# How to Witness

his section summarizes much of the information from this course, to refresh your memory about what you've learned. There are also some additional helpful analogies and points to remember when witnessing. You may even want to extend this study to discuss the content of this section.

#### STARTING A WITNESSING ENCOUNTER

To get your feet wet in witnessing, an easy first step is learning to be friendly and talk with people. This may seem obvious, but make a habit of talking to your neighbors and coworkers regularly. Then practice being friendly with people at the park, at the gas station, or at the grocery store. Perhaps you already have an outgoing and friendly personality—that's great! If you tend to be a shy, introverted person, try to open up a little and start greeting people. A simple "Hi, how are you?" isn't difficult. Or say, "Nice day, isn't it? My name is so and so..." With a bit of practice, anyone can learn to be friendly. Most people respond warmly to warmth.

To share our faith effectively, we must let people know that we are not "weirdos" or religious fanatics. We must show them that we care, and we start by being friendly. A good friend (who is admittedly quite shy) mentioned that he and a buddy went to the park on a Saturday afternoon, just to practice being friendly to strangers. They had a great time, and had so much fun that they couldn't wait to get out the following weekend to take the next step.

After you have gained a measure of confidence in speaking to strangers, you can swing to the subject of spiritual things.

It's not wise to walk up to people and immediately assault them with talk about Jesus. They'll most likely think you're strange. Instead, start in the natural realm (everyday things) and then swing to the

spiritual realm. That's what Jesus did (see John chapter 4). He began talking with the woman at the well about natural things, then He swung to the spiritual. You may want to talk about sports or the weather, and then perhaps use something in the news to transition to the subject of spiritual things.

Alternatively, you can simply ask if the person knows of a good church in the area. Or you can use a gospel tract. It doesn't matter how you do it, as long as you do it. Start in the natural realm so the person doesn't think you're a religious nut, and then make the transition any way you want. That will lead you directly into the conversation about God.

#### WDJD: THE FOUR STEPPINGSTONES

By following the WDJD outline from the Quick Reference Card, you can confidently lead *any* witnessing encounter. You will be in control of every conversation you have about your faith. Imagine—you will know exactly where you are in a conversation and you will know exactly where it is going. You don't have to study Greek or understand archaeology; you just have to follow the four "steppingstones" to reach your goal. You can say goodbye to your fears.

There is no doubt that the first point is the most difficult to ask. Once you've brought up the subject of spiritual things, it becomes much easier. Here are the four steppingstones in the WDJD acronym.

# W: Would you consider yourself to be a good person?

You will be surprised to find that people are not offended by this question. If they say "No" (highly unlikely), ask them what they mean. Remember, you are asking people about their favorite subject—themselves. Most likely you'll find that they are kidding or that they've done something in their life that they feel badly about.

Otherwise, expect individuals to respond, "I'm a pretty good person" or "I'm a really good person." This reveals their pride and their self-righteousness. At this point you are ready to use the Law (the Ten Commandments) to humble them...the way Jesus did. Now move to the next steppingstone.



# D: Do you think you have kept the Ten Commandments?

Some will say yes, others will say no. Regardless, you simply continue by saying, "Let's take a look at a few and see. Have you ever told a lie?" Some will admit to lying; others will say they have told only "white lies"; a few will claim they have never lied even once. Gently press the issue: "Do you mean to say that you have never told anyone a lie to deceive them? Even once?" Usually they will say something like, "Maybe when I was a kid." Ask, "What does that make you?" They will hesitate to say, but get them to admit, "A liar."

People do not get angry with this approach; instead, they become sober. They may declare, "I don't believe in the Bible." Simply continue on your course. If they argue about the Bible, say, "I know you don't believe it. I am simply sharing with you what the Bible says. Okay? Let's keep going."

