

BASIC TRAINING



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INTRODUCTION

Focus on the Gospel

Over these five lessons, we will focus on the gospel, clarifying the central message of Christianity and showing how the understanding and application of the Gospel to everyday life is the heart of discipleship.

4 Primary Commitments: Gather, Give, Grow, Go

We understand...

1. That we are saved as individuals but placed into a community to **gather** in the worship of Jesus and are called to be the church in everyday life.
2. That the Christian life is fueled by an ever-deepening understanding of the gospel message; that we are daily seeking to **give** of our time talent, and treasure for God's glory.
3. That we seek to **grow** by allowing the story of God to shape our stories.
4. That every Christian is called to fulfill the **mission** of making disciples of Jesus as their primary purpose in life. Jesus didn't wait for people to come to Him. He had a heart to **go**.

How to Get Involved

Regularly gathering on Sundays is a good place to start. We want Crossview to be made up of a group of people with whom you are free to rest, to not be "busy for Jesus," but to simply learn to enjoy the grace you've been given.

The simplest place to start is to find a place to serve on Sunday mornings. Seek to show up faithfully on a Sunday morning and serve

selflessly. Whether you're helping to disciple kids, joining with the worship team, helping others connect, or serving at the coffee corner, we'd like to see everyone serving on Sunday in some capacity.

The other great place to start is with this Basic Training course. The leaders of our church are called to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry." (Eph. 4:12) Jesus saved us and called us to be the Church for a purpose: so the church would make disciples. We desire to see everyone equipped to do this in every-day life. Taking this course is one key way you can take responsibility for your own development as a disciple who can make disciples.

Beyond that, we will help you find a community of gospel people to start to connect with. Be warned: getting into the rhythm of a Life Group can be a challenge. Most of our Life Groups have what we call "family dinner," a weekly connection point for the community to be together, eat, celebrate, tell stories, and remind one another of the gospel, so that together we learn to live a life of gospel intentionality.

Count the Cost

Part of our goal in this training is that you will **count the cost** of being a disciple of Jesus. Jesus actually warned people against being his disciples. He told them that following Him could result in their deaths!

If you're going to become part of Crossview and begin discipleship training by taking the Basic Training, we're asking you to put aside your assumptions and humbly learn with us. In order to do that, we ask that you come to training prepared, having read and worked through the manual, ready to engage in the discussion. Take responsibility for your development as a disciple. Ask that the Spirit of God would wreck and rebuild your life for the fame of Jesus, so that many may know Jesus' goodness.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

The Importance of the Gospel

The heart of Christianity is the gospel. Gospel means “good news” and was a word used by Jesus and the early church to describe the core content of Christianity. When people think about Christianity many things come to mind, but the message of the gospel is rarely the first thing. Yet, the Bible says that the gospel is “of first importance.” If there is one thing about Christianity that is important to understand, either for Christians or for people exploring Christianity, it is the message of the gospel.

THE GOSPEL IS PRIMARY:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures . . . (1 Corinthians 15:3)

THE GOSPEL IS POWERFUL:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones explains that when a king went to war and lost, he would immediately send generals throughout the cities and villages to prepare the common people for war. Because the battle had been lost, the enemy would advance to take the people captive, and if anyone wanted to live, they were going to need to fight for their lives. Their livelihood, their hope, and their future were, essentially, in their own hands.

On the other hand, Lloyd-Jones says, when the king won a great victory on the front lines, he would send messengers to proclaim the good

news throughout the cities and villages of the empire. These men were not generals telling the people to prepare for battle; rather, they were messengers (evangelists!) carrying the good news message (gospel!) that the livelihood, hope, and future of the people had been secured on their behalf by the king, though they themselves had not lifted a finger!

Lloyd Jones goes on to say that the difference between sending generals and sending messengers is the difference between religion and the gospel message.

If there's anything in life that we should be passionate about, it's the gospel. And I don't mean passionate only about sharing it with others. I mean passionate about thinking about it, dwelling on it, rejoicing in it, allowing it to color the way we look at the world. Only one thing can be of first importance to each of us. And only the gospel ought to be."

-C.J. Mahaney

The Gospel	Religion
News about what Jesus has done for us	Instructions about what we must do for God
Elicits joy and gratitude	Elicits fear and stress
Sends messengers who spread the good news that our lives are now safe because of King Jesus' victory	Sends commanders who tell people they must fight for themselves if they want to save their lives

Good News from God's Word:

THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL

To understand the message of the gospel, the best place to begin is the Bible itself. Below each of the following scriptures write down 2-3 key points that summarize that passage. Don't be surprised if the same key points continue to emerge.

