

Season's Greetings

Season's greetings and grateful thanks to you our most valued and faithful customers, donors and volunteers. We could not have done it without you. As you continue to give so selflessly to this highly important literature ministry, may you receive God's matchless favour.

Farewell

We say farewell to two team mates of Caribbean Christian Publications - **Ms. Sheryl Ward Bradshaw and Mrs. Joan Mars** who recently left the organisation. Sheryl came on staff as executive assistant then later became our marketing officer. Joan was the editor for Older Children publications. CCP extends sincere gratitude to them both and our best wishes for the future. We look forward to their service as volunteers in the future.

We're Done!

This past summer we embarked on the final leg of lesson writing under the fourth phase of the Youth and Adult curricula. We began in the summer of 2014 and wrote every summer since then. We cannot express enough gratitude to all who were a part of this faith journey. Thanks to every person, donor churches, prayer partners, trustees, other volunteers and the staff of CCP who have been totally committed to this work. God willing it, Phase V will begin with new curricula for the three children's departments in due course. Please be in prayer for this ministry and do offer yourself as a possible volunteer curriculum developer, writer, reviewer, proof-reader in this future undertaking.

Again, a Blessed and Holy Christmas to everyone.

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LIVING
THE WORD

CARIBBEAN BIBLE LESSONS

Bible

Leaders

Adults • Ages 19 and Up • Learner Guide

September • October • November • December • 2019



Adult • Age 19 and Up • Learner Guide

The learning activities suggested in this book are used as a part of the teaching plan provided in the *Adult Teacher Guide*. It is strongly recommended that each church provide a copy of the *Adult Learner Guide* for each adult learner and adult teacher.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Dear brothers and sisters,



Welcome to the Christmas edition of the adult Sunday School literature, **Caribbean Bible Lessons Bible Leaders Learner Guide**. It is my pleasure to partner with you on another engaging exploration of Christian education through the pages of the **Learner Guide**.

Certainly, this year has brought some of the hottest temperatures on record for the Caribbean nations and other parts of the world. Some of us got hot, miserable and easily drained in the searing temperatures of summer.

I hope while the temperatures soared, you kept hydrated with water and prayer. Even when there are no sweltering temperatures, **prayer is essential**. I wish that this year which is cantering to a close, has found you exploring greater heights and deeper depths in prayer. Prayer can stop us from becoming spiritually and emotionally weary and tottering on the brink of despair.

Prayer can be a soul-transforming and life-changing experience. When we pray, we cooperate with God, so that He can release His power into our lives, our circumstances and our mission. The more we allow God to talk with us and the more we communicate with Him, the more we make ourselves available to discern His Will and responsibilities for us, know the direction in which He is leading us and reap His abundant blessings.

It is my wish and prayer that your perspective will be increasingly **fashioned by God's perspective and standards**; not the world's expectations and standards. Real confidence comes from knowing that you belong to God. Walk worthy of your identity and calling! The Advent season should inspire and energize us to be more passionate proclaimers of the gospel in word, action and lifestyle. Let us be mindful that as God's people we are His mouthpiece to spread His Good News.

In this edition of the **CBL Bible Leaders Learner Guide**, we delve into the importance of doing mission wherever we are and no matter in what socio-economic circumstances we find ourselves. The **Unit, Mission to and from The Margins**, is our guide on that arm of our exploration which marks the observance of *Mission Month* in some parts of the Caribbean region. We bare our hearts and souls on certain realities of life in the trek for October: **Unmask. Get Real!** November is sometimes celebrated as *Stewardship Month* in areas of the Caribbean and the **Unit, Giving All!** bids us to be sacrificial managers of our resources for the glory of God. The **Unit, He Came...**, is our compass for the *Advent/Christmas season*.

May you fall deeper and deeper in love with God for the remainder of 2019 and beyond! Best wishes for a happy and holy Christmas.

