

For the Harvest Podcast #6 - The Importance of Trips

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The principle is trips and why and how they're effective. Especially effective for evangelism. How they're effective for training, how effective they are for vision and other things. So that's what we're going to be talking about today. I think it's something that is needed and oftentimes not prioritized high enough in the ministry.

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Thanks again for joining us for episode six with the "For the Harvest" podcast. I'm here again joined by three Worcester's. And, we're going to be sharing a lot of fun stories today. So I think this will be a very engaging podcast to listen to. And, we're going to be talking mostly about trips, actually our organization that we kicked off fairly recently, we named it Harvest Trips because of a conversation that was going around between this group where we were talking about how did Jesus train his disciples?

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Well, he took them on trips. And what if we help people learn to harvest on trips? And so, that's kicked off a lot of really good activities for us over the last couple of years. And I'm excited to hear, some of these stories from these men who've been on many kinds of trips. So, John, what kinds of trips are we talking about today?

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Well, they could be very short, or they could be longer. They could be as short as a trip across campus to do a gospel appointment. They can be as long as moving to Canada for three years to plant a church or moving to Russia, planting a church that could be longer or shorter and kind of a little bit of everything in between.

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And of course, we're thinking about the short term trips that people go for a couple of weeks or a summer or two. So the principle is trips and why and how they're effective, especially effective for evangelism, how they're effective for training, how they're effective for vision and other things. So that's kind of, that's what we're going to be talking about today.

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I think it's something that is needed and oftentimes not prioritized high enough in the ministry.

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And, Paul, David, would you say, have you seen this in your own lives? Just the significance of trips.

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Yeah. When I was a sophomore in college, I had an opportunity to spend a summer in Africa. And, actually, it was through an organization a great organization. If you're involved in college ministry, it's called OneLink. And they do these trainings. They do, kind of these kinds of orientation weeks, where they do a week of simulation before you even go on the trip.

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And I ended up leading that trip. But later on, the ministry director told me that the reason that he made me the leader was. Because I was the worst leader in the group.

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And he was like, you're kind of passive. And we wanted to cause you like, force you to step up. And so I learned so many lessons just in that one orientation week about making decisions, about standing by, you know, the decisions I made with the other leaders. And then on the trip, it was basically like, I don't know what it was, but being outside of my comfort zone and learning to memorize scripture, I, made a goal that I was going to memorize one verse a day for the whole summer, which is not what they told me to do on the trip.

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But there was just something about it. It was like this spiritual snowball effect. And, we ended up seeing about 50 students. We were going door to door doing evangelism in Kenya at University of Nairobi, one of the biggest campuses there. And, we were supposed to go two by two, but David and I would kind of like, we're so radical.

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We just like split ways. Hey, we can hit more doors if we go alone!

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Well, we usually had a local guy with us.

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We just ended up like going and we saw about 50 people come to Christ and things like that. And so walking away from that summer back to campus, it was just a whole new view on evangelism and just everything is just a lot more confidence stepping into the opportunities that God had for me.

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And I would say that same trip, I think, yeah, one of the amazing things about trips is, what it does for the people you go to, but ultimately your character in your heart changes. And yeah, it was kind of similar, that one for me was influential for a different reason.

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At that time, I was a little bit more of the leader of the two of us, and that was one of the reasons they chose because they liked, they saw like maybe, maybe I had some pride there that needed to die. And so I needed to follow Paul. And it was really cool to see Paul, like, emerge as the leader that he is today.

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As like that was kind of like one of the key moments. And then the other thing, too, he was dating Christy, his now wife, and she made a commitment to pray every day for Paul. And I think that was one of the reasons for so much fruit on that trip. And like so it's just amazing to see not only does it impact the people you go to, but obviously it changes your life and there's things that were birthed on that trip that, I think, are bearing fruit in both of our lives.

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to that to this day. And I remember just a quick story about that trip. It was like, I think it was one of the first days we did evangelism. I met this guy named Petrova, and he brought me around and he was not a believer yet, but he introduced me. He would bring me into this room full of African guys and they'd be like, all right, what do you come to share?