Read John 3:16-17

Read Romans 3:23

Read Ephesians 2:8-10

The gospel makes Christianity unique among all religions. Some people say that all religions basically teach the same thing, but those people have never studied religions closely. While there are some similarities among religions, the message of the gospel makes Christianity fundamentally different. Anyone whose life is shaped by the truth of the gospel, as opposed to religion, will have completely different motives, relationships, emotions, and behaviors.

But what has Jesus done on my behalf? And how does that make Gospel Christianity different?

First, Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to God. In every way, he was perfectly pleasing to God, absolutely faithful, and entirely obedient. When I put faith in him, I ask God to deal with me, not according to my performance in life, but according to Jesus' performance on my behalf. We fundamentally shift our sense of worth and identity from ourselves and our life record to Him and His life record. When that happens, God

no longer considers me a rebel against Him but treats me as a “dearly beloved son.” Our experience of this incredible truth leads to a deep, humble gratitude and a zealous desire to flee from sin because it is incompatible with who we are in Christ.

Second, Jesus died as a perfect substitute, taking the just penalty against my sin. Jesus drank the cup of God’s wrath against me and my sin to the very last drop. There is no wrath left for me when I place my faith in Him. God the Father turned his back on His own Son so that He could turn His face toward rebels like me. I recognize that my sin put Jesus on the cross, and that humbles me; but I also recognize that He freely chose to go to the cross for me, and that reality energizes me to live faithfully before Him! This is why Paul in Romans 8:1 says, “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!” We are no longer guilty before God. We have been “justified” or made right with him and we have peace with him. Our moral failure does not hinder our relationship with God.

Third, Jesus rose from the dead and defeated sin, death, and hell. Jesus is alive today and promises to take control of my heart and life, actually living in me by His Spirit! When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to live in us, empowering us for growth in character, gifting us for ministry in the world, and leading us into all truth. By faith in Him I can walk in consistent victory over my sin, the patterns of sin in the world, and Satan’s work.

Christians, then, are not primarily a group of people who all believe the same things and perform certain rituals and religious observances. The radical claim of the New Testament – and of Jesus Himself – is that Christians are a new people, a new humanity, created in and through the work of Jesus Christ. Our sin has been forgiven because of Jesus, God treats us as beloved children because of Jesus, the Spirit of God comes to take up residence in our hearts, and we have a secure future. **We are not who we used to be.** Rather, we are “in Christ”: all that belongs to Jesus is ours, our past is gone, our identity today is in Him, and our future is life in God’s kingdom with God forever!

Consider the following contrasts between Religion and the Gospel (adapted from Dr. Timothy Keller):

In religion, we obey in order to be accepted by God, fearing what he might do if we're disobedient. The gospel motivates us to obedient Christian living by telling us that because of Jesus we are already accepted, that the judgment against our sin has fallen on Jesus, and that there is no guilt or condemnation left for me.

In religion, I obey in order to get things from God, often making promises about what I will do or how I will change. The gospel tells me what God has done for me, and His grace teaches me to obey out of joyful gratitude for all that he has already given me. I obey to enjoy God.

Week 1

GATHERING: As God's Family

Gospel Identity

Many of us base our identity on what we do. Christians should be different—we base their identity on what God has done for us. We receive a whole new identity by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection. Christians are called to live radically new lives because they are radically new people. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

WHO IS GOD	WHAT HAS GOD DONE	WHO ARE WE?	WHAT DO WE DO?
Father	Adopted us	Family	As family, we love God and love one another.
Son	Purchased us	Servants	As servants, we serve King Jesus and serve others as a foretaste of the coming kingdom.
Spirit	Sent us	Missionaries	As missionaries, we follow the leading of the Spirit as we share and show the good news of Jesus.

Notice that the chart moves, left to right, from the power of the gospel to the purpose of the gospel. This is the "gospel flow," and is the pattern for life in Christ: Who God is -> What He Has Done -> Who We Are -> What We Do. Making disciples is the process of helping people connect who God is and what God has done to who we are now and what we are to do. Unless

we know who He is, and what He's done, we'll never know who we are now or have the power for how we are to live.

