to apprentice a new teacher or a Christian observer will want to sit in on a lesson. If this is the case, then the observer should act as an observer, a silent prayer partner, and never enter into the discussion unless invited by the teacher. When the teacher is waiting patiently for an answer from the student, it is often hard for the observer to resist the temptation to help by answering the question.

The dynamics change when there is more than one student. All the evangelists agreed that they would only prefer to deal with two or more students if these were already the best of friends. If they are going to think and act as a group then it can be helpful to deal with them as a group. This takes more skill, as the students can hide behind one another's responses, defend one another, and create an argumentative atmosphere. If everyone in the group is a seeker then it may be possible to move them as a group closer to Christ.

Almost all evangelists agree that the presence of persons of the opposite sex should be avoided and that female teachers should deal only with female students and male teachers with male students. The only occasion when students of the opposite sex should be together is if they are a married couple. In most cases it is unwise to teach an engaged couple together, as it may appear that this is an occasion for courting rather than study. Even teaching a brother and sister together should be avoided unless they are young children or older, respected members of the community.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. If a person wanted you to tell them what the Christian faith was all about, what would you say? Do you have a plan? If you needed a teacher, who could you call on?
2. If you are currently in a cross-cultural situation, is your house different from the people you want to reach? What might make your sitting area comfortable or uncomfortable for them? How are their houses different from yours? Are there things you can change to make them feel more at home?
3. What is Jesus teaching in Matthew 23:5-12? Does your culture have 'seats of honor'?

4. Why do you think it might be best to separate genders at a Bible Study?

Discovery Lesson Introduction

Introduction

The idea behind this course is to present major, foundational concepts about God and Christ to the Muslim who has either received Christ, or is merely willing to take a good look at the Bible. Because it is hard to predict how long a “seeker” will stay studying with you, the course is as short as possible, just six lessons.

This material has been developed in the crucible of real life ministry to Muslims in the Middle East. We have had the blessing of teaching the course many times to a large number of people, and so it has been refined through experience. Our objective all along has been to keep what works.

It seems that most discipleship courses presuppose too much Christian understanding. Certain basic principles, such as God’s goodness, are taken for granted. As a result many courses begin in the New Testament, but we have felt that we must start at the beginning. Consider the basic truths of the first two lessons which are taken from Genesis 1-3: Who God is; the basic quality of creation; man; man’s relationship to God; temptation; sin; the fall and the curse. The latter topics can be summed up as man’s terrible condition in contrast to his once perfect condition, an exposure of man’s sin-nature, and the need for God to rescue and put things right. If the Muslim has a good grasp from the Genesis account of these things, then he has gone a long way toward making sense of the gospel. And many scholars, especially from the field of Biblical Theology, agree that in non-Christian cultures, one must start from Genesis.

The fourth lesson concentrates on the core themes of blood sacrifice, substitution, and atonement in the Old Testament. There is a brief look ahead at Christ as the ultimate atoning sacrifice but the emphasis is on setting the stage from the Old Testament, so that when we get to Christ, it makes sense. Thus the three lessons on these core truths (together with Genesis 1-3) are an indispensable foundation.

Another precept of the course is that it ought to be taught in a face-to-face setting by a real teacher, preferably one who is qualified to minister the Scriptures. Other courses have students look up verses ahead of time, fill in

the blanks, and then the group compares answers together; but we don't believe this is the best approach in the Muslim environment.

Three of the lessons are topical, and three are expository (i.e. they concentrate mainly on studying one passage together in an inductive manner). As our preference is to make the whole course as expository as possible, we have found it best for the group to learn through discussion whenever practical. A good approach is for the teacher to ask leading questions, and then allow the students to discover for themselves the truths that are in front of them in the text. Not only does this keep them from getting bored, it also helps the truths to stick in their minds, and hopefully in their hearts. Some of the material, however, will simply have to be taught.

Some Practical Matters

Group size: between 1 and 10 students. A large group may cause some to be silent and for discussion to be limited. Some may even gang up against the biblical material. Obviously the teacher should know his students pretty well before creating a large group.

In many cases, these lessons only mention the point to be made. The teacher will need to work out how he wants to explain it. The material is not specially contextualized, but it can certainly be used, even without adaptation, in the setting of a highly contextualized ministry.

Each study is designed to take 45 - 60 minutes. In addition, the teacher may want to have singing, sharing and prayer, drills for finding verses, or whatever else he sees as appropriate.

The teacher may assign work for the students to study ahead of time. This is not necessary, and in some situations may hinder some from continuing. It may be more fruitful to have the students memorize verses after they've learned the meaning of them during a particular study, and then to review those verses at the beginning of the next lesson.

If possible, there should be a Bible for each student. When dealing with illiterate people, time should be given for slow and expressive reading of the text, and key verses should be recited more than once.

The design of the course is a gradual buildup for five lessons, with Lesson Six calling for a decision and commitment to Christ.

The teacher should plan on spending no less than 2 hours in preparation with the biblical texts and this material. This does not include the time necessary for preparing it in another language. Remember that you are ministering the Word of God, not just reading through a guidebook.

The material is presented here in English. If you are teaching in another language, especially if it is not your native language, then it is strongly recommended that you rehearse thoroughly, explaining everything in the target language once or twice before teaching the lesson.

What comes next after these six studies? We have prepared a course called The Growth Group (available in Arabic only) which is longer, and is geared mainly for believers. It is hoped that by this time the student will already have some deeper involvement with other believers.

Many debate the question of which type of teaching is more fruitful in discipleship, that is, Biblical content or the so-called “obedience-oriented” teaching. The question is similar to “Which wing of the airplane is more important?” Clearly to concentrate on one to the detriment of the other can short-circuit the believer’s new walk with Christ. Many verses could be given to show the urgency of balance between these two, or rather, the necessity of both. The disciple who is fed only content, truths, and theology week after week is left unchallenged in his faith and may be continuing to study for a variety of unhealthy reasons. Likewise, the new disciple who is merely given commands of Christ to obey, almost as challenges, but who is not helped to grow in the “knowledge of Christ” at the same time (2 Peter 3:18), is likely to suffer from a real lack of depth and the spiritual understanding necessary to make the right choices.

Memorize the Discover Lesson Outline

Lesson One God, Man and Creation Genesis 1 & 2

Lesson Two The Fall of Man and Sin Genesis 3

Lesson Three Fundamentals of the Bible Various Scriptures

Lesson Four Redemption in the O. T. Leviticus 16:15-19; 29-34; Isaiah 52, 53

Lesson Five Who was Jesus John 1

Lesson Six The Proper Response to God Various Scriptures

Lesson Fifteen

Technical notes

Story	4656 words = 28 minutes
Practice Session	
Discovery Lesson 1	2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize	
Practice Session	

Story

My first two years at University were very ordinary. I studied during the day, and I enjoyed student life during the night. My third year looked like it would be much like my first two years, but little did I realize how different that year would be.

It all started one Saturday at a reception that the school hosted for students and teachers. It was one of those events that most students hated. However, since I enjoyed meeting people, I happily clipped on my nametag and started mixing with the crowd.

During the course of the evening, one of the university professors noticed my nametag and tried pronouncing my name. “Abdalla Hawatmeh,” he said with difficulty, “and from Jordan?”

“Yes,” I answered wondering what was coming next.

“Well, Abdalla, how would you like to come to our church tomorrow and speak to us?”

I was astonished. “Excuse me sir,” I protested, “but I’m a Muslim, and my English language is really weak.”

The professor just smiled at me. “We don’t want you to speak about religion, just come, and tell us about Jordan. Tell us about your country and your king.” He paused and looked at me with friendly eyes. “Tell us about your language and customs, whatever you want, but please come.”

In the end I agreed and the professor, whose name I discovered was Mr. Charles Love, agreed to meet me in the morning.

The following morning, Mr. Love showed up at my apartment with his beat-up old pickup truck. It was rather strange but pleasant having a total stranger acting so warmly to me, but I was looking forward to getting off campus and meeting some new people. So we headed out, Mr. Love driving his truck with me following behind in my own car.

We began by driving down a highway, but after a short while, Mr. Love turned off the main road and started down a country lane. This road was narrow, and soon we started to pass through some deep pinewoods. It

was then that I became afraid. All the old rumors about churches and guns and killings flashed across my mind.

“This man,” I thought, “is taking me somewhere to kill me!” I was so shaken by the thought that I started to pray. I said, “God, I am sorry that I haven’t been seeking you for the last two years. I’ve had the freedom to seek you. My weekends have been free, but I’ve squandered my time on pubs and friends and fun. So if this trip is the beginning of my search again, please help me.”

My fear continued to grow, so I reached into my glove box and retrieved my gun. It was a black pistol I had purchased during my first week in America. Other foreign students told me that I needed to protect myself. After all, this was America. So I went out and bought a used gun. And now I needed it.

A few moments later, we pulled up in front of a nice little white church. The place looked pleasant enough and there were other people around, so I put the gun away and tried to relax. Mr. Love parked his Ford pickup and showed me where I should park. Then we walked together to the church.

Mr. Love led me inside and he and I sat on one of the pews. It was a pleasant place, with nearly thirty people sitting and waiting for the service to start. As I sat there, I felt a sensation of peace come over me. It was a strange feeling. I felt like I had discovered all the peace that I had yearned for over the years.

As people were sitting waiting for the service to begin, Mrs. Love came and warmly greeted me. Only after this did I dare to look around at the other women. They were all dressed very properly and that impressed me. Many of the girls on campus dressed in such a way as to catch a man’s attention, but these women were different and I felt at home.

A few moments later, the service began. As we sang and read the scriptures, the feelings of peace left me and I started to feel afraid again. It was the same feeling that I got whenever I had read the Bible and now it was happening here in church. I felt as if I was standing in front of God, and I was looking at myself in a mirror. I was seeing myself and I didn’t like what I saw. As I looked at myself, I grew afraid. The fear was so bad that I started to tremble. Right there in that little church I decided to renew my search for truth. If the truth was in the Bible, I would seek it out and follow it. If it was in the Qur’an I would seek it out and follow it. Whoever and whatever was right, I wanted to know. I would find the truth and follow it wholeheartedly.

Later in the service I had the opportunity to speak to the people about my country. After that was done, they had me speak to the children. I really didn’t know that much about my country, but I talked about what I knew and mentioned the countries around us and a little about politics.

At the end of the service people greeted me warmly and welcomed me like I was the guest of honor. It didn't take long until I warmed up and enjoyed their fellowship.

After that morning, I never doubted about churches again. That morning all the rumors I had heard in my childhood were erased. I realized that they were just rumors and people repeated them because they had never experienced otherwise.

I was about to return to my car when the Loves invited me to their home for lunch. I was very pleased and gratefully accepted their hospitality. I really enjoyed that meal. It was so nice to eat in a quiet home instead of a crowded school cafeteria. Besides, homemade food was so much better than university cafeteria food.

After the meal, we had some time to relax and so I decided to ask Mr. Love a question. "Can you please take me through the Bible? I need someone to lead me through it. I've tried reading it, but I have many questions."

"Well, Abdalla," Mr. Love said very humbly, "I can study the Word of God with you, but I'm not sure I can answer many of your questions. However, with time, I think you will answer them yourself."

"OK," I responded to his challenge, "let's see."

Years later, Mr. Love told me that if he had announced that he knew all the answers, he would have been a liar. Moreover, he wouldn't have given me any chance to search. I then realized that Mr. Love was not only a very smart electronics professor, he was also very wise.

That afternoon I started my first Bible study. Now I had someone who might be able to answer my questions. However, when I heard an answer, I usually had more questions and suddenly my mind was caught up in discovering what the Bible was all about. When we finished that Sunday, Mr. Love arranged to visit me on a weekly basis so we could open the Bible together. From that time on, every week we would sit together in my dorm room, around the Bible. I would get out my notepaper and diligently take notes. I was serious about learning, and I wanted to have notes so I could later review everything that was said. Whenever Mr. Love would say something I didn't understand, I would stop him and say, "Excuse me, but I don't understand this." Mr. Love would then try and find a simpler way to put things.

As I studied, it soon became obvious to me that the more I read in the Bible the more questions I had. Buried beneath the truth were more truths that I wanted to know about. In particular, I wanted to know about the personality of Jesus. I had read the gospels as a child but I had never grasped what it all meant. Now, as I read, I learned many new things.

For the first time, I realized that Jesus was a completely holy man. The harmony of the events in the Bible also caught my attention. I was fascinated with the way Jesus was born from a virgin. I carefully examined the story of how Mary conceived and how Joseph reacted to her being pregnant. There was a harmony in the Scriptures that I had never understood from my Islamic background.

As a young boy, I had heard all kinds of stories from my father about how Jewish people acted and reacted. We had heard that Jewish men treated their women worse than Muslim men did. But Joseph acted properly. He acted in love towards Mary. In the Bible, it all worked together so smoothly.

I was delighted with the story of John the Baptist's birth and the reactions of Zachariah and Elizabeth. As I reflected on these stories, I began to realize that the same voice that came to Joseph also came to Mary and was involved in John the Baptist's birth. It was evident that one person was controlling the whole thing. It was God. There was a voice speaking to Mary, and the message proved to be true. There was a voice speaking to Elizabeth and that message also proved to be true. This made me sure that John the Baptist came for one reason only: to prepare the people for the coming of Christ.

From Islam, I had learned that no prophet on earth had ever served another prophet. As I thought about my own religion, I realized that in Islam we had prophets coming throughout history. When they came, they fought, killed, preached, and then left. When Mohammed came, he lived 63 years and did many marvelous things but, in the end, he died from some sort of sickness.

John the Baptist was different. He was a gift from God and a miracle to Zechariah. John came for only one purpose. He was to focus everything on Jesus. He preached repentance and that the Kingdom of God was near. When he approached Jesus, he always pointed to Him and not to himself. He identified Jesus as the Lamb of God. When they asked him by what authority he did these things, he replied, "I am not Christ." This was true, but he had Christ in his mind every minute of his life. He was born to proclaim this message and died proclaiming it.

John had a very difficult job. He came to prepare a people for the Messiah. These people claimed that they were close to God, and yet they were far away. They claimed their closeness to Abraham through their blood lineage. However, their hearts were far from God.

When I read this, I began to understand. Bloodlines are very important to Muslims. Arabs claim bloodlines back to Abraham. Many families and tribes are very proud that they can clearly trace their bloodlines back to the prophet Mohammed.

Another thing that impressed me was the miracles of Jesus. I was not just impressed with his commands of “Be healed” or “Be raised from the dead.” No, it was not just that. I believed in Jesus’ miracles even when I was a Muslim. Islam had taught us that Jesus did His miracles “in the name of God.”

When I read the Bible, however, I began to realize that no one could do these things except God Himself. In the Qur’an, there is a verse that says, “Who can raise these dead (bones) except the person who created them (God)?” I understood that only God could do these things. But Jesus did them.

It wasn’t easy for me to link all these things together. I woke up many times in the night with a dry mouth and a trembling heart wondering, “What is going on in my life? This is wrong! I’m sure Islam is the way to God and by studying these things I’m doing something wrong.... I must repent.” My mind would switch back and forth between the things I had learned as a child and the things I was discovering in the Bible.

For a whole year I attended church. I always looked forward to attending church services, even when I knew that in the night my mind would be tormented with doubts. I seldom missed Sunday services and I often went during the week for the Tuesday night Prayer Meeting. If I did miss a meeting, it was because I was struggling with a rebellious heart. Sometimes I would get so fed up with my search that I didn’t want to discover any more truth. It wasn’t that I hated the search; I hated the truth I was discovering. The more I learned about the Bible, the more it made me look ugly and repulsive.

Questions would torment me. “Oh my, what if...?” The list of ‘what if...’ questions grew longer and longer. “What if my family knew where I was right now? What if the people in my village knew what I was thinking right now? What if...?”

I was afraid, honestly afraid. But every Sunday I would head out for church, even though my mind was plagued with doubts and fears. Sometimes I would struggle in myself whether I should go to church or not. God settled this one morning when on the way to church my old car suddenly stopped in the middle of a bridge. I had never had a car in Jordan, so I had no idea what was wrong. The first thing that entered my mind was, “Oh, it must be God punishing me, because I am going to church when Islam is the way.”

I got out of the car, opened the hood, and stared at the motor. Cars whizzed by me, and then I prayed the first prayer I ever prayed in Jesus name. I prayed, “Jesus if you really want me to go to church this morning,

would you please provide someone to take me there. That's what I'm asking." I really didn't want to miss the service. I looked at the motor and didn't have a clue what was wrong, and I didn't have any idea what I should do next. But I didn't have to worry long because a moment later a car pulled up and an elderly man looked out of his window.

"Can we help you?" he asked.

"Yes" I replied, "Could you please take me to church?"

"Close the hood of your car and get in. Just leave your car there," he instructed. So I left my car on the bridge and climbed into the back seat of his car behind his wife.

"Where are you going?" the old man asked.

"There is little white church in Ocean Springs..." I began.

"Oh," he said. "They are a different denomination, I do not agree with those people, but we love them anyway. They are our brothers. I'm sure they don't agree with us, but I'm sure they love us as their brothers as well. So, let's go to Ocean Springs. I've never been in that church before, but I want to be there today."

It took us fifteen minutes to get to the church, and this dear couple came in with me I introduced them to my friends there. They left after the service and I never saw them again, but to me they were a miracle. I had prayed, and I got an answer. That was enough to break the idea that God was punishing me. I realized that my car had just broken down and needed repair like any normal old car.

As I studied the Bible and attended church services, God began to stir up my heart. Sometimes fear would grip me. Sometimes I would cry. Sometimes I would go back to drinking. I was never a heavy drinker, but when faced with this new fear, I drank.

Nevertheless, every week Mr. Charles Love would faithfully come to my door. Sometimes we would study together. Sometimes we would pray. Together we started praying for my Math studies. "Lord I hate Math," I would pray. "I want to study Arts or English Literature, but my scholarship is for Defense Engineering." So we prayed together for my Math classes and slowly my marks improved. Eventually, with God's help, I became one of the best students.

Many times, however, Mr. Love came to my door and rang the bell and knocked and I didn't open it. I could see him through the peephole. It was our appointment time, but I wouldn't answer the door. Sometimes he would stand for more than ten minutes, knocking and ringing and I wouldn't open. I was never angry with him; I simply wanted to hide myself. The things I was learning overwhelmed me and I couldn't take anymore.

In the mornings, I often saw Mr. Love in class. After class he would stop to say a few words.

“Where were you, Abdalla? I came to your room last night.”

“I was out studying somewhere,” I would lie to him. He would just nod. There was never any discussion. Many times I lied to him, and every time he simply returned love. He never said, “Abdalla, I saw your car in the parking lot,” or, “I saw your lights on.” No, he never said that.

Several years later I asked Mr. Love to forgive me for those many times he came to my door and I didn’t open it.

“I knew you were home,” he said. “But I didn’t want to leave too quickly. I wanted to communicate to you that I cared for you, even if you didn’t open the door.” I appreciated that. Mr. Love cared for me as a person. He didn’t just focus his attention on evangelizing me. He was interested in me as a person. Many times the Loves had me over to their home. They fed me. We drove together in Mr. Love’s old Ford pickup. He even let me drive it sometimes. We worked together, and he educated me about the church.

One time, we built a cemetery for the church. I was happy to be out of the classroom and out of the city. Together we built a fence and did the landscaping. Mr. Love was more than just a teacher to me; he was a model. He was an example and I tried to follow him. Years later, as I started my own ministry of evangelism and discipleship, I realized how much I had benefited from that relationship. I’m certainly not as patient as he was, and sometimes I think that I need to go back to him again and take another course in patience. I never saw him angry. Although his family passed through some hard times, he was always praising the Lord.

Once, in the middle of my search for the truth, I received word that a cousin of mine had been killed. He was a close friend of mine and had been a pilot in the Jordanian Air Force. One day while flying, his airplane just exploded. He was one of the best pilots in Jordan, and he really wanted me to become a pilot as well. My family called me from Jordan and told me the news.

Mr. Love saw I wasn’t in school that day and so he came to my apartment to see what had happened. I told him about my cousin. To my amazement, he called the university and took the day off. He stayed most of the day with me and even took me out for lunch. After lunch, he helped me send some telegrams to Jordan. I was amazed at how he left everything and concentrated on me. With Mr. Love’s help I booked tickets so I could fly and attend the funeral. When my flight was ready, he went to the airport to see me off. When I returned a few days later, Mr. Love was there smiling and waving. It was as if he had never left the airport.

Through all this, I began to see the love of Christ in Mr. Love. Christ was always there, and Mr. Love was always there for me. Sometimes he would say, "Leave your car and jump in the truck and come with me." We became the closest of friends. Through this time I continued to study the Bible and ask questions.

The Bible was so different from the things I had learned as a child. I had heard that the Bible was corrupted. At first, this was easy to believe. In the Qur'an, everything was written as if God was speaking. "I the Lord God tell you..." but in the Bible, everything was written as if it was a storybook. How could a storybook be the word of God? When I asked Mr. Love about this, he explained to me how God's Spirit moved men to write. They wrote from their perspective but through the inspiration of God.

That might be true, I thought, but the Muslims at home said that Jesus prophesied that another prophet would come after Him. As I studied this, I began to realize that there was something wrong with this idea. Jesus Himself said, "It is finished." In addition, Jesus did not give the name of the one who was to follow. He simply said that He was to be the Spirit and that He would be a comforter. If there was to be another prophet, Jesus could easily have said more so that people would have recognized Him.

Along with this, Jesus was always pointing to heaven, never to earth. He said repeatedly that the kingdom of God was here. The kingdom of God was like this and like that. He would use parables and proverbs in His teaching so that people could understand and relate to what He was saying. If all this was true, how could there be a new prophet coming afterward to bring a new religion? Jesus himself said that He was not there to start a new religion. He did not deny the law in the Old Testament; He came to complete it. Complete means to finish the mission. If this was true, how could a new religion follow? Logically, it seemed wrong.

How could the Bible be corrupt? When I looked at it from Genesis to Revelation, I could see a ladder coming from heaven and going back to it. God created Adam, and the love of God continued for man even after sin spoiled things. God never ceased communication with man even when man was living in the pit. As I read, I could see that God kept revealing Himself through dreams and visions. I could see that God continued to send prophets. God continued to tell the people how they could be redeemed. He repeated over and over again the promise that Christ would come and save the world.

The picture in the Bible was complete. God was taking man with his sins and saving him through Christ. As I meditated on these facts; I realized that salvation was complete. There was nothing to be added to the message of the Bible.

But Islam presented another way. Islam had another book, a new book. As I began to think about Islam, questions formed in my mind. Where did Islam come from? Who brought it? Why was it established? Why does Islam concentrate so much on the language that the Qur'an was revealed in? Why doesn't the Qur'an have witnesses like Matthew, Luke, and John? Why has it never been subjected to historical or analytical analysis? Why was translation of the Qur'an into other languages wrong? I had questions, but Islam taught us not to question the Qur'an, just to believe it.

The two books were very different. Even their messages were different. In the Qur'an, God gave rules and instructions for Islamic society to live by. In the Bible, God gave very simple instructions to Adam. "Don't eat from this tree. But if you eat...." I could see that the biggest obstacle in man's relationship with God was disobeying God. Yet God gave Adam the freedom to act as he chose. Even today, God hadn't changed. We all have a choice. God gave us the Word to believe, to obey, and to apply to our lives.

As I went over my notes, I asked myself the question, "Where is the corruption in the Bible?" My process for analyzing the Bible was like filtering water. If it was bad water, how can you get good water? To prove it, you get into your laboratory and test it. If you want to test the Bible, live with it a while and see if the Word of God does what it says it will do. Does it change you or not?

So the problem of corruption became clear to me. The more I read and the more I discovered the truths of God's word, the deeper I understood. The more I understood, the further I moved from the past rumors that I used to believe in. All this came from testing. I tested it and it stood firm.

The most amazing thing about the message of the Bible was that it is completely fair to all. All men, no matter what their skin color or their position in society could receive forgiveness from God. This was a message of hope for mankind.

In the Bible, I discovered for the first time that God is truly just. His anger is not against people but against what people say and do. In my own religion, I understood that God was mostly angry with people themselves and not with what they did. The Bible, however, told me that good works were fine, but they are not all that God wanted from me. From my own religion, I had learned that God focused on the things we do. That was why we prayed five times a day, gave money to the poor, and fasted during the Holy Month of Ramadan. God would someday weigh the scales, and He would judge the good things I had done against the bad things I had done.

In the Bible, however, I discovered that God loved me. It didn't matter if I did good works or not. If I did good things, that was nice and I needed to do them. But even if I didn't do them, God would still love me. What I

needed to do was to hang around the Lord and be with Him and do the things He was doing. Everyone could do his own good works, but the question was: are they through Christ or not? This is what makes the difference.

At that point, I reached a conclusion. The question of the corruption in the Bible was put behind me. I hadn't yet become a believer, but I had decided that the Bible was the book that I wanted to concentrate on and learn more about.

My search wasn't easy. Sometimes my heart would get so stirred up that I hated Islam. And I hated Christianity. I even hated myself. Why am I doing this? Why did I mess around with Christians? Why didn't I stay as a simple Muslim? Back then, my heart was settled and I was fine. Sure, I didn't know a lot, but I was fine and having fun. Now, I knew more and I was having difficulties. Little did I realize that my difficulties had only begun.

Practice Session

Repeat the Discover Lesson Outline to another Student from memory

Discover Lesson One **God, Man, and Creation**

Memorize the questions and comments and the answers. When you teach, have the Muslim read the verses and then ask him the question. Keep asking and prompting him until he comes up with the right answer.

Bible Texts: Genesis 1 and 2

Introduction

The Bible teaches that Jesus came to give us a better life (John 10:10). Everyone that I meet seems to want a new life. Jesus has promised us that life.

The goal of these lessons is to help us understand who Jesus Christ is, why He came, and what He can do for us.

In order to understand who Jesus is, we must understand what happened in the world before He came. To do this, we are going to take a closer look at a familiar story: the creation of the world.

The Seven Days of Creation - The Importance of the Word of God

- 1) READ: Genesis 1:1-2
 - a) Was there anything in existence before the creation of the world? (God and the Spirit of God)
 - b) When God began creating the world, what was its condition? (Formless, empty, confusion, darkness)
- 2) READ: Genesis 1:3-5.
 - a) What did God create on the first day? (Light)
 - b) How did He create it? Did He use tools? (No. He spoke and it happened)
 - c) The Word of God is the foundation to the existence of everything. Everything is built upon the Word of God.
- 3) READ: Genesis 1:6-25.
 - a) How did God create everything? (By His Word.)
 - b) There was an order and a purpose to God's creation.
- 4) The expression 'Word of God' does not refer to a book. It means the voice of God, the will of God, and the revelation of God.

Creation of Man-God's Love for Man

- 1) READ: Genesis 1:26-27
 - a) Man was created in the image of God.
 - b) Are animals created in the image of God? (Of course not)
 - c) What does it mean that we are created in the image of God? Do we resemble God physically? (No. God has given man abilities greater than the rest of creation. God has distinguished man by giving him some of His (God's) characteristics.)
 - d) What are some of the ways that man is created in the image of God?
 - i) Man has authority
 - ii) Man has absolute responsibility
 - iii) Man has the ability to communicate
 - iv) Man can distinguish between good and evil
 - v) Man can have a relationship with God
 - vi) Man has life after death
- 2) READ: Genesis 1:28-31
 - a) Do you see anything that points to the value of man?
 - b) Do you see God's love for man?
 - c) When God said that creation was good, what did He mean? (Perfect, complete. No sickness, war, pain, sadness, crime, or even death. The relationship between God and man was perfect. Man was close to God. He had fellowship with God.)
- 3) READ: Genesis 2:1-3
 - a) What did God do on the seventh day? (He rested)

- b) Why did He rest? Was He tired? (No. He rested because He had finished and it was good.)
- c) It is very important that we notice the condition of creation at this time. It was perfect. It was complete. God rested because there was nothing else for Him to do.
- d) Notice that God made the seventh day holy. To this day, man rests one day out of seven because God made this day holy. This points to the holiness of the relationship between God and man.
- e) When a family moves into a new home, the parents want to prepare the children's room with a bed, toys, etc. In the same way, God prepared a beautiful world for us because He loves us.

The Garden of Eden-Man's Freedom to Choose

- 1) READ: Genesis 2:8-9
 - a) Where was the Garden of Eden located? In the East. (If necessary read vv. 10-14. Point out that the Garden of Eden was located on earth. It was part of creation.)
 - b) How many kinds of trees did God put in the Garden? (Three: the Tree of Life, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and all of the normal trees. The trees we shall focus on are the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life.)
- 2) READ: Genesis 2:15-17
 - a) Which trees did God allowed them to eat from? (All of them except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.)
 - b) This meant that they could eat from the Tree of Life. What was the importance of this tree? (If they ate the fruit of this tree they would never die.)
 - c) What was God's command to them? (Do not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.)
 - d) What would happen if they did? (They would die.)
 - e) Man has responsibility before God: the responsibility of obedience.
 - f) Man has a choice, he has freedom. He can obey or disobey. Man has complete freedom to choose.
 - g) Was God's command difficult? (No. He gave Adam and Eve thousands of trees to eat from. Only one was forbidden. Even today God's commands are not difficult. Man makes religion difficult.)

The First Marriage

- 1) READ: Genesis 2:18-25
 - a) Marriage is a gift from God

- b) Marriage and sex within marriage are holy
- c) The will of God from the beginning concerning marriage is one man for one woman for life
- d) Why did Adam and Eve feel no shame even though they were naked? (Because there was no sin. When there is no sin, there is no shame. Shame, fear and guilt are consequences of sin.)

Application

- 1) God created this world out of darkness and confusion. Because He is the Creator He can take the darkness and emptiness of our lives and give us new and beautiful lives. His Word is the foundation of spiritual life.
- 2) God created us to have fellowship with Him. Close fellowship. He created us so that we can glorify Him with our lives. God loves us. We have value.
- 3) The original condition of man in the Garden was perfect and complete.
 - a) He was physically complete (no sickness or death)
 - b) His relationship with God was complete (no separation because of sin)
 - c) The environment around him was complete
 - d) The marriage relationship was complete (respect between husband and wife, no divorce)
 - e) No sin, pain, suffering, sickness, death, or problems.
- 4) Man has complete freedom to obey or disobey God.

