

## For the Harvest Podcast #7 - Trusting New Believers to Go and Grow

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How do we handle keep going to new places like Jesus did and like Paul did with sort of the tension of how I take care of these people who I've led to Christ and who depend on me and and they can't get, you know, almost like they can't get along without me, like I'm indispensable kind of thing is what, what I come into a lot of people's minds.

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Welcome back. Thanks for joining us again at the "For the Harvest" podcast, and I hope you've gotten a chance to listen to podcast number 6 about trips, because that really sets us up for today's discussion. And if you haven't, go back, listen to that one. Today we're talking about something that might be a little controversial in some circles.

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And so we're going to deep dive into what it looks like to trust a young believer to grow and to go and to do all kinds of things. And, we're going to share some stories about how we've seen that play out in our own ministries here. And I'm joined today again by three of the Worcester's.

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We've got John, David and Paul with us, all of whom have a lot of experience in this area. And so I'm really looking forward to hearing about what God has done, in this area of trusting young believers. So, John, what's the kind of premise for talking about this?

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Yeah, like we said, we talked about in the last podcast that trips are for taking the gospel and for training the takers.

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And now whenever you're talking about a trip, you're also talking about when you go someplace, you leave somebody. Yeah. There are people you leave behind. And when you go someplace and you go back from that someplace, you're leaving somebody where you went. If you had a fruit, if you had people come to Christ, if you had a group start, I had a church start.

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How do we handle keep going to new places like Jesus did and like Paul did with sort of the

tension of how I take care of these people who I've led to Christ and who depend on me and and they can't get, you know, almost like they can't get along without me, like I'm indispensable kind of thing is what, what I come into a lot of people's minds.

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So that's what we want to talk about today. And, we want to think about Jesus's examples of that and Paul's examples of it, kind of should shake us up a little bit, I think, and get us to think about it. Not everybody's called to keep moving and be a sequential church planter, like I have been, some are called to plant and stay.

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But even when you plant and stay at a church, you ought to be constantly having the church keep reaching out to new territory, reaching new people, and continue to expand, at least through groups, if not through new churches all around your city. So there's always still a tension even there that this is going to be going on.

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So we need to talk about that. Maybe a question. You know what do we need to trust new believers that we leave behind to be able to do if we were to do it? Maybe I can ask you guys and we can start talking about that.

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What do we trust in them for? That's I mean, that's a great question. I think, you know, one of the first things that comes to mind is trust that if they are truly saved, that they have the Holy Spirit in them, and they will be guided by him and even be able to discern basic truth from error.

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Right from wrong. Just like I think our theology of conversion is a big part of this conversation and the New Covenant that we have the promises of the New Covenant, where we have the indwelling Holy Spirit. And so if someone is truly born again, they will, you know, and some theologians use the term perseverance of the saints like they will make it, you know, and so that's kind of our, not to say that we don't have a part as leaders in shepherding them and discipling them, but I think just in general, we have a high view of salvation and conversion, meaning that when someone

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is truly born again, they are bought by the blood of Jesus. They have the Holy Spirit inside of

them. They can discern truth from error. They can know right from wrong. They have the basic ingredients, I guess is the best way to put it, to faithfully follow Christ. One phrase David, wo;; like this phrase.

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"If you are saved, you will survive." If you remember Paul says "if God began a good work in you, what he'll perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus", so they really get saved. If God is really at work in a situation then they can endure.

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They can keep up with this, Keep that in mind. So one thing is that we have to trust them. They're going to be able to survive. What else can we trust? The thing I was thinking of was we can trust them to at least share their story and invite others in to basically share the gospel.

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They can invite their friends. And like, what we always say is like sometimes a brand new believer is the best evangelist because they don't know any better. They don't know that they're not supposed to share their faith. Yeah, they think that this is just the normal thing that people do. And, you know, that was again your example dad of when you came to Christ in the university setting, you were immediately sharing the gospel.

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Yeah, your little hippie Jesus pen and telling people about who Jesus was. And so I think that is really powerful. We need to unleash them as well to reach their peers and reach their oikos. And we've talked a lot about that, but I think that's another really practical thing, is trusting new believers, to share their faith in a simple, reproducible way.

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I think it's really powerful too. We want to trust them to keep walking with God. We want to trust them to be able to feed themselves. You know, they want to be able to feed themselves spiritually that the Bible, they have the Holy Spirit. Now, like Paul said, they can read the Bible or they can read or they can listen to it, and the Holy Spirit can then enliven it to their minds, their hearts, and they can apply it.

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And so, there are some scriptures we'll look at a little bit later on, related to some of that. And I think it'll build us confidence in that. And there's another verse in Acts 14:23. This is an example

of Paul and his journeys. He went and took a missionary journey, and on the journey he would plant churches in these various cities, and he'd move from one city to the next to the next, and then he would come back on the same track.