A disciple is someone who is living out their God-given identity as a member of God's family of missionary servants who makes disciples who makes disciples. In Track 2 of Crossview Basics, we discover how we can grow as disciples who make disciples by living out our identity as family, missionaries, and servants.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL (Who God is and what He has done)	THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL (Who we are and what we are to do)
We have been saved from the penalty of sin and <i>adopted</i> by the <i>Father</i> into His family.	As family, we love God and love one another.
We are being saved from the power of sin and <i>sent</i> by the <i>Holy Spirit</i> as missionaries.	As missionaries, we follow the Spirit's leading as we share and show the good news of Jesus.
We will be saved from the presence of sin and purchased by the Son as servants.	As servants, we serve King Jesus and serve others as a foretaste of His coming kingdom.

Further Developing Your Mission Statement

At the end of the last chapter, you wrote a personal mission statement that embodied how you sense the Spirit leading you to live in light of gospel power and gospel purpose. In this chapter, we are discovering how we can grow as disciples who make disciples by living out our identity as family, missionaries and servants. A disciple is someone who is living out their God-given identity as a member of God's family of missionary servants who make disciples who make disciples. Over the coming weeks, you'll be adding to your mission statement by writing out the specific ways you'll live your gospel identities of family, missionaries, and servants.

Take a moment and rewrite your mission statement here. Make any adjustments in light of what you've learned about the power and purpose of the gospel.

My Personal Mission Statement:

Good News from God's Word

Family: We are dearly loved children adopted by the Father. As family, we love God and love one another.

Orphans vs. Children

ORPHANS	CHILDREN OF GOD
Feels alone. Lacks a vital daily intimacy with God. Is full of self-concern.	Has a growing assurance that "God is really my loving heavenly Father."
Anxious over felt needs: relationships, money, health. "I'm all alone and nobody cares. I'm not a happy camper."	Trusts the Father and has a growing confidence in his loving care. Is being freed up from worry.

- The Church is a family with God as Father (1 Thessalonians 1:1-3, 3:11-13, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2, 2:16)
- The Church is the "household of God" (1 Timothy 3:15, 1 Peter 4:17, Hebrews 3:3-6)
- Christians are God's children (Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 4:4-6)
- Christians are brothers and sisters with Jesus (Mark 3:31-35, 10:28-31, Luke 9:60)
- Christians are brothers and sisters with one another (Matthew 23:8-9)

BUILDS COMMUNITY
Be devoted to one another (Rom 12:10)
Let us not judge one another (Rom 14:13)
Accept one another (Rom 15:7)
Instruct one another (Rom 15:14)
Care for one another (1 Cor 12:25)
Serve one another in love (Gal 5:13)
Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2)

Q. What benefits do you see to living in this kind of other-focused community with one another?

Q. What fears do you have about making a commitment to live as family with others?

Q. What has God the Father done? How do we relate to God as people who have been adopted by the Father? How do we relate to others?

Q. What has God the Holy Spirit done? How do we relate to God as people who have been sent by the Spirit? How do we relate to others?

Week 2

GIVING: As God's Servants

The Church as God's Servants

The church is the missionary people of God. Every Christian is on a mission from God--the mission of making disciples who make disciples.

The church is also the servant people of God. In this lesson we reflect on the Christian's new identity as a servant and how we can faithfully live out that identity in our Life Group.

Servants: We are servants purchased by the Son. As Servants, we serve King Jesus and serve others as a picture of the coming kingdom.

WHO IS GOD?	WHAT HAS GOD DONE?	WHO ARE WE?	WHAT DO WE DO?
Son	Purchased Us	Servants	As Servants, we serve King Jesus and serve others as a picture of the coming Kingdom.

Good News from God's Word

Jesus claimed to be a king, but not just any king. He claimed to be the king over all kings--God Himself. And yet, Jesus gave us an atypical picture of kingship. When two of Jesus' disciples were arguing about who would be higher up in his kingdom, He gave them a thought-provoking response.

Slaves of a Better Master

"Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:3) is the distinguishing article of Christianity and marks the essential confession of faith (Romans 10:9). Jesus proclaimed it to His disciples, His enemies, and His casual inquirers alike—and He refused to tone down its implications. The expression "Lord" (*kurios*) speaks of ownership, while "Master/Lord" (*despotes*) denotes an unquestionable right to command (John 13:13; Jude 4). Both words describe a master with absolute dominion over someone else. That explains Jesus' incredulity at the practice of those who paid homage to Him with their lips but not with their lives: "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).

