

For the Harvest Podcast #8 - Equipping and Encouraging Harvesters

00:00:00:00 - 00:00:23:27

I think, Paul, you mentioned it, but we need to teach about it too. People do what makes sense to them. One of our mentors, Harold Bullock, says that. And we've got to make evangelism make sense to people. And that's some instruction with that. But then also a modeling of that. And that's also given us practical advice on how to tools.

00:00:24:00 - 00:00:48:25

Welcome back to the "For the Harvest" podcast, where we have monthly discussions about how to accelerate evangelistic growth globally. Today I'm joined again by John, Pau,l and David Worcester, and I'm really excited about today's topic. We're going to be talking about how to equip and encourage people for the harvest. You might call those people harvesters. And this is a subject that I know.

00:00:48:25 - 00:01:08:29

All three of these men have extensive background and see a lot of fruitful ministry, not only through their own evangelistic efforts, but also through the evangelistic efforts of the people that they're leading. And so I'm really excited for all of us to get to learn from their experience here. We're going to share stories about ministry successes and some failures.

00:01:09:01 - 00:01:29:21

So I'm looking forward to hearing about both of those. But before we jump in too far, John, would you tell us a little bit about what you mean by that word harvester? Yeah. Basically, someone uses their gifts and abilities to bring people to Christ, but also into the body of Christ, into a church, into a group.

00:01:29:23 - 00:01:54:08

And so it's evangelistic growth. So the harvester is basically helping people and they're not all going to be the same, but it's using whatever gifts and abilities they have to to move towards that great commission. Okay. So this is not just for the, you know, the pro Christian that can do really, really strong evangelistic work. This is something that lots of people can participate in.

00:01:54:10 - 00:02:15:10

Yep. The harvesting...okay. And then we've said equipping and encouraging. So can you tell us a little bit about what we mean by equipping and encouraging. The word equip is really interesting even in the New Testament, in the sense that it's what was used to what a fisherman

did, when he prepared a net.

00:02:15:10 - 00:02:39:03

Either he made the net or he repaired the net. And what's the net for? Well, it's for harvesting, for catching fish. And, so that's kind of what we're thinking about there. And it's, Ephesians 4:11 is the key verse on that. And one thing that says to us is that evangelism, as best, is sort of a team sport.

00:02:39:04 - 00:03:02:25

We're working together now as a group. And not just only 1-to-1. We do 1-to-1 evangelism. But yeah, even behind the 1-to-1 evangelism, there's got to be some people encouraging them and celebrating them and equipping them and helping them. So it's still a team effort. But it's not all rod and reel New Testament there's a lot of throwing out the net and catching schools of fish and groups of people together.

00:03:02:28 - 00:03:44:21

It's good. So we're saying the harvesters are a part of a team and the equipping is trying to shore up the gaps and help them be more effective at harvesting. So what about encouragement? Why is encouragement important and what do you mean by encouragement? One definition I've heard somebody say is just putting courage in people and helping them to, you know, building them up and helping them to really believe that they can be used by God, the Holy Spirit. We had one of our podcasts about that kind of thing, just like a week or so or last time.

00:03:44:24 - 00:04:20:08

And so that's just it. It's really helpful, to them, to, you know, to be able to encourage them, helping them believe that they have what it takes and looking into various ways that we can help them in that way as leaders and as peers. Yeah. I'm curious about all of your experiences on this, but it seems like it's very easy to run out of courage, specifically in the area of evangelism.

00:04:20:11 - 00:04:54:02

What? Why is that? Have y'all found that? Yes. Yes, it is probably the most difficult thing. One of the most difficult things you can do with your life is stay in the trenches, especially in grassroots evangelism and really in the lives of people. I think the enemy hates it. And so, yeah, I've found any time our ministry does an evangelistic push, that's when the spiritual warfare ramps up.

00:04:54:04 - 00:05:17:15

So I think we do. We do. We don't want to be naive about the fact that we have an enemy that has one goal, if he can't stop you, he'll just wear you down with sicknesses or other things or drama in the ministry, and so that's just to get you off that one thing.

00:05:17:15 - 00:05:43:11

And so by the time you've kind of recovered from whatever is going on, your energy is down and all you want to do is just go relax or go do something fun, you know, whatever. And so I think that's just one element of this. And so they constantly need to be reminded. Harvesters need to constantly be reminded that we get to do this.

00:05:43:11 - 00:06:09:02

The reminder of the joy of the fruit that we can see, in evangelism and so constantly telling the stories, teaching...speaking of sickness, you know, I have that right now. But, really, I think about John 4 when the disciples came to Jesus and they said, hey, Jesus, eat something. He says, hey, I have food.

