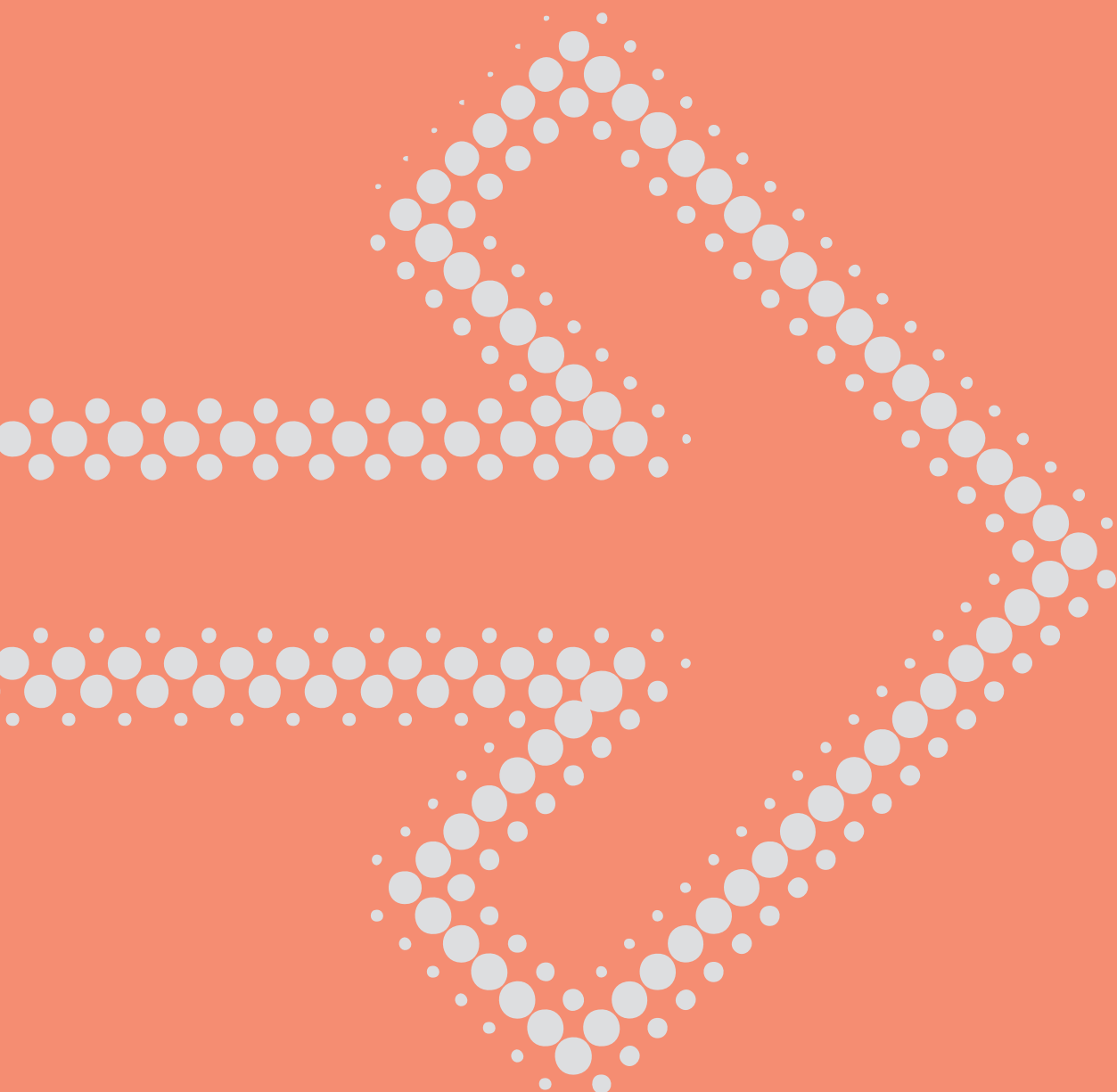
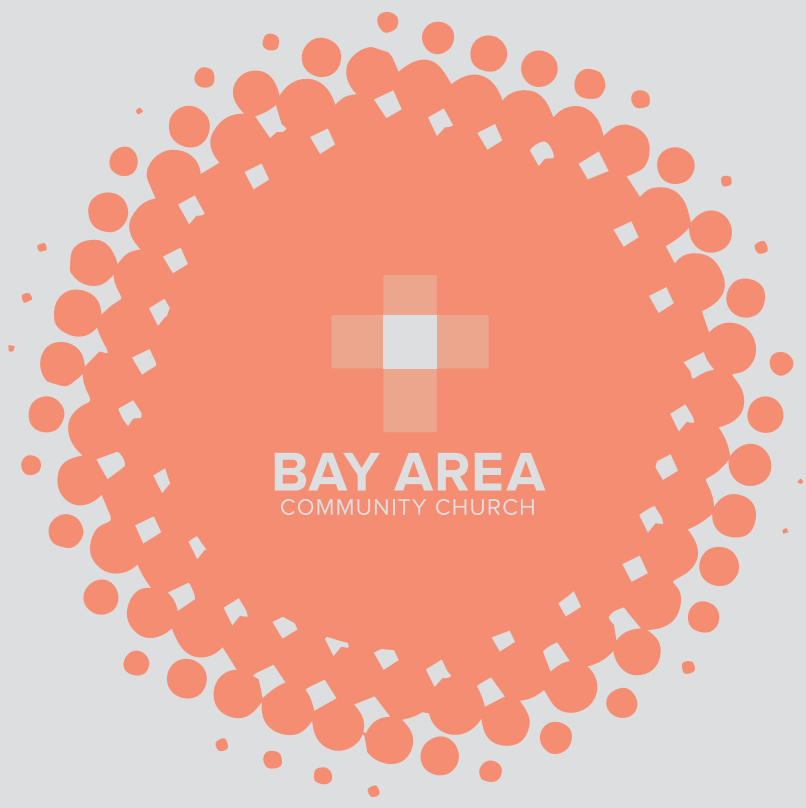