There is no legitimate way to adjust the message in order to make it sound appealing to people who admire Jesus but aren't prepared to serve Him. Jesus didn't seek admirers; He was calling followers—not casual followers, but slaves. Remove that spirit of submission, and the most profound kind of "admiration" for Christ is a spiritual fraud that has nothing to do with true faith.

Though they were once the slaves of sin, Christ's followers receive spiritual freedom and rest for their souls through their saving relationship with Him (John 8:34, 36; Matthew 11:28-30). A slave's life was one of complete surrender, submission, and service to the master—and the people of Jesus' day would have immediately recognized the parallel. Christ's invitation to follow Him was an invitation to that same kind of life.

The notion of being a slave may not be appealing. But the truth is that we will all be slaves to one master or another: sin or Jesus. The good news is that God loves us enough to purchase us from a master who is a tyrant so we can belong to Him, a master who treats His slaves as beloved sons. We are set free from bondage to sin, guilt, misery, and condemnation and given the freedom to obey and please God, and to live the way our Creator intended us to live – enjoying intimate fellowship with Him.

Saved People Serve People

There are lots of other things we do as Christians that sound more exciting than serving others. Meditation on scripture appeals to our

desire for spiritual depth. Fasting can strike us as a challenge to a rugged, self-denying discipleship. But serving? It sounds so mundane, even demeaning.

Enter Jesus and the gospel. Jesus declared, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28) God works through the gospel of Jesus in part to make people like Jesus. As Jesus came not to be served, but instead had the heart of a servant, so those who believe the gospel of Jesus are given Christ-like hearts of servants.

The gospel of Jesus Christ transforms enemies of God into servants of God. The Holy Spirit still works through the gospel to turn those who serve their idols (such as wealth, career, sports, sex, house, land, and so on) into servants of God, just as He did in the apostle Paul's day, when the missionary wrote to some relatively new Christians: "You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." (1 Thess. 1:9)

One way the gospel turns sinners into servants is by humbling their pride. Through the gospel, people see that God is holy and that each of us deserves His wrath for breaking His law an infinite number of times. The gospel shows us what Christ did for sinners and how blessed we are to be received into His kingdom and family. As a result of understanding this incomparable message and experiencing God through it, people willingly serve Him and His gospel.

So, one of the clearest indications that a person has believed the gospel of Jesus is that his selfish desire to be served begins to be overcome by a Christ-like desire to serve. He starts looking for ways to do something for Christ's church, especially in ways that will serve the gospel.

The transformation in a person's nature that God effects through the gospel also turns selfish people — interested only in serving themselves and being served by others — into people who, in the words of the apostle Peter, want to "serve one another." (1 Peter 4:10) The gospel opens believers' eyes to see needs they never saw before and changes their hearts to have a new compassion and willingness to meet those needs.

As the Holy Spirit permeates people's characters with the effects of the gospel, they increasingly develop a mindset of serving in every part of life. They begin to consider their daily occupation in terms of how useful it should be in the service of others instead of simply how it enlarges their wealth or reputation. They give more thought to serving the members of their families. They want to know that their churches are stronger because of their service.

This section adapted from *The Discipline of Serving* by Donald Whitney. Some sections have been taken word for word from this article.

Good News for Everyday Life

Q. If you are a Christian, you have been purchased by Jesus and are no longer a slave to sin, but a slave of Jesus. Why is it good news that we are slaves of Jesus? How do we know that He is a better Master than sin?

Q. The implications of being servants of Jesus include exclusive ownership, complete submission, singular devotion, total dependence, and personal accountability. In which if these areas are you most struggling and in need of growth?

Q. How would your Life Group look different if you more deeply believed the truth that you have been purchased by Jesus and are His servants?

Week 3

GROWING: As God's Disciples (Part 1)

The Gospel in Three Statements

In this lesson we will examine the message of the gospel in greater detail, as well as some of its implications for everyday life. We can divide the message of the gospel into three statements which focus on what Jesus has done for us. Remember: the gospel is the message or "good news" about what has been accomplished on our behalf, though we've done nothing to earn or merit it. Rather, through faith in Jesus Christ (that is, by trusting our lives to his work on our behalf), we receive the following benefits:

- I. We have been saved from the **penalty of sin** because of Jesus' life and death. (Past)
- II. We are being saved from the **power of sin** because of Jesus' death and resurrection. (Present)
- III. We will be saved from the **presence of sin** because of Jesus' return. (Future)

Notice that each statement has a different tense – past, present, and future. Romans 1:16 says that the gospel is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." Throughout the Bible, salvation is spoken of as an accomplished event (past tense), an ongoing experience (present tense), and a coming reality (future tense). We will now look in depth at salvation in each of the three tenses, beginning with the past tense.

