



WHEN FOLLOWING JESUS SEEMS

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RECKLESS

# RECKLESS

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A COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY MADE, WRITTEN AND  
DESIGNED FOR UNION POINT CHURCH.  
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# RECKLESS

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WHEN FOLLOWING JESUS SEEMS

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# INTRODUCTION

**Reckless:** *marked by lack of proper caution : careless of consequences*

At the time of writing this introduction, I am watching as the business world is completely astonished by how a company, once just a seemingly small ripple of an idea, could have ever evolved into a record setting business that would surpass a value of over a trillion dollars. In the eyes of those who pursue the "American dream," this would not only be an iconic pinnacle, but in many ways the very essence of a fairy tale.

Officially founded and organized on April 1, 1976, what began as a simple line of thought, developed into a complex line of code and would eventually develop into a line of products whose sole purpose was to bring fluidity of technology in the hands of the user, Apple Inc. was birthed. A dream carved out in a garage in California was propelled by the seemingly RECKLESS decisions and moves made by one Steve Jobs. Notorious for his laser focus on innovation, simplicity and design, Steve would take risks and chances that unsettled many business savvy minds around him. To those analyzing Steve Jobs, the risks he took made them

uncomfortable. Safe bets, incremental changes and padding yourself against possible losses, were not only seen as the ways to build a profitable and sustainable company, but were accepted to be standards by which one operates continually. What is clear, is that Steve held none of these things as religious absolutes. They did hold truth in many ways, but the way forward meant taking what seemed to be a risk to many.

By means many would consider a RECKLESS way to form a tech company, Steve Jobs showed the world, not once but twice, what it looks like to step into faithful action in pursuit of something you love. When many only flirt with a fleeting thought of taking a step out on the limb, Jobs was a stalwart example of what going all in really looks like. Love that produces action may lead us to do things others would never even consider, things that would appear from the outside to be RECKLESS. Apart from this seemingly RECKLESS action, whether good or bad, our lives would have never been revolutionized by the products of which Apple produced.

Steve Jobs was human and Apple is but the product of his humanity. While both produce for us an example to understand what RECKLESS risk looks like, it is only a glimmer and broken image of what God has and continues to do, through Jesus for us, His created humanity.

There before the garden, before creation, God had a dream. While Scripture does not produce this understanding for us verbatim, we can understand this by reflecting on how we, His image bearers, process, live and exist even in our fallen state. This dream apparently compelled God to not only consider what creating this world, creatures, and humanity would look like, but even greater, it moved Him to action. From our perspective, looking back I am often plagued with the question, why? Why would He, all knowing, omniscient and transcendent, create us all the while knowing what the outcomes and likelihoods would be of our existence? In all of this we can discern a few things. First, although knowing all lines of direction and even the eventual outcome, God still moved to produce an idea of His passion, to give His love to others, to bring His creation into His family. Secondly, we see that, unlike the inability for us or Steve Jobs to control the outcomes of what seems to be risky or RECKLESS, God would not let the outcome sway Him from moving towards what could be perceived as a RECKLESS action. God made way before the foundations of the world through Jesus. Paul speaks to this in his letter to the Ephesians in chapter 1:3-4, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even*

*as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."*

We know that God is not RECKLESS. But in the world's perspective, like the business savvy critique of Steve Jobs, everything about Jesus, the cross and God's redemption of humanity seems not only ludicrous, but RECKLESS. Paul echoes this truth in His letter to the Corinthians where he wrote in chapter 1:18, *"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* The cross defies our understanding and presents us with a love that will stop at nothing to pursue the dream and vision set forward for God's desired family. The cross presents for us what would seem like a RECKLESS act of laying your life down for another. An act very few ever entertain for those they love, let alone their enemies. This is the perspective of God's seemingly RECKLESS pursuit of our lives. It defies the odds, the seeming setbacks, and all the critiques one can throw His way.

The interesting thing about Steve Job's RECKLESS pursuit in the building of Apple, is that it spilled over into the lives of those who both worked for Apple and even more so those who were benefactors of it's technological advancements. Jobs carried a wake of passion that consumed all those within its reach. Steve's passion was infused into every Apple owner's life the minute the cellophane peeled off

the face of its most recent product released. After all, with the release of the iPhone we saw how far people would go to get their hands on the latest generation. Sleeping on sidewalks for weeks in advance, skipping showers and normal hygienic care, these people seemed to be completely out of their minds. How much more RECKLESS could you get? Yet what were we to expect? They had caught fire with more than what many of us saw as just another product. They had become believers of the vision, the mission and the change Apple had brought, and were following the RECKLESS pattern that had been modeled for them. (Personally I still think it's a bit over the top.)

If the RECKLESS vision of Steve Jobs changed people's lives to the degree that people litter sidewalks with their tent laden expectations, then one must ask why we who claim to have been radically rescued by the seemingly RECKLESS love of God carry very little resemblance. In the gospels we see Jesus calling regular men with set careers, even some great careers, to come and follow Him. Their response reveals for us their move in favor of a RECKLESS way. They throw their nets down, leave dad in the boat, and follow. I can almost hear the rumblings around town. "Can you believe John and James? Left all that their dad Zebedee had built for them. Just left him in the boat and took off with this nobody. What was his name? Ahh yes, Jesus. Can you believe it? Such RECKLESS choices".