00:06:09:02 - 00:06:33:22

You know nothing about, my food is to do the will of him who sent me. And I've been thinking about that lately. Evangelism is not just good and right, it is also fulfilling. It's also joyful. It's also like the best when you see someone cross from death to life. When you see someone come to Christ, like that is really where it's at.

00:06:33:22 - 00:06:58:08

But our joy is so easily sucked by life's trials, by the enemy's attacks, and just by good old fashion getting worn out. So that's where there's some wisdom in helping them learn how to avoid burnout with Sabbath and all those types of things, but also just kind of reminding everyone that this is like the best life that you can live.

00:06:58:10 - 00:07:25:09

So just a few things about encouraging people. And, you know, the thing I would say is I think most ministries don't have an evangelist. Resident evangelist on staff that's equipping and sounding the alarm for evangelism. I think most churches, most ministries are led by shepherd teachers. And there's not necessarily someone who's really playing that role of evangelist and equipping others.

00:07:25:11 - 00:07:48:15

And so I think it might be one of the reasons why Paul told Timothy, do the work of the

evangelist. Like, we don't know whether it was his gift or not. Paul told them to do it. So if your gift is not evangelism, you still need to do the work. If you're a ministry leader, do the work of an evangelist, and part of the work of the evangelist is to equip other people to do evangelism.

00:07:48:18 - 00:08:08:28

And so I think that's an important piece that, whether or not you have the gift of evangelism, you still need to do the work of the evangelist if you're a ministry leader. And so if you don't have anyone else on your staff or in your ministry who is like the resident evangelist, then you got to bang that drum yourself.

00:08:08:29 - 00:08:31:11

You got to cast that vision yourself. You've got to model it yourself. And you know, something for me is like, it's really important for me, even in my role, to continue to be on the front lines, engaging people in evangelism and doing gospel appointments myself so that the rest of my church seems like this is not just something I preach about that you guys should do.

00:08:31:18 - 00:09:10:05

This is the thing that I need to do personally as the pastor. And so I think that's a really important piece, is having someone who's championing. Really promoting that value within your church. I was going to say that too. And I just what I found, the problem for me is that I sometimes get myself working with leaders of leaders of leaders type of thing, and I'm getting away from that front lines, and I need to have somebody asking me about it and challenging me and some peers that I'm with that are also doing it and then asking me about it.

00:09:10:05 - 00:09:29:22

That's kind of what we do with our "harvest teams" that kind of motivate each other to stay after it and give some report. And you have nothing to report week after week when you're getting together, guys are asking, you kind of get a little bit embarrassed and so on, and it pushes you to make it a higher priority.

00:09:29:24 - 00:09:49:05

Yeah. It's good. It seems like we all need it and actually something I want to point out here. All of you just highlighted it, even though you're all leading ministries at very high levels and leading leaders, being a practitioner is also a super high value for all of you. So that's great. That makes a lot of sense.

00:09:49:05 - 00:10:15:03

So we've already started kind of bridging into this a little bit, but let's dig in. How do we go about equipping and encouraging the harvesters? That's good. Yeah, I think what comes to my mind is giving simple, reproducible tools and processes to people, especially if you're trying to lower... not lower the bar, but create as many harvesters as possible.

00:10:15:03 - 00:10:50:12

And sometimes, we think, well, we need some evangelists. So they're just going to do it however they're going to do it. Yes. There's a very small percentage of people that will actually do evangelism effectively without us as ministry leaders giving them training wheels, tracks to run on, some sort of simple, reproducible tool like discovery groups or, gospel appointments or the three circles or the bridge illustration or whatever you decide to use.

00:10:50:14 - 00:11:14:16

Those tools can really help people just plug and play what they're doing and then also doing it as a team where they're doing, you know, they're starting discovery groups together or they're going to do some certain outreach and you have to give them a plan. So I find it to be the equipping side, don't assume anything. Don't assume people know the right question, the transition to the gospel.

00:11:14:16 - 00:11:36:21

Don't assume they know how to start a conversation, how to, you know, bridge into the gospel presentation, how to even ask it after they share, how to ask the golden question, which is, would you like to make Jesus Lord of your life right now? Ask that question. How to do all of that? How? How to, is a big thing in my mind when it comes to equipping.

00:11:36:21 - 00:11:56:03

Not the only thing, but I think that is a piece of the puzzle. On equipping. Yeah. And then the two sides of that "how to." But also like you're modeling it yourself, that's even better. You know, it's like the second best is the how to, practically. But then the first best is to bring them with you.

00:11:56:03 - 00:12:16:17

So I think if you're asking about failures that we've done, I think there's been too many times where I've had that gospel appointment, but I failed to bring someone with me. I could've brought someone with me to do that with me and then connect with that person. And then even have an opportunity to start a discovery Bible study with that person.

