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# BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS

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IS HOLLYWOOD INTERESTED IN BUILDING UP  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

## TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 21

HOW CAN CHRISTIANS LIVE CONSISTENTLY, IN A WAY THAT ATTRACTS,  
RATHER THAN HINDERS, LOST PEOPLE COMING TO JESUS?

# HOLLYWOOD CHRISTIANS

## 21 – BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS

Several years ago **Hollywood** produced a movie about explicit teenage promiscuity. It included extreme language with drinking and drugs. It was a worldwide box office hit, spawning two sequels and four spinoffs. Following, in part, is a Rolling Stone interview with four of the stars (names have been changed).



### ROLLING STONES INTERVIEW

Jeff plays in a Christian rock band at the local Ministry Bible study! *"I'm writing music with God,"* he says, *"for God, about God or, you know, from God, or however you say it. It's just, God got combined into the music!"*

"Wow," we say, both amused and concerned. We hadn't expected this. And we wonder out loud how a God loving sort like Jeff can choose to appear in a sexed up movie like this?

When Jeff first read the script he said, *"This is disgusting! This is perverse! It is totally against everything I stand for!"*

What will Jeff say to Christians should they criticise him for his role in the movie? *"It's a character on the screen, not me! And let he who hasn't sinned cast the first stone! And the underlying message is that sex is*

*not the most important thing – love is!"*

We frown and shake our head, not in the least meaning to suggest that we are cynical.

*our trust in God; in junior high, people used to call me Church Boy."*

We're still shaking our head when we take a stroll with Jay, currently enrolled at Texas Christian University, *he is (wouldn't you know it) Christian.*

The next star, Tina, is not a Christian. she is as promiscuous in real life as the movie. "Love," she says, "I love the whole thing of love. But do I really want it? Is it really real?"

Suddenly she is close to tears. "I like intensity," she says after a while.

*"I like to feel the highest degrees of emotion in my life. And then I drown in it. I hate it, yet I love it. I'm so miserable. I'm so sad. I'm so lonely..."*

.....  
he's a Christian. He grew up in a family that *"lived for*

Here's a young lady being destroyed by the lifestyle promoted by Hollywood, and three professed Christians see no problem with their involvement. As Christians we have to do better than that!

We live in a postmodern society, characterised by lack of moral absolutes and objective truth, where people live comfortably with contradictions. The media and music bombards us constantly with these views.

How can Christians live consistently, in a way that attracts, rather than hinders, lost people coming to Jesus?

## Witnesses for Jesus

1. As Jesus was about to return to heaven, what did He say His followers will be? Acts 1:8 (page 770 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

But \_\_\_\_\_ when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ... to the ends of the earth.

A witness is one who speaks from personal experience. Jesus doesn't say, "You are to witness", but "You are my witnesses". Our lifestyle is more powerful than our words.

2. What great commission did Jesus give to His followers? Matthew 28:19, 20 (page 706)

Therefore \_\_\_\_\_ of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.... And surely I am \_\_\_\_\_, to the very end of the age.

## We Witness by the Way We Love

3. How will the world know that we are followers of Jesus? John 13:34, 35 (page 763)

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you \_\_\_\_\_.

**A deeply spiritual writer, Ellen G White, has said:**

*The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favour of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian. (The Ministry of Healing, page 470)*

4. What are the two great commandments that summarise the Ten Commandments?

"Love the LORD YOU GOD with all your HEART and with all your SOUL and with all your MIND." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF."

(Matthew 22:34-40, page 699)

**Renowned theologian and thinker Francis Schaeffer has said:**

*Love – and the unity it attests to – is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father. (The Mark of a Christian, page 153)*

## We Witness by Sharing the Gospel

5. How strong was the apostle Paul's motivation to share the good news about Jesus? 1 Corinthians 9:16 (page 811)

Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am \_\_\_\_\_. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

On the south-eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and His disciples met a man who was demon possessed living among some tombs (Luke 8:26-39, page 732). Jesus healed the man, who then begged to go with Jesus. Instead, Jesus sent him away saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." He hadn't been with Jesus or heard any of His teachings, but he could tell what he knew of the power of the gospel. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. We can tell people about our Friend Jesus and what He has done for us!