Closing

- 1) The things we see in the world today that are not right were not that way in the beginning. When we read about the perfect life in the Garden of Eden, we are reading about God's will for us. He wants us to have a perfect, complete life.
- 2) In the next lesson we will see how man destroyed the perfect world God gave him, and in the lessons that follow, we will see how God has made a way to restore us to our original condition with a perfect, complete life.

Memorize

Memorize this lesson

Practice Session

Find another student and practice this lesson with them.

Lesson Sixteen

Technical notes

Story	4522 words = 27 minutes
Practice Session	
Discovery Lesson 2	2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize	
Practice Session	

Story

The Lord was working in my heart. It was a hard process but the Lord was introducing me to many concepts and changing my wrong ideas to right ones. In my discussions with Mr. Love, we came across many theological issues, like the deity of Christ, that were very hard for me. When Mr. Love said that Jesus was God, it was like an explosion going off in my heart. My heart rebelled. “God cannot die; God cannot be seen as a man! God cannot be touched! What is all this rubbish about God barbecuing and eating fish with a bunch of sinners like Peter and John? This is a cheap God. This is not God!”

But His features were the features of God. He had power over creation. He could raise people from the dead. He himself was raised from the dead. He was eternal because He is coming back again. Islam believes this. He was the Word of God, and Islam believes that He is returning. Oh, we twist things a bit to say that the Spirit of God is on Him, but in the Bible I discovered that if Jesus didn’t leave, then the Spirit wouldn’t come. When one left the other came. If the Spirit was God, was Jesus also God?

In the middle of my search, something happened inside of me that had never happened before. I started to be convicted over my sins. I started to say, “Lord I admit that I am a sinner; I repent from my sin.” I started to stop sinning. I still had the same friends, the same car and the same girlfriend, but I quit drinking and smoking and I stopped attending nightclubs.

As I started getting closer to Jesus as a person, I began feeling that I was a bad person. I realized that if I was going to be around Jesus, then I should be a better person than I was. I decided I had better repent.

The first thing I did was to write to my father. “Father,” I wrote, “please forgive me. I lied to you during the last two years. I was not praying and I was not following the right way.”

Several weeks later I got an answer from my father. “Son,” he wrote, “I was so sad about the way you were, but I am glad that now you are out of

it.” I felt relieved, but I had not explained to him why I had changed. “Father,” I wrote back, “I am still studying the Bible.” His next letter contained a strange sentence. I’m sure he never realized what it would mean to me in my circumstances. “Son,” he wrote, “If you learn a better way in life, grab it. Get it. That will change your future.” He probably didn’t realize what this meant to me. I don’t think he ever thought that I might leave Islam.

Conviction over sin was one of the biggest changes in my life. Before, I had hated easily. I was angered easily. But when I became linked with Christ, even though I didn’t accept Him as God, I started to back away from sin and to feel cleaner. I didn’t want to mess around in the dirt any more. Not because I was a nice man now, but because it was wrong to God. Suddenly I realized that everything around me belonged to God. Even my schoolbooks belonged to God. I needed to take good care of them. My whole outlook on life changed. If something was sin, then it didn’t belong to God and I wanted nothing to do with it.

As I studied with Mr. Love, I was changing and, slowly, I started to think that maybe I was finding the right way. But one big question remained. If Christianity was the right way, then what about Islam? I found the answer about Islam in my Bible. There were many people in the Gospels who did not admit that Jesus was the Messiah. Many of them were Jewish people, who saw Jesus and did things like eating from the bread and fish he provided, or perhaps they were even healed, but they didn’t believe this man was the Messiah. They believed he was a nice rabbi who healed people. “God bless him,” they might have said, but they never took Him seriously. They didn’t say He was the Christ. Nevertheless, a few people did say it.

The first time someone said it, Jesus was very humble and replied, “It is not you who announced it, it was the Father through you, who has blessed you.” Jesus was laying down the foundation stones in a very logical way. He did not build with superficial things. Almost everything Jesus did was in public, with witnesses. Except for being with the woman at the well, Jesus was almost never alone.

My time of searching planted many seeds in my brain and I needed to know if these things were true. I wasn’t researching a research paper for school; I was searching out truth itself. I had to be sure. For more than two months, I diligently searched in the Bible. When Mr. Love came to my apartment, I had questions primed and ready for him.

“Mr. Love, in the Qur’an it says that when Jesus returns He will preach Islam. What do you think of this?”

“Well, you know what, Abdalla?” Mr. Love smiled, “If Christ comes tomorrow and if He preaches Islam then I will be a Muslim. Whatever He

wants to do I will follow. But since He did not say what He would do, except what He says in the Bible, I will believe Him from the Bible.”

He paused and looked at me. “If someone says Jesus is going to come back and be a blacksmith, OK; this is what they say. However, in the Bible, Jesus says He is coming back as the ruler of this world and I believe Him. If He comes back and wants to be a blacksmith that will be fine with me. It doesn’t affect my faith.”

As I discovered more facts from the Bible, bitterness started to come into my heart against God. “God, how can you allow this? Why do you allow people to think wrongly about you? There are millions of people in the world who believe something other than the truth. It is not fair. It is not right.” However, as I continued to study the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit started working inside me. Slowly but surely the war that raged inside my soul was being won over by God. As I read and studied, I began to grasp the situation as God saw it, not as I saw it.

When I realized that God allowed the first two humans to sin against Him, I had thought that God was weak. However, through my studies, I began to appreciate that people are free to choose in life. In Islam we believed that God directs everything, both good and bad. However, through the Bible, I began to see that people are free to choose. God gave us a choice. Slowly but surely I began to see that I too must make a choice.

One day during my studies I made a promise to the Lord. “Jesus,” I said, “if I find you are the way, I will never ever leave you. But if you are not, then I will go back to Jordan and do whatever others are doing and not think about all this anymore. I will just enjoy life and keep what I have learned simply as notes in a book. But if it really is you, then I want to be with you, and I will never leave you again.”

It was a brave thing to say and the Lord challenged me with it. I had crossed many bridges but there were two more bridges I needed to cross. The first was concerning the death of Christ. Islam taught me that Jesus had never died. It took Mr. Love over a month to wrestle through this issue with me. We spent more than six Bible studies concentrating on why Jesus had to be crucified. At first, we explored the Old Testament searching through the books of Moses to discover how the Jewish people put the blood of sheep on their doors.

Then we started on the crucifixion story itself. During these studies, I set up a court in my mind. I am a man who likes to take notes and to work my way through things. I appreciated the scientific way of doing things and wanted to work this problem through in a logical way.

First, I examined the facts, comparing the Qur'an and the Bible in a scientific manner. The Qur'an told me that Jesus was crucified, but yet he was not really crucified. The body that hung on the cross simply looked like Jesus. After all, no prophet of God could die such a dishonorable death!

But in the Bible, there were at least fifty witnesses. There were people like Joseph, who carried His body to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and other women prepared His body for burial. Even before His death, Jesus announced that He was going to be crucified. He foretold His death and then He raised Lazarus from the dead as an example of what would happen to Him. He taught His disciples that timing was crucial. Right from day one, at the marriage in Cana, Jesus told His mother that His time was not yet. What time was He talking about? It was His death. At the very peak of His power, He was arrested. Humanly speaking, this seemed all wrong. He could have done anything with these people. Nevertheless, He did not fight back. He did not respond. He just submitted. Even in submitting, He thought of others. He told the soldiers to leave the disciples alone and to only take Him.

If He were just a human prophet, maybe twelve disciples would be hanged before they would catch Him. If He was a king or a president, the whole nation would suffer and He would escape until the very end. This did not happen. Jesus let His followers escape and He gave himself up. All this fulfilled His preaching that He would be crucified.

There were other witnesses in my court. Soldiers were there; people with minds and brains and hearts. They saw Jesus. They knew He was dead. There were many witnesses at the cross: the centurion, Mary, Jesus' mother, and John. I did not count the two thieves. They were dying and were probably both liars anyway. But there were the soldiers who pounded the nails into his hands and feet. What about them? Surely they weren't fooled.

Slowly I took the pieces and assembled them together. When collected together the evidence seemed solid. It would be hard for the court to ignore evidence like this.

On the other hand, in the Qur'an, it said that He only appeared to be crucified. That doesn't stand in court. No witnesses, no defense, nothing. It all seemed so weak. When I was finished, I sat back and looked at the court case. There wasn't much of a contest. The answer was obvious. After Mr. Love left that night, I was in a daze. I drove to the beach and walked for a long time. It was late at night and I don't remember anyone else being on the beach, I was so lost in meditation, trying to fathom how Jesus so graciously died for us.

That night Mr. Love had said something very simple to me. "Abdalla," he said, "are you honest with me?"

"Yes, I'm trying to be honest."

“Do you believe Jesus? Do you believe whatever He says in the Bible?”

“Yes,” I replied, “I do, because someone who does all these things...why would He lie? There’s no reason for Him to lie. Either Jesus was a prophet or He was a liar. If He was a liar then His deeds would be bad. He would work hard, build a kingdom, have an army, and ten or fifteen wives. He wouldn’t have direction and protection from God, and He would end up doing many sins. But Jesus was not sinful. Even in the Qur’an, it says He was perfect.”

“Well,” Mr. Love continued, “here in the Bible, Jesus said, ‘I am the life,’ and He gave people life. He said, ‘I am the way,’ and he taught the way to the kingdom. It fits. But what if Jesus says, ‘I am the redeemer?’”

This was a powerful question for me. I am from an Arab background and I know what it means to redeem someone. In my culture, it means paying someone’s debts, sometimes with blood. If I redeem someone, it means I put myself in the place of another. Sometimes we could redeem something small by paying with an animal. Sometimes we could redeem ourselves by paying money. We called it blood money. But if a person put himself in the place of another, then his life would be taken.

Mr. Love looked at me. “Abdalla, do you believe that an animal can redeem a man? Do you think that a sheep or a goat, a camel or even a donkey can redeem you or me?”

“No,” I replied, “I don’t think so. An animal is an animal. I don’t think God replaces us with an animal. The sacrifice must be worth at least the value of what it is sacrificed for.”

Charles Love looked me in the eye. “You are right, Abdalla; we are so dear to God and the relationship is so different that it couldn’t be an animal. The sacrifice had to be more than an animal. A normal man couldn’t pay for the sins of everyone; he could only pay for his own sins. So it had to be someone greater than a normal man.”

Suddenly I saw it. I believed. Jesus must have been the Messiah, and He must have died for the sins of the world. As I grasped this new belief, my heart was filled with passion. Before this, I used to think of the Jewish people as having been brutal. They killed Jesus, an innocent man. Being from Jordan and having been at war with Israel, I had good reason to think that they were bad people.

But suddenly I saw it another way. The key to Jesus’ death wasn’t the brutality of the Jews but the love of Jesus. Jesus could have demolished all of Jerusalem in one command, just like He ordered the storm to stop. He talked to a fig tree and it withered. He talked to a leper and he was healed. He could have demolished Jerusalem, but He wasn’t a man of anger. I

understood that. Jesus was not a man of anger. He was a man of mercy. All that He did, even when He calmed the sea, was for the sake of those people around him. He was asleep; He didn't care; He knew what would happen. He knew His death would be by crucifixion. He knew that the storm would not kill Him because God had set His destiny.

It was out of mercy and love that He chose the disciples and told them to leave their things and follow Him. Afterward, He got into the boats with them and taught them and fed them. He saw the crowds around Him and was moved with love. He never thought of having a republic or a kingdom. Everyone else, including Muslims today, think that He should have set up a kingdom, but His kingdom was different.

Through my studying, I began to realize that as a young man, I had heard so many wrong things about the church and the Bible. We thought that Jesus was not crucified, but now I realized that not only had He been crucified, Jesus needed to be crucified. Thank God He was crucified. Through my studies, I began to understand why Jesus is alive now and why He is coming back again. Even Muslims say He will come again, but the Bible tells us how He will come and what He will do! In the Qur'an, things were fuzzy, but in the Bible it was all explained.

My eyes were opened to the love and mercy that was present in the death of Jesus on the cross. I appreciated His death, and I believed that He died.

But I couldn't believe that Jesus was God.
(Pause)

That year the people at church started earnestly praying that I would be saved. Moreover, they didn't do it only in secret. Many times people would come and tell me that they were praying for me. Sometimes they prayed for my salvation in the mid-week prayer meeting, while I was sitting right there listening. This did not offend me. I was actually encouraged that they were praying for me. Whenever someone would tell me that they were praying for me, I would tell them that there was a little gap in my heart that was not yet filled. I wanted God to fill that gap.

However, the situation was a bit more complex than this. On the outside I wanted the Lord to occupy me as Lord. I wanted Him to own me. I wanted Him to enter every little part of life. I heard others talking of it and, consequently, I wanted the Lord in my spirit, in my body and in my thinking.

I understood all this and desired it, but I didn't want to accept Jesus as God. The desire was in my heart, but I couldn't bring myself to acknowledge

that He was God. My Muslim upbringing had ingrained in me the fact that God did not have a son. Jesus could be the Messiah, He could have died on the cross for my sins, but if I acknowledged Him as God it would be the last straw in separating me from my past. So, although the church was praying for me, I resisted them and the voice of God.

Then the Lord found a new way to bring pressure on me. It came in the form of a Christian girl friend. She was a wonderful Christian, and soon we were thinking seriously about one another. However, she always resisted talking about marriage. Whenever the topic came up she would say, “Abdalla, I won’t marry you if you don’t believe.”

Inevitably I would reply, “I don’t blame you,” and the conversation would stop there. It seemed my life was at an impasse. In order to accept Christ fully, I had to admit that He was God. But admitting that Christ was God would mean that I was admitting that Islam was wrong and that I had to break completely from my past. It was too big a decision to make on my own. Then the Lord did something special in my life to confront me with Himself.

It all started when my new girlfriend and two other people from our church decided to visit California during the summer break. Since I had no studies and I wasn’t going back to Jordan, I was free to take them in my car. I was excited because it was a chance to see more of the United States. We planned a long trip, that would take us several weeks. When the day arrived for leaving, I was very excited. I thought I was starting a great vacation. Little did I realize that God was planning something more.

(Pause)

It happened several days into our trip. It was a beautiful day with good visibility when suddenly a car we were following went out of control. It started swerving back and forth and then it headed for the side of the road. As it tipped into the ditch it started rolling repeatedly. When it finally came to rest, it looked like it was totally demolished.

I was driving and as soon as I saw what was happening, I slammed on the breaks and we came to a stop near the damaged vehicle. We were the first people on the scene and we raced from our car to the overturned vehicle. We were terrified of what we might see, but we knew we had to look inside. Dropping to our hands and knees we discovered two elderly people trapped inside. As the dust settled, we could see that there was blood and shards of glass all over the place.

I rushed back to my car and called for an ambulance on my cell phone. I was told that an ambulance was on its way, and they asked us if we could

gently get the people out of the wreck and onto the side of the road. They instructed us to keep them warm and to wait with them until the ambulance arrived.

“OK,” I almost hollered into the phone. “The woman looks fine, but the man is in a very bad state. He has blood coming out of his nose, his mouth, and his ears.”

“The ambulance is already on its way.” The voice from the cell phone sounded remote and detached. Realizing that I could do nothing more I rushed back to the wrecked car and we started working on getting the old man out of the driver’s seat. It was a tough job as the man was quite badly trapped. The steering wheel had come up and crushed his chest. As he was quite a thin man, the steering wheel seemed to have crushed him badly.

The whole time we were trying to get the man out, the old lady was busy praying. “Oh Jesus, please save him; please help him. Give him strength; please stop the bleeding.”

As soon as we had the old man out of the car, we all started to pray with her. I too began praying with everyone else. We were pouring out our desires to God with our whole hearts. “Lord,” I said, “I know I don’t believe in you as God, but I believe you as Jesus. Can you please help this man and help us to know what to do?” I didn’t know what to pray and I remember thinking that all these others could pray better than I could.

After what seemed like a very long time but was probably only a short while, the ambulance arrived. They put the old man on a stretcher, and the woman got into the ambulance. The ambulance attendant came over to us and thanked us and told us we were free to go. We looked at each other and knew we wanted to go to the hospital with them. When we told the ambulance attendant, he didn’t object. We then followed the ambulance to a small medical center. It was more like a first aid station rather than a hospital. They took the man and his wife inside, and we sat outside waiting and shaking.

A little while later a doctor came out and told us that the man was in very bad shape. Two or three ribs were broken, and these ribs had punctured his lungs and his heart. He was bleeding internally and slipping away by the minute. He was dying and they didn’t want to open him up. There was nothing the doctors could do. It would only be a matter of minutes before he died. He was in a coma.

We sat in silence, shivering from fear and the effects of shock. As we sat there an idea suddenly came into my head. “What if I die? What will happen to me? Am I a believer? Am I a two-thirds believer? Am I even a half a believer? Am I half a Muslim and half a Christian?”

In the middle of these thoughts, another doctor came outside and said, “He wants to see all of you.”

We were a bit confused, but then we realized that the old man must have come out of his coma and was talking. So we went with the doctor and entered the emergency surgery room. A group of doctors were standing around the room with nothing to do. It seemed that they were waiting around and watching the man die.

No one said much, so we drew closer to the old man on the bed. The woman was praying and seemed not to notice us. Then suddenly the old man opened his eyes and looked at us. His eyes were clear and sharp. He must have been over seventy years of age and he looked all beat up, but suddenly he seemed as sharp and clear as ever. Then he spoke to us.

“You should accept the Lord as your Savior,” he said. Those were his last words and his eyes were clear and knowing as he looked at us. I was the only one of our group who was not a Christian. I knew my friends were praying for me. When the old man spoke, all three of them looked at me. I could feel their eyes on me. My eyes met those of my girlfriend.

“Abdalla,” someone said, “did you hear that?”

I nodded but said nothing. The doctors were amazed that he even spoke. Most of them seemed more interested in the fact that the old man spoke than what he had said. A few moments later the old man died. His last words had been directed at me. I knew it was God speaking to me.

As we left the room, one of the doctors followed us out into the hall. “Well, young man” he said, “that man inside gave you a very important message didn’t he?”

“Yes,” I agreed with a slight nod of my head.

“Well you’d better believe in that,” he said and turned to go back into the medical center.

A few minutes later we got into our car to leave. I wanted to go back to the church and tell all this to Mr. Love, but the others wanted to go on. In the end we did travel on, but later that night we called the Loves and told them the story.

“Abdalla,” Mr. Love said over the phone after he heard our story, “If you don’t want to accept Him, I don’t want to push you to accept Him. I’m going to leave it to you.”

Inside my heart a war was waging. Part of me wanted to accept and part of me fought back. It was a war that wouldn’t be won that night. The step was too big. If I admitted that Jesus was God, then I would have to admit that Islam was wrong. I would have to admit all my upbringing was wrong. I would have to admit that much of what I learned as a child was wrong. It

was too hard. I just couldn't do it. I knew in my heart that although I was going to church and even paying tithes, I was not a true Christian.

Discovery Lesson Two

THE FALL OF MAN - THE ORIGIN OF SIN

Bible Texts: Genesis 3

The lesson today has many new ideas. We will not be talking about Jesus yet, but this lesson will help us understand why we need Him.

Introduction

Review the purpose of the course: to help the student understand who Christ is.

Review last week's lesson: Creation. The three main points to remember about last week's lesson are:

- (1) All of creation and man's relationship with God were complete.
- (2) God's will for man is that his life should be complete and perfect.
- (3) God gave man a choice. READ: Genesis 2:16-17. What was that choice?

The story could have ended here and man would have lived in the perfect will of God for eternity, but the world we live in today is not perfect or complete. Today we will see what happened. We can divide this lesson into four parts.

- (1) Satan's temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-6)
- (2) The sin of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:7)
- (3) The punishment and consequences of that sin (Genesis 3:8-24)
- (4) The promise of reconciliation (Genesis 3:14-15; Genesis 3:21)

Part 1: The Temptation

- 1.) READ: Genesis 3:1-6
 - a. Who was the snake? (Satan. Satan used the snake. Satan came to Eve in the form of a snake.)
 - b. What do we mean by the word 'temptation'? (A temptation is when the desire or will of man goes against the will of God. When a man wants to do something against his conscience or against the Word or will of God, that is temptation. Temptation is not sin, but it can lead to sin if we do not resist it.)
 - c. How did Satan tempt Eve? Read the passage verse by verse and notice the five steps Satan uses.

- i. He causes doubt to the Word of God (vs. 1). ‘Did God really say ...?’ This question transmits doubt. This is Satan’s first step. Even today he wants to bring doubt concerning the Word of God.
- ii. He exaggerates the command of God (vs. 1). ‘You must not eat from any tree in the Garden...’ Was this God’s command? No! Satan makes God appear difficult and strict. He wants to lessen our confidence in God.
- iii. Eve adds to the command of God (vs. 3). How did Eve answer Satan’s question? Was her answer correct? No. She added something. Many times we add things to what God has required.
- iv. He contradicts the command of God (vs. 4). ‘You will not die.’ He calls God a liar.
- v. He lies (vs. 5). Satan says that the created ones can become like the Creator! Satan is the Father of Lies.

Part 2: Sin

1) READ: Genesis 3:6

- a) What were the three things that attracted Eve to break her obedience to God?
 - i) It was good for food
 - ii) It was beautiful to the eyes
 - iii) It was desirable
 - b) Are these things bad? (Not necessarily, but if they are against the will of God they are sin.)
 - c) What did Eve do after she ate? (She gave some to Adam. When Adam and Eve disobeyed the relationship between God and man was broken.) It is not only adultery, stealing, and killing that are sins. Anything that is disobedience to God is sin. Anything before God in our lives is sin.
- 2) The root of the problem is not disobedience, but lack of faith and confidence in the Word of God (‘Don’t eat from the tree or you will die’).
- 3) Adam and Eve did not believe what God said about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If man’s problem is bad works, what is the solution? Good works. If man’s problem is lack of faith, what is the solution? Faith. The focus of the true believer is faith in God’s word.

Part 3: The Punishment and Consequences of Sin

1) READ: Genesis 2:17: Punishment

- a) God is holy. He cannot accept sin in spite of His great love for man. This does not mean that God abandons us.
- b) What is the punishment if man disobeys God? (Death)
- c) Death is the only punishment or recompense for disobedience and sin. But there are three types of death:
 - i) Spiritual death: Separation from God.
 - ii) Physical death: The age of man is limited.
 - iii) Eternal death: (Damnation in hell for eternity with no hope for reconciliation with God. READ: 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.)
- 2) READ: Genesis 3:7: The Feelings of Guilt, Shame & Fear
 - a) What does it mean that their eyes were opened after the fall into sin? (They experienced inner emptiness. This resulted in three emotional responses: guilt, shame, and fear. They felt the need to hide impurity and uncleanness.)
 - b) What did they do to try to cover their guilt, shame and fear? (Made coverings of leaves. Hid themselves from God.)
- 3) READ: Genesis 3:8-9: Destruction of the Relationship Between God and man.
 - a) What was God's question? ('Where are you?' This was not because God did not know where man was, but because the close relationship between God and man had been broken.)
 - b) Why were Adam and Eve hiding? (They were ashamed. This is the normal response when we sin. We want to be far from God.)
 - c) Do you see anything that points to the value of man? (God was searching for him. Even today God searches for sinners.)
- 4) READ: Genesis 3:11-12: Blame in the Relationship Between Husband and Wife.
 - a) What was Adam's response? (He blamed his wife.)
 - b) Who else did he blame? (He even blamed God: 'The woman you gave me')
- 5) READ: Genesis 3:16-19: Some specific results.
 - a) What are the specific curses (judgments) against men and women?
 - i) Women will have pain in childbirth.
 - ii) Women will be subject to their husbands.
 - iii) Work will be difficult for men, and it won't be satisfying.
 - b) Have these things affected you? (We have all been affected by sin.)
- 6) READ: Genesis 3:22-24: Banishment
 - a) What did God do to Adam and Eve? (He banished them from the Garden of Eden.)
 - b) Why? (If they remained in the Garden they could eat from the Tree of Life and live forever.)

- c) By being banished from the Garden, man was being banished from three things:
 - i) The presence of God.
 - ii) The Tree of Life (eternal life).
 - iii) The perfect life-environment in the Garden of Eden.

Part 4: The Promise of Reconciliation

- 1) Compare the condition of the world before and after the fall. (Everything changed. However, one thing did not change: God's love for man. There are two things that reveal God's love for man: a promise and a provision.)
- 2) READ: Genesis 3:14-15: The Promise.
 - a) What is the prophecy here? (An offspring of Eve will crush the head of Satan, and Satan will strike the heel of this same offspring.)
 - b) Who is the offspring of Eve mentioned? (Jesus.)
 - c) When did Satan strike Jesus? (At His death.)
 - d) When did Jesus crush Satan? (At the resurrection.)
 - e) Notice that Satan will only strike the heel of the Messiah, but the Messiah will crush Satan's head.
 - f) This prophecy is a promise to all mankind that God will defeat Satan and overcome the effects of sin in our lives. It is a promise that even though we are far from God because of sin, God will reconcile us to Himself someday.
- 3) READ: Genesis 3:21: The Provision.
 - a) What did God do for Adam and Eve? (He gave them clothes made of animal skin.)
 - b) Why did God give them clothes made of animal skin rather than clothes made of leaves? Two reasons:
 - i) Only God can provide cover for the shame and guilt of sin.
 - ii) God provides this cover through sacrifice: the shedding of blood.

Application:

- 1) How many sins did Adam and Eve commit? (One.)
- 2) How many good works did God say they had to do to return? (None. No good work that they could do would make returning possible.)
- 3) Even today people believe that if they have more good works than bad they can go to heaven. This is not true.
- 4) A Christian sea captain once said: 'One leak will sink a ship and one sin will destroy a person.'

- 5) Because of one sin Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. Only one sin will block the way to heaven for us as well. Only God can bring us back to our original condition.

Summary:

- 1) Satan tempts us by decreasing our confidence in the Word of God.
- 2) Sin has separated us from God.
- 3) All of the problems we see in the world have come as a result of sin.
- 4) God has promised to solve the problem of sin, reconcile us to Himself, and overcome death.

Closing: READ: Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23.

Memorize

Memorize this lesson

Practice Session

Find another student and practice this lesson with them.

Lesson Seventeen

Introduction to Discovery Lessons

Technical notes

Story	4768 word = 28.5 minutes
Discovery Lesson 3	2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize	
Practice Session	

Story

For the next six months I continued to resist the Lord. Now the whole church was praying for me. Many more people openly told me that they were praying that I would come to Christ. I guess they realized that my time in America was ending and that after my graduation I would have to return to my home country of Jordan.

One Sunday evening, a dear woman by the name of Mrs. Dye prayed for me during the church service. “Dear God,” she prayed, “I’m asking you to give more time to Abdalla. Lord, don’t let him leave until he accepts you as God and Savior, even if it means keeping him here longer.”

After the service I approached this lady. “Mrs. Dye, you’re crazy!” I exclaimed.

“Why?” she laughed. I knew she loved me like a grandson, and I loved her, but I think I loved her cooking more. “Abdalla,” she said, “why am I crazy?”

“How can you pray that I will have more time? In one week I am leaving for Jordan.” I was proud of the fact that I was leaving. I had obtained my Bachelor of Science degree in three and a half years. I had done well in my studies and now I was returning to Jordan to see my family. I had already booked my plane tickets. I was now buying gifts for my family. My brother, Abdul Karim, had arranged his visit to Jordan so he could be home when I was at home. My father had bought three sheep to kill and eat. Everyone would feast and celebrate our return. Many people were invited for the welcome-back party that my family would host. There was no way I was not leaving America.

Mrs. Dye just smiled. “I asked Him and now God won’t let you leave until you have accepted Him.”

The following day was Monday. Graduation was less than one week away and I had only a few things to do in order to wrap up my studies. I

needed to do some last minute shopping for a gift for my sisters, confirm my flights, and I was ready to go. The big job for Monday morning, however, was to fill out a report on how my studies had gone. This report was part of the requirements for my scholarship.

Everything was going fine until I spotted a little yellow note on my mailbox. Its message was plain.

Mr. Hawatmeh, please report to Mr. Williams as soon as possible today.

My heart sank. Mr. Williams was a frightening man. If he called students to his office, they were usually in trouble. He could expel anyone. He might tell you that you were not doing well in your studies and that you had to change your major. In my mind's eye, I could see him peering at me, his eyes full of suspicion. Mr. Williams had no hair on his head, not a single one. Moreover, whenever I had seen him, he always had an unlit pipe between his lips. Lips that never laughed. Lips that never smiled. One girl from my class once said that she would rather have God see her with all of her sins than have to face Mr. Williams.

"Oh my God," I gasped. "What is happening to me now?" My knees were shaking. My mouth was dry. Somehow I made it across campus and, standing outside his door, I meekly knocked. There was no reply. I knocked again a little louder. Mr. Williams couldn't hear all that well. I hoped he wouldn't hear me knock, but he did.

He shouted at me and I almost tumbled into his room. I stood up and faced him as an accused man faces a judge.

"Mr. Hawatmeh," he shouted. "Come closer."

I came closer. It wasn't easy as a huge table separated us.

"Mr. Hawatmeh," he said, "do you want to go back to your family?"

"Yes," I said.

"What?" he said. "Is that a yes?"

"Yes!" I shouted.

There was silence as he wrote something.

"Did you like the university here?"

"Yes!" I shouted.

There was silence as he wrote something.

"Is your family expecting you on a certain date?"

"Of course, Mr. Williams, I already have my tickets."

"What?"

"I already have my tickets!" I shouted.

"You have what?"

"My plane tickets."

"Oh, your tickets. You have them?"

“Yes.” I answered. I wondered what in the world was going on. Mr. Williams’ face looked pleasant enough. He wasn’t obviously upset about anything.

“Mr. Hawatmeh,” he said, “I understand that you will be graduating this week.”

“Yes!” I shouted, getting somewhat frustrated at his simple questions.