00:12:16:17 - 00:12:38:24

Honestly, it's easier to do it just by yourself, but, you know, there's a phrase that we use that is "never shared alone." So like do your best to always bring someone that you're training with you to your gospel conversations or discovery groups. And then you're always having that built in training. And that's I guess what we see Jesus doing is bringing the guys with him.

00:12:38:27 - 00:13:02:06

So to me, I think modeling it, but then also giving them that reproducibility that it's so easy in their mind that they're like, oh yeah, anyone can do this. That's the goal that you want them to feel like anyone could do what we're talking about. I really agree with all that and I would just say I think Paul, you mentioned it, but we need to teach about it too. People do what makes sense to them.

00:13:02:06 - 00:13:26:10

One of our mentors, Harold Bullock, says that. We've got to make evangelism make sense to people. And that's some instructions for that. But then also a modeling of that. And that's also giving us those practical "how to" tools. So, you know, as you guys are talking, I'm having a flashback of another Worcester. Andy, he taught me this tool years ago.

00:13:26:10 - 00:13:46:06

FIRE: Family, Interests, Religious background and Experiences with God. And I had heard the tool before, but it wasn't until I was riding in a car; I was in a passenger seat, and he was in the backseat with an international student, and I heard him start going through FIRE. And I'm like, I recognize what he's doing.

00:13:46:06 - 00:14:09:05

And it's like all of a sudden just became alive to me, like it was real. And then I started to be able to use that myself. I had been taught it, but the modeling kind of sealed it in my mind. So that's good. A phrase that we often use is that, you know, character is more caught than taught.

00:14:09:05 - 00:14:31:06

So it is taught, but it's also caught as you see it. And that's a great situation. So let's spend a little extra time on this whole thing of modeling and what are some things like... two words that came to my mind and thinking about this podcast today were focus and frequency.

00:14:31:06 - 00:15:02:27

We want to really be training somebody in evangelism, we need to and we want to focus on them. We want to spend more time with less people. Jesus even selected people that were

showing the most interest, and he brought them out of the thousands that he had as followers. He chose 12 and the 3 and the 1, and there was a chance of focusing his efforts on a few men and letting them then also be the second round of examples.

00:15:02:27 - 00:15:34:18

So you see how you're doing it now you got them doing it now that on the next one and so what was the saying we heard last night? The thing we went to David? Life to life to life. We want that thing to go to different generations. Yeah. And that's I think, the right application of 2 Timothy 2:2 where things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses and trusted, reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others that you have to choose those few reliable people that you can invest deeply in, and then they can turn around and they can be the trainers as well.

00:15:34:18 - 00:15:58:00

So you're training up trainers to help you with the training because you can't do all the training yourself. I was actually just talking to another leader last night too, and he was just saying, there's a reason why you need to train these people deeply, because otherwise they feel like they're getting the short end of the stick even if you're, like, saying, okay, well, go to my second hand guy.

00:15:58:03 - 00:16:21:07

And then they try to get advice from him, but it's just not as rich as if they went straight to you. So you have to train them up to a level where it's almost comparable, where they can get a similar level of training that they'll get from you, or at least remove yourself from the situations. So you're not even really an option for them that they have to go to the other guy.

00:16:21:10 - 00:16:50:09

So I think that was just a practical thing I was picking up yesterday, actually. Yeah, I, I'm glad you added that second part, because in my mind if you're going to create a movement, you can't smother it with your own guru-ness, that is one of the key movement killers, is making yourself too much of the center of what's going on.

00:16:50:09 - 00:17:26:10

And, so you want to be as godly and as effective as possible, but also, if you're seeing God move among a group of people, there's just not going to be enough people that are close to where you are. Hopefully you're seeing so many people come to Christ, so many leaders raised up that it's just not realistic for them to be at a similar level as you, if that makes sense, because a lot of times, if you've been walking with Christ for 20 years and you have all these one year old new believers...I think, yes, let's keep

00:17:26:10 - 00:17:51:06

Training them into maturity. But, yeah, I just want to push back a little bit on that, a slight bit more, because the way I'm thinking about, seeing movements of newer believers leading other newer believers of Christ and then helping them in some sort of discipleship groups or whatever to kind of continue to move forward.

00:17:51:06 - 00:18:14:10

So, just some thoughts on that. Well, I guess the point that I'm trying to make is once you do find those 2 or 3 or whatever it is that have the potential to grow to whatever level that you're at, then you need to make sure you pour as much fuel on that fire as you possibly can, because you want them to rise as high as they possibly can for the sake of the overall movement.

