

♥ > ME



CONTACIOUS • DISCIPLE • MAKING







**LOVE IS  
GREATER THAN  
ME**



CONTAGIOUS • DISCIPLE • MAKING



This story book is dedicated to  
all of the everyday disciple-makers,  
supporters, and prayer warriors  
who partnered with God in 2021  
to see disciples multiplied  
and God's Kingdom come.



# CONTENTS

**THE MISSION 6 - 7**

**THE APP 8**

**THE DMC 9**

**SUMMER MISSIONS**

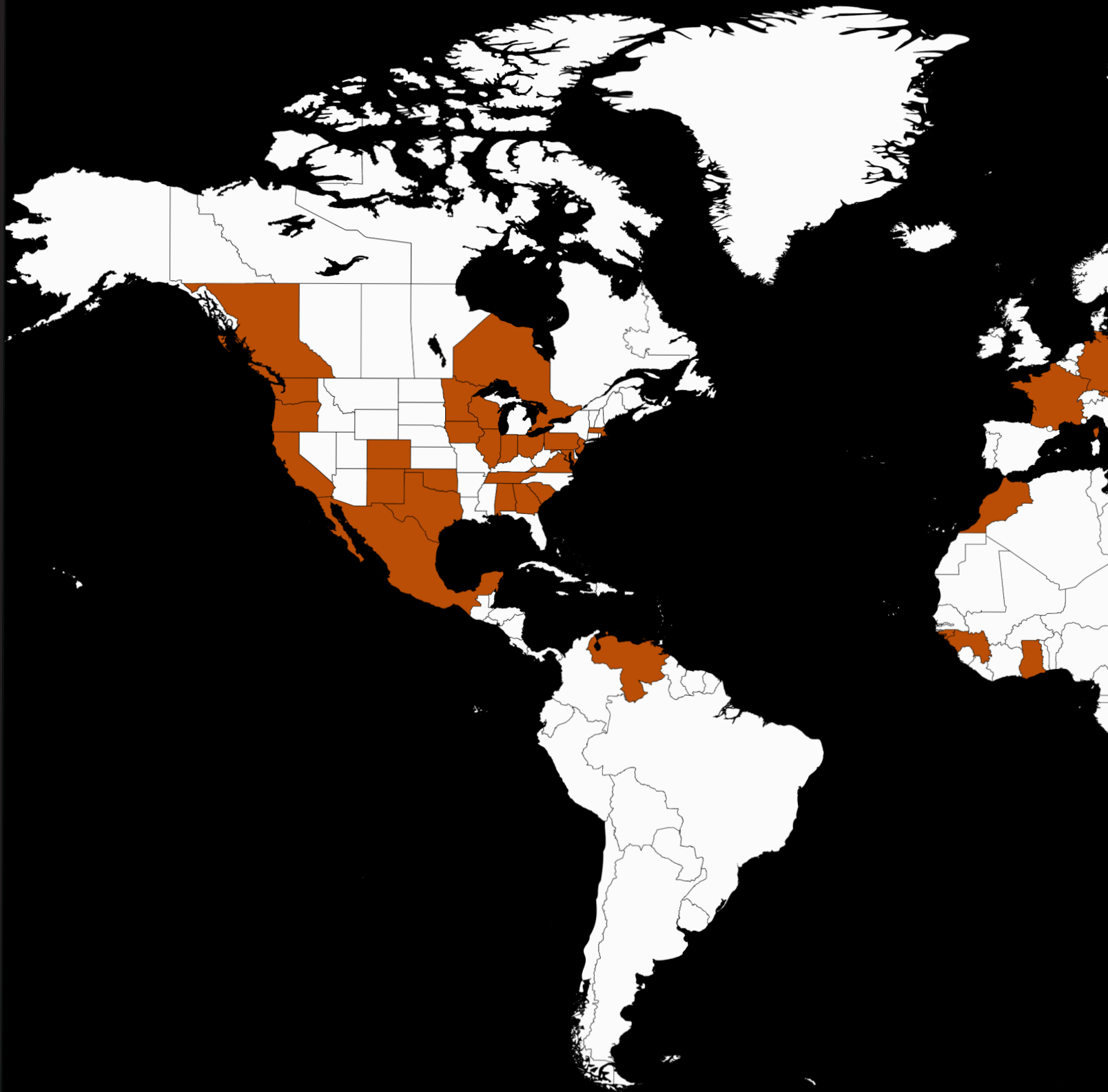
**THE STORIES 10 - 71**

**THE SUPPORTERS 72 - 73**

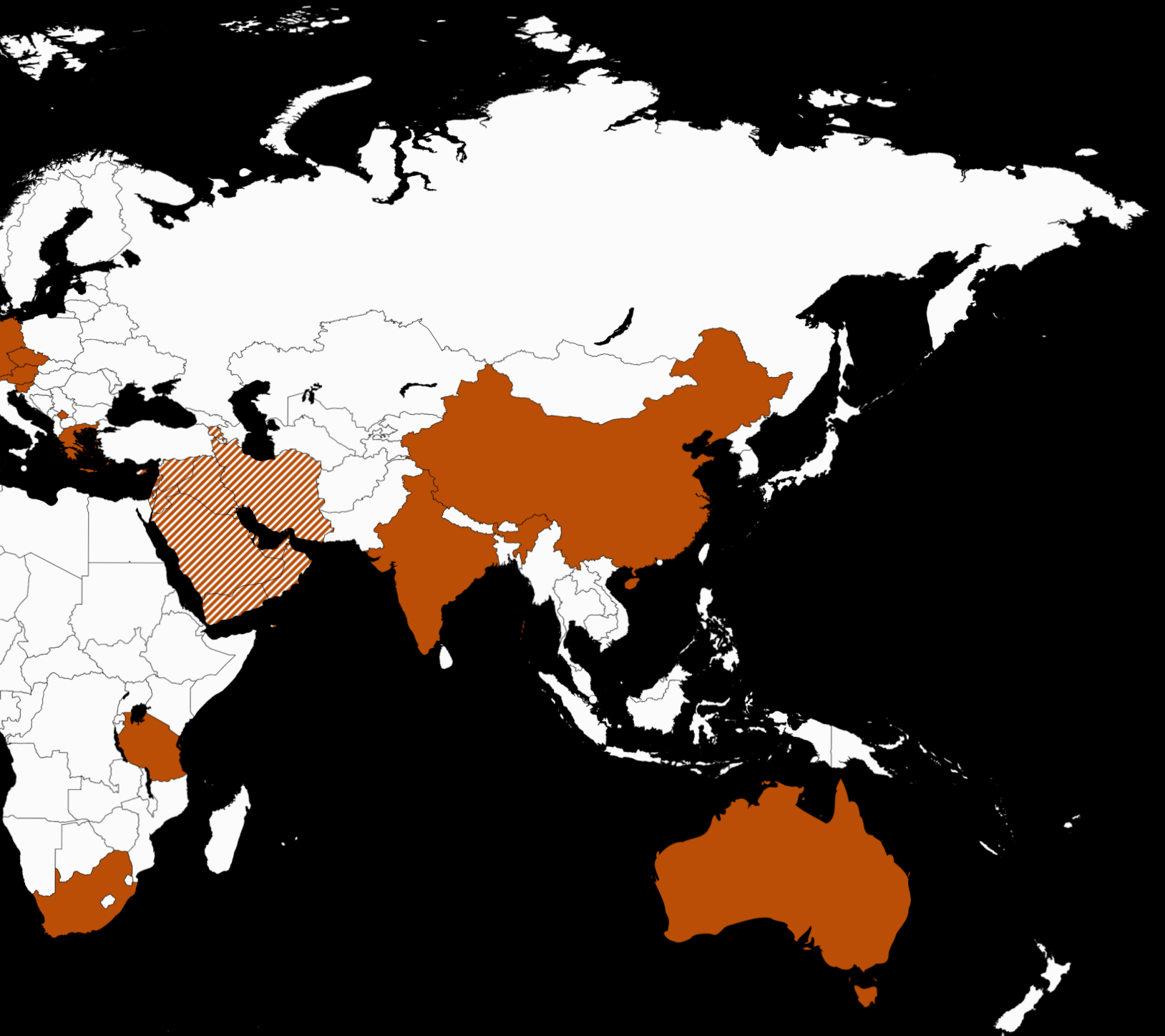
**THE TEAM 74 - 75**

**2022 76 - 77**









**WHERE WE WERE**

**THE**

**MISSION**





## WHAT WE SAW IN 2020

God used disciple-makers around the world to accomplish remarkable things in 2020. Contagious Disciple Making coached 104 disciple-makers in 25 countries. Our disciple-makers then established 96 Discovery Bible Studies and Groups with unbelievers who read, obeyed, and shared God's Word every week. We saw the development of 76 Disciple-Making Communities of believers who committed to making disciples and praying for the lost. We saw our disciple-makers help 19 unbelievers fall in love with Jesus through the pages of Scripture and become baptized.

In 202, CDM took steps to highlight

the importance of prayer through our Prayer Initiative. We hosted 142 online prayer and Disciple Making Community gatherings. CDM's private prayer community on Facebook grew to 742 prayer warriors, who posted prayer needs and prayed for each other. We saw 5000+ prayers and prayer requests. Finally, 330 believers prayed at least 5 minutes a day with other believers through their Prayer Calendar, resulting in over 300,000 minutes of prayer.

Finally, we welcomed a new member, Misheel, to our team to support us in administration, communication, and production.

## WHAT WE PLANNED FOR 2021

We entered 2021 with exciting hopes and plans. We hoped to continue supporting our community with coaching, resources, and content. Knowing that we'll be saying goodbye to our production intern, Kingsley, we also looked forward to hiring a new production team member.

As with every year, we sought to improve the quality of our content and tailor it to the needs of our community. We began the year knowing that we wanted to take steps to develop an app that can perform as a one-in-all container for our resources and information. We knew that having our resources into one, accessible space was needed for our community.

We also began the year with a plan to help our community learn from each other and develop strong communities. We continue to see the importance of developing strong foundations and supports within communities.

Furthermore, we saw how relationships across countries and the world help grow our community's knowledge base. Where local DMM communities can affect disciple-making efforts in that area, global DMM communities stretch our community's knowledge of a variety of cultures and relationship building techniques. With this in mind, we hoped to facilitate collaboration in our DMC meetings and coaching sessions!

# THE APP

We entered 2021 with a plan to grow our platform. One of the ways that we hoped to grow was to create an app for Contagious Disciple Making. We envisioned this app to be a place where our supporters and community could access our resources with ease. After exploring our options and researching the best hosting platforms available for organizations like ours, we decided to build our app with Subsplash.

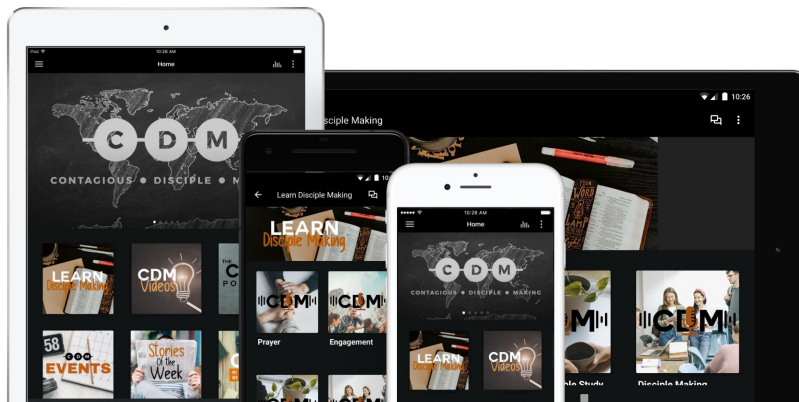
Over a period of hard work, creativity, and collaboration from our team, we built the CDM app. Since our initial hope was for this app to be an all-in-one platform for our resources, we focused on incorporating our videos, podcasts, stories, blogs, upcoming events, messaging, and event live events into the app. Finally, our app also functions as a donation platform, allowing our supporters to directly set up one-time and recurring donations through their account.

As CDM grows and evolves, we hope that our app will continue to evolve and be a place where our community can grow their learning as disciples!



## Contagious Disciple Making

Available in App Stores





2020 brought disappointment, uncertainty, and disconnection. We missed chances to engage our neighbors, spread the Gospel, and participate in missions trips. However, God used this time to prepare the harvest! In the summer of 2021, we invited churches in North America to join the DMC Summer Missions Initiative — an opportunity to mobilize our local churches to engage our neighborhoods and local communities! We asked our church teams to use their regular summer activities and missions to develop relationships with the lost who are around them every day!

Five teams joined the DMC Summer Missions Initiative in Texas, California, and Wisconsin. We envisioned the DMC Summer Missions Initiative to be a collaboration between CDM and the churches who participated. While the teams engaged their communities, CDM would support them with video production and engagement resources. With the help of our generous volunteer, Mario, we set up

the Summer Missions by meeting with our teams and helping them find the best locations, equipment, and techniques to record their stories. Through this process, we also welcomed our Production Manager, Ricky, to our team.

As we continued through the summer, we received amazing stories from our teams. Though our teams would otherwise keep these stories to their DMC's, we found that even the smallest stories were impactful and encouraging when shared.

In the Summer of 2022, we hope to run the DMC Summer Missions again. We are praying that more teams will join us in sharing God's stories!



Scan or click to watch our DMC Summer Missions stories!



# LOVING OUR MUSLIM NEIGH





# R M BORS





# PRAYER AND A DBS

**C**hris and his team work in Central Europe among Muslim immigrants and refugees. Here's the story of how a prayer for healing led to an opportunity to start a Discovery Bible Study.

*“Can I pray for your daughter in Jesus’ name before we leave?”*

I was caught off guard as my wife Mia asked the question. We had just spent the afternoon and evening with our dear friends from the Middle East, Belle and Jordan, imbibing more food and coffee than any reasonable person should in the course of a week, let alone a few hours. It was late. Our kids were tired — I was tired (the coffee notwithstanding)— and honestly, I just wanted to go home.

Aria is Belle and Jordan’s 2-year-old daughter. At her birth, the doctors noticed that her hips weren’t aligned properly, and to correct this, Aria had to wear a special brace for the first several months of her life. The goal was that she would be able to live a normal, healthy, and active life.

Although the doctors initially believed that the brace had been successful, a recent appointment

revealed that hip surgery would be necessary, and little Aria would be fully immobile for 6 weeks while she recovered.