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And I was like, all right! There were maybe 8 guys sitting in a circle. And we just had like the Four laws booklet with them and several of them would come to Christ. And then we did that several times that night. And then by the end of the night, he's like, all right, I'm ready. And he received Christ.

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And then I ended up disciplining him that summer and now he's continuing to walk with Christ,

as far as I know. And, you know, other trips have been back and I've seen him. So it's just really cool. It's an example of a harvest trip. Like we weren't there just to wait a really long time.

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We were there to harvest and, and so that's really the type of trip that we're talking about; it's not just to go and do something nice for people. But it's really more let's look for those who are already ready for the gospel and those who are ripe and harvest those people. And so, anyway, that's just one experience.

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And Paul and I have been on many other experiences as well with mission trips. I know, Stephen, you've probably had some great experiences too with mission trips.

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Yeah, man, whenever I saw this the subject came across talking about trips and thinking about it for a while, I realized actually that the last 15, 20 years of my life, I could kind of mark the turning points in terms of trips. And the first was at 17. I was on one of those kinda service-based trips, but it was in the middle of one of those trips that a pastor I heard preach.

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He said somebody might be called into the ministry and ask them to come forward. And that was the moment for me that I knew God was calling me into a life of ministry. And then there was a trip in college where, actually two trips. But, one of them was a trip that just highlighted the significance to me.

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It was going to South Asia. And, God just put a love for lost people from other parts of the world in my heart. And then the next trip was actually with another of the Worcester's with Andy. And, we were in East Asia and just seeing the impact of just massive gospel sharing, we saw 90 students over a ten week period, pray and choose to follow Jesus.

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We got to baptize 12 in a kiddie pool in a dorm bathroom. And, it was like at that moment, God grabbed ahold of my heart and just wouldn't let anything else be more important than doing that. So I had a mentor locally who told me that on some of these journeys, God actually wants to do as much, if not more, in you then he wants to do through you.

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And I've seen that to be true. And then it's something John said earlier is even a longer term trip to go and plant a church. You know, I moved to Kansas City about six years ago to pursue the planting of a church. And so in a way, that's been a long trip. And, I've been able to grow and see God work in me as well as through me.

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On this longer extended trip. And he's actually grown my family through it, too. You know, we had lost a lot of friends. We just had to leave a lot of friendships behind. But he's actually done really good for my family on this trip.

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One thing I'll just throw in there, kind of like you think, I think back to my life. I became a Christian when I was 20 and since then, my life has been one trip after another. I think we've counted up. We've lived in about 30 different homes and different places in different countries and different cities and those kinds of things, but it was almost always going to reach people and God used that, harvesting to plant groups or churches.

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And we just saw it to be a tremendous blessing for our life. And we believe it's helped the kingdom to move forward as well. But trips are really important. Let me just throw one illustration into. Is that the trip that we took as a family to Russia was very formative, not only for the kingdom, but for our whole family.

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It was kind of one of the first or maybe the second kind of international long term trip, the place we've lived. And, it was just like I'm moving from black and white to living color and it just felt like it was just exciting. And we were able to plant a church. All four of my sons made either commitments to Christ or recommitment to Christ.

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It was just very informative for them. It was a real stretching experience. My wife, she says, one of the hardest, but best experiences she's ever had in her life, by doing it. And, we saw some amazing fruit, the church we planted and we actually were able to train over a two year period, about a thousand, Russian speaking church planters.

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And, they planted some 600 churches and 600 preaching points. And so, that was a preaching point to something less than a church. They had less than ten baptized men. But that was kind of the result. But still a lot of people were gathering, even in those preaching points. So anyway, it was just a pretty amazing time.

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I mean it was God, of course, orchestrating all of that with the fall of communism back in 93 and just opening a door, which is one of the things we're looking for in the world, we're looking for doors that God's opening around the world, and we want to send teams and trips to them to harvest that ripe fruit and kind of gather them into, new congregations.