Salvation—Past Tense

Through faith, we have been saved from the penalty of sin because of Jesus' life and death.

We are more sinful than we ever realized, but we are more loved and accepted than we ever could have imagined, thanks to what Jesus has done for us.

An Invitation...

Imagine the opportunity to stand before God and hand in Jesus' resume in place of your own. Would you like to do that one day? If so, you can say to Jesus, "Thank you for living the perfect life that I haven't lived and thank you for paying the penalty for all the ways that I have fallen short of God's standards. I no longer want to rely on what I have done for my standing with God. I put my trust in you and what you did for me."

The Bad News: I am so sinful that Jesus had to die for me.

The Good News: I am so loved that Jesus was glad to die for me.

Good News for Everyday Life

Many of us have an internal drive to prove ourselves to ourselves, to others, and even to God. We approach encounters like we would a job interview, trying to make ourselves appear better than we are. The author Donald Miller said we live our lives like we are in a life raft that holds 15 people, but 16 are in the raft. Someone has to go and so we are bound and determined to prove that we deserve to stay. This drive to prove ourselves leads to all kinds of problems: stress, anger, jealousy, lying, debt, fear, to name just a few.

The message of the gospel is that we have nothing to prove and no need to pretend.

Religion	Gospel
My identity is based on what I do for God.	My identity is based on what God has done for me in Jesus.
I feel the need to prove myself to God and others because my acceptance is based on my good performance. I am constantly under pressure.	I don't have to prove myself to God or others because my acceptance is based on Jesus' good performance. The pressure is off.

1. We have been saved from the penalty of sin because of Jesus' life and death.
2. We are being set free from the power of sin because of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

“The gospel is not just what we preach to unbelievers in order to get them “saved” from the penalty of sin. The gospel is much more than that! The Good News is that Christ not only saves us from sin’s guilt but also delivers us from its slavery. The gospel is the principal energizing and driving force for living the whole Christian life. The gospel is not just for non-Christians. It is also for Christians.”

-John Fonville

The Gospel and Transformation

Often, we mistakenly believe that the way to change is simply to try harder. There is no doubt that effort is required to change, but true, lasting change does not begin by working harder. It begins by believing better. We are saved and we are changed by the same essential process: faith in the gospel. We are saved when we turn to the truth of the gospel and believe it. We are changed as we continually turn to the truth of the gospel and believe it.

The reason many Christians remain stuck in patterns of sin is because they focus on behavior without addressing the underlying unbelief. They try hard to change, but all their effort goes into behaving better rather than believing better. They try to change their behavior to no avail because they never address the underlying unbelief that is driving their behavior.

THE FOUR G'S

Let's consider four truths about God, all beginning with the letter 'G' that we can turn to when we are tempted: **God is gracious, good, great, and glorious.**

If I don't believe the truth that God is gracious, then I will believe that I need to prove myself to God, others, and myself. The result will be many of the sinful behaviors: blaming, faking, criticizing, judging. But if in the moment of temptation, I turn to the truth that I am saved by grace, I won't feel the need to prove myself to others in sinful ways. Believing that God is gracious is essential for transformation, and we see His grace most clearly in the gospel: God freely restores us to a right relationship with Himself through Jesus.

If I don't believe the truth that God is good, then I will insatiably search for what is good in things that will never satisfy: food, sex, entertainment, relationships. But if I believe that God is good, I will find my satisfaction in Him and enjoy His material gifts without obsessively pursuing them. Believing that God is good is essential for transformation, and we see His goodness most clearly in the gospel--that He sought our good even at the cost of Jesus' own life.

If I don't believe that God is great, I will be filled with anxiety when life seems out of control. When I am anxious it is difficult to love others well because I am consumed with my own struggles. I may even try to take control of people and situations through manipulation or intimidation. But when I believe that God is great, I can be at peace in all situations and care for others well because I know my Father in heaven is caring for me. Believing that God is great is essential for transformation, and we see His

greatness most clearly in the gospel--that He triumphed over the enemies of sin, death, and Satan through Jesus' resurrection.