00:18:14:13 - 00:18:42:22

And so I agree with you. Like it's going to take time, but that's still the most important investment that you can make. I mean, I look back on my ministry like the few guys that I really poured deeply into. That's where my primary fruit is, you know, guys like Kevin and Josh, you know, there's certain guys that I really poured a lot of my time and energy into, and those are the ones that they're training others and they're the ones that are leading.

00:18:42:22 - 00:19:00:10

And so again, you'll never regret spending more time with your top leaders. I don't think, you know, it's almost impossible to spend too much time with your top leaders, you know, unless you're just not doing evangelism yourself. But, yeah. So anyway, that was my point. I agree with that. And you know, we've talked about focus.

00:19:00:12 - 00:19:25:20

You know, you focused on that frequency. You need to be with him often. When Jesus trained the 12 I mean he had them, you know, 7 days a week, 24-7 traveling, ministering. He was with them. And that's where he set the example. So there's a frequency in that. Now, you can't do that with everybody. But you can put more time into some and just bring that focus down.

00:19:25:20 - 00:19:52:08

And I even think about Hebrews 3:13 where it talks about, you know, encouraging one another daily. While it's still called today. There's something about the frequency of being with someone and that's what you get in a family. I think there's some things that we experience as a family. There's frequency in that, but there's also apprentices people that come work with you and go

plant a church with you.

00:19:52:08 - 00:20:17:14

We've had several experiences doing that, and that has been rich. And those guys have gone out and planted other ministries. So people on your college staff, Paul, those kinds of guys, they're spending that extra time with them and now they've gone out and started their own ministries. And so focus and frequency and and really pouring into a few is one of the things that I think is really helpful.

00:20:17:21 - 00:20:34:26

You have to keep that balance at the same time. You don't go so much focusing on a few that you lose the top of the funnel. So you still need to meet a lot of people, find the ones that are most ripe. That's Discovery Evangelism. But then focus focus focus. And it'll help you widen the funnel.

00:20:34:26 - 00:20:51:10

So it's really both. And I see guys messing up in ministry going one extreme or the other. It's all the big stuff. And everybody it's just as a big crowd as me and the big crowd or I've just got my one disciple and I'm not doing anything else. I think you want to have both.

00:20:51:12 - 00:21:15:06

I agree, and I think it's helpful to create even a middle rung that you can teach to, but you can't possibly, spend as much personal time with. So that one in our ministry and Chico, it was our core team, our core team of student leaders. And so we had our large group meeting, our outreach, all that kind of stuff.

00:21:15:06 - 00:21:33:09

We had small groups, everything. But then we had our core team of about 50 student leaders, and then I was there every week. Every week we met with them, and I would teach to them a lot or cast vision to them a lot, but then I would also get our other staff and our other guys at the bottom of the funnel.

00:21:33:15 - 00:22:00:04

The staff guys, to really disciple and invest in those core team leaders. But that's where the real, peer to peer encouragement and accountability and momentum happened was in that core team. Because what I found is that the best person to reach a student with the gospel is another student. Because they're at that same level, and they can go and they can reach their peers.

00:22:00:07 - 00:22:28:19

And so, I think that's one thing, like you guys have your harvest... What do you guys call them, harvest gatherings or harvest team rallies? Rallies, yeah. Yeah. So I think create some sort of a bar that people can jump into, an environment that people can jump into. That's not like your hard core, top level people, but it's like a middle ground where they can get encouraged by each other.

00:22:28:24 - 00:22:50:29

In addition to teaching from the top level leader, if that makes sense. That's exactly what we're working on, right now. The churches that we're working with here in San Diego are trying to create that middle group. We're calling it, a spiritual family on a mission. Right. But it's not a real small discipleship group, it's not the big preaching service.

00:22:51:02 - 00:23:15:09

It's this midsize kind of group of 12 to 24 kind of people, or maybe a little bigger with your core team. We're talking about them being committed to three things, which is basically the commands of Christ summarized. We call them the big three. You know, love for God, love for one another, love for the lost.

00:23:15:12 - 00:23:32:19

And so you, you kind of look at that. And everybody in this group can be committed to that. Even if they're not the top leader. They can all be wanting to love God and walk with God on a regular basis. They want to be loving each other and encouraging each other to take whatever steps you are going to do.

00:23:32:19 - 00:23:53:16

And they can be committed to the same mission and using your gifts for that. So that's kind of what we're working on developing the systems. And when I see movements around the world, they've kind of got this kind of group that is about that size that is really encouraging everybody to take some steps. But then within that you've got some.