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So anyway, there's a lot to this, and I think it's a real important priority for us to think about.

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One thing I'd like to highlight is that just a lot of times, people are afraid to do these kinds of trips or to move and follow God's call because they're afraid their family is going to suffer. But, you know, Matthew 6:33 says, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.

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And Jesus promises whatever you give up, whether it's families or lands or whatever, he's going to give 100 times more in this life and in the life to come. And we have seen that play out in our family, like over and over again. And so I would just say it's almost like, if you're afraid because of your family, I can't do a trip.

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It's almost like because of your family, you should go on a trip, you should go. And it is one of the things, I think, because we moved so much, our family was actually closer than the typical American family, where there's a certain point, especially teenagers, they get closer to their peers than they do their parents.

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And I think we were able to stay closer longer because we moved around so much that we had to stick together as a family. Anyway, I'm not saying that's for everyone, but if you are on that edge of praying about maybe God's calling me, but it might not be good for my kids.

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Well, whatever God's calling you to do, that's what's going to be best for your kids. And so you have to have faith that God is going to lead you. He's not going to rip you off if you sacrifice for him.

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Yes. And taking that Russia example as a case study is really good because, you know, we didn't stay there long. And so some people in the missionary mindset might be like, well, they kind of failed because they didn't really learn the language. But really, you can do a lot of damage in a short amount of time.

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Damage? I don't know about damage...

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Damage against the Kingdom of darkness! I guess, you know?

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Yeah. Against the gates of hell.

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Yeah, against the gates of hell. So anyways, and what it did in our family's life, it really made us more a cohesive unit. And all of us locked in together and with Christ made it so much better. So that was probably the most strategic two year period and the most strategic thing that I could do was just be obedient to what God's calling you to do.

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But in looking back, I mean, it was a massive decision because you guys had basically had the American dream of the Christian bubble, like the Christian life, because we were in a nice house. You were getting speaking, training engagements, you were building this kind of platform, successful church plant, all this stuff, and then all of a sudden God calls you to go across the world.

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And so that was pretty gnarly, you know, and looking back, even knowing that you guys raised your support to do it when, you know, the mission agency didn't accept you for one reason or another. And so going, doing that, stepping out in faith, with four young kids was really inspiring to me when I look back. So it's encouraging.

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Yeah, we look back on it, my wife and I look at it in the same kind of way. That was a very formative two years and hopefully Kingdom Impacting. So yeah, that was just exciting.

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Well, I'm sure more stories of trips are going to emerge as we work our way through the discussion today. But I am you know, I'm sure some people are wondering, okay, we've had some good experiences. Yes. But what's like, what's the significance to the church or even biblically to trips and John, I know you've got a lot of thoughts on that.

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Yeah. Let me go ahead and jump in and share something on that. I'm really thinking that we're in a situation in the Western church, particularly that we're seeing some weaknesses in two areas. One is adult conversion growth or evangelistic growth, as we call it, and also raising up future church planters and ministers.

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That's something that a lot of churches and ministries are not doing to the extent that we want to. And I've found that trips can be accelerators, for both of those, both evangelism and for training, we make the frame the trips to for training and but the idea comes from you can go all the way back to Jesus.

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You think about Jesus. You know, he took the ultimate trip from heaven to earth. And in John 1-4, he took another trip as he was staying someplace at a friend's house, and took a trip to one of John the Baptist's meetings around the first disciples. Then Andrew took a trip and went out and found his brother, brought him back, and then the three of them, Andrew, John, and Jesus went and found Philip, and Philip went and found.

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And these were all trips. And then once he had his five, he then took those five to the wedding,

a trip. He took them down to Jerusalem, another trip. And then after, for three years Jesus was taking the 12 on one trip after another. There's a cool verse that comes to mind on that, on that topic as well.

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And it's, basically in Luke 8:1 it summarized Jesus' life. It says, "soon afterward, Jesus traveled from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the gospel. And then the 12 were with him," And the 12 with him, they were getting to train and become fishers of men as he traveled from village to village to city to city and not everybody is going to do that extreme that Jesus did on that.