One thing is clear, when we fully capture the vision of who Jesus is we follow His RECKLESS ways. *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"* Matt 16:24-26 ESV. This invitation of Jesus is one that is not for a select few. It is an invitation to find life through the RECKLESS way of Jesus. A life that takes up the cross and walks willingly to die to self, is radical. The world will look at this kind of response in the very same way the business world looked at Jobs, or those villagers who knew the men who left all to follow Jesus. It will defy the norm. It will leave many questioning your sanity. And even more so it will leave them wondering what it was to move you in such a way to risk everything to pursue Jesus with RECKLESS abandon.

Over the next four chapters we will look at some key areas of stepping into the RECKLESS call of Jesus. We will examine how His RECKLESS love calls us into the family and how to demonstrate the same to others around us. How stepping into a RECKLESS faith will run contrary to the way the world lives or even possibly moves us into a RECKLESS reliance of His provision and will. And finally how God's

RECKLESS pursuit of us should move us into responding to His command to “go into all the world making disciples,” of this good news of the Kingdom come. It is my hope that by the end of this series we will find ourselves being ever more inclined to willingly embrace and step into living a RECKLESS life for Jesus. Even more so quite possibly we could find ourselves saying “not my will but yours be done,” or “here I am Lord, send me!”

# CHAPTER 1

*(Reckless Love)*

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# RECKLESS

# CHAPTER 1

(Reckless Love)

## PASSAGES

*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;*

*and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. **Isaiah 53:4-6 (ESV)***

*6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.*

*7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

**Romans 5:6–10 (ESV)**

## OVERWHELMING

The old saying goes, “Love is a verb.” Or there are others that express the same token. “Love does.” Or one of my

personal favorites by John McDonald, "Love isn't love until you give it away." There are many options that fill books, websites and the like, which present us with common nominal phrases attempting to paint for us what love really looks like. These phrases and slogans may make awesome instagram, facebook or twitter posts, but ironically so, they do little to actually move us towards the direction they point. What many of us miss is not a slogan, or thought of what love is, but an actual example of what love does.

In the words of Isaiah we see the extent of what true love actually does. It is Jesus himself that said, *"greater love have no man than to lay his life down for his friends. John 15:13"* Yet, Jesus' love demonstrates for us who He calls friends. Paul points us to this reality when he says, *"For if while we were enemies. Romans 5:10"* ENEMIES! Let that sink in. You, I and the rest of humanity God called friend even while we were enemies. It is a remarkable and confounding thought. By all standards we could consider this to seem completely RECKLESS.

While surveying the landscape of humanity, it is pretty easy to see that love and enemies are polar opposites. There is little lost love between North and South Korea, the dividing line in America's political wings, the Patriots and all other NFL teams, and the big one, battle of Coke or Pepsi. All these

things reveal for us how much easier it is to hate another than to truly love. When we look at the love of God we clearly see it demonstrated in Jesus. We see the love of God in how He creates us even despite our current outcome. He moves to save us even before we moved in a way that needed saving. He is a God that gives in the face of rejection, in the face of affliction and even death. His love is not expressed with simple words, but is expressed in deeds of kindness, forgiveness and grace. His love is one that moves to make right what we made wrong. One that takes on Himself the shame of our sin and our deserved death so that we would only find His goodness and mercy. In a world driven by hate, this is a RECKLESS way. This is not seen as "hedging ones bets" properly. Rather, it could easily be perceived as a RECKLESS, risky and wasted investment.

There are little descriptives that accurately fill what such a painting of love looks like. If any word could even begin to do justice I think it would have to be, OVERWHELMING. Standing in the gallery of loves portraits, when we see the picture of Jesus and to what depths He will go through for the passion of His heart, for His family, His enemies, it is simply breathe taking. When we come to grips with our need for this kind of love, that this is our only one and true love, it will

become the OVERWHELMING love that opens us to the way of His RECKLESS call.

Following Jesus is not a mandated task spouted down and commanded from on high. Following Jesus is the overflow of a life fully OVERWHELMED by the unspeakable love of God. When Jesus calls His disciples to come and follow Him, it is the invitation to share the love of Jesus to the world around you. This is more than sharing a warm and fuzzy feeling or experience with someone. It is literally, more often than not, an invitation to walk in the fullness of Jesus. Paul understood this as he spoke of sharing in the sufferings of Christ. Through these things he rejoiced. Why we might ask? Because he saw them as the fruits of truly exemplifying Jesus. In talking to Peter, Jesus asks him repeatedly, *"Do you love me? John 21:15"* Peter struggled with this, but at the core of the dialogue it is clear that feeding the sheep, as Peter was told to do of Jesus, would only be possible through an OVERWHELMING love for Jesus.

Jesus' way may always seem RECKLESS. It is meant to in many respects. It is only when we are fully compelled by the OVERWHELMING LOVE of Jesus for our lives that will we fully trust Him to take that step of faith into His RECKLESS call.

# REFLECTION

How has your life been affected by the OVERWHELMING LOVE of Jesus? Have you come to grips with the depths of His love for you? Yes you.

Have you attempted to "follow Jesus" out of a feeling of duty or obligation? What are the motives behind the way you live?

If you were to give an honest review of your life, would you say that those around you come in contact with Jesus' Overwhelming Love? Do you extend forgiveness, grace and mercy to only people you like? How do you treat those you consider enemies?



Have you ever experienced rejection, hurt or suffering of any kind because of your love for Jesus? What is your reaction? Have you stepped away from following Jesus in certain situations because you fear that these things may follow?