When I don't believe that God is glorious and that His truths are weightier than anyone else's opinions, I will end up listening to others and following their advice. I will give in to peer pressure and live a life that looks just like everyone else in the culture. But if I believe that God is glorious, I will listen to Him and walk in His ways. Believing God is glorious is essential for transformation, and we see His glory most clearly in the gospel--that Jesus is Lord overall and worthy of our love and devotion.

The gospel is for both salvation and transformation. Therefore, it is essential that someone who wants to experience increasing freedom from the power of sin be immersed continually in the good news of the gospel through time in God's Word and a through vital connection with a community that will lovingly remind them of the truth each time they struggle with unbelief.

THE BAD NEWS

Read Romans 9:10-10:20

THE GOOD NEWS

Read Romans 3:21-25

Q. According to these verses, what is the bad news about your obedience to God?

Q. Is anyone good enough? Why? What is the standard?

Q. What is the good news?

Q. How do you get this salvation that is now available?

Read Romans 6:1-4

Q. According to this passage, how does Jesus' death and resurrection impact your life in the present?

Week 4

GROWING: As God's Disciples (Part 2)

Saved From . . . Saved For

The good news of the gospel is not just what are saved from – sin's penalty, power, and presence; it is also the good news of what we are saved for. We have a God-given purpose in life. That is good news! We are saved by God's power for God's purpose. We are saved by God's work, for God's work.

Our Purpose in God's Big Plan

GOD'S PLAN

Purpose and plans go hand-in-hand. By looking at the plans for a building you can begin to determine the purpose for the building. Plans for a home will look very different from plans for a baseball stadium because they serve different purposes. One of the best ways to understand God's purpose in salvation is to look at His plan. That plan is found in the Bible. The Bible is comprised of 66 books, but there are four primary movements or acts, like acts in a drama: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. By tracing the storyline of these acts, God's purpose in salvation becomes clear: to restore humanity and creation to its original purpose of reflecting God's goodness and bringing Him glory, all through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

ACT 1 – CREATION

Creation: In the beginning, God makes the heavens and the earth, and He makes it all perfect. He reigns over His creation as the all-loving King, and Adam and Eve are His agents, made "in His image" and charged with taking what He made and cultivating it, creating a culture that brings glory to God and reflects his goodness and good purpose for it. This is

what the Bible means by the term “the Kingdom of God” or “the Kingdom of heaven.”

ACT 2 — FALL

Fall: God’s people choose to doubt God’s heart, reject his kingship, and find their own sense of purpose and meaning in the world apart from God and His good purposes for them. As they turn from God, all of creation turns with them, and humanity has been in rebellion against a good and loving God ever since. While they remain image-bearers, that image is significantly damaged – they can no longer be the people God intended them to be. They put themselves and their glory first, rather than God and His glory. One of the first and most destructive results of the fall is religion – the human attempt to cover up and try to earn our way back to God.

ACT 3 – REDEMPTION

Scene 1 – Israel: Rather than wipe the slate clean and start over, God begins to enact a plan to redeem His creation. Rather than cast humanity aside, He calls a man named Abraham and promises that through Abraham He will eventually remake the world as He intended it to be. The majority of the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis 12, is the outworking of this scene and traces the way in which God acts through this people – called Israel – to begin to redeem His creation.

Scene 2 – Jesus: The New Testament begins with Jesus, who is the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham about remaking the world. Jesus is the one through whom God sets the world right and renews God’s Kingdom, and He does so not by destroying the world, but by taking the brokenness of the world on Himself, dying, and rising to life again three days later. In his resurrection, the early Christians come to see that death has been destroyed and that God has done what He promised to do! Through Jesus, God has made a way for people to be restored to a right relationship with God and begin to live again for His Kingdom and purposes.

Scene 3 – The Church: We are living in this scene. It begins with Jesus sending His followers into the world to make disciples - to bring others to know, trust, and walk with Jesus – from all nations. He fills them with the

Holy Spirit so that they are empowered to both share the good news about Jesus and live lives that show the good news of Jesus. Ever since Jesus sent out his first disciples, the gospel has been spreading throughout the world, reaching every nation. The goal of this scene is to fulfill the Great Commission: to spread the gospel to all people so they can be saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and begin living their lives for God's glory as participants in His plan of restoration.