On Mission Field Guide



BAY AREA
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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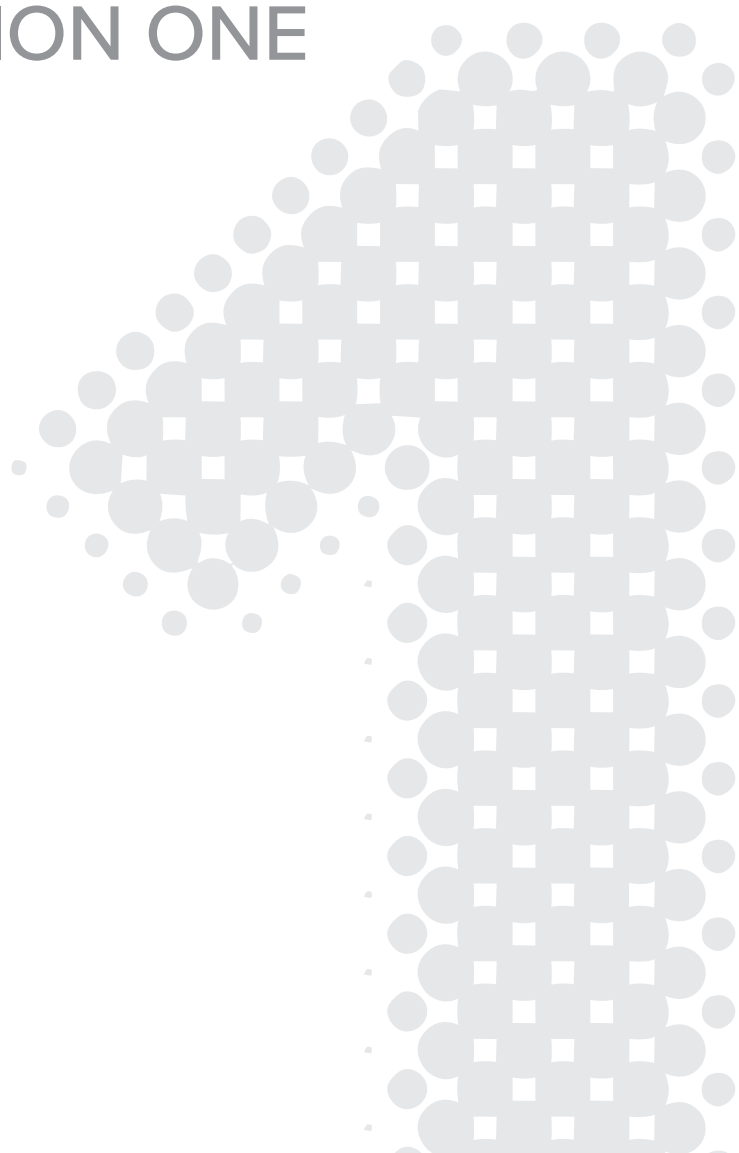
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GOOD NEWS PEOPLE