# PASSAGES

## PASSAGES

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, <sup>[a]</sup> not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. **2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)***

*But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. **Psalms 86:15 (ESV)***

# NEVER ENDING

Growing up on a construction site can open you up to many experiences. One of the most common things you will find in this type of employment is the unreliability of people. Although not everyone is this way, it seems that those you often count on the most always under deliver. Most that wained in their effort to follow through on their commitments would find themselves sent to the proverbial hill. In other words, termination was the likely outcome. Hearing the words, "you're fired" were just a part of the regularly employed catalog. This was the case for many except one guy by the name of Doby. Or at least that was the only name I knew him by. (Nicknames are common place on the job site, and I often

joke that these names produced a new identity for some to escape who they had been or really are.)

Doby was the best carpenter I had ever seen. This guy knew everything about anything. When framing roofs, he was so good with math that once you gave him one measurement he would not need another the entire way through any hip/valley combo. It was simply amazing. For all the things Doby had going right in the construction field, his kryptonite was alcohol. There were times, on a hot summer day, I could have sworn Doby was sweating pure Anheuser Busch products. Due to Doby's extra curricular activities, this more often than not lead to my dad and I sitting in the driveway honking the horn, trying to get Doby out of bed. (In many ways trying to get someone awake after an all night binger is about as exciting as wrestling a 300 lb gorilla.)

Day after day, morning after morning this little procedure was maxed out on the repeat button. I had such trouble reconciling why my Dad would put up with this. It seemed to press against all that was morally right and good about the employment system. Yet the next morning here we trekked again. What later became apparent to me was that, unlike myself, Dad saw something in Doby he just loved. Sure all these mornings of waiting and playing horn lead orchestras for all the neighbors drove him crazy, but he just kept on with

this seemingly NEVER ENDING action.

The Apostle Peter was fully aware of this kind of NEVER ENDING love, so expressed in Jesus. Like Doby, and the rest of us, Peter had his kryptonite, sins and struggles. What one step ahead would deliver was only followed and buried by the very near three steps back. One minute brilliance would flow, the next he is wanting to build a temple, sinking deep in his circumstances, and denying the only one that had ever truly loved him. I think Peter knew for someone to love him in any way had to be RECKLESS. In his second letter, Peter establishes the reality of how NEVER ENDING God's love is for us. He echoes the psalmist's words of the steadfast love of God. Slow to anger, merciful and gracious. In examining himself, Peter only knew what it would fully take to love a guy like himself.

One thing is interesting about Doby. He knew his struggle. He realized how steadfast Dad had been in giving him grace time after time. He loved all of us for it. Doby stayed with us for right around 10 years. Many things were a constant battle, but I think what was demonstrated for him was the NEVER ENDING love of God. When others had walked away and counted his situation useless and anything invested in him as a RECKLESS pursuit, right out his window sat a man that saw all, knew all and yet valued him based on a measure

unquantifiable. The measure of Doby's worth was seen in light of who Jesus proclaimed him to be.

Doby, Peter, us, we are all the same. Some of us carry more visible reasons as to why we are a RECKLESS case to love or rescue, but what is true is that we all are there. We all have fallen short. We all are a people plagued by sin and disfunction, and when we fully see who we are on our own how amazing is the NEVER ENDING love of God. He never gives in, never gives up. As Peter says, *God is , "slow to anger and patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. James 1:19"* Just look out your front window, there you will see Him. He hasn't left, he's there calling out. His love is faithful and NEVER ENDING.

When we come to see how faithful and NEVER ENDING God's love is for us we will be moved to engage seemingly RECKLESS connections in other lives around us. Something as trying and simple as sitting in the driveway of someone's life may be the very place where heaven touches earth and transforms a life for all eternity. These driveways may be ones others have designated as hopeless and helpless. They may be littered with the wreckage of sin, suffering and kryptonite, but in all honesty hasn't yours been? This RECKLESS call is nothing new. Stepping into humanity's mess to put on

display the NEVER ENDING love of God is what Jesus does.  
And so, it is to be our mission as well.

## REFLECTION

When you reflect on your life, where are the places you can clearly see the NEVER ENDING love of God?

Was there ever a time when you believed the lie that you were hopeless, helpless and unlovable? If so how did you come to see the NEVER ENDING love of God? If not, what are the areas you are struggling? Have you been told you were a RECKLESS situation? If so, how do you now view the depths of God's love for you and how He feels about you

Seeing how God continually moves in favor of us, is faithful, and steadfast, how do you reflect this to those you perceive as hard to love? Is your approach NEVER ENDING and abounding in love? Or are you quick to severe and pull away deeming them a RECKLESS case?

Are there some connections you know God has called you into but you have counted as costly? If they looked out of the front window of their lives would they find you there, sitting in the driveway of their life?

# CHAPTER 2

*(Reckless Faith)*

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# RECKLESS



# CHAPTER 2

(Reckless Faith)

## PASSAGES

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)***

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)***

*And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross **Philippians 2:8 (ESV)***

## LEAN

Leaning into a situation can be scary. The first kiss my wife and I, at that time just friends, ever shared, took what seemed to be a measure of RECKLESS risk. LEANING in, I was

relying on the hope that she felt the same as I did and would return the moment's expression with great acceptance. In other words, I leaned in hoping to God my lips would find hers and not the soft white sand beneath our feet. In a moment of great risk I trusted that which could not be seen, but very clearly was drawing me in.