The family was understandably devastated. After all, what does a 2-year-old do for 6 weeks when they can’t move, run, jump, or play? And not only that — Belle and Jordan also had a newborn son to take care of. They were facing a mountain of stress and uncertainty.

## MIA PRAYED IN FAITH

**“Yes, of course we would love prayer,” they said in a voice that expressed both gratitude and uncertainty.** Our friends aren’t believers, but they know we’re Christians and that Christ is central to our lives and family. We share openly with them about our faith and the hope in Him, praying that they would express a deeper interest in knowing Jesus.





Truthfully, I don't remember much about what Mia prayed that evening. Perhaps it was the foreign language, my tiredness or being distracted trying to wrestle shoes onto a wiggling toddler's feet. Regardless, the **Holy Spirit spoke through Mia, and she was able to articulate a meaningful request to God for peace, grace, strength, endurance, and healing.** Our friends expressed their gratitude and we left for home.

### GOD CAME THROUGH

Two days later, my wife Mia received a text from Belle. **"We received a call from the doctor," she said. "The most recent scans show that surgery is not necessary!" We could feel Belle's joy, relief, and gratitude.\***

"You realize that God gave you a miracle?" Mia said. "He healed Aria and helped her to avoid the surgery." Belle affirmed that God had indeed intervened and thanked Mia. prayer.

### A MIRACLE TO A DBS

The following week we had coaching with Paul and he reminded us that miracles and answered prayers were some of the most effective ways to invite people to start a Discovery Bible Study.

Taking this advice, Mia invited Belle to read the Bible together, and to hear more stories about the God who heals. And do you know what? She said she'd love that!

Mia and Belle met for the first time last week to study the Bible together and to learn more about the healing God. We pray that this meeting is just the beginning of Belle's journey to Jesus and the hope and joy that we have in Him.



# CONVERS OPENS RELATIO





# SATION NSHIPS

**“YOU CAN ONLY EARN... TRUST BY  
INVESTING HEAVILY INTO  
RELATIONSHIPS.”**



**S**kylar is a disciple-maker in Texas. She learned disciple-making principles from CDM while being a missionary overseas and was surprised to see how these same principles can be used to reach the lost in North America as well.

### **YASMINE HAD NEVER MADE A FRIEND AFTER 9 YEARS**

Last Friday night, I took my children to their elementary school's Fall harvest festival. As we pulled into the parking lot, my 8-year-old son, Jackson, saw his friend and said, "Hey, that's Jamal!"

I recognized the name as one Jackson had mentioned at home before.

"Jamal," I said. "That's a cool name. Where's he from?"

"I don't know. But he's brown!" Jackson smiled. He didn't really narrow it down for me much.

Everything made sense though when I saw Jamal and his mom. Jamal's mom, Yasmine, was wearing a Hijab — a traditional Islamic head covering — so I greeted her, "Assalamualaikum!"

"Walaikum assalam," Yasmine replied without looking up from what she was doing. As soon as she realized I was the one who had greeted her, her eyes widened and she asked me a question I'm very used to by now — "Where did you learn this from?"

"I lived in a Muslim country for 7 years," I explained, "and I appreciated this greeting and the Muslim culture, so I like to use it."

That evening we walked about the harvest festival together having casual and meaningful conversations through broken English about her friends and family. **Yasmine shared that she didn't live near any family, nor did she have any American friends. In fact, she was so surprised that I was born and raised in the US**

**surprised that I was born and raised in the US because in the 9 years since she moved here from Afghanistan, no American had ever even engaged her in real conversation before.**

While our children played together, Yasmine said to me in her broken English, "You work? You come my house!" She pointed toward her neighborhood, then at the top-down view of her house in Apple Maps on her phone. "You see? You come my house," she insisted.

I happily accepted the invitation.

### **THE AFGHAN COMMUNITY**

After we texted pleasantries over the weekend, she called me on Sunday saying, "**You come to park for party with my friends? Your husband, your sons, Inshallah (God willing), they come also!**"

"Yeah, we'd love to come!"

"Okay, I send you address." Then she hung up on me. I thought that was a humorous encounter.

We showed up an hour late, knowing that's how it works in Muslim culture. Yasmine and her family didn't even show up until an hour later! Nonetheless, many more of Yasmine's Muslim community showed up. Then the men separated from the women, as per tradition, to spend the extended afternoon together.

As I talked with the Afghani women, I discovered many of them had been here for 5-10 years while others had only just arrived a week or a month ago because of all the turmoil happening in their home country. I held hands with the women as we conversed, and participated in innumerable selfies with them as well. One woman even had me FaceTime with her family back home!



## A BETTER WAY

After 3 hours of casual and meaningful conversations, we ate. As we were sitting there, a couple of women from a nearby church approached us sporting “God loves you” shirts, gospel tracts, and copies of the Jesus film in hand.

“We have something for you!” they said while handing out the tracts and videos to the Muslim women. They seemed confused, but accepted the gifts nonetheless.

“Oh no!” I thought. The Afghani ladies didn't know what was going on. So, I went around and took back the tracts and DVDs from the Muslim women. The materials were all in English, which these women barely knew how to speak! The ladies from the church looked at me aghast.

I put my arms around the two church ladies and said, “Let's come this way!” — walking them a few yards away so we could speak in private.

“Look ladies,” I said, “I'm on the same team as you. I like what you're doing—that you want people to know Jesus. But handing out tracts to Muslims is not the way. There's a better way.”

They looked at me with narrowed eyes that seemed to say, “Who are you to tell us this?” To spare them the trouble of actually asking, I began.

“I was a missionary in East Africa for 7 years in a Muslim context and during my time there, I learned that there is a better way to minister the Gospel with people, especially Muslims.”

“What do you mean?” they asked, their faces relaxing a little.

“Look, you can hand these tracts out to people all day, but it's not going to really do anything. They need to trust you first. And **you can only earn that trust by investing heavily into relationships with them.** My whole family is here

and we've spent the whole day together so far. My intention is, over time, to get to know them, love them, and build trust so that I can help them discover God for themselves through His Word.”

They nodded and asked, “Oh! Well, can we pray for you then?”

The two ladies laid hands on me, prayed for favor from God and for open doors in the community to share Jesus, and then we parted ways — I, back to my new friends, and them back to the drawing board. It was an easier conclusion to our encounter than I was expecting!

## SKYLAR'S TAKE-AWAY

The biggest lesson I took away from this is that, \*if you're reaching out specifically to immigrants, know you will need to invest a lot of time. Relationship is everything. \*It's not a “check in here and there” kind of thing. It's spending six and a half hours at a park with homesick families. It's sitting in silence as you listen to refugees speak in a language you can only catch pieces of. It's being willing to be uncomfortable. That is how you will show them the love of Christ.

It reminded me of how it was when I first moved overseas for mission work. I would just visit people and I would be present with them, most of the time not having a clue what they were saying, and I did this over and over again. Much later, once I knew the language, they told me of those times, \*”that's how we knew you loved us—when you spent time with us!”\*

# ISLAM TO JESUS

**“I forgot to tell you—I actually believe in Jesus now!”**

I met my Muslim friend, Layla, while I was staying at a guest house in the Middle Eastern country where I reside. After building a friendship and having meaningful and spiritual conversations, we started a Discovery Bible Study. It was a long journey over a year, but we completed the entire Creation to Christ Scripture list!

We stay in touch and continue to do weekly DBS. After one of our DBSes in the Gospel passages, she told me, **“Anna! I forgot to tell you—I actually believe in Jesus now!”** However, she is still not sure if she is ready to be baptized. **“I believe Jesus is the way! But I’m not sure what I should do..”** she told me. Lately, I’ve been frequently fasting and praying for God to bring her to the point of baptism.

## BETWEEN ISLAM AND FAITH IN JESUS

Layla faces a real spiritual battle. “The Quran doesn’t say that Jesus is the only way—it says there are many ways,” she said to me, worried.

“Okay, let’s look at the stories from the Bible!” I told her. We read the Gospel passages that show Jesus saying He is the only way to the Father.

“Yeah, I see that the story says the Jesus is the only way,” she admitted, “but how do I follow Jesus when my whole culture and family is living differently?”





Later, while doing a DBS on the Great Commission in Matthew 28, Layla said, "**This is amazing!\*** Jesus made a way for all the nations to come to God through Him! I love God, and if God says that Jesus is His only Son, then I'm willing to believe in Jesus. If God says so, then I'll obey Him."

Her obedience statement in response to the passage was to start reading the Bible daily. She has since finished Matthew and is making her way through the Gospels.

### A DISCIPLE MUST COUNT THE COST

Another time Layla said, "I know what it takes to obey God, but I'm not obeying Him. Jesus said 'if you love Me, you will obey Me,' and I'm not sure if I'm obeying God." She understands where she is headed and what it takes. She is counting the cost of following Jesus.

One day, Layla came to me after her Bible reading and told me, "I just read in the Bible that Jesus said we are supposed to be the light and salt of the earth. And I'm not there yet."

"You don't have to share with everyone you meet," I said.

She persisted, "The Bible says that I have to be the light and tell everyone! And I can't do that."

"We're looking for spiritually open people," I explained. "**Not everyone will be spiritually open.**"

### THE LONG JOURNEY

Layla is slowly but steadily growing into a **disciple of Jesus**. I don't know how many more Bible stories it will take before she is ready to be baptized. But I have hope because she consistently shows up for DBS every week and looks forward to it.

In addition, Layla does tell someone every week what she is reading from Scripture and she makes concrete "I Will" statements in obedience to the passages. She really understands and follows through on meeting needs in her community. Now living in the USA, she invites many immigrants and refugees over for meals to show hospitality and brings dinners to her neighbors.

Pray for Layla. I am believing that God will not give up on her and that one day, she will be baptized!

### LESSONS LEARNED

Anna and Layla's story communicates how **Scripture is the best teacher**. Layla had doubts because of the Quran says, yet Anna's response was not to preach at her. Instead, she led her into Scripture, which spoke truth into the matter. Once Layla made it through the entire DBS Scripture list, she believed in Jesus through the process!

**Disciple-making takes time.** As Jesus works on each part of Layla's life, He is transforming her to be more like Him. This isn't a fast process, however, and it requires perseverance on both Layla and Anna's part.



**M**y husband and I are in a predominantly Muslim country in West Africa. Our focus has been on two unreached people groups, which are 99.99% Muslim. They are not just unreached. They are considered hard-to-reach. Actually, they don't want to be reached and most are quite content in their folk-Islamic faith. This is the story of a woman from one of those people groups.

### MY LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH ASTOU

I met Astou nearly fourteen years ago when she was in her early twenties. As a devout Muslim from a culturally Islamic area, Astou clearly knows that I am a disciple of Jesus. We were very close for about five years until she married and moved to another city. Through the years, we have continued to keep in touch, typically when she calls to celebrate wonderful events, like the birth of her children, or when she is struggling with something significant in her life.

Most often, I hear from her when she is experiencing difficulty in her marriage. She has observed my marriage up close and says it's the type of marriage she wishes she could have. In

response, I share with her that **our marriage is shaped by what the writings of the early prophets depict as God's design for marriage.**

### HER MARRIAGE WAS ON THE ROCKS

A couple of months ago, Astou called me again, distraught. She said she was ready to pack up with her daughters and their belongings and leave her husband. I decided to visit her and listened as she explained how she was tired of trying to make her husband happy. Among other things, she had grown weary of having to ask him for money to meet basic family needs.

Her husband had even told her to leave. Astou believed he wanted her to leave so he could bring another wife to their compound. Although Muslim men can have up to four wives, there wasn't room in their compound for another wife unless she left.

### ASTOU SAW SOMETHING DIFFERENT

She told me **she likes what she sees in Christian marriages**, which are different from the marriages among her Muslim friends and family.

# LIVING AS AN EXAMPLE





She has studied the Quran and Islamic teachings and has told me several times that she believes we are the same — that we believe in the same God and our books teach the same things.

I asked her, “If that is true, how come three religions have come from the writings of these prophets?” She admitted that she didn’t really know what was in the writings of the earlier prophets, so I challenged her to study them to see what they teach us about God and His plan for all the “children of Adam.” She took on my challenge.

### DBS PROMPTED ASTOU TO CHANGE

We began meeting every week for Discovery Bible Study over video call. We studied God’s creation of humans in Genesis 2 during our second DBS, in which she learned that God created her to be her husband’s helper and companion. However, since she was created from his own flesh and bone, he should love her like he loves himself. When we got to the question of what she should do in response, she said, “I should help my husband.”

I asked her how she could help her husband this week so he’d know she was helping him. She didn’t know right away, so I gave her some time to think and then prompted her.

“How do you find out something you don’t know about?” I asked.

“I ask questions...” she pondered. “Oh! I should ask him what I can do to help him that day.”

### SHE IS HUNGRY FOR THE WORD

So far, we have met every week without missing. Twice now she has called me the day before we are planning to meet to make sure I’m still available and already planning our Bible study.

Astou is the mother of four daughters under the age of eight. She is the only daughter-in-law in the family, so she is responsible for all the cooking, cleaning, laundry, and childcare. Naturally, there are lots of distractions in our meetings — fussy children, interruptions from neighbors, her mother-in-law wanting her to cook something different for her dinner, her husband wanting her to make or reheat his tea, etc. This many competing concerns and responsibilities might reasonably cause anyone, let alone a busy homemaker, to put a Bible study on the back burner.

Not Astou, though! If we can’t complete the study that evening, **Astou quickly requests that we re-schedule for the following evening.** It’s amazing to see how God is moving in her heart!

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Deb and Astou’s story displays how crucial it is to welcome lost people into our daily lives.** Astou saw the power of Jesus through the freedom and peace she witnessed in Deb’s personal life — especially her marriage. Deb had something Astou desperately wanted and needed in her marriage.

Furthermore, **to make disciples, our personal lives need to be filled with the Fruit of the Spirit.** Imagine if Deb’s marriage was no different from Astou’s. Astou wouldn’t have seen any reason to pursue Jesus! **Disciple-makers must daily welcome the Kingdom of God into every corner of their lives because the kind of life they live is what they will multiply into new disciples.**







# SERVING AND HEALING

**J**ackie is a disciple-maker in Canada who is using volunteer opportunities to build relationships with lost people, pray for them, and invite them into God's Word. Below is the story of how a miraculous healing led a Muslim woman to start a Bible study with Jackie, which didn't end up how Jackie expected!

