

SAMPLE PREVIEW

Pre-Field Preparation

Spiritual Focus Before You Go

by Howard and Bonnie Lisech



*Pre-Field Devotional Bible studies
for those preparing for short-term missions*

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Before You Go

As you go into another culture, it will be a significant step of faith and an experience which can impact you for the rest of your life. Whether there will be lasting benefit to you and those you hope to minister to is mostly up to you and the way you prepare for the experience. As you get ready to go, you may experience excitement, adrenaline, busyness, pressure, frustration and even a hint of worry. Leaving the “known” and venturing into the “unknown” can be stressful, but that’s why preparing your heart for ministry and service in another culture is essential. Take the challenge to prepare seriously as you complete *Pre-Field Preparation*.



These brief devotional Bible studies will bring different concepts and principles to your mind as you open God’s Word. Allow Him to teach, challenge, and prepare your heart for significant ministry.



There are no short cuts! You certainly wouldn’t think of rushing down to the local airport just in time to catch your overseas flight without taking your suitcase, medications, extra clothes, shaving kit, etc. That would be absurd. This trip is not just another day in your life. It takes considerable and intentional effort to get ready to go on a ministry trip to another culture. Don’t fall into the trap of exerting so much effort on the physical preparations that you forget the essential discipline of preparing your heart spiritually.

You will face challenges, discomforts, disappointments, and strange foods and smells. More importantly, you will find significant opportunities to show Christ’s love

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to people who desperately need it. When you can't even say "Hi, how are you?" in the local language, people will be observing that you are different because of your Christian love and character.

Take pre-field preparation seriously and ask the Lord, "What would you have me do or change in order to best represent YOU on my mission trip?" Give Him the right to reveal anything in your heart that needs attention before you set foot on foreign soil. You will gain new perspectives, purposes,

Your heart will be stretched on this trip and it will never be quite as small again after you return.

values, and a deeper understanding of God's heart for the lost and hurting people of our world. Make sure you are willing to do "whatever it takes" to equip yourself spiritually for this exciting ministry experience. You will

be amazed to discover that as you go to "minister" you may instead find yourself being "ministered to" by the very people you want to help.

The devotional Bible studies in *Pre-Field Preparation* may excite you, challenge you, and occasionally convict you. Ask the Lord to use these studies to open your mind and heart as you prepare for ministry in a cross-cultural setting. We encourage you as you GO FOR IT! But we do encourage you to GO PREPARED!



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Day 1

The World Will Know!

By this all men will know that you are my disciples,
if you love one another.”

John 13:35

In most countries, you'll stand out in a crowd because you are obviously from another culture. John 13:35 promises that if you love one another, you will be known by the peoples of the world as followers of Jesus. Loving others may seem like a simple command, but the love Jesus asks for is beyond the norm.

1. Read John 13:34-35. Loving others is commanded in the Old Testament. What makes this command to love new?
2. According to Rom. 5:8, how was Christ an example of this extraordinary love?
3. Read 1 John 3:16. How did the Apostle John define *love*?
4. By now, you should understand why this kind of love is not the norm. In ourselves we don't possess the capacity to love in this way. According to the verses you've read in this study so far, what is the major characteristic of Christ's love that makes it beyond human love?
5. According to Rom. 5:5, who gives a believer power to love others the way Jesus loved?

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(Note: The love God gives to believers by the Holy Spirit is called "agape" love. Agape love includes a willingness to sacrifice or suffer for the sake of another. This is the love that is a fruit of the Spirit [Gal. 5:22]. Agape love often means making a choice with our will and ignoring our feelings.)

6. The opportunity to die in another's place is rare, though it has happened. It is more common to be called upon to die, sometimes daily, to our own desires for the sake of another. Give two examples of this kind of love. Examples: Forgiving a fellow believer when they offended you is a sacrificial act of agape love.

"Love is denial of self for another's gain.
It is doing what Jesus Himself would do."*

7. In 1 John 3:18, what problem is John addressing? How does John say agape love is demonstrated?

8. According to Gal. 5:13b, how is love demonstrated? Why may we find it difficult to obey this command?

9. Love is an action word. Often helpful deeds that are not expected are some of the greatest actions of love. Why?

10. Give examples of ways you might be called upon to serve another believer.

*The Expositors Bible Commentary

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11. Remember, "Love is denial of self for another's gain. It is doing what Jesus Himself would do." Jesus' life is the perfect model of love, both in word and action. Think back through His life and list at least five ways, other than His death on the cross, in which He sacrificed to love others.

If you are going on a mission trip on your own, with a partner, or with a team, agape love for other believers is the key. The world's people *will know* that you are a follower of Jesus. In fact, this is God's promise!

Let all that you do be done in love. 1 Cor. 16:14

12. Agape love begins at home. Are you currently demonstrating agape love by serving your family members? Explain. What is the meaning of 1 Cor. 13:3.

Remember: Agape love only comes through the empowering of the Holy Spirit when a believer is in fellowship with Christ through obedience, (no unconfessed sin). In Scripture, this is called walking in the light. (See 1 John 1:5-9.)

Challenge Project: Now is the time to practice! Do something loving for a family member or friend that is totally unexpected and that requires personal sacrifice. Journal by explaining your deed and record your thoughts and insights.

Thank the Lord for pouring out His love into your heart through the Holy Spirit.
Ask God to empower you to love with actions beyond the norm as you walk with Him through yielding to His will and obeying the Word.
Pray that the world will know you follow Jesus.