Continue going through the Commandments. You may want to ask about stealing next, then the Seventh Commandment, then the Third. Here is an example of how to go through each one:

- #9 We covered "lying" above.
- "Have you ever stolen anything?" Many will claim that they haven't. "Have you ever taken anything that did not belong to you, regardless of its value—anything? Even when you were younger? Be honest before God." Some will try to trivialize theft by saying that they stole when they were a child. Ask, "What does that make you?" and press them to say, "A thief."
- "Have you ever committed adultery?" Again, most will say no. Add, "Jesus said, 'Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' Have you ever looked at someone with lust?"
- "Have you ever taken the Lord's name in vain?" Some will try to wiggle out of this, but just press a little: "You mean you have never used God's name casually, or to express anger?" Most will admit to this one. Then gently explain, "So instead of using a four-letter filth word to express disgust, you have taken the name of the One who gave you life and everything that is precious to you, and you have dragged it through the mud. People don't even

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use Saddam Hussein's name to curse, and you have used Almighty God's name? That is called 'blasphemy,' and God promises that He will not hold anyone guiltless who takes His name in vain."

Note: You should be noticing something at this point. The individual will either grow quiet (his "mouth may be stopped" by the Law, Roman 3:19) or will be getting agitated. If the person seems to recognize his guilt, you may want to say at this point, "By your own admission, you're a lying thief, a blasphemer, and an adulterer at heart, and we've only looked at four of the Ten Commandments." If he is still trying to defend himself ("I'm not a bad person"), go through a few more Commandments.

- "Have you ever murdered anyone?" Obviously, most will say that they haven't. Point out, "Jesus said that if you merely call your brother a fool, you are in danger of judgment, and the Bible says if you've ever hated anyone, you are a murderer in God's eyes. God does not simply judge actions, He knows the intentions of the heart."
- "Have you always put God first in your life?" Most will admit that they haven't. "God says that He is supposed to be the primary love of our life. In fact, Jesus said that our love for God should be so great that our love for our parents, kids, friends, even our own lives should seem like hatred by comparison."
- "Have you ever made an idol, a god to suit yourself?" People will usually say that they haven't. "Have you pursued money more than God? Then you have made money an idol. Have you given work more attention than God? Then work is an idol. If you think, 'God is loving and wouldn't send me to hell,' you are correct; your god wouldn't send anyone to hell, because your god doesn't exist. He is a figment of your imagination. You've created a god in your own mind that you're more comfortable with, and that is called 'idolatry.' It's the oldest sin in the Book and God warns us that idolaters will not inherit the Kingdom of God."
- #5 "Have you always honored your parents, treating them in a way that is pleasing to God?"



- #10 "Have you ever coveted, or jealously desired something that did not belong to you? Covetousness reveals a lack of gratitude for what God has already given you."
- "Have you kept the Sabbath holy? God requires one day out of seven for you to rest and acknowledge Him, and you have failed to give Him what He has demanded. How many times have you neglected to bow your head before your meal and thank Him for the food He has provided? How many thousands of times do you think you've just greedily dug in without thanking your Provider?"

# J—Judgment: If God judges you by the Ten Commandments on the Day of Judgment, will you be *innocent* or guilty?

If the individual has not yet begun to show signs of conviction, he will more than likely start now. Most people will sense where you are going with the conversation and say, "Innocent." But they must understand and confess their guilt if they are ever to come to Jesus (see Proverbs 28:13). The following will help them do that. Use this as a guide in directing the conversation and dealing with common responses. Again, this is not a script for what to say; feel free to use your own words.

Them: "I'm a pretty good person."

You: "You just told me that you broke God's Commandments, the Moral Law. By your own admission, you're a lying thief, an adulterer at heart, a murderer, and a blasphemer. Think about it. Will you be innocent or guilty?"

Them: "But I haven't done those things for a long time."

You: "Imagine saying that in a court of law. 'Judge, I know I am guilty but it has been years.' He won't ignore your crime. He will see that justice is served and will punish you no matter how much time has elapsed. The courts punish war criminals from decades ago, and God doesn't forget sin no matter how long ago a person did it. Do you think you will be innocent or guilty?"

Them: "But I have done more good than bad."

You: "Again, think of a court of law. If you have broken the law, you are guilty. It doesn't matter how many good deeds you've done

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when you are being tried for your crime. You have broken God's Law. Will you be innocent or guilty?"

Them: "But that's man's law. God is different."