ACT 4 – RESTORATION

Restoration or New Creation: The final act in the drama begins with Jesus' return. One day Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead. Those who have put their hope in Jesus' perfect resume rather than their own will enter into the new heaven and new earth. Those who have chosen to trust in themselves will be judged accordingly and banished from the new heaven and new earth to pay for their sin in hell—a place devoid of the love and presence of God. When Jesus returns, He will restore all of creation to his original intent. There will be no more sin, sickness, pain, or death. Everything that was damaged in the fall will be healed and restored. Rather than individual souls going up to heaven, heaven will come down and God will dwell with His people again in a perfect world. Everything will serve its purpose of reflecting God's goodness and bringing him glory.

OUR PURPOSE

We live after Jesus' resurrection and before his return, just before the final act of God's drama. We are like actors who have been given the script to a drama but the scene right before the ending is missing. The director wants us to improvise our parts for that scene. How would you figure out how to improvise your part well? You would need to know the rest of the play well—everything that has come before and how the drama will end.

According to Jesus, our primary role in God's plan is this: to make disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus.

Good News from God's Word

God has saved us for the purpose of making disciples.

Jesus defines our purpose in the final command He gives His followers—it is called The Great Commission. In this commission, Jesus calls all those He had shaped into disciples to repeat the process and help others to become disciples of Jesus, too. A disciple is someone who has been saved by God's power for God's purposes and is living out those purposes in everyday life by helping others to live in the power and purpose of the gospel.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

Q. What kind of power does Jesus have? How is this good news for the disciples' mission?

Definition of Discipleship

Disciple-making is the process of helping someone to understand the power of the gospel and the purpose of the gospel, and live everyday life considering these truths. Disciple-making is the process of applying the good news to every area of life and learning to live in the new identity given to us through Jesus and helping others to do the same.

Good News for Everyday Life

Take some time to consider the following: Consider the degree to which your life is lived in the power of the gospel for the purpose of the gospel. We want to ask the hard questions: Is my real life about fulfilling the Great Commission? Do I want it to be about fulfilling the Great Commission? How can I be faithful to make disciples?

Read Acts 2:41-47

Q. According to this passage, what has God saved us for?

Q. Why is it important to be devoted to God's word, worship, generosity, and fellowship?

Q. How does participating in God's church put us in awe of God?

Week 5

GOING: As God's Missionaries

The Church as God's Missionary People

Just as the church is the family of God, the church is also the missionary people of God. If you are a Christian, you are a missionary: someone who has been sent by God to show and share the good news of Jesus. In this lesson we will explore our missionary identity:

Missionaries: We are missionaries sent by the Spirit. As missionaries, we follow the leading of the Spirit as we are empowered to share and show the good news of Jesus.

WHO IS GOD?	WHAT HAS GOD DONE?	WHO ARE WE?	WHAT DO WE DO?
Spirit	Sent Us	Missionaries	As missionaries, we follow the leading of the Spirit as we share and show the good news of Jesus.

The gospel has done its work in us when we crave God more than we crave everything else in life – more than money, romance, family, health, fame – and when seeing His kingdom advance in the lives of others gives us more joy than anything we could own.

- J.D. Greer

Good News from God's Word

THE MISSION OF GOD

God is on a mission. After people rebelled against Him and started living for themselves and their glory, everything God created was damaged. Every human relationship was broken with God, with one another, with the world, and even with oneself (our view of self). But God set a plan in motion to heal and restore both humanity and creation through the savior, Jesus Christ. He reveals His plan in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, and we get a picture of the completed plan in the last book of the Bible, Revelation.

THE MISSION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

God's people are part of God's mission. As they show others the good news of Jesus through serving and share with others the good news of Jesus (the gospel), people are restored to a right relationship with God, are filled with his Spirit, and become participants on His mission.

Jesus saved us for the purpose of participating in God's mission. Followers of Jesus are missionaries: people sent by God on a mission.

THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN MISSION

In the book of Acts, a book about the early church, the Holy Spirit emerges as the primary agent of mission.

Led by the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is our guide as we seek to discern God's will for our lives. Jesus told his disciples, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (John 16:13) The Apostle Paul encourages the Christians in Galatia to "walk by the Spirit," be "led by the Spirit," and "keep in step with the Spirit." God has given us a guide; our job is to learn to follow the guide.

THE BASICS

In order to listen to God, we need to begin with the basics like:

- A growing understanding of God's character and God's will through daily time in the Bible
- A growing relationship with God through daily time in prayer
- A growing obedience to God's will so that we do not grieve the Spirit and our prayers are not hindered
- A growing discernment of God's voice through listening, testing what we hear with the scriptures and the Christian community, and then obeying

On a Mission from God

God's people are missionaries. Not just the ones who go to foreign countries. All of them. If we think of a missionary as someone who is on a mission from God, then all Christians are missionaries in the places they reside. Key to living out our God-given purpose in life is embracing our identity as missionaries.