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But the principle of trips for the church should be coming through because they are something he modeled. And Paul followed also very closely, not just Paul, but the rest of the apostles. And some people don't think about this, but the word apostle itself means a sent one. Right? And they were sent. And you see, and in Luke chapter nine, talking about apostles, describing them. Jesus made a statement, down in verse 5 it says, have we, talking about him and people like Timothy and, and Titus and stuff like that

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Have we no right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? And so when you think about that, that took along and it was just telling us that these other apostles were going and they took their families with them all over the world, and after, you know, going and getting the things established there in Jerusalem.

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So you see the apostles doing it of course you see Paul doing one missionary journey after another to different places. And it's kind of a long journey for years, but then little sub journeys within that journey. And so you see this principle, all through the Scripture. And so what we want to do is we want to be brave enough to go all the way back to how they started, how Jesus, the prototype of how we're supposed to do things, how he did it and get it close and learn the principles on that and then begin to apply that, in our lives today, kind of figured it out.

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If we had developed traditions and things in the church that are not to go contrary to that, then I think we ought to start to figure out and think about how we get back to some of those things? How do we get that into our systems today? So anyway, I can say a lot more about that. Maybe you guys have some questions.

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I got one that they kind of came to mind as you're giving biblical examples. You know, one of my favorite passages to teach on evangelism is Matthew 9:36-38. And you know, the harvest is plentiful. Jesus. He had compassion for the crowds. Harvest has been full. The laborers are few. But verse 35, it says, Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness.

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So the precursor to this call, this passionate call to the harvest, was Jesus showing what it meant to be "for the harvest" ; it was going to every town and village, all the towns and villages and proclaiming the gospel. And so that's kind of like the context of that passage that, you know, if you heard me teach, you know, I'm going to teach that one.

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Yeah. So I just love that. Yeah. I think there's another time where basically the people are like, he's got his rock star status achieved at one place, and they want him to stay there like begging him to stay. And then he says, hey, I got to go to other towns and villages too. And this is why I came.

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I didn't come just to set up shop and be the most popular person in this town. I've come to spread the gospel all over. And I think as a local church pastor, for me, what's exciting is if you live in a city, most of us listening to this live in a city.

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There's plenty of pockets of people in your city that you can do trips to. Like you said, you don't even have to go across the country or across the world to go do a trip. There's other church plants, maybe in your city that you can go partner with. You can go start. There's people in different areas of your city.

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And then we always talk about this for the college campus. It's like a waffle, not a pancake. And so even on a campus, if you're doing campus ministry, you can go to a different part of campus as a mission trip, kind of a quote, unquote mission trip to help. If you have people reaching frats, then you can go, hey, let's help them do a party for the fraternity here, and you can do a mission

trip to another part of campus.

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And so I think it's good to not be limited to only going for two years, or it's only going for one week and it has to go across the border. You have to go to Mexico. Whatever it is. I think that's another really good perspective to have. When it comes to this.

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With that in mind, I mean, I will tell you another illustration of something God led us to do. This was after Russia and after we were really into these kinds of things we started a church in Fort Worth, Texas called Team Church, and the goal of Team Church was to plant 4 churches a year. And from year one.

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And the way we did that is that we took these commits. Actually, most of them were students. And we sent them on what we call mini mission trips every Sunday and every weekend to go help church plants get started around the metroplex. And we were able to do that. We didn't reach 4 a year, but we ended up with about 3 a year.

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We ended up in four years, about 12 churches, and a little later on, we found out that there were some 6000 people attending those churches. Talk to one of them last week that he has now 5000 just in his one church. We have planted dozens of churches. But we went out and we did the evangelism and we helped those guys get those churches planted.

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Some of those churches, of course, I've gotten big. Some of them haven't gotten big. But, God likes all kinds of sizes of churches along with people that have been reached. But Team Church was an interesting experience, and I'd love to see more people trying some more risky things and setting some big goal helping to plant churches.