You: "You're right. God can never be bribed. And His standards are much higher than a human judge's. He loves justice and has promised that He will punish not only murderers and rapists, but also liars, thieves, adulterers, and blasphemers. You are in big trouble, aren't you?"

Often, people become awakened (aware of their sin), but not alarmed. In other words, they understand they have broken God's Law, but it seems that they just don't care. Your goal is to see them alarmed, because they should be—they are in great danger. This line of reasoning can help:

Let's imagine that a computer chip has been placed behind your ear, and it records everything that runs through your mind for a whole week: every secret thought, every deed, and every word that comes out of your mouth. Then all of your friends and family are called together and all of your thoughts are displayed on a big screen for them to see. How would that make you feel? Embarrassed? Ashamed? That is just what will happen on the day when God requires you to give an account for everything you've said and done for your whole life. All of your secret thoughts will be laid before Him. You are in big trouble.

It's wonderful to get a confession of guilt, but if the person simply won't be honest and admit his guilt, at some point you may have to help him. Say, "If you would just be honest, you know you will be guilty before God. Besides, that is what the Bible says and if you claim to be innocent, you are calling God a liar."

# D—Destiny: Will you go to heaven or hell?

Gently ask, "Do you think you will go to heaven or hell?" People won't be offended because you are simply asking a question, rather than telling them where they're going. Some will say, "Hell," but most will say, "Heaven." If they think they are going to heaven, you can use this analogy:

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Consider this. You are standing in a court of law, guilty of a serious crime. There is a \$100,000 fine. The judge says, "You are guilty. Anything to say before I pass sentence?" You answer, "Yes, Judge. I'm sorry for what I have done. Please forgive me." Can a good judge let you go simply because you say that you are sorry, or that you won't do it again? Of course not. There is a \$100,000 fine that must be paid. However, if someone pays the fine for you, can the judge then let you go? Yes; once the fine has been paid, your debt to the law has been satisfied and the judge can set you free.

In the same way, each of us is guilty before God, and He will not let us go simply because we say that we're sorry or that we won't do it again. Of course, we should be sorry, and we shouldn't do it again. However, the fine for our crime must still be paid.

If the person responds by saying that this is man's justice, and that God's ways are different, agree with him. Say that God's justice is far harsher than man's justice, and that His standards are infinitely higher.

Don't be afraid to tell people that if they die in their sins, the Bible makes it clear that they will go to hell. Ask, "Does that concern you?"

If they say that it doesn't concern them, or if you sense they are not humbled and don't recognize their need of God's forgiveness, it's very helpful to describe what hell is like until they show signs of concern. According to the Bible, hell is a place of eternal, conscious torment, where "the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched"; there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth," "everlasting punishment," "shame and everlasting contempt," and "eternal fire... the blackness of darkness for ever." Tell them that you don't want them to go to hell, and God doesn't want them to go to hell. Plead with them. If they do not seem concerned, it may be that they are just hiding it.

Don't feel pressured to give the Good News to a proud, selfrighteous (rebellious, cussing, arrogant) sinner who is not willing to admit his guilt before God. Remember, Jesus didn't give the gospel to the rich, young ruler, because he needed the Law to humble him first. You will have to watch and listen carefully because humility is not always obvious.

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If the person admits that it does concern him, only at that point should you go to the gospel. If you are able to detect humility (the person is no longer justifying and defending himself), or his responses indicate that he has been humbled, you now have the glorious pleasure of sharing the Good News.

#### SHARING THE GOSPEL

#### The Good News

Here's a good way to begin sharing the gospel: "God provided a way for you to be forgiven. The question is, how do you access this forgiveness?" Take the time to explain this thoroughly: "God loves you so much that He sent His only Son to suffer and die in your place, taking your punishment for you so that you could live. It's this simple: you broke the Law and Jesus paid your fine. Then Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death. If you will repent—turn away from sin—and place your trust in Jesus Christ alone as your Savior, God will forgive you and grant you everlasting life. He will change you from the inside out, and make you a new person in Christ."