SECTION ONE



WHAT ARE WE REALLY TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH?

Ask ten people what *missions*, *outreach* or *evangelism* are, and you'll probably get ten different answers. Some think about mission trips. Others think about serving projects, food pantries, charity work, community events, social justice initiatives or helping people in need. These are all good things. Many of them can be important opportunities for disciples to show the love of Jesus. But how do you know what you are called to? And who is God asking the Church to be? Underneath all those activities lies a deeper question: *What are we really trying to accomplish?*

Is our goal to fix things? Is it to help people in need? The last 50 years of global aid and community development have proven that there are no quick fixes or silver bullets. It's a messy, long-term process.

Is our goal personal growth? Often, spiritual growth is measured by how much we know. Have I learned more, read more, studied more? Those things matter, but knowledge is never the destination.

So, *what are we really trying to accomplish?* Jesus' mission!

A disciple of Jesus is someone who follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is ON MISSION with Jesus. All three dimensions are important! Our discipleship to Jesus is bigger than information, behavior modification, or church attendance. The goal of discipleship is becoming more like Jesus and helping others to do the same.

Being ON MISSION with Jesus is not an extra assignment added onto discipleship, but a core part of discipleship itself. The more we become like Jesus, the more we begin to care about the things Jesus cares about, and the more we find ourselves joining Him in His work.

We are trying to accomplish Jesus' mission! What exactly is that mission? **If we had one verse to describe the mission, it would be Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."** We believe that God calls every disciple and every church to live out the mission of making disciples who turn around and make more disciples.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible tells the story of the God who moves toward people. He desires to be known, pursues those who have wandered, and invites us into abundant life with Him. That story reaches its fulfillment in Jesus.

Jesus didn't come to start a religion but to restore people to God. Throughout the Gospels, we see Him moving toward the broken, the overlooked, the outsider and those who don't yet know God, inviting them into relationship with Himself.

Jesus cared deeply about people's physical and emotional needs. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, comforted the grieving and welcomed those others rejected. But His compassion always pointed to something greater. He wasn't only changing people's circumstances; He was inviting them to know the Father who loved them. In this way, He was meeting humanity's deepest need: spiritual reunion with God.

Ultimately, the mission of Jesus in the first century is still His mission today: to help people begin a relationship with the God who created them, knows them, and loves them. Jesus is the same today and tomorrow as He was yesterday. People need more than help, they need *hope*. People need more than resources, they need *relationship*. People need more than temporary relief, they need *Jesus*.

The mission was never intended to belong primarily to church staff or to be confined to church buildings, nor was it designed to be something a handful of professionals do on behalf of everyone else. The mission belongs to all of us!

Instead of asking, "What ministry should the church start?" we begin asking, "How is Jesus inviting me to participate in what He is *already doing*?" Instead of asking, "How can we meet every need?" we begin asking, "How can we faithfully steward what God has already entrusted to us?" The idea is to shift our thinking from programs to people and from outsourcing the mission to living ON MISSION ourselves.

There will always be another problem to solve, cause to champion or need that deserves our attention, but if our goal is to meet every need, we will quickly become overwhelmed. It is helpful to clarify that when we talk about mission, this is what we mean: helping people move toward Jesus so they can discover who He is and experience the abundant life that is found in Him alone.

You could summarize the mission this way: **we want to be people who show and share the Good News of Jesus so that others might live.** We want people to experience the love of Jesus through our actions, and to hear about Jesus through our words. We care deeply about both parts because one without the other is incomplete. A gospel that is only spoken can feel distant and impersonal. A gospel that is only demonstrated will leave people wondering why we do what we do. Ultimately, both our showing and sharing should point to Jesus because Jesus is the goal.