## MEETING NEW PEOPLE AT THE FOOD BANK

Back in December of 2020, I heard that there was a 300% increase in domestic violence since the lockdown began, due to families being isolated at home. At the time, I was learning about the disciple-making principle of meeting needs in my community, so I went to a local community center and asked, "What kind of help do you need?" I specifically asked if there were support groups for women or opportunities to teach English as a second language.

"Nearly everything is shut down," they said. "But we do need a lot of help at the food bank before Christmas!"

I got connected with my local food bank and \*I requested to be put in a position where I could interact with lots of people\*. They agreed to place me at a table where clients can come and pick a few food items.

\*Prayer Caused a Woman's Leg to Be Healed\*

Once I began volunteering there, I settled into a rhythm where I asked the clients about their days and then followed up with, "is there something you would like prayer for today?" \*Nine out of ten people were happy to talk and wanted prayer.\*

Early on, I met a man from a Muslim country who, through broken English, asked for prayer for his wife Nadia's leg. I said a short little prayer, and that was it!

\*He came back the next week and he said, "My wife's leg was healed!"\* Together, we gave honor to God for the healing, and the following week his wife Nadia came as well.

#### \*Reading Stories About the God Who Heals\*

When I met Nadia, I told her, \*"God did that for you—would you like hear some stories about the God who healed you?"\* \*She said yes!

We set up a time to meet at their house, and I did a Discovery Bible Study (DBS) with her on Genesis 1, and it was amazing. However, quarantine restrictions soon tightened so that we could only meet over the internet, but Nadia only wanted to meet in person. Consequently, we couldn't meet up!

Nadia shared the stories with her mom; \*however, her mom's response was not positive. "Don't read any more stories," she cautioned.\*

#### \*Our Bible Study Ended, But Our Relationship Deepened \*

When Nadia came to give me the sad news, she said, "I'm so sorry Jackie! We're Muslim, and you're Christian, but I love you! And I want to be friends. But my mother says we can't read the Bible stories."

She went on to explain how much her mother matters to her and how her mother has been there for her in the toughest of times.

"You know," I replied, \*"it's important that you honor your mother. I see that you really love her."\*

Despite the setback, I continue to pray for Nadia and her family. I don't see the situation as a problem because I am still getting to build a friendship with her, and I am willing to invest the time it takes to build trust with her and reach her whole family! Nadia continues to message me frequently and

wants to have me over for dinner, although COVID has prevented us so far.

One day recently, I asked Nadia, "How are you?"

"Not good at all," she replied. She explained how her brothers' lives are in danger in her home country.

After we had talked for a while, Nadia said, \*"We love Jesus. Jesus is good. And you are a good person. Everything Jesus does is good and full of love. So, we love Jesus! I know that I can trust you—you are like family to me."\*

Hearing this, I told Nadia, \*"Tell your brothers that they can call out to Jesus. He healed your leg. He can help them."\*

I have heard so many stories of people who didn't know Jesus but called out to him and had Him reveal Himself to them. This is my prayer for Nadia and her brothers. In addition, I am asking God to show me some stories from Scripture of people calling out to Jesus that I can share with her next time.

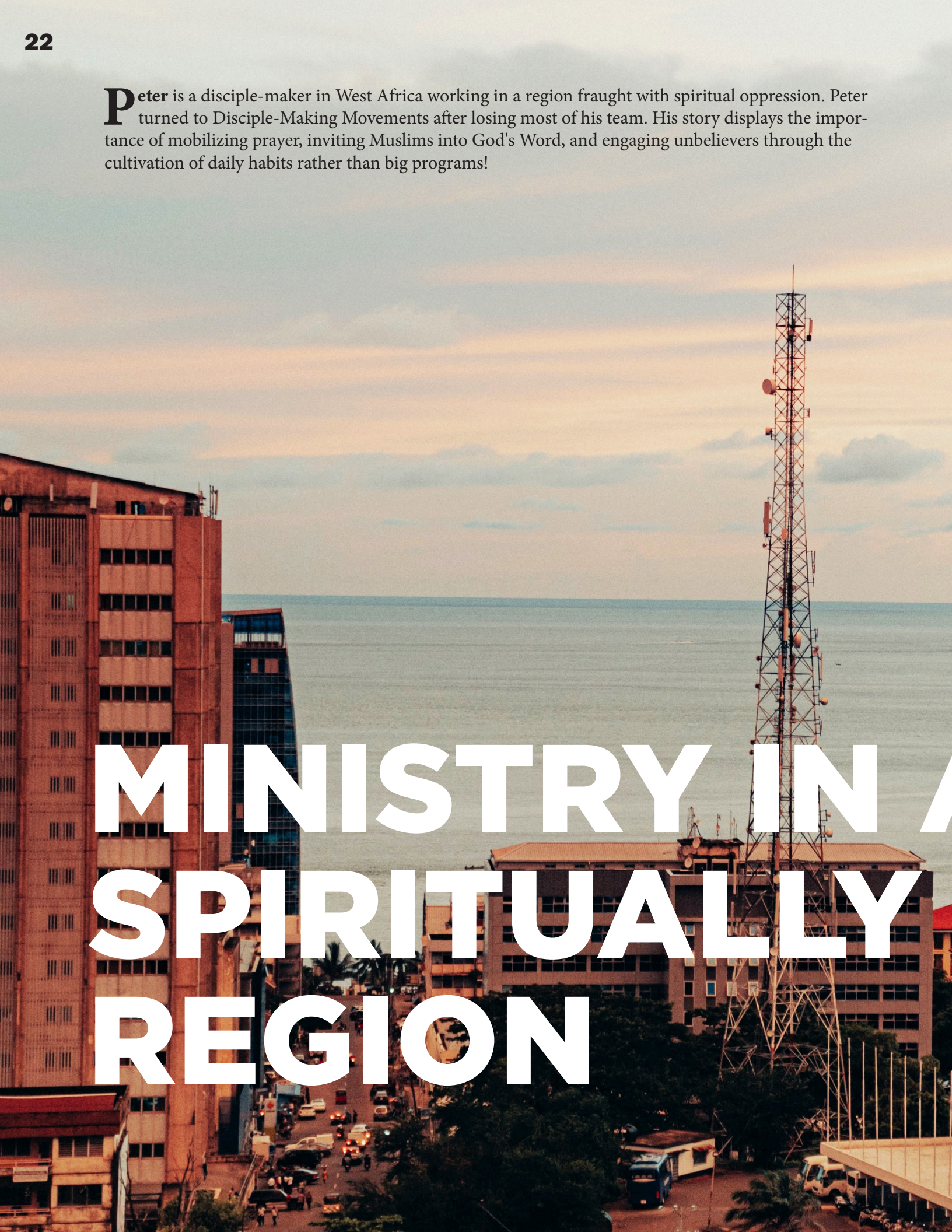
#### \*Lessons Learned\*

Jackie's story communicates how \*meaningful connection and relationship are crucial in disciple-making\*. Jackie was intentional in pointing to Jesus, but wasn't forceful. She didn't give up even when Nadia said she couldn't continue reading Scripture with her, nor did she pit Nadia against her mother. Instead she encouraged Nadia to respect and love her mother. Jackie's faithfulness to be present for Nadia made all the difference.

Second, \*disciple-making is about reaching whole families, not just individuals\*. Jackie's heart is that the gospel would transform Nadia's whole family. Whether by honoring Nadia's mother, helping Nadia's at-risk brothers, or simply having meals together, Jackie's prayer is for the Kingdom to come into Nadia's household!



**P**eter is a disciple-maker in West Africa working in a region fraught with spiritual oppression. Peter turned to Disciple-Making Movements after losing most of his team. His story displays the importance of mobilizing prayer, inviting Muslims into God's Word, and engaging unbelievers through the cultivation of daily habits rather than big programs!

An aerial photograph of a city street. On the left is a tall, multi-story brick building. In the center, a street with cars and a bus leads towards the ocean. On the right, a tall, lattice-structured communication tower stands prominently. The sky is overcast with soft, diffused light. The text 'MINISTRY IN A SPIRITUALLY REGION' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

# MINISTRY IN A SPIRITUALLY REGION



My team and I work in an Islamic region where missionaries ministered with little success in 100 years. Extreme spiritual oppression plagues the area. One missionary told me, **"Nobody lasts here. Whether because of illnesses, fights, or fears, missionaries always end up leaving."**

Within a few years, every member of my team left due to hardships, just as the missionary had warned. I decided I needed to find a new direction in ministry.

One day, a pastor visited and dropped off books he recommended for me to read, one of which was *Miraculous Movements*. I read it and discovered about Disciple-Making Movements (DMM) for the first time and my jaw dropped. **This was the answer to all the questions and challenges I had faced!**

## PRAYER WAS THE FOUNDATION

We decided to pursue Disciple-Making Movements as our new direction. We made the difficult decision to move on from our denominational group during a furlough because they were only interested in planting churches of their denomination and would've been hesitant to support this direction.

My team knew **we needed to mobilize at least 1,000 people to pray for us if we ever hoped to see movement**. While visiting churches, we asked every person and prayer group to pray regularly for us and receive our prayer updates.

After returning to the field, we started a medical clinic to reach and bless the local community. In the following years, we started Discovery Groups among Muslims, Muslim-background believers,



**A  
OPPRESSED**



and believers.\* \*At this point, I realized I really didn't know what I was doing, so I searched online for help in DMM. Soon, I stumbled upon \*Contagious Disciple Making and signed up for coaching\*!

### ENGAGING WHILE JOGGING

Though the clinic helped us reach the lost some, I soon found my running hobby to be a more effective engagement strategy. I go on runs regularly through my neighborhood and practice learning the language by speaking phrases with locals. I frequently ran by an Islamic school where, every time I passed by, all the kids would come out and greet me.

One day, the teacher came out and said to me, "I like you—you're a nice person."

"I like you too," I replied and we started talking. After having many casual conversations while jogging by the school, I decided to give an invitation to Discovery Bible Study.

"I know the Torah," I told him, "and I know you're a teacher. Would you be interested in reading it with me in your language?"

\*He accepted my invitation and brought six teachers with him for our first meeting! \*Eventually, the others dropped out, but two of the Islamic teachers still study the Word with me to this day.

### READING THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

We read about John the Baptist's testament in Matthew 3 and John 1 of Christ being the Lamb of God. I hoped my Muslim friends would connect that truth with all the Old Testament passages we've already covered, but I was nervous.

I noticed that Jesus is referred to as the "Son of God" multiple times in the story — a phrase that is very difficult for most Muslims to swallow. Muslims often have a bone to pick with the Bible and

lims often have a bone to pick with the Bible and Christians for referring to Jesus as God's Son.

Nonetheless, we met together and I began to read the passage out loud first. It felt like every time I read "Son of God," it slapped me in the face. "Oh man," I worried, "I'm sitting here with these two Arabic teachers, reading this. They can't be happy at all."

### ARABIC TEACHERS READ SCRIPTURES

For our second read-through, I asked one of the teachers to read the story, which he did without stopping. He was accustomed to reading Scripture at this point.

I looked over at the other teacher—his gaze was downward. "It's your turn to read, would you like to read?"

"No. I don't want to read."

"Oh no," I thought. Here's where my DBS becomes a train-wreck.

I gathered myself and said, "Well, we should still read it again!" I began the third rereading and felt tension every time we read "Son of God." Once I finished, I looked up at the teacher and he started reading too! **He read through the entire passage, "Son of God" and all!** Perhaps he was just hesitant because he sometimes struggled with reading their local written language.

Furthermore, both of them connected Jesus being the "Lamb of God" with the Abraham and Isaac story, the Passover story, and Isaiah 53.

### "I Will" STATEMENTS AND SHARING

After discussing the reading, I led into the obedience question "If this is true, what should we do about it this week?"

"Since John bore witness that Jesus was the Lamb



of God," one of them replied, "we should do the same. **We will share the story with two people each this week instead of one.**" They even mentioned specific names of people they would share with. Amazing!

Once we finished up, knowing most Muslims can't usually meet during Ramadan, I told them we could meet after Ramadan. "No! We'll meet next week anyway!" they retorted. They clearly value our Bible studies if they are willing to meet during such a culturally sacred time of fasting and abnormal schedules!

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Prayer is the prerequisite to disciple-making.** Peter and his team knew that prayer is indispensable to movements. Not just any prayer, but large scale prayer, especially for a region that is so spiritually dangerous.

**Daily habits are often more effective than big programs.** Peter found that his regular runs were more effective for engaging the lost than the entire medical clinic. All of us have hobbies and daily routines that we can use to reach nonbelievers if we're mindful.

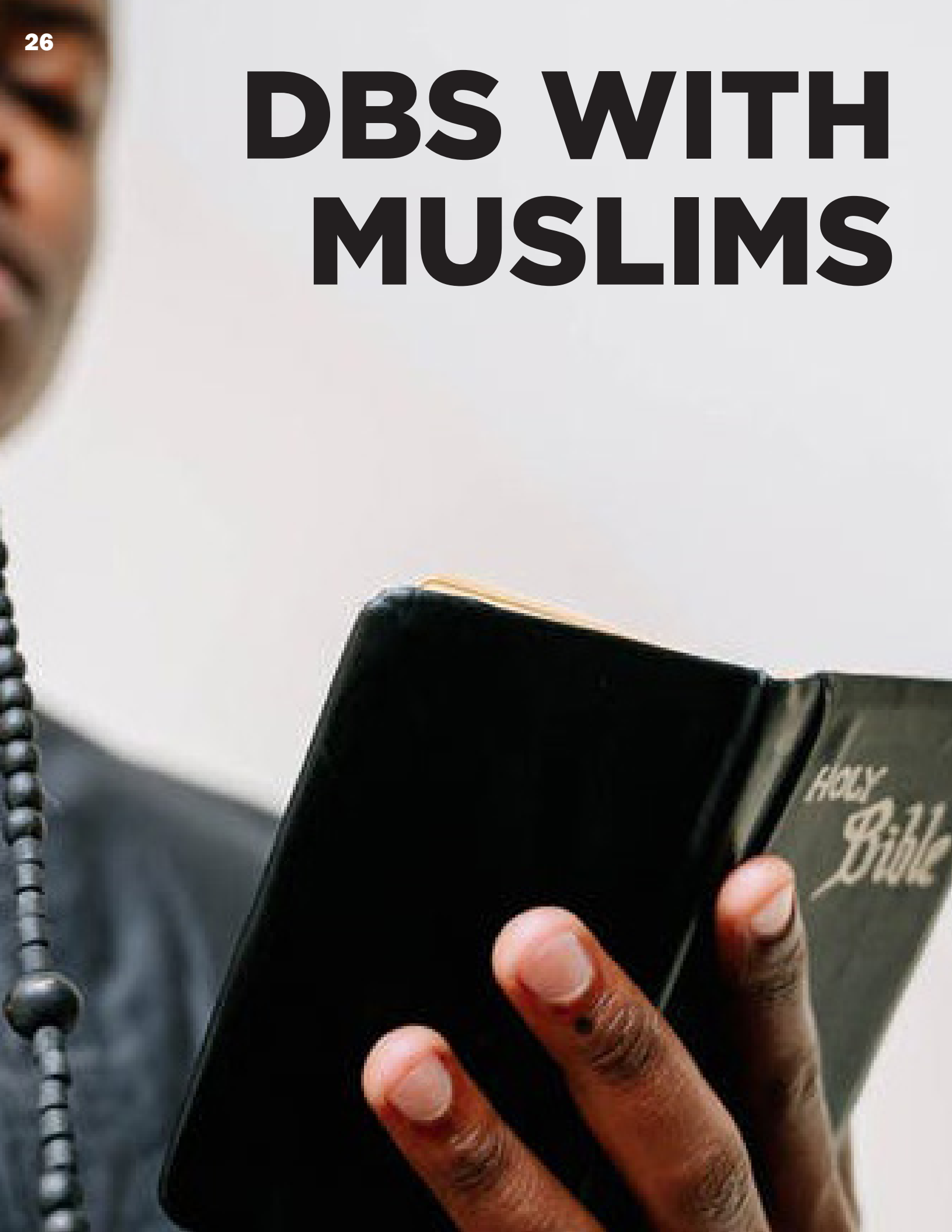
**We should trust Scripture's authority to establish Jesus' divinity rather than our authority.** If Peter had started his relationship with the Arabic teachers arguing that Jesus is God's Son, it was unlikely that they would be drawn to read God's Word. However, when Peter's Muslim friends read the truth straight from Scripture, they didn't even question it!