“Mr. Williams,” I shouted back to him “Why are you asking me these questions?”

He looked up at me. “This morning we received a telex from the Jordanian Military. The Government of Jordan wants you to study airborne radar systems. Before you study you have to take an orientation course and then you have to fly from the air force base here. That will take about six months.”

“Oh no!” I groaned, suddenly grasping the situation. It was that prayer of Mrs. Dye’s last night. I was devastated. I wasn’t going to get to go home. God was going to keep me in America. “Oh God!” I gasped, “I can’t resist you anymore.” So while Mr. Williams was writing in his papers, I cried out to God. “Oh God, I want to accept you as Lord right now.”

“What?” Mr. Williams shouted.

“Sir,” I shouted back, “I want to accept Christ right now!”

Mr. Williams shook his head, trying to figure out what I was talking about. I just ignored him and knelt down behind the big table and poured out my heart to God.

After a couple of moments, Mr. Williams began to wonder what I was doing.

“Where are you, Mr. Hawatmeh?” I was on my knees praying.

“What are you doing, Mr. Hawatmeh?” I was asking God to forgive me.

“Mr. Hawatmeh, are you OK?” I was better than I had ever been in my whole life.

“What are you doing down there on the floor?” I really didn’t think he would understand, so I stood up. “You don’t know the story sir,” I answered as politely as I could.

He looked at me rather strangely. “Do you agree to this arrangement? Do you want to do the radar courses?”

“I guess I have to.”

“There is a problem,” Mr. Williams went on, “Mr. Hawatmeh, if you want to do this, then you can’t go home now. The training starts in seven days.”

“Sir,” I said, “Am I going to graduate?”

“Yes,” he said “When the graduation ceremony happens, we will call you from the air base and you can fly back here.”

“That’s neat,” I thought. So I agreed.

After I left Mr. Williams’ office, I called my brother, Abdul Karim. When I told him that I had extended my stay, he became very angry. He insisted that I fly to Jordan to see my family.

So I returned to Mr. William’s office.

“Sir,” I said “I don’t care if you expel me; I want to go see my family.” Mr. Williams wasn’t very happy, but in the end he managed to get an agreement worked out so that after my graduation I could fly back to Jordan for eight days.

Back in my dorm room I collapsed on my bed. What a day it had been. It was a day that I would never forget. It was a day when relief flooded into my soul. I had done it. I had really given my life to Jesus. Along with my heart, I gave him all of my doubts. “Here they are, Lord,” I had prayed, “here are my doubts. I am asking you to fix them.”

The next Sunday morning I could barely wait to get to church. “Be careful of Mrs. Dye.” I told them all. “You people have to make sure you please her all the time.” Some of them looked puzzled. “If Mrs. Dye prays anything against you, you’ve had it,” I insisted. I then went on to tell them about Mrs. Dye’s prayer and the strange way that God had answered it. That morning, a lot of tears were shed; tears of joy. Everyone was so happy.

After the service, people crowded around to hug me and wished me well. When Mrs. Dye came up to me, I hugged her.

“You old lady,” I scolded. “You almost killed me.”

“Abdalla,” she replied, “you almost killed us by resisting so long.” I didn’t stay long at the church. I had changed my flight; so after greeting everyone, I rushed to the airport and caught my plane to Jordan.

(Pause)

It had been four long years since I had been in my village. Many people gathered at the airport to meet me. Once again we traveled in a convoy back to the village. I felt like a hero returning after battle. Many old friends and neighbors came to greet me. Some of the children stared at me in awe. I had been to America!

Father was true to his word. He slaughtered three rams, and my mother and sisters prepared a great feast. My brother, Abdul Karim, had been in Saudi Arabia and had come home so we could all be together. We talked and we laughed and everyone enjoyed the occasion. I unpacked my gifts and everyone seemed pleased that I was home.

“Abdalla,” Abdul Karim said to me, “I swear to God that you must have a very pretty girl friend there in America.”

“Why do you think that?” I asked him.

“I can’t believe you are going back just for your studies,” he chided. “It’s got to be a girl friend.”

“Look,” I told him, “you just don’t know.”

Everyone wanted to know what America was like. I told them many stories, but I never told them about my new faith. My family knew I was going to church, but they kept saying to me, “When you grow up you may benefit from these things, but it will all be washed away.” They never took it seriously.

All too soon my eight days were over, and I was back in America. I accepted the Lord in 1980, and I was baptized afterward in the little white church. I was excited about my new Christian faith, and perhaps I was a little naive. Never in my whole life had I heard of a Muslim leaving Islam and becoming a Christian. I never stopped to think about it, and I never stopped to ask myself why. I knew I had found God and I had found peace. It didn’t matter to me what the future held because I had found the one who held the future.

(Pause)

Life in America was easier for me this time. I was doing well in my studies and I had no other agenda so I had time to look around at what was happening on campus.

I soon noticed one young man who seemed to be ministering to the students. I was curious about him. “One day I asked him “Why are you doing this? Is someone paying you to do this?”

“No,” he replied, “this is my ministry.” Having a ministry was a new concept to me.

As we got to know one another, Richard started to ask me more about my relationship with God. He was very happy to discover that I was a believer, and he asked me about my Muslim background. He knew more about Muslims than Mr. Love and was really excited about my coming to Christ. In my heart I knew that my receiving Christ was offensive to Muslims, but most Americans didn’t seem aware of this.

Richard invited me to join some of the students for a Bible Study. During my time there, I discovered that there were people who were trying to help others become Christians. What was exciting to me was that they were targeting everyone, not just foreign students. God accepted everyone. Everyone had the same value. Everyone had the right to accept or deny.

Everyone! That somehow made me feel safe. I realized that they were not interested in me because I was a foreigner. It wasn't that I was a Jordanian or an Arab or a Muslim. They were targeting everyone. When they talked about sin, they were talking about their sins and my sins. I was one of them now. Others were now accepting me as a Christian and that was important to me.

(Pause)

One day they asked me to pray for one of the students who was a genius in engineering, but he would sometimes get into trouble because he would smoke marijuana. Although he was a Christian, he still struggled with this weakness. The students didn't hide from me the fact that he smoked marijuana. They trusted me. They trusted whoever was a believer.

So one day they said, "Abdalla, can you pray with this brother?"

"Listen" I said when we were alone, "how can you trust me?"

"Well," he said, "you are a believer." That was it. It was plain and simple. I was a believer and that was good enough for him.

I was thrilled. I suddenly realized that we had a common ground. I belonged. I was one of them. These students linked me to the body of Christ, not just to a small white church with nice pies and coffee. No, it was more than that. I was linked to the wider body of Christ. People everywhere were part of this body. I felt like I had come home.

Soon after this, I began to think about what was next. Now that I was a believer, was there a role that I was to play as a Christian? Mr. Love had often encouraged me. "Abdalla, take what you have heard; go tell people, but in time. Be wise, especially in your culture. I don't know, is it prohibited for you to do that?"

I nodded.

"Then," he said, "You need to be extra wise. I don't know how you should do it, but be wise."

I never led anyone to Christ while I was at university but I shared my testimony and I watched as others were led to Christ. One student jumped to his feet after kneeling and asking Christ into his heart. He was crying and smiling, and he hugged me. I didn't hug him back, but I saw his tears and I started to realize what he was going through. It had happened to me, and now I saw it happening in others.

During my time at university I saw over ten people accept Christ. One time I went witnessing with one of the students. He wanted to witness to a particular friend of his. He thought he would need to make at least five visits

before he could share fully about Christ. However, when we talked for a little more than an hour, his friend accepted the Lord.

“Well,” I said afterward, “does that mean he was smart, or was he just ready?”

My Christian friend looked at me. “It was the Lord’s timing,” he said.

We were walking back to our car and suddenly we started jumping and skipping as we were running. The experience of leading someone to Christ had left us giddy and happy. As we jumped around, I mistakenly jumped from the sidewalk into the street. Suddenly I heard car tires squeal and a car zoomed passed me. The driver was a young student and he shouted obscenities. My Christian brother and I just laughed harder.

It was a real joy to see people finding the truth. It didn’t matter to me who they were. They were just people, and God was opening their eyes to the truth. Serving God this way was more exciting than I could have ever imagined.

Graduation day, but in many ways it was a sad day. I had come to know these students and now we were saying goodbye. Most of the students were looking forward to their first jobs and talking about what the future held, but I knew I had a contract to fulfill. The Jordanian government had paid for my education and now I needed to pay the Jordanian government. In exchange for all of my free education, I had agreed to serve the government for fourteen years. While I knew that I would have a job, I knew that the job would not be one of my own choosing.

So I returned to Jordan and enjoyed the warm reception of my family. Everyone was proud of my academic achievement. I had done well, and now I would be offered a nice government job with good pay.

When I arrived to take my job, the government had some thinking to do. The Jordanian Air Force did not have an airborne radar program so they loaned me to the country of Greece for nine months to teach engineering. I met a couple of Christians in Greece who told me that there was an evangelical church in Athens, but I never attended. I was busy with my work and I was enjoying the good food and nice music. I was a Christian but I didn’t exert myself spiritually.

After Greece, the Jordanian government sent me to Saudi Arabia for two months to train several engineers in radar technology. I lived on a compound full of Americans and other foreigners. I was only teaching a course and was there for a short time so I didn’t bother to witness.

After Saudi Arabia, the Jordanian government sent me to Egypt to teach a course there. Following this, I was sent on a secret mission to the country of Iraq. At that time, the Iraq - Iran war was taking place. My

Jordanian helicopter pilot took me to some secret place in Iraq where I was transferred to an Iraqi helicopter.

During my time in Iraq, I saw many things. Most of my time was spent in the air, as planes constantly refueled us. During this time, I saw missiles flying and bombs exploding. I saw floods of people from Iran kissing the Qur'an and rushing forward, many of them to their death. My job was to be a 'second Arab opinion.' I had to fill out reports for both the Jordanian and the Iraqi government. In the end, I received a letter from Saddam Hussein thanking me for the part I had played.

During my time in Iraq, I grew concerned about what I was doing. I began to see that my radar training could be used for both good and evil. I decided to ask the Jordanian government for another role.

Since I was not directly serving the Jordanian Government using radar, they suggested that I become a teacher at the Jordanian Air Academy. I agreed, and soon I became a teacher of Electronics.

During all this time, I had told no one that I was a Christian. In America, Christians had surrounded me, but here in Jordan, I was surrounded by Muslims. On top of this, I was part of the government body, and I had to represent the government. It didn't take much rationalizing to convince myself that I could not reveal to anyone that I was a Christian.

"I can't speak about Christ," I would tell myself. "I can't announce my faith and I can't attend church because I have a lecture on Sunday mornings. I can't do this and I can't do that. I simply can't..." There were too many barriers.

During this time, I met one man that I could talk to. He was a very humble Christian worker from England, who had ministered in Jordan for many years. He took it upon himself to encourage me. "Abdalla," he said to me one day, "If you can't come to us, I will go to you in the spirit. We know exactly where you are and we will pray for you every day."

This brother pastured a small church in the center of the city. Every now and then, I would get a Sunday morning off from the Air Academy and I would try to visit a church. I never told anyone that I was from a Muslim background. This was because the Air Academy was part of the government and I felt that knowledge of my conversion could hurt me. Not only would the government not understand, there were Muslim fanatics around who could make my life miserable as well. As a result, I would arrive at church a couple of minutes late so I could slip in the back and worship unnoticed.

My Hawatmeh name helped cover me. In Jordan, there are two Hawatmeh tribes. One of them is Muslim and the other is nominal Christian. Most people never questioned my background, but the pastor was curious.

Soon after he met me, he asked me which Hawatmeh tribe I was from. I told him I was originally from Irbid.

“Oh,” he said, “you’re originally from Irbid, and then you moved to Salt, so you’re from those Hawatmeh?” He started asking me about some relatives, but they were all names from the Christian Hawatmeh tribe.

“Sir,” I carefully replied, “I was born a Muslim.” He smiled as I said that and I could tell that he was pleased. “Please,” I begged him, “please keep this between you and me.”

So the pastor knew, but to other people I was just Abdalla who worked in the Air Academy and periodically attended church. Very few Christians got to know me because I would slip in and out of services as quietly as possible.

After this I started to meet some of the other Christian leaders in Amman. I was interested in learning about the Christian community in my country, so I made it a point to seek out the evangelical pastors and the Orthodox and Catholic Church leaders. I was very cautious, but I wanted to know more about who these people were. I wanted to belong to the Christian community, but I was afraid that knowledge of my conversion to Christianity would bring me trouble. In my country, families are very proud of their religious heritage, and it would be a great dishonor to my family if it was discovered that I had left the family religion to join Christianity.

Through my contact with Christian leaders, my life was challenged. I found myself wanting to choose between my faith and my job. I was in an excellent job. When I worked in other countries, I often received a double salary. In Greece, I was paid three salaries: one from Greece, one from Jordan, and one from Westinghouse Corporation. I took the money I was earning and I built a house near my village. With the high salary came respect. I had everything a man could hope for. But my faith was going downhill and it bothered me.

Instead of thinking about the Lord, I was thinking about what I should buy, what I should do, and where I should travel. I had become a worldly man more concerned about who I was seen with than who was my Savior. My faith was still warm, but it was not hot.

“Lord,” I prayed one day, “I’m strangled with this contract to serve the government. I can’t get out! I have years left to serve, and this job is killing me. Look at my faith, Lord. How can I explain to people about giving up a job like this? Many young men look up to me. I have free gasoline, free housing, free airplane tickets to fly everywhere, up to twenty times a year. Lord,” I prayed, “show me your way. I don’t know anything about Christianity except what I learned in America. How can I live as a Christian

in this country?” It didn’t take the Lord long to answer my prayer. He did it in a way that I never expected.

In the Air Academy we trained engineers and pilots. I was teaching one of the hardest subjects, Digital Techniques. Because I had up-to-date training and possessed a Masters Degree, I was put in charge of the electronics section of the Academy. Most of the other teachers only had a Bachelor Degree and some simply had experience.

One of my students was called Issa. One day I looked at his file and saw the terrible marks he was getting. I was amazed that the Academy still let him study, so I called my secretary and asked her to book an appointment with this student.

“Wait,” my secretary said, “Mr. Hawatmeh, you need to be careful.”

“Why?” I said, “he’s simply a student who is not doing well. Just call him into my office.”

“Mr. Hawatmeh,” she said, “he is from a Christian tribe but he wants to become a Muslim. All the Muslim Brotherhood people are supporting him.”

“Oh?” I said, “Then he must come to my office.”

A few days later Isa came to see me.

“You seem to be having a lot of trouble with your studies.” I told him. “I don’t understand why you are still in the program.”

“Mr. Hawatmeh,” he said, “I have some special circumstances.”

“Oh?” I said, “What are they?”

“Well,” he replied, “God opened my heart to the truth.”

“Good,” I said, “I want to hear more.” I could feel the tension growing within me.

“I became a Muslim.”

“Why? You are a Christian.” I was puzzled.

“It is the light, the light....”

He thought I was a Muslim. He thought I would be delighted, but instead I looked puzzled. “Have you ever studied the Bible?” I asked.

“Yeah,” he said easily. “I went to church.”

“But, did you study the Bible?”

“Yeah, I read the Bible.”

“My next question to you is the important one. Have you accepted the Lord as your Savior?”

“Excuse me?”

“Have you ever accepted Christ as your Savior?”

“I’m a child of the church!”

“I know, but have you accepted Christ as your Savior?”

Isa was getting more and more distracted, and I was getting more and more upset. “Look,” I told him, “if you had known the truth, you would

never have become a Muslim. You have never been close to Jesus. You have never really studied the Bible. You have never been part of the real church. Never! You were always weak, and now you are getting weaker.”

It was my first try at evangelism in my country and I wasn’t doing too well. I wasn’t like those students back in America. I didn’t know how to handle this kind of a situation.

“Look Isa,” I said, “you have one week to leave Islam or I will expel you!”

Isa looked stunned. “Aren’t you a Muslim, Mr. Hawatmeh?”

“Yes Isa, I was a Muslim, but then I became a Christian. I came to the truth. It is a truth that you don’t know about. Now, don’t tell anyone about this, OK?”

“OK.”

“You can go now.”

As Isa left I realized what I had done. Was I crazy? What had I done? In no time the news had spread all over. Everyone was whispering. It didn’t take very long before my boss called me in to his office.

“Excuse me, Mr. Hawatmeh, please sit down.”

I sat.

“Is what I am hearing true?”

“What are you hearing?”

“You stopped someone from becoming a Muslim?”

“Yes.”

“Why?” The man in front of me was a Muslim, so I didn’t feel I could discuss any issues of faith with him. “We are paid to teach electronics,” I said. Suddenly I felt very patriotic. “We are not paid to discuss religion or propagate faith.”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Hawatmeh. Whatever you do, please be wise next time.”

There were three engineers in the office at that time, and they were looking at me like I was crazy. They really wanted me knocked down so they could take higher positions. Thank God, no one reacted against me at that time. I continued teaching at the Air Academy for several more years and eventually I discovered a way to appeal my fourteen-year commitment. My commitment was reduced and as soon as I had fulfilled it, I decided to resign. I didn’t know what God had for me, but I knew that He would lead me forward.

Discovery Lesson Three

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE BIBLE

Bible Texts: Various

Introduction: The Purpose of the Lesson:

- 1) To give the student a comprehensive view of the Bible.
- 2) To present the idea of the inspiration of the Bible.
- 3) Remember that the goal of the course is to help the student understand who Christ is; but to do this we must understand the Bible since it is the source of our knowledge of Christ.

Structure of the Bible

Some general statements:

- 1) The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before the birth of Christ. The New Testament was written after. Jesus is the link between them.
- 2) A testament is a promise from God. The Old Testament and the New Testament are the same promise but in two forms.
- 3) The whole Bible was written over a period of 1600 years by about 40 authors.
- 4) It was written in different situations: during times of war, happiness, sadness, etc.
- 5) There are different types of literary styles: songs, poetry, history, law, prophecy, and letters.

The Old Testament

- 1) The Old Testament contains the books of Moses, historical books about how God worked in and through the Jews, poetical books including Psalms, and books of the prophets.
- 2) There are 39 books in the Old Testament. Each book is complete on its own.
- 3) The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew.
- 4) The Jews refer to the Old Testament as the Law and the Prophets. All of the Old Testament books point forward to the coming of the Messiah. READ: Matthew 5:17; John 5:39-40.
- 5) The prophets prophesied details about the Messiah's life to prepare the world for His coming. We will study this later.

The New Testament

- 1) There are 27 books in the New Testament. Each is complete on its own.
- 2) The New Testament was originally written in Greek.
- 3) The New Testament includes the Gospels, Acts, Letters of the Apostles, and Revelation.
 - a) The Gospels give details about the life and teaching of the Messiah.
 - b) Acts tells of the growth of the church in the first century. The focus is on the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.
 - c) Letters giving believers instructions on the Christian life.
 - d) Revelation: the Second Coming of the Messiah.
- 4) The meaning of the word 'gospel'.
 - a) The gospel is not a doctrine or religion that came down from heaven.
 - b) The gospel is not a means of communication or group of commands or laws about how to go to heaven.
 - c) The word 'gospel' is a Greek word meaning 'good news'. What is this good news? READ: 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

Closing points on the structure of the Bible

- 1) The books of the Bible are powerfully united and arranged and their foundation is Jesus Christ Himself.
- 2) The Old Testament prophesied the coming of the Messiah with amazing detail.
- 3) As for the Gospels, they inform us 'according to eyewitnesses' about that coming of the Messiah which prove it to be true.
- 4) The rest of the books of the New Testament inform us about the establishing of the first church and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ by the apostles.

The Inspiration of the Bible

- 1) Many people stumble over this point because the language and style of the Bible is different from that of other religious books.
- 2) The main principle that Christian believers concerning the inspiration of the Bible is that God inspired the Bible through the control of the Holy Spirit over the writers who wrote the divine Word. Each of them wrote in his own language but under the direction of the Holy Spirit in facts and words.
- 3) The original Bible was written in Greek and Hebrew (show original languages). It has been translated into thousands of languages. The Arabic is not an original. It is a translation.
- 4) Has the Bible been corrupted or changed as some people say?
 - a) There are hundreds of copies of the Bible from the first and second

- centuries. Could all of them have been changed?
- b) If there are mistakes in the Bible, this means one of two things:
 - i) God made a mistake (impossible).
 - ii) The Bible is not nor has it ever been the Word of God.
 - c) God protects His Word. READ: Isaiah 40:8.
- 5) How then was the Bible written? READ: 2 Peter 1:21.
- a) All of the writers wrote under the control of the Holy Spirit. Their words are the words of God.
 - b) God respected the personality of the writer. Even though God respected the personality, the Holy Spirit led the writer.
 - c) Each writer wrote in the language of the people because God was concerned that the people understand His Word.

The Purpose of the Bible

- 1) The focus of Christianity is not a book. It is a person: Jesus.
- 2) The Bible is the written Word of God, but Jesus is the living Word of God.
- 3) The purpose of the Bible is to lead us to Christ. The Bible is a door to a personal relationship with God because it leads us to Christ. It is possible to study the Bible for years and yet not have a personal relationship with God.
- 4) READ: Luke 24:44-45. Jesus 'opened the minds' of the disciples so that they could understand that the Scriptures taught about the Christ.
- 5) READ: 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
 - a) Who is the source of the Scriptures? God.
 - b) What is the purpose of Scripture? Teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

Closing

READ: Hebrews 1:1-2.

True knowledge of God cannot come through books, but through Christ alone.

Activity: Draw a timeline. Place Adam at one end, and your contact at the other. Now ask him to place famous people on the timeline. Moses, David, Jesus, Muhammad, John the Baptist, etc. This will help him understand the timeline of Bible History

Memorize

Memorize this lesson

Practice Session

Find another student and practice this lesson with them.

Lesson Eighteen

Technical notes

Story	4644 words = 28 minutes
Discovery Lesson 4	2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize	
Practice Session	

Story

People were shocked when I resigned from my job at the Air Academy. My mother had a heart attack that very week. I visited her in the hospital and she was quite angry with me.

“This happened because you lost your job,” she told me.

“Mother,” I said, “I am getting a better job.”

“No,” she insisted. “All the village women were envious of me because you are my son, and I was so proud of you.”

“Mother,” I countered, “I’m a man; I can work wherever I want.” Nevertheless, my whole family was upset.

“You’re crazy to walk away like that!” they protested. “You are in the beginning of something great. You had a good salary, a good position, and you could travel.”

It was true. I had everything a young man could want. I had a good education, an excellent government job, and a good salary with free travel allowances on the national airline. Furthermore, I enjoyed my work. To top it all off, there were excellent possibilities that I could move up the ladder to better things. Jordan was a small country, which at that time had a limited number of highly educated people. If I stuck it out, I could be promoted higher and higher. An ambitious man could do much in my position.

Nevertheless, I wanted to quit. I really didn’t know why I quit, but I knew that if I stayed, my spiritual life was in jeopardy.

When I realized that I had shamed my family and that I wanted more spiritual freedom, I started to make plans to leave Jordan and return to my studies and pursued a Ph.D. Then my honor would be restored. If I returned to the west I would also be free to live as a Christian should. On top of that, my old Christian girlfriend in America wanted me to come back.

So I started to make plans to leave Jordan. Ever since arriving back in Jordan I had kept up correspondence with my old American girlfriend. In America, we had discussed marriage but when I told her I needed to serve

the Jordanian government for fourteen years, she was unsure. She didn't want to live in Jordan so our plans were put on hold.

Once I obtained my release from the government and started talking about returning to the west, our relationship flourished. We then started planning our wedding. We set a date and printed invitation cards. Mr. Love was to be my best man. My girlfriend's father was a pastor. He was the one who baptized me and now he would be the one to marry me.

My family wanted my girlfriend to visit Jordan, but circumstances prevented it. Instead, she sent a picture. My mother was very impressed with her picture and kept it for many long years afterward.

I was happy. I had a plan and the future looked bright. During that time I heard of a conference that was being held in the nearby country of Cyprus. I didn't know what a missions conference was. I didn't even know much about Cyprus. However, people seemed to think it was a good idea, so I changed my plane ticket so I could travel to Cyprus. I still had time. It was a month before I was to get married.

Unknown to me, the Lord had different plans. The missions conference in Cyprus changed my life. I saw something of the missionary movement. All kinds of people were keenly focused on reaching Muslims for Christ. I talked and prayed with Christians from other countries who wanted nothing else in life than to see Muslims come to Christ. Many of these Christians wept while they prayed. As they prayed for laborers to go into the Middle East, I realized that I was running away.

I also met people who were training to be missionaries. Some had left their families in the west and had come to minister in my part of the world. "This is a shame," I thought to myself. "It is a shame for me to leave all of this and go to America just to be there."

Something was changing in my heart. I knew that if I was to follow God's plan for my life then I could not return to America. God's place of ministry was among my own people. But giving up America meant giving up my girlfriend. It hurt me a lot, but I had to do it. I had no choice. Losing my girlfriend was going to be like losing life itself, but I felt that I must choose between serving God and pursuing what would be nice for me.

I called her in America and we talked on the telephone. I tried to explain it, but there was nothing to explain. She knew about ministry. She had experience working in the church and in Sunday School. We had dreams of ministering together some day. She and I would lead the youth group. She knew a lot about ministry but she didn't know about missions. Now, missions had gripped my heart. When I broke the news to her she was heart-broken. Her father had built us a place to live in America. All I had to do

was get on the plane. I still had the ticket. But God had gotten a hold of my heart.

We called each other several times. I didn't want to go to the States, so she told me that she would come to me in Cyprus. "Listen," I said, "if you want to live with me in Jordan I will be the happiest person in the world. But I don't want to go to the USA."

"What happened?" she cried. "People are expecting us to get married!"

"Look," I said, "I can go to the USA to get married, but I won't stay. I have to come back. If you want to do that, then I can leave right now. I still have my ticket."

My girlfriend came to Cyprus to see me and then returned to the United States without me. What should have been a very happy occasion turned out to be a very sad one. I wandered around for few days. I hated God for two weeks. I hated religion. I hated everything. But I couldn't fly to America. I couldn't get on that plane.

Now when I look back at God's plan, I know his plans are better than our plans. I wrote several letters over the following years to explain how the Lord had used me in ministry. I explained how others were changed and how the church had changed. Not because of me, but because of Jesus. I wanted her to feel that we didn't loose, but rather that we had gained. It was a very difficult time in our lives but, with God's help, we faced the pain and moved on.

I found a job as a translator with a mission that worked with children. I translated materials for them, but I found the work unchallenging and I wanted something else.

Unknown to me, the Jordanian Government gave my name to the Cypriot government. The British government was handing over two radar stations to the Cypriots and the Cypriots did not have anyone who could run the radar stations and were looking for someone who could train their technicians.

When I left Jordan, I had given my business card and forwarding address to the director of the Air Academy. Over the years, I have kept him informed of my address and sometimes I get invitations to lecture. There are very few Jordanians with radar training, so whenever I go to the States I take upgrading courses from university. Along with this, I get magazines and journals to keep current in my field.

One day I received a telephone call from a man in the city of Limassol.

"Mr. Hawatmeh," he said, "we want to talk to you about work. Do you want to work with us?"

"Sure," I said, "but you know my career is kind of strange."

“Aren’t you a radar engineer from Jordan?”

“Yes.”

“The Jordanian consulate here in Cyprus gave us your phone number.”

“Is there a Jordanian consulate here? I thought I was the only Jordanian in the country.”

“Oh, no,” he laughed.

After a couple of days I met the Cypriot people at the Jordanian consulate. The Cypriots needed to train five or six radar technicians. It was just ground radar and it required no involvement in war, so I agreed to work for them. The first thing we did was to move the radar sites so that they faced Turkey, an old enemy of Cyprus. Then we went about the business of getting them to work and getting the staff trained.

During my time in Cyprus God began to work in my heart. In the churches and through a missions training program I met other people who came from a Muslim background. I was surprised to meet others who had left Islam. Two or three of them were from Egypt. They had left their homes and fled from their fathers and mothers. To me it was a shock. I really loved my family. I was a villager at heart. I grew up with my family around me and I loved everything they cooked and everything they joked about. I was a family man. I was sorry to see these people in this state. “How could you leave your mothers?” I asked.

“The Bible told us to leave her,” they insisted.

“No it doesn’t,” I said. “But if you left, then the Lord will work it out.”

Those two years in Cyprus were very unique for me. I learned how to witness to people and how to share the gospel. The Lord was working in my heart and He used the students as well as the classes. If the classes were like water to my soul, then the students were like a stick that stirred everything up. The Egyptian believers especially touched me. I couldn’t believe how simple they were, and yet how joyful they were. It was easy to deal with them. I, however, was proud and hard while they were wonderfully receptive and warm. I was from a better situation. I had attended university. I had money saved up from the excellent jobs I had held. Yet, I saw someone who only owned a T-shirt and shorts, and he was content. I had two full suitcases of suits, complete with ties. I had new jeans and fashionable clothes. I had a car and could go up to the mountains when it was hot. But I was not always content. However, by the time I had finished the training course, I had started looking up to the Egyptians rather than down on them.

In my country, we look down on Egyptians and employ them to clean and serve. Serving others was not even in my thinking. It was out of the question to serve someone who had lower social or financial status than you.

I even refused and balked at taking my turn at washing dishes, but slowly God changed me to understand the need to serve my brothers and to serve others. I discovered that if I serve someone else, I am honored more than if he serves me.

I also attended a church in Cyprus and the Lord used the pastor and others to teach me many things. After church on Sunday mornings we would often go to the beaches or parks or even the red light district to witness to people. Little did I realize how much God was using this time to prepare me for the ministry He had waiting for me.

(Pause)

When my job ended in Cyprus, the Cypriot government offered me a raise and asked me to stay. I appreciated the time that I had spent in Cyprus but I was ready to move on. I knew that in some way the Lord was directing me to minister to Muslims.

As I pondered the path ahead of me, I had many questions. How could I function in Jordan? How could I reach Muslims? People would know me. They would know who I was. In Cyprus, I was just an Arab from the Middle East. Back in Jordan, I would be known. People would soon know who my father and mother were. Although doubts plagued me, I knew I needed to go back.

