



## Experiencing the Love of Christ with your Neighbors



As we take a deeper dive into the Love Avenue, we can't forget the whole reason for joining with our neighbors in community. We are compelled by love, Christ's love, which fills and transforms us, compelling us to share that love with those around us.

### WITNESS

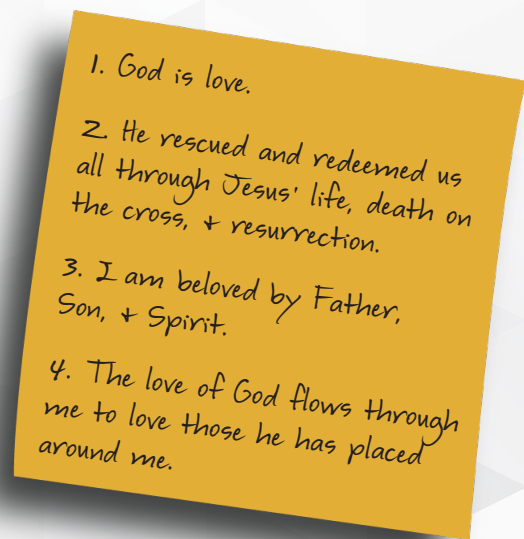
The Love Avenue is summarized by the word **witness**. We are witnesses to what we have experienced in Christ. We are witnessing the good news of Jesus, who fulfilled the law and fulfills the longings of our heart.

It can be a natural tendency to want to outsource evangelism and witness to our friends and neighbors by simply inviting them to church events or by sharing a book or sermon podcast with them. However, we know we are not transformed merely by information about Jesus, but by experiencing his love.

In his book, *Gospel Fluency*, Jeff Vanderstelt suggests that many Christians struggle with sharing the good news of Jesus because we do not see our lives through the lens of the good news. He suggests questions that can help us reflect on how the Spirit is moving in our lives and to help each other see the hope of Jesus in our everyday lives.

Sharing the love of Christ is not a task we work ourselves up to accomplish or an obligation hanging over our heads; It is an overflow of our relationship with him. We can practice seeing God's work in our lives as we study God's Word and as we live in the world. We can consider how God is moving in and through our lives with these questions:

1. **Who is God?**
2. **What has God done?**
3. **Who am I in light of God's work?**
4. **How do I respond and live in light of who I am?**



### EXAMPLE

“The roots of our faith produce the fruits of our faith.” - Jeff Vanderstelt

Another strategy that equips us to witness is to reverse the order of the questions to discern whether we are planting roots of hope in other gods – to look at our fruit to identify where we are planting our roots:

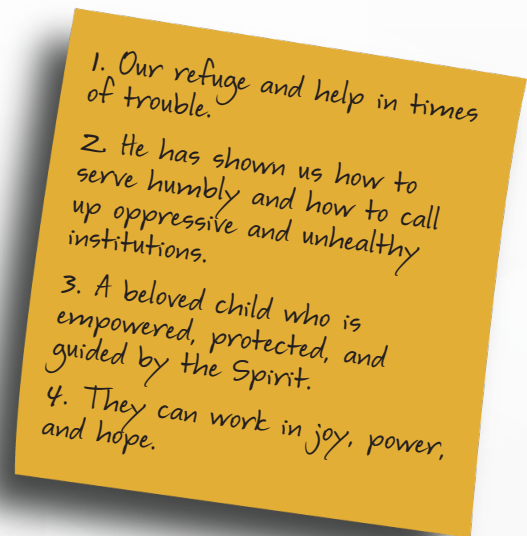
1. **What am I doing or experiencing right now?**
2. **In light of what I am doing or experiencing, what do I believe about myself?**
3. **What do I believe God is doing or has done?**
4. **What do I believe God is like?**

As we practice examining our lives through the gospel, we naturally begin to share our stories with the truth that God is with us and moving in all the circumstances of our lives. We begin pointing one another to Jesus. It is not only in our own stories that we can reflect on these questions, but also with everyone we interact with. As God’s beloved children, all of humanity is created to long for and experience Christ. We encounter God everywhere we go in the world, in all our interactions with others.

It is the love of Christ that compels us, and it is a response to Jesus’ invitation when we join him in ministry. We share the gospel not for an in-the-moment salvation conversation, but because our lives are a declaration of good news! We are the good news to one another – believers and not-yet-believers alike.

In listening to the stories of others, we can consider the same four questions:

1. **Who is God?**
2. **What has God done?**
3. **Who are they in light of God’s work?**
4. **How do they respond and live in light of who they are?**



## EXAMPLE

**A friend shares their struggles with a difficult work environment and supervisor.**

Let’s make it a practice to share the hope of Jesus in our conversations and interactions.

Adapted from - *Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life Hardcover* – February 28, 2017 by Jeff Vanderstelt