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But these mini mission trips were quite revolutionary for the guys that went on them. And now several of them are now missionaries and stuff like that.

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There is also something special about going to a totally new environment that I think is really important for the development of people. I remember my first trip when I did a Mexico mission trip, it was just a totally different thing. And man, just seeing the poverty that they had and things and then and then getting to serve.

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And I just felt like a joy that I'd never felt before, there's a sense of one of my personal family values is purposeful adventure. And I think if there's something inside of us that we want to be on an adventure, we want to be, you know, a part of a bigger story, an exciting, epic story to be a part of.

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And I think this is one of those opportunities, especially for younger people, that they have that desire to, like, change the world. And, this is an opportunity for us to kind of cast a vision for that. Like, you don't have to stay comfortable in your own little comfortable bubble, like you can get out of your comfort zone.

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And I think even just that getting somewhere that's different, and they see that God's working in different ways and different parts of the world that does, actually wake up something within people, and just whatever it is, obviously the Holy Spirit has to do it, but, it just it gives another opportunity for the Holy Spirit to do that, to give people a heart for the nations.

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One of the things we say is like short term missionaries become long term missionaries. You know, I've never met a long term missionary who did not first go on a short term trip. You know, maybe they're out there. I'm sure there's some that are out there, but most of the time it's usually they'll go short term first and then God will call them long term.

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It's almost unfortunate that there is a small, probably vocal group that almost criticizes short term trips because they're so zealous about getting long term workers on the field, which is true. We need long term workers to go to the unreached in the difficult places and to lay down their lives in that sense. But it's a little bit naive, I guess, to think that we're going to have a flood of long term workers without people getting that short term experience and exposure, and God can do a lot, maybe not the hardcore, most unengaged unreached.

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Like God can do stuff there, but also going to a less reached place. I love sending college students from Chico or wherever, you know, to a less reached area. They're not completely unreached or unengaged, but they're less reached, and they can still do similar types of evangelism that they would do in Chico and get reps of just sharing the gospel with a lot of people, and seeing people come to Christ within 3 or 4 weeks, or even the first week.

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And this comes back to one of our first episodes about discovery evangelism is that God is sovereign. God is moving in people's lives. And man God can do a lot in a short amount of time. And that comes back to our belief in the power of the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit in our faith, in God's sovereignty to lead us to the right people.

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And I think it actually shows that when you do these types of trips. I think that shows that you have a high view of God, a high view of God's sovereignty, high view of the Holy Spirit and his ability to move and do supernatural things, even in a short amount of time. And so I think stepping out in faith, taking risks is something that God honors. So I think that's something we need to lean into more is I think a lot of Christian leaders are.

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So they're overthinking everything. They're professionalizing everything. And the early church was just guided by the Spirit of God, like God said, you know, I go here, I'm going to go there, or even Apostle Paul, he went somewhere and tried to go there. But it says, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of God, like told him not to.

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And so he tried a couple places, and then finally he got that dream of the man from Macedonia saying, hey, come over here. But it was as he was going and as he was taking steps of faith towards advancing the kingdom.

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So yeah, it's easier to just hear a moving vehicle than one that's standing still. And so if you're moving towards the mission, then God can guide you and lead you. And so yeah, I think that's a great example of that.

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One more thought. I've never seen an honest effort towards expanding the gospel where they took a strategic risk. I personally have never seen that not produce some level of fruit, whether that's in the, the people that are going on the trips lives or just people tend to get saved when we're doing honest efforts and taking risks and turning over every rock that we can, like all different types of ministry, will work.

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And God honors that. God is pleased by that. And even if it doesn't result in fruit like the fruit you're looking for, I believe it's like it honors God. It's like a fragrant offering to him. Or he's just like that, pleading with God to kind of be on the front lines and the edge of faith, of stepping forward towards these types of trips.

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Yeah. That one of the practical considerations that a lot of people ask is like, what about the what about the money? It's kind of expensive to do these short trips. Like, What would you say to someone who's, like, worried about the money? The money part of it?