That brings us to this Field Guide. Ultimately, this isn't a curriculum to complete or a checklist to finish, it's an invitation to join Jesus in His work. It's an invitation to pray for people who don't know Him, care for them well, and share the hope you've found in Christ. We want to be the kind of people who live ON MISSION right where God has already placed us. As you read, approach these pages with that mindset.

You will get out of this book what you put into it. If you simply read it, you may learn a few new ideas, but if you pray through it, discuss it with others, practice what you learn, and allow it to stretch you beyond your comfort zone, it can become a meaningful part of your discipleship journey. By the time you've worked through this Field Guide, you will hopefully notice that you've begun to see people differently, become more aware of God's work around you, and become more confident in showing and sharing the Good News of Jesus so that others might live.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

As disciples of Jesus, we are ON MISSION with Jesus! The ON MISSION Field Guide is helping us grow in this. After each chapter, there will be a practical section focused on how we take what we are learning and live it out. At times this part of our time will be more reflective. We might teach you a framework. Other times, you will be equipped with a new tool for your “ON MISSION” Toolbox. This is where we lean in and are shaped by the Spirit into more effective Good News People!

PAUSE:

Let’s stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

- (1) Before reading this section, what came to mind when thinking about the words *mission, evangelism, or outreach*? What emotions come up when considering those words?

- (2) We’ve just read that mission is one major strand of discipleship. How does this idea impact how you think about spiritual growth? How have you separated “growing in Jesus” from “joining Jesus ON MISSION”?

- (3) As we start this journey together to live ON MISSION and become more effective Good News People, what do you think you need to learn, understand, or get more skilled in?

PRAY:

Set the timer on your phone for two minutes. Pray that you would be equipped by the Spirit with the skills to be a more effective Good News Person over the course of this journey.

WHO AM I?

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is ON MISSION with Jesus. These three ideas belong together. They are not separate tracks of discipleship but three dimensions of the same life, but many of us find the third part the most difficult. We understand what it means to follow Jesus. We expect Him to change us over time. We readily embrace following Jesus and growing to become more like Him, but we often assume that living ON MISSION is for a select few, rather than every disciple.

Living ON MISSION with Jesus can feel intimidating. We imagine missionaries, evangelists, public speakers or unusually outgoing Christians. We picture people who seem gifted at talking to strangers answering hard questions, and leading people to faith everywhere they go. The result is that many ordinary disciples quietly conclude that while living ON MISSION may be important, it probably isn't meant for them.

But what if we've misunderstood the assignment? What if living ON MISSION with Jesus is not primarily about adding more activities to an already crowded schedule? What if it is less about intensity and more about intentionality? That is the vision behind the idea of being a Good News Person.

A Good News Person is someone who shows and shares the Good News of Jesus so that others might live. Our goal is to be a source of Good News in a world full of bad news. That's it! And the truth is that if you are a disciple of Jesus, you are *already* a Good News Person. Whether we realize it or not, we already carry the greatest news the world has ever heard: the Good News of Jesus' victory over sin and death.

The challenge is that many of us live out that identity in passive, unintentional ways. We know the truth but may struggle to find the right words, or we're not intentional in opportunities to show Jesus love.

Overcoming this challenge and living into our identity as Good News People begins with seeing the spaces where we live, work, play and learn with a missional perspective. **Jesus has already placed you with specific people and in specific places for a special purpose.**

If you do not feel gifted in evangelism, if you feel intimidated by the thought of talking about Jesus, if you are busy, tired, uncertain or even afraid, then you are in the right place!

This conversation, and this whole Field Guide, is not ultimately about trying harder and adding more to the calendar. It is about becoming more *intentional* with what we already have in front of us. **This is where the journey begins: seeing ourselves simply as *ordinary people carrying an extraordinary hope*.**

In fact, you are exactly the kind of person Jesus loves to use. You are not behind, disqualified or late. You are right where God wants you to be!

DO I HAVE TO?

We've said living ON MISSION is one of three dimensions of our discipleship, but *why* do we say that?