This is the time to *magnify the love of God* to the sinner. Now you have the green light—go for it! Don't hold back: show the amazing length, width, depth, and height of God's love for the person as a sinner. This is when you pull out John 3:16. God offers complete forgiveness of sin and the gift of everlasting life *freely* to those who will surrender everything to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

Ask the individual if he understands what you have told him. If he is willing to confess and turn from his sins and trust the Savior for his eternal salvation, encourage him to pray and ask God to forgive him.

# The Prayer

Should we pray the traditional sinner's prayer with someone who we think is willing to turn from sin and trust in Christ? Perhaps this will shed some light on the subject: If someone you know committed adultery, would you lead him back to his wife and say, "Repeat after me: 'I am really sorry. I should not have slept with that woman'"? More than likely you wouldn't. If someone says he wants to pray right then and there, encourage him to do so. You might like to say, "You



can pray right now. Confess your sins and turn from them, and then tell God you are placing your trust in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life. Surrender your heart to Him. After you've prayed, I'll pray for you."

Then make sure the person has a Bible (get him one if necessary), and encourage him to read it daily and obey what he reads. Also, encourage him to get into a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church.

If the person doesn't ask you to pray with him, let him go on his way, but encourage him to think deeply about your conversation and to get his heart right with the Lord as soon as possible. You can then leave him in the hands of a faithful God, who will continue to speak to him through His Holy Spirit and bring him to genuine repentance in His time.

For a thorough treatment on why we should be very careful about hastily leading someone in a prayer for salvation, visit our website at LivingWaters.com and check out the article "How to Botch an Altar Call."

# Inoculated "Almost-Christians"

If you are dealing with an inoculated churchgoer who knows a few Bible verses (such as John 3:16), you probably have the toughest encounter of all. The person may answer all the questions correctly, but you know he doesn't live like a Christian should. Here are some questions that might reveal his level of understanding:

- 1. "Are you born again?" If he says he isn't, remind him that Jesus said a man must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5).
- 2. "When was the last time you read your Bible?" If he says it's been a long time, express your concern by asking, "What would you think if you sent love letters to your wife and she never took the time to read them? You would start to suspect that maybe she isn't very interested in you. God sent you sixty-six letters and you rarely read them. What should He conclude about your love for Him?"

Encourage the person to examine himself to see if he is in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). If there are no signs that he has been born again, if there is no fruit in his life to indicate that he is a child of God, ask,

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"Would you consider yourself to be a good person?" If he says yes, something is radically wrong, and you should take him through the Law.

## The Place of Apologetics

While apologetics (defense of the faith) play an important part in evangelism, it's vital to realize that they have a limited function in reaching the lost. If we confine our witness to arguing about the existence of God, the inspiration of Scripture, the age of the earth, etc., we are like a man who goes fishing with bait, but no hook. While he may attract the fish, they will end up fat and happy... and they will get away. The function of bait is to attract the fish and disguise the hook. When the fish come around, the fisherman pulls the hook into the jaw, and catches his fish. Apologetics are the bait, and the hook is God's Law. It is the Law that appeals to a man's conscience and brings the knowledge of sin.

### Hell-fire Preaching

It's important to realize that when we talk about the Law and the reality of hell and Judgment Day, we aren't referring to "hell-fire preaching." Hell-fire preaching will produce fear-filled converts. Using God's Law will produce tear-filled converts. Those who hear only the message of hell, without the Law to make it reasonable, come to Christ because they want to escape the fires of hell. But in their heart, they think God is harsh and unjust, because the Law hasn't been used to show them the exceedingly sinful nature of sin. They don't see that they *deserve* eternal damnation, that hell is their just dessert. They don't understand mercy or grace, and therefore lack gratitude to God for the cross—and gratitude is the prime motivation for evangelism. There will be no zeal in the heart of a false convert to evangelize.

However, those who hear and understand the Law come to Christ knowing that they have sinned against heaven. They know that God's eye is in every place beholding the evil and the good, and that God has seen darkness as though it were pure light. He's seen their thought life. If on the Day of Judgment God in His holiness exposed all the secret sins of their hearts, if He revealed all the evidence of their guilt, He could pick them up as an unclean thing and cast them into hell

and do what is just and right. But instead of giving them justice, He has given them mercy and grace. He's demonstrated His love toward them in that while they were yet sinners, Christ died for them. They therefore fall on their knees before that bloodstained cross and say, "Oh, God, if You did that for me, I'll do anything for You. I delight to do Your will, oh, my God. Your law is written on my heart."