Then my brother, Abdul Karim, called me. My father was getting older. On his papers it said that he was 105 years old. My brother insisted that I return. So, in 1988, I flew back to Jordan. Later I was thankful that I did because one year later my father died.

My brother, Abdul Karim, was insistent that I join him in Saudi Arabia so that I would be closer to the family; and other family members had all kinds of ideas of where I could work so I could be closer to them.

In my heart I really wanted to minister to Muslims but I realized that I needed a job just so I could live. I told my brother that I needed several days to think about it. Really, I wanted to pray about it.

I knew in my heart that it was the Lord's will for me to be back in my home country. While I knew it, it still wasn't completely my will. So I prayed and asked God to guide me and show me what His will was, and to give me peace about settling back into Jordan. My family reacted very positively about me coming back, but they were still suspicious over my leaving the Air Academy. My father started talking to me about going back to the Air Academy so I could get my old job back. But I didn't want to go back to the Academy.

My family knew I had gone to church and that I had had a Christian girl friend, but to them it wasn't a big deal. My family also knew I regularly went to church in the States and that my girlfriend's father had been the pastor. They even knew I had been baptized there. But they really didn't understand what it all meant. They thought it was all in the past and part of my rebellion as a teenager. They thought I would eventually settle down, get married, have a family and it would all be over. Now that I was in need of employment, they started coming up with all sorts of options.

Knowing that I needed to make a decision, I prayed to God and asked him for a sign. "Lord, if you really want me to stay here in Jordan, then I want to see three Muslims accept Christ this week." I was very naive. I prayed hard, and I really believed. If God didn't bring three Muslims to Christ that week through my ministry, then I would leave Jordan.

I found work being a salesman with a computer company. Through my work with the company I started to meet people. I was single, so I could visit people at lunch breaks and after work in the evenings. During this time, I did not tell anyone about my prayer request for three converts. I knew God was not going to put three Muslims in a basket and place them in front of me, so I started to pray for these three and to ask God to show me where I was going to find them.

Each day I visited a small corner cafe where I had lunch. Each time I was there I had an opportunity to talk briefly with Muhammad, the waiter. We talked about his family and his job. One evening, I returned to the cafe for a cup of coffee and Muhammad and I got talking again.

This time he started asking me questions about my family and what I was doing. Eventually I steered the conversation to the place where I could ask him if he knew anything about the Bible. He asked me if I was a Christian and I told him a bit of my testimony. Then we arranged to visit together after his work.

When we met, I didn't have a plan or course of action to follow. I was very afraid, because I knew I was doing something risky and against the logic of these people. Nevertheless, I shared the gospel with him that night and the next day I prayed with him to accept Christ. I didn't have a lot of theology to share, but I poured out what I had and God blessed it. I read a little from the Bible and shared my testimony. I had nothing to give Mohammed other than my simple faith in Jesus. Before I knew it, I had my first convert.

The next convert was Hani. I met Hani through my work. It took less than six hours and he accepted Christ. He is still a believer today, living in the capital city with a believing wife and kids. Hani is very dear to my heart and like a son to me.

The third one to come to Christ was an Egyptian parking place worker in the building where I had found an apartment. His name was Jamal, and I visited him several times in the parking garage and shared with him. He always had Qur'anic chanting blaring out of big speakers. Several people had talked to his boss about it. His boss was a nominal Christian but had to put up with it because Jamal was a Muslim in a Muslim country. Who could deny a person the right to listen to the Qur'an? Seven days later, he started to play hymns.

When this happened, a neighbor came and asked his boss, "What did you do to him so that he stopped the Qur'an and started playing hymns?" His boss was as puzzled as everyone else.

That was the very first time I had prayed with people to accept salvation. I felt that this was proof from the Lord that I was to stay in Jordan and do what the Lord wanted me to do.

A short time after this, one of the missionaries took me out for lunch and he shared with me how discouraged he was. "Abdalla, I've been in Jordan for the last two years and it's not working. I just want to reach Muslims. Can we work together?" "Sure" I told him "we have a meeting on Wednesday. Can you come?"

"What?" he stuttered, "Who is 'we'?"

"A group of new believers." I said.

"New believers? Already?" he gasped. I just smiled. Wednesday would be our first meeting.

I knew in my heart that these three did not believe because of something that I had done. They were a gift from the Lord, a confirmation that I was to stay in Jordan. I knew in my heart that it was the voice of the Lord answering my prayer and saving these three people just to prove to me that He wanted me in Jordan. From this small beginning I started to reach out to people whom God brought across my path.

Slowly but surely a small fellowship started. For the most part, I worked alone. When I was in Cyprus, I had worked in a team and there were others to help in making decisions. Now I worked alone. Yes, I had friends who encouraged me but for the most part I ministered alone.

Our first fellowship meetings were quite difficult. How can three single men and myself sing? They didn't know any hymns so I had to sing alone. I would make the tea, welcome them at the door, pray for them, teach them, sing a hymn, pray, and shake their hands at the door, and say goodbye. The new believers were like statues just sitting there. They were very new at being believers and I was very new at being a leader.

Not long after this a Jordanian church worker called me at the office and wanted to talk to me. “Abdalla, I need to talk to you about something that is happening.”

“Go ahead,” I said.

“There is this sister, a girl who has escaped from her parents.”

“Um,” I replied, “Why are you telling me this? Call the police.”

“We sent her to you.”

“What?” I started to get alarmed. “Where did you send her?”

“To your apartment.”

Suddenly I was angry. “I thought you people were naïve!” I burst out. “What will people think? What will my neighbors think? I’m a single man living in an apartment building. My neighbors know me. How can you send a girl to my house?”

“I’m sorry, but she’s already on her way.”

“Oh my,” I thought. “This is a very conservative country. If I act quickly I can save my reputation.” I hung up the telephone and thought fast. I needed to call someone for help. I needed a female. I immediately thought of Amal, the secretary. She was a very new believer, but I needed a woman to meet with this girl. Perhaps she could help.

I first met Amal through my work. She was from a Greek Orthodox family and had five sisters and two brothers. She was just getting to know some evangelicals when I met her. She thought she was a believer, but she really wasn’t. A short time later, I met Amal by surprise in my own neighborhood. She and her family were out walking one evening when we bumped into each other. I discovered that they lived in a neighboring apartment building. Maybe I could call Amal now and ask her to help me.

While I was thinking of this the telephone rang again. This time it was my neighbors. “Abdalla, there is a girl sitting on the steps outside of your apartment.”

“Good night,” I thought, “this is the end of my career as a missionary.”

Aloud I said, “Yeah, I know about her. Someone is coming over right away.” Thankfully my neighbors offered to let her into their apartment until someone arrived for her.

Amal would be the natural one to help me. I needed a woman to help me out so in desperation, I called Amal. After all, she was a neighbor and quite close to my apartment. When I explained my problem to Amal, she was alarmed.

“No Abdalla,” she said. “I’m scared to death. My family might beat me.”

“Please do it,” I begged. “Please go to my house and see her.”

Finally she agreed and went to my apartment. I came as soon as I could from the office. When I arrived at my neighbor's house, I asked Amal to stay for a while. Then I asked my neighbor to stay close by and make tea or something in the other room. I needed to have someone around while I spoke with these women. In our culture it would be a great shame and embarrassment if I were alone in an apartment with a woman.

As soon as I was alone with Amal and the girl, I told the girl, "Please, don't you ever come to my house again like this. Go to a church and have them call me. I'm a single man and people will talk."

Then, with Amal beside me, and the neighbors in the other room, I heard her story. She had run away from her home. Someone had abused her. It took a while, but slowly we got her story from her. She had been abused sexually. I was shocked by her story. Her brother had abused her when she was young.

"What?" I gasped. "Why have you come to me?" I quickly found an excuse to leave the room and I called the Christian workers who sent her to me. "Why in the world did you send her to me?" I asked.

"Well," they said. "She is a believer from a Muslim background and we know you care for Muslims."

"Oh," I said. "You might be right." That day we started a ministry for women.

I prayed hard as I returned to Amal and the girl. "Look," I said, "As a Jordanian, I advise you to call your family right now and let them know you are alive and OK." She did that. "And now," I told her, "you also need to leave here and go straight back to your family. There is no place here or anywhere else for you except with your family."

She was very upset. She got up to go and then she ran down the stairs, out of the building and down the street. I didn't want to run after her. I was afraid that a police officer might shoot me if he saw me chasing a woman down the street. I just let her go. Then I called Jamal in the garage.

"Jamal," I said, "can you come with me and look for a girl who ran away?"

"Sure," he replied, and in a few moments he arrived with a car. We drove around for several hours until we found her in a park. She was sitting alone on a park bench. We brought her back with us, and then I called her family. It was my first time ever calling a family on behalf of another believer. Little did I realize that it would be far from the last time.

"You Christians," her father roared over the telephone. "You Christians have ruined our daughter. She has stayed several days with you. We are going to go to the police, and have our daughter checked to see if she is still a virgin!"

“What?” I gasped. They were trying to trick me. I was going to hang up, but I listened until they were finished. The father and mother were both on the telephone on different lines.

“Now you listen to me,” I said to them. “If you go to the police, I will go to the police. I know what happened. She has been abused in your home. Your son abused her when she was 12 years old.”

They were immediately quiet and then they agreed to take her back home.

“Where is the girl now?” they asked, much more subdued.

“We found her on the street,” I replied, “It is almost evening and anyone could do anything with her.” They agreed to come and get her.

This was a turning point in my ministry. We were now getting into some serious issues: crimes, family related issues, males, and females. Families in Jordan are very close. They are very different in the way they live from people in other parts of the world. Families think and act together. It is not wrong and it is not right. It is our culture.

From this point on, in one way or another, our ministry started to get known. It was in some ways unfortunate because we did not want to be known but, through this, God brought seekers and new believers to us.

My working relationship with Amal was also starting to grow. Whenever I needed to minister to women, I would find some way to arrange it so that Amal could be present. Amal even managed to attend some of our meetings. She also started attending some of the services at a local evangelical church. She usually went in secret because her family were staunch Orthodox and they did not approve of anything evangelical. If her family disapproved of her attending an evangelical church service, what would they think of her mixing with a group of Muslims? Time would tell.

Discovery Lesson Four

REDEMPTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT-THE NECESSITY OF BLOOD FOR SALVATION

Key Bible Texts: Leviticus 16:15-19; 29-34; Isaiah 52, 53

Introduction

Do you remember Lesson 2?

- 1) What are the consequences of sin?
- 2) Do these things affect our lives today?

- 3) Are you pleased with the world today?
- 4) Man is always looking for a solution to the problem of sin. Today we will be looking at God's solution for the problem of sin.
- 5) We are not looking at a specific event today, but at a subject that can be found throughout the whole Bible from beginning to end: blood sacrifice.

The Problem of Sin

- 1) What God's Word says about sin:
 - a) READ: Psalm 14:3. Does this describe people today?
 - b) READ (Optional): Psalm 143:2. Who is righteous?
 - c) READ: Ecclesiastics 7:20. Who is righteous?
 - d) READ: Isaiah 59:2. What is the worst consequence of sin? (Separation from God.)
- 2) What are some of the things that man has done to solve the problem of sin? (Religion, science, good works, etc. Man looks for salvation from good works.)
 - a) READ: Ephesians 2:8-9. What does it mean to be saved? What are we saved from? (From the consequences of our sin.) Can good works save us? (No.)
 - b) READ: Romans 3:20. Can we become righteous through the Law? (No)
- 3) The greatest problem in the world is sin. Because sin is a spiritual problem, we cannot solve it alone. We must depend on God. What is God's solution? This week we will look at the answer in the Old Testament and next week in the New Testament.

God's Plan for Salvation

The Law and the Prophets point forward to Christ.

- 1) All through the Old Testament we read about the men of God offering sacrifices, e.g. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. Why are these sacrifices necessary? (According to the Law, forgiveness and redemption from sin only comes through the shedding of blood.)
- 2) READ: Leviticus 16:15-19; 29-34. The Day of Atonement.
 - a) What was the sacrifice? (A goat.)
 - b) Why was this sacrificed? (For sin.)
 - c) What did the sacrifice do? (Atoned for sin. Covered sin. Purified the people from sin.)
 - d) Who was this sacrifice for? (The whole nation.)
- 3) READ: John 1:29. The Perfect Sacrifice. An animal does not have the same value as a man. Therefore we need a more perfect, final sacrifice.
 - a) Who is the lamb that John is referring to? (Jesus.)

- b) Why did he call Jesus the Lamb of God? (Because Jesus Himself was a sacrifice like the Old Testament sacrifices.)
- c) For whom was He a sacrifice? (The whole world.)
- 4) READ: Romans 5:18. How could one man be a sacrifice that purifies the whole world?
 - a) What was the one act of disobedience that brought death to the world? (Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.)
 - b) What was the one act of obedience that brought life to the world? (The death of Christ on the Cross.)
 - c) Through Adam all of the problems of sin entered our lives. Christ brought the solution.
- 5) READ: Hebrews 9:22. According to the Bible, there must be the shedding of blood for forgiveness of sins. It is important to highlight the importance blood has in the Middle East:
 - a) a) When a group of people go out to greet the president or king of the country, they yell with one voice, "By spirit, by blood, we redeem you, oh ..." Why blood? Why isn't it said, 'By money or by land?'
 - b) What erases a debt other than blood? (Blood revenge still exists in Arab villages. If something shameful happens to a member of a family, especially girls, they take their blood revenge by killing. They will not be satisfied except by blood.) Why?
 - c) Why do people sacrifice on the roof of their houses? (Someone told me that it is so God will protect the house! Just as with the Passover, the blood is protection.)
 - d) Where did these traditions come from? (God has put a special knowledge concerning blood inside us. We understand the importance of blood.)
- 6) Prophecies of the coming Messiah. The Law states that there must be a blood sacrifice for forgiveness. It also states that the sacrifice of an animal is not enough (this is why there must be continual sacrifices). But the prophets describe the final, perfect sacrifice.

The following prophecies from Isaiah help us to understand this:

- a) READ: Isaiah 52:13. Who is the servant? (Jesus.)
- b) READ: Isaiah 52:14-15. How does Isaiah describe Christ's body?
- c) READ: Isaiah 53:1-3. Describe the physical appearance of the Messiah. Even today people do not recognize the greatness of the Messiah. They think He is only a prophet or teacher.
- d) READ: Isaiah 53:4-5. Why did the Messiah die?
- e) READ: Isaiah 53:6. How are we like sheep?
- f) READ: Isaiah 53:7-8. How is Christ like a lamb?

- g) READ: Isaiah 53:9. What is the prophecy here?
- h) READ: Isaiah 53:10. What is a guilt offering?
- i) READ: Isaiah 53:11-12. What are the results of the Messiah's suffering?

Homework:

READ: John 18 and 19. Notice the similarities between the prophecies of Christ's crucifixion in Isaiah 53 and the actual crucifixion as described in John 18 and 19.

Closing

- 1) Both the Law and the Prophets point forward to Christ.
- 2) The Law teaches us that without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness for sin. This is the justice of God.
- 3) The Prophets teach us that God will send a final, perfect sacrifice, Christ. This is the mercy of God.

Memorize

Memorize this lesson

Practice Session

Find another student and practice this lesson with them.

Lesson Nineteen

Technical notes

Story	4338 words = 26 minutes
Discovery Lesson 5	2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize	
Practice Session	

Story

Soon we started thinking about leaders. Our church was no longer a small weak group. We had grown and now we were starting to wrestle with new issues. Sometimes, I had to rebuke other believers. I even started to encourage the young men to marry Christian girls if they could.

In our conservative culture, single men and women seldom, if ever, mix. In the meetings in my home, however, men and women mixed with each other. I had to watch this situation closely because the young men from a Muslim background really didn't know how to act appropriately around young women. Fortunately for me, my time in the west had helped prepare me for this.

One time I grabbed one young man by his collar and pulled him away from the group.

"Come with me." I insisted. "Stop messing with that girl! If you want to marry her then talk with me, but don't you ever mess around with her like that again." I was a young single man, but I needed to take charge. This young man was always talking with the girl who was sent to my home the first time I worked with Amal. Sometimes he would arrange secret dates with her. He would tell her to wait somewhere in the city and then, often, he wouldn't show up. It became so bad that she would call me at night and be angry with me, as though I was the one who was doing it.

When I realized that the young man was serious, I started to meet with them and counsel them. I gave them books to read and we would talk about what marriage meant in the Word of God.

"Look," I told the man one day. "Don't rush into an engagement. Get to know her in a proper way. Don't just look at the outside. Think of her spiritual life. Make sure she is the right person for you. Behind that lady is a story."

He looked at me waiting for me to continue. Then, as carefully as I could, I told him about how she was abused as a young teenager. I told him

about how she came to the Lord and how her family tried to kill her. They had placed some bottles of butane in her room while she was sleeping and had opened them up. They sealed the windows and doors and left. A short while later the neighbors smelled gas and called the fire department. They came and broke down the door and discovered the attempted murder. The authorities almost jailed the father. I was rather blunt as I told him the story. I guess I wanted him to understand the kind of situation he was getting himself into.

Unknown to me, that night, the young man took his mother, his sister, and his brother and went to the girl's house to arrange an official engagement. I was peacefully unaware of all of this until one o'clock in the morning, when I heard someone knocking at my door. I opened the door and there stood the young man.

"What is it?" I said sleepily.

"Let me in. Do you have some water? I'm thirsty."

"It's one in the morning," I protested.

He started crying

"What's going on?" I asked again, suddenly a bit softer.

"I took my mother and sister and brother and went to ask for the girl."

"You what? Are you crazy? Why did you do that? Things still need to be arranged!"

"I know."

"OK, what happened?"

"My mother clashed with her family over the price of the dowry. My mother told the girl's family that their daughter was not educated and not very pretty, so she didn't deserve that much money." He was crying now, and I was laughing at how ridiculous this all was. "They said that if we come back again they will beat us up. We left. Now my chance is ruined."

I let him into my apartment.

"OK," I said, trying to encourage him. "Let's give this time. We need to pray about it and see what we should do."

About four weeks later I took my brother-in-law with me and we went to visit the girl's family. My brother-in-law was now a believer and it was good to have someone I could work with. Before we left, we arranged to have ten people praying for us. I picked up the young man and we went back to the girl's family. This time we were three men and we acted as an official party to request a bride. When we arrived at the house, we announced who we were. Again my Hawatmeh name served me well.

"Oh," they said, "we have some relatives who have married Hawatmehs, come on in."

“Lord,” I prayed, “please let them forget my name and my voice.” The girl’s mother and father had spoken to me over the telephone the night we had found their daughter in the park. I was sure that they still had my telephone number and name. Now, a few months later, I was in their home on an official bridal request. I spoke carefully.

“We know that a few weeks ago you had trouble with this man’s family,” I started, “but this man’s family is now acting correctly and from the door he wants to announce that he would like to marry your daughter. We are here to represent his family to you.”

We talked for a few minutes, and then they gave us a price. “For you, you are good Hawatmehs, we agree that we don’t want money. His family thinks we are after money, but we don’t want money, and we don’t want gold, we just want 500 JD.” (This is about \$700.00). “Wow,” I thought to myself, “at that price, give us two girls.” My brother-in-law was horrified and he quietly whispered to me “This is cheap. It’s not good. Something’s wrong with her.” Of course, he did not know her background as only Amal, the bridegroom and I knew.

Her family said “Does he have a house and furniture ready?”

I replied that he was a handyman and he could work and fix things up. It was true; he was very good but he didn’t have a place ready for them to live in. However, despite this, it was all over in ten minutes and we had agreed to the terms and conditions of their marriage.

“Let’s read the Fatiha from the Qur’an,” they said. This was the Muslim way of confirming our agreement. So I lifted my hands and while they read, I thanked God for His goodness that night. They were reading something but I didn’t even hear them; I was worshipping God. When we finished praying, we moved our hands over our faces in a washing movement like all good Muslims do. Then I looked at the bridegroom and whispered, “What did you do while they read?”

He smiled, “I did the Qur’anic thing.” I grabbed him by the neck in mock punishment, but I was very happy. I was marrying my children. I was young and single, only 30 years old, and already I was marrying off my children.

A month later, they got married. By this time the bridegroom’s family had decided not to agree with it, so none of them came with him.

“OK,” I said, “we will be your family.” We gathered twenty cars full of people to attend the wedding. None of us were Muslims anymore. We were all evangelical Christians. We joked a bit as we headed off to attend this Muslim wedding.

First we arrived at the bride’s house to get the bride. All the people who received us were Muslim leaders. It was fun. They never imagined that we

were all evangelicals and that we were coming to get their daughter. When they stood up to pray the evening prayers, we just stayed waiting for them. It was a bit embarrassing, so one of the men with us said, “Abdalla, why don’t we at least go stand with them. Just to let them know we are here.”

“OK,” I said, “You go and do that if you want, but not me.” No one moved. After getting the bride, we visited the court to have a civil wedding. After they signed the official papers, we all trooped over to my house and I conducted my first marriage, a Christian marriage. Truly our little fellowship was maturing. As I gazed at the happy faces of those attending the Christian wedding, I realized that we had come a very long way from being a group of four single men.

One week later I started receiving threats from the bride’s family. They felt that we had deceived them. I insisted we hadn’t. They discovered that their daughter’s new husband was a Christian and they were infuriated. They had known that their daughter was seeing Christians and going to church, but they thought that through this wedding they were marrying her off to a Muslim man who would straighten out her funny ideas.

The young man’s family also knew he was interested in Christianity, but they didn’t know that his bride was also a Christian. They too thought that marriage and family life would help their son forget about his Christian ideas. Once they discovered she also was a Christian, they too started telephoning me.

“It’s you, the Christians...!”

“Thank God” I thought, “they have forgotten they originally accepted me as a Muslim and now they are thinking that I am a Christian.” It was a miracle to me that the Lord could put together a Christian family from two Muslim converts. I was so happy at what was happening that I really didn’t care about the threats. I knew the Lord could take care of the threats.

In time, we would become more concerned. This was not a game. It wasn’t just a couple of single guys messing around with religion anymore. We were dealing with serious matters.

It was 1989. That year, I called five or six evangelical churches to see if they would baptize our new Christians. It made me sad to discover that not one of them would dare baptize the three single men I had initially led to the Lord. I called all of the evangelical churches and they all said no. I found this quite frustrating. Whenever I called, I had spoken to Jordanian nationals. I realized that if I had called the foreign missionaries with these churches, we could have baptized them. However, I wanted these new believers to be baptized by the Jordanian churches and not by a group of foreigners. I also

realized that there was some sensitivity between the local churches and the missionaries. I didn't want our little fellowship to be in the middle. I wanted peace with the Jordanian churches. With missionaries it was easy; I could deal with them. They understood the situation and they simply wanted to see people coming to Christ. The local churches were different. At that time they were very reluctant to do anything with Muslims.

When I realized that the churches wouldn't help us, I took the three brothers down to the Dead Sea to a spot where warm water comes down a stream and flows into the sea. In that spot we made a little dam so the water would be deeper. There, beside the bubbling stream, we held our first baptism service. One by one, the three men gave their testimonies and I baptized them. As they were lifted from the water, I began to sing "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back..." "It was a special moment for all of us, until I lifted one of them and he gasped, "Oh no, my teeth!" Sure enough, part of his false teeth had fallen into the water. We soon forgot about singing and started groping around in the water looking for his teeth. We never found them.

Several months later Jamal the mechanic, moved to Iraq. I did not hear from him for some time, and then one day a message came from Iraq. Jamal wanted to get married. However, before he got married he wanted to join a church so that people would trust him. So I wrote a letter of recommendation for Jamal and sent it to him. It seemed to do the trick.

A while later, I got another letter from Jamal. He had found a Christian girl and wanted to marry her, but her family was concerned. They wanted to make sure that he was speaking the truth about being a baptized believer. Jamal wanted to have a baptismal certificate.

We weren't a proper church and we certainly were not registered with the government. In the Middle East, there are Christian churches that have been in existence since Christian history began. These churches have survived through many long years of difficulties and troubles. Now that Middle Eastern countries are under Muslim control, these churches are allowed to continue because they serve the Christian families and tribes in the Middle East. As converts to Christianity, we had no Christian families to identify with. Our families were Muslim and our religion was clearly stated on our identification papers. We were Muslims. Now, however, Jamal wanted an official baptism certificate.

Sitting in my office one day, I made up a certificate on the computer. I found some computer clipart of a dove and placed it at the top. It looked quite pretty. I then signed the certificate and took it to a local evangelical church. I had only recently become a member there, but I asked the pastor to

stamp the certificate with the church stamp. To my amazement, he not only stamped it but certified it with the church seal. He then wrote:

The minister who performed this baptism is well known to us and is part of our congregation. He also acts as a minister in our church.

I sent the certificate to Iraq and sometime later we heard that Jamal had gotten married. During this time a small group of us sat down and started to draw up lists of teaching materials that we needed. The list grew quite long. We needed materials to teach Muslims about marriage. We also needed materials to teach the new converts about Christian leadership. Our goal was not simply to make materials. We needed to have something in hand to use with those who were coming to Christ. We started with evangelism and after trying a number of things, we came up with a series of lessons that we could teach to those who were seeking truth. Little did we realize the impact these simple Discover Lessons would have on Muslims around the world.

Trouble came to us in 1990. God had given me the opportunity to visit the country of Syria and to minister to people there. I made a short trip and found that God was also at work in the lives of Muslims in Syria. Everything went fine until I arrived back at the Jordanian border. At the border, travelers pass through several checks. Vehicles are checked by Customs. Passports are checked by Immigration. The Intelligence Department checks for criminals and those trying to escape military service. I wasn't expecting any trouble and, therefore, was quite surprised when the border police had my name. They simply told me that I needed to go to the Intelligence Department in Amman for an interview.

I was a bit shaken. I hadn't realized that the government would be taking much interest in me. In our country, most families and tribes police themselves. Families usually settled things between themselves before involving the police. In the case of someone changing their religion, families sometimes ostracized the person. In rare cases where someone spoke out against Islam or Christianity, the families would attempt to kill them. Honor killings in families were not strange. If someone severely dishonored his or her family, the possibility of revenge was there. If a young girl became pregnant out of wedlock, there was a good possibility the family would feel she had dishonored the family name and they might respond negatively. In some severe cases, she might even be killed. I was aware of all of this and realized that most Muslim countries have special laws that cover honor killings.

At this point, my own family was not acting upset or concerned. My immediate family knew of my interest in church, and they knew that my American girlfriend had been a Christian. They thought my attraction to Christianity was simply a youthful whim and that in time, it would pass by, especially if I married a good Muslim girl and started to have a family.

So, when the Intelligence Department requested an interview, I was quite puzzled. In my working career, I had been a government man. I had a good record with the government. I was a Jordanian citizen from a good ethnic background. I was not a Palestinian or Armenian refugee. Like the apostle Paul, I had all the right credentials. I had respect because I had attended an American university. Because of my studies and service at the Air Academy I had obtained officer rank. I had security clearance to both the royal palaces and to the Defense Department's Operation Room. On top of all this, I had not committed any criminal acts.

Now, the Intelligence Department wanted to see me. It was a sobering thought. The Jordanian Intelligence Department is considered by many to be the secret police of Jordan. Officers generally do not wear uniforms. They act independently of the regular police or the army. Their function is to deal with any internal threats to Jordanian security. They were busy keeping their eyes on the local branches of the Palestinian Liberation Organizations and the fanatical Muslim organizations.

So, I prayed for several days and then I braced myself and went for my interview. Their office was only two or three minutes from where I worked, so I took time off during office hours to walk over to the Intelligence Department's big gray building.

The people at the front had my name, and they took me down a number of long corridors until I arrived at a small office. I was asked to sit inside.

A few minutes later a nice looking young man came in. He was slightly older than I was, and he asked if I wanted tea or coffee.

"OK," I agreed, "coffee would be nice." Coffee is also the Jordanian sign of friendship, and this seemed reassuring.

The young man started by asking very simple questions.

"What's your name?"

"What is your father's name?"

"What is your mother's name? Your brothers'? Your sister's?"

"Where did you graduate from?"

"Where did you work?"

These were all very simple questions, but there were tons of them. I had arrived at their office at eight in the morning, and I didn't leave until four in the afternoon. I sat in the same room with the same person the whole time.

He never left the room except to take half hour lunch break and, during this time, he placed two soldiers outside the office door.

By four o'clock, I was exhausted. "Thank you," he said, standing up. "Don't tell anyone about this and come back tomorrow morning."

I was free to go. It had been my first contact with the Intelligence Department. Little did I realize that the young man sitting across the table from me asking me all sorts of questions was an officer who had been assigned to my case. The first time we met, everything was very friendly. That was soon to change. In the years that followed, this one man, Abu Sayed, would come to know more about me than perhaps I knew about myself. In time, I would view him as my enemy; when we would talk, he would hide his agenda and I would hide mine. However, during my first interview, we were simply two young men sitting across the table from each other. Now, years later, he has been promoted to become a high-ranking officer while I'm still a simple minister of the gospel.

The next morning things were totally different. I was escorted back to the same room and sat in the same chair. This time, however the officer across the table from me was totally different. This man had a sour face and an angry personality. The first man had been pleasant. This man was mean. The officer I talked to the first day would use words like, "Mr. Hawatmeh," and, "my friend." He would never repeat a question. Whatever answer I gave he would simply take his pen and write it down. His voice was gentle and every now and then he would ask me if I would like tea or coffee.

This new man was different. He never asked me if I wanted tea or coffee. He shouted questions at me and he almost never believed my answers. He always wanted more.

"Who did you meet yesterday?"

If I simply said, "A few people," he would start shouting, "Who are they? What are their names? Where do they live?"

When I told him, he continued his questions. "Where did you meet them? Who else did you meet?"

This questioning went on most of the day. I was thankful when at four o'clock he told me it was over. I was finished for that day, but I was to come back again the next morning. I left completely devastated.

That night I prayed a lot. I had agreed not to tell anyone about the interviews. This was a cross I had to bear alone. I was also concerned about my job. I had now missed two days at the office and it looked like I would be missing several more. As I prayed that night I felt a renewed sense of peace. I decided that the next day I would take a slightly different track. I

would not tell them everything. I would answer their questions as carefully as they asked them.

