

OLD PLACES, NEW FACES

**Bible Places Illuminating
Today's Christian**

**12 Studies
Based on John**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
1. Living with Lost Friends and Neighbors <i>Location: The Other Side of the Jordan</i>	5
2. Living with the New Birth <i>Location: Jerusalem at Night</i>	15
3. Living with Humility <i>Location: Judean Countryside</i>	25
4. Living with Jesus' Love <i>Location: Samaria</i>	33
5. Living with a Shepherd <i>Location: The Sheep Pen</i>	43
6. Living with Death <i>Location: Bethany</i>	51
7. Living with Instruction <i>Location: The Upper Room</i>	59
8. Living with Denial <i>Location: The Sea of Tiberias</i>	67
9. Living with a King <i>Location: The Governor's Palace</i>	74
10. Living with Finished & Unfinished Business <i>Location: Golgotha</i>	82
11. Living in the Light <i>Location: The Empty Tomb</i>	89
12. Living with God in the Flesh <i>Location: Behind Closed Doors</i>	96
Leader's Notes	104
Reorder Information	123
Other Books by Kent Groethe	124

Introduction to

OLD PLACES, NEW FACES

Places have to do with geography. In the Bible we find God's people in many different places, both physically and spiritually, in their relationship to the Creator and Savior. We, like them, journey through many lands in our Christian walk. We move from chaos to order, from Ur to Canaan and from disobedience to obedience. The geographical locations of Biblical characters can symbolically refer to places we find ourselves with respect to our faith. As we become more acquainted with our spiritual geography, we will better discern where God would have us go or what changes we need to make in order to serve Him better.

Old Places, New Faces seeks to make the stories and places of the Bible a reality in our lives today. It seeks to get at the relevant messages for today as found in the pages of the Scriptures. This study relates to the Bible as a book that speaks clearly about present realities through stories of the past. The Bible is not only intended to give the reader knowledge about events and people in the past, but through these events and people, inspire greater faith.

Old places from within the Bible can come alive with present significance to new faces—that is, us. May this be true for you as you use this study.

LESSON 1:

LIVING WITH LOST FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

The Other Side of the Jordan

Not many Christians take part in sharing their faith with others in North America today. There are many reasons for this. People do not hear about the need for others to know Christ in their churches, so many times they do not even think that others need Jesus. Also, tolerance is a very important value in our culture and this often leads people to believe that either 1) All beliefs are equally valid so we do not need to convert others to our beliefs, and 2) It would be arrogant to claim that we know the truth more than anyone else. Many Christians are also uncomfortable with sharing their faith because they either do not understand Christian beliefs well and/or know that their own faith is immature and shallow. The fear of being rejected or ridiculed is another obstacle to sharing faith.

Yet, if Christians do not share Christ, no one else will. As a result, many people will not experience salvation and life with God. It is imperative that the church makes evangelism and missions a high priority in its work and helps members learn to share Jesus in appropriate, tactful, loving, and simple ways.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

READ JOHN 1:35-51

1. What was the first thing Andrew did after meeting Jesus and realizing He was special? (v. 41)

7. Have you ever shared your relationship to Jesus with a family member or friend?

8. Sharing one's faith is not an easy thing to do for most people. Check as many reasons listed below that make it hard for you to share your faith with somebody you love.

_____ I am afraid I will be ridiculed or looked down on.

_____ I do not know what I would say.

_____ I am not sure that Jesus Christ is the only way.

_____ I have doubts about my own faith.

_____ I will sound arrogant if I talk like I have the truth.

_____ I don't think much about the spiritual state of others who are not Christian.

_____ I do not know much about the Bible or the doctrines of the Christian faith.

9. Did Andrew and Philip tell their loved ones doctrines and religious truths or did they introduce them to the person of Jesus?

10. What is more important to you: a great relationship or a great truth?

11. How might the above discussion help us focus on the right thing when sharing our faith?

We usually share with others what excites us most: a sports team, our work, our house, a hobby, etc.

12. How excited are you about your relationship with Jesus Christ? Why?

13. What excites you most in your life? What do you share most with others?

Leader's Notes

LESSON 1: Living with Lost Friends and Neighbors

Location: The Other Side of the Jordan

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Remind participants that people who do not know Jesus through repentance and faith will be separated from God eternally.
2. Help participants to know the vital part they play in people coming to faith in Jesus.
3. Stir participants to think about how they can become better ambassadors of Christ.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Andrew found his brother Simon and told him that he had found the Messiah.
2. Andrew and Peter were brothers.
3. Philip found Nathanael and told him about Jesus.
4. Philip told Nathanael to “come and see.”
5. Nathanael instantly believed that Jesus was the Son of God.
6. They were friends.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.
9. Andrew and Philip did not get into religious doctrines but simply introduced their loved ones to Jesus.
10. Answers will vary.
11. People usually want a real relationship more than simply information about a person. Consequently, we relate what our relationship to Jesus means to us more than sharing doctrines/Christian beliefs.
12. Answers will vary.
13. Answers will vary.
14. Answers will vary.

15. The best ways to help your faith grow are to:
 - Read, hear and study the Word
 - Worship, study the Bible and pray with other believers
 - Participate in regular devotional/prayer activities
 - Receive communion regularly
16. Answers will vary.
17. Learning facts about the faith—rather than growing into a more intimate awareness of God's presence, His great love and His daily activity in your life—can lead to a dry, unexciting faith.
18. We should always be ready to give a good answer when others ask why we have hope.
19. Paul says we should share our faith with gentleness and respect.
20. Paul asked the Colossians to pray for opportunities to arise for him to share Christ.
21. Answers will vary.
22. Answers will vary. Being a light in this context can mean that we help people find their way out of the darkness of unbelief by sharing the Gospel with them.
23. There is an often quoted line, "People won't care what you know until they know that you care." Our witness for Christ becomes much more successful if our lives are examples of moral integrity, we help others in need on a regular basis, and we truly care for those with whom we witness our faith.
24. People will be affected by our message and witness if we are unloving, immoral, and don't show compassion for those in need.
25. Answers will vary.
26. Answers will vary.

LESSON 2: Living with the New Birth

Location: Jerusalem at Night

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Teach/remind participants that humans cannot come to faith in