

January 6, 2019
NEW YEAR, ON THE RIGHT TRACK! - Part 1
“Heading in the Right Direction”

It's easy to get distracted today and find our attention wandering from what really matters, and we end up running into things in life that can be painful.

KISS Principle (Keep It Simple Saints)

Where are we going? Why does it matter? What's *my* role? (next week)

Great Commandment

Jesus: “³⁷...‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-39 ESV)

Great Commission

Jesus: “¹⁸...‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Gateway's Mission: leading everyone to become more like Jesus.

Gateway's Vision: to focus on growing people in spiritual maturity in order to unleash God's life-changing, unconditional, sacrificial love in our church, homes, community and world.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 (NLT): “¹Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. ²I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, ³for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?”

Hebrews 5:12-6:1 (NLT): “¹²You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right.

¹⁴Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. ¹⁵So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding....”

Hebrews says spiritual maturity comes “through training.”

1 Timothy 4:8-9 (NLT): “⁸Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.’ ⁹This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it.”

Paul says the “benefits” aren’t just in the future in heaven, “the life to come,” but also now, “in this life.”

The purest expression of the “fruit” of “godliness,” is “love.”

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV): “²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control....”

Growing spiritually, growing to spiritual maturity, means we become more loving.

Love is accepting someone for who they are and sacrificially working for their good.

The church has too often believed discipling others was the work of a few or the church staff.

Jesus’ discipleship style came alongside individuals and grew increasing numbers of deeply committed, mature disciples who sought to imitate Jesus.

Jesus: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”
(Matthew 18:20 ESV)

It’s time we got back to Jesus’ style of disciple making, where each follower comes alongside a few others and they relationally live out their faith together.

Ephesians 4:12-16 (ESV): “¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Simeon and Anna perceived who Jesus was directly, through the working of the Spirit *inside them*. (Luke 2:22, 25-33, 36-38)

Simeon and Anna perceived what God was doing because their faith wasn't a once a week thing but their whole lives, integrated into everything they did.

The church and Christians have lost a lot of influence today because we want instant results and we want to point to specific things we know or do, but being a disciple of Jesus is so much more and so much bigger.

The Church matters, because it's God's instrument of transformation as a community of faith to become more and more like Jesus in order to be of service to him and be his agents of love to our world.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV11): “⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

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