00:23:53:16 - 00:24:18:27

You're focusing on and doing what we're talking about here. So yeah, one way to look at that is like we're calling every believer to obey all that God commanded, every believer, but then we're also inviting a few that we see leadership potential in that God may be calling to a higher level of leadership, and we're giving them the more intentional apprenticeship that is leadership

development.

00:24:18:27 - 00:24:38:04

I think a lot of times it gets blurry in people's minds. When we talk about discipleship, we think it's only the 2 Timothy 2:2 really one on one personal, you know, it's only that. But really, every disciple of Jesus needs to be disciplined in the sense that they all need to be taught to obey everything Jesus commanded.

00:24:38:07 - 00:24:57:08

And then there's the few top leaders that we need to pour even more into. And they actually do have a higher calling than the typical person. They have the same calling where they have to obey all Christ commanded plus some things, you know, that need to be called to.

00:24:57:08 - 00:25:18:12

And so, I don't know, I think that's an important distinction to make. I don't know what you guys would say about that. I want to just highlight a couple of these things I'm seeing here, because so far, in terms of how we equip, I've heard you guys say you got to model it. You've got to train them on some tools that they can use simply, and then you've got to teach them some things as well.

00:25:18:12 - 00:25:51:15

And it sounds like that kind of fits both groups. You've got the normal average Christian, that's called to obey the commands of Christ. And then you've also got the high level leadership being developed in some smaller group. But it seems like the content of the teaching might be a little different depending on which group. And so I'm wondering if you guys could speak a little bit to what kinds of things need to be taught, maybe first to the broader group and then maybe some things that need to be taught to the leadership.

00:25:51:15 - 00:26:12:18

2 Timothy guys. That's good. And I would also put a middle group too. Like maybe your core team or whatever you're calling it or that thing that dad described. It's still a high bar, and a commitment where someone is stepping into that environment to get training and evangelism and things like that.

00:26:12:24 - 00:26:37:24

But it's not quite the staff or or even that 2 Timothy 2:2 or that highest level. So there's kind of in my mind, there's three categories. Okay, that makes sense. But yeah, that middle category I

think is really important. And what you teach them is, giving them vision for this is great.

00:26:37:24 - 00:27:02:04

This is something you can be a part of. This is urgent. The importance of eternity, the importance of sharing the gospel, the like, how to stuff and then casting vision, praying together. That's so valuable in that space. And then I love the final kind of tip of the spear, the top level guys.

00:27:02:11 - 00:27:35:00

You can really customize that, either one on one or in little small discipleship groups. You can just adjust theology. You can go into how to preach better, how to lead leadership skills, EQ, Emotional stuff. You can go to any sort of thing. I had a guy that was a little lacking in his own social skills, so I gave him how to win friends and influence people and like, hey, you have a lot of potential to be a great leader, but you need to know how to carry a conversation.

00:27:35:00 - 00:27:54:19

And so we just kind of helped him with that aspect of his leadership, if that makes sense. So any sort of customizable thing can be done at that final stage, I guess. One thing we're thinking about Paul, see what you think about this... Is that we're thinking about in that middle group, not just being a group that's just focused on evangelism.

00:27:54:19 - 00:28:19:27

It is a family that's on a mission. We all have the mission, but that's one part of the big three. But that family is also helping you really connect with God and have your daily time with God and have the presence of God. We feel the spirit on a moment's basis. You're also committed to each other to do the "one anothers" with each other in that spiritual family, but all of it still.

00:28:19:27 - 00:28:47:28

You're always not just upward worship, not just inward, but also outward. You get all three of them put together. And we believe that there's a synergy when you have a meeting that is helping committed disciples to go after those three, pursue those three goals wholeheartedly. Love that. And I think one way that we try to accomplish that in our core team, I'm just using it as an example.

00:28:48:01 - 00:29:09:19

But one way we do that is we do the teaching altogether on whatever topic that may be, but then they split up into peer to peer accountability groups and ask pointed questions on each of

those issues about the heart attitudes, there. So have you had a chance to practice one of the heart attitudes this week, which are seven principles for Biblical Community.

00:29:09:22 - 00:29:36:15

How is your time in prayer? How is your time with God? So very specific questions. And we even wrote a little resource called the Big Five Foundational Habits for Discipleship. It's an e-book that we can actually put in the show notes if someone wants to take a look at it. But it introduced those habits, but then it also has accountability questions that you can ask in a weekly kind of, peer to peer discipleship group or accountability group.

00:29:36:17 - 00:30:02:08

But it's based around those kinds of spiritual disciplines. So that's kind of a little bit different. But it's been really helpful for us, for the people that have been a part of it. One thing I would say about this topic is that I think that often if we're talking to the quote unquote ordinary believer, I don't think we call them to enough.