6. How did Paul relate to people who were lost? 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (page 811)

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone, to \_\_\_\_\_, .... I have become \_\_\_\_\_ to all men so that by all possible means I might \_\_\_\_\_. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

## We Witness by Our Lifestyle

7. What kind of lives does Peter urge us to live and why? 1 Peter 2:12 (page 858)

Live such \_\_\_\_\_ among the pagans [those who don't follow Jesus] that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ God on the day he visits us.

We witness for Jesus by the way we live. The apostle Paul says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is" (Romans 12:2, page 803).

We live in a secular society that has lost connection with God. The entertainment media bombards us daily with its secular message. As well as violence, each year teenagers are exposed to over 15,000 sexual references on television, with less than 170 references having any discussion of consequences. Ninety-nine per cent of sexual references are between unmarried persons.

**Research shows that the earlier children are exposed to explicit sexual material in the media (music, TV, movies, video games) the earlier they tend to become sexually active.**

While the sex and violence will harm us - it's not the worst thing about the media.

**The worst thing about the media is that it presents a world view where God is absent.**

If there is no God, then life is meaningless, anything goes and you can do your own thing

Lady Gaga's *Born This Way* album is the fastest-selling album of the year. In the title track she sings:

"No matter gay, straight or bi / Lesbian, transgendered life / I'm on the right track, baby / I was born to survive."

It's one thing to say that all people should be equal, regardless of race, gender or creed. It's another thing to say that all relationships and behaviours are equal and that people should be free to do as they please. This is to do away with the distinction between male and female and the concept of right and wrong. Jesus calls us to stand against such a secular culture.

8. With what does Paul tell us we should fill our minds? Philippians 4:4-9, page 832

...whatever is \_\_\_\_\_, whatever is \_\_\_\_\_, whatever is \_\_\_\_\_, whatever is \_\_\_\_\_, whatever is \_\_\_\_\_, whatever is \_\_\_\_\_—if anything is \_\_\_\_\_or \_\_\_\_\_—think about such things.

## We Witness by Giving for the Gospel

9. What does the Bible say God owns?

The EARTH is the Lord's, and EVERYTHING in it, the WORLD, and ALL who live in it.

(Psalm 24:1, page 392)

God's ownership of all things is the most fundamental fact of human existence, and the most fundamental doctrine of the Bible. It's the foundation of all divine claims and promises, and of all human duties. When God created Adam and Eve, He made them **stewards** over this world. A steward is a person entrusted with management of another's property. He gave them delegated authority over this earth to care for it and for each other (Genesis 1:28; 2:15, pages 1, 2).



10. What is God's way of financing the spreading of the gospel? 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14 (page 811)

Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the \_\_\_\_\_ way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should \_\_\_\_\_ from the gospel.

God's method of financing the work of spreading the good news about salvation is through tithes and offerings. The priestly tribe of Levi didn't receive any land to provide for their needs. Their work was to care for the spiritual needs of the Israelites in the temple. God said through Moses: "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting" (Numbers 18:21, page 109).

Tithe is a tenth of our regular profits (Genesis 28:22, page 21). The word usually applies to that portion of regular profits that God has declared as His for the carrying out of His work on earth (Leviticus 27:30-32, page 92).

Abraham, the father of both the Jewish and Arab nations and spiritual father of believers in Jesus, paid tithe to Melchizedek, the priest of God (Genesis 14:18-20, page 9).

11. While disapproving of the legalism of the Pharisees, how did Jesus approve the paying of tithes? Matthew 23:23 (page 700)

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You \_\_\_\_\_ practised the latter, \_\_\_\_\_ neglecting the former.

