

TEACHER NOTES:

my decision to my church and it was amazing to see God make the changes I needed in my life. I immediately lost my old friends, but quickly gained the right kind of influences I needed for spiritual support. I got busy doing whatever I could to serve in various areas of the church that helped in my preparation for missions.

God has never failed me since and never will. I love missions. There are millions of people out there who are miserable and are searching for something or someone to change their lives for the better. God is the one to do that change and I am honored that He has chosen me to be a part of His mission!

Discussion Questions:

- What are the characteristics of a true friend?
- In Lisa's testimony, she made a decision for God and then she made that decision public. How do you think making a spiritual decision public before your church would help you?
- How could your church family help you in your decision?
- After Lisa changed her direction, she did everything she could to serve the Lord and prepare for the mission field. What are some practical things your church can help you with in preparation for service?
- In this testimony, Lisa struggled with peer pressure. What is peer pressure and is it any different in a Christian environment?
- What are some ways to deal with peer pressure and how did Lisa's involvement in service help her overcome it?

Definitions:

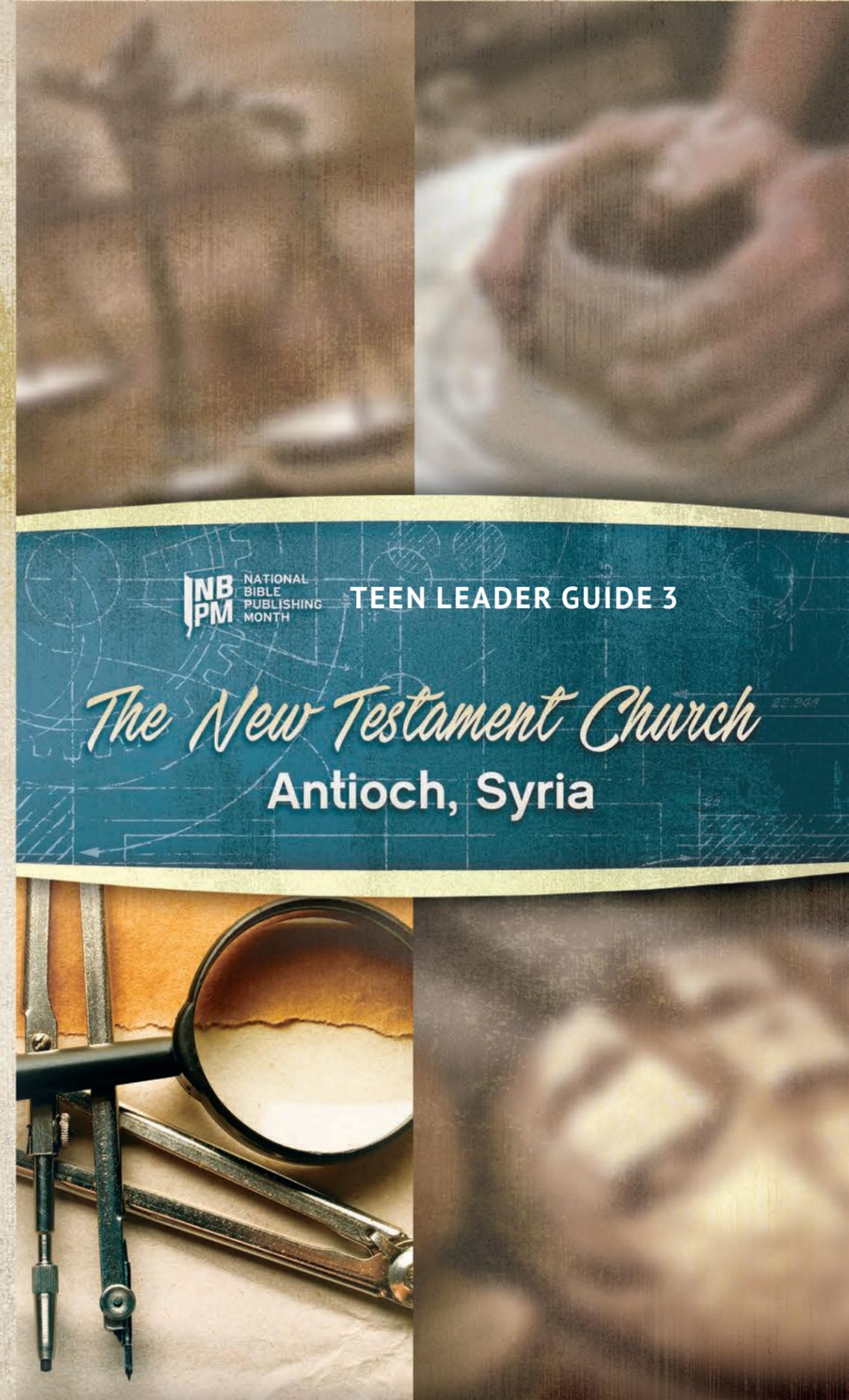
Evangelize - to preach the gospel to

Commission - an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or perform prescribed acts

Hierarchy - a ruling body of clergy in authority



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TEEN LEADER GUIDE 3

The New Testament Church
Antioch, Syria

The New Testament Church Antioch, Syria

TEACHER NOTE:

The purpose of this lesson is to get a glimpse at the God-inspired and preserved record in the Scriptures of a church completely yielded to Him. The church at Jerusalem clearly started out correctly. They experienced a certain level of God's blessing that paralleled their level of obedience. They partially obeyed and as a result they received a partial taste of God's power in their church and had an effective range of influence in Jerusalem and in Judea. They had to be scattered and Philip and Peter singled out by God and sent by to Gentiles to spread into parts of Samaria. On the other hand the church at Antioch was quite different. What God did through them clearly changed the world. The good folks of Antioch obeyed God without regard to any prejudices or personal agendas. They were about introducing Him to as many people as would listen, regardless of color, ethnicity, or prominence in the community. They sent missionary teams out of their own congregation to evangelize the world where they themselves could not get to. They actively tried to impact eternity everywhere they could at the same time.