00:30:02:11 - 00:30:21:26

We don't call them to a high enough commitment. We don't call them to the same level that Jesus calls every disciple. So I think, you know, that's the starting place that we need to raise the bar to the level that Jesus set the bar for every disciple. And, you know, one of the things you're talking about with the movements we're seeing in India, in places like that.

00:30:22:01 - 00:30:49:11

It's true. They are ordinary believers, but they have an extraordinary commitment. So I think that should be our goal when we're discipling people, that man, these are average, ordinary, everyday believers. But we do need to call them to an extraordinary commitment to Christ. And to me, I think that's one of the biggest differences, in what we're talking about with these spiritual families and core team, whatever it is like.

00:30:49:13 - 00:31:14:19

All right, what can we actually expect from the everyday ordinary believer? And then, you know, on top of that, sharing the other stuff. So I just wanted to share something that I think that's helpful. I think we also have some good groups that don't ask enough of a disciple for commitment like you're saying.

00:31:14:19 - 00:31:34:11

I totally agree with that. But some are going the other extreme and they're asking everybody, if

you are a disciple, you gotta be just like one of the 12. And they put them on that. I know you're not saying that, but I just want to for the listeners, I want them to see that there's a distinction here. Every disciple is to deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow Christ.

00:31:34:11 - 00:32:03:17

You're not even a disciple. You need to make a commitment, and everybody's committed. But not all have the same calling that are going to take the focused, frequent attention and discipleship that we want to give them. And I know you agree with that, David, but I just wanted to clarify that sometimes if we have too low expectations of what people can do or God can do. And then some we put so much on them that it's what they do.

00:32:03:17 - 00:32:23:01

So either I guess you're asking the elephant to fly. But they do have something they can definitely contribute to the Great Commission. And they ought to be doing it. We ought to be challenging. We move on, as high and as they can. Yeah, exactly. And so, you know, Scripture is the standard.

00:32:23:04 - 00:33:01:14

And I think you go back to what Jesus said, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. And when he says that, you know, yoke involves work and so he has a yoke that's, you know, put on every disciple that works for them to do. But if we are doing it according to his calling for our personal, lives, you know, according to our spiritual gifts, stage of life that we're in, and we put all those layers in, on people's lives, we still need to call them to full commitment to Christ, where they're all in with whatever God calls them to do.

00:33:01:16 - 00:33:34:25

But yes, we see that looks different for different people at different stages. And, you know, just practically speaking. It seems that Jesus primarily focused on young men, where his main thing was that he focused on, and not that, you know, you can't focus on other people. But there is something strategic about these guys, who knows if or when they get married or whatever, but young men tend to have more freedom, more time, more energy.

00:33:34:28 - 00:33:55:20

And he put a lot of his eggs in that basket to focus on those few young men that he invested in. I wanted to say something else here. I think it's important to clarify that, we must realize that being committed to something does not mean you're competent at doing it yet.

00:33:55:20 - 00:34:20:16

And I think that's not clear in a lot of discipleship rooms. It takes time and intentionality to become competent, but you can be committed in an instant, right? Commit yourself to something and want to learn as a disciple, as a learner wanting to learn how to obey all that Christ commanded. But it still takes a lifetime to kind of figure it out.

00:34:20:16 - 00:34:41:00

I got married in a moment, but it's taken me 51 years and I still haven't got marriage down right. I had a little miscommunication with my wife this morning, we had to apologize to each other, And it's just those things that happen. But I'm still committed to the marriage.

00:34:41:08 - 00:35:24:07

We're committed to following Christ. But we've got a lot to learn that keeps that humility part of the process. So anyway, that's something like commitment and then competence, you know, difference between commitment and maturity and what you do. That's good. And I think along with this focus conversation, and I think allowing people to focus on the most important parts, especially when it comes to evangelism, if you have a harvester, we're using that term that's starting discovery groups or trying to reach out to a certain group of people and they're using their time on that.

00:35:24:14 - 00:35:50:14

I think you protect that person's time where you're not getting them to lead the kids, AWANAs thing on Wednesday nights or you're not having them do these other things. Because a lot of the time the people that are willing to do evangelism are also the most epic person to have volunteer at X Ministry, you know, whatever, fill in the blank ministry.

00:35:50:16 - 00:36:13:10

And, so we want to make sure we free those. We almost play blocker for the people that are going to be on the front lines of evangelism. So again, we had guys that were trying to reach their fraternities for Christ. And I told those guys specifically because they're trying to be intentional with it.

00:36:13:12 - 00:36:32:27

I said, "Don't come to another group. That is your mission field. And if you want a small group, start one. That's your small group. And there are other serving opportunities like we just said, hey, your mission is we're going to equip you to reach those guys for Christ.