The Jews were very careful to pay tithe on the smallest of herbs, but neglected to show mercy and justice. Jesus condemned them for the latter, but upheld tithe paying. In some respects the Old Testament law is superseded in that Jesus gave His all, so now a tenth is only a bare minimum guide to giving.

12. What promise has God made to those who place Him first in all things—including finances? Malachi 3:8-10 (page 676)

"Bring the \_\_\_\_\_ into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. \_\_\_\_\_," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out \_\_\_\_\_ that you will not have \_\_\_\_\_ for it."

After the Babylonian captivity (605-538 BC), the Jews who returned to rebuild the Temple became discouraged and were failing to honour God.

God doesn't ask us to pay tithes and offerings because He needs the money, for "the silver is mine and the gold is mine" (Haggai 2:8, page 668), He says, and "the cattle on a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10, page 404). He wants us to recognise His ownership and to learn to be unselfish givers.

While tithe paying is not a magic wand to financial wealth and God is not Santa Claus, God, nevertheless, has promised to supply our needs. For some, getting wealthy would be a stumbling block. For others, who have honoured God in tithe paying, God has prospered them materially, because they used their wealth unselfishly. John D Rockefeller began tithing when he was earning only \$3.50 a week. H J Heinz of "57 Varieties," H P Crowell of Quaker Oats, J L Kraft of Kraft cheese, M W Baldwin of Baldwin Locomotive Works, F W Woolworth of the well-known chain stores, William Wrigley

of chewing gum, M S Hershey of Hershey's chocolate, and William Colgate of toothpaste fame all put God first in their finances and God blessed their efforts. (*Your Bible and You*, page 188-9)

13. What kind of giver does Christ love? 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7 (page 820)

Remember this: Whoever sows \_\_\_\_\_ will also reap \_\_\_\_\_, and whoever sows \_\_\_\_\_ will also reap \_\_\_\_\_. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus' commendation of the widow who gave two small coins indicates that God is more interested in our motives and attitudes rather than amounts (Luke 21:1-4, page 745). Someone has said: "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

The innocence and dedication of children is beautiful. The greatest surprise of Mary's life was receiving a \$5 note on her fourth birthday. She carried the note about the house and was seen sitting admiring it. "What are you going to do with your five dollars?" her mother asked. "Take it to Sunday school," said Mary promptly. "To show your teacher?" Mary shook her head. "No," she said. "I'm going to give it to God. He'll be as surprised as I am to get something besides silver coins."

## The All-Sufficiency of God

14. How does Paul state the all-sufficiency of God for every faithful steward? 2 Corinthians 9:8 (page 820)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having \_\_\_\_\_, you will abound in every good work.

Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31, 32, page 801)

Jesus came to bring salvation within the reach of all. Upon the cross of Calvary He paid the infinite redemption price for a lost world. His self-denial and self-sacrifice, His unselfish labour, His humiliation, above all, the offering up of His life, testifies to the depth of His love for fallen human beings. It was to seek and to save the lost that



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He came to earth (see John 3:16; Luke 19:10, pages 752, 743).  
What God wants from us is our complete commitment to Him as a  
response of gratitude and love.

# A Tract Written by an Atheist

Following is a tract written by an atheist. An atheist is one who doesn't believe there is a God. What he has written is a challenge to those who do!

Did I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean to me everything. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought, and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labour in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of Eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand, nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon Eternity alone... I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, **WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?**

## ARE YOU WILLING TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE?

Yes, I appreciate what Jesus has done for me and would like to do what I can to bring others to know Jesus.

I'd like to learn more about how I can bring people to Jesus.



In what ways has this guide challenged you?

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Who has Jesus put in your life who may be open to hearing about Jesus?

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Published by: The Seventh Day Adventist Church, South Pacific Division Design  
and Layout: DEC Creatives, Bonnells Bay, New South Wales, Australia Cover  
Image: shutterstock.com