Trust is a difficult thing. No matter the scenario or shape of our life we all have to deal with issues of trust. "If I sit in this chair will it fall?" "If I step on this board will it give?" "If I share my life with others will they judge, condemn and make fun of me?" No matter the area, trust is measured with every step. We place our hope and trust in things we cannot often see. The better word for this is Faith. Faith is not a magical word. It is not something that is relative to every person, nor something to conjure up good juju. Rather, in its original habitat, faith is the byproduct of a God centered life.

King Solomon, Israel's second king after his father David, writes for us what the basics of Faith are, when he says in the above passage, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not LEAN on your own understanding." LEANING into God is trusting him. The simple reality is that we lean into God not because we possess anything good. Solomon admits we have no power to make our paths straight or capacity to have what is true wisdom. We LEAN into and are able to do so, because

God has first LEANED in favor of us. We can trust what God ultimately calls us to no matter the Reckless variables it may carry. One of the most well known passages in the gospels is the account of Peter walking on the water with Jesus. Peter stepped out trusting in the way of Jesus. He was fully trusting Jesus to carry him in the moment. All things surrounding this call are impossible with man. But with God all things are possible. To us today, and likely the disciples then, this was a reckless endeavor. Peter's failure was not to step out, not to embrace what others deemed as reckless, but to remove His focus and trust from the One who made this impossible journey possible.

When we look at Jesus we see that God has made Him the perfecter of our faith. This is because there on earth Jesus fully LEANED into God and submitted to His ultimate will; death on a cross for you and I. Prior to His death, there in a candle lit room Jesus had invited them to the table and to share in all that he was about to do for them. Could you imagine what the disciples, those that had physically seen the demise of Jesus in the flesh, fought against in their submission to LEAN into God's RECKLESS call?

When humbled before Jesus, we open ourselves to His plan and LEAN into what He would deem best for our lives. In many ways it seems RECKLESS because it forces us to give up

striving for control. We aren't LEANING into a kiss hoping for a reciprocal action. The fact is He has already taken the first step and LEANED into us. When we understand it from this angle it is easy to see that our faith and trust in Him is not followed in blinded veil. Rather, it is one lead with full assurance in what He has already done for us.

The RECKLESS call to follow Jesus is a call to LEAN fully into a life defined by His purpose. It is seeing all that we ever dreamed placed upon the altar of His ultimate will and purpose. In the world's eyes around us, this is a RECKLESS way, but those who have become impassioned by His love see it as wisdom and true life. Following Jesus will always be an invitation into trusting His wisdom for your life. It will be a way that causes initial pause, a battle with letting go and casting aside, even seemingly good insight and direction from those around you. Stepping into a RECKLESS faith will always reveal who is at the core and center of our life.

## REFLECTION

Placing your full confidence in the direction and move of God can seem reckless. What are some ways you continually hear Jesus calling you to trust Him in the ways that you live?

Are there places in your life that you have more faith in what other people say about you or your circumstances than the promises of God for your life?

What are some things you withheld from the direction of God because you perceived other insight to be wiser than His seemingly RECKLESS call?

Are you more focused on waiting on the “big” call of faith in your life and in doing so miss the seemingly insignificant ways God is calling you to trust Him?

# PASSAGES

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **Matthew**

**16:24-25 (ESV)**

3Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

4Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5**Commit** your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. **Psalms 37:3-5 (ESV)**

# COMMIT

Sitting at my desk on a cold February night, I was at my whits end. Everything I had ever desired, worked for, and envisioned was now at my fingertips. The direction I had so desired for my life was in my very grasp and something was gravely wrong. Rather than a feeling of ecstasy, excitement or joy, all I found was discontentment, resentment and emptiness. As I starred at our two young kids playing on the floor, I began a conversation which would change my life. "How could I ever tell them to fully COMMIT to Jesus when I myself had been so

unwilling to COMMIT?" Thoughts swirled about, and Jesus settled in for a deep inspection. On the inside I knew God had a far different plan for my life but, up until this point, I had been unwilling to RECKLESSLY let go and release my own vision and dreams for my life. I professed a love for Jesus, but my life said otherwise. "If I love Jesus, how can I not commit myself to His ways, commands and walk?" All these things cut my heart to the quick and rattled my soul with what seemed a RECKLESS call to release, to fully COMMIT everything to Jesus.

COMMIT means, to carry out, engage in, to do. At its core, to commit to something is to, as the world says, "put your money where your mouth is." COMMITTING to following Jesus is the simple maneuver of fully engaging in the ultimate mission of Christ. To COMMIT is to fully believe, so much so that one is moved into action. With a refusal of one to commit, Faith becomes questioned and doubted by those who observe. Can one really profess to have fully believed in someone, an idea or something, if they passively disregard following what they preach?

That night I realized what Jesus meant by saying, to His disciples, *"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* Preceding this verse, Jesus calls them, and us, to deny ourselves take up our

cross and follow Him. It seems ludicrous to those who have not come to the end of themselves, and in many way a RECKLESS call to give up the illusion of control and our own plans and visions. The truth is, when you come to grips with who Jesus really is, the depth of His love for us, and the seemingly RECKLESS ends by which He has pursued us, it makes complete and total sense to COMMIT all of yourself to following Him.