00:36:32:27 - 00:37:02:29

And it was fruitful. Sometimes it's really fruitful. Sometimes they just learn the hard way that it's like a lot of laboring in the gospel. But, that's something just as a ministry leader, be very wary of adding extra programs. Every added program can be used by God, and God can bless it. But be very careful because that can become a distraction to people that could be more focused on evangelism and this type of stuff.

00:37:02:29 - 00:37:21:26

I totally agree with that, Paul. That is such a good word. Yeah, it's so easy to add things to ministry, and it gets so complicated for people to decide what to take, you know? Yeah. If you want multiplication, you've got to simplify. How do you say that, David is a better way of saying that? Simplify to multiply.

00:37:21:26 - 00:37:53:06

There you go. Simplified multiply. And, it's rare to find a guy that's really getting after evangelism. So you really need to help them really focus on evangelism and really get after it, not tie them up with a bunch of other stuff. I totally agree with that. It got so bad even when David and I were in the dorms at the University of Oklahoma, we were trying to bring students to the weekly meeting that we led to Christ or that we were sharing the gospel with, and we're like, hey, we're going to bring them to that meeting.

00:37:53:10 - 00:38:09:24

We're going to go with them. We're going to take them with us. But then some other guys were saying, hey, you need to join the setup team. You need to be committed. You need to come early and help us set up the chairs, because that's what real Christians do, is they help set up the chairs because we need chairs set up.

00:38:09:26 - 00:38:26:09

And I'm like, well, we're bringing lost people to the meeting that you're setting up the chairs for. Like, what do you want us to do? You know, and so if you have people that are actually going to bring people to sit in the chairs, maybe find someone else that'll just set up the chairs. I mean, it's just kind of an idea there.

00:38:26:15 - 00:38:42:04

But yeah, absolutely. I mean, you think of it like, you know, You used kind of the sports metaphor blocking for I think it's a perfect metaphor of someone who's actually doing evangelism and they're being effective. It's kind of like the quarterback, like they're the ones you got to find people to block for them.

00:38:42:04 - 00:39:01:01

Or it's like the goose that lays the golden egg. You find someone who is actually doing evangelism and being effective at it. That's a unicorn. You know, you want to protect that person and multiply that person as much as you possibly can. And, that's where you can see a lot of the fruits. So unleashing those people

00:39:01:04 - 00:39:27:02

is really, really important. And, yeah, I think one of the keys to seeing a movement. Okay, don't forget prayer. We need to be praying. That's the one way we encourage. And we're praying for the workers. And so you see, in any interest or any steps in the right direction now to continue to pray for that person, but also celebrate those steps and honor those, you know, we are to outdo one another, showing honor.

00:39:27:02 - 00:39:54:16

People rise to what you encourage in a group and that becomes a big part of keeping the motivation to keep the fire under them by pointing out and giving them a chance to share what they've done before, some others, I mean, Acts 14:27 where Paul had gone to ministry, come back and he would share what all that God had done in the ministry, and if somebody takes some steps.

00:39:54:16 - 00:40:19:14

They need to be obedient, and have a place for them to be willing to share. And asking them what's going on can really be helpful. Celebrating stories is one of the keys to evangelizing the moment to me, always just constantly sharing those stories and then getting those unicorns, those top level guys that are really going after evangelism.

00:40:19:20 - 00:40:40:19

Those are your trainers. Those are the ones that are going to train the mid level commitment group because they're going to come in even if they're a little raw. Have them teach how to do a discovery group, how to do gospel appointments, give them the tools, give them the script, so to speak, but let them cast vision, let them tell their stories.

00:40:40:21 - 00:41:05:15

And then you get that younger believer casting vision, telling stories, crying about what God's doing, and just fire it up. That's going to fire up everyone else even more than maybe you. So there needs to be a balance there of getting those other guys decentralize the evangelism

training as well. Decentralize everything you possibly can, especially the evangelism training.

00:41:05:18 - 00:41:26:08

Yeah, I was just going to say the, you know, you're mentioning, the really practical training piece, especially those people who are going to be the trainers or the evangelists. Yeah, training them and how to discern what's best, you know, priorities in their life, I think is so important. What do you say no to?

00:41:26:08 - 00:41:47:06

What do you say yes to? How do you maximize your spiritual gift that God has given you? I think that's really important. One of the first kinds of lessons that you really pour into those guys. How do you say no to good opportunities so you can say yes to the best things? That's another huge, I think, training piece for these evangelist type people.