#### HELPFUL ANALOGIES TO USE IN WITNESSING

If the person to whom you are witnessing seems to be having trouble understanding a spiritual truth, you may find these analogies helpful. (See *The Evidence Study Bible* for these and many others.)

#### You Don't Just "Believe" in a Parachute

A churchgoer may need help understanding the difference between just "believing in Jesus" and being "born again." Say, "If you and I were on an airplane and we knew we were about to crash, and I had my parachute on and you didn't, what is the most loving thing I could do for you? It would be to tell you to put on your parachute! If you told me you already believed in the parachute under your seat, but you didn't put it on, I'd plead with you to strap it on right away—because I know what will happen to you if you jump without the parachute. Simply believing in the parachute will not help you; you must put it on for it to do you any good.

"That's what the Bible says you must do with Jesus. It's not enough to simply 'believe' in Jesus (even the demons 'believe'); you must 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' in order to be saved. You do that by repenting and placing your trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. It's called being born again."

# The Good Judge

A person may say that, although he's sinned against God, he will go to heaven anyway. This is usually because he thinks that God is "good," and that He will therefore overlook sin in his case. Point out that if a judge in a criminal case has a guilty murderer standing before him, the judge, if he is a good man, can't just let him go. He must ensure that the guilty man is punished.

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Say, "If the judge just let him go, he'd be a corrupt judge and should himself be brought to justice. If he is a good judge, he will do everything in his power to see that justice is served. Likewise, if God is good, He must (by nature) punish murderers, rapists, thieves, liars, adulterers, fornicators, and those who have lived in rebellion to His Law and to the inner light that God has given to every man in the conscience."

But God is also rich in mercy, not wanting anyone to perish. He demonstrated His love for us on the cross. Tell the person, "We broke God's Law and Jesus paid our fine. If you will repent and trust in Jesus, God will forgive your sins and dismiss your case."

#### The Value of a Soul

If the person you are witnessing to doesn't seem to understand the seriousness of immediately getting right before God, try this: "Would you sell one of your eyes for a million dollars? What about both of them for ten million? Of course you wouldn't—no one in his right mind would—because your eyes are precious to you. If you think about it, your eyes are merely the windows of your soul (your life). Your life 'looks' out of your eyes. If your eyes are precious to you, how much more should you value your life?

"Jesus said, 'If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.' Jesus also said, 'What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?' There is nothing more important than your own soul and where you will spend eternity."

# Right in His Own Eyes

Many people don't think about the consequences of their actions and don't realize that they themselves are responsible. Consider the way dogs cross the road. A dog will wander onto a freeway oblivious to the danger. His tail wags as he steps between cars without a second thought. Cars swerve. Tires squeal. The noise is deafening as vehicles smash into each other. The sleepy dog stops wagging his tail for a moment and looks at the pile of smoldering, broken cars on the free-

way. His expression betrays his thoughts. His bone-burying brain doesn't realize for one moment that he is responsible for the disaster.

When man wanders onto the freeway of sin, his tail wags with delight. He thinks that this is what he was made for. His thoughts of any repercussions for his actions are shallow. His mind wanders into lust, then predictably he wanders onto the path of adultery. Suddenly a disaster sits before him. His marriage is shattered, his reputation is ruined, his children are twisted and scarred. But like the dumb dog, he doesn't realize for one moment that he is solely responsible for his sin. What he has done is right in his own eyes. This is why the perfect Law of God needs to be arrayed before his darkened eyes—to show him that his way is not right in the eyes of a perfect God.

#### IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER IN WITNESSING

Communication consists of more than our words. When it comes to sharing our faith, there are certain aspects that we often overlook. The following are points to keep in mind.

#### Tone of Voice

It is imperative that we ask God for the right spirit, tone, and attitude in a witnessing encounter. We don't want to come across like a "know-it-all," or as arrogant. Our attitude should be humble compassion mixed with a deep concern. Be resolute, but gentle. Don't be smug with your arguments. We're called to speak with gentleness and respect, like compassionate doctors with a cure. We should never become angry, or even raise our voice. We have the freedom to speak very boldly, if the hearer senses that we are coming from a place of love and concern.