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He went back on the way back to the journey and went back to those same cities. In 14:23. It says on the way back, when he went back to the churches that he started in the different cities, it says that he appointed elders in every church. Right. And so when you read and you think about that, what it means is that on the way on the trip, when he started the church, he left him with some temporary leaders.

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Somehow they weren't elders yet. They were still church leaders, but they weren't elders yet because they hadn't qualified. 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, stuff like that. But then after the months of going on the trip and coming back, he was able to see who rose to the surface and who had the right testimony and who were living the life.

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And he was able to appoint the longer term elders in that situation. But he trusted people sometimes, and the best we can tell, in Thessalonika he planted that church, and he was booted out of town within 4 or 5 weeks. And yet he comes back and writes a letter. He says, you guys are examples to all the other churches, right?

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They did just fine. I mean, there are some things that they had some problems with. He had to do some corrections. But. Right. But I think we sometimes really limit that. The question I'd ask is why and how can we trust them. What are some of the thoughts you guys have on that?

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I have several, but I want to get you guys to kind of get some of this going for us. Well I kinda wanted to push back a little bit. Not too much, but just make sure that we have a little bit of balance here with even the Thessalonians. He did express concern for them and said, oh, I pray that I do not run or labor in vain.

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And in other letters he says, I'm sending you Epaphras, or I'm sending you Timothy or you know, so he did. It's not like he just "loved them and leaved them" completely. He did have this

like mindset of... and even when it talks about his sufferings, it's that he had this constant concern for all the churches.

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So he was deeply burdened for their sanctification, for their health as local churches. And that's what inspired a lot of these follow up letters. The epistles are follow up letters to the churches. So I don't know. I'm not saying I disagree with the premise here.

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I'm just saying this is kind of the other side of what people would be thinking as we have this conversation. Right. And I think we need to address it. That's a great question, Paul. And I think at the end of this podcast, I've got about nine things that we can talk about. Let's see if you can help solve that problem and how do we deal with it?

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But at the same time, I think our society and our churches are so much on the side of sort of the motherly take care of them for a long time side of things that we need some balance. And I want us to hear the side of it that sometimes you need to go and you need to trust, but not irresponsibly.

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Let's figure that out and then let's figure out how to do it responsibly. So I like what you're saying there, David. You had something you wanted to say on that. Yeah. I was just going to mention he often would have these, you know, for lack of a better word, he'd have a leadership one day conference with them before he left.

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And so he would be with the guy that fell out the window and died, Eutychus, you know, he knew he only had a short time with them. So he stayed up all night, sharing and downloading as much as he could when he was there. And you know, when he raised him from the dead and stuff too.

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That helps. But that'll liven things up a little bit. But yeah. I think we see that. Yeah. Again, I love that his heart was for them to do whatever he could to take care of them. But he also knew he lived in this tension of he only had this short window of time to get the gospel out to where it had not gone before.

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And so his priority was getting the gospel out to the unreached. That was his priority. But he did not do that at the expense of the health of the believers, because he knew that with the Holy Spirit and with the right-like leadership structures in place, that they could survive without him. They didn't need it.

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And so I think that's the whole key here is, if you're setting up a system that is required for you to be there for it to function, that's probably a bad system. Like, as a leader in a lot of ways. So eventually and even for those of us who are local church pastors, we need to do our best to only do what only we can do.

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And then, if anything else can possibly be done by someone else, we want to delegate that to someone else so that we can be freed up to do the things that only we can do. And so I think just a general leadership principle that we have to learn. So, yeah, I mean, Dawson Trotman, he said, never do anything that others can and will do when there's so much of importance that others cannot or will not do.

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So you're kind of constantly, working at yourself out of a job and delegating to others to kind of take care of the flock. So yeah, and if you work yourself out of the job, you'll never be out of a job. Well, you know, if you call me back, I'll throw out one other thing, too.

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You think about dovetailing on this idea. Think about Jesus and what he did and what Paul was saying is that there was this. He went to Sychar. All those people became believers. And then John is very careful to say he stayed there for two days, not a long time, but two days. And we get a lot of training in two days, the intense training kind of thing.

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And then he left and probably only came back 2 or 3 times a year when he went on his journeys. And, so Jesus practiced this same thing, of leaving quickly, but yet giving them the basic doctrine in theology, what they needed to do while he was gone. We'll come to a little more of that.

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Yeah, what comes to mind, as we've mentioned this before, but the the circuit riders, the Wesleyan circuit riders, where they would go place to place and their goal was just to preach as many places as possible, stir up as much dust, you know, start as many fires, if you will. But then they had these little meetings, these little discipleship groups where they kept each other accountable.