READ:

Read Acts 11:22-26; 13:1-5

The Christians at Antioch experienced God in such a personal way that it altered their lifestyles. This was the first place where people were identified as being "little Christs" or Christians (Acts 11:26). They essentially became the missions model carried out today in our evangelical churches. This lesson will look in detail at those traits as well as point out the impact that a "messenger with the message" can have in his efforts to evangelize the area where God has called him.

The Church at Antioch was a phenomenal church. The membership there had such zeal for the Lord and a genuine love for Him that it resulted in the evidence of their love for others. They served without the restrictions that stifled the church at Jerusalem. These saints had such a powerful testimony, that the term Christian became what the world described them as (Acts 11:26).

Antioch is the place where Barnabas brought Saul back to after his conversion. It is said of Paul and Silas, having been sent out by the church at Antioch, that they turned the world upside down for Christ (Acts 17:6). This church established the pattern that we follow for sending missionaries. They chose men who were faithfully serving already. They followed the Holy Spirit's direction in choosing the men. They prayed and fasted before doing something this important.

DISCUSSION:

Carrying the Word of God locally and globally was important to the Antioch church. It was so vital that they took time to pray and fast. Consider why they needed to pray and fast. What sorts of requests might have they made to God? Talk about surrendering your life to the Lord. What might have happened if they would have bypassed the perfect will of God and did it their own way.

- Their Pattern of Evangelization (Acts 13)
- They had faithful men who were actively serving the Lord in the church (Acts 13:2).
- They were sensitive to the Holy Ghost's direction for their service (Acts 13:2).
- They did not take the sending out of missionaries lightly.
- They fasted and prayed first (Acts 13:3).
- They commissioned them through THEIR local church, not a hierarchy from Jerusalem (Acts 13:3).
- They sent them out as a team (Acts 13:3).

Why do you think it was important that those sent out were already actively serving in the church? Why is a team concept important in ministry?

They sent them under the authority of their local church, not the church at Jerusalem. They sent them out in pairs. The missionaries returned with a report of what God had accomplished on the journey. God began to prove mightily what He could do through people totally yielded to His will and His direction in their lives.

DISCUSSION:

Gather a few missionary letters from missionaries that your church supports. Distinguish the difference between a *sending* church and a *supporting* church. Help your students understand the importance of the local church in sending missionaries. Teach them why it is important for the missionary to send a report to his supporting churches. Help them understand that it is more than accountability but it is to enlist prayer support from the supporting church and to keep the church involved in their ministry. The church is the partner to the missionary. List ways your students could assist your missionaries.

READ:

Acts 13:1-14:28; Acts 15:36-18:22; Acts 18:23-21:16

Paul, as the lead missionary, took three missionary trips and another trip to Rome as he was being taken from jurisdiction to jurisdiction for trial. The religious crowd was trying to shut him up so that people would continue to follow them. He preached in front of royalty, and prestigious people along this journey, just as God had told him he would (Acts 9:15). God is looking for individuals who will totally surrender and yield all restrictions, aspirations, personal goals, and desires to simply follow Him (Romans 12:1).

In conclusion, we see the results of a church comprised of yielded Christians who were unreservedly obedient to God's command. Their willingness cast off any restrictions

that could have ended with very different results. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" Acts 19:20.

What could God do with a life of total surrender to Him? What could be accomplished for His glory if a youth group or Sunday School class would take time to pray and fast? What are you going to change in your life so that the Great Commission is fulfilled in your generation?

The Value of Influence

by Lisa Turnbull

I was fortunate to have grown up in the Christian home that I did. I had spiritual truths instilled in me from the beginning of my life and came to know the Lord as my Savior at the age of five. My parents were leaders in the ministry of Master Clubs at our church and required no less than my best in everything. Early on, I observed that my whole family seemed to have a good godly reputation in our church and therefore I felt somewhat pressured to have that same reputation. In spite of this, when I reached Junior High, I fell into the peer pressure of trying to be popular.

For three years of my life, I played the part of a good church-going Christian who was completely surrendered. However, outside of church I had become spiritually empty. I was too busy trying to please my friends. It took me three long years to realize that being popular was not about being a good spiritual leader or being friendly to everyone; it was a quest that led to shallow emptiness and often hurtful attitudes and actions toward others. I knew in my heart I was not where I should be. I thought repeatedly, "I was raised better than this!" The last half of ninth grade, I cried myself to sleep every night because I wanted to be where God wanted me to be, but I didn't have the back bone to walk away from my so-called "friends."

I was glad when school ended so I was not under the constant pressure of trying to be popular, but I still felt spiritually empty. I believe God was testing me to see how serious I was about changing my ways. I was desperate for God's presence in my life and finally gained it when I realized I had first to obey Him.

A true friend invited me to go to a small missions conference with her one weekend. I quickly accepted the invitation since I was willing to do anything to find God's will for my life. The first night, I could immediately feel the presence of the Lord and was feeling convicted about the very real need in missions. I could not wait for the second night. I cannot tell you what the preacher preached about, but God completely broke me. It felt like "the road to Damascus" kind of experience. It was as if God had shown a bright blinding light in my life and had spoken to me, giving me direction to be involved in missions in some way. I knew my "friends" were not going to be happy about this, but that was no longer important to me; I hadn't known this sort of peace and happiness for a long time. That Sunday, I announced