**Whether ministering to Muslims or not, it is always beneficial to start with the Old Testament.** Peter's Muslim friends were able to connect the John the Baptist story with the Old Testament accounts of Jesus being Savior, giving more credence to the truth that Jesus is God's Son.





# DBS WITH MUSLIMS





**S**ince I (Peter) signed up for coaching with Contagious Disciple Making, I have seen God work mightily in an area where missions have historically come to die. God is even reaching the Muslims here through their own people now.

One Muslim-background believer named Ahmad has started a DBS with his Muslim friends and now he is seeing fruit that years of trying to convince his Muslim friends and neighbors couldn't produce.

**"It's a whole different ballgame,"** Ahmad said. **"I talk to so many Muslims and, before, it always ended in arguments. They always got stuck on Jesus being the Son of God. However, now as we do DBS, these same Muslims are discussing Creation and asking questions about the God of the Bible!"**

Ever since Ahmad started Discovery Bible Studies beginning with Creation, **his Muslim friends are actually excited to read the Bible** because it is already somewhat familiar to them. He no longer finds himself in unproductive arguments but in engaging conversations about Scripture.

## GOD SENT SPIRITUAL SEEKERS

Word is getting out about Ahmad as well. Another Muslim man approached him saying, "I used to have a Bible when I was younger, but I lost it. I was wondering if you could find me a Bible?" This Bible-seeker came from a region very resistant to the Gospel, so much so that he said he would have to hide the Bible from his parents when he went home.

A little while later, I gave Ahmad the first Creation to Christ Scripture passage (<https://www.contagiousdisciplemaking.com/post/discovery-bible-study-creation-to-christ-scripture-list>) in his local language. A man walked over to Ahmad on his way home and asked, **"Can you tell me about Creation? I was wondering about it and I looked at you and saw a glow around you. I felt like you were a guy who could tell me**

**about how God created the world!"** Ahmad had that exact story literally in his hands! So, Ahmad shared the story and plans to begin a Discovery Bible Study with him.

## ISLAMIC SCHOOL DIRECTOR ASKED FOR A BIBLE

Not even a week later, the leaders of a prestigious private school in Ahmad's area contacted Ahmad. "The director of the school wants to see you," they said. Ahmad was worried there might be a problem because of how vocal he is about his faith.

When Ahmad and the director met, the director said, **"Ahmad, I was wondering if you could get me a Bible.** I remember reading some of it as a child—would you get one for me?"

Ahmad had these three positive experiences in the span of a few weeks after years of seeing very little fruit! He already has an ongoing DBS, and now he's primed to start another one with these new seekers.

## What changed Ahmad's disciple-making from ineffective to fruitful:

Ahmad is open about his faith, so that was never the problem. In addition, Ahmad is already a person of influence in his community. People actually trust him to keep his word more than they trust other Muslims. However, the first difference between Ahmad's unfruitful ministry in the past and **his success today is due to focusing on directing unbelievers to God's Word, not arguing with them into believing in Jesus on the spot.**

Second, the starting point makes all the difference. Ahmad now starts with Creation whereas before, he went straight to Jesus, explaining that He was the Son of God. This was often received poorly by his Muslims friends. **Ahmad has found that beginning with Creation in Genesis and then leading to Christ is a more natural opening that Muslims receive well.**



**LOVING OUR  
LGBTQ  
NEIGH**



# Q IBORS



# LEAVING

**M**ichael is a pastor and disciple-maker in Maryland. For many years, he struggled with deep prejudice against the LGBTQ community. However, God sent Michael to reach out to them. Read Michael's journey of heart transformation after God brought Mary into his life in the story below.

## GOD SENT ME TO A LESBIAN'S HOUSE

A few years ago, God began a deep work in my life when I was introduced to my friend Mary, who had been a Lesbian for 26 years. I was touched so deeply by what God did in Mary's life that it changed the way I viewed LGBTQ people entirely.

It all began on August 29th, 2019. I was sitting in my office at church when another pastor came in and asked me to join him to visit a lady who just called from the apartments across the road wanting help.

We went across the street to her house. She emerged from the house trembling—I could tell something was wrong. She said that she felt that her house was under spiritual attack. The house reeked with an oppression that adversely affected her family's sleep and daily activities, and she had tried everything she could to fix it.

I asked Mary a question I often ask when I go prayer walking: "If God could do a miracle in your life, what would it be, Mary?"

**"I would want Him to save my family," Mary replied, "I want to live right and get back on my feet. I want us to be able to function and be financially okay again!"**

We had never met before, so I asked, "Well,





# LESBIANISM

who lives in your home?"

"My wife," she said, "and my daughter and her kids."

## SWALLOWING MY SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Immediately, unbeknownst to her, I was facing a stronghold in my life—a self-righteous attitude about gay people.\*

I'll be really honest—I've been a believer for 38 years, but for a long period of time, the people I despised the most were from the LGBTQ community. I wouldn't give them the time of day, I placed myself above them. I'd think, "God says this, you reject that, so I reject you." I was as wicked as could be in my heart. Nonetheless, I figured that we should see what God would do.

We walked into the apartment and noticed a bunch of people on the deck, smoking. Mary opened the sliding door, "I want all of you to come in here right now." She was tough. "Sit on the floor," she barked. They all obeyed—her daughter, her daughter's kids and fiancé, her wife, and her wife's friend.

I will never forget what Mary said once they all sat down.

**"We're either going to get God in this place, or all of you are going to get out.** I brought these pastors here so they can tell us how we can know God."

## ITCHING TO GET INTO THE WORD

Since Evangelism is my gifting, my normal modus operandi was proclamation evangelism. I had only just been introduced to Discovery Bible Study. So, I

shared the gospel with them, but none of them were ready to receive it yet. That is, except for Mary's daughter. **She sat on the ground weeping, "I can't do this anymore—I need Jesus in my life!" I led her to Christ that day.**

Then, the Holy Spirit said to me, "Okay, you've been learning about DBS. Why don't you just try it? Ask them if they would be willing to meet next week to discover what God has for them."

I'll never forget that answer they gave me when I offered to do a DBS with them.

**"Yes! We want that. Would you please come back next week?" they said.** Their response was the total opposite of what I expected. I never thought they would be interested in reading the Bible.

## LOVING UNCONDITIONALLY

We returned the following weeks to facilitate Discovery Studies on the Creation to Christ Scripture list. Once we got to Genesis 2, the rubber met the road. We read about God making humans as male and female, and how a man should leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.

Once we went through the study, I told Mary, "This is where I am at. I want you to know that I love you unconditionally, but this is what I believe."

**Mary's eyes narrowed. "It's nobody's business who I sleep with."**

"Well," I replied, "I'm in this for the long haul. Just know that this is something I believe you need to face, and if you ever come across the street to our church, you are totally welcome. Just understand that we believe what the Bible says here. I will be



gracious to you, but I can't guarantee that everyone else in my church will be."

### A WHOLE FAMILY BAPTIZED

Mary and I continued our journey through the DBS process. About 3 weeks later, Mary's daughter's fiancé gave his life to Christ. After reading the Genesis passage about the fall of man, he told me, "I'm ready."

Shortly after that, Mary, her daughter, and her daughter's fiancé came to me and said they would like to be baptized. I gulped and thought to myself, **"I'm okay with baptizing the others, but what about Mary? She's given her life to Christ, but she's still living as a lesbian."** Then I realized that when I got baptized, I wasn't squeaky clean either. So I went to my lead pastor and he gave permission to baptize them.

Baptism was a big step. I knew that God would have the final say, and I saw Mary's heart was devoted to Christ.

We continued the DBS until we had gone all the way through the 27 weeks of the Creation to Christ Scripture list. After we read the last story, Mary's two grandchildren said, **"We want Jesus, what do we have to do?"** Now, Mary's whole family had given their lives to Christ! God was moving powerfully.

Mary then went down to Florida to help a friend and God began to work on her in an even deeper way while she was there. One day, after finishing a 21-day fast, I called Mary to tell her what God had done in my life as a result.

"I think I need to do that too," Mary said.

### MARY'S LIFE CHANGED

While Mary stayed in Florida for two months, she began to talk to God. She said that God brought her away from her home so she could see the brokenness that was in it with fresh eyes. Every time she called home, she could feel the negativity and oppression.

At the time, Mary was struggling with her now ex-wife. They were getting a divorce and she was battling with the dread of losing someone to whom she had committed her life. Now that God was in the mix, Mary felt even more pulled in every direction. The more she prayed, the more the distance grew between Mary and her wife.

When Mary returned home, all her life was crashing down. Her father had a stroke, her family was financially unstable, she was going through a divorce — and all of this while COVID kept her in quarantine.

**"I wanted to die,"** Mary said. **"And if I didn't have God, and if I didn't have my pastor, I would have done it."**

### GOD FREED MARY FROM LESBIANISM

But then Mary cried out to God like she had never done before. She asked, *"What do you want from me God? Speak to me what I need to know!"*\*

**"Then she opened up to Leviticus 20 in which God talks about His laws for sexuality. Then I started to get sick,"** Mary recalled. **"I knew it was God talking to me. I couldn't unsee it. So I did the most difficult thing I could — I gave up my sexuality as a sacrifice to God."**

"I had been giving my flesh more attention and idolization than God," Mary continued. "I wouldn't even say good morning to God or have a conversation with Jesus."

**"If I give up my sexuality to You, will you please take away this pain?"** Mary told God, **"As long as I live, I will never sleep with a woman again, because I've read your law, and I know what the consequences are."** It was in that moment that Mary became free from 26 years of being a lesbian.

**"It was the hardest thing in the world to give up,"** Mary recalled to me. "But I'm telling you—there's nothing in this world that I could take,



drink, or experience that would make me feel the way I feel right now. You can't make this up. You just can't."

After Mary finished making things right with God, I was the first person she called. She later told me why.

"I wanted to honor you, Michael. I wanted to share my good news with the man who helped deliver me, who saved my life. **You cared enough about me it didn't matter the color of my skin, who I slept with, how much money I made, or where I lived.** You went against your own grain, for me. And I loved you and your wife for that."

### GOD ANSWERED MICHAEL'S PRAYERS

I journal all my prayers. So I went back and looked up the first prayer I had ever prayed for Mary. I wrote, "**God, I pray that Mary Thompson will become a disciple worth following. Help her to be an influencer with her life.**" Then I read the other prayers I had prayed, day after day, for Mary. I would ask God things like, "**I don't know how to share the truth about Your standards for Marriage with Mary! You're going to have to show her, God. I can't.**"

So as I was on the phone with Mary when she told me how she had surrendered everything to Christ, there was no greater joy. **To get that call from Mary was one of the greatest things that has ever happened to me.**

I want to encourage all of you to not give up on people. Let God do His work. He is going to use us, and it will be a joyous thing. God can do anything, and Mary is a testimony of that. I told Mary that she will be my greatest church planter. Mark my words — this is just the beginning of Mary's story. **God is so amazing that He can take two strangers who have prejudices against each other and make something really beautiful out of it.**

### LESSONS LEARNED

**When reaching unbelievers, the love we show them is more important than anything.** Mary shared, "Michael went above and beyond in being gracious to me. He made me feel like a daughter. He never for a moment let me forget that he was there for me." Michael's unconditional compassion for Mary and her family was key in her eventual surrender to Christ.

**Never let your expectations dictate who you engage with the love of Christ.** God can do anything, and he chooses the least expected people in the world to be drawn to Him and His Word. Michael never imagined that any lost person would want to read the Bible, much less someone from the LGBTQ community which he hated.

**God answers our faithful, earnest prayers.** Michael prayed every day for Mary when he had no idea how to help her become free from her sexuality. God came through.

**Our life's testimony of our walk with God makes all the difference.** Michael openly shared about his walk with God, such as his 21-day fast, with Mary. She was able to witness what a transformed life with Jesus looked like, and it changed her.





# DBS WITH A TRANS WOMAN





### A TRANSGENDER WOMAN INVITED HERSELF TO A DBS

**M**ichael met Jill, a transgender woman, at a Wendy's. Jill saw that Michael was praying and reading the Bible, and wanted to join! Since then, Jill and Michael have met for Discovery Bible Study for 22 weeks straight. God is carrying out remarkable transformation in Jill's heart.

My wife and I frequent a Wendy's restaurant near us. Week after week, we saw someone who appeared to be a transgender woman sitting at one of the tables. God has been working on my heart toward people from the LGBTQ community. **So, my thought wasn't, "Why are they living that way?" Instead, it was, "I need to get to know them!"**



One day, I was doing a Discovery Bible Study with two other people at Wendy's, and the transgender lady came and sat two tables away from us. I was walking back from the restroom and God spoke to me: "Okay, you wanted to meet this person. Now's your time! Go to the table, introduce yourself, and go from there!"