In the first part of this lesson, we focused on how to live out our identity as missionaries in relationship to Holy Spirit asking the question, "How do we follow the Spirit's leading?" In this lesson we will focus on how to live out our identity as Missionaries in relationship to others asking the question, "How do we show and share the good news of Jesus?"

You simply cannot be a disciple without being a missionary – a sent one. For way too long discipleship has been limited to issues relating to our own personal morality and worked out in the context of the four walls of the church with its privatized religion. In doing this, we have severely neglected our biblical mandate to go and "make disciples." The fact is that you can't be a disciple without being a missionary: no mission, no discipleship. It's as simple as that.

-Alan Roxburg

Good News from God's Word

Jesus came to earth on a mission, and he sent his own disciples out to continue that mission before departing.

Read John 20:21

Q. How would your perspective on your neighborhood and workplace change if you embraced the truth that you are God's 'sent' person in these places?

SHOWING THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus' primary message is captured in Mark 1:15: "The time has come ... The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Jesus came to tell people that God had good news, but he also showed them that God was good news.

Q. Glance through the section headings in the book of Mark. What are some of the ways that Jesus showed people he was good news?

...When the people of God act like the people of God, we actually help people see God.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Both Jesus and his disciples prioritized telling others the gospel.

- And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. -Luke 9:6

- One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel. -Luke 20:1
- Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. -Acts 8:25
- When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch . . . -Acts 14:21

Note: the word 'preach' means to announce. It does not necessarily involve being in a church or pulpit.

Read Romans 10:17

Q. According to Romans 10:17, why is sharing the gospel so important?

Read each of the scriptures below and jot down insights about the Spirit's role in mission.

Acts 1:8

Acts 2:4-8

Acts 4:31

Acts 8:29-31

Acts 12:12-15

Q. Having read these scriptures about the Holy Spirit, how do you believe you need to grow in your role as a missionary? How does your community need to grow?

Q. Have you ever had experiences of being clearly led by the Spirit? How did you know it was the Spirit?

Being missional does not mean that we have to go on a mission trip for a week in another country. We are the missionary people of God sent by God for his purposes every single second of our lives.

-Jeff Vanderstelt

The ABC'S of Mission

Being a missionary can sound intimidating. For some it conjures up images of moving to faraway places and slogging through swamps and rain forests. Mission could involve those things, but many of us are called to be missionaries in the places we are presently living. If you have faith in Jesus Christ and are a part of God's family, you are on a mission from God. The location of that mission might be the cubicles at your office, the homes in your neighborhood, and the schools your kids attend. You don't have to move to be a missionary.

Living for Jesus and his mission takes intentionality and involves sacrifice, but it isn't as complicated as we think. The ABC'S of mission can help your Life Group be a tangible expression of the love of God toward others.

Before you read through the ABC'S, write down the names of 3 people that you would like to see realize the depth of God's love for them. Keep them in mind as you read through the ABC'S.

Three People:

"The future of Christianity lies not in a return to the dominance of Christendom, but small, intimate communities of light. Often, they're unseen by history. But like yeast they're what transforms neighborhoods and cities."

-Tim Chester

Ask God

It is important that we ask God to move in the hearts of others. Praying for people is one of the most loving things we can do for them. It is also one of the most important. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." (John 6:44) We can ask God to draw people to Himself.

Build Relationships

Building a relationship with someone is the best way to discover how to care for them personally. It is in the context of relationship that we can discover tangible ways we can love a person as an expression of God's love for them. What are some simple ways you can strengthen your relationship with the three people God has put on your heart?

Connect with Community

Experiencing Christian community is an important part of helping people get a clearer picture of who Jesus is. Each Christian has different gifts (Romans 12:4-5) from the Holy Spirit and God uses them all. One person may have the gift of hospitality, so they tangibly demonstrate the gracious welcome of God through how they welcome people into their homes. But they may not feel particularly gifted at talking about Jesus. That's okay, someone else in their Life Group may frequently talk about Jesus. If a person spends time with this Life Group, they will both experience God's gracious welcome through the person with the gift of hospitality and hear about God's gracious welcome through the person with the gift of evangelism.

How can you create opportunities for the people you have identified above to get connected with your Life Group?