The next morning we started again.

“What are you doing here?”

“I’m working with a company.”

“What are you doing there?”

“I’m the technical manager doing some engineering.”

“Why were you in Cyprus?”

“Working as a technician for the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority.”

The questions went on and on until suddenly they took on a new slant.

“What is your relationship with the churches?”

“Just friendship.” I thought I had fooled them. I wasn’t sure if it was considered lying, but I didn’t give him all the truth. They asked more questions, but my answers were evasive. A second officer joined us. After a few minutes, he spoke to me.

“If you don’t give us the truth easily, I will call a couple of men to take you down stairs to be tortured for a couple of hours. Then I will bring you back.” His eyes were icy cold and his face was somber. I wasn’t sure if it was a real threat or not. I needed to find out.

“Look,” I said. “You don’t need two guys. I’m a skinny man. If you want, I could go down stairs by myself. I’ll torture myself and then come back.”

He laughed. “Don’t mess around with me,” he said, trying to be serious.

I thought I had managed to break his meanness when suddenly his questions became rude.

“What did you do with these women in your home?”

“I, hum ... I...”

“Did you sleep with them?”

Suddenly I was angry. I reacted before he could repeat his question.

“If you repeat this question again,” I said, my finger suddenly waving in his face. “I will sue you. My morals are better than yours. You are doing this because you receive money. I am a loyal citizen. You are just an employee of the government. If you repeat this ‘women thing’ again, I will sue you in the civil courts for slander. Remember, I am from the Hawatmeh tribe!”

My anger was slowly warming up and for the first time, I saw uncertainty in his eyes.

“No, no,” he protested, “it’s OK. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that.”

The questions continued, only now the atmosphere was a bit more charged and the questions a bit more subdued.

When four o'clock came, we finished, but they wanted to see me back the next day. On and on it went, day after day, for almost three weeks. My job was in trouble and my nerves were getting frayed.

Through all of these questions, I discovered that they knew an awful lot about me. They knew pieces of information that I had said on the telephone. Someone had asked me to do something, and they knew about it. It meant that my telephones were bugged. I was slowly becoming alert to their plans.

A couple of days later, I realized I was being followed. It wasn't obvious at first, but once you are conscious of it, it becomes obvious. Without realizing it, I was carefully studying the faces of those around me, remembering where I had seen them last. I started noticing the kinds of vehicles that were parked around me, especially those with people sitting in them. I never purposely decided to notice these things, but I did as the days of interviews went on. I began to realize the extent of their knowledge about me. I started to try to learn how they had obtained this information. As I learned their tricks and techniques, I slowly found ways of counteracting them. It was the beginning of a cat and mouse game, in which I was the mouse, darting from shadow to shadow. It would take several years before I discovered a more practical and biblical way of dealing with this form of harassment.

Discovery Lesson Five

WHO IS JESUS

Bible Texts: John 1

Introduction

Review lessons 1 -4.

- 1) Lesson 1: How did God create the world? (By His Word. What was the condition of the world when He finished creating it? It was perfect.)
- 2) Lesson 2: How did the world become so bad? (The result of sin.)
- 3) Lesson 3: What was the purpose of the Old Testament Law and Prophets? (To prepare us to receive the Messiah.)
- 4) Lesson 4: What does the Law teach us about redemption? (Without blood there is no forgiveness for sins.)

What was the theme of the prophets? (They prepared the way for the Messiah.)

The Bible tells us that the Messiah is the solution to all of our problems. But to understand the solution, we must understand the problem: sin. This has been our main focus. Man is not able to remove the guilt, shame or fear from his sin by religion or good works.

Today's lesson is a simple introduction to the Messiah. We cannot say everything. However, we must remember that the entire Bible, even what was written before the Messiah's birth, was written about Him. He is the focus and the center of the Bible. He is the focus and center of our faith. John 1 gives us five titles for Christ the Messiah. We shall study these titles today.

Titles for Christ in John 1

Jesus is the Word of God. READ: John 1:1-3, 14.

The most important word in this section is 'word'. A word is an important part of the way in which understanding is established between people. How could we understand one another without words? God communicates to us through His Word.

- 1) What are some of the attributes of God's Word we discover in these verses? (Read again if necessary.)
 - a) The Word of God is eternal.
 - b) There is no distinction between God and His Word.
 - c) Everything was made through the Word of God (Remember Genesis 1).
 - d) The Word of God became a person.
- 2) If the Word of God became a person, who do you think that was? Jesus.
- 3) What does it mean that Jesus is the Word of God? (He is much more than a prophet. He is the revelation of God to man.)
- 4) The Word of God must have authority in our lives. This is why we accept Christ not only as Savior, but also as Lord. (He has authority.)

Jesus is the Life. READ: John 1:4.

- 1) READ: John 6:35
 - a) Who is the Bread of Life? (Jesus.)
 - b) What does Jesus mean when He says that we will never be hungry or thirsty? Does He mean physically? (No. He means spiritually. We will be satisfied.)
- 2) READ: John 6:51.
 - a) Where did Jesus come from? (Heaven)
 - b) What will we receive if we eat this bread from heaven? Eternal life.

- c) What is this bread? (The flesh of Christ)
- d) This is symbolic. It refers to accepting Christ as Savior.

The important point here is that Jesus is Life. There is no eternal life apart from Jesus.

Jesus is the Light. READ: John 1:4-9.

- 1) Explain who John the Baptist was. Do this before reading the passage.
- 2) How is Jesus described here? (Light)
- 3) What are some of the things that light does?
 - a) Light reveals the straight path so that we do not fall.
 - b) Light exposes the darkness (darkness is a symbol for sin).
 - c) Light helps living things grow.
- 4) How is Jesus like the light?
 - a) READ: John 8:12. Jesus reveals the way to God.
 - b) READ: John 12:46. Jesus overcomes darkness (sin).

Jesus is the Lamb of God. READ: John 1:29

- 1) What is Jesus called here? (The Lamb of God)
- 2) Do you remember why Jesus is called the Lamb of God? (Because He was a sacrifice.)
- 3) As the Lamb, what does Jesus do? (Takes away the sin of the world)
- 4) READ: Hebrews 9:27-28.
 - a) What was Christ's purpose the first time He came to earth? (To be a sacrifice for sin.)
 - b) What will be His purpose when He comes again? (To bring salvation to His followers.)

Jesus is the Son of God. READ: John 1:30-34

- 1) What does John call Jesus here? (The Son of God.)
- 2) There are many misunderstandings concerning this expression.
 - a) It does not mean that He was born in the natural way with God as His father and Mary as His mother. Mary was a virgin. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) It does not mean that God adopted Him as a son. He was not born like the rest of humanity. Because of this He was righteous, without sin.
- 3) The meaning of this expression 'the Son of God' is that Jesus had a unique relationship with God and that He came directly from God.
- 4) After understanding these five titles for Christ, can we still think that Jesus was merely a prophet?

Application Rejecting and Receiving Christ

- 1) READ: John 1:10-11
 - a) What does it mean that the world did not recognize Him? (The people did not recognize Him as the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God.)
 - b) Who were His own? (The Jews.)
 - c) Did they accept Him? (No.)
 - d) Why do people today reject Christ? (They accept Him as a prophet or a teacher, but not as the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, or the Son of God.)
- 2) READ: John 1:12-13
 - a) What does it mean to receive Christ? (To accept Him as the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God.)
 - b) What happens to those who receive Christ? (They become children of God.)
 - c) What does it mean to be a child of God? (A child has an inheritance from his father. We inherit eternal life from our father, God.)

Closing

- 1) Do you understand what I mean when I say that Jesus is the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God?
- 2) Do you understand how Jesus is Savior? Do you understand how He is Lord?
- 3) There is one more thing that distinguishes Jesus from all of the other prophets: He is alive. Because of this, He is much more than a prophet. Prophets make bad people good, but Jesus makes dead people live. He is the source of life. QUOTE: John 14:6.
- 4) READ: Revelation 3:20. The decision is yours. Do you want to accept Christ and become His child?

Memorize

Memorize this lesson

Practice Session

Find another student and practice this lesson with them.

Lesson Twenty

Technical notes

Story 3983 words = 24 minutes
Discovery Lesson 6 2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize

Practice Session

Story

Even though the eyes of the Intelligence Department were on me, I knew that ministry had to continue. The new converts needed discipleship and teaching and there were always new people wanting to know about the gospel. Most of these new contacts came through letters that people had written to a Christian television network. As people watched these programs, they were invited to respond by writing in to the broadcasters. The letters from Jordan were collected and regularly carried in someone's suitcase into Jordan and passed to me.

While I lived in Cyprus, I met a man from the television network. Since that time we had kept up contact. After I began my ministry in Jordan, this same man passed by my office for a visit. During our visit I asked him, "Don't you have Jordanians writing to your Christian TV station?"

"Yeah," he said looking at me, "we have lots of Jordanians who write to us."

"Does anyone follow up with these people here in Jordan?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Can I take some of those letters?"

"Well, we can give you all of them if you like." I liked the idea. And so they started sending me lots of letters. In the years that followed, the number of letters slowed down, but initially there were lots of letters. At that time, there were fewer TV stations, less media, and fewer satellite dishes in Jordan. People were content to watch whatever came over local television. The Christian station was new, its programs were all new, and thousands of people tuned in to watch it each day.

Following up the letters became a major task. It soon became obvious I could not handle this task alone. I asked several others to join me. Together we formed a ministry team. We shared together and formed prayer teams. Sometimes we would walk around neighborhoods praying for those who lived there, that the Lord would open doors into that part of the city.

Our ministry team was not based around any mission organization or person. It was a team that God brought together to minister to those who were seeking. Different ones related to different organizations, but our goals were all similar. We all wanted to reach others for Christ and to see people disciplined into mature believers. God gave us grace and we worked together very smoothly.

While the Intelligence Department started their opposition, God pushed us forward. On the one hand, we felt pressure and harassment. On the other hand, we found open doors for ministry and discovered people waiting and

ready for us. The harvest was ripe. The laborers were few, and there were those who opposed what we were doing.

(Pause)

As the months went by my relationship with Amal grew deeper. We lived in the same neighborhood and we both felt God's call on our lives to minister. On many occasions Amal had been used by God to minister into the lives of women seekers, and I found myself increasingly relying on Amal.

I knew that a relationship was starting but at the same time I had my doubts about us. I had been very close to marrying before, and it was hard to enter another relationship. Deep in my heart, I resisted any relationship with Amal, even though I enjoyed being around her and working with her.

There was another problem as well. She was from a Christian family and I was from a Muslim family. Since Jordanians operate in a family setting, family members are always involved in the various steps in arranging a marriage. Amal's family would resist any relationship with a Muslim family. My Muslim family would resist any relationship with a Christian family, although they would not be as much against it. Under Jordanian law, when a Christian woman marries a Muslim man, she automatically becomes a Muslim and the children are always Muslims. I knew that if I were to marry Amal, we would need to have a Christian marriage. I was not hiding behind Islam. I boldly told people I was a Christian, and I identified more with the Christians than with Muslims. However, officially, on paper, and before the eyes of the government, I was a Muslim. If I was to marry, I needed to marry a Muslim. It was an insurmountable problem only God could overcome.

Our little ministry team liked Amal. I had introduced her to the team and they enjoyed working with her. She was a nice girl, new in the faith, but serving the Lord.

Then one day in 1990, in the middle of all our troubles, I came out with it and asked Amal if she was at all interested in having me as a husband. She responded positively and this worried me. "Look" I said. "I've thought about this but I need more time to make a decision. I am going out on a long ministry trip; let me pray about it and see what God has in it."

It was true; I did have a long trip but I had a second agenda. Some of the missionaries wanted to go visiting with them, because they felt they had found the perfect girl for me.

"Lord," I prayed, "if it is your will for me to go back to Amal and marry her then please help me not to like the girl the missionaries found." It may have been a strange prayer, but the missionaries were like family to me.

They loved and cared for me as well as for others. However, during the ministry trip the Lord spoke clearly to my heart. Several days later I called Amal and told her I loved her and wanted to marry her.

Once I said it, I knew it was something I had wanted for a long time. Peace flooded my soul and I knew I had made the right decision. Making up my mind had been hard enough, but getting the families to agree was going to be much harder.

(Pause)

Saleem Salah was the bishop of the Roman Catholic Church. Several years before, when I had returned from Cyprus, I made an effort to meet the various leaders of the Christian community. Saleem had taken an immediate interest in me, and this resulted in a good friendship developing between us. Through the following years we had many good discussions, sitting and talking about ministry to Muslims. Whenever I came to visit him, he would always get up and close the door and sometimes even close the windows. We would talk and I would share stories of what God was doing and he would laugh. Many times, as I told my stories, I could see tears in his eyes, especially when we got to the part about Muslims accepting the Lord.

The next time I visited Saleem, I told him that I was in love with a girl.

“Congratulations,” he beamed, “who is she?”

“You are going to meet her,” I smiled, “but I need your help.”

“Of course,” he smiled back. He and I both knew that in our culture young men and women don’t meet and mix. Young people can only meet together in groups. If we were to get to know each other better, we would need a chaperon.

Saleem, however, did better than that. He arranged for us to start six months of pre-marriage counseling with him. I would go one week and Amal would go the next. The last two or three weeks, Saleem arranged to meet with both of us. He had carefully counseled us and considered our personalities, our histories and our wishes and desires in life. When he was done, he was sure we would fit together.

During the counseling time, he would talk to me about marriage in general. He spent time sharing with me how people with a Christian background behave. He told me what to expect from Christian girls. He instructed me how to behave as a Christian man around Christian women. We talked at length about the difficulties we might face in our marriage. Saleem would then meet with Amal and discuss much the same with her about my background and me.

Then the day came when he arranged to meet with both of us at the same time. We sat in his office, our eyes meeting occasionally. We were nervous, but Saleem soon put us at ease.

“I think you two are perfect for each other. Not only that; I think you two should get married.”

“Great!” we agreed with him, “we think we should too.”

He smiled at us. “So, what can I do for you to help you from here?”

“Saleem,” I said, “can you approach Amal’s family?”

In our culture, a young man always gets someone to represent him when he asks for a bride. Usually it is his father or an uncle or some respectable person; not many Christian families would send a bishop. Most might ask a minister or priest to go with them when they ask for a bride, but I took the bishop with me. At that time, the bishop was the highest Catholic church official in Jordan and he was a very well known man.

On the day when we approached Amal’s family, Saleem came dressed in his robes, representing the Catholic Church. I came in my best suit. We sat and talked and Amal’s family rejected the offer.

“Don’t you even think about it!” they almost shouted. “He has a Muslim background and in our eyes he stays a Muslim.”

Saleem tried to interject but couldn’t.

“We would never agree to this. He can be our friend and our brother but never our brother-in-law or son-in-law.”

The family was adamant, so we left. I felt dejected, but Saleem insisted that we should try again after the smoke settled a bit. After all, the family had been surprised by this turn of events. Perhaps they would feel differently as time passed.

Over the next two years Saleem went to Amal’s family seven times. Every time they refused. Those were difficult years. During that time, my father died and sometime later Amal’s mother also passed away. The Intelligence Department continued to put pressure on me, and Amal’s family continued to resist. In fact, they stopped Amal from working and insisted that she stay at home and not be allowed to leave the house.

I continued with my ministry. The converts were now meeting at my house three times a week. During those days, we used to have a prayer bulletin board. Many needs would be written on the board and as they were answered we would rejoice and remove the requests. However, my marriage request stayed at the top of the list.

Finally we came to a decision in October 1991. Saleem, the bishop, met with us again.

“I think you should get married,” he said bluntly. “If you don’t, then you should cancel everything and forget it.” He paused. “You need to do something; we can’t go on and on with this forever.”

We both agreed and started putting plans into motion.

The first thing Saleem did was to call Amal’s sisters. He bluntly told them that he wanted to marry me to their sister. The sisters agreed, just as Saleem thought they would. Some of them liked me and, when faced with the issue, did not object. Their brothers were the ones who were objecting.

“Well,” Saleem said to us later, “I can’t marry you here in Jordan, but perhaps I could bless you here. We could have a special ceremony for you. It won’t be a regular wedding.”

In Jordan, Christian weddings need to be done in a civil court and then churches add their blessing to the marriage. The wedding service is often called a crowning service as the husband and wife wear crowns, and the church pronounces the blessings. Well, since we couldn’t be married legally in Jordan, the bishop said that there was nothing against him blessing us, even without the certificate and the crowns. So we were blessed. Then we started to make plans to fly to Cyprus, which is a Christian based nation, so we could be married. A friend in Cyprus checked out the situation for us.

“Sure you can come to Cyprus and go to any church here and get married easily.” He insisted. “We have church weddings all the time here.”

“Great,” we thought, “this is going to be easy.”

But nothing was going to be easy. The Intelligence Department called me in the following day for questioning. After a lot of initial questions they finally got around to the reason for the interview.

“Where are you going to get married?”

“In Cyprus.”

“You are not allowed to leave the country.”

“But I simply want to get married.”

“We will not allow you to go.”

“What if I go anyway?”

“We will take you and Amal off of the plane by force if necessary.”

I was stunned. How was I ever going to get married? I then asked everyone to pray. Within a few days I had made up my mind. We would fly to Cyprus. We would call the Intelligence Department’s bluff. If they took us off the plane, then we were back to where we started. If they didn’t, then we could get married.

In October 1991 we boarded a plane for Cyprus. The Intelligence Department didn’t stop us. They had threatened, but they had not followed up on their threats. I wasn’t sure if they chose not to or if they were not legally able to do it. Whatever the reason, we were free to fly to Cyprus.

When we arrived in Cyprus, we discovered that we had been given completely wrong information. As in Jordan, the church could only offer us a blessing after a civil wedding. They could not perform the real wedding nor could they provide us with a certificate. We already had a blessing service, but we had no marriage certificate.

I wanted a church wedding, with a certificate, not a civil marriage. I considered all this to be like an Islamic wedding. Besides, having a real Christian wedding was very important to me. It was part of my identity as a Christian.

But not one church agreed to marry us.

It was a very hard time for us. I felt a lot of bitterness. We had to live in separate homes. Amal's family was very upset. I had taken their daughter and run off with her but I hadn't married her!

"Bring her back to Jordan and get married here," they insisted. "Having you two married is better than this!"

"No," I said, "we want to find a solution here."

Even Saleem called me and said, "Look if you cannot get married in Cyprus then get back to Jordan or leave one another. Don't keep on like this. It looks bad to everyone."

The pressure was on and so I did what I had always done when the pressure was on. I prayed. The following day we heard about another minister that we had not approached. He was the vicar of the Anglican Church in Nicosia and he was known to some of the believers in Cyprus. We went to visit him.

He listened to our story and was very sympathetic.

"Look," the vicar said, "I am very new on the island, but I don't see why I couldn't marry you here. First, however, let me call the Ministry of the Interior and see what they have to say."

We waited while he called. He talked to a woman on the telephone who said that she didn't see why we couldn't be married.

When he hung up the phone he was beaming. "We can do it!" he almost shouted. We were amazed!

"OK," he said with a smile, "when do we do it?"

We looked at each other. "How about tomorrow night?"

"Fine with me."

The rest of the morning was a blur. We immediately called a friend in Jordan, and he rushed to a rental shop and rented a wedding dress. We gave him the measurements and he grabbed the dress and jumped on the next plane to Cyprus. He made it by evening.

We phoned people on the island and invited them. By the next evening a small crowd gathered to witness the marriage. My friend from Jordan was

the best man and the Vicar was the officiating minister. It was a wonderful evening. We signed the documents, had a wonderful time with our guests, and then went to the hotel.

Early the next morning the phone rang. Someone on the line said that we needed to talk to the government Minister of the Interior of Cyprus.

“Oh no!” I thought, “what has happened now?”

I called the number that they gave me, and a few moments later I was talking with the Minister of the Interior. And he was angry.

“Who do you think you are?” he shouted. “You came here to our country and you broke the law!” He was screaming over the phone. He was really mad. He didn’t slander me but he shouted and went on and on.

“No comments,” I thought. I didn’t say a word.

Then after five minutes of shouting at me, he said, “You bring that certificate to my office right now! I want to tear it up because it is not legal.”

As soon as the Minister of the Interior hung up the telephone I called a courier service and told them that I had a letter for Jordan. Could they bring an envelope to the hotel?

While we were waiting for the courier, I had a photocopy of the certificate made for my own use. When the courier arrived, I put my marriage certificate, our wedding pictures, and the video of our wedding into the envelope and sent them to my apartment in Jordan.

Then I called the vicar and we arranged to visit the Ministry of the Interior. When we arrived at his office, the Minister of the Interior was still very upset and he almost deported the vicar from the island. Then he spent fifteen minutes shouting at me.

“You are an Arab. If you come here, you should respect yourself. You should respect this country. We have laws here....”

When he finally showed signs of slowing down, I interrupted him. “Are you finished? Can I say something?”

“OK, what is it?”

“I was in your country for two years working for this government and I respected your country fully. I never broke the law then.” I paused. “But isn’t it a shame for you to encourage Islam and not Christianity? The Muslims occupy half of your island. Look, I am fleeing the bondage of Islam and I came here for help.”

The Minister of the Interior looked at me. Slowly his face changed.

“Tell me again about this marriage. Why are you here?”

“I came here for a church wedding, not a simple civil wedding. I was born a Muslim but I became a Christian. They won’t let me marry in my

country and remain a Christian. I came here for help. Besides, we called your office first to make sure it was legal.”

Then the vicar spoke very politely. “I didn’t know if it was possible or not for me to marry them, so I called the Ministry office to check.”

The Minister of the Interior nodded and then checked to discover who had been on the telephone that day. In a few minutes he discovered it had been a new secretary and it was her first day at work.

“You know, Abdalla,” he said to me. “For 35 years no one has broken this law. You are the first person to do that. But I’m very happy you did. I will certify your certificate as legal.”

“Mr. Minister,” I replied softly, “it’s not me who did this; it is Christ. He has performed a miracle.”

As he signed and stamped my copy of the certificate, the government minister smiled. “Please promise me one thing. When you divorce, do not divorce through the church.”

“That’s easy,” I said to him, “We are not going to divorce.”

A few minutes later we shook hands and we left. In those last minutes, the government minister was quiet and shy. He had started out being angry and upset but, in the end, the Lord had changed his heart and we left on good terms.

When we arrived back in Jordan we tried to approach Amal’s family and build bridges of love and friendship. Her family was not happy, especially her brothers. Several times they threatened to kill me. My apartment in Amman was only 100 meters from Amal’s family. Their anger continued for many weeks. Often, in the evenings, we would sit at home alone, with the lights off, so that no one would know we were there. During that time we began to learn that the Lord was protecting us. He had saved us, and now he had also married us, and we would continue our lives together trusting him.

Marriage was a life changing experience for me. I started eating some real food. What a wonderful thing to come home and smell food cooking, not just stale popcorn.

But more than this, I started to have a partner. Amal became an integral part of my ministry. My crazy ideas sometimes became less crazy because I had another person to talk them over with. God brought Amal into my life to be a blessing to me. Through the early stages of my ministry Amal became like a glass of water to me. When I was thirsty, Amal was there to drink from.

With Amal, we started to reach families. Suddenly we started to have women’s meetings in our home. Wives began coming to Amal to talk about marriage problems or other issues. We started to think about a children’s

ministry. Who would care for the children? Before this, I had thought, “Yeah, it’s nice to have children around, but we need to have them in another room.”

But when Amal came along she said, “Don’t you think we should teach the children something?” She opened my eyes to the needs of the children, so we started a children’s ministry.

Time and time again, it amazed me how much patience Amal had with me. During that first year of marriage, the Intelligence Department interviewed me over fifty times. Every time, Amal was always there at home waiting with food and a smile and saying how good it was to have me back. Many times she was afraid, but she never discouraged me from the ministry. Even when things really got rough later, she stood with me.

As time went on, Amal’s family began to notice our lives. We spent our time serving the Lord, not doing things for ourselves. When Islamic feasts came, we didn’t celebrate the way Islam celebrates. When Christian holidays came, we didn’t celebrate the way Orthodox Christians celebrate. We didn’t drink or smoke. We didn’t hold parties or go to dances. Our home was always open for people, and people were always in our home. Before Amal came, I was a single man living alone. Now, with Amal, we were a couple and a family. Our home became a pleasant place where people were welcome and where people could come to talk and pray with us. Amal made the difference.

In the days ahead, people would start to reject me and troubles would come, but Amal was always there with me. When my family rejected me, Amal was there. Even when the Intelligence Department opposed me, Amal stood with me.

Discovery Lesson Six

THE PROPER RESPONSE TO GOD

Bible Texts: Various

Introduction

Review Lesson 5: Jesus is the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God. Answer any questions.

The lesson today begins with a story. Tell how Saul persecuted the early Christians. Explain how he thought he was obeying God. He thought he was fulfilling the will of God. One day as he was traveling to Damascus to persecute the believers there, something very strange happened to him.

READ: Acts 9:3-9. As Paul traveled, he saw a bright light from heaven:

- a) Who was the light? (Jesus.)
- b) What were Paul's two questions to Jesus? ('Who are you?' and 'What do you want me to do?')

These are two important questions that we must ask today. In the first five lessons we have tried to answer the question, 'Who is Jesus?' In this lesson we will answer the second, 'What does He want us to do?' This is a very dangerous question because the way you answer it will affect your entire life on earth and your eternal life.

In today's lesson we will answer this question with four points. These are not four steps to arriving at salvation, but one step with four sides. Example: How do you show love to your wife? You are kind, don't hit her, provide for the family, etc. Are these many things? No. They are all expressions of love.

1) Consider the Cost. READ: Luke 14:25-30

- a) What do you think Jesus means when He says that we must hate our families and our life? (Christ must be our priority. He must come before our families, our job, our house, our honor, etc.)
- b) What does He mean when He says that we must carry our cross? (The Cross is a symbol of suffering. If we follow Jesus we will suffer. There will be persecution.)
- c) What do you think Jesus is telling us in the story of the tower (vv. 28-30)? (If you decide to follow Christ it means that you will follow Him, obey Him, in every area of your life.)
- d) **READ:** John 14:15. What is the proof that we love God? (Obedience.)

- e) The first thing you must do is to consider the cost of following Christ. Do not promise to give Him your life if you are not committed to obeying Him, following Him, and carrying your cross. If you start on this way and then turn back you will bring judgment on yourself.

2) Repent.

- a) READ: Matthew 3:1-12. (You may want to read this verse by verse.)
- b) Who was John the Baptist? (A prophet. He prepared the Jews to receive the Messiah.)
- c) What was John's message? (Repent.)
- d) What was his message to the religious leaders? (Repent.)
- e) What were the religious leaders trusting in (v. 9)? (They were trusting in their religion. This is why it is so hard for religious people to come to the Messiah. They trust in their religious rituals and they don't think they need to repent.)
- f) Repentance is the preparation for experiencing the presence of God.
- g) When we repent we are emptying ourselves of our old life in order to receive a new life.
- h) READ: Luke 18:9-14
 - i) Describe the two men. (The Pharisee was a religious man and the tax collector a sinner.)
 - ii) Which man repented? (The tax collector.)
 - iii) Who did Jesus say was justified before God? (The tax collector.) Why? (Because he repented.)
 - iv) Repentance means that we confess we are sinners. We confess that we need the grace of God. We confess that we do not deserve God's love. Repentance takes humility.

5) Have Faith. READ: John 6:27-29, 40

- a) What kind of work should we do? (Work that leads to eternal life.)
- b) What is the work that God requires for eternal life? (Believing in the one He has sent.)
- c) Who is the one He has sent? (Jesus.)
- d) What does the word 'faith' mean?
 - i) It does not mean that you believe in God in a general sense.
 - ii) It does not mean that you only believe that Jesus was a prophet or teacher.
 - iii) It means that you believe Jesus is the Savior of the world.
 - iv) It means that you believe He is your personal Savior. You believe that without Him you could not have eternal life.
 - v) It means that you believe that Jesus was without sin, that He died on the Cross for your sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He is coming again.

- vi) Specifically there is a link between faith and trust. When we have faith, we are trusting God to save us. We are not trusting in our works.
- vii) When we have faith, God in Jesus satisfies us.
- e) There are two kinds of faith.
 - i) Religious faith: believing in the doctrines of a religion. It is possible to have religious faith and yet not have a personal relationship with God.
 - ii) Personal faith: opening your heart and life to God through Jesus. This is a personal relationship with God.
- 6) **Receive Christ** READ: John 1:12-13
 - a) What happens to those who receive Christ? (They become children of God.)
 - b) What does it mean to be a child of God? (To be an heir of eternal life.)
 - c) To accept Christ means that we open our hearts to Christ and allow Him to give us a new life and to change us.
 - d) To accept Christ means that we have personally accepted the way of Christ for our life.
 - e) When we accept Christ He lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

Invitation

- 1) Have you considered the cost of following Christ? Do you understand the commitment?
- 2) Do you confess that you are a sinner in need of God's grace and forgiveness?
- 3) Do you believe that Jesus is the Savior who died on the Cross for you? Do you believe that He is the only way to God? Do you understand that He is much more than a prophet?
- 4) Do you want to accept Christ and allow Him to be your personal Savior and Lord? Are you willing to follow Him?

READ: Romans 10:9-10.

- 1) According to these verses, what are the two things we must do to be saved? (Confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that He rose from the dead.)
- 2) What is the means of believing? (Our heart.)
- 3) What is the means of confessing? (Our mouth.)
- 4) This faith must not be religious faith, but personal faith.
- 5) Would you like to pray now with me to receive Christ?

Salvation Prayer

Oh, Lord Jesus, I confess to you that I am a sinner needing your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins, and now I repent of them. I call on you to enter my life. I am putting my trust in you as Savior, and I will follow you as Lord all of my life. Thank you, Master, Lord, because you have saved me. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Note:

If the person you are teaching is still confused or wants further explanations, you could use the Freedom from Shame lesson in the next lessons to further reveal the gospel in a slightly different way.

Memorize

Memorize this lesson

Practice Session

Find another student and practice this lesson with them.

