



Living Proof

Bringing the Kingdom of God into your everyday world

Week 4: BEAUTY OF THE BRIDE—THE MUSIC OF THE GOSPEL

1. Read “*The Music of the Gospel*”:

What is the music of the gospel? The **music** of the gospel is the beauty of the indwelling Christ as lived out in the everyday relationships of life. The **gospel** is the good news that Jesus Christ has solved the problem of man’s sin and offers him the potential of an exchanged life, a life in which the resources of God Himself are available for his transformation. And as the gospel is translated into music, it makes redemptive relationships possible. When the world observes husbands loving their wives, and wives supporting and caring for their husbands and families, they have seen a miracle; they have heard the music. It is miraculous music for which many of them are longing.

The two greatest forces in evangelism are a healthy church and a healthy marriage. The two are interdependent. You can’t have one without the other. It is the healthy marriage, however, which is the “front lines weapon.” The Christian family in a community is the ultimate evangelistic tool, assuming the home circle is an open one in which the beauty of the gospel is readily available. It’s the old story: **When love is seen, the message is heard.**

Even God’s evangelism strategy in the Old and New Testament involves a beautiful bride and her relationship to Him. Israel and the church are called “brides” by God and their beauty is of great concern to Him. But the beauty described (Ezekiel 16, Ephesians 5) is relational. It is the beauty of how they lived together. Israel became a harlot because she forgot the source of her beauty and splendor. The church at Ephesus was charged with the loss of beauty even though she was theologically sound (the condition of hundreds of churches today).

Most evangelism training involves helping people learn how to “say the words” of the gospel. Little attention is paid to developing a biblical philosophy of ministry which moves the corporate life of the church away from ugliness to beauty. We must become candidates for God’s blessing, begin to incarnate His beauty in our relationships, and open these relationships to the non-Christian. Once the “**music**” has been heard, expect to be asked for the “reason for the hope (beauty) that you have.”

Play the music, and they’ll be candidates for the Word! Sheldon Vanauken says it so well! “The best argument for Christianity is Christians; their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians—when they are somber and joyless, when they are self-righteous and smug in complacent consecration, when they are narrow and repressive, then Christianity dies a thousand deaths.”

When the joy, the certainty, the completeness, and the beauty of a Christian community is cultivated and communicated, evangelism is the glorious result. I have written this book with the intention of nudging the church toward its divine birthright so that it will explode its beauty into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of your world.

Joe Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism*

What is the “music of the gospel” according to Joe Aldrich?

The biblical pattern is for the individual’s witness to be carried on within the setting of a corporate effort. The corporate witness says, “Look at all of us. This is who you too can become. There’s hope.” It’s possible to discount or explain away an isolated individual, but it’s impossible to refute the corporate testimony. – Jim Peterson, Living Proof

2. Read Acts 2:42–47; 4:23–37 and 1 Thessalonians 1:2–10.

- How do these texts describe the Beauty of the Bride and Music of the Gospel?

- How does this confirm what Jesus said in John 13:34–35?

- What were the results?

- Describe a time you have seen this happen in your life?

3. What in our hearts and culture hinder us from living out the music of the gospel today?

4. How can we help each other become the music of the gospel?

5. What can we do together in our social networks that will be the music of the gospel?