

Discovering My Life Mission

CLASS 401

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WELCOME TO DISCOVERING MY LIFE MISSION

This class is the fourth of our basic purpose-driven classes.
Congratulations on making it all around the bases!

In CLASS 101 - You committed to being a **Member** of God's family.
In CLASS 201 - You committed to the habits for Spiritual **Maturity**.
In CLASS 301 - You committed to having a **Ministry** in our church.
In CLASS 401 - You will begin to discover your **Mission** in the world.

THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS:

- **I WAS CREATED TO FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSE.**

"The Lord has made everything for his own purpose..." Pr. 16:4 (LB)

- **GOD PLANNED MY LIFE MISSION BEFORE I WAS BORN.**

"God is our Maker, and in our union with Christ, he has created us for a life of good works, which he has already prepared for us to do." Eph. 2:10 (GN)

My Life Mission has both universal elements (what God calls every Christian to do) and unique elements (what God custom-designed me to do).

- **FULFILLING MY MISSION BRINGS GLORY TO GOD.**

*JESUS: "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."
John 17:4 (NIV)*

- **MY PRIMARY TASK IN LIFE IS TO FULFILL MY MISSION.**

*"The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me--to tell people the Good News about God's grace."
Acts 20:24 (NCV)*

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS:

That I commit the rest of my life to being a messenger of God's Good News to other people, and using my time, talents, and treasure for his Kingdom, regardless of where it leads or what it costs .

*"We make it our goal to please him..." 2 Cor. 5:9 (NIV)
"...our goal is to measure up to God's plan for us..." 2 Cor. 10:13 (LB)*

THE CLASS OUTLINE

SESSION ONE: DISCOVERING MY MISSION

- God's Purpose in Creating Us
- Jesus' Mission on Earth
- Why Jesus' Mission Must Matter To Me

SESSION TWO: SHARING THE MESSAGE

- Part 1: My Testimony – The Story of How I Began a Relationship with Jesus
- Part 2: The Good News – Explaining How to Accept Christ
- Communication Tips: How To Share Christ More Effectively

SESSION THREE: FISHING IN MY MISSION POND

- 5 Keys to Spiritual Fishing
- How People Come to Christ
- How to Build A Bridge of Friendship

SESSION FOUR: BECOMING A WORLD-CLASS CHRISTIAN

- What On Earth Is God Doing?
- New Memorial's Global Vision and Your Passport To The World
- How to Get In On What God Is Doing: Acts 1:8 Opportunities
- What it Takes to Be On-Mission for God

SESSION 1

Discovering My Life Mission

To discover your mission in this world, you must first understand:

- God's overall purpose in creating human beings.
- Jesus' mission in coming to earth.

I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR CREATING US

1. We were made to have a Relationship with God.

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..."

Gen. 1:26 (NIV)

"Long ago, even before he made the world, God chose us to be his very own through what Christ would do for us... His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us."

Eph. 1:4-5 (LB)

2. We were made to Become Like Jesus.

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." Rom. 8:29 (NIV)

"God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son... We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him."

Rom. 8:29 (Mes)

"Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ..."

1 Cor. 15:49 (NLT)

"We know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is."

1 John 3:2b (NCV)

3. We were made to Serve His Purpose.

"God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which He planned in advance for us to live our lives doing." Eph. 2:10 (NCV)

4. We were made to Last Forever.

"He has planted eternity in the human heart." Eccl. 3:11 (NIV)

"This is his purpose: that when the time is ripe he will gather us all together... to be with him in Christ forever." Eph. 1:10 (LB)

THIS LIFE IS PREPARATION FOR LIFE IN ETERNITY!

II. JESUS' MISSION ON EARTH

The Problem: Our sin has broken our relationship with God.

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden his face from you." Isa. 59:2 (NIV)

God's Solution: He took the initiative to bring us back to Himself.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (LB)

"God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself..." 2 Cor. 5:19a (LB)

WHAT WAS JESUS' LIFE MISSION?

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19:10 (NIV)

"This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people the truth."
John 18:37b (NCV)

"I came to give life--life in all its fullness..." John 10:10 (NCV)

"I have come as a Light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer wander in the darkness." John 12:46 (LB)

*"I must tell the Good News about God's kingdom... This is what I was sent to do."
Luke 4:43 (ICB)*

III. WHY JESUS' MISSION MUST MATTER TO ME

TEN FACTS THAT MOTIVATE ME

1. IF I WANT TO BE LIKE JESUS, MY LIFE MISSION MUST INCLUDE HIS LIFE MISSION.

Jesus prayed to the Father: *"In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world."* John 17:18 (Mes)

2. JESUS EXPECTS ME TO CONTINUE HIS MISSION.

The 5 Great Commissions of Jesus

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt. 28:19-20 (NIV)

"You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere." Mark 16:15 (LB)

"With my authority, take this message of repentance to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me."

Luke 24:47 (NLT)

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." *John 20:21 (NIV)*

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

3. **SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.**

"... you must warn them so they may live. If you don't speak out to warn the wicked to stop their evil ways, they will die in their sin. But I will hold you responsible for their death."

Ezekiel 3:18 (NCV)

"Telling the Good News is my duty - something I must do. And how terrible it will be for me if I do not tell the Good News."

1 Cor. 9:16 (NCV)

If I'm a Christian, my mission is not Optional!

4. **SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IS A PRIVILEGE.**

"And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favor and be reconciled to him... This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors."

2 Cor. 5:18b (LB)

"I am proud of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes..."

Rom. 1:16 (NCV)

5. **I'M GRATEFUL FOR WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR ME.**

"Remember that in the past you were without Christ... You had no hope, and you did not know God."

Eph. 2:12 (NCV)

"For I have a great sense of obligation to people in our culture and to people in other cultures..."

Rom. 1:14 (NLT)

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all..."

2 Cor. 5:14 (NIV)

6. **BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE HOPELESS WITHOUT CHRIST.**

"Jesus is the only one who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. We must be saved through him."