Before we talk about the “how” of all this, we need to answer a more fundamental question: Do we actually have to? Don't just take our word for it. Let's look at what the Bible has to say about that.

For many, that question itself feels uncomfortable. We know the answer we are supposed to give, but beneath the surface there is often a lurking question: Is sharing the Good News of Jesus *really* part of discipleship, or is it actually optional for most?

Where do we go to answer this question? Well, let's first examine the most famous passage about the mission. The section commonly called the Great Commission is found in Matthew 28. These are Jesus' final words to His disciples in Matthew:

The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and *make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them* to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20 CSB)

The central command is simple: “*make disciples*.”

“*Baptizing them*” represents making new disciples and adding them to the spiritual family of Jesus. “*Teaching them*” points to the lifelong process of growing to become more like Jesus and helping others to do the same. Both are included in the mission as outlined by Jesus. In Matthew 28. **As disciples, making other disciples has always been the mission.**

Jesus understood the enormity of what He was asking. After all, He was entrusting the future of His movement to a small group of ordinary followers. That is why His final promise is just as important as His final command in verse 20: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” **Jesus never intended His followers to carry this mission alone.**

What is fascinating, however, is that this mission does not suddenly appear at the end of Jesus' ministry, like we might expect. If we go back to the beginning of His story with the disciples, we discover that the mission was there all along.

As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. “**Follow me,**” he told them, “**and I will make you fish for people.**” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-20 CSB)

We often read that passage so quickly that we miss what Jesus is doing. His invitation contains two parts.

- “*Follow me*” is the call to relationship with Jesus. It is the invitation to learn from Him, walk with Him, and be transformed by Him. It is the call to be a disciple of Jesus.
- “*I will make you fish for people*” is the call to make disciples. It is the promise that those who follow Jesus will participate in helping others follow Him as well.

The two parts are inseparable. The Great Commission was not a surprise ending to the story. Jesus did not spend three years preparing His disciples for one thing only to hand them an entirely new assignment before ascending into heaven. **The mission was integral to the original invitation.**

If that is true, then the answer to the question, “Do I really have to be a Good News Person?” is clear: **yes**. Every follower of Jesus is called to be ON MISSION with Him. It’s not an optional part of discipleship; it’s part of what it means to follow Him. It was present in His first invitation, it was present in His final command, and it remains central to His mission today. **As disciples, making other disciples has always been the mission.**

SO, WHAT DO GOOD NEWS PEOPLE DO?

To some, the mission feels intimidating because it feels massive. How could I possibly make a difference? Or maybe it just seems vague. We hear words like evangelism, outreach, disciple-making, and witness, but we are often left wondering what those things look like on an ordinary afternoon.

When we look at the life of Jesus in the gospels and the early church in Acts, being a Good News Person is simpler than we might think. It certainly wasn’t easy, but it was surprisingly ordinary. The disciples prayed. They cared for people. They shared what they had seen and heard. They depended on God, loved their neighbors and spoke about Jesus.

Throughout this book, we are going to return to three simple “markers of intentionality” as seen in the lives of Jesus’ earliest followers: PRAYER, CARE and SHARE. We are Good News People in a bad news world whether we know it or not. Our goal is to become *intentional* Good News People.

These markers are simply indicators or signs that someone is intentionally joining Jesus in His mission. They are habits and rhythms that position us to effectively participate in what God is already doing around us.

- **PRAYER** cultivates dependence upon God’s power to do things that we cannot. So, we pray by name for people in our life that don’t yet know Jesus because He is the only one with the power to save.
- **CARE** is the expression of God’s love through relationships. So, we learn people’s names, listen to their stories and show up in their lives consistently.
- **SHARE** is speaking to others about the Good News that radically changes everything. So, we build the muscle to speak about Jesus, tell our story and explain the hope we have found in Him.

Prayer, Care, Share brings mission out of the realm of specialists and places it back into the hands of ordinary disciples.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

- (1) **Grab a Bible and re-read Matthew 4:18-20 and Matthew 28:18-20. Reflecting on the two together, what do they invite you to consider about your own calling as a disciple?**

- (2) **Who comes to mind when you imagine a Good News Person? What characteristics, attributes or behaviors do they practice or embody?**

- (3) **What is encouraging or challenging about seeing yourself as a Good News Person? Why?**

PRAY:

Set the timer for two minutes. Pray that you would be shaped by the Spirit to live more intentionally as a Good News Person.