Once you have memorized all six Discovery Lessons, meet with someone and take them through the lessons. Your goal is to do this without notes.

Models of Ministry to Muslims

Section Three

Freedom from Shame

**Lesson Twenty One
Freedom from Shame**

Technical notes

Story 4025 words = 24 minutes
Freedom From Shame Part 1 2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize
Practice Session

Story

One month after we returned from Cyprus, I approached the government to get my marriage certificate recognized and to obtain a Jordanian Family Book. This family book is an important document in Jordan and is used when dealing with government bodies and when putting children in school.

I prepared my documents and at the end of 1991 I started the application process. I had with me the official Cypriot marriage certificate that was sealed and stamped by the Cypriot church and the Cypriot government. I knew I might have some problems, as I had heard that in Jordan the government only accepts court marriage certificates or Islamic marriage certificates.

The clerks at the front desk were very nice. I presented them with my marriage certificate and my wife's and my own birth certificates. Then I politely told them that I wanted to apply for a Jordanian Family Book.

"That is fine," one of the clerks said looking at our birth certificates, "but what is this?"

"This is a marriage certificate from a church."

The clerk looked puzzled. "But you are a Muslim. How could you marry in a church?"

"I am not a Muslim."

"What do you mean you are not a Muslim? You were born a Muslim."

"I am a Christian. See here is my baptism certificate."

The clerk looked even more puzzled. "Excuse me sir; I think you should go and see my supervisor."

"OK." I went to the supervisor and I told him what I wanted.

He heard me out and then he said, "Close the door."

I closed the door.

"Now tell me again what this is all about."

I smiled and began again. "I was born a Muslim but I accepted the Lord as my Savior. I became a Christian in 1980 and I have been living as a Christian since then. Now it is time to apply for a family book, so I am providing you with enough information about my Christianity to complete the paperwork."

The man looked doubtful.

“Look, here is my baptismal certificate. Here are recommendations from several churches. Here is my marriage certificate, also from the church. My wife is a Christian. She was born a Christian. Here is her birth certificate and her baptismal certificate. Look, there are church stamps on all these papers. We were married by a church in Cyprus and the papers are certified by the Cypriot government.” I smiled at him.

He made me repeat it four times.

“This is impossible,” he said in the end. “You can’t be a Christian. I don’t think this is legal.”

I smiled, “I think it is legal. King Hussein has introduced democracy and freedom of religion. It is all in Article 13 that King Hussein signed. And,” I smiled again, “I have a copy of it. Here it is.”

“You know,” he said, “if the government knew that I was even allowing you to say all this in my office, they would jail me!”

“That’s fine with me,” I said still smiling. “All I want is to be registered.”

“We can’t,” the man protested. “You’re a Muslim and you will stay a Muslim forever.”

“OK, then I will have to go to court.”

“I would advise you not to do that.”

“If you are saying you cannot register me as a Christian, I think I will have to.” I was no longer smiling.

“Give me your telephone number and I will call you in a couple of days.”

I left his office, but I never got the telephone call. The Jordanian Intelligence Department must have gotten one instead, because since that day they started working harder on my case.

Soon after this, I decided to open a legal case against the government in order to get my marriage registered. The first thing I did was to get in touch with a number of human rights organizations. Through these organizations, I met Asma Khuder. She was a lawyer and she was the head of a union for women and a local human rights organization. People told me not to bother with her. She was crude and would talk to anyone about anything. I was immediately interested. I needed someone who wouldn’t be afraid of tackling a new and different case. I met with Asma and told her that we needed to be registered as Christians. She agreed to take the case.

People who didn’t like Asma told me I should consider a more respectable and established lawyer like Saleem Sweiss. He had years of experience. People felt that he knew the law better and was acquainted with the strange zigzags that are so commonplace with governments and laws. So I visited Saleem and asked him if he would also represent me. I asked him to

consider teaming up with Asma on this case, but I think Asma frightened him.

“Look,” he said, “I will work by myself and she can work by herself. After that we will see how we can manage.”

During the next year we tried many things. With either Asma or Saleem representing me, we tried various government ministries, the Office of the Prime Minister, and even the Royal Courts. Other lawyers got involved, but we seemed to get no where.

Then Asma decided to approach the king personally. She called me and was optimistic. We started to pray. After the visit, Asma told me that the king had stated that this was a very serious matter. He preached about human rights to her and said that he would get back to her, but he never called her again.

While it seemed that we were getting nowhere, we did make one step forward. The Jordanian Government said they recognized my case as a valid human rights case. They did not deny us the right to raise the point. However, the government never allowed us to go to court. Whenever we tried to move, either the Ministry of the Interior, the Justice Ministry or the Prime Minister’s Office blocked it from going to court.

We concluded that they were afraid that this case would set a precedent for future cases. The surrounding Islamic nations might look unfavorably on Jordan if they granted Muslims the right to be registered as Christians.

One day, Saleem Sweiss thought he had a good idea. Jordanian law is based on the Turkish laws of the Ottoman Empire. In Turkey, they have religious freedom. Perhaps if he flew to Turkey to dig out old files about the Ottoman Empire, he could influence our case. The old laws were in place before Jordan became a nation. So he flew off to Turkey and stayed there for three or four days to study their laws. However, it all came to nothing. They were wasting their time and my money. In the end, the lawyers took a lot of money from me. I ended up selling some of my property in the north to help finance their efforts.

After a year of trying to persuade the government, we finally made some progress. In the end, I didn’t get a family book, but my marriage certificate was recognized. They exchanged the church certificate from Cyprus with a civil certificate from Jordan. However, in the process, they put my religion down as Muslim just as it is stated in my birth certificate.

I didn’t have a family book, I was still classified as a Muslim, but my marriage was legal.

(Pause)

It started slowly at first. It was so slow that we didn't notice it immediately. Amal and I were busy with our work and our ministry. Every day there were people to minister to. Some wanted help. Some wanted to know about Christ. Others needed teaching and encouragement. Each day was filled with ministering to people. We didn't notice when some stopped coming to our meetings. People are busy and not everyone can come all the time to everything. Many of the believers were secretive about their faith, and they needed to participate in their family activities in order to keep relationships open. We understood that, so we never put pressure on people that they had to attend or be involved in all the things that were happening.

After a while, however, we realized that something was wrong. People were leaving. No one was angry and no one had any disagreements with us. They just stopped coming to meetings. Then slowly, they also stopped visiting us at home.

By the time we realized what was going on, the exodus was in full swing. We immediately started to visit those we hadn't seen in some time. They were glad to see us and have us in their homes but, one by one, they had reasons why they could not attend our meetings.

"Look, Abdalla, I'm from a Palestinian background. It isn't as easy for us as it is for you. Our work is in danger if we are too closely identified with Christians. I don't want to lose my job."

"Abdalla, my family isn't happy. It's probably best if I'm not seen with you for a while."

Everyone had an excuse. The Intelligence Department had approached everyone in some way. They had quietly approached all those in our fellowship on an individual basis and somehow frightened them. The Intelligence Department had done their homework, and they discovered some point of weakness in each person or family that could be used for their purposes. When pressure was applied in just the right spot, people backed off.

One by one people left. By the end of the year, over ninety percent of our congregation had vanished. Some left for England, Sweden, America, or Iraq. Some just stopped coming. I still occasionally see those that are left in Jordan. I know them; I still visit with them sometimes and once in a while they may drop in on me for a visit. However, they are afraid to sit and talk to us about the Lord. I think it was the Intelligence Department's first success at dispersing a Christian meeting. In the end, there were only a handful of believers left in our ministry. Amal and I started asking ourselves, "Where do we go from here?"

After listening to each these protests we decided to switch our meetings from my home to a church. This way people were not coming to Abdalla, they were coming to a church. If the Intelligence Department wanted to scare people away, they had to speak against the church, not just an individual. It made sense, so we threw ourselves back into ministry with a fresh vision. We switched the meeting to a downtown church and we started with ten to fifteen people.

As the numbers grew, so did the opposition from the Intelligence Department. It all came to a head one day, as God allowed me to see how far the opposition had gone and to what extent they had been successful.

The room was full that night. I stood up to lead the meeting when a lady stood up and said, “Abdalla, you need to know what is going on in the group.”

“What?” I thought. “This is very unusual.”

The lady made her way to the front of the meeting. “Abdalla, they are saying all kinds of slanderous things against the church. These people sitting here are saying that you are a hypocrite. They say that you are a liar, but I think that they are liars. They say good things to you now, but when your back is turned, they say bad things.”

I was stunned at what I was hearing. I didn’t know what was going on. “Abdalla,” she said, “listen to me. They think you make money from gathering believers. They think you have a link with Israel. You work for foreign governments and agencies. They even say you built a house out of money you took from this ministry.”

I was shocked at what I was hearing. I stood up. I was going to have to defend myself that night. I did not know it then, but the government of Jordan had managed to work through one of the local ministers. He is now no longer part of the ministry in Jordan but at that time he was an active minister. The Intelligence Department had found a way of passing wrong information to this minister, and this minister had passed it on to the church. It was part of the government’s effort to demolish our church, and it was doing a good job.

As I stood up, another member of the group stood beside me.

“Shame on all of you,” he said. “I visited Abdalla’s home in the north ten years ago. It was built by Abdalla when he worked for the government, not from money collected in this ministry.”

However, the damage had been done and it took a couple of weeks to settle it. I visited each member of our group, discussing the rumors with them. “Didn’t you know me from day one? Didn’t you know me over the last four years? Didn’t you enter my home, eat my food, and even sleep in my beds when you needed to? You know me inside out! Didn’t you visit my

office? Do you not know those who work with me? Didn't you visit my home in the north?"

After visiting everyone in the fellowship and seeing the doubts on their faces, I felt tired and discouraged.

"Lord, what can I do? The ministry is not doing well. Should I leave? Should I quit and do something else?"

However, while there were those working hard to discourage us, there were those praying and working hard to encourage us.

"Abdalla, you must stick around."

"Abdalla, this is the work of the enemy and we must resist it."

In the end, I decided to stay but I also decided that we needed to change our policy.

From that point on, as people came to Christ, I would work with them separately until I was convinced that they were on the right track with Christ. At that point, I would introduce them to the fellowship of believers.

Something was still missing, however, and I realized that we needed to think through what we were doing. We needed to develop some strategy. We needed to examine the things that we had learned and to establish some basic standards on how we would work together. With that, we started a new era.

We almost lost the church. It took over a year to discover in detail that each new convert had been completely investigated then threatened against even talking with me. With time and threats, the people were gone. In the end, only one person came but we had the meeting anyway. We always had the meeting. We would have had meetings even if I was alone.

But the Lord was purifying the ministry and purifying us at that time. We lost many believers but it wasn't through any personal or theological issues. Even today, if I meet them on the street, they will hug me. It was not personal. They were simply afraid.

"Abdalla," one of them told me, "we can't be like you. You are courageous and you don't care. We cannot be that way because we'll lose jobs and family." These people are so dear to me, and I really feel for them and the trouble they are going through.

In the end, we moved the meeting to a friend's house, at the south end of the city. At that time we had only one couple and a single person. Three believers had stood against the pressure. It was better than nothing. We were happy to see them and we picked up again from there.

One day we decided to use my membership with an evangelical denomination to open a door into that ministry. I approached the pastor with a plan. The Sunday evening meeting had been cancelled as there weren't enough people attending to keep it going. I offered to start it again for the

church. However, I had a lot of conditions. We Muslim converts would lead the meeting. We would promote it as a regular church meeting, and we would promote ourselves as a church body meeting in this registered church building. It was something I had dreamed about for a long time. The pastor needed time to talk it over with the church elders.

In the end, they agreed we could start the services, but they didn't agree that we could be our own entity. We started anyway, thinking that in time we would be accepted, either as a body of Muslim background converts within the church or as a separate group using the church building. In the end, neither worked out.

Our meetings didn't last more than a couple of years and then we ran into a wall. The local church accepted us as people who were attending the church. We were a part of the congregation, but we were always outsiders and never really sure of what was going on. We did not feel we were accepted as an integral part of the church, nor did we have our own identity as a fellowship of Christians from a Muslim background. I would lead the meetings and gear them towards the needs of those from a Muslim background. However, the Sunday evening service was open to everyone. Soon the local church agenda and our own agenda, as converts from Islam, started to clash. It wasn't working.

Finally, we Muslim background believers held our own business meeting and the majority said, "Let's get out of this place." We had nowhere to go and our numbers were growing. The group consisted of a large number of people I had prayed with personally, but we also had a growing number of people who had come to us through other ministries. In many cases, missionaries working in Jordan would direct their new converts to our fellowship and we would start discipling them. It took time to earn the trust of the church, but we really didn't fit into the main life of the denomination as we were solely interested in people from a Muslim background. The rest of the church was made up of believers from Orthodox and Catholic backgrounds.

I functioned as if I was one of the elders in the church. I would lead and sometimes preach. I even formed Bible Studies and discipled some of the regular congregation. I shared in the Evangelism Explosion program and other evangelism ideas in the church. At the same time, our ministry team shouldered the ministry to believers from a Muslim background.

In my heart, I really wanted to gain the trust of the church. I wanted to partner with a local church and share efforts and vision. I think the Lord gave us much grace at that time to do this. As a result, we came to a place where the evangelical churches in Amman began to trust us.

We could make a phone call for whatever we wanted. If we had some activity and wanted to use a building or to hold a baptism, to marry someone, or to do whatever, the Christians didn't ask any questions.

At least four churches certified the baptism certificates I had created. They never argued with the motivation behind the ministry. They never argued about character. They came to my home; I visited their homes. The local Christian leaders came to accept Amal and I as fellow ministers in the gospel.

That year was a year of growth and of testing. God used that year to help us gain the trust of the churches and to unite us against the pressures of the government. If we had not been committed and united with a church, the Intelligence Department could have crushed us again.

Nevertheless, the Intelligence Department kept up the pressure. By 1993, I was going for an interview with them almost every other day. I had started my own business but, through this pressure, they managed to see my business disintegrate as I wasn't able to work full time.

If I needed to travel to Syria or somewhere, they would tell me, "You can't leave; you must report to the Intelligence Department." I would have to leave the border and travel back to Amman and report in. Then they would ask the same questions they always asked.

Soon after this, I started getting threats on the telephone. Sometimes they would say that they would kill me or that they would put a bomb in my car. I didn't dare talk to Amal about it. One man called me several times at night and threatened Amal. "When you leave tomorrow, I will come and rape your wife."

I didn't want to tell Amal so in the morning I insisted that Amal come with me to work. Then while we were away, someone robbed our home. This happened more than once. They would take whatever they could find. A radio might be missing. Four times they broke in and stole our rent money. We didn't want to scare the fellowship, so we kept it to ourselves.

I had to check my car whenever I wanted to get into it. I had a mirror and I would search under my car before I started it. I kept the mirror in my trunk until someone said I should hide the mirror outside. "Maybe they will put a bomb in your trunk and when you turn the key to open it, it will blow up," they said, trying to be helpful.

Those were difficult days. It was hard to tell who was threatening me. Was it the Muslim fanatics? Was it the Intelligence Department? Then, during the summer of 1993, the Intelligence Department assigned someone to watch our home. They were there for more than three months. During that time, I often saw a man standing across the street watching us. I wondered about him and when I asked the Intelligence Department about him they said

he was put there to guard us. What danger were they guarding us from? We may never know.

Despite the troubles, God was still at work. We received many letters from the Christian Broadcasting Network. Through those letters we made many promising contacts. The TV station was flooded with letters and they in turn flooded us with letters.

In response to these new opportunities, I decided to formalize the lessons we were using so that we could train others to use them.

We began by analyzing what I was saying to people, isolating what methods and approaches were working best. We then compiled a series of six lessons which represented the materials I would share with someone who was interested in the Gospel. We simply called these lessons the Discovery Lessons. It wasn't long before others started using these Discovery Lessons and I soon started hearing reports from other countries where Christian workers had found these lessons useful. A television documentary series based on the Discovery Lessons was eventually developed and released in video form and aired over satellite television in the Middle East.

Those years were the hay-day of ministry. God gave us contacts from all over Jordan. We had contacts with students from universities. People in the north of Jordan saw television broadcasts and responded. God gave us contacts with people in the Jordan Valley and from as far away as the Aqaba port in the south. We would visit Bedouin Arabs in the desert and wealthy people in their huge houses. I would drive everywhere just to meet with people.

During this time, it was impossible to earn much money. Between the ministry trips and the interviews with the Intelligence Department, I had little time for business. My own small company was going through hard times, so I was free to take whole days to travel around Jordan visiting contacts and encouraging new believers. 1993 and 1994 were years when God poured out his mercy and grace on the country of Jordan.

LESSON

Freedom from Shame

Principles behind this lesson

For many centuries, the church in the west has used man's guilt as a starting place for explaining the gospel. Freedom from Shame is different. It uses man's shame as a starting place for explaining the gospel. The subjects that this lesson addresses are very important subjects to most Muslims.

This lesson is designed for leading someone to Christ. It should be used only after you have addressed the typical Muslim objections about Christianity and the Bible. It is very useful to use when explaining the gospel, after finishing a series of teaching lessons, such as the Discovery Lessons. Please be careful not to change the contents of these lessons. They contain many issues that are important to Muslims, and may not seem important to those from other cultural or religious backgrounds.

This lesson can be a power tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit working through an evangelist. Memorize it, translate it into the local language, and use it wisely, when you feel the Muslims you are dealing with are ready to accept the Lord Jesus as their Savior. Do not use it too early, before the Muslims you are dealing with have agreed that the Bible is not corrupted and that Jesus could be the Messiah. Answer those kinds of objections first before using this lesson.

The Freedom from Shame lesson has been divided into three parts so you can easily memorize it. Make sure that you can take someone through these lessons using the Bible as your only reference.

May God bless you richly as you endeavor to share the Gospel with Muslims.

Memorize the Lesson (Part 1)

Adam's Shame

The Scriptures teach that God made everything in six days. When God was finished:

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. (Genesis1:31)

Everything was good, indicating that God was pleased with all that He had made. God was pleased with Adam as His special creation—being made in His own image:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis1:27)

Being created in the image of God placed man above the other creatures—a great honor. This honor can also be seen in the fact that God walked with Adam and Eve as common friends—denoting an absence of shame:

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. (Genesis2:24-25)

Shame comes with offense, and sin is an offense to God. For having been just created, man had not offended God through sin; hence, the Bible concludes that they did not know shame. When God made mankind, He placed them in a beautiful garden to care for it:

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. (Genesis2:8)

God placed mankind in paradise, the type of place that men only dream of. God provided for all mankind's needs as they were able to eat from the fruits of the trees—that is, all except one:

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis.2:16-17)

As Creator of everything, God had the right to honor Himself by creating and reserving one tree for Himself—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When mankind ate of the forbidden fruit, they dishonored God bringing shame not only on themselves but on God’s image as well:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Genesis3:6-7)

Once mankind ate of the fruit, they felt the shame of dishonoring God. Adam was held accountable for the offense toward God because it was his responsibility to protect Eve from the potential danger of the serpent’s cunning. For Adam was present when the serpent deceived Eve:

She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. (Genesis3:6)

Adam was there with Eve and could have intervened between the serpent and Eve, but he did not. He did not take his role as head seriously, and for this he shamed all mankind—including his wife. For the Bible only speaks once of the part Eve played in the fall of man into sin:

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. (1Timothy.2:13-14)

Eve was deceived first, but the Scriptures hold Adam accountable for the fall of man. Consider Romans 5:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, (Romans 5:12)

...even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, (Romans 5:14)

For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, (Romans 5:15)

*Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin:
(Romans 5:16)*

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, (Romans 5:17)

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, (Romans 5:19)

Adam was held accountable for dishonoring and shaming God's image; his offense was so great that this shame was passed down to his descendants as well. Now, for the first time, Adam and Eve experienced defilement—the personal feeling of shame through the dishonoring of God. They tried to cope with the shame and the feeling of being defiled by covering their bodies with fig leaves:

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Genesis 3:7)

In their ignorance, they did not know that one cannot hide his defilement nor can one cover his shame before God. So when God came to walk with Adam and Eve in the garden, they hid from Him out of fear of revenge:

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" (Genesis 3:8-11)

When mankind ate the forbidden fruit, they not only dishonored God while assuming a position of shame, but they also violated God's trust, experiencing fear for the first time. It is out of fear that mankind deals with shame in two ways: first, to attempt to cover the offense and pretend it never existed—this did not work with God—He sees everything. The second way to escape shame is to shift the offense by blaming others. Blame is an attempt to transfer our shame onto others—deflecting it away from ourselves:

The man said, "The woman you put here with me— she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! (Genesis3:12-14)

Adam tried deflecting his shame of failing to take leadership by blaming Eve; Eve tried to deflect both Adam's and her shame on to the serpent who tempted Eve. God dealt with the serpent's shame by making him crawl on his belly in the uncleanness of the dust of the ground, but He dealt with mankind's shame by banishing them from His presence:

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis3:23-24)

Shame lowers the offender from a place of honor, invoking both separation and alienation from the one who has been offended. Mankind was created to live eternally with God and, hence, could eat of the tree of life at any given time. Once man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God could not allow man to live forever in His presence; therefore He prevented man from having access to the tree of life. Since man's spirit is eternal and cannot be destroyed, God decided to send man to the place He had created for Satan and his fallen angels.

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ... Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.'" (Matthew 25: 41& 46)

The real punishment for dishonoring God by their sin was not physical death; the real punishment is an eternity apart from God's presence—an eternal banishment to hell. Therefore, Adam and Eve dishonored God in that while being in the image of God, they violated the essence of His nature through sin, thereby shaming His image—this must be avenged according to the law given at creation.

Practice Session

Once you have memorized the first part of the trace and the Bible verses, practice teaching it with another student.

Lesson Twenty Two

Freedom From Shame

Technical notes

Story 4960 words = 30 minutes
Practice Session
Freedom from Shame Part 2 2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize
Practice Session

Story

The Muslim Brotherhood found me. It is usually easy to identify members of the Muslim Brotherhood. They like to wear loose fitting robes with bare feet and sandals, and all of the men have beards. The women are always veiled, and often they wear a distinctive head covering. In most cases, the men try to resemble the prophet Muhammad as much as possible.

The Muslim Brotherhood are the fundamentalists of Islam. One of their goals is to bring Islam back to its roots. Their hope is placed on establishing true Islamic laws and government around the world.

In Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood have entered politics, and they have successfully obtained seats in the parliament. Around the fringes of the Brotherhood are smaller groups of more sinister Muslims whose plans include any form of force or persuasion to establish what they feel is God's holy calling on Islamic nations. These small groups concern the Jordanian security departments. In the past, they have resorted to protests, riots, and even bombings. Despite these activities, many Muslims hold them in high regard and, consequently, the Brotherhood is capable of rousing the Muslim masses to support some of their causes.

One day six men from the Muslim Brotherhood came to my office and knocked on the door. "Mr. Abdalla Hawatmeh?"

"Yes?"

"Can we talk to you about a few questions that we have?"

"Sure; who are you?"

They introduced themselves as Munther, Mohammed, Suliman, Kassim, Basil and one other. Munther was the leader. He was a psychiatrist. Two of the men had long beards; the rest were clean shaven. These were the kind of men I feared. They were highly educated and they had goals and strategies. They didn't go to the mosque simply to pray; they went there to make up ideologies, think strategically, and plan.

We sat at the conference table. “What can I help you with?” I asked with a smile.

“We heard that you are a priest.”

“What exactly did you hear?”

“We heard that you go after Muslims to make them Christians.”

“Oh, what else did you hear?”

“We also heard that after they become Christians you teach Muslims how to be stronger Christians.”

I was amazed at what they knew about me. I was not a priest, but they didn’t understand the priesthood of all believers. I tried to witness to Muslims and build them up in the faith, but I wasn’t that good at it. Most importantly, however, they did not know of my background. They thought I had been born a Christian, so that helped ease the tension a bit.

They had over 25 questions, fashioned after Ahmed Dedaht’s teachings. Ahmed Dedaht was an Islamic leader who used the Bible to question Christianity and try to prove that Islam was true. These six men had questions about the deity of Christ, the genealogies of Christ and comparisons between the Old and New Testament. They picked on the Bible, but they were very polite and well mannered. This made me quite afraid. If one of them spoke, the others would stop. It was like they were in a team.

I found myself weak the first day. I offered them coffee and, while I was preparing it, I started to pray hard, “Lord could you please take over? This thing is really not going too well.” It took me fifteen minutes to make the coffee. I needed this time so I could pray. I then called another Christian brother, George, to come and help me. His office was just down the street from mine. When I called him I said, “George, please come to my office.”

“Abdalla, I’m busy right now.”

“Shut up George and get right over here.”

“Oh, you must have someone, eh?”

“Just come please.”

He came. He knew something was up. The Intelligence Department was monitoring my telephone calls so I didn’t want to say more and George understood.

Before our coffee break these men introduced their ideas to me, and they stated their questions and objections.

“Oh no,” I had thought, “I don’t know how to answer all these questions. I need time to research them and to ask others.”

While I made coffee, I prayed. “Why don’t I go ahead with my own agenda?” I thought. “Why should I be tied to their questions? They should also listen to me and what I have to say.”

By that time George had arrived and I asked him to serve the coffee, get himself one, and sit down with us.

“And George, you pray.”

George had worked with me before and he was a good backup man. He was very hospitable and could put people at ease. And he could pray. George often depended on me to talk, but I knew that in this kind of situation there should be two of us and one of us should be busy praying. In a moment, George was busy with hospitality, George’s way.

“How many sugars would you like to have? Would you like cream? Where do you work? Have you ever read the Bible? Oh, what kind of Bible?”

George showered the table with kindness. I had been missing this because of the questions they had asked. I was still reeling from the fact that we were having this kind of confrontation but God provided, through George, just what was needed.

We started the second round and I took the lead. They sat there and listened. I was amazed that they didn’t interrupt me.

“Now, can you allow me a few minutes to tell you who we are and what we are and what Christ is all about?”

“OK.”

“And no questions, OK?”

“No questions.”

During the first round, one of them men pinned me down with questions. I didn’t know at that time that he was a lawyer. All I knew was that he was a smart man and that he knew how to corner me, and he did it many times.

During the second round, we saw them carefully listening and taking notes. I spoke for almost an hour.

At the end of the second round they didn’t reply to my talk but simply said, “We think it is getting late and we need to get back to you some other time. But why don’t you come to us at that time?”

“OK, where?”

“We meet in the mosque every Tuesday at four.”

“Oh?” I was suddenly wary. Government agents had been watching me for a long time. They had warned me not to get involved with fanatical Muslims. I told them, “No, I don’t want to go to them.”

“Why, are you afraid?” I hated that lawyer’s questions, but I loved his style. “Are you afraid?” he asked again.

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Well, Islam believes in violence and I don’t want things to get violent.”

“Were we violent when we came here to your office?”

“No, but you are not in a mosque; you are in my office.”

“Our office is the mosque. You can come there and drink Pepsi inside the mosque. We have offices around the mosque. We can sit there.”

“Maybe later, but not this time. I want to see you again somewhere. If you don’t want to come to my office, we can go to the church nearby.”

“OK, next time the church.” They were very polite, quiet thinkers and willing to do whatever I said in order to meet again.

A few days later, we met in the neighboring evangelical church kitchen. We sat around a table, and the Egyptian caretaker served coffee for us so George could sit with me.

We spoke boldly and we spent time looking in the Bible. Since I didn’t have any other materials, I used the Discovery Lessons that we had been developing. When we had finished, they insisted that the next time we needed to meet in their mosque.

“Why?”

“We will not be alone,” Basil, the lawyer said. “You are going to meet our leader.”

“Oh, who is your leader?”

“Sheik Mohammed”

“OK, I’ll go.” I didn’t care if I was beaten up or killed, I wanted to go. My father had taught me that if someone visits me, then I need to visit them. It is part of the Arab code of hospitality. These men had come to me twice, once to the office and once to the church. Why shouldn’t I go to them? If they are coming with good hearts to us, why shouldn’t we go with good hearts to them?

But I wouldn’t take anyone with me.

If anything bad should happen, it would be best if it only happened to one person.

I invited George and George refused, “No, not the mosque.” He protested.

“Then I will go alone.”

“OK, but we will pray for you.”

I looked sideways at him. “You’d better,” I teased. “Don’t you dare not pray.”

The next Tuesday I had an interview with the Intelligence Department, and then on the Wednesday I went to the mosque. I drove and parked my car in

front of the mosque. That morning I kissed my wife a very long kiss. Then I told her where I was going. "What?" She had cried out. "Why there?"

"I was invited and these people seem to be genuine, so why shouldn't I go there? Jesus went to all kinds of places and did all kinds of things, so why shouldn't we?"

When I arrived at the mosque they were very humble, quiet, and welcoming. As I got out of my car, there were six or seven of them waiting on top of the stairs. Basil, Munther, and their leader came down the stairs to greet me. "Thank you for coming to us," they said warmly.

"You're welcome. It is my pleasure. You came to me twice; why wouldn't I return the favor?"

Basil looked around, "Where is George?"

"He is a rabbit." I thought. He is a praying rabbit, and I am a rabbit ready for the slaughter."

When we got inside, I was very surprised. They led me up to the front of the mosque in front of more than 45 Muslims, all of them Palestinians.

"Oh my goodness" I thought. "Most of them have Qur'ans." The six men and the sheik were sitting in front.

Then Sheik Mohammed stood up. "In the name of Allah we sit and think and talk about issues related to God. Please know that this is your home. This is your family."

"Thank you." I smiled.

"We have just a few questions," the sheik went on. His voice was so soft and low I could barely hear him. "We have no political intentions; we just want to talk about God." I nodded and they asked me the first question.

"Do you believe in the Qur'an as the Word of God?"

I was immediately alert. That question had been asked of us before and we had gotten into trouble. Since then we had thought a lot about how to answer this.

"Look, the Qur'an is not my book." I started. "It would be impolite for me to give any opinion about it. I want to say the truth, and nothing but the truth. I might say something about the Qur'an that is not true, so could you ask about the Bible please?"

"OK." The sheik replied. He seemed to accept my answer as logical.