Acts 4:12 (NCV)

"Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them."
Rom. 10:13-14 (NCV)

7. BECAUSE GOD WANTS EVERYONE SAVED! (Luke 15)

"God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
1 Tim. 2:4 (NIV)

"God does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants all people to change their hearts and lives."
2 Peter 2:9 (NCV)

8. I WILL BE REWARDED FOR ETERNITY.

"Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord, which he promised to his people."
Col. 3:24 (ICB)

**9. GOD'S TIMETABLE FOR HISTORY HINGES AROUND US
COMPLETING OUR MISSION!**

"The Good News about God's kingdom will be preached in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come."
Matt. 24:14 (NCV)

"They asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' Jesus replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. BUT you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" Acts 1:6-8 (NIV)

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said 'Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'" Acts 1:9-11 (NIV)

10. I WILL BE GLAD WHEN I SEE PEOPLE IN HEAVEN.

"I tell you there is much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart."
Luke 15:7a (ICB)

Knowing this, what should be my response?

"I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus - the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness." Acts 20:24 (NCV)

SESSION 2

Sharing The Message

"You are the ones chosen by God... God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you."

1 Peter 2:9 (Mes)

"...He has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are Christ's representatives." 2 Cor. 5:19b-20 (GWT)

FOUR PARTS OF YOUR LIFE MESSAGE

3 Unique Parts

- Part 1: **My Testimony** – My story of how I began a relationship with Jesus.
- Part 2: **My Life Lessons** – (Covered in CLASS 501)
- Part 3: **My Life Passions** – (Covered in CLASS 501)

The Universal Part

- Part 4: **The Good News** – Explaining how to accept Christ.

I. SHARING MY TESTIMONY

A personal testimony is the most persuasive form of communication.

The Bible is full of testimonies:

DAVID

"Come and listen, and I will tell you what God has done for me." Ps. 66:16 (NCV)

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony." John 4:39 (NIV)

THE MAN BORN BLIND

"I don't know whether he is good or bad, but I know this: I was blind, and now I see!" John 9:25 (LB)

PETER AND JOHN

"We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20 (NLT)

PAUL

On six different occasions (Acts 22-26) Paul used his personal testimony to share the Good News with unbelievers.

JESUS

"Listen carefully. I'm speaking sober truth to you. I speak only of what I know by experience; I give witness only to what I have seen with my own eyes. There is nothing secondhand here, no hearsay." John 3:11 (Mes)

We are commanded to share our testimonies

“Let the whole world know what he has done for you.” Ps. 105:1b (LB)

“Every day tell how he saves us. Tell the nations of his glory; tell all peoples the miracles he does.” Ps. 96:2-3 (NCV)

THE VALUE OF YOUR TESTIMONY

1. It is unique! There are no others just like it.
2. It is personal and easy to understand.
3. You are the authority on it. It’s difficult to argue with.
4. People love to hear personal stories and they remember them.
5. People can relate to it. It builds a relational bridge.
6. In our postmodern world, it may be your most effective witness.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

A. IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AS AN ADULT

THE FOUR PARTS OF YOUR TESTIMONY

1. WHAT MY LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE I MET CHRIST.

*What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?
What were your attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?
What was most important to you?*

*What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life?
(sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money,
drugs/alcohol, having fun, entertainment, popularity, hobbies)*

2. HOW I REALIZED I NEEDED CHRIST.

*What significant steps led up to your conversion?
What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied
with the way you were living without God?
How did God get your attention? What motivated you?*

3. HOW I COMMITTED MY LIFE TO CHRIST.

*What specifically did you do? Where did it happen?
What did you say in your prayer? Be specific.*

4. THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE IN MY LIFE.

What benefits have you experienced or felt?

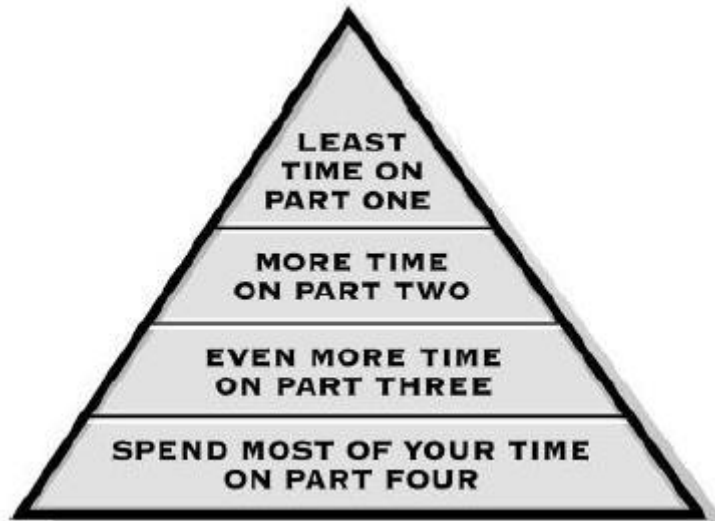
What problems have been resolved?

How has Jesus helped you change for the better?

How has it helped your relationships?

Give a current example.

The Testimony Pyramid



B. IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AS A CHILD BUT WALKED AWAY OR NEVER GREW UNTIL A DEEPER RECOMMITMENT AS AN ADULT.

Use the same four steps, but start with the time just prior to your *recommitment*. Give some examples of how you were trying to meet your own needs without Christ but it wasn't working. Describe what caused you to realize you needed Christ directing your life and how you made a full commitment to him. Then explain how Jesus is currently meeting the deepest needs in your life.

C. IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AT AN EARLY AGE AND NEVER STRAYED.

Use the same four steps with this modification: Point out some deep need or common problem that you see *other people* trying to resolve. Point out how unsuccessful their attempts are to meet their own need. Then explain why you never experienced that problem by trusting Christ early in life. Don't say the exact age. Continue with steps 3 and 4.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR TESTIMONY

- Pray and ask God to give you the right words.
- Write it out on paper. God honors preparation.