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I think God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. I mean, money is such a small thing to God. Like in God's economy. Yes, we want to be good stewards, but I think even in this one popularized thing in missions is the wartime mentality we're talking about, which is I think it's a good concept to have is we need to be Spartan and industrial and not be extravagant in our personal lifestyles.

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But also during wartime, you buy tanks. During wartime you spend millions of dollars on the right equipment to do the job. And so there's nothing wrong with spending money to advance the mission. It's when you're just being extravagant in your own personal life or whatever to kind of like, be complacent in that.

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So we've seen God work over and over again, providing for us... Back to the Russia thing. We got, in a sense, rejected by a mission organization. So we had to go on our own and we started to pray about it. We still felt like God wanted to go so we kind of committed ourselves to go without any money.

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And then kind of out of the blue suit, complete surprise to us. One church that my wife had grown up in and ended up giving us \$50,000 to go to Russia. And, so we went and God provided and that pretty much took care of us for those couple of years. And, so God does provide.

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I would talk about one other thing that we've begun to touch on, I want to just go a little bit deeper into it. We talked about trips being effective for evangelism. I want us to think a little bit more. Get you guys have thoughts on why? Why is a trip effective for evangelism?

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Yeah. I mean I think one thing is from the people that go, they have this extra boldness, you know, they did spend money to get that. They did make a lot of effort to fly over there. So they want to make the most of that opportunity. They don't want to waste that time. And they realize that I'm never going to see these people again.

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So they're a little bit extra bold in what they're doing. And I believe that God uses boldness. He wants us to be bold. And so I think that's a couple of the factors that I can think of.

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Yeah. And there's usually an intentional effort and a plan in place, you know, like we're going to show up and we're going to do this thing. And it's not just like willy-nilly, we're going to just walk around in a heavenly daze and hope that we find someone, you know, God can use that too. But I think, you know, a lot of times there's a plan or a strategy or some sort of event that you're pulling off.

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And I think God honors that. Those are team efforts to do not just one-on-one evangelism, but net fishing. Kind of like it's a Super Bowl party, or maybe it's some sort of block party type thing. And that creates a little bit of momentum so that you can use that manpower for momentum.

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A lot of times in Chico during our fall outreach, I don't know, Stephen, did you ever go on one of those trips? We had people from a church, partners of ours from Texas come out, and they would do these one week trips during the first week of our fall outreach at Chico State, a college ministry, and they would help us.

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It was a bunch of young adults, and so they looked like college students, and they would do surveys. They would pass out fliers. We put our challenge T-shirt on them, and they were able to set up and tear down for all of our social events, and they just became this extra manpower that made it so our students, our staff could be on the front lines of sharing the gospel and it was just a huge boost to what was happening there.

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So that's a few of your ideas there.

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That's a great idea. That's a great thought. What about the phrase where Jesus says, "A prophet has no honor in his own home" I found something when you go someplace else, there is a natural curiosity that people have about, Why did you come? What are you doing there?

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That curiosity opens a door for the gospel. If you think about it, why did you come? You have a way to begin to explain the gospel that just kind of gives a footing for that. And Jesus said that 2 or 3 times throughout the not the Gospels "a prophet has no honor in his own home."

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And you basically say go places and you're going to have more honor. I mean, I found that when I speak to the local guys, well, that's just John. But when I go across the country to Mongolia or India or something like that, then all of a sudden people are listening better. It's interesting...

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In other countries too... if you're an older leader, it's a great opportunity. They really respect older people, the gray hair and stuff in other countries as well. Not so much in the US.

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That's probably a distortion of what should be. Yeah, I think in a lot of countries they still have that respect for older people. So if you are an older leader listening to this, go to some other country and they'll just give you the seat of honor and they'll listen to you and stuff like that.

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Yeah, I mean, that's a good word. If you feel like you're not getting as many opportunities in The States, join up with us. We're always doing harvest trips overseas. God can use you in a mighty way. Like you're not done yet, you got plenty left in the tank to go.

