

**Solution #3: Change the world without changing your routine****THE QUICK SUMMARY**

When you've been transformed by God's love, you can't help but want others to experience the same grace and freedom. But how do you share it without scaring them away or offending them? For most Christians, "evangelism" is an intimidating word that suggests handing out tracts to strangers or doing other awkward things.

But what if there was a more organic, more authentic way to share your faith with your friends, neighbors, and coworkers?

Dave and Jon Ferguson have found five simple, straightforward practices that will allow any believer to do just that. And by consistently living them out, you can affect not just individual lives but your entire neighborhood and community—one person at a time.

**A SIMPLE SOLUTION**

Authors Dave and Jon Ferguson believe that people are looking for you to be a friend. They are looking for a friend who will live the good news, be good news, and then share the good news in the form of their own story. In that order!

They made a list of all the ways Jesus practiced being a blessing to people, and narrowed it down to the top five. The resulting B.L.E.S.S. practices are five everyday ways that Jesus loved His neighbors.

The authors believe that if you are willing to adopt a new way of living, a new system or set of behaviors, it will help you bless the people around you so that more of them will come to know the love of God in Jesus.

*So more often than not, the difficulty we face in loving our neighbors is because we simply don't know how to love them.*

**Begin with Prayer**

The “B” is for Begin with Prayer. We believe that prayer is both how you discover your mission as well as how you go about it. If you’re not sure who God is calling you to bless or where God is calling you to go to be a blessing, you can begin with prayer. And if you know the people or the place you want to bless, begin praying for those people and those places.

**Listen**

The “L” in BLESS is for Listen. Sadly, most Christians are known for talking more than listening. If we truly hope to bless people around us, we must first get to know them. Any relationship starts with listening. We need to hear about their hopes, their dreams, and their challenges. Truly listening may be the kindest and most loving gift you can give someone. The “L” is for Listen.

**Eat**

This third practice is our personal favorite, and it’s something in which many of us are experts—eating! There is something about sharing a meal together that moves any relationship past acquaintance toward friendship—faster than just about anything else we can do. And there are few ways we can better bless the people around us than by sharing a meal together. The “E” in BLESS is “Eat.”

**Serve**

And then we are convinced that if you will begin with prayer, listen, and eat, there is a good chance that by then you will have discovered how you can best serve the person or place to which God has called you. As a matter of fact, they’ll likely tell you how you can best serve them. The first “S” in BLESS is for “Serve.”

**Story**

And finally, our experience is that if you – Begin with Prayer, Listen, Eat, and Serve, then there is a good chance you will have the opportunity to share your story. Someone may ask you to explain what makes you different. It is then that you can tell them your story of how Jesus changed your life. The second “S” in BLESS is “Story.”

– Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson, *B.L.E.S.S. - 5 Everyday Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change the World*

**A NEXT STEP**

According to Dave and Jon Ferguson, the rhythm of B.L.E.S.S. living takes the focus off of us and what we want and puts the focus on others and what God wants.

Using the descriptions above along with the suggestions below, plan specific ways you can B.L.E.S.S. others this week.

**B: Begin with prayer**

When Jesus started His earthly mission, Luke 6 tells us that He went out on a mountain and prayed. Prayer is both how you discover your mission and how you live out your mission.

**L: Listen**

Asking questions and then listening was central to Jesus' life and teachings. Any relationship starts with listening to someone's words and life. True listening may be the kindest and most loving gift you can give someone.

**E: Eat**

Jesus liked to eat! Over and over, as in Matthew 9, we find Jesus with tax collectors and sinners... doing what? Eating! There is something about sharing a meal together that moves any relationship past acquaintance toward friendship.

**S: Serve**

Jesus told us straight up, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..." (Matthew 20:28). He modeled for us that once you begin with prayer, listen, and eat with someone, there is a good chance that you'll discover how you can best serve the person God is asking you to bless.

**S: Story**

When people were ready to listen, Jesus would share His story, as in John 14 with Thomas. When you befriend and bless people, they feel relationally safe and want to know your story. Then, and only then, can you tell them how the love of God and Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have changed you.

Consider a campaign within your church to B.L.E.S.S. five homes over the next six months.

- Gather key leaders together to create a plan allowing every family unit to identify five neighbors or families to B.L.E.S.S. during this season.
- Create a system of reminders during worship and digital communication moments.
- Consider setting up a feedback system allowing your people to share stories of God at work as they love their neighbors.

Start by scheduling a 30-minute information meeting/ZOOM with your leadership team this week to discuss the above ideas (adding more of your own).