Losing your life and finding it in Jesus will always bring with it a measure of COMMITTING. Taking up one's cross is an action, one that is decisively made in our response to Jesus' great grace, love and mercy for us. This decision to courageously submit will mean, through the power of the Holy Spirit, deciding against ourselves, our visions and dreams. It means we are COMMITTING everything before Him and trusting in His guidance and direction for everything in this life. Jesus is clear, when we go against this and try to make a life for ourselves we will in the end ultimately lose it. In all actuality, like myself, many times we come to grips with this way before the "end" of our physical life. Often it is in the midst of actually getting what we have pursued that we find the greatest emptiness of true life. It is illusive, and Jesus knows this, hence His invitation for us to lose ourselves in Him.



The psalmist says it best, *"COMMIT your ways, trust Him and He will act."* We can ultimately trust Jesus with our lives because He has made us with intention, care and love. The Gospel communicates to us the great love of God for us, to realign us once again with His purpose for His creation. It is He that made life, and in Jesus we see it is He that only can fully give us life. If Jesus came to take all our sin, shame and death away, we see that all He has to give is true life. To the world following Jesus into RECKLESS FAITH will run contrary to self. When a people COMMIT their ways to the Lord, it will reflect something far different from the hopeless nature of our dreams and desires. Our COMMITMENT to following Jesus faithfully will call all around us to stop and take great notice of what/who could ever move a person to act in such a seemingly RECKLESS way. Letting go and embracing all that Jesus has is pure RECKLESS faith. Have you lost your life in Him?

# REFLECTION

Currently reflecting on your life, can you fully say that your way of life and how you live is fully committed to the ways of Jesus?

What are the things you have given your life to that may present as obstacles to fully picking up your cross and following Jesus in our right Reckless faith?

When looking at Jesus' call for us to lose our life in Him, what reaction do you have? Are you filled with anxiousness? Doubt or fear? Why would you be hesitant to commit everything to Jesus?

How do you measure being a follower of Jesus? Is it based on works and your completion of daily duties? Have you ever given consideration to what fully committing each part of your life, day and purpose to Jesus' guidance would look like? What are the places you know you have not fully committed to Him, and what are the next steps in helping you move towards His RECKLESS call?

# CHAPTER 3

*(Reckless Reliance)*

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# RECKLESS

# CHAPTER 3

(Reckless Reliance)

## PASSAGES

25“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?g 28And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

**Matthew 6:25-34 (ESV)**

## SEEK

No bones about it, Jesus said some difficult things.

Jesus is the one who said he had come to bring a sword that would divide many from fellowship within our own families and

friends. Jesus was the one who said, in the face of a man saying he wanted to follow Him but had to bury his recently deceased father, *"let the dead bury the dead. Luke 9:60"* And Jesus was the one who said we should be anxious for nothing, but SEEKING first His kingdom. One solid truth about life is, anxiousness is always crouching and ready to attack.

The degree of anxiousness seems to only increase with every passing year of our lives. Life brings with it natural pressures that press against us and shake our peace of mind. Moving towards Jesus and following Him, in many ways, seems to compound this. For all of us, following Jesus is a call to die to ourselves and to SEEKING our own way, in favor of SEEKING His leading and guiding in all of our lives. SEEKING Jesus and His kingdom first is a step towards RELIANCE on Him and His provision.

For many of us, we have stood on the precipice of such a call for our lives. We have felt Jesus drawing us to release our everything to Him. Often, fear wells inside us. "What will I have to change?" "What will it cost?" "How will my life really look?" In the old ways of the church there was a phrase for this, "Counting the cost." In many of our eyes we are not SEEKING first the kingdom because we are worried more about what seems to be most pressing to us. We buy into the lies that our lives are so complex and in such great need that

seeking Jesus first seems RECKLESS. Rather, to the contrary, Jesus is fully aware of our circumstances and knows us, not from a distance, but from He Himself coming to where we are and putting on flesh, knowing every emotion, temptation, experience and struggle.

In the ultimate embrace of His creation, Jesus, taking on our likeness in flesh, does not stand from afar and call us to some insurmountable standard. In His command, for those who follow Him to be anxious for nothing, He is not presenting us with only an idea or good thought, but one He demonstrated to us in the way He lived. Jesus was fully aware of the toil and snares that seek to pull our affections, thoughts and direction away from fellowship and relationship with Him. This is why Jesus points us to examples in creation to exemplify God's ultimate provision and goodness towards us. "Consider the birds; Consider the lilies." If God so loved us that He sent His son for humanity, and he cares for the needs of these seemingly insignificant parts of creation, how much more does He love and care for you and I?

SEEKING the kingdom first, above what we perceive as our greatest of needs, will often seem to be a RECKLESS way of life. This does not mean we become passive or flippant with the obligations in our lives carrying a false hope that God will make them disappear. Rather, it is intentionally turning our

mind, focus and will towards what Jesus would ultimately do in and through our lives. SEEKING the kingdom is seeing our anxiousness crushed under the feet of God's reign. It is seeing that Jesus' reign is not one of dominance nor burden, but one from which true release and comfort reside.

SEEKING the kingdom first in life is to step into the RECKLESS RELIANCE of Jesus' reign. A people SEEKING the kingdom first will be a people who are not devoid of problems or hardship but a people casting their cares on the One that has every good thing to give. A people living this way, with RECKLESS RELIANCE, will disrupt a culture and society built upon anxiousness, worry and control.