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So if you're someone listening to that join up with us, we'd love for you to be a part.

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The other side of that comes to my mind. Is that what it does to the people that are on the trip? Is that where we are going next, Steven? Okay. So I recently did a training conference back to Africa.

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I just, I love going there, but I did an event there where I was speaking at this event and doing some training and things like that. But I brought two of my top staff guys with me. And actually we taught tag team. They said, hey, I'll come, but I need these guys to teach some of my sessions.

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I'm not going to teach you all the sessions, they're teaching some of my sessions. And so we got to spend a week and a half together, 24-7. And, we had great conversations on the flight there, bingeing the Mission Impossible movies. We got to drive all over the place. I remember we had a bucket of KFC chicken.

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It was like, exactly the same as the KFC chicken that's here. But it was funny. There was one last piece of chicken and I grabbed it and I was like, hey, do you guys want this chicken? Both of them later on they said, hey, you know, it was really cool.

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You talk about the hard attitudes, and it was this little act of me putting the goals and interests of others above my own. You know, that idea of putting the goals and interests of others above your own. And they were like, hey, they both mentioned that later you offering me that last piece of chicken helped me realize that this was real.

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This one is just true. It's real. And so being on a trip I was like, man, I didn't even think about that. That was just, you know, part of it. And then by the end of the trip, we did have several opportunities to clear up our relationships with each other too because we started getting on each other's nerves and all that.

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We were tired and exhausted. And so it's just the perfect time. These types of intensive trips are a perfect opportunity for training, not just in evangelism, but also character and life on life discipleship.

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Yeah. And that's what you see Jesus doing. He selected basically his top guys that he brought with him to do this and to share his life with. And. Yeah, and the other practical thing is you don't have all your daily stuff that you normally do, you know, the bills that you're paying and dropping kids off and to and from school and things like that.

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And so you have a little bit more time to really invest and to do life with the people that you're going with.

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So Paul's story about the chicken reminds me of something, Just a phrase I had this morning in my quiet time. And the phrase was, I just came out with the reaction to some groups that basically are doing the deeper stuff and they're doing detailed Bible studies in some obscure place in the Bible or something like that.

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And the thought was, the deeper stuff is actually living out the daily stuff. And like these heart attitudes, like clearing up relationships again, and the mission trip actually puts you together in a living situation where you're eating, you're traveling, you're sleeping in the same places. You're intensely together in a relational kind of way on a purpose.

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And just those daily things can just be revolutionary. And we're coming back and just seeing real life together with Christ controlling your life.

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It's almost impossible to fake it on a mission trip. Yeah. I'm sure someone's pulled it off, but it stretches you in a way that really exposes what's there.

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I have a story about that. One trip I took to East Asia there was a team of people that I had from San Diego State. And the first couple weeks, we didn't really see much happen. And then we realized that we're not really praying for the people that we're trying to reach.

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And so we just got this like a whiteboard or whatever it was, and we started getting this list of people, the names of people that we were trying to reach out to, and we decided we're going to pray for them every single day. Every morning we're going to get up, we're going to meet, and we're going to pray every day for those people.

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And we saw just a complete shift in the trip, like where we were praying together for those people every day. And at the end of the trip, I think it was like eight people that prayed the prayer with us to receive Christ. But also another thing we saw happen was every night we would come back together and we would play Monopoly Deal, as a team.

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And so we really created this bond together. We not only do what we pray together, but we have fun together. And out of that trip, Kevin Thorsell - he's leading challenge, Josh Jenkins - He's going overseas to Taiwan. Colleen - is married to my brother Joseph. Elise - is now on staff with One Link.

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And then one other guy... and it's just amazing to see this team of people. I'm not saying it's just because of that team. Right. But God was working on other things. But do you see the potential of just one team like that? How the impact is being multiplied over and over again.

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And so I think that's just one example, I wasn't trying to do that, but it was just saying like, man, the power of prayer. And then God working and through those relationships is amazing.