Yours in the Lord's service,
Erica James-King

MEET OUR WRITERS

UNIT ONE: Arcelio Hartley, Panama

Mr Hartley has been a Christian for over 40 years. He is vice president of the Panama Baptist Convention and retired Chairman of the Board of Inspectors of the Panama Canal Authority. He serves as a church planter, lay preacher, deacon and Sunday School teacher. He is passionate about leading people to commit to serving the Lord. Deacon Hartley believes that the more a person comes to understand God's Word is the more that individual will appreciate Who God is, and will be more likely to serve God sacrificially.



UNIT TWO: Erica James-King, Jamaica



Ms. James-King is a Christian career journalist who has served for many years in the broadcast and print media. While working as a communication manager in corporate Jamaica she responded to God's call on her life to engage in full-time ministry through Christian literature. She is the Assistant Director/Editor-Adult Publications at Caribbean Christian Publications. Sister James-King has a zeal for evangelism, Christian Education, as well as mission to vulnerable persons. She is a lay preacher and also serves on the Jamaica Baptist Union Print Media Committee and Social Issues Study Commission.

UNIT THREE: Zoë Simpson, Jamaica

During her high school years, Dr Simpson became aware of her Christian responsibility to help others to find Christ and to grow in Him. Since then, she has used her writing and teaching skills to disciple others. The guiding Bible verse of her life is Ezra 7:10, because it confirms and fuels her passion for studying and sharing the Word. She has served as the Christian Education Director of her denomination. Dr. Simpson is the Executive Director of a service organization for teen mothers.



UNIT FOUR: Alfred Charles-Julien, Guyana



The Reverend Charles-Julien has been a Christian in excess of 40 years and a minister of religion for over 12 years. He is the president of the Baptist Convention of Guyana and pastor of the Wismar Baptist Church. With a zeal for helping others to experience Christ, it is little wonder then that the Rev. Charles-Julien is passionate about evangelism, pastoral service and community outreach. His community involvement includes home visitation, serving as a member of the Linden Ministers' Fellowship, and providing marital and guidance counselling.

100 and Counting!

CONGRATULATIONS to *Barbican Baptist Church* in St. Andrew, Jamaica, which is this year celebrating **100 years of its Sunday School ministry**. The Sunday School is one year older than the church, and served as the fertile ground for the planting of that church. The Rev. Dr Stephen Jennings delivered the main address at the 100th Anniversary Church Service for the Sunday School on July 21.

Caribbean Christian Publications wishes the Barbican Baptist Church Sunday School ministry continued growth from strength to strength as it prepares lives for the Kingdom of God.



Special wishes to all **three adult Sunday School classes** at **that church**. The Barbican Baptist Church and its Circuit of Churches are under the visionary leadership of the Rev. Trevor Edwards, who is also a member of the CCP Board of Trustees.



Rev. Dr Stephen Jennings



(R-L) S.S. Superintendent Ms. Tamar Henry and a member of the adult class

Special Recognition !

Caribbean Christian Publications expresses appreciation to the following persons for their contribution to this issue of the **Caribbean Bible Lessons Bible Leaders Teacher and Learner Guides: Curriculum Developers:** The Rev. Arthur Edgar, Erica James-King, Rebecca McHenry and The Rev. Norva Rodney.

Mission as Transformation



BIBLE FOCUS

1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Exodus 3:1-12; 4:19-20;
Matthew 10:1-10

KEY VERSE

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

– 1 Corinthians 1:27 NIV

BIBLE TRUTH

God chose the poor, the uneducated, and the powerless to further His mission of justice and peace and to have them play their part in the expansion of His Kingdom.

LIFE QUESTION

What role can people from the margins play in mission which transforms lives?

THAT'S LIFE

On one Caribbean island, not so long ago, a prisoner positively influenced change in the lives and eternal destiny of thousands of people. Leon Edwards of Grenada was that prisoner. He was sentenced to death for murder. In 1972, while behind bars, Edwards began listening to a Baptist radio programme and was led to accept Christ as his Saviour. Edwards became a dynamic prison evangelist. As a result of his ministry, many prisoners and prison staff came to believe in Christ and experience new life in Him.