1.3

WHAT’S HOLDING ME BACK?

The truth is that many of us are scared. Not scared in the dramatic sense. We aren’t afraid that someone is going to throw us in jail for talking about Jesus, at least in this country. We aren’t worried about losing our lives for our faith. Still, our fears are very real and powerful enough to keep us from living ON MISSION.

When we take the time to reflect on what holds us back, a list of our fears might look something like this...

- I’m afraid someone might ask a question I can’t answer.
- I’m afraid of damaging a friendship.
- I’m afraid because I’m an introvert.
- I’m afraid because I have my own questions and doubts.
- I’m afraid because I don’t know where to begin.

What fears would you add to the list?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

These are real fears for many of us and we all know people who feel the same way. Most followers of Jesus struggle not because we haven’t heard the Great Commission, but because we can think of a dozen reasons why we are not the right person for the job.

When we believe we aren’t equipped, aren’t gifted, don’t know enough or might get it wrong, we can respond in different ways. We might quietly leave mission out of our spiritual growth. We might turn it into another thing we need to “do better.” Or we might convince ourselves that we need to become an expert before we take that next step. Over time, our fears leave us stagnant, starved or spectating.

STAGNANT: Leaving mission behind.

Stagnant is an uncomfortable word because it sounds negative. If you say you are stagnant in your faith, it can sound like rebellion, failure or walking away from God. However, many relationships have seasons of stagnation. We have friends, siblings, spouses, and children who have seasons of ups and downs, of closeness and greater distance, of growing together and maybe just not growing at all. All relationships have seasons and your relationship with God is no different.

Sometimes we get stuck going through the motions even when we're doing all the right things. We attend church. We read our Bibles. We serve. We grow in our knowledge. Every one of those things is good. They change us by the power of the Spirit. However, when we focus solely on knowledge and personal growth, we miss something important. We can get stuck by not putting our knowledge into practice. We are following Jesus. We are being changed by Jesus. But we aren't living **ON MISSION** with Him. **Somewhere along the way, we have quietly, maybe even subconsciously, separated mission from maturity. They cannot be separated.**

One of the best illustrations is a car sitting in a garage. The car may be beautiful and well-maintained, with a full tank of gas and a powerful engine. If it never leaves the garage, it is failing to fulfill its purpose.

What can make this particularly difficult to recognize is that nobody tells us we are doing anything wrong. In fact, many of the things we are doing are genuinely good; we're just missing something essential.

The Christian life was never designed to be lived entirely inward. We are called to receive God's grace, but we are also called to share it. We are called to experience God's love, but we are also called to extend it. We are called to follow Jesus, but we are also called to join Him in seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10).

The irony is that we think mission is something that will drain us, burn us out or be something else to add to an already crowded life. What we will eventually discover is the opposite! **Living ON MISSION doesn't take away our purpose, it restores it.** Part of what it means to be human is to live for something larger than yourself. Part of what it means to be a disciple is to participate in God's mission in the world.

While that realization can help us understand what is missing in our walk with Jesus, it also exposes another problem lurking beneath the surface. We might not only be stagnant, we may also be starved.

STARVED: Losing sight of Good News.

When we open the Scriptures, we can easily see a list of everything we still need to do for Him rather than what Jesus has done for us. Every passage becomes, another reminder of where we fall short: pray more, serve more, give more, share more, trust more, obey more. The list can feel endless. **Instead of being amazed by grace, we become preoccupied with performance. Instead of seeing a Savior, we are culturally trained to see a scoreboard or an unfinished to-do list.** Instead of celebrating Jesus' finished work, we can slip into constantly measuring our own unfinished work. Many of us get to seasons like this eventually.

We know the language of grace and the theology of salvation, and we know that forgiveness comes through faith, not through works. Intellectually, we believe those things.

Functionally, however, we can spend seasons of our spiritual lives as though God's approval depends on our performance. Maybe you're in a season like this right now. We've all had times when we act as though acceptance had to be earned, or at least repaid. We treat the Christian life like a never-ending attempt to prove ourselves worthy of the price that was prepaid.