- Keep it short and to the point. Don't lose site of your goal.
- Be succinct. Avoid excessive, unnecessary details.
- Try to keep your testimony below 3 minutes.

- Refer to experiences most people have in common.
- Share a slice of your life (a story) that they will identify with.

- Be honest about your continuing struggles. Your life is not perfect.
- Don't imply that all of your problems ended at conversion.

- Spend the most time on part 4: the difference Christ has made.
- Emphasize WHY you received Christ (the benefits of doing it).
- Mention the benefit of being certain of your destiny when you die.

- Don't exaggerate or brag about pre-conversion sins.
- Don't make negative remarks about other religions or people.
- Don't mention any denomination.

- Don't quote a lot of Scripture. (A maximum of one verse)
- Don't answer questions they haven't asked.

- Give concrete examples of the changes in your life.
- The more specific you are, the more dynamic it will be.
- Avoid using dates, names, and ages. It doesn't matter to them.

- Be prepared. Practice it until it feels and sounds natural.
- Read it aloud and edit it to make it conversational.
- Let a friend read it and make suggestions.

- Speak casually and informally, in a matter-of-fact tone.
- Don't dramatize or embellish your story.
- Don't share mystical experiences. Share on *their* level, not *yours*.

- Don't talk down to people. Don't sound "preachy."
- Use "*I, me, and my*" not "*You*". It's about you – not them.
- Use humor - it reduces tension and relaxes people. Smile!

- Choose a central theme. (See list)

POSSIBLE TESTIMONY THEMES

How Trusting Jesus has helped me deal with my...

- Worries / Anxiety
- Guilt/Shame
- Anger / Temper
- Emptiness/Lack of Purpose
- Grief
- Stress / Burnout
- Low self-esteem
- Poor health
- Disappointment
- Insecurity
- Regrets
- Discontent / frantic activity
- Fears
- Loneliness
- Lack of emotional support
- Addictions / Habits
- Self-centeredness
- Despair / Depression
- Cheap thrills
- Boredom with my life
- Fear of Death
- "Something was missing"
- Bitterness & resentment
- Pain of rejection
- Marriage Problems
- Financial Problems
- Business Problems

How Trusting Jesus has given me

Inner Peace
 Forgiveness and a fresh start
 Patience and love
 Purpose in life and meaning
 Comfort and Joy
 New energy and power for living
 Significance. I am valuable to God
 Strength to go on
 Trust in his good plans
 Confidence and sense of security
 A second chance at life
 Contentment and peace
 Faith to face my fears
 Assurance He's always with me.
 A church family that supports me.
 Power to change. Freedom
 Love for other people
 Hope
 Real, lasting happiness
 Adventure with God
 Assurance of heaven
 A sense of fulfillment
 The ability to be free from my past
 God's unconditional love
 Positive changes in my marriage
 Positive changes in my finances
 Positive changes in my business

God allows experiences in my life so I can relate to others who need Christ!

COMMON GROUND CIRCUMSTANCES

Could you give a testimony about how Jesus helped you with any of the following experiences?

POSITIVE:

Adoption, breaking a bad habit, financial gain, raising kids, marriage strengthened or restored, new baby, new business, new friends, new home, new marriage, new job, success, renewed love, restored relationships

MAJOR CRISES

Abuse, accident, addiction, abortion, bankruptcy, broken dream, eating disorder, death, depression, disease, discrimination, divorce, empty nest, financial problems, infertility, incest, jail, rape, surgery

- **Realize you have more than one testimony!**

- Different situations will require different testimonies!
- Choose the testimony that best matches your listener.
- Realize you can tell about how others' lives have been changed too. Your small group can share your stories with each other.
- Don't use religious terms or clichés or broad generalities.
- Ask: "If I were an unbeliever, would this make sense to me?"

TRANSLATING CHRISTIAN WORDS

A cliché lexicon

CHRISTIAN TERM	WHEN TALKING WITH SEEKERS
"Blessed"	"Happy"
"I was Born Again"	"I was given a fresh, new start"
"I was Saved"	"My life changed at that moment"
"Jesus is my Lord"	"He's the Manager/CEO of my Life"
	"I put Jesus in the driver's seat."
"I repented"	"I changed my mind" (a mental U-turn)
"I had sinned"	"I knew I'd blown it"
"All are sinners"	"Nobody's perfect. No one bats 1000"
"I felt convicted"	"I realized that..."
"The Holy Ghost"	"God's Spirit"

PHRASES TO AVOID IN A TESTIMONY TO UNBELIEVER

*"I just Praise the Lord for..." "Now I am so blessed" "Hallelujah!"
"Amen" "It was glorious" "I was convicted" "The Lord laid on my heart"*

HOW TO LEAD INTO YOUR TESTIMONY

1. Listen for problems or needs that Jesus has helped you with.

"You know, that used to be a big issue in my life too (or my marriage, etc). In fact, I felt pretty (hopeless, frustrated, etc.) But then I discovered something that made a major difference in my life."

2. Refer to something in the news or on TV that deals with a common need or problem.

"Did you read about... I can sure identify with how those people feel. It wasn't that long ago that I struggled with that too. But then something happened that changed everything for me..."

Start with a statement they'd agree with or situation they relate to.

"It seems like life is getting faster and faster."

"Sometimes life just gets so complicated."

"Life doesn't always turn out the way you planned it."

3. Apologize to people you've known a long time but haven't witnessed to.

"Bill, I need to apologize to you. We've known each other a long time, and I consider you to be a good friend. But friends don't keep secrets – and I've never told you about the best thing that ever happened to me. I guess I was afraid you'd think I was some kind of nut. Anyway... (begin your story)."

"Each day tell someone that he saves." Psalm 96:2b (LB)

II. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

The universal part of your Life Message is the Gospel, the *Good News* of how we can be saved, forgiven, and begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The moment you trust in Christ, you are called and commissioned to be a messenger of the Good News to people who haven't heard or responded to it.