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They call them class meetings or something. Where they were just peer to peer accountability. And that helped sustain them. And they were new believers able to encourage each other towards holiness. And then they would circle back and teach them more and kind of create that movement that way. Exactly that's part of the remedy for this trusting of things.

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One thing I want to make sure we touch on here as far as the implications for this idea, you know, we've talked a lot about trips and also planting, but for the established church who does get some new converts, you know, each year, Lord willing, there's a few people that come to Christ. And I think the tendency is to sort of think they can't do much like stick them on the coffee team and we'll let them grow and percolate for 5-10 years and on the other end, if they make it out the other side, we'll start trusting them with stuff.

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And I think this flips that on its head. So I'm really also a local church pastor, I'm looking forward to what we uncover that they can do. We want to release everyone for a movement to happen. We've got to figure out ways to release everyday disciples, to do the stuff, to do evangelism, to do basic discipleship.

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We've got to release more of them. And I think we got to release them more quickly. And I think this is going to be an example of that. Think about it this way. Think about, you know, ten people doing the good stuff, even though they're limited in the time and how much they can do. Evangelism and discipleship is still going to be better than one Superman trying to do the work of ten people.

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Yes, doing all of it himself and kind of hogging the glory, hogging the situation. And I think that we need to see ourselves as equippers of the saints to do the work of the ministry, which is not

just percolating coffee, but is building the body of Christ, which has to do with evangelism and has to do with edifying the other believers in their group.

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So we've got to really take seriously the Ephesians 4:11, quite seriously about it and verse 12. Yeah. I think a good filter to sift through is what is a leadership role and what is a role that's for every believer. And so, you know, a good way to think about that is when James talks about not how many of you should be teachers, my brothers, because teachers will have stricter judgment.

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But then in Colossians 3 it says, "we are to teach one another." And so there is a sense where every believer is to be a teacher of other believers, and we are to teach one another. But then there's another level of leadership that we should be hesitant to put a new believer in, because then they'll become conceited and proud.

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And so we want to be careful not to elevate and give them a status in the church. That is a leadership role. That would be where I would draw the line would be, we're not giving, new believers, leadership, official leadership titles and things like they're being seen as a leader. But to invest in one person or to share the gospel or to even to facilitate a group discussion, that's not necessarily you don't have to be, quote unquote, like an elder or leader or whatever to do that.

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I think that would be where I would draw the line like, yeah, that's practical. All of this is, of course, very pertinent to me, just from the way God brought me to Christ. And then what I saw happen in the first ministry experience I had as a new believer. I may have told the story, but I'll just summarize it a little bit here.

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Is that, you know, I became a believer. Three months later, I went back to my hometown, began to share the gospel. People started coming to Christ and a group went from me to 30 by the end of the summer. Actually, it was in two groups because we couldn't meet in the same living room. You know, it was too big.

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So we'd multiply the group. But I did the same thing. And basically we just read the Bible and just discussed it, and I shared some of my ideas on it. They shared some of their ideas on it, and we were just kind of on our own as these young, I was 20 years old I guess, and most of the group were around that age, a little younger and God used that.

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We baptized nine that summer. I use that point to say "God can use a young Christian." I wouldn't call myself a pastor. That would have got me a big head. And don't call me an elder. But I could do evangelism. This was an evangelistic kind of thing. So that's what's going on in that group actually lasted too.

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I mean, I left after three months. I came back later. I think I left in the fall to go back to college. University of Florida. And I came back at Christmas. They were still meeting and they actually rented a hall. They had a hall in the middle of our city and it was called JC RAP before I left.

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JC RAP. Jesus Christ Reaches All People But they were just young Christians and they were doing the stuff! I just think we limit God a lot. When we should be trusting God more in these things.

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But at the same time, let's be wise about it and let's figure out what things we can put in place to help people to continue to grow and be an environment that they can continue to grow in Christ and do well. Yes, I think there's a tension that David had kind of talked about of unleashing new believers to share Christ, to reach other people, even to help be a part of discipling others and, not fast tracking the most gifted to quit, to become elders leaders and that sort of thing.

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And I've kind of made mistakes on both ends of the spectrum. Personally, I think about guys where I unleashed the new believer so soon. And I mean, I think about one guy. He led 12 people to Christ the semester after he came to Christ. He had a radical conversion. You know, actually, sometimes the biggest sinners end up becoming the best evangelists, you know, but then even thinking about some of those, like, I had a similar situation where the guy really rose quickly.

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I almost gave him too much leadership too fast. And it short circuited some of his character development. And I kind of regret it, I should have kept feeding the fire on his personal evangelism, but not elevated him in our ministry too quickly, if that makes sense. That makes a lot of sense. And so making that big separation between evangelistic ministry, telling your story, and seeing what God leads you to do, and then being the official leader of a church, a designated leader, an elder, pastor, a shepherd of a church.

