

Session 3: God Wants You to Be Effective

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Effective Christians take advantage of every opportunity God provides for us to do good works.

Head Change: To understand what it means to put our faith into action and live for the betterment of others.

Heart Change: To feel excited to serve others and influence their lives.

Life Change: To be known primarily by our love as we seek to make a godly impact in the world.

OPEN

When is the last time you recommended something—like a movie, restaurant, or song—that someone loved? How did their excitement or enjoyment make you feel?

We are all natural evangelists. We are excited to tell people about a great meal we've just had or a movie we enjoyed. And there's nothing quite like finding out that the people we told enjoyed it just as much as we did. Spreading good news feels good!

The same is even more true for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Christians should be eager to share Christ in evangelism and through good

works. We have encountered the hope of the world. God wants us to share that hope. In this final session, James and Coach Dungy will discuss what it means to be effective Christians in word and action.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in James's and Coach Dungy's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how they answer the following questions.

What is the process of producing spiritual fruit?

Why is biblical love essential to being effective as Christians?

Watch Session 3: *God Wants Us to be Effective* (14 minutes).

REVIEW

James opened the session by saying that our actions should make an impact not only on the body of Christ but on everyone around us. Effectiveness is being able to benefit others and make meaningful, godly changes in the world.

How much of a priority has it been for you to make a godly impact in your sphere of influence outside your church community?

Coach Dungy explained that when it comes to football, being effective is not solely about talent but about coming together and helping one another. The same is true for the Christian life—your relationship with God is important, but we also have to serve others in their relationship with God. **What could it look like for you to**

help someone in their walk with God this week? How could you intentionally help someone else be effective?

James and Coach Dungy also discussed how being effective means never overlooking people. Coach Dungy encouraged us to extend our prayer and support to people working in unseen and often uncelebrated ministry positions—the parking lot ministries and janitorial services, for example. They are humbly serving the church with no expectation of being praised. **Why do you think it can be easy to overlook certain ministries within your local church? How could you encourage and pray over the people serving in ministries that are overlooked?**

Coach Dungy talked about the importance of producing fruit and described the process as simply making a difference in people's lives—like changing our communities for the better, serving our neighbors, and directing people to the right way to live. **Considering where God has placed you, what opportunities do you have to serve other people? Who might God be calling you to serve today?**

Getting involved in our communities is a great way to positively impact others while sharing the love of Christ. **What difference could it make for you to become more involved in your community? What communal needs has God uniquely equipped you to meet?**

There might be times that we feel insecure about our ability to change people's lives. We might even wonder whether we're the right person to do what God is calling us to do. But Coach Dungy reminded us that God is the one who

changes hearts—we just have to be willing vessels and allow him to transform others. **When have you felt unqualified to share the love of Christ? How should we respond to the fear or insecurities that keep us from talking to people about Jesus?**

Coach Dungy also talked about the elements of biblical love like patience, kindness, and rejoicing in the truth. These qualities are vital for the world to see and experience from believers. They need to experience God's love in action.

Who in your life could you extend kindness or patience toward? What difference could it make for them if you loved them with patience and kindness?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Coach Dungy taught us that effective Christians make a habit of making disciples and doing good works while being known by their love for Christ. Jesus preached the same message when he commanded his disciples to be “salt and light.”

Read Matthew 5:13–16.

Jesus compared his disciples to salt. Think of the salt in your kitchen; if it had no flavor, it would just be a pile of crystals, useless for cooking. As Christians, God has a specific purpose for us. But if we refuse to do good works or make disciples, we are like flavorless salt. **What happens when Christians lose their saltiness, or forget their purpose? What can distract us from having a godly impact?**

Salt's flavor stands out and enhances other good flavors. In the same way, Christians stand out while enhancing the love, charity, and goodness in our communities. **In what ways have you**

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found it difficult—or easy—to stand out for your faith?

In verses 14–16, Jesus says we are “the light of the world.” Throughout the Bible, light represents truth, knowledge, and God’s presence. **What is the intended result of letting our light shine?**

The world we live in can be a dark place—there are many hardships that we all deal with. And it can be even harder for those who don’t have the hope of Christ. As the light of our world, it’s our responsibility to bring the hope of Christ to those who do not know him. **How do you intentionally represent Christ in your workplace, neighborhood, and community? What has it looked like for you to share the hope you have in Jesus with people?**

What is the point of a lamp if it’s hidden or put under a basket? When we hide God’s influence in our lives, we not only rob ourselves of our God-given purpose but also obscure the truth from people who desperately need it. **In what ways is it empowering to know that God has commissioned you to bring light into a dark world? Where could your light shine more brightly in your sphere of influence?**

It can be tempting to do good works to build our own reputation. But Jesus says that our good works should be seen by others so that they’re drawn to him. The way we serve should bring attention to God, not to us. **What’s the difference between doing good works for God and doing good works that make us look good? How might your actions and good works point people more to Jesus?**

LAST WORD

James ended the series with a good reminder: being on God's team means being a reflection of him in the world. If we want people to come to know Jesus, we must remember that people will often meet a Christian before they meet Jesus.

This week, take some time to think about all that you've learned in this series—ask yourself these questions: What am I reflecting to other people? How do people know I'm part of God's team? Say a prayer of thankfulness that you get to be part of God's mission to bring others to know him.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read and memorize Matthew 5:15–16, "No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give your father glory in heaven."

Pray: Pray and ask God to help you courageously share his love with others. Ask him to help you joyfully serve rather than performing out of a sense of obligation.

Meditate: Meditate on what it means to be salt and light. Pray that God would help you find opportunities to do good works in your local church, neighborhood, and workplace.

Write: Write on a notecard or in your journal three or four ways you'd like to impact someone else—whether a friend, co-worker, or teammate. Ask God to highlight some unique ways you could display his love to them.

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The Game of Life STUDY GUIDE

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