The sheik then showered me with questions. The audience just sat there. These six men, Munther the psychiatrist, Basil the lawyer, and the others also just sat there. The sheik asked questions for the next hour, and I listened and sweated and tried to answer him.

"Why do you want us to say that the Bible is the Word of God? Why do you want us to confess this with our mouths?"

I thought for a moment. “Do you want me to think and believe that the Qur’an is the Word of God?”

“Of course.”

“I do the same for the Bible.”

“Do you really believe that Jesus is God?”

“Yes, I do believe that.”

“Why?”

“Can I ask you a question?”

“Why don’t you answer my question?”

“I will, but first let me ask one question. Before I answer, I need to know something.”

“Go ahead.”

“Describe God to me.” I asked.

“Well, God is holy; God is mighty; and God is living forever, from ever to ever; He is alive and never dies; He gives life and He takes life,” the sheik paused.

“Jesus is all of those things.” I said carefully. “Tell me, can any human being or man have these features?”

“Of course not,” the sheik retorted.

“What is the clearest feature of God?” I went on.

“He is complete.”

“Jesus is also complete.”

“How can you say this?”

“Don’t you believe that? Is it not in the Qur’an that Jesus had no sin in him?”

“Yes, but what you say about Jesus makes him just a prophet, not God,” the sheik protested.

“Let’s talk about Jesus’ works. What He did also announced His deity. He raised people from the dead. I don’t care. He could have paid someone to get some loaves and fishes and to hide them somewhere on the mountain and then pretend to give them out. He could have done many tricks. But who can be alive again after being dead?”

“He never died.”

“OK, I know you believe this. But he is still alive. Who can be alive forever? If you don’t want Him to die, fine; but where is He now?”

“He is in heaven.”

“I agree, because He is alive. And God doesn’t dwell on earth, He dwells in heaven.”

It took us a while to get through the questions. However, God had prepared me. During the previous two years God had provided many

opportunities for input into my life and, because so much had been given to me, I could give to others.

It was important not to offend. It was important to help them see the light of the truth. In the mosque, I was working hard to use the style that Jesus used. Take question for question. Don't answer; give a question to open the answer. Help people to find their own answers. If they find something very obvious against their beliefs, at least they will not come against you. They will find it by themselves and it will seem more logical to them."

God gave me great peace inside the mosque. I had never experienced a peace like it before. I loved these people.

Sheik Muhammad had another question.

"If you studied the Qur'an, do you believe that maybe God might lead you to be a Muslim?"

"Look, I would follow God, even if He would lead me to be a Buddhist. I don't care where God would lead me. I trust in God. If He wants to lead me to be a Muslim, fine. He would find ways to make it clear to me. But at this minute, I am really led to be a Christian. Now, I would like to ask you the same question. If God led you today to be a Christian, would you do it?"

"Yes, but we are fully believing that Islam is the only religion accepted by God."

"Again, what if God led you to something else?"

"I don't think so."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, I would go with whatever God calls for me to do."

"Thank you; maybe God is calling you to do just that."

He was very patient but persistent in his questions. I tried to stay calm and cool and to give answers that would prompt the listeners in the mosque to think.

After some time, however, I grew tired and eventually I gave a negative answer to a question.

"Why do Christians drink a lot, divorce, and commit adultery in these western Christian nations?"

"Oh, Sheik," I said, "do you believe sin is everywhere?"

"Yes, but Christians do most of the super sins." he said.

"During the last few years, I have discovered many horrible sins in the society here. Some are done by Muslims. I've discovered a brother sleeping with his sister. In 1994, I found an 18 year old girl sleeping outside my doorstep at two o'clock in the morning. She was cold and shivering and she had run away from her father who was trying to abuse her sexually. This was in Amman, not New York."

“He must have been a Christian.”

“I tell you, he was a Muslim. He had the same name as yours, Muhammad.”

Suddenly the sheik got excited. He raised his voice and started to shout. “He could not be a Muslim. You are not here to slander Muslims.”

“You also not are here to slander Christians. You wanted to know more about the Bible and then we started talking about the Qur’an. I’m telling you that sin is everywhere and sin is not classified by nations. These standards are made by God and not by you and me.”

“Mr. Hawatmeh, we hear that you go to the University of Jordan and that you turn Muslims to be Christians.”

“How did you know that?” I asked.

“I teach there, in the College for Islamic Law.”

“Oh no,” I thought to myself, “he is a teacher of Islamic Law.” Aloud I said. “People are free to study the Qur’an and the Bible. People are free to choose.”

“Yes, people are free to think whatever they want, but they cannot choose religion.”

I said, “God only decides that, not you.”

I was very much at peace during this time. No one knew I was at the mosque except George and Amal, and I asked them not to phone anyone, as our phones were taped.

I answered many questions but before I finished, I asked, “Can I say something without anyone interrupting with questions?”

“No,” the sheik refused, shaking his head. “You’re here to answer questions and to ask some questions if you wish.”

“Look, can I ask questions to the people here?”

“No, you talk to me,” he glared.

Then I started to see him as he was. He was a very strong dictator. He wasn’t really that humble and nice. His personality was starting to show and he reminded me of a serpent unwinding.

Whenever one of these people would call him *Siyadi* or Master, I thought, “My, imagine having a Master who leads you into darkness!”

“I don’t care,” I told him, “I will talk to you, but you others please hear me. I am here as a friend but that doesn’t mean I will say anything but the truth. Only the truth will save you. I can flatter you and say that the Qur’an is the best, Mohammed is the best, you are the right people, and after I leave I can say, ‘You bunch of jerks.’ I can say that, but I don’t want to say that. You are good people and I want to be truthful.”

I spoke about ten minutes, until he asked me to stop.

“Excuse me, excuse me, there is a prayer time coming up and we want you to leave.” He wasn’t very friendly and he ignored me at the end. Several others walked outside with me.

“You should forgive him,” they said.

“I have nothing but forgiveness for him. I would be like him if it wasn’t for Christ,” I said sadly as I left.

The next day I was called into the Intelligence Department. The authorities told me that the reason I was picked up was that I was meeting with fanatical Muslims and they were afraid for the security of the nation. I didn’t deny it. We had done five Discovery Lessons with two of them and three lessons with the full six men.

Then the Intelligence Department asked me to do three things. First, I was to stop my ministry among Muslims. Secondly, I must stop meeting with the Muslim Brotherhood and fanatical Islamic clerics. Lastly, I was to act as an agent for the government among the missionaries.

The last one surprised me. I didn’t know how to react. “How much will you pay me?” I asked, rather curious to know what informers got paid.

“We will give you enough,” the officer smiled. He named a figure, but it wasn’t much. I felt sorry for any informers working for the Intelligence Department. It seemed rather absurd. They were offering me so little to give up so much. I had discovered something far more precious than gold or silver, far more precious and important to me than even life itself. They thought I would give it up with a couple of threats and a handful of coins. They had a lot to learn. Little did I know how soon they wanted to start their lessons.

The Intelligence Department refused to accept a quick answer from me. They insisted that I return the following Thursday so I could give my ‘yes’ answer to them. They thought their three-point proposition was an irresistible offer.

The following Thursday, however, started rather poorly. Laura, our newborn was only five weeks old and I had been awake with her several times in the night. Then, when I awoke in the morning, I had a terrible stomachache. Amal fed me some herbal tea and she sent a mug along with me in my car. I had only drunk half of it when I returned to the Intelligence Department.

When I arrived, I was politely ushered into a room full of uniformed officers. They reviewed my case and then listed off their three points again looking at me as sternly as they could.

“No,” I insisted shaking my head. “The decision is no. I won’t do any of these. I am a free Jordanian citizen and I will do what I like as long as it is legal.”

There was tremendous tension in the room. Then the highest ranking officer spoke to me. "By the authority of the State Security Court, we arrest you and want to search your home."

A bad day was about to get worse. I told Amal earlier that morning that I would be home for lunch. But I hadn't told her about the eleven uniformed police officers I would have with me. I also hadn't told her about the plainclothes men that would come along! I didn't even tell her we would all be early for lunch. And I certainly didn't tell her that my guests would refuse her food.

Despite the tension, it was kind of fun to be sitting in the back of a nice BMW car. There were two officers on either side of me, plus the driver. We drove like crazy through the crowded streets of Amman.

"Look," I said to them, "I don't care if you don't like life, but I love my life. Please don't drive so fast. Be legal."

They didn't slow down. In fact, they simply ignored me and went on about their business like they did this every day.

As we sped through the streets of Amman, I suddenly realized that they were getting closer and closer to my office. Fear began to build inside of me. "Lord, don't let them go to the office," I prayed silently. In my office I had stacks of literature as well as records of names, dates, and appointments. If they found those things, a lot of other people could get into trouble.

They came closer and closer to the office. Just when I thought that all was lost, they sped right past and a block or two further pulled into a nearby Security Center. The driver went inside and I waited in the car with two officers guarding me. They seemed like nice men. So far they had been very polite to me, so I decided to ask them some questions.

"Why are you arresting me?"

"We don't know."

"What's going on?"

"We don't know."

"Why are we here at this police center?"

"A policeman has to come with us to make the arrest legal."

I realized that they were going to my home. As I thought about this, it dawned on me that this could be an embarrassing scene. Police would be swarming all over our neighborhood and I would be arrested in front of everyone. "Oh Lord," I prayed, "please help us in this situation."

A few minutes later the police officers started to gather. There were uniformed officers, plainclothes men, and the *muhtar*, who is a civilian contact for the government. His role is to act as the appointed person in a neighborhood to lead the government to people who are acting out of line. His role is also to act as a social witness.

The police then gathered a convoy of vehicles to transport us all to my home. In a few moments we were off to my house. When we arrived at our apartment building, I asked the officers, "Look, can you wait down on the stairs a moment so I can tell my wife what is going on? We have a new born baby and I don't want to alarm her."

To my surprise, they were very polite and agreed to stay. So I rang the bell. Amal was surprised to see me and even more surprised when I said, "Amal, there is a group of people, police, who are coming here to search the house and arrest me." She was very shocked and then afraid. I didn't know what to do so I turned and invited them in. "Welcome into your brother's house," I said as warmly as I could. "This house is your house. Welcome."

Most of them nodded and almost everyone said, "Thank you."

When they had all gathered in my living room, I addressed them all. "I would like you to do two things if possible. First, please don't smoke in my home and, secondly, please be nice to my child and my wife." I paused. "Amal, could you please make some tea for our guests." Amal smiled and everyone had tea while they searched our home.

The police were very polite during the search. They started going through almost everything, but as I watched them I realized that they weren't searching very well. They would grab something and put it down without opening it. They would grab a video and look at it without checking it. I think they were just intimidating me.

At some point, they asked me what was in the storage space above the bathroom. I had been dreading this question but had resolved to answer as clearly and honestly as I could. "There are over 80,000 letters from 80,000 Muslims in Jordan who have written to a western TV requesting the Bible." I announced. (It wasn't really the truth; there were around 85,000 letters in two big boxes.)

"Do you want me to get them down for you?"

"No," was all the officer answered, and he came down and started looking elsewhere.

"What's on this video tape?" one man demanded.

"It is a children's program."

"OK," he answered and set it down. It seemed amazing that they believed our answers. Whatever we said, they simply believed and they looked elsewhere. They were kind enough to come quietly into the room where my daughter was sleeping. The man said he would be quiet and he searched very gently.

My daughter woke up in the middle and I wanted to carry her, but the officers wouldn't allow me so Amal carried her until she went back to sleep in her bed. Up to that point, I was handling things well, but not being

allowed to carry my little daughter hurt me the most. I didn't argue with them or even ask them why; I just accepted.

It took them around an hour to search our house. During this time, they received many telephone calls and messages on their portable radios. Someone higher up was making sure that they were doing things in a peaceful way. One of their calls was even for me. A police officer answered his radio and then said, "This is for you."

I took the phone and a voice said that he was from the Intelligence Department.

"Please understand," he said, "we have nothing against you as a person, it's is going to be peaceful. It will be only a few hours and then you can go home, but we want you here."

I knew then I was going back to their office.

Amal asked me if I needed anything. Should I take my pyjamas, my toothbrush, or whatever?

"No," they insisted, "don't worry. He will be back here in the evening."

But I had my doubts. I knew I was being arrested.

We piled into the cars and drove off. Before we left, I asked them to leave me with my wife for a couple of minutes I said goodbye to Amal and we held each other, not knowing when we would see each other again.

Then I stepped outside and was pushed back into the BMW and whisked off down the street. I remember sitting in the BMW, looking back at Amal's face anxiously peering out our window and wondering if I would ever be back to my apartment again? I knew that Amal was thinking the very same thing.

The amazing thing about my arrest was that no one was in the whole apartment building, except Amal and I that morning. The neighbors were out. No one on the street saw us. We came and left and not one of our neighbors knew. God had answered my prayer.

Practice Part One

Find another student partner and practice giving the first part of the Freedom from Shame lesson to each other. Make sure you repeat the Bible verses correctly.

Freedom from Shame Part (2)

Our Shame

Adam and Eve's shame did not solely remain on them; their shame was passed on to their descendants. For, shame extends far beyond the individual who committed the offense to those associated with the offender. Since God was dishonored by their parents, their descendants assumed the shame along with its penalty:

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)

The honor of God must be avenged, and yet, God did not kill Adam and Eve immediately, but allowed them to live and bare children. Since everyone was born from Adam and Eve after they dishonored God, all mankind also came under their sentence of death:

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

All who were born from Adam were considered dishonoring to God because of Adam's sin and thereby must face death. This is clearly taught by the Scriptures in Romans 5:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, (Romans 5:12)

For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, (Romans 5:15)

Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, (Romans 5:16)

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, (Romans 5:17)

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, (Romans 5:18)

It was obvious from these Scriptures that Adam's sin was so great an offense to God that his entire lineage inherited his shame as well as its penalty. This meant that the only way that God's honor could be restored was in the destruction of all mankind. However, our situation is further compounded by our continuation to dishonor Him, refusing to live according the

Scriptures and following in Adam's shameful ways. The prophet Daniel wrote:

O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. (Daniel 9:8)

It is by our constant rebellion against God through our disobedience to His commands that we continue to bring shame upon ourselves. King David himself writes that his sin made him an object of shame:

Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. (Psalms 119:5-6; 119:80)

Many people do not realize that it is our sin, our blatant disobedience to God, which will cause us to live totally separate from God. As Adam's dishonoring of God caused him to be banished from the garden, so our sin will ban us from the presence of God. For God's nature is holy--purity in its absolute form:

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1Peter 1:15-16)

Since God is a holy God, those who continue to bring shame to His image by sin cannot enter heaven:

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

We think that God will allow people who dishonor Him into heaven; it is no more possible than a honorable father keeping in his house a daughter who publicly prostitutes herself with other men. God will put the sinner to death:

For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son— both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die. (Ezekiel.18:4)

Sin brings both shame and death, and yet, many religious people live solely for the honor of men. In the eyes of the public they live honorably; but in secret, they commit many shameful acts that they would not dare do in public for fear of the shame attached to those acts. In their hypocrisy, they think that if no one knows, there is no shame.

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied, "*These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.*" (Matthew.15:7-9)

Many think that shame must be avoided, but if incurred, it must be hidden so that if no one knows their shameful ways then they have dishonored no one. They forget that their shameful ways, their sin, always dishonors God because He knows and sees everything, even in the dark:

O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. (Psalm 139:1-4)

God is constantly aware of every sin we commit, and this constant shaming of His person through man, His image, will eventually bring about our death:

For the wages of sin is death, (Romans 6:23)

Others are only concerned if they shame their family or community. When they travel to distant places, they care very little about what they do. They do the very things that would shame their families back home but think little of it because no one will know. Hence the proverb: "*Where you are not known, do whatever you like.*" This may be true with their family or community, but it is not true concerning God. A person's shameful actions are never hidden from God—even in a distant land:

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. (Psalm 139:7-12)

Your family and your community may not be shamed by your sinning in a distant land, but God is dishonored and will not let the shame go unpunished:

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame. (1Corinthians 15:33-34)

If shame is exposed, it must be avenged. God knows our sin and is aware of our position of shame. Those who think God is not dishonored because they are in a distant land are not only shaming God's image but mocking Him as well:

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; (Galatians.6:7-8)

God will punish all those who dishonor Him by sending them to the place of eternal torment- a living death:

He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars— their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” (Re.21:7-8)

All our sin is dishonoring to God, and it is because of our shameful ways that His honor will be avenged in the last day. Therefore, God is constantly aware of our sin, leaving us under a constant position of shame and demanding that all who act shamefully will suffer eternal banishment to hell.

Practice Session

Lesson Twenty Three Freedom from Shame

Technical notes

Story	4732 words = 28 minutes
Practice Part Two	
Freedom from Shame Part 3	2392 words = 15 minutes
Memorize, Practice Session	

Story

The General Headquarters of the Jordanian Intelligence Department is located in the modern section of the capital city. The building was so new

that many Jordanians had never seen the inside, not that many of them wanted to.

I was very impressed with their new facilities but no one offered to take me on a tour. Instead, they took me directly to the jail section.

In one room, they took everything out of my pockets and spread it out on the table. They even took my wallet and spread out the contents. There were a couple of soldiers in the room and I noticed that all of them were younger than I was and less educated. One of the guards was a young man, and I could tell from his accent that he was from Irbid near my hometown. This young man seemed disturbed by my presence. He was talking to me in a rough way like he thought I was an enemy of the people. As he looked in my wallet, he saw a card with a few verses on it. He picked it out and read aloud John 3:16. He snorted and looked at me. "What do you mean, 'Son of God'? What does this mean? Are you crazy, having this thing in your wallet?"

One of the other soldiers seemed annoyed and told him to shut up. "This is not your business. You remember what the officers told us; be kind to him."

When I heard this, I knew I was not in any physical danger. At least, not yet. Perhaps God had a reason for putting this young guard on my case. "Why don't I explain to him what is being said on the card?" I thought.

I was pleased when this young soldier was assigned to escort me as they took me through the various sections of the security building in order to prepare me for prison. First, we went to the finger printing room. Then they took me to a room to register my belongings. There they took my wallet, my money, my wedding ring, and even my belt. I felt in my heart that I was going to be staying for a long time.

While we were walking between the rooms, I said to the young soldier from Irbid, "You asked me a good question when I was in your room. You asked me why I say that Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Son of God. What do you think?"

"No, he is not the Son of God. God is powerful and mighty and He is good enough for Himself. He cannot have another God around."

"So you think if He has a son He would also be God?"

"Shut up," he growled. "Just walk; don't talk to me!"

"If I am staying here for a long time," I ventured, "feel free to come and talk to me about this while I am in your custody."

"Don't ask me these things!" he snapped back.

Of course I wanted to know if I was going to be staying for a long time or not.

"OK," I smiled.

“Just walk,” The guard growled.

He led me down the corridors of the brand new Intelligence Department Headquarters. The building was full of rooms and halls. As we walked, I thought perhaps my guard was trying to disorient me, but in the process I got a nice tour of the new facilities.

Again, I broached the subject. “Are you a Muslim or a Christian?”

“Don’t talk to me about that. I am a soldier.”

“That’s fine, but you are a human aren’t you?”

“Just walk!”

So we headed off down the corridors and through doors until we finally stopped in front of a heavy steel door. The young man called another soldier to open the door, and then he said, “This is your room.”

I knew this was a jail cell. The first cell I was ever to see was to be my own.

It was maybe 3 1/2 meters square. I had thought that jail cells were tiny, but this room seemed large to me. It also had an attached bathroom. There was a bed, a table and a chair, and some writing paper and two pens. There were even electric lights.

The window was barred and looked out at the back wall of another building. No sun ever came into that room, but I could see light.

The guards then left the room and the door clanged ominously behind them as they shut it and slid the bolt into place.

Later I heard someone in the hall and the door opened. A guard was there with a blue, two-piece jail uniform. Nothing else happened. I just had to wait. No one said anything and no one asked any questions.

The first evening was the worst for me. I was used to a very busy lifestyle, meeting people each day and going to activities each night. Now I was in this room doing nothing.

That first night, I thought a lot about Amal and the kids. I was sad, mad and upset. Then in the middle of the night someone came and looked in the window of my door and said, “Get ready.”

“OK,” I thought, “I’m going to be released.”

But I was not.

They took me back through all of those corridors and, finally, I met again with my old interrogator. I had met with this man many times over the years. It was always the same man. In my first interrogation years ago he had been the nice man who had asked polite questions and he never slandered me through all those years. But he was an Intelligence Officer. He was always trying to trap me with his questions, always trying to get me to say things. In this, he was my enemy and I was his.

“Abdalla,” he said, “we don’t want to harm you.”

I just sat there. It was in the middle of the night after all.

“Why don’t you call your wife and tell her you are staying here. Tell her to bring pajamas and whatever you need.”

“Look,” I protested, “I was promised that I would be back home this evening.”

He looked at me evenly. “That was a lie. I never told anyone to say that. You are staying with us until you go to court, are sentenced, and put in a regular jail.”

“If I go to court,” I almost hollered, “you will be the one in jail. Right now you are breaking the law that King Hussein signed. He made it a law for this country. I am here as a citizen functioning within my rights and you are breaking the law.”

My interrogator was very upset. “Look, just call your wife and tell her to bring these things. In court, you can do your best and I will do mine.” He paused and looked at me. “I’m a lawyer,” he stated, looking at me out of the corner of his eye. “I’m a lawyer and a prosecutor. I will be the one against you in the court.”

“Fine,” I said, “Of course you know who my lawyers are?”

“No.” he said and his eyes flickered.

“Asma Khuder and Saleem Sweiss. They both represent me.”

Abu Sayed looked physically sick. “Oh my God,” he whispered. “How do you know these people?”

“Well,” I thought to myself, “I’ve given them a lot of money, so far for next to nothing. Too much money. Perhaps now they will be useful. I just hope that they are still willing to represent me.”

That night they sent me back to my room and I wasn’t called again for several days. Other than the guards who brought my food, I was alone. It was like solitary confinement, only Jesus was with me.

On the fifth night the interrogations started. Sometimes my interrogator and I would sit for hours. He was always nice but always in control. I eventually learned that I had been arrested for being a threat to national security. They were going to have a court case but were holding me while they gathered their evidence.

“You went to a mosque. Why did you go there?” My interrogator said accusingly.

“When?”

“The day before you were arrested you stayed an hour and 16 minutes in the mosque.”

“That’s right. Is it forbidden to go to a mosque?”

“No, it is not forbidden, but when you lecture about Christ in the mosque that is forbidden.”

“Maybe you’re right. Perhaps I shouldn’t do it again.”

“Tell us about your debate with the sheik in the mosque. Who did you meet? What were their names?”

“Ahh,” I thought, “he probably wants to know the names of the leaders of the fundamental Muslims.”

“I can’t give you names of others. They are not my church; they are other people,” I answered, trying to avoid discussing fundamentalist.

“OK, you don’t want to talk?” He picked up his telephone and called someone. Two men came into the room. “Do you know these men?”

“I think I saw them at the mosque” I answered.

“Where was this man sitting?”

“He was in the front row at the debate and that other man was kind of behind.”

The interrogator turned to the two men. “Why were you there?”

“I was there to guard him,” he answered curtly, pointing to me.

“What were you carrying inside your jacket?”

“I had a pistol and an automatic machine-gun.”

“What were your orders?”

“To attack anyone who attacks Abdalla and to arrest them.”

He asked the same questions of the other agent.

“Oh,” I thought, “they really are serious.”

Several nights later, my interrogator told me that I could call my wife. I was delighted and he left the room so I could call home in private.

“Amal,” I said, “they let me call you. How are you? How are the children?”

“Abdalla,” she said with emotion. “We’re all fine. Abdalla, they had a meeting at the church—”

“Hang up the phone,” someone hollered over an extension.

“—all the pastors in the country are united in supporting you.”

“You must hang up now!” My interrogator screamed, as he rushed into the room and grabbed the phone out of my hand.

“I’m sorry madam, but I must cut the line now!” He glared at me angrily and we sat in silence, staring at each other.

“How did you manage it?” he growled at last. “How can you be a member in one church and speak in other churches? How can you meet and have debates with Christians in other churches about how to convert Muslims? How can you disagree with people and still have everyone supporting you?”

“I really don’t know. I didn’t do it, but I praise God if they are all behind me.”

“This is becoming a really dangerous situation.”

After a while, he calmed down and we got back to business.

Once during the questioning he suddenly said, “We know you are a nice guy. We have tried everything we could to trap you: counterfeiting, stolen goods, prostitution, everything, and you didn’t fall for any of it.”

That got me thinking. They must have wanted to use legal reasons to stop me. If they did this, then it would not raise flags in the human rights courts. If I were caught with a prostitute, for instance, then the whole church would collapse. The police would have to deal with me, and the Intelligence Department would not have to be involved. The community and even the evangelical churches would be against me. The secret police wanted to trap me in some way. The thought had crossed my mind before. After every interview or meeting I would start thinking, “What can they do to get me in trouble?” I searched my car many times for fear that someone would plant drugs or stolen goods on me.

I would not sit with any woman anywhere behind a closed door, not even in my office. I knew a man once who told me to watch out. He used to be with the Department of Intelligence and he told me that they would use dirty tricks. He said sometimes they even got government ministers in trouble and thrown out of office.

Consequently, I was half prepared when they sent a woman to me, a really attractive woman. My hair almost stood on end because she was so good looking. She came into the office and asked to see the director.

“Did you have an appointment?” my secretary asked her.

“No, but I want to see Abdalla personally.” She spoke with authority.

“Who is this lady outside my door?” I thought. I looked out and said, “Oh, my goodness, help us, Lord!”

If Amal had seen her in my office, she would have had a heart attack or something. This woman then burst into my personal office without listening to the secretary.

“Good morning,” she bubbled.

“Good morning,” I said carefully.

“Do you have a light?”

I was caught off guard. “What?”

“My cigarette, do you have a light?”

“I don’t smoke.”

“Can you ask someone for a light?”

“I’m sorry, I don’t smoke, and I don’t like smoke in my office.”

Silence.

“Don’t you welcome investments into your company?”

“Oh, OK.” I raised my voice. “Suzan, can you see what she wants.”

“Isn’t this an investment office?”

“Yeah,” I thought, “but what do you think? We don’t just invest money.”

She sat down. “Look I’m a rich woman.”

“Oh Lord!” I said. Then I smiled and tried to be friendly. “I’m married now. Why didn’t you come several years ago before I got married?”

She laughed.

“Who sent you here?” I asked.

“The company next door. Do you know them?”

“Yes.”

“They are related to me. They told me to come to you if I needed a trustworthy man to take care of my investments.”

When she said this, I thought “You’re a big liar, they don’t know anything about my work! Either you are after something, or you’ve been sent by the Department of Intelligence.”

“Suzan,” I shouted to my secretary. “Please keep all the doors open, even to the hall.”

“Why? You could close this door.”

“No, please, leave that open.”

“To be honest with you, I want to partner with you in some way,” she said, trying to look serious.

“Look, we are not a company you can partner with. What do you have to invest? Money?”

“Yes, I have thousands of dollars. We came from Kuwait.”

“OK.” I said tentatively. Perhaps she was interested in business after all.

“I am alone in my house. If you are not comfortable here, you can come to my house and we can discuss business there in a more relaxed atmosphere.”

“Oh no!” I groaned to myself, but aloud I said: “No, ma’am. Not even in MY house. This is a business place and these are business hours. Could you discuss it with me here?”

“Look,” she said, “Why don’t I make it clear. Let’s be friends.”

“What do you mean friends?”

“Let’s have a relationship,” she said with a smile.

“Are you married ma’am?”

“Yes. Aren’t you married?”

“Yes.”

“OK,” she said brightly, “we can be friends.”

I scowled, suddenly tired. "Madame, did you finish your coffee?"

After she left, I asked the neighboring business, "Did you see that lady?"

"What lady?"

"Yesterday she was here looking all fancy and cute."

"Oh, yes, she came here a couple of times and she asked us if we knew the office of Abdalla Hawatmeh. We told her we didn't know who he was but perhaps it was the man who has an office on the third floor."

"Did you tell her anything else?"

"No, we don't know anything else about you. We asked her what she wanted and she said that she was a relative of yours, but she didn't know where your office was."

Now it was clear. It really had been a setup.

Another time a man I distantly knew came to see me.

"Abdalla, I have some ancient mosaics. I have a small piece here and I have a very large piece in my possession. Do you want to buy them and sell them to the foreigners?"

"What are you talking about?"

"I have ancient artifacts for sale. This mosaic is worth a lot of money."

"What?" I exclaimed. I immediately thought of one of my brothers who had found a statue of a king and a queen on our property. He had sold it immediately for a lot of money. It was an easy way to make fast money in the Middle East.

"I have a large mosaic," he went on. "We could cut it in pieces and ship it to the west. People there will pay a lot of money for it. I have a sample piece if you want"

"Look, do you want to call the police, or should I?"

"No, don't do that," he protested, and he took off. Sometime later I saw him again and he confessed that the Intelligence Department had approached him, threatened him, and told him to do this.

Another time they sent a man with a bunch of counterfeit money to my house. I was at home when this man, whom I had only met once before, came and said to me, "Can you help me?"

"What is it?"

"I have dollars. Can you sell them for me?"

"Dollars? You can exchange them anywhere. Any money exchanger or any bank will take them."

"No, we cannot go to the banks," he replied shaking his head.

"Why? Did you steal them?"

“No, it is not good money.”

“What do you mean ‘not good’?”

“It is counterfeit.”

“Are you crazy?” I got up. “Look, wait a minute; I will be back in just a minute.” I went into the other room and called the police.

“What is the name of this person?” they asked me. When I told them, they said, “OK, we will come and get him.”

He must have overheard me. “Please let me go!” he begged when I returned. Then he ran out my door and off into the night.

When the police came, they didn’t seem to care that much. I was giving them information, but they didn’t seem in any hurry.

“What’s your name?” they asked me. I told them my name and they wrote it down.

“Look,” I said. “I’m telling you about the man carrying a bag of counterfeited money. Don’t you want him? Go run after him!”

“It’s OK, Abdalla; there are many people like that.” The police officer said carelessly.

“What? Oh, now I get it. Maybe he’s sitting in your car now, waiting for you to finish here.”