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Those are two different conversations that need to be had. Yeah. I think what our culture has tried to do in general they like to do is blur the lines of things, you know, and I think in church world too, like we want to emphasize the fact the priesthood of all believers and to an extent where we've almost erased the fact that there is a distinction between pastors and elders and apostles and leaders.

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And so I think that's the other thing of like, there is a reason there's definitions and clarity for those things. We don't want to overemphasize, like the pastors, the only one can do it, but we also don't under emphasize the distinction that's there. So again, I think Scripture is always the best filter for all these questions.

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What are some examples in Scripture you guys can think about? Where Jesus or Paul or whatever trusted young believers and he left them. And again, we're talking about trips where you're leaving? And, I just took one. And you guys have come up with a couple other ones here.

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Is that in Luke 2:38? You remember the guy that was delivered from the demons, actually when you look at all these other things on that. There were actually two guys. But, you know, this tells a story in Luke about one. But anyway, the man, you had the demons, you know, he begged to go with Jesus right away that day after he was delivered.

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But Jesus sent him away, saying, return home and describe how much God has done for you. So the man went away and proclaimed all over the town, how much Jesus had done for him. That's amazing. So, you know, just kind of, I don't know what a how much a conversation Jesus had with him in that thing, but it sounds like a very short period of time, probably almost sounds like it was the same day, but it wasn't a long term discipleship thing

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He didn't travel with Jesus for three years before he was sent back to do this. And we find out later historically, that a whole bunch of people from the Decapolis, where he was sent back to, were coming after Jesus after that. Some people think that that guy was maybe key to some revival in this whole region.

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So that'd be a good marketing strategy. I mean, look at this guy who was possessed. Here he was just he, he trusted this guy and he didn't. Yeah. Oh, I've got a disciple You for two years before you can say anything or tell anybody anything. So yeah, I mean, on a serious note, I think you do see that, like, sometimes when the gospel penetrates a new unreached people group or things, God will do a miracle at the beginning in order to, like, open up the door and, you know, or whatever it is.

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So that's the goal. I think another story that comes to mind was Jesus sending out the 72 and, you know, he gave them the instructions to go, and he really didn't give them that many resources. He's like, you know, take what you got and go. And if you find a person of peace, stay with them and tell them the kingdom of God is there.

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And if they don't respond, then just shake the dust off your feet. So Jesus really sent them out to do that. But what he gave them was the power of the Holy Spirit. And he gave them, you know, the gospel, the good news. And again, I think it goes back to what do we feel like are the essential elements that we need?

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We have the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the people of God. You know, those are the three elements that you really need, you know, and then you can do a lot with that. So, I would say this when we talk about, like, this demoniac or we talk about the people that Jesus left behind in Sychar after two days of training or those different examples.

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I want you to understand, though, like the Sychar or the demoniac, I think that's not necessary for everybody. You know, we give one example, I think, well, that one example that fits everybody, that's not the case. This guy had special gifts, I'm sure he had special experience with Jesus and the deliverers that he had, but he also had some special gifts to be able to do

this.

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So there's different gifts that God has for different people. And so don't put the expectation to go away and don't spend any more time with them. And that's not the principle we're trying to say here, but the principle of this is that God can do a lot more than we think.

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And it's not always the same with everybody. So that's just something else I wanted to make sure that we got out there before people jump to any conclusions on us. Yeah. And even thinking about Apostle Paul's journeys, many of the times he left he had to leave because of persecution or whatever he was about to get killed or whatever.

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But even that, if you believe in the providence of God, right? God knew that was going to happen. I mean, if you're going to blame anyone, like, that's irresponsible. Blame God for it. You know, like. But God was more than happy to start that church and let it be the way it was. And see what happened.

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Even when you think about the church in China. There were all these missionaries there. And then the persecution broke out in China, and that ended up being a very transformative thing for a lot of the house churches in China, because a lot of these local believers had to step up in these, leadership roles in the churches went viral.

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There was this movement of God where God raised up all these amazing testimonies of just men that the Holy Spirit just ignited and used, and this kind of like now it was almost like the best thing that could have happened. The same thing happened in Ethiopia. We did a study on a book called Spontaneous Expansion of the church.

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The same thing happened. The other missionaries got kicked out and the church took off like crazy. You know, not the missionaries are necessarily bad, but people need to have the weight of responsibility for their walk with God in the ministry that God has for them.

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And that's what gets people stepping up and trusting God. I mean, even basic like if you think about parenting, I mean, we might get to this later, but even parenting, as I'm raising my son, Owen and he's 13 now. If I still, like, cut his sandwich, his peanut butter and jelly sandwich for him and got the crust off like, that's not a healthy form of me taking care of him no more times than not, I'm throwing him in and I'm like, figure it out, you know?