So I went up to the table and introduced myself. "I see you in Wendy's all the time. You seem to be here a lot!" I said.

"Yes I do," and before I could ask anything else, she asked, "Is that a prayer group you've got back there?"

"Well, we do pray, but we're actually a little group that studies passages about the Bible to find out what we can learn about God and ourselves. Then we apply it and share it with others," I explained.

**Before I even knew her name, Jill asked, "Is that something I can join?"**

Without even asking my friends, I said, "Yeah!"

### JILL'S HUNGER FOR THE WORD

The four of us met the next week, but we only met for the introductory questions of "What are you thankful for?" and "What has stressed you out lately?" This Discovery Group was already on their 7th week, and I wanted to start back in Genesis with Jill to make sure she also received a good Biblical foundation.

Since that day, I have met with Jill for 22 weeks in a row without missing a meeting! What has been very challenging to me is, putting aside that Jill is transgender, she talks and acts as though she is a solid believer. **She is hungrier for the Word than any Christian I know right now.** She asks the most awesome questions and has the softest heart. She even asked to go prayer walking with me in the neighborhood.

Through this process, I have to get outside of myself. I go into restaurants with her, and she's

dressed up as a transgender woman with her purse and all. **I have to put all that aside and focus on her as someone hungry for Jesus.**

Although she didn't claim to be a believer when I met her, she told me that she's "mostly with Jesus." As a proclamation evangelist, I considered telling her how to accept Jesus in the moment. **But I resolved to trust the Discovery Bible Study process and let God do His work through the Word and the Holy Spirit.** God is teaching me patience through this process.

One day, I showed her my daily Scripture reading, prayer, and obedience habits.

"How often should a person do this?" Jill asked.

"Well," I said, "it's our daily Bread—wouldn't you want to ask God daily what He wants you to do?" Since then, Jill has emulated my daily devotional habits and posted about it on her Facebook profile, which is a pretty wild page.

### GOD IS TRANSFORMING JILL

There are so many things God is teaching Jill through Scripture that I can't even begin to cover it all. One day, I asked, "What did you do yesterday?"

"I prayed all day," Jill answered. "I sat with God all day and He showed me some very hard things."

"Well, like what?"

**Without batting an eye, she said, "God showed me that many of my sexual practices are wrong."**

"Okay!" I was stunned. I had never even brought up her sexuality before. I didn't even want to know about her personal sex life. This was 100% God speaking straight to her.

In addition, she obeys what we read in our Discovery Studies and she shares the stories with her housemates, one of whom is also transgender, and with people from the LGBTQ community who she knows on social media.



I've been teaching her the basic habits of disciple-making. She eats up whatever I show her, and the thing that boggles my mind is that she actually does it. She is the most unlikely person I would have ever thought, but God is transforming her.

### POINT BACK TO THE BIBLE

One of the messy parts is Jill's gender identity. She has told me before that she believes she was born this way, and that she didn't choose to be transgender. I told God, "You're gonna have to sort out this gender issue."

Recently, Jill asked, "Where does Jesus say that we'll get a new body one day?" Then I pointed her to what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.

"I'm going to share this with my roommate," Jill resolved, "she has a hard time with her own body. She doesn't understand why God would give her a body like hers."

Whenever Jill asks me questions, I always say, **"I want to point you back to the Bible because I don't want you to get answers based on what I say. Don't listen to me unless I can show it to you in the Bible!"**

My friendship with Jill has sharpened me and keeps me on my toes. It is a gift from God in my life, and I am so grateful for it. I'm praying and trusting God that he will completely change Jill's heart.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Michael's story shows how **God has prepared people who want to seek Him. People are waiting for you to be obedient and talk to them!** If Michael had ignored God's prompting, who knows when Jill would have been brought into God's Word?

**Patience is key in disciple-making.** Michael decided not to skip straight to a gospel message, instead trusting God to speak through the Word in a DBS. In addition, Michael is trusting God to

**Patience is key in disciple-making.** Michael decided not to skip straight to a gospel message, instead trusting God to speak through the Word in a DBS. In addition, Michael is trusting God to redeem Jill's sexuality, and God has already been doing remarkable things in her!

**Always point unbelievers to Scripture for answers.** Michael ensures that Jill goes to the Bible for her questions so that she won't have to rely on Michael but on God for truth. This is essential if we want to be disciple makers who make disciples who not only know what they believe, but why they believe it.



# CONSISTENCY MATTERS

**R**ob, a disciple-maker, is engaged in weekly hobbies to build friendships with unbelievers. A two-year friendship with Zach culminated in a Discovery Conversation that led to a Discovery Bible Study.

## HOBBIES LED TO FRIENDSHIP

Nearly two years ago, I chose several hobbies that allowed me to interact regularly with unbelievers and build friendships that could lead to disciple-making opportunities. I started attending pick-up volleyball at my local recreation center, a martial arts gym, and a board game community every week.

I met Zach at the martial arts gym and we became friends over months of training together. A few times, I invited him to lunch or on a walk so I could hear his story and I learned that **Zach came from a Christian background, but has since left that behind to dabble in Buddhism, New Age thinking, and join an LGBTQ community.**

Eventually, the onset of the pandemic prevented us from attending our martial arts gym and,



although Zach and I talked online from time to time, I looked for a more consistent way to stay in touch with him. One day, during one of our online chats, he mentioned wanting to learn guitar, so I offered to give him lessons!

We began meeting every week over Zoom for guitar lessons, which gave us time to catch up on each other's lives and be there for one another during the ups and downs of life in quarantine.

### RAISING PRAYER FOR ZACH

While I enjoyed our friendship, our conversations did not progress beyond meaningful to spiritual and discovery conversations— sharing stories from Scripture.

**If there's one thing I know about disciple-making, it's that success is predicated on prayer—and lots of it.** Therefore, I mobilized hours of prayer for Zach through CDM Prayer Meetings, Disciple-Making Community meetings, and by posting regularly on the CDM Facebook Prayer Page and my own personal prayer page. I would regularly ask for prayer that the Holy Spirit would guide my conversations with Zach.

Even when I became discouraged at the lack of progress in my conversations with Zach, the prayers from my communities encouraged me to keep pressing forward and taking next steps.

Then, suddenly — a breakthrough!

### GUITAR LESSON CONVERSATION

After our regular guitar lesson last week, Zach shared that he had been feeling down lately, leading to a conversation about self-care. I paused a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to guide my words and actions, and then I asked Zach, "What kinds of things lift your spirits and re-energize you?" His response took us right into spiritual conversation.

"I love going on walks and meditating outdoors because I feel like nature puts me in touch with the divine," Zach mused. "I feel like there's a little piece

of God inside of everyone."

My heart leapt—I had been praying for a moment like this for months! **I knew God was presenting me with an opportunity to connect where Zach was at with God's story.** "You know," I told him, "what you just said reminds me of a favorite Bible passage of mine. In Genesis it says that after God created the world, He specially made humans in His image."

"That's awesome!" Zach replied. We kept talking and eventually I said, "Something I love to do is open the Bible with others to discover what it says about our lives and about God. Would you be interested in doing that?"

Zach didn't even hesitate—"Definitely!"

We are scheduled to begin the Creation to Christ Scripture list and read Genesis 1 after our guitar lesson this week! Thank you so much for your continued prayers, and to God be the glory!


### LESSONS LEARNED

We can glean quite a few disciple-making principles from this story. **First, consistent interaction with unbelievers is key for building relationships that lead to disciple-making.** Boxing twice a week and eventually guitar lessons were the perfect outlets for Rob and Zach to bond in a meaningful way. And it takes time—Rob grew his friendship with Zach for nearly two years before he found this opportunity to invite him to DBS.

Second, **a large amount of prayer is absolutely necessary to see any lasting fruit when making disciples.** Rob would not have seen any success without God's provision working through the faithful prayers of a community of everyday disciple-makers.

Third, **ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into conversations that help you link their stories with God's story.** Whenever Rob went into interactions with Zach unprepared in regards to prayer or sensitivity to the Spirit, he didn't get anywhere. God is the one who draws hearts to Himself. Our job is to see where the Spirit is already moving and join Him there.



A person is sitting on a couch, reading a book. The background shows a living room with a potted plant and a lamp. The text is overlaid on the image.

**DON'T  
CENSOR  
SCRIPTURE**



## AN ANGRY GOD

**G**od has richly blessed my Discovery Bible Study with Zach. Ever since we began several months ago, we've rarely missed a week. In addition to our regular guitar lessons and DBS, we often spend extended time together walking, talking, sharing meals, and playing games.

Most recently, we read the Genesis 6-7 story of Noah. After finishing the passage, I asked, "What does this teach us about God?"

\*"Wow. God is pissed," Zach commented\*, reflecting on how God just destroyed nearly all of humanity. "This is a pretty brutal passage."

Zach's comments worried me and I feared this story was going to give him a negative view of God. However, my fears were soon dispelled.

## GOD'S REVELATION TO AN UNBELIEVER

"I like trying to see the principles we can learn from these Bible stories. For example, I always thought God just told Noah, 'Okay, go build a boat!' But here I see God gave Noah extremely detailed instructions on how he was to obey. And because he obeyed, God gave life to Noah and his family."

"That's awesome!" I cheered. As we continued reflecting on the passage, I asked, "Well, if this is true, what difference will it make in your life in the next 24 hours or week?"

**Zach pondered for a moment. "When God tells you something, you need to listen. You need to make sure it is from Him, and when you hear, you need to follow His instructions carefully!"**

I was astonished that God revealed this truth to Zach, a person far from God and steeped in New Age thinking and the LGBTQ community.

## ZACH IS TANGIBLY OBEYING GOD

"What do you think God is telling you, Zach?"

**"I think God wants me to talk to my mom,"** he replied. "We just had a pretty heated argument last week, and I don't feel like things are right between us. God wants me to talk to her, clear the air, and make sure we're okay."

"What will you do this week to make that happen?" I asked.

"I will call my mom and talk through this," Zach committed, "and I'll make sure I prioritize listening over speaking, and empathy over judgement."

I was so pleased with how God led Zach to obey this truth in such a tangible way. After sharing how I would obey as well and talking through who we would share with, we concluded our DBS for the week.

I'm excited to see how God will continue to move in Zach and draw him to Jesus. Please pray for him!

## LESSONS LEARNED

Rob and Zach's story communicates that **you should never shy away from uncomfortable Scripture passages**. Rob was afraid Zach would see God as overly harsh, but instead, the Holy Spirit revealed amazing truths. **If you try to censor Scripture, you may stifle the Spirit's speaking power.**

We also learn that **you should never assume what kinds of people will be interested in God's Word**. Zach is not exactly someone you would think would want to read and obey the Bible, but God is clearly drawing him!





# EUROPE NEIGH



The background of the page is a detailed, sepia-toned antique map. It features intricate line work representing rivers, coastlines, and geographical features, with small, illegible text labels scattered throughout. The overall texture is that of aged parchment or paper.


**LOVING OUR**  
**PEAN**  
**IBORS**





# FINDING GOD THROUGH GRIEF





**S**imon is a counselor at a psychiatric clinic in Central Europe. Today's story is about how he integrated Discovery Bible Study Into his counseling meetings with a client named Sandy. Through the DBS process, Simon helped Sandy find healing and discover Jesus.

### IN THE MIDST OF GRIEF

Simon met Sandy when he took her on as a client in the Spring of 2020. Although her parents had passed away many years ago, Sandy had not yet allowed herself to grieve the loss, which led her to seek counseling.

In their first sessions, Simon focused largely on Sandy's mourning and healing process. He didn't bring up God immediately, just listened to her and explored what she believed about herself and her situation. He told her the same thing he tells most of his clients: **All of us need a foundation that gives us the strength to go through life no matter what happens. Even in the midst of tragedy, we need something we can stand upon firmly. You can't be your own foundation. You need something else.**

Sandy wanted to be her own rock, and it wasn't working. Eventually, Simon started having spiritual conversations with her about God, to which she was open. One session, he showed her a Psalm that talks about God as the Rock, then he facilitated a Discovery Bible Study (DBS) on Psalm 139, which says that we are not only known by God, but are fearfully and wonderfully made by Him.

"What is one thing you could do in response to this?" Simon asked.

Sandy pondered a moment.

**"I will step in front of my mirror and say, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made!'" And she did it! It really impacted her.**



## DBS AND COUNSELING

One thing to know about Simon's counseling in soul care is that people come to him of their own volition. They're not forced to be there, so he never knows for sure if a client will return.

But Sandy kept coming back.

Whenever Sandy came for a counseling session, Simon would first listen to her share how she was doing and then he would ask her, "What do you want to do in our time today?" **And then she would say she wanted to read another story from the Bible.** As Simon listened to what she shared with him, he tried to find passages of Scripture that fit the needs she expressed.

Holidays can be an immensely complex time for anyone who has suffered a loss. When December rolled around, Sandy shared with Simon that Christmas used to be a time full of fond, family memories for her, but now she had no family left. So Simon took this opportunity to ask, "Would you like to discover what the real meaning of Christmas is from the Bible?"

When Sandy said that she would, she and Simon started doing a DBS through the book of Luke, beginning with the birth of Jesus right at the beginning of December. It was all new to her.

### SANDY PRAYED TO FOLLOW JESUS

At the beginning of March, after nine months of meeting with Sandy and doing DBS stories together, Simon was praying for her while home from work.

"I felt God telling me to read two passages with her—Psalm 23 about God as the Good Shepherd, and John 10 on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. So, we did a DBS on those two passages and they really spoke to Sandy."

After reading John 10, Simon asked Sandy, "What touches you from this passage?"

**"What speaks to me," she said, "is where Jesus says that His sheep hear His voice and nobody**

**can snatch them out of His hand!"**

"You know what? That's not the typical reaction of many people." They read the rest of the passage where it shows how people actually wanted to kill Jesus because of His claims.

"You can see that people respond to this very differently than you do—it means something when you say this touches you!"

Simon asked, "What do you want to do in response? There's two options I see in this passage. Some follow Jesus the Good Shepherd, and others want to kill him. Which group do you want to belong to?"

**"I want to follow Him!" She replied.**

"Would you like to pray and tell Jesus that yourself?" Simon asked.