Now it was clear to me. When my interrogator said “We tried everything we could to trap you: counterfeiting, stolen goods, prostitution, everything, and you didn’t fall for any of it.” I had proof that all of these occasions were traps set by the Intelligence Department.

“You sure did.” I replied. “But I knew it. Whenever you sent me something, I knew in my heart that it was you. Listen, I would act the same, even if I was in New York and these things were offered to me. I would do the same thing and call the police.”

It didn’t take me long to realize that the reason for my imprisonment was simply to isolate me and to put pressure on me. They also wanted to frighten me. The questions they asked were not strange to me. I had heard all these questions in previous interviews. I would sit for three or four hours in the middle of the night waiting for them. Then they would act all friendly and say: “OK, let’s talk. What do you want to drink?”

It was a friendly atmosphere. They would ask about people. They cared about the people that I knew, foreign or Jordanians. They asked about my connections with churches and whether I was linked with a mission or not. What was my position in the mission?

I told them.

They then asked if I was an official representative for the Christian TV station.

I said that I had connections with them.

“OK, how much money do they give you?”

“Nothing, no money. If I buy books from the Christian bookstore to give out to interested people, then I can add it to their bill. They send letters to me and I pay from my own pocket to follow them up.”

“OK, what is your position with them?”

“I’m just a follow-up person. I travel around and follow up with people who have responded to the TV broadcasts.”

“Do you do reporting for them?”

“No, I don’t do any reporting. I don’t even write reports. I hate reports. However, every now and then one of them will come here and we go out for dinner. We talk about TV, what they produce, and what is aired.

Once they brought a group of engineers and we did a survey on the signal reception in Jordan. That was the heart of my work for them. They also wanted to have a conference to meet with some people from their audience and I helped them book a place and get things ready. I did some translation for them, but I wasn’t involved in the interviews other than that.” At that time they paid me some money for helping them. I did not ask them, and I did not have a contract with them. But after three days of running around, spending over hundreds of dollars on food plus renting a couple of cars and the conference center, they gave me some money and told me that whatever was left over after expenses was for my ministry. I simply said thank you.

My interrogator went on to ask about the names of the churches in Jordan. What did I know about this pastor or that one?

“I don’t know,” I replied. “These people are Jordanians and they have been ministering in these churches for years now. Who am I to speak about them? I cannot speak good or bad about them. Ask me about the people I am linked to.”

So they went into detail about the various converts in our fellowship. What is the name of this one and that one? What are the names of their wives?

“I’m sorry, we don’t know their wives names. We call people by the name of their first child; mother of Mirwan or father of Mohammed. This is the Arabic way of doing it, and we don’t care to know all their family names.”

“What is the real name of Abu Mirwan?”

“We just call him Abu Mirwan.” I protested.

“OK, OK, you don’t need to tell us, we will tell you. His full name is Zayid Muhammad Ahmed Husseini. His wife’s name is Fatima Mahmoud.”

“Oh, OK. I guess you know this and I don’t know it. It is not important to me. I don’t know all the names.”

“How many conferences did you have in the last couple of years? Where did you have them and who spoke in them?”

I honestly forgot. “Ask me about something that happened in the last year and I might remember.”

“No, I want you to tell me. Who spoke in the last conference? Who attended? How many people came? How many nights were you there? Who served you? Who sang?”

I couldn’t remember all the details of that conference. I remembered a few things but I had honestly forgotten many details. This irritated them.

“If you don’t cooperate with us we will do something that will make you remember.”

“No, look I’m an honest man. If I tell you I don’t remember, then I really don’t remember. So take it as it is. If you beat me up all night...”

“Who said anything about beating you up?”

“You said...”

“No I didn’t. Maybe I will bring you a cup of coffee to help you remember.”

“Even if you brought me all the coffee in Jordan, I won’t remember.”

“Oh.”

Then he went back to asking about names. I was very careful about names. I didn’t want to give any names from my side. If they knew about certain people, fine, but I didn’t want the information coming from me.

When he tired of asking me about the names of converts he switched and started asking me about missionaries. “What do the mission names mean?”

“I don’t actually know what they mean”

“I can’t believe you don’t know. You work with the missionaries.”

“Believe me I don’t know. All I know is the letters in the names. I don’t know what they stand for. I don’t deal with these things. I don’t need to know.”

Then he switched directions.

One night, we simply looked at pictures taken from my home during the search.

“Who is this?”

“He is a colleague of mine.”

“Where does he work?” I told them.

Some of them were pictures from our ministry. There were photographs of meetings or of me baptizing someone.

“Who is this? Did you baptize this one?”

“No.”

“How about this one?”

“No.”

“How about this one?”

“Yes, I baptized that one.”

“OK,” he said and he put that picture aside and started asking about the next picture.

The Intelligence Department never kept the pictures. Perhaps they made copies, but in the end they returned them to me when I was released. However, during this exercise I noticed that they were very interested in matching names with faces.

They then asked me about particular meetings I had attended or spoken at.

“Tell us about the meeting in the east of Amman. Did you teach about baptism?”

“Yes.”

“Who attended?”

“I’m not sure who all attended.”

“What did you teach about that night?”

“I don’t remember.”

“Then listen to the tape, perhaps it will remind you.” He put on a tape recording. I was stunned. I felt weak. It was scary but sort of funny at the same time. They knew the answers to most of the questions they were asking me. It was all a big game.

“What is your strategy? What do you want to do?” The questions kept coming. “Do you want to change your papers to become a Christian?”

“Look,” I said, “I don’t discuss this, I have a lawyer and he discusses this with the court. I am not in a position to say anything about that.”

“Do you want Christian papers?”

“Yes.”

“Why? Won’t you lose your inheritance?”

“Maybe.”

“Perhaps your family will kill you.”

“That also may happen, but when that happens then God will allow it to happen.”

“We will never allow it to happen. But you will never get new papers. You have your Muslim papers and you should be proud of them.”

“I am proud of them. Really, I’m not ashamed of my Muslim inheritance. I want my legal status as a Christian, however, for my daughter.”

“Did you distribute Bibles in Jordan? How many Bibles did you distribute? Where did you buy them? Where did you get the money from?”

“Look” I said, “I’m not very interested in simply distributing Bibles.”

“Yeah we know, but you taught people how to do it.”

“Not that many.”

“What is your connection with the Catholic Bishop?”

“He is just my friend, and I go there sometimes to visit. He helped us to get married. He loves us and gives us advice about life as a married couple. It has nothing to do with theology.”

“What is your relationship with the human rights organizations?”

“Very little. I’m not a great supporter and I don’t go to conferences or anything. I simply want to claim any rights that are mine. That’s it. I love the law and try to keep it. I am a law abiding citizen.”

“You are not obeying the law; you are far away from the law. We want to bring you back under the law.”

“If I am away from the law, tell me, and bring me back. I would appreciate it.” That is how it went, over and over again every night.

Practice Presenting Part Two

Freedom from Shame Part (3)

Memorize

The Work of a Mediator

Since we are first under the sentence of death for Adam’s dishonoring of God, we must conclude that there is no hope for mankind,. For this, we will all die physically:

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,
(Hebrews 9:27)

Then, we are all under our own sentence of death through the shame that we bring upon God by bearing His image but violating His character through sin. We have all sinned:

There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
(Romans 3:22-23)

Shame and honor are the only two positions we can have in God's sight, and it is because of our shameful way of life that everyone must face eternal shame. I think it strange that we refuse to show mercy to those who shame us, but we expect God to overlook the dishonor we show Him.

God *"will give to each person according to what he has done.* (Romans 2:6; Ro.14:12)

Those who live without knowing that they shamed God will be avenged for the dishonor they caused Him. If you live knowing what God requires of you yet disregard it, you will also be judge according to the law:

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. (Romans 2:12)

Whether we know what God desires or not, we have all dishonored God by the way we live; therefore, we will suffer eternal shame. The prophet Daniel writes clearly on this:

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

We will all suffer shame and eternal contempt for our dishonoring of God. The only way that we will ever receive everlasting life is if we find a mediator who can reconcile us to God. The Gospel, or good news, is that God has provided a mediator: His name is Jesus.

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (1Titus 2:5)

If a person is to mediate, he must be an equal or greater personage than the offender and the offended. For this reason, Jesus could mediate between God and man; because being God, He was equal to God:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! (Philippians.2:5-8)

Jesus was not just a man but was God made in human likeness. Being God enabled Jesus to live a holy life, a life free from sin with its shame:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are— yet was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Only God is holy, hence, only He could mediate between Himself and man. For, no one who has dishonored God could mediate the reconciliation between God and man. God honored Jesus when He spoke from heaven:

For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (2 Peter 1:17)

God was pleased with Jesus indicating the absence of offense and shame. For Jesus not only lived a perfect life but was willing to reconcile man to God:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

The penalty of our sin was death; so in becoming our mediator, Jesus was willing to die on our behalf, paying the ultimate price to reconcile us to God:

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

Our sin was the offense that caused our shame and resulted in our being alienated from God; hence, when Christ died for our sin, our offense was removed, allowing us to regain honor in God's sight:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation... (Co.1:21-22)

Christ's work as mediator was so complete that now we are considered holy—regaining our position of honor with God:

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1Peter 3:18)

It is important to realize that it was our sin that caused our shame. By dieing, Jesus took our sins upon Himself:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Once Jesus took our sins upon Himself, He also assumed the consequences of our sin, bearing our shame as well:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, (Hebrews 12:2)

It was on the cross that God's dishonor was avenged, as Christ carried our sin and our shame. Christ experienced the full consequences of our shame, experiencing both separation and alienation from God. This is clearly seen on the cross, for throughout Jesus' ministry, He spoke of "my Father." But it was when He bore our shame on the cross that He was rejected by His Father, thereby formally addressing His Father by His title of "God":

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Jesus was forsaken by His Father so that we could be reconciled to God. Christ's death was sufficient to reconcile the whole world to God, yet we must personally believe that He mediated our peace and ask Him to apply His work on our behalf—thereby personally receiving it as individuals. Our shame is then transferred to Him:

As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:11-13; 1Pe.2:6)

All Jesus asks is that we humble ourselves, admitting our sin with its shame, and call on Him to reconcile us to God— so that God can elevate us from our position of shame to a position of great honor. For the work of Christ as mediator was so effective that not only have we been elevated from a position of shame but we have been elevated to the honor of being adopted as a son:

So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. (Galatians 4:3-5)

There was a great honor that was bestowed on me when a friend took me—a foreigner and unbeliever of his religion— and elevated me to the place of a member in his family. I was no longer considered shameful but was now welcomed in his house, being considered a part of his family. This is what the gospel is all about:

So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (Galatians 4:7; Romans .8:16-17)

Rather than be faced with the wrath of God for our shame caused by our sin, we can experience the fullness of an experience as a son of God based on the death of Christ. If we reject this provision of Jesus, to be reconciled to God, we will suffer as Daniel said—shame and eternal contempt:

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." (John.3:36)

We all have dishonored God by our sin. Christ has the place—being equal with God; He has the position —being holy and without shame; and He has the power to restore you to the highest honor. However, you must accept Him as He claimed to be and receive His work on your behalf:

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John.5:12)

The choice is yours: you can remain in your position of shame while you wait for God to avenge your dishonoring of Him; or you can seek Christ and His work as mediator, being elevated to the position of the greatest honor as

a child of God—even an heir with Christ. You have a choice, and the choice is yours!

Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John.11:25-26)

Memorize Part Three

Practice Session

Lesson Twenty Four

Freedom from Shame

Technical notes

Story 4524 words = 27 minutes
Practice the whole lesson

Story

At one point, the Red Cross Society sent a worker to see me in jail. There were two visits, one person each time. Since no one could get in from the outside to see me, Amal called the Red Cross to see if they could do something.

So, one night, during my interrogation, they told me that I would have a visitor the next day from the Red Cross. My interrogator looked at me sternly. “Don’t discuss anything with them except your food and your living conditions.”

The Red Cross worker was a woman from Europe. When she arrived, I said nothing about my food or my living conditions. We only talked about my case.

“Your wife called us yesterday and told us about you, so I am here to hear from you,” she said by way of introduction.

The soldiers closed the door behind her and she was alone with me in my cell for about an hour.

“I believe that I am here because of a human rights violation. I am here because I believe in Jesus. I was born a Muslim, but now I am a Christian.

I looked at her carefully and wondered if the Intelligence Department had hired this woman. How could I know? They could hire foreigners to go around milking information as easily as they could hire Jordanians.

“Did you ever commit a crime?”

“No. If I committed a crime, I would not be in this jail; I would be in a normal police jail.”

“What can we do for you?”

“Get me out of here, that is all I ask.”

“Do you want to send a message to your wife?”

“Yes,” I brightened. “Tell her I love her. If you can visit my wife at home and tell her that, then I would appreciate it.”

She did that and she returned a few days later.

“I have asked the Red Cross Headquarters to act on your behalf, but that takes time. We are very limited here in this country.”

“I know that,” I smiled. “We are all limited, aren’t we?” She laughed.

“Did they beat you up?”

“No.”

“Is your food OK?”

“Yes.” I smiled. “Don’t tell this to Amal but it is better than at home.”

“I’m sure that is not true because I ate in your home and it was delicious.”

That evening, my interrogators were visibly upset with me.

“How do you know these Red Cross people?”

“I don’t.”

“Then why did they come and visit you?”

“They were concerned.”

“How did they know you were here?”

“I don’t know.”

“Why did you talk about the reasons for your being in prison?”

“My discussion with the Red Cross is my business, not yours.”

They changed tactics and started on a new line of questioning. I was sure they had recorded what I said. They treated me like a mouse in a laboratory, trying all kinds of techniques and tricks to see what would work. Thank God I am still alive.

After a few days, these periods of interrogation really boosted my spirit. I sensed the presence of the Lord and I started to think, “OK, I accept that I am here. Now, how should I act as a Christian under these circumstances? How should I function? How should I talk to people? I represent Christ in this place and I need to speak like him.” So I started to speak as a believer. I started to reach out to those who worked in the prison.

“How do you see politics?” my interrogator asked one day. “What do you think of the situation the country is facing now?”

“Well,” I answered, “I’m just a citizen in Jordan. I think what you think. I disagree with the wrongs and I agree with the rights.”

His face twitched a bit. God had given me the right answer to sidestep another trap.

I began to think that I was going to get out soon. I knew it in my heart. It was just a matter of days. Why? Because there were no more questions when they interrogated me. We talked a couple of nights the first week and then we met again another four or five nights the next week. One day he asked me to call my wife again and talk to her.

By the eighth or ninth day, my interrogator told me that Amal was coming for a visit on Friday. “Would you like to see her?”

“Of course.”

“Your brothers also want to see you.”

“No,” I replied, “I don’t want to see my brothers while I am here.”

“Are you sure you don’t want to receive your brothers?” he asked again. Again I said no. So they didn’t tell my brothers. They were that nice to me. I discovered later that one of my brothers came to the gate of the jail, but they did not let him in to see me. They told him that I was fine and that he should go and see my lawyer. They assured him that I was in good shape and would be getting out soon.

Then Amal came and she brought a Bible with her.

“I want to send this Bible to him,” she told the guards.

“Wait,” they told her, and they sent for a soldier to take the Bible to me. The soldier who arrived was that very same soldier who had befriended me earlier. “Don’t worry,” he told her. “Abdalla has had a Bible from the second day.” Amal didn’t know if she could trust him.

“This is a special Bible,” she insisted. “Can you send it to him?”

He agreed and he brought it to me. So from that day on I had two Bibles.

Later, Amal was allowed into a room to visit with me. A guard was present all the time.

Before I entered the room, they said to me, “Don’t tell your wife about anything that has happened or what has been said here. You can only talk about the food, your health, or if you were tortured.”

“No,” I said, “I will answer any of her questions. I have nothing to hide. If you want to stop us, then you will have to stop the visit.” They weren’t too happy with that.

“Next,” they said, “you have to shave.”

“No.” I said again, “I will not shave. You haven’t let me shave up to now; I won’t shave for this visit.”

“You have to shave because we want you to look good for your wife.”

“Look,” I said, “this is like a vacation. Maybe I’ll shave sometime afterward.”

Next they arranged so I could wash my hair. When I was done, a man came with a hairbrush to make sure that I looked my best.

Then two men in civilian dress took me away. We walked down hallways and took elevators and walked down more hallways. It wasn’t really like a jail; it was more like a castle. As I walked down the halls, I could see rooms and offices with desks, computers, fancy elevators, and door plaques. One huge room was full of men sitting at computers.

Finally we came into a big room with a thick glass wall down the middle. It was a very modern facility and there were microphones and speakers so we could communicate through the glass. An officer would be with us during our visit. I waited for a moment and then Amal came in.

“How are you?” I asked.

“I’m fine.” she smiled. She looked tired and tense.

“How is our daughter?”

“You know, after you were arrested I didn’t have any milk anymore so I had to start her on a bottle.”

Then Amal started asking me questions. “So what is happening?”

“I’m sorry,” the officer said, “this question is forbidden.”

I waited until the officer was finished speaking and then I told her, “Nothing is happening; they are just interrogating me.”

“We heard you are going to court.”

“Ma’am,” the officer insisted, “you cannot speak like this! It is forbidden.”

“I don’t care.” I told him. I knew deep in my heart I was getting out. “Expect me home any time.”

“Oh I hope so!” she sighed. “Abdalla, do you want us to report this to the outside media?”

“Oh my goodness, don’t do this. But be prepared; if I am not home by the thirteenth day, do whatever you want to do.”

I said this because under Jordanian law the police can arrest you and hold you for thirteen days without charging you. If they cannot charge you within thirteen days, then they have to let you go.

As soon as I said this to Amal, the officer shouted, “Stop, the visit is cancelled! Please go, ma’am.”

“OK, OK.” I tried to calm him, “can I talk to her about some personal stuff first?”

“Yes, but this is your last warning.”

“Amal, do you have enough money at home?”

“Yes, your brother brought money to the house to help with finances and to help pay for the lawyers.”

“Does our baby know where I am?”

“No, of course not. But she looks around sometimes for her daddy.”

In a few moments the visit was over. I missed my wife and family after that but I knew that they were safe in God’s hands. Later I would learn that a Christian women came to help Amal. She stayed in our house day and night and helped Amal make appointments with the lawyers and the Minister of Interior, as well as helping with kids and cooking. Other sisters in the Lord also came by to encourage and help.

My brothers were also concerned about me. It soon became obvious to them that I was more than just a curious Muslim looking into Christianity. Several times when they visited Amal, various evangelical pastors and leaders were also in my home to try and encourage all concerned.

My brothers were surprised at what they heard. "Here Abdalla is in jail and he is a minister."

My brother was shocked, but people kept on talking about me. "Yes," they said, "we know his life. We all know his testimony, how he asked the Lord into his heart many years ago."

My brothers sat silently. They didn't respond at that time, but our close family relationship was affected. From that time on they started to become more concerned about my situation.

Two days later, I was called back to the interrogation room. I was asked to call Amal again and tell her that I was leaving in two days. It was a very happy telephone call.

The two days passed and still I wasn't released. Finally on the thirteenth day after my arrest I was called into the office of my interrogator. It was 1:30 in the afternoon. I had been arrested at two in the afternoon, thirteen days before. If they were going to get me out in thirteen days, they would need to hurry.

First they brought me my clothes and asked me to change. I put on my own clothes, but when I came to put on my shoes there were no shoelaces.

"Look," I said to them, "I can't walk in these without shoelaces." The soldiers started to search for the laces but they couldn't find them. Then someone rushed out to buy me some new ones.

By this time they were getting desperate. Time was running out. They needed to get me out of there before 2 p.m. If they kept me longer I would have a case against them for holding me longer than 13 days without my being charged. They would need an official statement from the court saying that they found some new evidence, so I could be held longer.

The officer said, "Let's go out to your car."

But we had a problem. Stacked on the floor were six or seven large plastic garbage bags full of the things they had taken from my home. There were tapes, books, and literature. Now it was only ten minutes before two and he was getting worried.

"Quick," he shouted to some soldiers, "Come on, quick. Bring him some shoelaces."

I took my time putting them on, making sure my shoes were tied up good. It wouldn't do to have them coming off while I was walking to my car, would it?"

"Come on" he urged, "Just sign this and then lets go." He threw a paper in front of me.

"What's this?" I asked. I sat down to read the paper. It was nicely typed and neatly prepared, all ready for me to sign. It contained some very interesting reading.

I commit myself to helping the kingdom's security by informing the Intelligence Department about any sabotage or actions that people are planning to do against the government.

I read further.

I will report about any conflict or potential conflict situations that might arise because of religion.

"Oh-oh."

I will report to the authorities about my activities and the activities of others around me.

"Never. I'm not going to sign that."

"Sign it, because it is getting late," he protested.

"No, I won't sign it."

"You will go back to your room," he threatened.

"OK, let's go back," I sighed.

He grabbed the paper and tore it up. "Come on, let's get out of here."

We grabbed the bags and started out of the building. He looked at his watch and saw that there were now only seconds left. We started running towards the gate.

Then he couldn't find my car. It had been parked outside when they arrested me but now it was nowhere to be found. He called on his radio to find out where my car was. Some soldiers standing nearby said that they had moved it behind the buildings so that it wasn't sitting out front.

"Stay here!" he commanded me, "and I will get my own car." When he arrived we loaded up my things and drove around the building. To my relief, Amal and my brother were waiting beside my car.

After we transferred my belongings, he shook my hand, "It has been nice getting to know you," the officer said frankly. Then he turned and addressed my wife. "Amal, I'm sorry for the trouble we caused you. Your husband is a clean man. There is nothing against him."

We were weeping and hugging one another as we stood outside the car. It was a few moments before we felt we were ready to go. I must have been a sight. I had an ugly beard on my face so we discussed getting me cleaned up before I met people. Amal then commented that our house was full of people waiting to greet me.

On the way home we decided to get my picture taken before I got my beard shaved off. We stopped at a small photography studio and had some pictures taken. The pictures were priceless. Amal was standing beside her bearded husband, so glad to have him back. I was glad to be out of jail and

back into the real world. After taking the pictures, we jumped in the car and headed for a barbershop to get my beard shaved off.

On the way, I told Amal how much I had missed her and how much my family meant to me when I was on the inside..

Amal had lots to say as well. My time in jail had been a good testimony to many people. I shared about some of my experiences in jail and Amal shared about the impact my internment had had on the believers, both in the churches and among the converts from Islam.

I couldn't help noticing that Amal had developed in her personality as well. She had become much stronger. While I was in jail, she had stood by me and fought for me. I was inside like a rabbit and she was outside like a fox, running around on my behalf. I appreciated her so much that day and I could see she had tears in her eyes as we drove along.

Once my beard was shaved off, I felt ready to meet my friends and family. First of all, my brothers wanted to talk to me. So we stood outside my house and talked for a few moments.

My brothers were very glad to see me. From them I learned that one of my brothers had gone to the gate of the Intelligence Department with a gun in his belt. He had threatened that if anything happened to me, and he swore on the Qur'an, Muhammad and God, then he would kill the officer who hurt me. He took out his gun and added, "With this gun," and put it back.

The soldiers at the gate were amazed at his guts, so they told him, "Don't worry, your brother is fine. Just go home."

While I was in prison, my brothers became very upset. Abdul Karim flew back from Saudi Arabia and they all rushed to see Amal. "What happened?" they all wanted to know.

"He is in jail because of his faith." was all she told them.

Of course they were mad at Amal. They were kind to her but still mad. Somehow they believed that she was responsible for boosting my Christianity. When they confronted her with this, she told them, "Actually, he boosted mine."

They were even madder then.

"Look," she protested, "I've known Abdalla for only a few years. You should hear about him from others. Don't just hear rumors and think bad things about him."

Amal then took my brother to a meeting with some of the evangelical pastors. He sat and listened quietly. To my brother, it was a disaster. To these Christian leaders, it was a powerful testimony. They all shared how I was trying to serve the Lord in Jordan. Abdul Karim was horrified.

"Abdalla has been a member of this church for many years." The church leaders said. "He is an elder and practically an ordained minister.

Abdalla baptizes people in our church and he teaches people.” Once started they didn’t know when to quit. “Abdalla also preaches in many different churches.”

“Oh really?” was all my brother could manage.

Later, when I was released my brothers still greeted me, but there was something between us from that day onward.

Once I arrived home I greeted everyone who was gathered there. Our house was crowded with over sixty people. There was a mixture of relatives, believers, and church leaders. Everyone was beaming and smiling. It was a great welcome home.

I was happy to see everyone, but I noticed that our neighbors weren’t there. I then discovered that the neighbors knew nothing. Amal had not told them a thing. They were Muslims and we didn’t want them to get upset. Nevertheless, the house was full of people. Everyone was gracious and we hugged and kissed and talked. Around six o’clock people started to leave, saying that I should have time with my family.

Once they were gone, Amal sat beside me. “When I was young,” she said, “we heard about lots of Christians becoming Muslims. But we never heard of a Muslim who became a Christian. Then, when I first heard about you, I didn’t believe that you could be a Christian. However, when I got to know you I started to think. Later, when we started our relationship, I knew we loved each other. It was then that I started to hope that more Muslims would become Christians. I think I now know why God worked so hard to get us married.

Around eight o’clock, the doorbell rang. I went to the door and opened it. Standing outside my door were the six Muslim fundamentalist scholars I had debated with.

“Welcome,” I beamed. “Please, come in.” They stayed for only a couple of minutes.

“Mr. Hawatmeh, we heard you were imprisoned. We now know your story. We went to the parliament and asked them for your release.”

I was really surprised! Imagine these Islamic scholars who carry Ahmed Dedaht’s books around asking for my release! During our time of debating, I had been really hard on them.

“We came here to show solidarity for you and to show how we care for you. You are a good man; we love you as a brother.”

I really appreciated that they came. It was a miracle that these men who knew that I was working to see Muslims become Christians actually appreciated me as a person and supported me at that time.

While I was in jail, I made a promise to God. It was something like a covenant or an oath. I promised God that I would stay at it. I would not quit.

I resolved in my heart that, with God's help, I would continue the ministry He had given me. I made that decision on my tenth night in jail. That night I knelt by my bed and poured out my heart to God.

"Lord," I had prayed, "I believe you want me here. If I want to close my mouth because the flesh is weak, then, Lord, you open it. You are mine Lord, and I am yours..."

When I explained this to Amal, she grew afraid. I could see it on her face as I talked with her. She begged me to cool down and be wise. As lovingly as I could I explained to her what really good times I had had with the Lord while I was in jail and she was encouraged.

"If you think that the Lord spoke to you about these things, then I am with you all the way," was her quiet response. And she kept her promise.

A new phase had now started. Before I went to jail, we had a church that met regularly but now the church was gone. People would see me in the street and wouldn't speak to me. People I honestly loved as much as my children. People I lived for and cried for. People I had eaten with. People who had slept in my home, and I had slept in theirs. But now they were afraid.

The scare tactics of the Intelligence Department kept them from talking to me. Even to this day, some of them see me on the street and they stop to hug me. I may visit them in their homes, but they don't visit me. This is fine. I don't care. I visit and keep reaching out to them.

Despite this, I left the prison with a new vision of what we should be doing. The plan was very simple. We would concentrate on developing a handful of key leaders. By training a few leaders, we could then multiply ourselves more easily.

When I was released I started looking among the converts to see who were the godly ones. I knew one or two; the Intelligence Department told me about them.

A handful of believers from Muslim background had kept meeting, even while I was in jail. Four or five would meet in a park. Under the trees they would sit and worship and fellowship.

One night, while I was in jail, an Intelligence officer suddenly said, "Abdalla, even today they were meeting. What is this? They are meeting in a large park."

In my heart I said, "Praise the Lord," but out loud I said, "How did you know?"

"We saw them. Look, we have pictures," he handed them to me.

"Oh? Is it forbidden to sit under trees?"

"Shut up. It has nothing to do with that...."

That night I said, “Thank you Lord. Thank you because they are still together or at least these few.”

After I got out of jail, I followed the new vision. We stopped concentrating on gathering large numbers and started concentrating on a small group of godly men and women who could be trained for leadership.

I began with four or five believers. Out of the four or five, we had two who were older and who had been Christians for years and knew the Word of God. They had faith in their lives. They worked and had good testimonies in their work place and in their lives at home.

Then we started training. We taught lots of lessons and shared various kinds of ministry together. We ate food in each other’s homes. Amal and I stayed with them in their homes. They stayed overnight in our home, in order to learn how we functioned as Christian leaders at night and in the morning. Did we pray or not? What time did we wake up? What time did we sleep? How did we deal with our children? Did we help our wives in the kitchen or not? (I don’t. I don’t like the kitchen, but I help with the cleaning. I’ll clean any room, even the toilets, but I hate to go into the kitchen except to make coffee).

“Look,” I told them, “in our culture we must respect our wives. If your wife feels it is her place to cook in the kitchen then let her run the kitchen and you stay out of it. If your wife feels it is her place to clean the house then let her do that and you stay out of it. You can respect your wife by helping her if she desires this. Or you can respect your wife by letting her have a share of the responsibility and doing some things alone.”

We presented all these subjects to the new leaders to be trained. Then we switched them to a more academic level of training with others from the Christian community teaching them.

Through these leaders we started gathering more believers. When I came out of jail, we had just a handful of believers who we trained as leaders. Within two years, we had over thirty adults meeting together. However, we were not just adults. We were blessed with families and children. Suddenly, we went from zero to eighteen children. We had a new face. If we were going to have a children’s program, we had to get more organized. We met together to share our visions of what was coming.

During those days, we met in a local neighborhood church hall when it wasn’t being used for church services. We had moved out from the main church into this smaller church so we could have our own identity.

Everybody was encouraged. The ministry was moving ahead. I was being blessed tremendously by these people. Now, instead of rushing into the church with my mind full of the things I had to do, I was coming and doing nothing. I would sit back and do nothing in a service. I enjoyed

watching the new leaders teaching. I was thrilled as one shared about communion and another one led the meeting. I could just sit back and I enjoy what I saw.

“Thank you, Lord, for replacing me with others,” I prayed.

Practice

Go through the whole Freedom from Shame lesson with another student from memory.