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Or even like when we were going out surfing together, like, let's get in the big waves. Let's let you get stressed, you know, in over your head a little bit because that's how you're going to get better. That's how you can improve. So if you remember we let you guys go on mission trips all the way South America, when you're in your younger teens?

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Yeah, yeah. We kind of pushed you out there. So I think a lot of the ministries unintentionally do this with their new believers. If they smother them and they baby them and they kind of like, act like their baby. Literal babies. Not just they are spiritual babies in a sense, but if they're adults, they can learn things.

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They have leadership gifts. Some of them do and they can. They can do things. So we want to like, give them enough shepherding but not smother them, if that makes sense. Yeah. What I've found is that people tend to rise to the level of your expectations. So if you expect them to, you know, have a daily quiet time and memorize verses and, you know, start to pray, to share their faith.

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And a lot of them will, a lot of them will step up. And again, a lot of what you get is what you expect. And by faith, you're trusting the Holy Spirit working in their lives. The other principle that I have found from what we were talking about is the way I've heard it said is like, you want to create a leadership vacuum.

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So when you create and whether God does that or you do that, but you're creating these leadership vacuums. I know, Paul, your story where you had the issue with Christy's back and you weren't able to be on campus as much, you weren't able to be as hands on as you would have liked to be. But God used that by removing you from a lot of the day to day nitty gritty stuff.

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Yeah. Then God was able to broaden your horizons so that you're able to, like, invest in the overall body of Christ, the collegiate body of Christ. And then also, I think it made Chico more effective because you weren't the one that was planning all the parties and you weren't the one, you know, figuring out all the fliers and things like that.

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And it was actually more effective than it would have been if you just tried to do everything yourself. And so I think that's like a perfect example. God sovereignly created that leadership vacuum at Chico, that actually opened the door for the expansion of your ministry. And that was, what felt like what was a really hard thing ends up being like, one of the keys to, like, what God's done in your life.

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So I think that's a cool principle to think about. One of our good illustrations of this is one of our mentors for all of us is a guy named Harold Bullock. And, one of the things he would say to us is that when God wants to teach adults, the whole principle of adult learning is having responsibility.

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He says, well, if you want to teach somebody to learn how to swim fast, just throw them in the lake with a lot of alligators. And they will get teachable fast. And so, there's some element to that. One thing I'll say to Paul is a misunderstanding about the baby thing.

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I think we are told to long for the pure milk of the Word like new babes for Christ. But if you are an adult, it doesn't mean you are a baby. So I mean, you are just starting off the Christian life. But you look at Apostle Paul, he started right off he was knocked off his horse, converted, and he started, you know, proclaiming the gospel and preaching and stuff like that, right off the bat.

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And so God can use people, early on. And I just think we need to keep that in mind. Yeah, yeah. And then, you know, part of Paul's training program was he got sent to the desert, I think it was like three years that he was there and we don't know what he did.

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We know he was still preaching the gospel there. He wasn't just sitting around under a tree because he came back and tested what he had been teaching. To see if it was really the right thing or not. Right? Yeah. So, I mean, there's a lot of misnomers on that whole thing.

00:32:33:05 - 00:33:10:04

Yeah. If we can't do anything unless we spend three years or 17 years in the desert before you do anything. As if he went as a monk. But that's not how I read the New Testament. So if we were to take this step and it's a little bit of a faith step of trusting new believers with things, whether we're in a kind of an existing established church in one place or we're going and we're trying to plant and keep moving, I'm sure one of the questions people are having is, oh, okay, how do we set them up,

00:33:10:04 - 00:33:31:14

at least for success, when we are ready to move on? So what are some tips you've found for leaving people behind well? Before we go there, let me just throw out one other thing. I want to go there. I want to get there okay? I want to ask one more question. Is what makes us think that a new believer can do this stuff?

00:33:31:14 - 00:33:52:26

What are some scriptures that come to your mind that encourage us, that new believers have what it takes? I call it, they're battle ready. They're battle ready to do whatever God's going to put in their lives. You know, you're thinking for 1 Corinthians 10:13. Yeah, that was the whole church. You know, "there's no temptation to overtake you, but that which is common to man.

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And God's gonna provide a way of escape. He's faithful to provide a way of escape. You'll be able to endure it." So they're battle ready for the temptation to come to him. 2 Peter 1, By his divine power he has given you everything.

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Everything you need, for life and godliness." And so, you know, he's telling them that they have everything they need by God's divine power and his promises. God's power plus God's promises, equals the potential that God wants to give you and use you in your life. That God has given you what you need.

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And God's people, I would add into there, that you need God's people around you to surround

you and help you grow. So God's power, God's promises, and God's people are like, if you have those fundamental elements in you, then you have what you need to do whatever God's called you to do.