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Well, as we've covered a lot of ground today and what kind of a summary of the impact of these trips like, I heard you say that they obviously have a dramatic impact in the area of evangelism and then training on the people who go, it makes a huge difference. The pressure cooker of the trip, bubbles things up to the top and helps people see in a new different way.

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John, I've heard you talk about this before, the the verse about seeing through a mirror dimly, you know, we all see ministry and God's work in a lens of what we're used to, and we kind of blend and blur what's God's ways of doing things and what's our society's ways of doing things. And when you leave your society, it kind of shatters the glass a little bit.

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And you see God working in totally different ways. But you also connect some patterns and you recognize what's God and what's my culture. In some ways, I know our first trip to South Asia last year really shattered some things for me. And it helped me see some new ways of doing ministry. Yeah. Really impactful.

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As I'm thinking about how this could play out practically for a ministry leader, sometimes ministries are so focused on building their thing. And that's a good thing, is to build your church, build your ministry. But thinking about doing trips externally to what you're trying to, you're like, man, we don't even have enough time or resources to do what we're doing now.

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What I found is that if you make it a priority to do that, to send teams on these little mini mission trips or even overseas, like for a summer or whatever, fill in the blank. If you make that a priority. That actually ends up, it's kind of counterintuitive, but it ends up making your local ministry more healthy because the people going on that trip come back so much more fired up for the kingdom of God in general, and they're going to apply a lot of the stuff that they learned on the trip to that.

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And I also think it's a principle of generosity. If you're expanding God's kingdom, God is going to bless you. And so I think a lot of times it is easy to think of a scarcity mindset, even with your time, your resources. Well, we're not a very big church or we're not there yet to really start doing mission trips.

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I think the sooner you could do that, the better to create that healthy culture and get that DNA into your ministry.

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Our people won't do that or our people they're too comfortable. I've heard a leadership saying that said, basically when you say our people won't, you should instead you should say, I haven't led them to. And then the other thing I think would be rather than making an excuse of we won't be able to get very many people... who said you have to get very many people like just get 1 or 2.

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Just start with you going and you bring 1, 2 or 3 people with you and then tell that story. And I almost guarantee you that it's going to snowball. There's going to be more people that are going to be hungry for it as you start telling the stories. So if you're a leader and you've never done missions, I would say go on a vision trip yourself and bring 1 or 2 other people with you and just go on a vision trip.

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And then the other thing I would say too is, what I love to do is be strategic about who you're partnering with, that your church can keep going back to the same places year after year to build that rapport, build that credibility. You know that the people that you're reaching are getting followed up with, well, so that's another

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good thing I would think about. And it really helps when you have brothers who live overseas. But, if you don't, then just find someone that you can trust and keep going back to the same places. And that builds like a heart, like almost like having sister cities in your church, you know, you have this and you have this other place that you can be, joining.

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So there's a few practical things that I would say about sending as a leader.

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I'm going to make a comment about what Paul was saying. It seemed like somebody said somewhere give and it should be given to you. I'm not sure who said that.

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You can't outlive God. Sending people on mission trips or sending out church planting teams is a form of church giving. It's what the church does. It's your church tithing that is when you give the most valuable thing in your church to the people of your church. And as you have an open hand, like, the people in Antioch had an open hand with some of their best leaders with Barnabas and Saul and to be able to willingly send them out that's a huge give and it should be given to you.

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Well, one question that some of these trips tend to raise, and I'm kind of seeding for our next podcast here is, you know, one of the obstacles that some people have when it comes to trips is that, yeah, maybe you are able to lead some people to Christ. On this however short term the trip is.

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But then you leave them and that can sometimes be viewed as a really negative thing. And so I think the area that we need to deal with next here is just on what can we entrust these new believers to do? And how can we set them up the best so that we have a really positive impact on the place that we take the trip to?

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And so, we'll be talking about that on our next podcast, coming to you here soon. So thanks so much for joining us, guys. It's been a pleasure getting to hear some of your stories.