

B.L.E.S.S.
5 Everyday Ways to Love your Neighbor and Change the World!
Dave Ferguson and John Ferguson

Jesus commanded us to be a blessing to the world around us when he said “love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mark 12 30-31) but loving your neighbor isn’t always easy. This book is a practical resource to help you obey God’s command.

- **Who is your neighbor?**

The good news was not meant to be shared through awkward conversations with strangers, but in routine exchanges between friends. Choose a context (where you work, play, or live) and name the eight people in closest physical or relational proximity. Pick your primary context. Even the most well-intentioned people will not be able to go deep enough relationally with multiple/different networks of people.

- **Common strategies for sharing the good news**

1. use words - can be complicated, time consuming, or just plain awkward; can feel like a verbal assault to insist that your neighbors hear it whether they want to or not
2. live your life - live like Jesus and wait for others to come with their questions; lacks intentionality and is a more passive approach. Our neighbors may not realize we have faith at all!

- **A different strategy! What is the BLESS strategy? LIVE FIRST, THEN SHARE**

B: Begin with prayer

God uses prayer to change us, and then God uses us to change our world. Prayer is like breathing: Breath in to listen to God, then breath out a missional prayer for others. Instead of waiting for God to grab your attention, be intentional about giving it to Him!

Example of Jesus (Luke 6:12-16) who started His earthly mission with prayer

L: Listen

Really hear and understand what someone you’ve been praying for is saying and feeling. When we don’t listen, people not only feel unheard, but begin to feel unknown.

Important: Most people don't want your expertise, they want your support.

Example of Jesus (Luke 18: 40-42) who loved others by asking questions and listening to them

E: Eat

When we share together over a meal, we offer more than food and drink; we offer ourselves (friendship, fellowship, conversation, intimacy, closeness). Eating with others is how we move a relationship from an acquaintance to a friendship.

Example of Jesus (Matthew 9: 9-13) who consistently shared meals with the "sinners"

S: Serve

Serving others is a tangible way we can demonstrate the love of God to them. This is an "as you go" activity, maintaining a posture of willingness that stands ready to "put down your crown" and "grab an apron" thus bringing dignity to your neighbors. Sometimes it starts with letting someone serve you! Or coming together to serve alongside each other can also be a catalyst for friendship/bonding.

Example of Jesus (Matthew 20:28) who did not come to be served but to serve others

S: Story

If we're going to bless others and share the gospel of Jesus, there will be times when words are necessary. The stronger your relationship with your friend, the more relevant and powerful your story becomes. It will be what people see in your life that gives your words credibility. Your story is clear, concise, and compelling: who you were before you met Jesus, how you met Jesus, and what your life has been like since you met Jesus.

Example of Jesus (John 3: 1-17) who shared the good news of his own story with others

- **Conclusion:**

The rhythm of BLESS living takes the focus off us and what we want and puts the focus on others and what God wants. People need to know someone they trust to help them find their way to the one True God. We don't have to manufacture anything: just bless others with who we are, and all that God has given us. God is responsible for converting; we are responsible for loving.