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So you got a sermon, you got three Ps. I know that's hard, right? That's the pastor and pastor coming out. 1 John 2:20 "but you have been anointed by the Holy One and you all have knowledge." And so it's talking about, basically, you all have the anointing to understand God's Word and discern truth.

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from error and in context, there were these false teachers trying to say, hey, you have to only listen to us. We're the anointed ones. We know what we're saying. We need to teach you guys this stuff. But in context, John is saying, hey, you guys have it. You guys know how to discern the truth from error.

00:35:42:05 - 00:36:06:15

And you have that anointing as the body of Christ. And as individuals to discern the Word of God. While you're there. Read verse 27 too, okay, "but the anointing that you receive from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you.

00:36:06:17 - 00:36:34:12

But as his anointing teaches you about everything and is true and is not no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him." So yeah, that's good. And I think John is teaching here, so he's not saying there's never any need for teachers. Right. But he is saying that once you're grounded, you got the new heart, going back to conversion and you got the new covenant taking place in your life.

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You don't have a need for teachers. They may benefit you, but you don't have a need. You don't have to keep looking around on the internet to find somebody else to teach you something new. You got people that lead you to Christ, learn from them. Like you said, you don't have a need for that and it might be beneficial, but be careful because of the false prophets.

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That's a good passage to study. And I think the next one, we tend to gloss over a lot of times, that there is a teacher...Especially people who teach Yeah. And it's good accountability to me.



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And that helps avoid error because if everyone has that mentality that like, you know, I don't have to take...like Acts 17:11, the Bereans, they tested to see if what Paul said was true. And every day they examined what it was, and the other passage I wanted to just briefly highlight was, Romans 8.

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"If God is for you, who can be against you?" And, and if God didn't spare his own son, what makes you think that he's not going to give you everything else that you need? And, and so in his love is never to be separated from us. And so all of those things, all of those truths are really powerful to live our lives based on that.

00:38:03:03 - 00:38:24:07

Yeah. We're on the winning team. And so we can trust that those people, if they have the Spirit of God, then they're capable of doing whatever God's called them to do, right? That's right. And while you're in Romans, let me read another verse in Romans, Romans 15:14, which is a good one.

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He says, now concerning you, my brothers, you are talking to the whole church, there'll be new Christians in that, and there will be older Christians in that they'll be the whole church. Now, concerning you, my brother, not just talking to Timothy and you my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able.

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This is the point I want you to see... and able to admonish or to instruct one another. There is an ability that we have to not only evangelize, which we've highlighted already, but also there's an ability that any believer can help and encourage. You can be inspired by the Holy Spirit to say something in a meeting that encourages the other people that admonishes them and teaches them to help them to take a next step in their own Christian life.

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And I just think we need to believe that the Holy Spirit can do that in and through people and as church leaders and ministry leaders set up environments for that to take place. That's something I'm working on, we won't get into in this podcast, but that's something I'm working on right now. How do we set up the environment where everyday believers are getting a chance to really put

into practice some of these kinds of things we're talking about here?

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Yeah, yeah. And I guess getting into a little bit more of a practical aspect of this, that's why it's so important to teach groups of new believers. And as you're doing these different groups and things, the importance of proper hermeneutics and Bible interpretation, because then if they're in little groups, they can self-correct to one another as they're studying the Word of God.

00:40:06:27 - 00:40:28:04

And that also avoids cultish type false teachers rising up and saying "hey, just listen to me. Whatever I'm saying, this is where it's at." Because then they have those tools to discern that. So that's kind of, just a more of a practical thing. Now back to Steven's question, which I did want to get to.

00:40:28:04 - 00:40:51:07

And we're kind of running out of time. So we better get to it. Now, in the sense of what do we leave? How do we help those left behinders to do well? And, that was one of them you just said there, Paul, I want to make sure we all highlight that we're modeling for them, and then we're teaching them some basic principles of hermeneutics how to read the Bible and not read stuff into the Bible.

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But how to take what the authors are saying and understand it accurately so we can apply it humbly. That's basic. The Bible is the one that keeps correcting us, keeps us back on path. And so that's a huge one right there. So at least in those first two days in Sychar, did you give them something on how to deal with the Bible?

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Yeah. And kind of just a little one liner "teach a man to fish. You can feed him for a lifetime", "you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. You teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." And that's why you leave them with the importance of, you know, how to study the Bible, how to read the Bible, how to pray.

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And a lot of these how to's so they can get traction. And in a group of peers, or if there is someone older that can help lead that group, that's great. But, you know, having that accountability and fostering those environments are really helpful. Yeah. And I would say, you

know, maybe one way that you can say it is the "one another" commands in the New Testament.