Sandy was nervous, but she prayed in her own words: "I want to entrust my life to You. I want You to be my Good Shepherd."

From there, Simon and Sandy kept up with their regular counseling meetings and DBSes, and after a few months, she said she wanted to be connected with other Christians.

Simon had been mentoring two Christian friends of his on how to do DBS, so he connected them with Sandy, and together they began a DBS with her and another guy!

### WHAT SIMON LEARNED

"I see Sandy taking baby steps in faith. Sometimes the steps she takes in response to Scripture are very very small. But she always does something with it! **I have learned to not disregard the smallest steps but to celebrate and honor them.** It is important to understand that a small step in our eyes can be a huge step for them, especially when doing a DBS with people in psychological crisis.

In addition, she always comes back for more Scripture. She has a hunger for the Word which

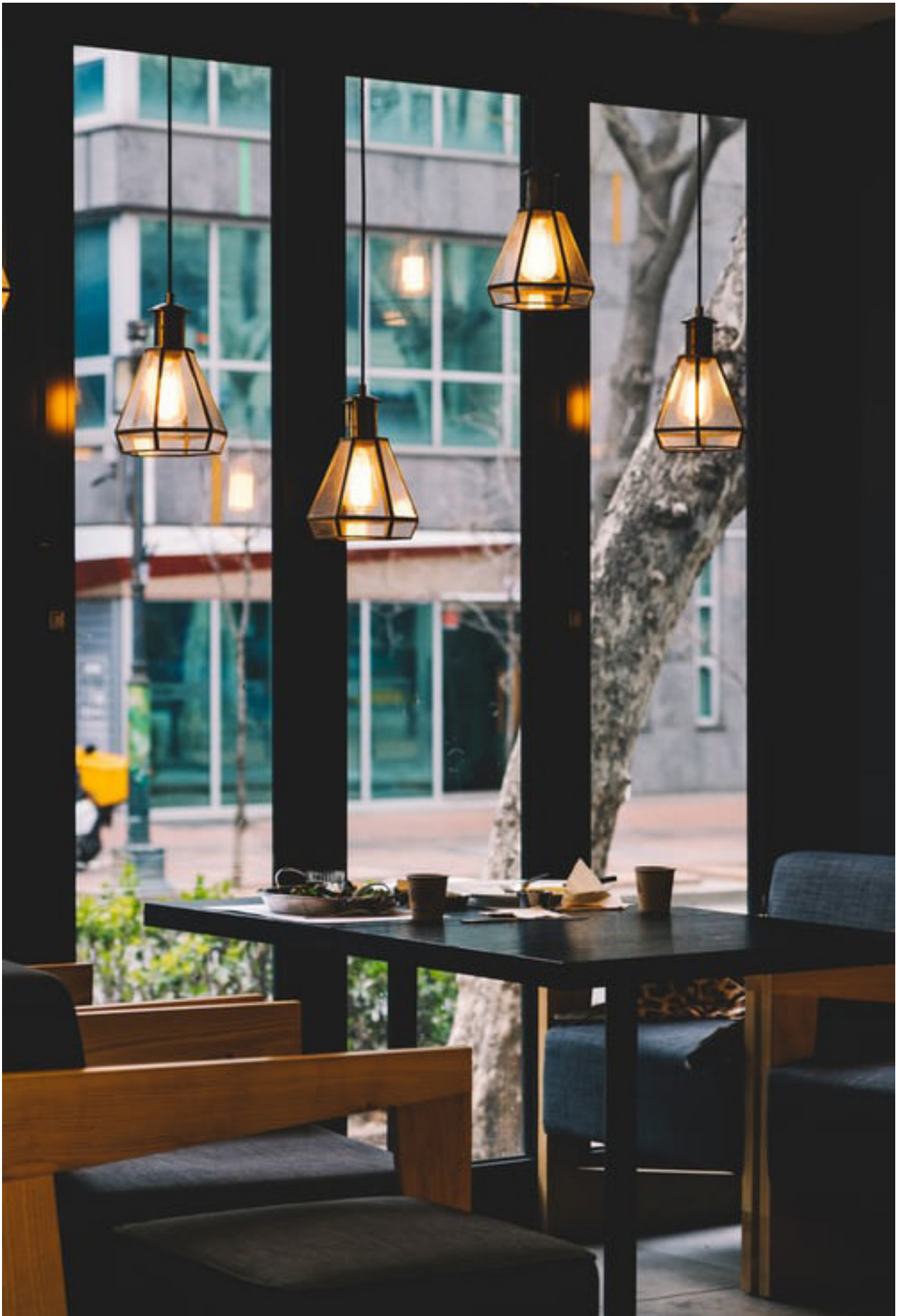


encouraged me very much. **That's something you should look for when seeking to reach lost people—a desire for Scripture.**

**Another thing I learned is that I needed to address Sandy's felt need, right where she was, with a Biblical story.** For hurting people, I found the Psalms to be very helpful since they communicate great pictures of God's character that comfort them. Listening to God and finding the right story was often a challenge. But every time I did, something in the passage touched Sandy or she learned something new about God's character.

One last thing I learned is to **be patient, take the time the people need, and trust God that He is working in their lives.** After many months of meeting her needs with a passage from the Bible, she now wants to understand God's big picture. So, we decided to go through the Creation to Christ passages in the Old and the New Testament. And I am excited to see what God will do in her life as she keeps discovering God."







# PRAYER, OBEDIENCE, AND PROGRESS

**J**ustin is a disciple-maker in Slovenia. He began a friendship with Adrian before the pandemic and, over the past year, has remained faithful to prayer and intentional engagement through the Conversation Quadrants. As a result of Justin's obedience, God drew Adrian to participate in a Discovery Bible Study!

## CASUAL TO MEANINGFUL

Adrian is a non-believer in Slovenia and the father of my son's classmate. After months of waving at each other in the school parking lot, running into each other at the grocery store and chatting outside of school, I told Adrian, "Hey, we see each other a lot, why don't we get coffee some time?"

After that, we met for coffee regularly, getting to know each other over casual conversations that gradually became meaningful. **Adrian usually lead the conversation and brought up meaningful topics!**

**Much of this is due to the prayer I've mobilized for Adrian.** Through Facebook prayer groups, sending videos to believers requesting prayer, or joining prayer meetings, I always asked people to pray for him. One day, he opened up about some events from his past that sent him on a journey of exploring spiritual things.

When the coffee shops closed down due to quarantine, **we opted to go on weekly walks at a nearby park.** What initially felt like a barrier was actually a blessing in disguise! I sensed that our walks together were more relaxed and less intimidating for Adrian than sitting eye-to-eye over coffee.

## SPIRITUAL TO DISCOVERY

Adrian continually brought up spiritual topics and asked for my opinions, which prompted me to share God's Word with him. **"Adrian," I said, "what you just shared reminds me of a story from the Bible I read this morning. Can I share it with you?"**

"I would love to hear it," Adrian replied.

I shared how Jesus said, "If you hear My words and obey them, you're like the man who builds his house on the rock. If you don't, you're like the man who builds his house on the sand that gets washed away by the storm."

"What do you think about that, Adrian?"

"Justin," he pondered, "it seems like we Slovenes are choosing to build our house on the sand—and it's not working." He continued, **"Also, it's easy to just say you love someone. But, here Jesus says, if you really love Him, you'll do what He says."**

"Wow," I marveled, "that's pretty profound."

I continued to take every opportunity to respond to his questions by sharing what I was reading from Scripture. There were other times were it felt appropriate for me to pray for him and he was open to it. He responded by asking how he could pray for my family. That is just one example of how Adrian and his family are generous to us. Not only that, but they've invited us into their home, which is rare in Slovene culture.

## INVITATION TO DBS

A couple of weeks ago, we were having another



conversation and I told Adrian, "Almost every time we meet, we talk about God, the Bible, and spiritual things. Would you like the opportunity to open the Bible, read it together, and discover what it says?"

"Well, what do you mean?" Adrian questioned. Apparently he got the idea that I would just give him the Bible, he would read the whole thing, and come back to me. Instead, I explained to him the Discovery Bible Study process—how we read the word, ask questions, obey it, and share it.

**"Next time we meet," Adrian concluded, "that's what we're going to do!"**

### SCRIPTURE ON-THE-GO

When Adrian and I met up for our first DBS, I printed out the first passage in the Creation to Christ Scripture list — Genesis 1 — on sheets of paper for us to read as we went on our walk. We planned the DBS two weeks prior but didn't plan the specifics, so, I didn't really know what to expect.

When we got together, I said, "Hey, I brought this passage with me, and it's up to you, but would you like to read this together?"

**Adrian smiled. "Of course—that's what we're going to do!"**

Before we dove into the DBS, Adrian told me about a friend named Boris he visited that week who was suffering from cancer. "Justin, I told Boris about you. I told him that I have a friend who is a Christian and I know he prays. I told Boris I'd ask you to pray for him!"

I prayed for Boris right then and there, then I asked, "What did Boris think about that?"

"He was so excited and happy to know someone was praying for him!" Adrian exclaimed. I was overjoyed. Boris sounds like the perfect person with whom Adrian can share the Bible stories.





## I DIDN'T SETTLE FOR VAGUE OBEDIENCE STATEMENTS

After we had read the story and Adrian had shared some of his observations, we moved on to the "I Will" statement part of the DBS. It must have been God's timing because we passed by a man as we were talking about obeying the passage.

"I know that guy," Adrian whispered. "I used to not get along with him very well. But after reading this passage, if everyone is made in God's image, then everyone has value and worth. And, if that's true, I need to treat people differently."

**I nudged Adrian to make his "I will" statement more practical and doable.**

Adrian pondered. "Last week, I got a call from this family that always wants me to do time-consuming favors for them. I will never get paid and it always ends up being a headache. And, I always tell them no. However, for some reason, this time I agreed to help. **And knowing now that everyone has value as God's creation, I will continue to help this family, whether or not I receive anything in return!**"

Then, I asked him with whom he could share the story. **"Can I keep this paper with the Bible story? I want to read this story with my wife."** I was excited to hear this because his wife is from a Catholic background but also likely very far from God.

As we parted ways, Adrian said, "Next week—next story!" I didn't even have to ask—Adrian really wants to meet again!

## PRAYER FUELED MY PROGRESS

The root of my success with Adrian is prayer. Between the 30 friends on my prayer calendar, the CDM prayer page of 700 people, weekly CDM prayer calls, a personal prayer page of 30 people, and my missionary prayer team, I have absolutely

covered Adrian in prayer. I also keep everyone updated as God answers prayer so that He gets the glory and they get the joy of seeing how their prayers are working!

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Consistent and intentional conversations are key.** Through prayer and consistent meetups, God led Adrian to ask spiritual questions until an opportune moment arose for Justin to invite Adrian to read the Word with him. **To Adrian, it felt so natural to say "yes" to DBS because of the friendship, trust and openness he had built with Justin.**

**Justin let Adrian—and the promptings of the Holy Spirit—guide the conversations.** Justin never forced spirituality into their talks. He simply kept his eyes open to where God was already moving. After all, **only God can draw people to Jesus—our job is to join Him in that process!**

**It is important to get "I will" obedience statements right.** If Justin had settled for Adrian's initial answer, Adrian would never have been drawn to meaningfully impact the family in need with his obedience.

**Prayer is an indispensable building block of disciple-making.** Justin didn't slack in regards to prayer—he had hundreds praying for him regularly—and those prayers made a world of a difference. Mobilizing prayer also encourages the people praying for you to take their own steps of obedience!



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# UNCONSCIOUSLY CHRISTIAN

**M**ichael began a Discovery Bible Study with his unbelieving friend Pierson by reading his Bible on his lunch breaks at work. Pierson keeps discovering amazing truths from the Word, and is growing in obedience. Read their story below!

## READING MY BIBLE AT WORK

Pierson and I were coworkers at Target a few years back. I sometimes brought my Bible with me to read while I was on break. One day, Pierson spotted me and asked me what I was reading, so I told him it was the Bible.

"Dude," Pierson replied, "I've been meaning to read that!" He told me that a psychologist and professor named Jordan Peterson had the Bible on a list of important books that everyone should read. "I feel like I never gave it a fair shot," Pierson admitted, having been raised Catholic.

My friend Joleene had just shared about DBS with my family, so I asked if Pierson would like to study the Bible together.

"Yeah, that'd be great!"

Thus began my DBS with Pierson. Something that I love is that after each consecutive Discovery Bible Study, Pierson ends by saying, "I know I said the last passage was my favorite, but I gotta say — I think this one is my new favorite!"\*

## JESUS IS LIKE SUPERMAN

Recently, while reading the story of the Last

Supper, Pierson noticed the dramatic irony in that Jesus knew He needed to die on the cross and had been telling his disciples that, but His closest friends and followers were oblivious to his impending fate.

**"To me," Pierson shared, "Jesus seems to be the epitome of beauty because he is a tragic hero. He has to die but his best friends don't know it."**

We read the story of Jesus' betrayal and condemnation in John 18:1-19:16 next. Once we reached the question, "What does this teach us about God?" Pierson pointed out how Pontius Pilate asked Jesus a series of questions, but Jesus remained silent and wouldn't answer. In the story, Pilate reminds Jesus that he has the authority to have Jesus killed. Jesus answered Pilate, "You would have no authority at all unless it had been given to you from above."

"I know we're not supposed to bring in outside material to our DBS," Pierson clarified, "but man—this just reminds me of that scene in the Superman movie!"

There's a scene in the 2013 film "Man of Steel" where Superman surrenders to the military, is cuffed and put in custody for no other reason than that they're scared of him. The soldiers and scientists are watching him from behind a one-way window wasting time trying to figure out what to do with him. Impatient, but calm, Superman snaps his cuffs like they're made of plastic, strolls over to the one-way window and informs the men that he has the power to leave whenever he wants, but is choosing to stay out of respect for them.

Pierson was struck by how similarly Christ's power shines forth in His interaction with Pilate.

**"Jesus doesn't have to be here because He's God!" Pierson marveled. "He could escape easily. However, He willingly submits himself to die for our sake!"**



## CONNECTING PASSOVER WITH THE GOSPEL

As we continued reading, we noticed the Jews refraining from entering Pilate's palace to stay clean because it was the night before Passover.

"**Passover?**" Pierson paused. "**That's the story we read way back in the book of Exodus!**" He remembered that they needed to find a pure lamb, kill it, and put the blood on their door frames.