Edwards was also concerned

for the salvation of those outside of the prison walls and since he could not reach them directly, he sent letters to Baptist leaders in Jamaica and the USA, requesting that they establish work in the island of Grenada. As a result, the St. Georges Baptist Church was founded in December 1975. Leon did not know of this great event, since he died in prison in October 1975. Over four decades after his death, the influence of the born-again prisoner, Leon Edwards continues to facilitate the transformation of lives.

How are you transforming lives in your residential and/or work communities?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The Christian mission is an organized effort to spread the gospel of Jesus' sacrifice to redeem humankind.

Regardless of each believer's physical, socio-economic and emotional circumstance and condition, God calls him or her to be involved in mission. Additionally, God expects each Christian to be an agent of transformation in the lives of individuals and their communities.

Transformation means to bring about change for the better.

1. Called Regardless of Identity and Origin – Exodus 3:1-12; 4:19-20

A person on the margins of a situation or group has very little power, importance or influence. Moses was one such person. Moses was a murderer living in exile in the land of the Midians. He had the task of tending to the flock of sheep and goats of his father-in-law, Jethro. As a shepherd, he was at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. God appeared to Moses (Exodus 3:1-10) and called him into service just where he was and without regard to his criminal status, ungodly spiritual condition and poor circumstances in a foreign country.

Moses believed he was an insignificant, worthless, nobody; unfit to be used by God (v. 11). God knows us all and He invites us to be part of His mission not because of who we are or what we have done or have failed to do but rather in spite of who we are. He knows our strengths but He also knows our weaknesses and our failures. Yet, He invites us all to join in His mission, and it is He who is able to transform us and empower us to overcome any inherent weakness that could possibly hinder that mission.

God summoned the marginalized Moses to reach out to a set of marginalized people—Moses' fellow Israelites. They were living as slaves under severe oppression in Egypt and were crying out to God to be rescued from their suffering (vv. 7, 9). It is interesting to note that when God presented His plan to Moses (vv. 7-8), God revealed His concern and willingness to respond to the needs of those trapped in difficult situations and unable, by themselves, to remedy their condition.

God called out to Moses (v. 4) and Moses responded, hesitantly. Moses gave several excuses why he was not the best person to carry out God's mission to the Israelites in Egypt (vv. 11,13; 4:1,10). Even when God blessed Moses with miraculous powers to empower him for the mission, Moses was still complaining that he was not the person God should send on the mission. After exercising patience with Moses' numerous excuses, God got angry (4:14). Moses finally surrendered to God and packed up his family to go with him on the mission to Egypt (4:20). God has given us everything we need for mission. However, unless we surrender to God, He cannot use us to accom-

plish the great things He requires us to accomplish for Him on the mission to which He calls all Christians.

2. Called to Be Agents of Transformation – Matthew 10:3-10

Jesus' selection of His first 12 disciples (learners), also called apostles (those sent), reveals that He is inviting persons who come from all sections of the society to partner with Him in mission. His disciples included men of varying professions, levels of class and education, characters, and personalities. Among the disciples were: fishermen, a tax collector (Matthew), a scholar of the law and writings of the prophets who descended from the royal line of King Geshur (Bartholomew), a fanatical nationalist (Simon the Zealot) and an alleged violent nationalist and fighter who was also a fisherman (Thaddeus). Their personalities ranged from moody, to optimistic, pessimistic, sceptical, outspoken, aggressive, quiet, poised, rational, trustworthy and untrustworthy. It would have been almost impossible for this diverse group to work effectively together if it had not been for the power of God changing and moulding them into an effective team. When we respond to God's invitation to partner with Him in mission we can be fully assured that He uses our differences, our strengths, and our weaknesses to fulfil His purpose.

Jesus gave the twelve disciples authority and power to attend to the needs of those crying out for help. The disciples were required to meet the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the persons to whom they ministered (v. 7). The disciples' weaknesses helped them to be more understanding and empathetic of the needs of others. Also, it is believed that the weaknesses they may have demonstrated at the beginning of their service were later replaced by overwhelming displays of faith and courage (Peter in Mark 14:66-72 and in Acts 4:13). We, too, are called from the diversity of our characters, personalities, and social standings, to attend to the diversity of needs that our post-modern but so very complex society presents today.