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So giving them a place where they can one another one another, that's what you want to do. I really think that's essential. Like, you know, iron sharpening iron. You need that place where they can encourage one another and challenge one another and love one another and all the one another's.

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And somehow it's almost more meaningful to get that from each other than it is for the above guy. That's the official guy. You know, the one another. And coming from the others, I'm just underlining what you're saying there David, that's great. I think that's again, going back to the essential elements is they're learning how to feed themselves spiritually.

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They're getting challenged by other believers, you know, and they have like, what the Spirit of God working in their life and they have those three things. And, you know, maybe you could add they have a missional mindset that they're also seeking to expand the kingdom. Those things I think are kind of the essential elements that help someone grow spiritually.

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So that's right. I would also say what you want to do as the equipper, the one who starts the thing and get something going as an equipper of a ministry, you also want to lay a firm foundation of the basic doctrines as well. There was a certain thing Paul had in mind that I'm entrusting you with this.

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Pass this on carefully to the next generation to the next person who becomes a Christian. And there is a certain level of doctrinal teaching that you need to have in the mix, but it's sort of downloaded ahead of time. It doesn't have to take years and years. You can download it and get it in place, and then they're learning how to live it out.

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But I think that does need to be done early on in the Christian life, helping you learn the basics. And I emphasize more, learn the basic doctrines even more than just learn all the disciplines you're supposed to do. Because the doctrines who you are in Christ and what came with salvation, what you have in Christ, and in what God is expecting for you to do, very specifically

in the commands of Christ is really important.

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And that's what Paul emphasized. So you're in pretty good company there. There you go. That's what he emphasized. You know, I didn't mean that the disciplines and you know, having a daily quiet time and Scripture memory like that are not important. Those are important tools. But, you really want to emphasize the rules, the commands of Christ, because that's what we're told.

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Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey all I've commanded you. Let's get back. And let's make it real clear what were those things that he commanded believers to do? And like somebody said earlier, all believers, what do you command all believers to do? How do we separate that, make sure we're in an environment where we're encouraging one another to obey these commands, to be doers of the word.

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One of the things that comes to mind with this topic, I think it's probably for another podcast, but, like, how do you clean up all the messes that come from trusting new believers? Because I think that another practical concern is like, if you unleash all these new believers, there's going to be a lot of mess.

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But, I what came to mind was Proverbs 14:4, where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of an ox. And so I think that's a perfect verse for unleashing young believers. Like if you want a crop, you cannot have a clean manger. Having an actual crop requires having a messy manger.

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And so we have to be willing to have a little bit of mess in order to do ministry. It's a requirement. And so I do think that that's like something that we'll have to, you know, again, like to do our best. And Paul, a lot of his letters, we're coming in and like cleaning up all the messes that were being made by people.

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But ultimately, we have to be willing to live with the mess, for the sake of the ministry, and see that as almost the price of doing ministry that if you're going to work with, with imperfect people, then there's going to be drama, there's going to be different things that come up. And so I'd love

to kind of talk more about that.

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How do we manage the mess even at some point. I would throw out one thing on that. You think of 1 Corinthians. That was a messy church. God was working, God was doing all kinds of amazing things in that church. But it was also messy. But what Paul did is he wrote that letters back to correct them.

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He warned them, I'm going to come back and talk to you face to face and get you straightened out if you don't straighten up here. And, so they weren't left alone. He visited, revisited churches. He sent people back. He sent them letters, and, you know, we have some of the letters there, probably other ones that he wrote besides the ones that we have that have made it into the canon.

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But they're not totally left alone, but at the same time, they're left more alone than some of us are uncomfortable with, and I know I struggle with that. I mean, I've left a lot of churches and fortunately most of them have continued on and grown and done well, but it was always a struggle.

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And some of them didn't know what it was going to be like when I left, I had to trust that the new leader could take over. So usually it was somebody I brought in from the outside. I'm wondering about that. I'm kind of rethinking my past ministry and wondering if I should have been a little bit more inclined towards finding some people within the group to take over the group, rather than taking a ringer from the outside.

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God works in different ways. And some of them I'm really glad I got that person on the outside. And other ones I think I might have done better by taking somebody from the inside, as I look back on it in hindsight. But anyway... And I guess that highlights the importance of leadership development and training qualified leaders.

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2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses and trust, the faithful men will be able to teach others also." That's for leadership development. And

Paul was talking to Timothy who had this movement that was going on that he was overseeing. It wasn't just like one church. I don't think... Not at all.

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Not even in one city. He was like Timothy, we need to get some more faithful men who can teach others also and expand this movement, and take care of it. So even Moses, like Moses and Jethro, like Moses, had a lot of mess when he was judging the whole nation of Israel.