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?

1. GOD BECAME A MAN - SO I COULD RELATE TO HIM.

*"It is the **Good News** about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who came as a human baby, born into King David's royal family line; and by being raised from the dead he proved to be the mighty Son of God, with the holy nature of God himself."*

Rom. 1:3-4 (LB)

2. JESUS DIED FOR MY SINS - SO I DON'T HAVE TO.

*"It is this **Good News** that saves you if you firmly believe it... that Christ died for our sins. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said."*

1 Cor. 15: 2-4 (NLT)

"For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others."

2 Cor. 5:19 (LB)

3. JESUS DESTROYED DEATH - SO I COULD EXPERIENCE ETERNAL LIFE.

*"Jesus destroyed death, and through the **Good News** he showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed."*

2 Tim. 1:10 (NCV)

4. SALVATION IS A FREE GIFT - SO I DON'T HAVE TO EARN IT.

"People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God gave Jesus as a way to forgive sin through faith."

Rom. 3:24-25 (ICB)

5. IT IS BASED ON FAITH - SO ALL I HAVE TO DO IS REPENT AND BELIEVE.

Jesus said, "Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15 (NIV)

*“The **Good News** shows how God makes people right with himself - that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, ‘Those who are right with God will live by trusting in him.’”*
Rom. 1:17 (NCV)

Memorize these 5 basic truths!

3 SIMPLE TOOLS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD (tract)

1. Be in a relationship with God.
2. Let Jesus bridge the gap.
3. Respond to God's invitation to accept His Son.
4. Let God control your life.
5. Practice spiritual disciplines.

THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION

“God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together.” 1 Tim. 2:4 (LB)

“But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12 (NLT)

HOW TO ESTABLISH A SPIRITUAL BASE (card)
(How to lead a person in a commitment to Christ)

III. COMMUNICATION TIPS: HOW TO SHARE EFFECTIVELY

1. RECOGNIZE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE OF WITNESSING

Your “*SHAPE*” not only determines *your ministry in the church* it influences *the style of your mission in the world!*

S piritual gifts	(1 Cor. 12, Rom. 8, Eph. 4)
H earth	(Matt. 12:34, Pr. 4:23, Ps. 37:4)
A bilities	(Ex. 31:3, 1 Cor. 12:5)
P ersonality	(1 Cor. 2:11 LB)
E xperiences	(2 Cor. 1:4, Rom. 8:28)

Right brain witness (*emphasizes personal experience*) “*all your heart*”

Left brain witness (*emphasizes facts and scripture*) “*all your mind*” *Need both!*

SOME COMMON STYLES:

The Serving Style
 The Intellectual Style
 The Bringing Style
 The Testimonial Style
 The Literature Style
 The Confrontational Style

Don't feel guilty about styles you don't naturally use.
 Don't judge others who don't use your style!
 Realize that Jesus never used the same approach twice!

2. THINK THROUGH WHAT YOU MIGHT SAY

“*Everything you say should be kind and well thought out so that you know how to answer everyone.*” Col. 4:6 (GWT)

“*Intelligent people think before they speak; what they say is then more persuasive.*” Pr. 16:23 (GN)

3. ASK GOD FOR HELP IN CHOOSING THE RIGHT WORD

“*Pray for me that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret of the Good News without fear.*” Eph. 6:19 (NCV)

4. SHOW LOVE

“*If I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or clanging bell.*” 1 Cor. 13:1 (GN)

People don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care!

5. BE POSITIVE AND PLEASANT

“*A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is.*” Pr. 16:21 (GN)

"Be tactful with those who are not Christians..." Col. 4:5 (JB)

"A word of encouragement does wonders!" Pr. 12:25 (LB)

6. NEVER USE ANY PUT-DOWNS

"Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out." Col. 4:6 (Mes)

Don't expect unbelievers to act like believers until they are

7. TELL STORIES - GIVE EXAMPLES - People always relate to a story better.

*"Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables."
Matt. 13:34 (NLT)*

8. LIGHTEN UP! *"The Son of man came enjoying life..." Luke 7:34 (Ph)*

9. BE YOURSELF. BE NATURAL. DON'T TRY TO SOUND "SPIRITUAL"

"When I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy but simply to tell you what God has guaranteed." 1 Cor. 2:1 (JB)

"Your speech should be unaffected and logical so that your opponents may feel ashamed at finding nothing in which to pick holes." Titus 2:8 (Ph)

10. BE VULNERABLE AND AUTHENTIC

"Because we loved you, we were happy to share not only God's Good News with you, but even our own lives." 1 Thess. 2:8 (NCV)

"We've spoken frankly to you, we've opened our hearts wide." 2 Cor. 6:11 (GN)

*"Be sure that you live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ."
Phil. 1:27a (NCV)*

11. MEMORIZE A FEW KEY VERSES

"Concentrate... on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the Word of truth to the best advantage." 2 Tim. 2:15 (Ph)

12. KEEP IT SIMPLE

*"I fear... (Satan) will corrupt you from the simplicity that is in Christ."
2 Cor. 11:3 (KJV)*

13. REMEMBER, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS USING YOUR WORDS

You are not trying to convince anyone on your own.

“For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true.”
1 Thess. 1:5a (NLT)

NEXT STEPS FOR SHARING YOUR LIFE MESSAGE

- Finish writing out your Testimony that you began in this session.
- Turn in the Testimony Survey to let us know what testimonies you could give.
- Begin praying for God to bring people into your life that you could share the Good News with in a natural, casual way.
- Read *Gentle Persuasion* by Joe Aldrich (Multnomah), or *Out of the Saltshaker And Into the World*, by Rebecca Manley Pippert (Intervarsity).
- Subscribe to *On Mission Magazine*, North American Mission Board.