3. Called to Display Godly Wisdom – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was meant to address a young church that had begun to suffer from divisions and contentions over sexually immoral acts and philosophical arguments. Some questioned Paul's authority to present the gospel of Christ since he was not an orator. Others questioned the soundness of the gospel. Paul explained that godly wisdom was not based on worldly wisdom and uneducated persons and others on the margins could reflect godly wisdom and a godly lifestyle that would confound intellectuals (vv. 27-28).

Reality Check

Reflect on your experiences and **write two ways** in which you have experienced how God use ordinary or marginalized people to do extraordinary things for Him. Commit to being an agent of transformation.

Mission as Liberation



BIBLE FOCUS

Luke 4:16-21; Matthew 1:21-23; 6:19-24; Isaiah 61:1-3;
Mark 2:13-17

KEY VERSE

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

– Luke 4:18 NIV

BIBLE TRUTH

We serve the mission purposes of God best when we do not yield to the lures of materialism, and we help others overcome oppressive situations and systems.

LIFE QUESTION

How can we be agents of liberation for others?

THAT'S LIFE

In his childhood years, Bertram always looked with envy at children in the community who came from wealthier families. Their parents were much better off than his, and he noticed that they had things like cars and nice clothing. He wished he could have these too. Soon after high school, Bertram started working and soon began saving money to acquire the things he had always wanted. He bought a car, and a house. Bertram then got married and started a family.

He decided he wanted his children to have all the nice things he did not have as a child, but in order to do so he had to get a second job. Bertram started missing out on his children's social activities and

his wife began to complain that he was not spending time with his family. The couple often quarrelled about this situation. One day his wife informed him that she was leaving him. Bertram felt devastated.

He turned to his childhood friend and co-worker, John, for advice. Bertram felt strange turning to John for help, since he always thought that he was better than John, since John did not own a car or house. Bertram thought that John was somewhat unstable intellectually, since even though he could not afford the "very important things in life", he gave generously to people in need. John also visited the prisons regularly doing ministry.

If you were John, how would you advise Bertram?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

Liberation means freedom from the control of another or from something. It is the action of setting someone free from any condition that has been dominating, controlling or repressing that person. Our God is a God of liberation. Therefore, as Christians, our effort to share the gospel on every occasion should be informed by a sincere desire to help liberate persons from all the things that hold them captive.

1. Liberation from Oppression – Matthew 1:21-23; Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21

The name of Jesus is indicative of His liberating and redeeming power and mission. The name *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew Word, *Joshua*, which means *Saviour* or “*He saves people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). Matthew 1:21-23 show that God revealed to Joseph, Jesus’ earthly father figure, that Jesus is the God Man Who would save them and manifests Himself among the people (*immanuel*). Followers of Christ, Christians, therefore, have a liberating mission and have been blessed with a liberating power from the Holy Spirit.

Bible scholars have concluded that the “*Me*” referred to in Isaiah 61:1 is the promised Saviour or Messiah mentioned in several other chapters in Isaiah (e.g. 42:1, 49:1-8, 49:8, 50:4). The Hebrew word, *Messiah*, translated, *Christ* in the Greek, means the *Anointed One*. So in all these verses Isaiah is prophesying of the coming Messiah. In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus read the Isaiah passage and confirmed that He indeed was the Anointed One. Only the Anointed One Who came as God in flesh, could deliver or free people spiritually from their sin. Luke 4:16-21 could be thought of as Jesus’ mission statement as He launched His public ministry in Nazareth.

Jesus rescues people from all forms of captivity: spiritual, physical, social, economic, psychological and political. Jesus liberated us from spiritual death when He rose from the grave (Matthew 28:7; Acts 26:23). Jesus liberates those who are under the control of the devil. He does the same for the materially and spiritually poor, and the oppressed. Jesus sets the example for all believers in liberating people from all forms of bondage. In both the Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 passages, the Scriptures present Jesus as the Liberator of the poor. Christians who have a mission of liberation to do cannot ignore the poor and must see it as their duty to assist the poor in improving their lives. When we see people hungry and cannot help to feed or sustain themselves and their families, God requires that we help them (Matthew 25:35). Jesus taught how wrong it is to fail to assist the

wounded and marginalized in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). Another liberating duty of all Christians is to encourage peace. It is evident that the Christ of Whom Isaiah prophesied came with a mission focused particularly on freeing the spiritually poor, and improving the lot of the materially poor and other marginalized peoples.