## REFLECTION

When you are confronted with the call to totally be RELIANT on God and His grace and provision, how does that make you feel/respond?



What are some of the ways Jesus is calling you to SEEK first His kingdom in your life?

Seeing what Jesus teaches us about the provision of God, how does this free us to SEEK first the kingdom with seemingly RECKLESS RELIANCE?

Knowing that Jesus Himself lived in this reality and provides us with the strength and power to do the same, lead by His spirit within us, how does this reassure you that you can step into this kind of Reliant SEEKING?

# PASSAGES

*1And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 3And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.<sup>a</sup> 4And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." 6And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.*

**Luke 9:1-6(ESV)**

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* **Matthew 28:18-20**

# SENT

*"Just as the father has sent me, so I am sending you."*

These were Jesus' words to His disciples found recorded in John's gospel, chapter 12. One of the pinnacle realities of the Christian faith is to understand clearly that being a follower of Jesus, by necessity, is to be sent on mission. Jesus in telling His disciples that He was sent by the Father for them is an inclusive reality that will compel them after His death. To be a follower of Jesus is to willingly engage by being sent and moved by His ultimate leading and guiding in and through our lives.

Prior to giving the "great commission," to His disciples, Jesus, earlier in His ministry, sends the disciples out on a field exhibition, if you will. In bringing the twelve together He commissions them to go in His authority and power to proclaim the kingdom and to heal. In this charge He not only presents them with a task, but also a set of instructions that many of us would scarcely ever consider. "Take nothing with you." I could only imagine being one of the disciples there huddled around Jesus eagerly awaiting all that He is asking them to do.

Put yourself there for a moment. Jesus has just told you that you are going to go out in His name and see the kingdom proclaimed and people healed. You are going to engage in the very reversing acts of healing that He did, these demonstrations of the kingdom. Excitement would overwhelm, your heart begins to race. "Finally, we get to see the real stuff for ourselves!" Then in the midst of all your excitement, dreams and zeal, you hear those words, "Take nothing with you." Wait a minute... Did He just say what I thought He said? Jesus, I think I may have heard you wrong or you maybe misspoke there. Did you say, 'take nothing with us?'" Could you imagine the look on Jesus' face? None of us were there, but I am sure if this had been questioned Jesus would have calmly and lovingly repeated and reassured the disciples on their trust of being RELIANT on Him.

For many of us we have quite possibly had this scenario play out in our lives from time to time. We feel a strong prompting of Jesus to do something we maybe have never considered or even would love to see happen. Yet there in our time of processing through the invitation, we hear a few words we could have sworn we didn't really hear. They may not be "take nothing with you," but what they do present you with is Jesus' SENDING of you is a call into deeper RELIANCE on Him alone.

I am certain that as Jesus commissioned the disciples there before His ascension that many of them reflected on that day when Jesus had sent them out before. They willingly engaged in His SENDING and found that, amidst a seemingly RECKLESS call to RELIANCE, they had full faithfulness in His provision. So here, now Jesus is once again charging them with his mission to GO, be SENT in spreading the Gospel, the good news and making disciples. All of this could seem like an extraordinary mission, one filled with great danger and risk. After all, they had just watched Jesus hanged on a cross and suffer a gruesome torture and death all because of who He was and proclaimed to be. Now He was calling them to RELIANTLY trust in Him to be SENT in the reality of His overcoming.

The disciples leaned into this mission, to be SENT. Regardless the outcomes, hardships or adversities they may face, because of their RELIANCE in Jesus and His ultimate authority and power, we today have much to be thankful for. Their willing embrace of a seeming RECKLESS RELIANCE to SEEK the Kingdom first and be SENT on His mission is an example of how we should follow suit and trust Jesus with the same. If we say we are followers of Jesus then our lives will embody the very reality that just as the Father sent Him, so He sends us.

## REFLECTION

When you reflect on your life, how have you been uniquely placed to be SENT on Jesus' kingdom mission? Who are the people around you that you have been called to?

If you have resisted Jesus' call to Go, in your life, what have been the things you have allowed to hold you back? What have you considered as more important than going?

In likeness to Jesus telling His disciples to "take nothing," what are we allowing our cares to be carried away by?

Knowing that you have been sent with Jesus' power and authority in the going, how does that move you to trust Him more? To move towards being RECKLESSLY RELIANT on Him?

# CHAPTER 4

*(Reckless Pursuit)*

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# RECKLESS

# CHAPTER 4

(Reckless Pursuit)

## PASSAGES

*"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.*

*12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. **Matthew 18:10–14 ESV***

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. **Psalms 139:1–4 (ESV)***

## ONE

In the Gospel of Matthew, we see Jesus presenting us with what seems to be a reckless scenario. Through the example of a shepherd with his sheep, Jesus seeks to paint a



picture of how the Father cares for just ONE individual. In His parable, we see a shepherd with 100 sheep. This is no small flock. In fact, culturally speaking, this would have been the entire family's livelihood and means of resources and income. To leave these sheep unattended could mean the demise of the family. For those around Jesus this would be an extremely relatable scenario.

So, Jesus sets the stage. He paints a shepherd in the field with his entire flock of sheep. A few things we can easily assess. First, this shepherd knows his sheep. He sees them, keeps watch of them and knows where they are. In the midst of his survey he notices something. "Hmm, there seems to be one missing." Jesus doesn't elaborate, but we can almost picture the shepherd's concern gradually increasing as the recount ensues.