SESSION 3

Fishing In My Mission Pond

“Jesus called out, ‘Come follow me and I will show you how to fish for the souls of men.’” Matt. 4:19 (LB)

Fishing and Following go together!
Introducing people to Christ is like fishing, not hunting!

HUNTING

Aggressive
Based on confrontation

“Go out there & shoot them”
Uses “1 size fits all” bullet

Take your best shot & it’s over
Scares off the animal if you miss

The animal has no choice
Must be a skilled shot

VS

FISHING

More gentle
Based on attraction

“Get them to nibble on your bait”
Allows you to try all kinds of lures

Reeling in a fish requires *give & take*
You get more than one chance

The fish gets a choice!
Anyone can put bait into the water!

In Jesus’ day, they only used nets for fishing. Today, we have many kinds of methods for fishing, even bass boats with built-in sonar equipment!

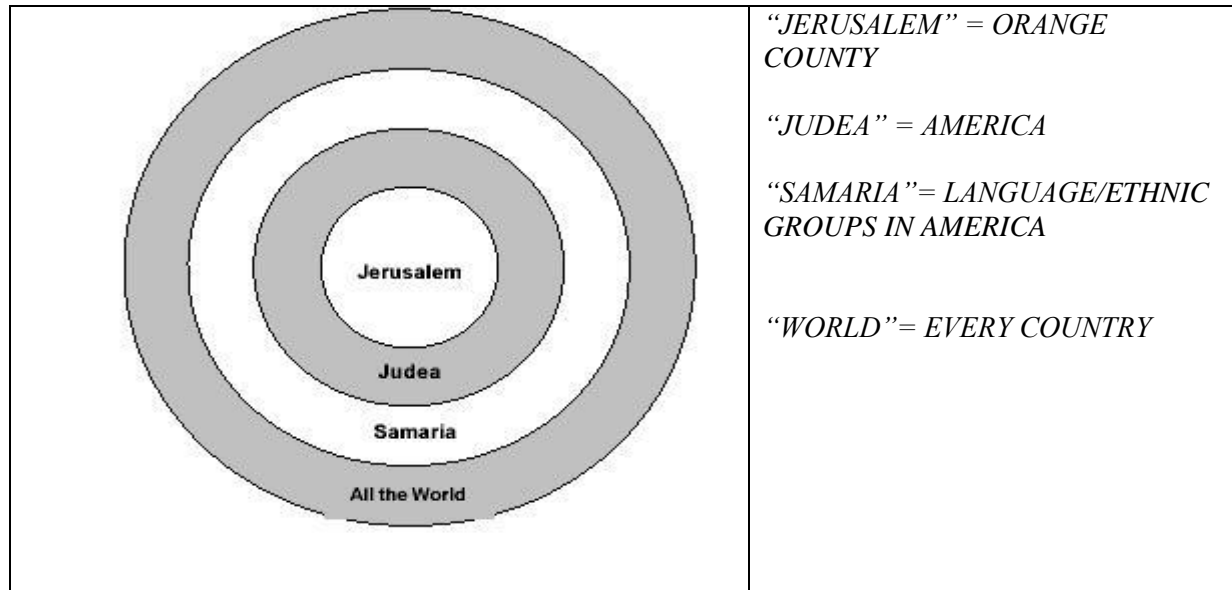
5 KEYS TO SPIRITUAL FISHING

1. IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONAL FISHING POND

“You will be my witnesses - in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.” Acts 1:8b (NIV)