2. Liberation from Addiction to Things – Matthew 6:19-24

In Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus warned against dedicating one's life to the accumulation of material possessions. This passage does not suggest that having material possessions is bad. It cautions us about being more concerned about acquiring material possessions than we are about securing our place in the kingdom of heaven. We are powerless to guarantee the security of the riches we accumulate on Earth. Our earthly treasures can very quickly be lost by sudden changes in conditions or situations over which we have no control. On the other hand, Jesus invites us to lay up treasures in heaven (v. 20). This is accomplished when we engage ourselves in fulfilling God's mission.

Jesus presents us with a dilemma that every man will face. Either we allow ourselves to be servants of Christ our Master, or we enslave ourselves to the desire for earthly riches, allowing greed to be the master that rules our lives. Jesus came to liberate us not only from the oppressive conditions that men will at times impose on us, but also from the enslavement of our hearts and minds to this world's bounties. We cannot claim to have Christ as a main priority in our lives and at the same time be dedicating our greatest efforts to the accumulation of earthly riches (v. 24).

3. Liberation from Social Stigma – Mark 2:13-17

The passage reports that Jesus called Levi, son of Alphaeus, to be one of His disciples. Levi was a tax collector and he and fellow tax collectors lived a comfortable, privileged and fairly wealthy life. However, they were despised, stigmatised and treated as outcasts by the Israelites. They were ostracised by the Jews for being too close to the Romans, as the taxes were collected for the Roman Empire, which ruled the Israelites at that time. Many Israelites considered tax collectors to be traitors of their people and their religion, because of the nature of their jobs. Additionally, many of the Israelites hated the tax collectors because they accused them of pilfering some of the taxes to make themselves wealthy. Jesus had fellowship with tax collectors, to teach us that He came to liberate the outcasts and we should also reach the despised with the liberating love of God (Mark 2:13-17; Matthew 11:19; Luke 15:1; 19:7).

Reality Check

Think of some oppressive conditions in the society from which people need to be freed. How can you and your local church help them?

Mission as Evangelism



BIBLE FOCUS

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 4:1-11

KEY VERSE

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

– 1 Thessalonians 1:3 NIV

BIBLE TRUTH

God will empower and use in a mighty way, Christians who make themselves available to proclaim the gospel wherever they go, and wherever God calls them to go.

LIFE QUESTION

How does your engagement in evangelism, or lack thereof, reflect the nature of your relationship with God?

THAT'S LIFE

Dear Sir,

My husband is now retired from his work as an electrical engineer and we have been feeling a call to get more involved in mission. We attend an evangelical church. Our oldest child graduated from a Christian academy and the second child is in her last year there. The youngest is in the tenth grade in another Christian school. We have been praying for an opening to get more involved in social ministries outside of the church in order to reach more persons for the Lord Jesus.

We have been working with several departments within the church that deal with children

and family. We are also working with a foundation that organizes medical tours, programmes for the prevention of sexual abuse of children, and all that has to do with parenting. We conduct a small Bible Study and discipleship training for a group of new believers, but we want to reach further outside of the church. We would like to know in what way we might also engage in the work that you (Logos) are doing in order to do as much as we can for our Lord.

(An extract from a letter to the floating library ship, Logos, used with the permission of the writer and the Logos Latin American mission team.)

What role does evangelism play in the life of the letter writer? What role does evangelism play in your life?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

Evangelism is the spreading of the gospel by our words, deeds and lifestyle. If we are living in obedience to God and if we sincerely love people, then evangelism will be part of our lifestyle. The Lord does not want anyone to perish. Instead, He desires for all persons to repent from their sin and know Him as their Lord and Saviour (2 Peter 3:9).