00:41:47:06 - 00:42:16:14

Because many of them are very zealous and duty bound and just excited about so many things, I know I'm that way. I feel like I constantly have 4 or 5 plates spinning, and I need to learn to say no to certain things. And so sometimes that is a liability. Some of the pros of an evangelist is that they're highly motivated and they're trying lots of new things and some of them work and God's using it.

00:42:16:17 - 00:42:42:15

But then the liability is sometimes they get too many plates spinning and plates start falling and that sort of thing. So there is some wisdom that you can help them develop. But sometimes they come up with a really cool idea that you think isn't going to work, like, hey, we're going to go street preach on campus, or we're going to go do Q&A with the Christian professor.

00:42:42:15 - 00:43:05:08

And you're like, oh, okay... but sometimes it works, you know, so you never know. Let those guys try some new things. But those are also the kind of guys that'll be recruited by the other ministries, other people giving them jobs and, you know, other sort of internship and suck them into, well, you need to learn how to preach the word properly.

00:43:05:08 - 00:43:26:29

You need to go to seminary. You need to do this. You need to just study theology 24-7 and do that, you know, because you're gifted. But man, you don't have the right stuff. So there's all sorts of like off ramps for these guys I guess. Yeah. I think it's kind of like the fire.

00:43:26:29 - 00:43:47:09

As a leader, there's this person. They've got the fire. So you're putting logs on that fire. You're fueling the fire but you're also helping them funnel the fire helping them put a fireplace around that fire. How can it be the most effective fire as it possibly can. And then you throw as much gasoline on that fire as you can.

00:43:47:11 - 00:44:09:11

But what you don't want to do is just let the fire, you know, go wild and like, you know, you lose it or lose the fire and it spreads too thin and then the fire goes out. I think that's a good metaphor to think about, like when you find that whatever spark there is in evangelism happening, put a little bit of fuel on that and then let that spread throughout your ministry as much as you possibly can.

00:44:09:11 - 00:44:29:07

So think of that stewarding. You're stewarding the momentum. You're stewarding whatever it is that God gives you, like celebrating whatever. If there's a baptism, celebrating that, if there's someone sharing their faith the very first time one person shares their faith, that's what you always say. Do backflips out the window like, you know, make it like the biggest deal ever.

00:44:29:07 - 00:44:52:24

When people start to do these baby steps of starting to do evangelism, celebrating those things is, I think, really powerful. And that fuel thing that you're talking about there. And just getting behind them by releasing them. But we also if you have resources, you know, put resources behind them. The parable of the talents. You know, somebody has one talent

00:44:53:00 - 00:45:11:01

Give them a talent to try someone. Maybe you think it's a crazy idea. Maybe they need 50 bucks to do that event on campus. You have to give them 50 bucks to try the event. And if it goes well, give them 150 next time. I mean, if you have the opportunity.

00:45:11:03 - 00:45:41:08

block them time, but also back them up if you're in that position and you have that ability to do that, I think that could also take you a long way. It's another just one other aspect of putting fuel on the fire. I would send them to a training event, you know, either way for more than the one that's not doing it. Find the one who's doing and get behind, get behind them and let them, and get behind what they're doing.

00:45:41:08 - 00:46:01:10

I think they saw me mentioned already, but take them with you. Mission trips can be huge. Jesus trained the 12 by taking them on trips. We talked about that in one of our podcasts, but when you take them on trips, you get that focused attention on a few people because it's a small trip, you also get frequency of time together and you're on mission together.

00:46:01:10 - 00:46:30:27

And those can just be huge. Just two weeks or one summer can be a life changing experience for somebody. Yeah. The verse that comes to mind where Paul said, fan into flame, the gift that God gave you. He told Timothy that and so by helping them specifically with evangelism here. And, you know, you think of the case Paul, you're talking about the guy that's like, well, he's got to shine and make him become the best teacher ever or whatever.

00:46:30:29 - 00:46:49:10

That guy probably has a gift for teaching. And so that's why he's so passionate about it. And so you have to be careful of which leaders or which people you expose people to, and they have to learn discernment. Honestly, at the end of the day, they have to learn discernment. What's my gift? What's God calling me to do?

00:46:49:12 - 00:47:11:20

And what do I need to spend most of my time doing? To leverage what God's given me for God's kingdom? That's the ultimate question. At the end of the day. That's great guys. It seems clear evangelism has plenty of obstacles. Things get in the way, and so people need some equipping and encouraging. Even the most gifted evangelists could use it.

00:47:11:22 - 00:47:33:28

So, well, thanks for joining us today on the "For the Harvest podcast" on equipping and encouraging harvesters. Check out some of the notes in the show notes. We'll be sure to link to some of those resources that were mentioned here today. I'm looking forward to checking some of those out myself. I'll catch you next time on the "For the Harvest" podcast.