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And Jethro said, hey, what you're doing is not good. Like get men to kind of like, delegate this thing and scale it. And so that's the quicker you can raise up other leaders and scale what you're doing and multiply the impact of what you're doing, the better. And that's kind of what our goal in Chico, when we were leading at Chico State, we wanted to help a student go from lost to labor in one year lost to labor in one year.

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And it doesn't mean they're a leader necessarily like leading on that elder level. But they were laboring and a lot of them did it sooner. But then we created a leadership pipeline where people would kind of step in to higher levels of leadership. So all that's important, it's just, you know, if you have that grassroots evangelism going on of new believers sharing with other new believers, that's where the action is, at least evangelistically speaking.

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Yeah. And it goes back to the heart attitudes too, like when you have people making these messes that you're moving towards the mess and like, you have the heart attitude of following leadership within biblical limits. And you have that heart attitude of people giving and receiving scriptural correction and clearing up relationships. And so a lot of those, "one another" commands, help you to actually manage the mess.

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So I think it all fits together, if it's done biblically. I know we've probably got to wrap up here, but I've got one other thought that I want to bring out on this topic is just the principle of "one step ahead" leadership. And, people that are born again, they can lead a non-born again person to become born again.

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Right? And just one step ahead. A person who's been a believer for a few weeks and helps a

person to take a few steps towards walking with Christ in it. And if you think about it this way, is if you're going on a trail walk somewhere. You have somebody that's miles ahead, that's the leader.

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You can't even see him very well, but you can see the guy right in front of you. And so if you get everybody just the following with the right attitude, the person right before him, and then that's kind of "one step ahead" leadership makes a big difference. As long as you have a system that keeps people moving.

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And so that fits into this whole thinking as well. So about the "one step ahead" leadership. One cool thing to think about was like there's been times with Paul and I where maybe I was a step ahead. And then there's other times where Paul was a step ahead. And so I think that's another cool thing when you have that "one step ahead" leadership, sometimes one person will start out as the one that's ahead and then the other person will outpace them.

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You see that with Paul and Barnabas that at first Barnabas was the one that was ahead. And then Paul ended up, you know, being one that was ahead. And it doesn't matter. You know, who's ahead of who. And what matters is Christ, that we're all following Christ. And so I think it's cool to have that mentality, too, we can disciple people.

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And sometimes the people we disciple become stronger in one area than we are or in multiple areas. And so just learning to be humble in that way too. And I think spiritual gifts and calling plays into that. It's not apples and oranges like, oh, this guy's leading more people to Jesus.

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So he's further along. No. And this guy understands the Bible better. Now, maybe that's because this guy's evangelistically gifted, and this guy's more pastorally gifted, you know? But that's a good mindset to have, like actually you're hoping that's one of the hearts of a leader in some of this training up younger people under you if you want them...

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I love that phrase someone said is my fruit grows on other people's trees. And so we want to unleash and equip as many new believers. And then over time, other leaders and multiply

ministries and churches, until the whole world is saturated with the gospel. And then that idea of like my ceiling is other people's floor.

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Like, you want to be that empowering leader. And I think that's a good example. Again, dad with you, you've said this before too, but like you've made an amazing impact in your life. But, you know, one of the greatest impacts that you're making is through us that we're all multiplying leaders and trying to make an impact for Christ.

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And so if those behind you can make an even bigger impact than you can ever make yourself, that's an even better thing. So having that mentality too is really important. And that's why if you go back to the trips thing, if you're taking trips, take some apprentices with you on the trips. That's what Jesus did with the 12.

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That's what Paul did with Timothy's and Titus' and Silas' and stuff like that. He was multiplying his ministry through on the job apprenticeship so that it goes back to trips for training, but also in taking others and helping them to become what they can be. Yeah. One more thought. The funnel illustration.

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You know, we're on the top of the funnel. You're trying to do a lot of evangelism. You're trying to expose as many people as possible to the gospel. And then you got to the middle of the funnel. It's more about environments and discipleship, new believers. And then you have the bottom, which is leadership development. As top level leaders in an organization or a ministry, you want to focus on the top of the funnel, getting as much evangelism happening and the bottom of the funnel equipping leaders.

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And that's what you spend your time doing. The top and the bottom. And then you create systems, and raise up others to disciples the people in the middle. So that's kind of the focus there. Amen, that's the great principle. I want you to keep that in mind, I wish we had a visual here for you for that.

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But that's huge. And the leaders at the bottom of the funnel, the leaders, we need to spend a



special attention to ones like Jesus did, is that the leaders that will actually be able to be sent out, your future apostles, the future starters of groups and ministries and churches is one of the things that we need to focus on the very bottom of the funnel, those who multiply your ministry.

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Well, thanks for joining us for today's podcast, for the "For the Harvest" podcast. Hope it was a real help to you. And let's move ahead. And trusting faith beginners to do the work of the kingdom. Amen.