1. Taking our Cue from God's Commands – Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Jonah served as a prophet around the time of King Jeroboam's reign (792-753 BC). During the reign of this king, Israel expanded and enjoyed a certain level of economic prosperity that may have contributed to the people feeling less dependent on God, and turning away from Him. God warned the Israelites through the prophets Amos and Hosea that He would punish their waywardness by allowing the Assyrians to take them into captivity. About that same time God instructed Jonah to go and preach to the people of Nineveh, the capital of a neighbouring nation, Assyria (Jonah 1:1-2). Assyria had become a terrorizing empire and the wickedness of its people was offensive to God. It was God's desire for the people of Nineveh to repent and turn from their wicked ways. Jonah, however, had no compassion on the people that the Israelites considered their enemy and he did not want to see them saved (1:3). God foiled Jonah's efforts to escape from the evangelistic task He had given him (1:4-17).

After God rescued Jonah from the whale, he obeyed God's repeated command to evangelize the people of Nineveh (3:1-3). Jonah warned the people of Nineveh of the destruction that was to be brought upon them, if they did not repent (v. 4). The people reacted almost immediately with clear actions showing their repentance (v. 5). They proclaimed a fast, dressed in sackcloth, and covered themselves with ashes, in keeping with the traditional cultural displays of mourning or penitence.

This response must have been mind-boggling. Some may have expected these people to be more resistant to the Word of God. They probably had worshipped other gods all their lives. But, upon hearing God's message from Jonah, they quickly believed and fell down before Him in repentance. Today, sadly, many Christians are at times sceptical about taking the gospel to some groups of people because of our prejudices or because we mistakenly conclude that they will not respond positively to the gospel. We can learn from today's study to go boldly to share the gospel, having every confidence that the Lord will never condemn a repentant sinner.

2. Taking our Cue from God's Love – Jonah 4:1-11

Jonah's reaction to God's display of compassion and mercy was shocking. God had not destroyed the inhabitants of Nineveh and Jonah was angry (vv. 1-2). Not only was he angry, but also he openly confessed to God that he had tried to dissociate from God's plan to reach out to Nineveh because he had anticipated this show of mercy from God. Jonah even went as far as to ask God to take his life, because God spared Nineveh (v. 3). His hatred of the Ninevites was so great that he would rather die than see them saved from death. The irony of this is that Jonah himself had experienced and benefitted from God's abundant mercy when God rescued him from the sea and gave him a second chance to be involved in God's mission of evangelism.

Jonah listed the attributes of God that not only he, but the entire nation of Israel had been enjoying: gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love; a God Who relents from sending calamity (v. 2). The Israelites had been on the receiving end of God's goodness for hundreds of years. Jonah's negative attitude was thus representative of the entire nation of Israel. They had cried out to God for Him to respond to their situations with mercy and love. Having being blessed on many occasions in the past, their present attitude to God showed that they had now become indifferent to His mercy and grace and callous about the needs of others to receive those blessings.

God made a plant grow to provide comfortable shade for Jonah but then caused the plant to wither and die leaving Jonah exposed to the searing heat of the sun. Jonah once again reacted angrily, for having lost the provision for his personal comfort. By the destruction of the plant, God was teaching Jonah that the people of Nineveh and their souls were more important than his personal comfort, from the shade of a plant that He, God, created.

3. Taking our Cue from Good Examples – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Apostle Paul established the church in Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia, on his Second Missionary Journey. He had responded to a vision of a man asking him to come to Macedonia (Acts 16:9). This small church was in a very large city among a hostile set of Jews and a larger number of pagan Greeks and Romans. The believers were, therefore, a marginalized community. Nevertheless, they worked at spreading the gospel through speech and acts of love. This led Paul to commend them as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10. Paul prayed with thanksgiving and joy for their work *produced by faith, their labour prompted by love, and their endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*, as they shared the gospel even while facing every imaginable challenge (v. 3).

Reality Check

Do you think God is pleased with your attitude and actions with regard to sharing the gospel? Give reasons for your answer.