

# COMMISSIONED

## THE ART OF LIVING OUT THE WORDS, WAYS, & MISSION OF JESUS

### 6.1 Practicing One Another's

#### Way of Action

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I would like to talk with you today about practicing the one another's.

Many of you have heard me tell this story, but when I was first diagnosed with cancer, it was very hard for me to share with others. I held it close. It's a vulnerable feeling to share my struggle. For some of you I understand that it's not a big deal to share these types of things, but I know there are others who do relate. I just don't like people to feel sorry for me. It feels like you are giving away your power when you share your vulnerabilities, but what I realized is that you are actually exponentially multiplying your power by inviting people into your story! By letting others carry my burdens it humbled me and empowered others in a positive way. It enables others to obey the command to carry one another's burdens and at the same time it humbles me to be able to share that story with others. You see, we were made to both share our vulnerabilities and carry the vulnerabilities of others.

Practicing the one another's is a foundational component to living the Jesus Way.

The phrase "one another" is derived from the Greek word *allelon* which means "**one another, each other; mutually, reciprocally.**" It occurs 100 times in the New Testament. Approximately 59 of those occurrences are specific commands teaching us how (and how not) to relate to one another.

Few stories illustrate the power of community as much as one found in Mark 2. Jesus was teaching to a packed out, standing room- only crowd in Capernaum. When four friends arrived, carrying their paralyzed friend on a mat, they weren't deterred by the crowd but were determined to get their friend to Jesus. They were so determined that they didn't do what normal, rational

people would do. They refused to sit quietly, wait patiently, and civilly wait for an audience with Jesus. They carried their friend to the roof, dug a hole in the roof, and lowered their friend at the feet of Jesus.

Can we slow that down for a moment?

They carried him to the roof.

They dug a hole in the roof.

This was a hole big enough to lower an entire grown man through. It took time, intentionality, and intensity.

They excavated someone's roof.

While Jesus was teaching.

Then they devised some sort of pulley system to lower the man through the roof, into the living room, in front of Jesus.

All eyes look to Jesus . . . then to the man . . . then to the four friends peering through the hole from the roof. And perhaps there is a sideways glance or two to the owner of the house... what was he thinking?

Jesus looked up at the friends, saw *their* faith, and told the man on the mat, "Your sins are forgiven."

That unsettled the religious crowd, who questioned the brazenness and potential blasphemy of Jesus to be so presumptuous as to declare what only God has the authority to declare. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus decided to perform a second miracle: "Pick up your mat and walk."

The man walked out with new faith and new legs because of the faith of his four friends.

Andy Stanley said: "Your friends will determine the quality and direction of your life."

The man walked out that day with new legs and a new identity because of the faith of his friends. Show me who is surrounding you, who has the loudest voice in your life, whose opinion matters most—and I can show you where you are heading. And the best friends change us in the best way by getting us to Jesus. The kind of friendship we see in this story changes, stretches, heals, and transforms.

This story forces us to ask the questions:

Whose faith is changing your life?

Whose life is being changed by your faith?

Someone else's miracle may be on the other side of your faith.

Someone else's miracle may be on the other side of your prayers. On the other side of your risks, your encouragement, your checkbook, your inconvenience.

Finally, this story demonstrates that community can show the world a picture of Jesus.

We read in verse 12, "He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"

The result of the friendship between these four men was

Not just that they supported . . .

Not just that they transformed . . .

But they set the stage for Jesus to show up and show off.

It is an echo of John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

What if people around us were compelled to follow Jesus because of the way we loved one another?

When it comes to our friendships, are we willing to move past convenience to commitment?

Are we willing to measure the value of the friendship by what we bring to it and not what we get out of it?

Are lives being transformed because the faith we live out together?

How are we loving one another.

I love backrubs. I often ask my wife to give me backrubs and she will often give me a backrub the way she likes them. But I don't always like the way she does because she'll dig in and do a deep massage and I start crying and saying "Ouch, that hurts!" And so I have to tell her how to rub my back in a way that feels good to me.

And I think a lot of times we try and love one another but we do so in a way we like to be shown love. It's natural and there is nothing wrong with it. But I want us to ask ourselves how can I love someone in a way that they can receive

It starts by listening. It starts by knowing. It starts by understanding.

I want to challenge us in these one another not only that we carry them out but that we do them in a way that actually meets the need of the person we are seeking to love.

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You see, friendship invites the awkward. But the awkward initiates miracles.

Friendship is hard work. But the hard work brings transformation.

Friendship reflects and refines our faith. And that faith changes the world around us.

This is a fact: You have been commissioned by the CREATOR, Father God, to practice the one another's, both in giving and receiving. And I affirm and call out that commissioning on your life, in Jesus name, Amen.