This leads us to the second understanding about the shepherd, he loves his sheep. He loves and values each sheep so much that ONE missing is as great of a loss to the shepherd as would be losing the entire 99 still present. We are drawn to lean in closer as we examine the shepherd's decision and left to ponder the reality of leaving the majority of sheep, the entire family's "kit and caboodle" to find just ONE. Wouldn't it just be easier to count the ONE as a loss? Think of all the possible scenarios that could happen as the shepherd leaves

the 99 to find this ONE sheep. With the shepherd away, the 99 could stray and find themselves in the hands of marauders. Quite possibly they could find themselves at the hands of other ravenous wildlife and meet their peril. Whatever the scenario could be, we are left with a strong feeling that the love of this Shepherd for His sheep seems to be on the side of reckless.

At the crux of the parable, in the midst of our wrestle and questioning of the shepherd's judgement, Jesus begins to venture at pulling the rug from beneath our feet. This Shepherd is no ordinary shepherd. This Shepherd is the very essence of how the Father feels about us; yes you, the ONE sheep. It is extraordinary for certain. Can you imagine the response of those religious pharisees and sadducees. "The gull of this guy. The nerve to present YHWY as a reckless and almost destructive behavior." It is easy to see they likely missed the point.

Jesus is not seeking to form our understanding of God as truly destructive or reckless, but he is seeking to help us see to what end the Father will go to redeem the ONES He loves. After all, sending His only Son to purchase and redeem us, to go and find the lost sheep, that seems super RECKLESS. What is clear is that JESUS loves us and does not stop PURSUING us. It seems to be a RECKLESS PURSUIT, when you value ONE

sheep so much that you will give your entire life for them. Even in the face of them being enemies against you.

As followers of Jesus we are to be moved by the PURSUIT of even just the ONE. ONE person, ONE soul, ONE life should matter so much that we continually move in favor of them even when they could be considered enemies. For sure it is a hard word, but to move against this would be to find ourselves in the company of the religious zealots. Those that size the ONE up and decide they just aren't worth the perceived loss. The psalmist reminds us that God knows everything about each individual. EVERYTHING, and yet still he loves them enough to send His only Son for them. ONE matters. God does not stop His seemingly RECKLESS PURSUIT of the ONE. Can we say the same for ourselves?

## REFLECTION

When you see that you were the 1 out of the 99 for which Jesus came, how does this shape your gratitude?

Knowing that God values others around you just that much, how does this adjust your vision and attitude towards them?

Are there some around you that you carry a pharisaical attitude towards and put outside God's grace and rescue? (Deem worth no value?)

Who is the ONE around you now that needs you to imagine the reality of God's RECKLESS PURSUIT of them? What are some ways you can continue to reach out?

# PASSAGES

*"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

**Matthew 18:10–14 ESV**

# DILIGENT

Diligent simply means, "having or showing care or consciousness in someone's work." As is Jesus' protocol, He yet again presents us with another parable to gain insight on the kingdom and the Father's passion for us, His creation. In the likeness of a widowed woman who has but 10 silver coins, Jesus pulls our attention to how the Father is in RECKLESS PURSUIT of us. If you read ahead of these two parables, the "lost sheep," and the "lost coin," you will see that tax collectors and sinners are those that have gathered. They understand the value of each unit that could bring profit. Jesus is using this to draw their hearts towards how much even they mean to the Father. The tax collector knows the value of the silver coin. They have spent their life caring for both Rome and

their own wallets. If one is lost, being DILIGENT in the search is key to properly caring for the matter.

Though the story of this lady, Jesus presents to us yet again the value of the coin. This woman will not stop in her RECKLESS PURSUIT of the item. This is not a pursuit without a game plan. It is one that persistently and DILIGENTLY moves all things around with care. No sweeping, plenty of light, call the neighbors. The matter at hand is of such importance that everything at her disposal is employed in the search and rescue mission. Because of the DILIGENT manner with which she has sought the lost coin, the coin is found. The house rejoices.

In just a few short sentences, Jesus has us in His clutches. Sometimes a coin, a sheep, they don't know they are lost. They have no means to find their way back into the proper hands. So there they are, in need of rescue. Rescue is only possible when there is a DILIGENT PURSUIT, a search and rescue sent for the one who is lost. This PURSUIT can at times seem extremely RECKLESS, yet in the face of what stands to be lost, the failure to act and do nothing would be the only true RECKLESS response.

In these parables Jesus moves to help us see and understand how the Father loves us in the way He RECKLESSLY PURSUES us. It is not a PURSUIT that is on the fly, but one that

has been DILIGENTLY laid before us in the provision of Jesus. To be a follower of Jesus is to see our call into this mission of RECKLESS PURSUIT. Jesus is DILIGENTLY placing each of us in people's lives who are the lost sheep, lost coin and of considerable value to Him. To reject our responsibility in this search and rescue mission is to not only devalue the other party, but as well the very grace that has so save you and I. We are the neighbors called into the house to help in the search efforts. When we see the depth of value we carry in God's eyes, it should only move us to value others in like manner.

When we choose to engage in the seemingly RECKLESS PURSUIT of others, it will be a call for us to become diligent. To use all means and resources in our life to see others found. After all, this rescue is valued so much that celebration happens in the kingdom when lost valuables are found!

## REFLECTION

Have you ever lost something of value? How did you feel in the midst of noticing it was missing? What was your response?