The New Testament Pattern

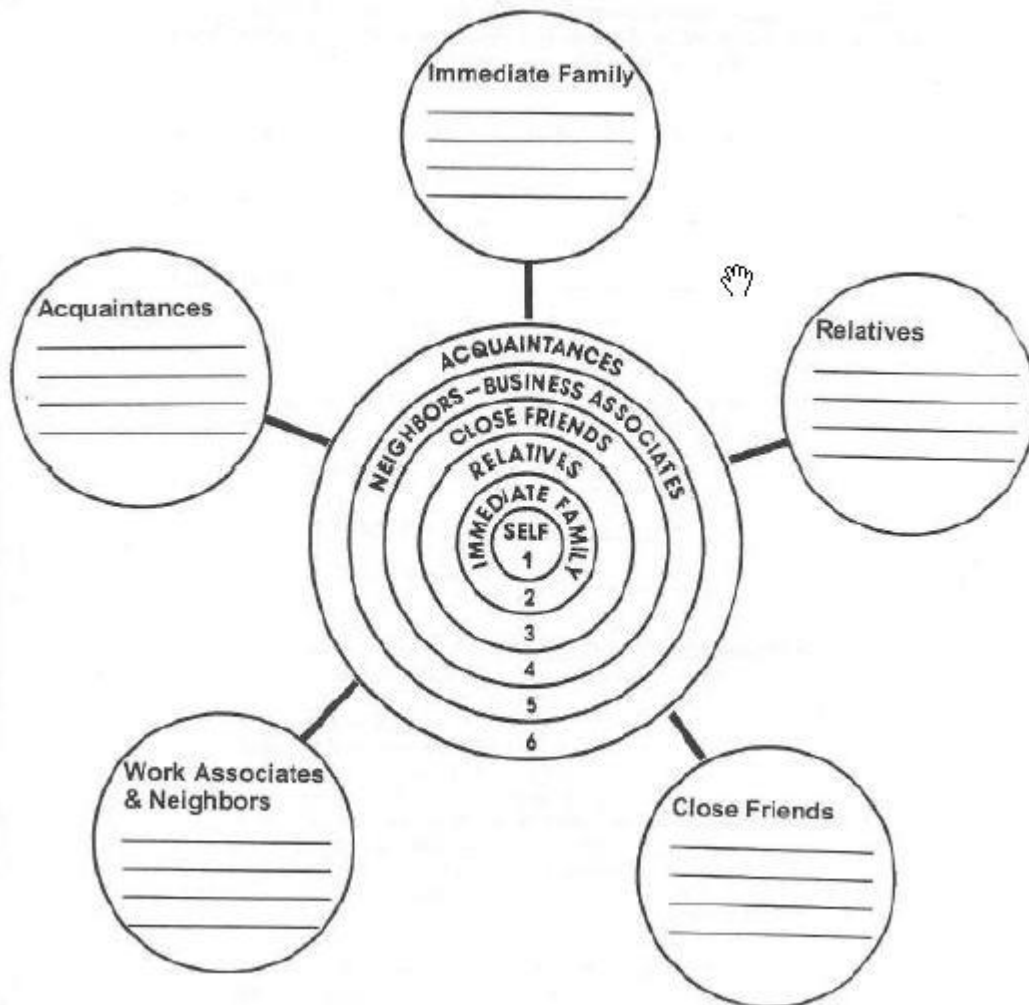
Our Church’s Pattern



MY CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

(My Fishing Pond)

God holds me most responsible for people I already have relationships with.



Where do I start first? Those closest to me!

"Go home to your family and friends. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you." Mark 5:19 (NCV)

Family (John 1:40-46), Coworkers (Acts 18:1-4), Friends (John 4:39-42)

People who cross our paths (John 4:4-30)

2. LEARN ABOUT THE KINDS OF FISH IN YOUR POND.

“To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews...to those who are without the law I became like a person who is without the law... to those who are weak I became weak so I could win the weak. I have become all things to all people so I could save some of them in any way possible. I do all this because of the Good News and so I can share in its blessings.” 1 Cor. 9:20-23 (NCV)

“Every prudent man acts out of knowledge.” Pr. 13:16 (NIV)

The more you know about a person, the easier it is to reach them.

A. WHAT ARE THEIR INTERESTS, NEEDS, AND HURTS

“Jesus knew what they were thinking...”

Matt. 9:4, 12:25; Mark 2:8; Luke 5:22, 9:47, 11:17

A powerful filter: *Your Reticular Activating System*

What gets our attention:

1. Things we VALUE
2. Things that THREATENS US
3. Things that are UNIQUE

B. WHAT DO I HAVE IN COMMON WITH THEM?

“...Whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him. I do this to get the Gospel to them and also for the blessing I myself receive when I see them come to Christ.”
1 Cor. 9:22b-23 (LB)

This is the fundamental secret of telling others about Christ.

“With many stories like these, he presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity.” Mark 4:33 (Mes)

- Before you can share the Good News, you must first find a common ground.
- Before you can *reach* them, you must be able to relate to them.

Make a list of areas where you have common ground with the unbelievers in your life.

- Common Experiences
- Common Interests
- Common Needs
- Common Hurts

3. REMEMBER THAT FISH GET HUNGRY AT DIFFERENT TIMES

“Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers...”
Col. 4:5 (GN)

This is called “*Receptivity*.” How open are they to the Good News?

It is important to realize that people go through a process in coming to faith in Christ and they must be approached differently depending on where they are.

Examples of levels of spiritual receptivity

“Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness.”
Isa. 46:12 (NIV)

(Jesus with an unbeliever) *“Realizing this man's understanding, Jesus said to him, ‘You are not far from the Kingdom of God.’”* Mark 12:34(LB)

“He has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were very far away from him, and to us Jews who were near.” Eph. 2:17 (LB)

*“Now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.”
Eph. 2:13 (NLT)*

The Parable of Soils (Matt. 13); Four kinds of receptivity
 Hard soil = The defensive heart
 Shallow soil = The impulsive heart
 Soil with weeds = The distracted heart
 Good Soil = The receptive heart

- Facts:
- Some people are *close* to making a commitment to Christ, while others have a *long way* to go!
 - Effective evangelism relies on assessing how receptive a person is and then helping them take the next step.

HOW PEOPLE COME TO CHRIST AND THEN GROW

(Revised Engels with Purpose-Driven Process)

- 6 Self-satisfied, skeptical, resistant, or spiritually apathetic. (*Resistant stage*)
- 5 Becomes aware of an unmet need or spiritual void in life. (*Receptive stage*)
- 4 Begins looking for answers to questions or solutions to problems. (*Seeker stage*)
- 3 Considers the differences between themselves and believers. (*Consideration stage*)
- 2 Learns why and how to become a Christian. (*Understanding stage*)
- 1 Ready to believe and receive Christ. (*Ready stage*) The fruit is ripe!

Ground Zero: NEW LIFE IN CHRIST!

- +1 Baptized and connected to a church family. (*Membership - CLASS 101*)
- +2 Practicing the habits necessary for spiritual growth. (*Maturity – CLASS 201*)
- +3 Using God-given talents (“SHAPE”) to serve others. (*Ministry – CLASS 301*)
- +4 Sharing the Good News with non-believers. (*Mission – CLASS 401*)
- +5 Living out one’s Life Purpose to the glory of God. (*Magnification – CLASS 501*)

At what stage would a person say...

<i>“I think religion is a crutch for weak people.”</i>	<u>The Resistant Stage</u>
<i>“Please show me how I can become a Christian.”</i>	<u>Ready Stage</u>
<i>“I’m really fed up with the stress I’m under.”</i>	<u>Receptive Stage</u>
<i>“I think everyone will go to heaven.”</i>	<u>Minus Six or Minus Two</u>
<i>“I’ve been reading a New Age book on spirituality.”</i>	<u>Seeker Stage</u>
<i>“Why do Christians seem so happy?”</i>	<u>Consideration Stage</u>

INSIGHTS

- Evangelism is a process of moving people through the stages!
- People move through these stages *at different speeds*.
- People often require *multiple exposures* at each stage before moving on.
- A person can *get stuck* at any stage. The #1 reason is fear
- Every stage requires a different response by me!

“My work was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos' work was to water it, but it was God, not we, who made the garden grow in your hearts.”