#### Gestures

Don't point your finger at someone in a judgmental way. Be careful even of your body language. Don't stand above people if you can help it; sit down beside them. Don't have a smug grin on your face as though you are winning an argument, or fold your arms as though you are scolding a child. Remember, above all, that you are only a fellow sinner saved by God's grace, pleading with others to come to the Savior.

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### Your Testimony and the Law

If you choose to give your testimony when witnessing, remember to weave in the Law. Here's how *not* to testify: "Before I knew Jesus, I was sad and unfulfilled. I tried everything but it just didn't make me happy. Then I gave my heart to Jesus and I have been so happy ever since." Remember, that will introduce a false motive. Instead, say something like this:

Years ago I lived for myself. Then I looked at the Ten Commandments and I realized that I had broken God's Law. I began to understand that He saw me as a liar, and that all liars will have their place in the Lake of Fire. I realized that I had used His holy name as a filth word, and that He doesn't hold people guiltless who take His name in vain. [Go through all Ten Commandments if you are able to.] That is when I realized that I was going to be in big trouble on Judgment Day, and that I deserved to go to hell. I certainly didn't want to go to hell—that's a place I never want to experience. Then I heard that Jesus did something truly amazing: two thousand years ago, He was brutally whipped and beaten, and nailed to a cross. He willingly shed His blood and died in my place so that I could be forgiven. I broke the Law and Jesus paid my fine—He took my punishment for me.

When I heard that, I dropped to my knees, confessed my sins to God, and gave my life to Jesus Christ. Ever since then, I have been reading the Bible because I want to know more and more about the One who loves me so much that He died for me. Now I know that I have eternal life, and will be found "not guilty" on the Day of Judgment—not because I'm a good person, but simply because of God's mercy.

This testimony is only an example, showing how to properly present the issues. Obviously, you need to tailor your story to reflect your personal experience. It is important to remember the principle of law before grace, and to use the Moral Law to bring the knowledge of sin before sharing the gospel.



# Loving Our Neighbors

The greatest way to love our neighbors is to share the gospel with them. But neighbors are like family—we don't want to offend them unnecessarily, because we have to live with them. We need to be rich in good works toward all men, but especially our neighbors. The Bible reveals that good works are a legitimate means of evangelism. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). It is God's will that "by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15). Sinners may disagree with what you believe, but seeing your good works makes them think, "I don't believe what he believes, but he sure does. He certainly is sincere in his faith."

A friendly wave, a gift for no reason, fresh-baked goods, etc., can pave the way for evangelism. Offer to mow your neighbors' lawn or help do some painting. Volunteer to pick up their mail and newspapers while they're on vacation. Compliment them on their landscaping and ask for gardening tips. Invite them over for a barbecue or dessert. Pray for an opportunity to share the gospel, and be prepared for it when it comes.

#### **Practice**

Keep your Quick Reference Card with you at all times, and practice going through WDJD and CRAFT as often as needed until you have them memorized. Find a friend and role-play. You had to practice almost everything else in life—walking, writing, reading, riding a bike, driving a car. Evangelism is no different. Once you have these memorized and begin putting them into practice, you will start an incredible evangelistic adventure. You will be amazed that the responses of those you speak to will be very predictable. In no time at all, sharing your faith will become second nature to you. What's more, God will be with you every step of the way.



# HELPFUL VERSES TO USE WHEN WITNESSING

Exodus 20:1–17 (the Ten Commandments)

Psalm 51 (as an example of a prayer of repentance)

Isaiah 53:5,6

Ezekiel 18:4

Matthew 5:27,28

Matthew 7:21

Matthew 12:36

Luke 13:3

Luke 16:15

John 3:3

John 3:16

John 3:18

John 3:36

John 14:6

John 14:21

Acts 4:12

Acts 17:30,31

Romans 2:5,6

Romans 5:8

1 Corinthians 6:9,10

Colossians 1:20-22

Hebrews 9:27

1 John 1:9,10