Knowing that God takes DILIGENT measures to seek out and find us, how careful are we to do the same for others? Do we actually take the time to know them and to properly care for them?

When the item is found, how much do you celebrate? Are you overly joyed? At peace? If our Father responds that way to the lost being found, and our submission is to His good pleasure, what does this mean for our heart to seek the lost? If we desire to please him, what should be of priority?



# CONCLUSION

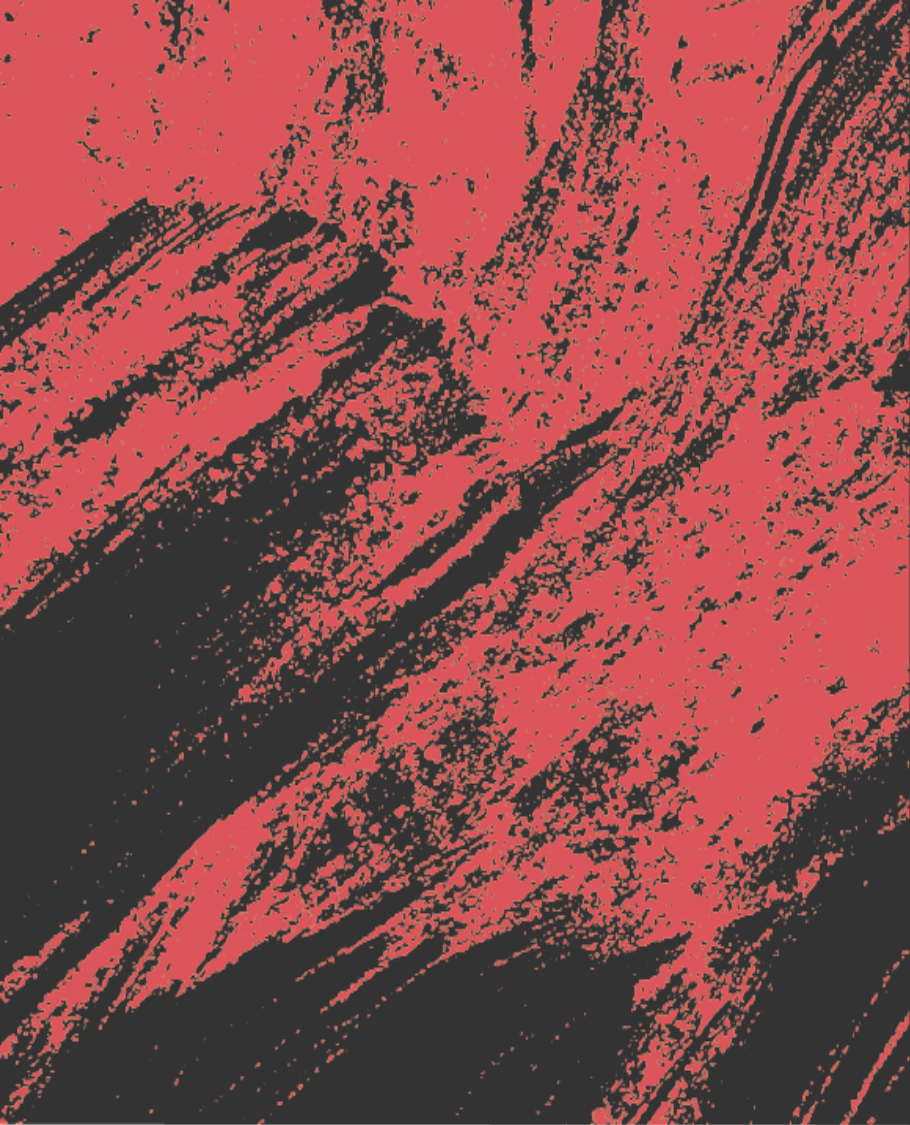
**Reckless:** *marked by lack of proper caution : careless of consequences*

By now, hopefully you have gotten the message. While God does not act in truly RECKLESS ways, we can see how His great love for us could seem suspect of such accusations. In Jesus, we are presented with the depth of God's persistent pursuit for His creation. In Jesus, we see a life that to the world, both "religious" and "secular," can seem perplexing, risky and RECKLESS. In Jesus, we see a dream that has not stopped short of acting, but action propelled by the very reality of the Father's pursuit and dream for us.

While Steve Jobs holds but a birthday cake candle to the truth revealed in Jesus, we can see how we as "Apple fanboys and girls," should be moved by the incredible culture Jesus has produced and called us into. To follow the way of Jesus, to surrender to Him and die to self, means that we have to embrace all that He is for us. It means that the measure of our life should be sized by the ruler of His. We will never fully look like Him this side of Glory. However, what is being produced in the "already but not yet" from which we live, should be ever increasingly closer.

The way of Jesus can seem RECKLESS to many. It will bring with it scrutiny from even the closest of friends and family. Following Jesus will produce in us a desire to embrace the things we could never accomplish on our own. RECKLESS LOVE, RECKLESS FAITH, RECKLESS RELIANCE and RECKLESS PURSUIT will all become the actions we take within the, Apple like, garage beginnings of our lives. Some may call you crazy, but often it is the things that seem crazy which breed the so thought impossible. Following Jesus will at times seems impossible, but know that every measure of obstruction and doubt the flesh and enemy can construct, Jesus has ultimately overcome.

In closing, let me just ask this one question. How will you respond when FOLLOWING JESUS SEEMS RECKLESS?



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