**Pierson's eyes widened. "Wait a second—Jesus is the Lamb of God!** He started spinning in his chair with his hands in the air. "The lamb in the Passover story had to be without blemish. Jesus is without blemish! He's the Lamb of God!"

Pierson's step of obedience was to reread the Exodus story to see how else the story connected with the Gospel. As we do DBS together, Pierson has shown an incredible willingness to share what he's learning to his friends and family. He shares the stories with his dad, brothers, and our old coworkers from Target! I thank God that I had the privilege to witness such an impactful discovery moment in Pierson's life.

## GOD REVEALS PROFOUND TRUTHS TO UNBELIEVERS

Pierson has been sharing the stories every week with his sister, brothers, and dad. God uncovered powerful truths for Pierson as we read the stories of the Bible. For example, we read about how Jesus appeared to His disciples on the road to Emmaus and in the upper room, and the disciples said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

In response, Pierson reflected, "**There's something missing in us that only God can provide. I think that you aren't a fully realized person until you've felt the fire that the disciples felt with Jesus.**" Only the Holy Spirit could have revealed a truth that profound to Pierson, an unbeliever. I believe God is setting up Pierson for the John 3 passage where he can choose to follow Jesus!

Later, when we went through the crucifixion and resurrection stories, Pierson pondered, "Jesus' death and resurrection are like a reset for the world like Noah's flood was. In the flood, God wiped out everyone because they were evil, but spared one man—Noah—and his family. But through the crucifixion, God saved the whole world from sin, but one man had to die—Jesus. It's like a cosmic reversal!"

As we read about Pharisees doubt of Jesus's resurrection, Pierson said, "I could blow off this story and just assume the disciples stole Jesus' body from the grave. There's margin for doubt here. **However, God is offering me a second chance through Jesus death and resurrection. All I have to do is have faith. God gives us a choice!**" I thought Pierson's insights were profound, especially because he's not even a believer yet.

## OBEDIENCE BECAME A HABIT

Pierson isn't just getting deep spiritual insights from the Word—he's obeying too! In the beginning of our DBS, Pierson struggled at times to come up with practical ways to obey what God showed him in the passage. However, throughout the past few weeks, Pierson's practical obedience has grown.

As we read a passage, Pierson already formulates how he will obey. After sharing his thoughts, he self-corrects without prompting: "**Actually, that's too vague!**" he admitted one time, "**I need to narrow it down to something actionable!**"

In a recent story we read—the resurrection of Christ from the dead—he saw how Jesus gave his life up for so many people who are lost and hurting. "At my work," Pierson explained, "I think a lot of my co-workers are stressed out and lonely."

**He led into his obedience statement: "I will reach out to at least one person to make plans to do something together this week. I want to give up my time to make someone else's life better."** Pierson is learning to tangibly obey God's Word. I'm excited to see how God will touch Pierson's co-worker through Pierson's obedience!



## LESSONS LEARNED

**Michael and Pierson's story teaches us the importance of being conspicuously spiritual.**

Michael, as a part of his everyday walk with Jesus, read his Bible in his workplace. He allowed his faith to be seen without being pushy. His obedience led Pierson to dive into the Word with him!

This story also displays how **God's Word, in conjunction with the moving of the Holy Spirit, is more than sufficient to help unbelievers discover who Jesus is.** Michael didn't have to explain it all. In the process of reading the stories of Scripture, Pierson experienced huge discovery moments. In fact, if Michael had explained it all from the start, it would have robbed Pierson of the joy of discovering God for himself!

**God reveals crucial truths to unbelievers through His Word.** It is always astounding what kind of insights unbelievers glean from the Bible. Although Pierson isn't a believer, God reveals truths to him of through reading the Bible every week with Michael.

**Obedience is a habit that grows over time.** Don't give up hope if the members of your DBS struggle with coming up with "I Will" statements. Keep faithfully and lovingly asking the DBS questions. And lead by example. Eventually, they, like Pierson, will start formulating actionable steps in response to Scripture on their own!

You may doubt whether unbelievers would ever want to read the Bible with you. The truth is, many will! All it takes is building meaningful friendships with unbelievers and following the Holy Spirit's lead as you seek casual, meaningful, spiritual, and discovery conversations. Michael initially found Pierson by reading his Bible out in the open during his lunch breaks at work. You could do something similar!







# BEING A GOOD

**M**ichael thought his friend Charlie would never want to do a Discovery Bible Study. In fact, Charlie had given him a straight up "no." However, Michael remained faithful in friendship and prayer for Charlie. Read Michael tell how God changed Charlie's "no" into a "yes!"

## A CALL DURING A PANIC ATTACK

Charlie is someone I've been praying for over the last few months. We both started at the same job handling covid tests on the same day back in June of 2020. Since then we've had many casual, meaningful, and spiritual conversations, and even some discovery conversations too.

On Monday morning, I remembered it was Char-

lie's birthday the day before, so I called him to wish him a happy belated birthday, but he didn't pick up. A couple hours later, he texted me back saying he had been having an anxiety attack for 10-15 minutes when my phone call came. Charlie hadn't wanted to answer the phone in his panicked condition, but when he saw my caller ID — my name and a little prayer hands emoji — he said he felt a bit better for some reason. He said he started to pray after that and then calmly fell back asleep.

A few hours later, I had an opportunity to respond in our text conversation, so I asked him what had made him so anxious.

"It's weird," Charlie replied. "I was hungover so I was feeling really gross, so that had something to do with





# FRIEND

my anxiety attack. Then the fear of death just popped into my head randomly! That might've triggered it. And I've also been distancing myself from God and I'm not doing it on purpose, but I need to get back on track."

I asked him if something like this had ever happened before. He reminded me of a time several months ago when we had been working together and he had stopped smoking weed. He had had some episodes from that, but it felt so long ago to him that he didn't think much of it. About this instance, however, he said, "I honestly just think God's giving me a reality check."

I asked Charlie what he thought God was trying to say to him. He said, "to get closer to Him for sure,"

and added that he maybe also needed to stop drinking for a while and get his life together. I asked him what he thought getting closer to God specifically looked like, to which he responded that he needed to attend his church again, pray daily and read his Bible app at least once a day.

## A WINSOME INVITATION TO DBS

Then he asked me, "What about you?" I took this to mean, "What do you think it looks like to get closer to God?" So I told him that if those were the things he felt God was trying to tell him, then I thought he should listen. I also added that if he was interested in discovering God for himself through reading stories from the Bible, there was this thing called a Discovery Bible Study that I'd be happy to journey with him



through. He then asked me to explain a little more of what that looked like.

My mind raced faster than my fingers could type the words. I checked and re-checked what I was saying to make sure I wasn't saying so little that Charlie wouldn't know what to expect, nor so much that he would run for the hills. In the past, I had told people it would be a 26-week study. Recently, I learned that most human beings find that slightly overwhelming.

Instead, I explained the basics of what the DBS was—the different questions we'd ask and answer, and how it would involve him and any friends or family who wanted to join discovering God for themselves through reading Bible stories. I clarified that it wouldn't be me teaching and I told him we could take it one meeting at a time. If he decides he doesn't want to do it anymore, that's fine, and if he does want to continue, we'll make that happen.

Then I waited.

### **“NO” TO “YES!”**

Months prior, Charlie had said “no” when I first brought up the idea of doing a DBS. He comes from a family that has some religious background and church experience, but I think much of what he learned has been mingled with various new age beliefs and practices. He had said something similar back then about wanting to read the Bible more, but when I offered up DBS as an idea, he said his spirituality was something he needed to navigate on his own. I now prepared myself for a similar response.

“Yeah,” he said to my surprise, “that sounds cool. You want to try it on Sunday?”

I couldn't believe it. What had changed in the last seven months to turn what was a hard pass into a “tell me more,” and then a “yes, let's try it”? But it's God—of course He could do this!

### **OVERCOMING MY INFLEXIBILITY**

Now let me tell you how I almost ruined it. Sundays are pretty crammed for me. Sunday is my one day off from work, it's the day when my family and

I have church in the morning, it's the day our DMC meets in the afternoon, and it's the day we host people in the evening. At first, I asked Charlie if there was another day that might work, still keeping Sundays open, but hoping for something a little less packed.

When he responded that he would get back to me later in the week, I had a vision (non-prophetic) of a dismal future where either one or both of us didn't follow up and the idea of a DBS pattered out and died. I thought to myself, “there's no way I'm letting this opportunity slip by because I'm inflexible,” so we decided right then and there that we'd have our first DBS meeting this Sunday.

I asked Charlie if he could think of anyone else who might be interested in joining us. He said he could ask a few friends and see what they say, but that he had a feeling he knew what the answer would be—“no”. I pointed out it's possible that his friends may have had a similar fear-of-death experience and just haven't had anyone to talk to about it. I encouraged him to reach out and see what happens, which he said he'd do! And that is where we're at.

You guys, I'm so excited! I called my mom, I called Paul Watson, I called Rebecca Ewing, and now I'm sharing with you all. God is amazing and is on the move! He is at work even in the life of my friend Charlie, who I figured would never want to do a DBS — because he had told me he didn't want to do a DBS. But God has used the last year and a half to do work in both of us to bring us to this point, and I can't wait to see what He'll do next!

### **PRAYER FOR CHARLIE**

That said, we need lots of prayer. Please pray for Charlie this week and for our time together this Sunday—that the enemy wouldn't be able to disrupt or interfere with this study happening and that Charlie would have the courage to ask other non-believers in his life if they want to join (and that they would!). Pray that the Lord would work in the hearts of Charlie and anyone else He draws so that this study would continue for weeks and months to come. Pray that Charlie and his unbelieving friends and family would be transformed by the Holy Spirit and born again.



## LESSONS LEARNED

**Real friendship is crucial.** This whole situation took place because Michael remembered Charlie's birthday. It's the little things that lead to big things.

**Don't make someone commit to a 26-week study when inviting them to a DBS.** That can be overwhelming even for Christians. Take it one week at a time. If a DBS is really ministering to someone's heart, they'll want to meet again for DBS.

**Without over-explaining, let potential DBS participants know what they're getting into upfront** like Michael did. Tell them you're inviting them to study God's Word, obey it, share it, and invite others into it. Setting expectations early helps solidify the DNA of a group and avoids investing in people who ultimately won't be interested.

Finally, **God is able to change any "no" to a "yes"!** What does it take? What we saw in Michael's story—faithful obedience and persistent prayer.







# THE GOTH HAIRDRESSER

**P**enelope is a disciple-maker in Southern California. She met Jennifer, a goth hairdresser who absolutely hates church and dislikes Christians. God allowed Penelope to have an amazing spiritual encounter with Jennifer that sparked a friendship.

## PRAISING AND FASTING

I've known my hairdresser Sadia for twenty years. She's a Muslim from Afghanistan, and someone I've witnessed to and shared the gospel with countless times. She hasn't been receptive, but we're still friends and she's someone I continue to pray for.

With the recent news coming out of Afghanistan, I have been in contact with Sadia a lot more. I've told her that I and many other believers have been praying and fasting for her, her family, and her country, which she seemed to be very grateful for.

All that said, today's story isn't really about Sadia. It's about her boss, Jennifer.

## THE GOTHIC HAIR SALON

Several weeks ago, I went to the salon to get my hair done by Sadia. It was late in the evening, so the only people in the salon were me, Sadia, and the salon owner, Jennifer.

This is a Gothic salon, decorated with a Halloween theme year-round. The walls are black, the floors are black, even the toilet paper and toilet itself are black! And there are dragons and black cats displayed all over.

As the salon would suggest, Jennifer herself is totally goth. She has black fishnet tights, dyed black hair, long black fingernails, and tattoos and piercings everywhere. Before this evening, I had never had any conversations with her; however, whenever I did overhear her talking, it was usually her sharing how much she hates anything involving conservative values.



## I PUT MY PHONE DOWN

That particular evening, I conversed with Sadia as she did my hair, but after a little while, I began to scroll through Facebook on my phone. I sensed the Lord tell me, *"Put down your phone! You're in a place with two non-believers—you don't have time to be on your phone. You need to be aware and engaging with them."*

I obeyed and put my phone away.

Jennifer walked over and started decorating the "Christmas" tree which was black and covered in spider webs. "Gosh!" Jennifer fumed. "October 1st is coming up and I hate October 1st! It's the worst day ever."

I thought that I needed to ask her about that. "Hey, why is October 1st such a bad day for you?"

"That's the day my sister was murdered in the mass shooting in Las Vegas four years ago," Jennifer replied. My heart broke as she explained the details of what happened.

**"October 1st destroyed my life," Jennifer sighed. "That's the day I gave up."**

In that moment, I knew I needed to give this woman a hug, so I got up from my chair, hair-dying foils all over my head, and asked, "Can I give you a hug?"

Jennifer nodded. **As soon as I embraced her, she started weeping.** This is someone who I've never talked to before and who knows nothing about me, but there we were — both of us crying, soon followed by Sadia.

"You're so kind," Jennifer told me over and over. "You're so kind, you're so kind!"

Then she started apologizing, "I'm so sorry. I'm not supposed to talk to other stylists' clients about personal things."

"No no no," I assured her, "don't worry about it!"

## MY MUSLIM FRIEND SHARED ABOUT MY PRAYER LIFE

Sadia interjected, "Penelope will pray for you! She prays for people. She prayed and fasted for me and for my whole country of Afghanistan. And she had hundreds of others praying too."

Jennifer looked at me and paused. "Are you a Christian?"

Her comment made me a little nervous. However, **I was reminded of a tactic David Watson uses when people ask if he's a Christian. He asks in return, "What do you mean by 'Christian'?"**

So I asked Jennifer, "Well, what do you mean by that?"

"Do you believe in Jesus?" she clarified.

"Yes!" I said.

"Well, I do too!" Jennifer grinned.

**Then Jennifer stood up, looked at me, and said, "I really trust you."**

## A PASTOR FOR PEOPLE WHO HATE CHURCH

From there, Sadia finished up my hair and I continued my conversation with Jennifer. **"I do believe in Jesus," Jennifer explained, "but I will never go to church. I hate church, and I hate that most Christians hate the LGBTQ community. Because I love the LGBTQ community and they are my people."**

She explained to me how she participates in all the gay pride parades and that her sister who was murdered was bisexual. Although she herself is straight and married, most of her friends are from the LGBTQ community.

"I am so sorry," I replied. "Because as a Christian, I do not hate LGBTQ people. And God does not hate them either, because God is love and He loves them. I agree that many churches don't show these people love like they should."