1 Cor. 3:6 (LB)

WHAT TO DO WITH PEOPLE AT EACH STAGE

What do you do when someone is at the **RESISTANT** stage?

They are skeptical, self-satisfied, resistant, or spiritually apathetic. (-6)

1. Pray for them to become receptive.
2. Build a relationship through love and service.
3. Invite them to a fun event.
4. What NOT to do with resistant people: DON'T ARGUE

“Don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.”

2 Tim. 2:23-26 (NLT)

Note: Some people we might think are “resistant” are actually just *unaware* of the gospel or they've never heard it in terms they can understand!

☑ **What do you do when someone is at the RECEPTIVE stage?**

They are aware of an unmet need or spiritual void in their life. (-5)

1. Offer to help them in a practical way.
2. Share your testimony about the same need.
3. Tell them that you are praying for them.
4. Ask open-ended questions. *“Tell me about the spiritual side of your life.”*
5. Assess if they are ready to skip to stage –2 or –1

“Evangelism is helping people discover how God is already at work in their lives.” - Sam Williams

What makes people receptive? Change
(either positive or negative)

HOLMES STRESS SCALE

LIFE EVENT	STRESS LEVEL
Death of a spouse	100 points
Divorce	73
Marriage/Separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or major illness	53
Getting married	50
Fired from work	47
Marriage reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Major change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sex difficulties	39
Gaining a new family member	39
Major change at work	39
Major change in financial status	38
Death of a close friend	37
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Wife begins or stops work	26
Trouble with boss	23
Change in residence	20

☑ **What do you do when someone is at the SEEKER stage?**

They are looking for answers to questions or solutions to problems. (-4)

1. Invite them to our weekend worship service.
2. Invite them to a Bible Class.
3. Give them cd's, reading materials or lead them to the messages.
4. Open a dialog on spiritual issues with questions like:
"Have you ever considered what Jesus said?"
"What do you need to know to take the next step?"
"How can I help you?"

☑ **What do you do when someone is at the CONSIDERATION stage?**

They begin to notice the real differences between themselves and believers. (-3)

1. Introduce them to other Christians.
2. Invite them to a small group.
3. Discuss the different ways believers respond to life.

☑ **What do you do when someone is at the UNDERSTANDING stage?**

They need to understand why and how to become a Christian. (-2)

1. Explain God's plan of salvation!
2. Explain how you made your decision for Christ.
3. Help them see the benefits, implications and costs.

☑ **What do you do when someone is READY to receive Christ? (-1)**

Offer to lead them in a prayer of commitment!

☑ **What do you do after they have RECEIVED CHRIST?**

1. Take them to Class 101!
2. Encourage and attend their baptism!
3. Get them into a new believer's small group!

HOW TO BUILD A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

A plan for sharing your faith

Good friendships are usually intentional, rather than accidental. Developing friendships with unbelievers often requires going the second mile, taking some risks, and moving outside your own comfort zone. And with our busy lifestyles, it takes *planning*. If you don't plan to cultivate friendships with unbelievers, you'll find that you never have the time to do so.

"We should make our plans - counting on God to direct us." Pr. 16:9

STEP #1 : BECOME AWARE - of the unbelievers God has placed in your life.

- ✓ Make a list of them by name.
- ✓ Realize that they are your responsibility.
- ✓ Assess each person's level of spiritual receptivity.
- ✓ Discover and write down what their interests and needs are.
- ✓ Look for areas of common ground that you can build on.
- ✓ Figure out what kind of testimony each would respond to.

STEP #2: COMMIT TO PRAYER

- ✓ Use your list to pray daily for your unsaved friends.
- ✓ Pray that God will draw them to himself. John 6:44
- ✓ Pray that God will remove their spiritual blindness. 2 Cor. 4:3-4
- ✓ Pray that the Holy Spirit will make their heart receptive. Jn.16:8-13
- ✓ Pray you'll get the opportunity to share a clear witness. Col.4 3-5
- ✓ Pray that God will give you wisdom in what to say. James 1:5
- ✓ Pray the Holy Spirit will use the words you say. 1 Thess. 1:5

STEP #3: SHOW YOU CARE

- ✓ Treat everyone with respect as people, not as "prospects".
- ✓ Be a genuine friend. Help them in practical ways.
- ✓ Be a good listener. It is a great way to show love.
- ✓ Make service your aim, not recruitment.
- ✓ Invite them into your home.
- ✓ Consciously focus your concern on meeting their needs.
- ✓ Go out of your way to love them until they ask you why.
- ✓ Accept people as they are without being judgmental.

STEP #4: BE READY TO SHARE

- ✓ Identify yourself as a positive, joyful follower of Christ.
- ✓ Share a testimony when the occasion naturally arises. (It will)
- ✓ Never force the Good News. Be patient. God is working!
- ✓ Use crisis situations to show why we all need God.
- ✓ Ask questions that lead to spiritual discussions.
- ✓ Give them appropriate message tapes or books to read.

- ✓ Concentrate on the essential. Don't get sidetracked by hang-ups.
- ✓ Invite them to a seeker service at church.
- ✓ Offer to lead in a prayer to commit after sharing the Good News.

NEXT STEPS FOR FISHING IN MY MISSION POND

- Prepare a Friendship Evangelism Planning Card for reaching your unsaved friends.
- Read *Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry & Mary*, Lee Strobel, (Zondervan)

Internet Links: Communication skills for evangelism:

<http://www.gospelcom.net/iv/students/library/commskills.html>

Using the Internet for evangelism:

<http://www.webauthors.org/guide/web-evangelism.html#content1>

THE POTENTIAL OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

SESSION 4

Becoming A World-Class Christian

GOD'S GLOBAL PLAN

God has always been interested in the *entire* world.

“Jesus said, ‘Go everywhere in the world, and tell the Good News to everyone.’”
Mark 16:15 (NCV)

“And the Good News must first be made known in every nation before the end-time finally comes.”
Mark 10:13 (LB)

Many Christians mistakenly assume that the responsibility for taking the Good News to all parts of the world belongs only to missionaries and pastors. But the Bible clearly points out that it is every believer's responsibility to be a *world-class* Christian. Every member is a messenger!

We are all called to be On-Mission

Now, with the Internet, digital communication technologies, and air transportation available to practically every corner of the planet, our responsibility has increased - but *the task has also gotten much easier!* Our world is shrinking. When you can fly across the ocean in less time than it takes to drive to Northern California, the opportunity to be a part of God's Global Mission around the world is now available to all of us!

DEFINITIONS:

MISSION: *The overall task of the church to fulfill its 5 purposes as given in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission – worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry.*

EVANGELISM: *Introducing people to Jesus Christ. Sharing the Good News.*

MISSIONS: *Fulfilling the 5 purposes of the church in a different culture than your own.*

EVERYDAY MISSIONS

20 IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING A MISSION HEART

1. Create a plan for inviting your neighbors to bridge events at the church (Christmas & Easter services,).
2. Host an “Open House” to get to know your neighbors. (Hand deliver the invitations so that you make face-to-face contact).
3. See the schools as a mission field. Volunteer as a chaperone for field trips, dances, grad night or PTA.
4. Invite friends and family to “Affordable Christmas”
5. Invite a friend to go to a movie with you, and then, over coffee, utilize the movie to discuss their outlook on life.
6. Leave a piece of evangelistic literature for a waiter or waitress along with a generous tip!
7. Memorize Luke 19:10 and create a list of the potential “lost” people you’d like to reach in your area.
8. Invite some people from other cultures into a discussion on the question, “What do you think a Christian is?”
9. Make a list of various ethnic and cultural groups you come across in your work place.
10. Memorize I John 3:16-18.
11. Attend a local cultural or ethnically distinctive event in an effort to understand the cultures around your area.
12. Read Matthew 25 and try to identify one project per month that you can do for the types of people Jesus lists.
13. Read [Six Dangerous Questions](#) by Paul Borthwick.
14. Pray for the country on the label of your clothes.
15. Ask your server is it anything they want you to pray for.
16. Pray for a week for the Muslim countries in North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Indonesia.
17. Pray for your children to be open to wherever God might call them in service around the world.
18. Start an email or pen pal connection to any long-term international missionaries.
19. Pick up a copy of “On-Mission” or “Commission” magazine to continue your mission education.
20. Listen to CNN or another world news report and pray through the countries mentioned.

GOD IS DOING AMAZING THINGS AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN CHURCH PARADIGM

“This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very first day you heard and understood the truth about God's great kindness to sinners.” Col. 1:6 (NLT)

Saturation Evangelism: Using every available means, at every available time, to reach every available person!

*“I become all things to all men so that I may save some of them by all means possible.”
1 Cor. 9:22 (GN)*

GOD’S CHALLENGE TO US

*“Look at the nations and watch - and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.”
Hab. 1:5 (NIV)*

“Your faith in God has become known throughout the world.” 1 Thess. 1:8 (NIV)

*“... God determined the times set for everyone and the exact places where they should live...”
Acts 17:26 (NIV)*

THE BIG QUESTION: AM I WILLING TO BE USED BY GOD?

*“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”
2 Chron. 16:9 (NIV)*

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE ON - MISSION FOR GOD

We must make 5 major shifts in our thinking.

1. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM SELF-CENTEREDNESS TO GOD-CENTEREDNESS.

“When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
Acts 1:8 (NLT)

“For the Holy Spirit, God's gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them. If you will stir up this inner power, you will never be afraid to tell others about our Lord...”
2 Tim. 1:7-8 (LB)

2. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL.

“If you ask me, I will give you the nations; all the people on earth will be yours.”
Ps. 2:8 (NCV)

Watch the world news with “missionary eyes” then pray!

“From one man God created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand which should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose in all of this was that the nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him--though he is not far from any one of us.”
Acts 17:26-27 (NLT)

3. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM TEMPORAL VALUES TO ETERNAL VALUES.

“Anyone who lets himself be distracted from the work I plan for him is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”
Luke 9:62 (LB)

“No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.” 2 Tim. 2:4 (NASB)

“The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these other things you need will be given to you.” Matt. 6:33 (NCV)

“Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.”
Matt. 6:33 (Mes)

4. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM SECURITY TO SERVICE.

“Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live!” Mark 8:35 (LB)

“Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back... and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us.” Heb. 12:1 (LB)

5. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM COMFORT TO SACRIFICE.

“Since God has shown us great mercy... offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him...” Rom. 12:1 (NCV)

“...Give yourselves completely to God – every part of you... you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for his good purposes.” Rom. 6:13 (LB)

Jesus replied, “Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything... for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who won't be given back, a hundred times over... All these will be his here on earth, and in the world to come he shall have eternal life.” Mark 10:29-30 (LB)

MY LIFE INVESTMENT GUIDE

What percentage is used for God's Kingdom?

C=my current status X=beginning today

|-----| **MY TIME**
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

|-----| **MY TALENT**
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

|-----| **MY TREASURE**
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

“Store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is.” Matt. 6:20-21 (NCV)

The Best Investment: Getting people Into Heaven!

“I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven.” Luke 16:9 (NLT)

**WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO LIVE FOR DURING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?
THE CHOICE IS YOURS**

"David served God's purpose in his own generation...." Acts 13:36a (NIV)

*"If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work."
2 Tim. 2:21 (NLT)*

*"I want to finish the race I'm running. I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus-- the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness."
Acts 20:24 (GWT)*

*"For what is it we live for, that gives us hope and joy and is our proud reward and crown? It is you! Yes, you will bring us much joy as we stand together before our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes back again. For you are our trophy and joy."
1 Thess. 2:19-29 (LB)*

Will anyone be in heaven because of you?

*"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "**Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?**" And I said, "**Here am I. Send me!**" Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)*