"I agree! But still, I will never go to church." Jennifer continued. "And my dad is a pastor. I talk to him on the phone all the time, and every time I talk to him, he tries to tell me Bible stories, and I am so sick of it. I do not want to hear Bible stories."

**Then I pulled out a line I learned from Paul Watson. I said, "Well, I'm kind of like a pastor for people who hate church!"**

"That's awesome!" Jennifer exclaimed. "I would love to get to know you. Could I get your number?"

So we exchanged phone numbers. A few weeks later, on October 1st, I texted her saying, "Jennifer, I am praying for you today. I know this is a very hard day for you. But I want you let you know that I'm praying for you and thinking about you throughout the day."

"Thank you, that means a lot," she texted back.

Now, my next step is to ask the Lord what He wants me to do. I am excited to pursue a friendship with Jennifer and see what God will do as He draws her heart to Him!

## WHAT PENELOPE LEARNED

From this story \* **appreciate how, because I prayed for Sadia, she brought prayer and spirituality into my conversation with Jennifer.** My example of prayer and fasting for Sadia led her to point Jennifer toward God and cause Jennifer to trust me deeply.

Through this process, **I also learned the importance of listening to the Lord in the moment and being slow to speak.** I could've jumped right into sharing a Bible story, but in-

stead I listened to Jennifer, and I'm glad I did because I learned that a Bible story would've been the last thing she wanted to hear. Jennifer was receptive to a relationship with me, but wasn't ready for a discovery conversation about Scripture just yet.

Finally, **if I had remained checked out on my phone, I never would have had this beautiful encounter with Jennifer.** What I learned is that I really need to be in tune with the Spirit and what He's doing at all times.





An aerial photograph of a beach at sunset. The ocean waves are breaking onto the shore, creating a white foam that contrasts with the dark, wet sand. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, reflecting on the water. A series of footprints are visible in the sand, leading away from the water towards the top right of the frame.

# THE FRUIT OF OBEDIENCE

**P**enelope's small act of obedience to prayer walk in her neighborhood led to a series of events that culminated in three baptisms and a daughter seeking Jesus.

## PRAYER WALK AND A MEETING

Two years ago, I went prayer walking with my friend Laura. As we walked our neighborhood, we asked God to help us meet our neighbors.

Then we bumped into a woman named Irene who was walking with her husband and their dog.

We discovered that Irene and her family had just moved into our neighborhood two weeks prior! Not only that, they also had a young daughter who was the same age as ours. We immediately decided we needed to set up a play date with our daughters, which excited Irene because she wanted to help her kids make friends.



### THREE BAPTISMS

At the time, I was facilitating a Discovery Bible Study with Laura and some other women. Unprompted by me, Laura invited Irene, who wasn't a believer, to our DBS, and she showed up! Ideally I would have had Laura start a new DBS with Irene and her friends so we could see multiplication, **but even though I rarely do things perfectly, God still uses it for good!**

We read the story of the Ethiopian eunuch who, after reading Isaiah with Phillip, asked if he could be baptized on the spot. After reading, I asked the group, "What could we do to obey this passage?"

**"I need to give my life to Jesus," Irene said, "and I need to get baptized!"** Her bold obedience led two other women in the group, including Laura, to commit to be baptized as well!

I had been asking them to obey the passages about baptism over and over, and this was the first time they made the decision! All three women were baptized within a few weeks.

### IRENE'S DAUGHTER ASKED ABOUT JESUS

Now that Irene was a baptized believer, I urged her to start a Discovery Group with her own husband and children. However, for about 6 months, she always got cold feet and came up with reasons it wouldn't work out. Even so, she did well with sharing the Bible stories with her daughters.

One day, out of the blue, Irene's daughter, Chelsea, texted me from her mom's phone saying, "Hello, this is Chelsea. I just came back from a Christian summer camp, and I really enjoyed it." Her mother Irene had told me Chelsea was going to a summer camp put on by the church they started attending on their own after we starting doing DBS together. To my surprise, her husband — very much a non-believer — was attending with them!

Chelsea's text continued: "I did not have many opportunities to ask the questions I wanted answered. **So I was wondering if you had any**

**time tomorrow to speak with me about my questions pertaining to Christianity.** Thank you."

Wow. I was so surprised because I had always seen Chelsea as a shy girl. She would sometimes come along to the Discovery Group meetings with Irene, so she was aware of how I've been discipling her mom, but she hadn't engaged much yet.

"Sure, Chelsea!" I replied, "Come on over and we can talk."

### CHELSEA KNEW GOD'S STORY

Chelsea came over and started sharing about all the things she was learning at summer camp. She was stirred by the truth that, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, she could be called a new creation and an ambassador for Christ.

**Chelsea's most pressing question was, "Why is there evil in the world?"**

I suspected what Chelsea had on her mind was a tragedy in which an individual had done something terrible to one of her family members. It's been a huge wound in their family for many years.

"That is a big question that many people struggle with," I replied. "Do you remember how God created the world?"

"Yes, I remember that God created the world as a perfect place with no evil in it, but then the snake came." Chelsea continued to retell the whole story of Adam, Eve and the fall.

"That's right! That's why we live in a world that's full of evil and sin."

I asked Chelsea questions about various stories from the Bible to see how much she was familiar with. From this I learned that she knew the stories of the Old Testament and she knew that Jesus died for her.



## FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL

Then I asked, "Do you have confidence that if you were to die tonight, you would go to heaven?"

Chelsea began to cry. "No, I don't know."

"Do you want to know?" I asked.

"Yes! I want to know for sure!"

"Well, first, I'm going to go and get you some tissues. Then I'm going to pray and ask the Holy Spirit about what to say to you. There's different ways we could go here, and I want to only say what God wants me to."

After I got her some Kleenex, I spent five minutes in the other room asking God what he wanted me to do. **I didn't want to jump to a gospel presentation if that wasn't what He wanted, but I also didn't want to start a DBS if God had prepared her for the gospel right now.**

**Then I felt God say to me, "She knows my story. She's ready!"**

## CHELSEA GAVE HER LIFE TO JESUS

I returned to Chelsea and said, "Chelsea, you know God's story. And He wants you to know that you can have eternal life. To come to Christ, He has to be Your Savior. But He's also got to be Your King—the Lord of every area of your life. Following Jesus is not going to be easy. And it doesn't mean you won't suffer.

"What that means is that you need to obey every single thing He says in the Bible, whether you feel like it or not. If God says you need to forgive the person who hurt your family member, you need to do it." As I spoke, I feared I may have come across as too heavy-handed.

**"I know I need to forgive them," Chelsea replied, "because I've been having dreams about them. In the dream, I look at them and say, 'I forgive you.'"**

This was huge. Her own mother had not been

able to do this yet.

"Okay Chelsea," I said, "what I want you to do right now is pray. I'm not going to tell you what to pray, because prayer is just talking to God. Tell Him whatever you want to tell Him to make Jesus your King right now."

In response, Chelsea prayed the most beautiful prayer of repentance, faith, and surrender to Jesus that I have ever heard.

**"I hate living in my sin," she cried, "I hate living in fear. I don't want to live for myself anymore. I only want to live for You, Jesus. I'm not my own anymore, I want to make You King of my whole life. I want to obey whatever You tell me to do."**

Then Chelsea said, "I want my family to know Jesus. I want my dad and my sister to know Him too."

## A BEAUTIFUL BEACH BAPTISM

"Well," I said,\* "The first thing you need to do is be baptized! Then you should start a Discovery Bible Study with your family. And you'll lead it!"\*

"Okay!" she replied, "I want to be baptized in the ocean. I want my dad, and my friends, and my family to be there."

At first we scheduled Chelsea's baptism, but some things got in the way and we had to postpone it. This genuinely frustrated Chelsea, who was impatient to take the next step of obedience. "I can't wait to be baptized! I know something greater will happen after I'm baptized, and I don't want to put it off."

Finally, we took the trip to the beach with my family and Chelsea's family for her baptism. I told Chelsea's mom, Irene, who is already a baptized believer, that she could baptize her daughter herself—she didn't need me!

It was a beautiful baptism, and her whole family was very touched and blessed by the event. Now, I'm in the process of discipling Chelsea to lead

her family in DBS and I'm so thankful for all that God has done. Pray for Chelsea and her family!

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Obedience is contagious.** It all started with Joleene's obedience to go prayer walking with her friend, which led to meeting Irene. Then Irene's obedience to trust Jesus and be baptized led the other women to follow suit. All along, Chelsea was able to observe her mother's newfound faith and hear the stories from Scripture from her as well. That led Chelsea to seek Jesus herself!

**You can't control how God works. And sometimes it looks different than you expect.** Joleene was a little disappointed that Laura invited Irene to their existing DBS rather than starting a new one with Irene, because that could have helped multiplication happen. However, God had different plans in mind. He used Irene to spark obedience in the women at Joleene's DBS to be baptized!

In addition, Joleene never told Irene that she and her family had to attend church. Irene chose to bring her family to church of her own volition as an expression of her faith in God. That decision helped bring Chelsea into an environment at summer camp that caused her to seek Jesus!

**Listening to the Holy Spirit is the most crucial thing to do when leading someone to Jesus.** God is the one who draws unbelievers to Jesus, so we need to follow His lead to know if someone is ready to receive Him. Clearly, God was moving in Chelsea and He showed Joleene that when she took the time to pray.

**After someone trusts in Jesus, follow-up is crucial.** Joleene urged Chelsea to be baptized as her first act of obedience which ended up being a testimony to Chelsea's family. In addition, Joleene is coaching her how to start a DBS with her family so that they can see multiplication!





**THANK  
YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT**

**WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE  
TO DO IT **WITHOUT YOU!****

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# THE TEAM

## PAUL WATSON

### FOUNDER & COACH



Paul grew up witnessing the birth of modern Disciple Making Movement as his parents worked among an unreached people group in Northern India. Later, God called him to devote his life to helping people fall in love with Jesus by

by training disciple-makers and their teams around the world.

Paul founded Contagious Disciple Making to apply the principles of Disciple Making Movement in the US and Canada so that people who wouldn't normally go to church would have a chance to fall in love with Jesus and live in spiritual community.

## REBECCA EWING

### CEO & COACH



After working as the Pro-life Coalition Leader for South Carolina in the 2016 Presidential primary election, Rebecca helped build a non-profit to equip Christians in cultural activism and network among those already active within

their culture and community.

She created Gospel Engagement Teams that train Christians in apologetics, Biblical worldview, and evangelism and organize participants to culturally engage and transform their cities for Christ.

## RICKY POPE

### PRODUCTION SPECIALIST



After completing a BA in Music from a Christian college in Oklahoma, Ricky spent 15 years as a worship leader before changing his focus to video and audio production. Working with multiple organizations including book and music publishers, churches, missions organizations, news stations, and the US Postal Service, he has produced hundreds short commercials, audio-books, music videos, news reports, and training videos.

In 2015 he helped the "Where Was God: Stories of Hope After the Storm" feature documentary find a successful distribution deal as well as placement on Netflix for two years. And in 2018, He directed an award winning short film called "Overdue".

Currently, Ricky focuses on helping ministries with video production, hosts nerdy podcasts, operates multiple Christian focused social media pages, and serving his wife who has a total artificial heart and is prayerfully awaiting to be placed on the transplant list.

## DAVIN SANDERS

### PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST



Prior to joining the team at CDM, Davin was highly involved with the CDM community and received coaching while living in East Africa where she served with her family for nearly seven years. During her time overseas, she facilitated prayer meetings, helped organize and pro-

vided training for Discovery Bible Study, as well as DMM principles, and was blessed enough to see the first fruits of her and her team's labor through the baptisms of new believers.

Outside of work, Davin is best known for making tasty tacos to share with friends and family. Creating art, sunflowers, sunshine, and walking barefoot in the grass are just a few of the things she enjoys in her free time.

Davin holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. She currently resides in Texas with her husband and the tribe of five boys they created themselves.

## BEN HUNNICUTT

### PRODUCTION TEAM MEMBER



Through studying history, culture, language, religion and a Bachelor's in communication and spending time in South Asia and Eastern Europe, Ben nurtured a passion for helping people find out who they were created to be. Ben is a part of CDM's disciple-making commu-

ity and pursues relationships with unbelievers and seekers through his hobbies.

## MISHEEL MANDALSAIKHAN

### EXECUTIVE ADMIN ASSISTANT



Misheel graduated from Lesley University with a Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a focus in Art Therapy. During her Master's in Boston, she supported the socioemotional development of immigrant and disenfranchised youth in Christian afterschool pro-

grams. In addition, she supported the socioemotional development of elders with Alzheimer's, dementia, and age-related health issues in a Community Health Center.

She hopes to pursue her Ph.D in Social Psychology to study the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and, eventually, start a non-profit for Inner City Youth.

## MICHAEL GARCIA

### PRODUCTION INTERN



Michael is from San Diego, CA and has been involved with DMM for 2 years. In his free time, he enjoys going on walks, listening to music, reading, playing Halo, board games and ultimate frisbee, making video montages, etc. He wants to someday create his own sci-fi action adventure

cartoon for young adults. He is allegedly addicted to Coca Cola.





## WHAT WE HOPE FOR IN 2022

CDM's dream every year is to honor the Great Commission by coaching, training, and mentoring disciple-makers. We hope to continue supporting our community by creating more content to help our community grow and develop as disciple-makers. We hope to further expand the quality of our content and resources.

We have plans to further grow our Social Media presence and expand our online reach. We also have plans to start our 2022 DMC Summer Missions with past and new teams. We also have a couple of big projects that we're still in the process of planning!

Furthermore, we hope that 2022 will bring new team members to CDM. We hope that they will have skills and talents that will complement and bring fresh ideas to our talented team.

Though we do not know what will happen in 2022, we have faith that God will continue to direct us according to His plan. We hope that you will continue to support us through your prayers and partnership!

*- the CDM team*

## HOW TO SUPPORT CDM

### PRAY

Join our Wednesday prayer meetings and/or our private Facebook prayer page!

### CLASS

Learn the Biblical and philosophical basis of DMM!

### COACHING

Get personalized coaching to support your unique ministry and join a community with others like you!

### CONNECT

Reach out to us with your questions and requests!

### GIVE

Donate to the CDM team and help us support disciple-makers around the world!

### SHARE

Help us expand our community and create a larger network of disciple-makers by sharing CDM with your friends and family!

### FOLLOW

Follow us on our social media pages!

LEARN MORE AT [CONTAGIOUSDISCIPLMAKING.COM](https://contagiousdisciplemaking.com)



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