As we reflect on it, we realize that the root of this performance-dependent spiritual health mindset is that we have turned the Good News into bad news. We live our lives starving for Good News. We reduce the gospel to behavior management, focusing on our failures, weaknesses or shortcomings. Somewhere along the way, we become more focused on our sin than our Savior.

It is so hard to recognize when we are there; it's almost like we are the last ones to know when we are in a season like this. We want to become more like Jesus, and conviction is good and helpful. We want to be "a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God" (Romans 12:1 CSB). These are good things; they were just never the main thing. But fundamentally...

Spiritual life with Jesus isn't a "to-do list." It's an "already-done list." We don't behave worthy of God's sacrifice. Instead, God's sacrifice changes us from the inside out when we focus on what He *did* more than what we *do*.

Jesus never said, "Strive harder and you will bear much fruit." He said, "Abide in me" (John 15:4, ESV). Fruit is the result of abiding. As that truth begins to settle more deeply into our hearts, it changes the way we read Scripture. Passages that once felt like assignments begin to feel like invitations to rest, trust and abide in Jesus. **We work *from* the love of the Father; we don't work *for* it.** We can have the right ideas and intentions, but if the ideas aren't in the right order and our focus isn't on the right place, it will produce the wrong results.

Even then, there may be one more obstacle standing in our way. We know the mission, and we love the message, but we still struggle to participate. Why? We're spectating.

SPECTATING: Staying on the sidelines.

For many of us, we will realize that mission is a missing component of our discipleship long before we live differently.

We can find ourselves believing that if we just learn a little more, we will finally feel ready. One more book or podcast. One more training. One more answer to a difficult question. Somewhere along the way, preparation becomes procrastination.

Imagine someone who wants to become a great soccer player and decides the best path forward is to earn a master's degree in soccer. They study the history of the game. They learn every formation, strategy and tactical system. They can explain pressing schemes, possession structures and player development models better than anyone else. The only problem is that they never actually step onto the *field*. Soccer is meant to be played, not just studied!

Have you ever been there? It can be far too easy to spectate from the sides. But mission, like soccer, is learned on the *field*!

It is learned through imperfect conversations, awkward moments and opportunities that don't go the way we hoped. It is learned through praying for someone and wondering if we said the right thing, through inviting a neighbor to coffee, offering to pray for a coworker, sharing part of our story or finding the courage to mention Jesus when it would have been easier to remain silent.

One of our culture's greatest misconceptions is believing that God is asking us to become experts. We assumed that before we can be useful to Him, we need more confidence, more knowledge, better answers, and greater skill. Yet throughout the Bible, we see dozens and dozens of characters that are living counterexamples. God consistently uses the younger siblings, the weak, the culturally marginalized, the powerless and the least "expert" person in the room.

Just think of the disciples for a minute. Who in their right mind would entrust the world's largest and most important movement to an uneducated group of teenage boys led by a few overconfident twenty-something know-it-alls? *Jesus did*. Only Peter had reached adulthood, and even he constantly misunderstood Jesus' intentions and misread the situation. But when empowered by the Spirit, eleven young men began history's largest movement.

At some point in our walk with Jesus, we discover that God is far less concerned with our expertise than He is with our availability and intentionality.

SURRENDER

If we look more carefully at our list of fears a few pages ago, every fear begins with the same word: "*I*." Without realizing it, we place ourselves at the center of the entire conversation. My abilities. My personality. My fears. My comfort. My reputation. My success. My failure. Everything revolves around *me*.

Fear is a real emotion. Rejection hurts. Awkward conversations are uncomfortable. None of those concerns are imaginary. Looking back, we begin to realize that fear isn't actually the issue. **Fear is the symptom. The deeper issue is surrender.**

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew beside the Sea of Galilee, He didn't hand them a curriculum and tell them to spend a few years mastering the theory of fishing for people. He said, "Follow me, and *I will make you* fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19 CSB).

Then, Matthew recorded a remarkable response: "*Immediately they left their nets* and followed him" (4:20 CSB). The more we dwell on this passage, the more we realize that this is the heart of our unwillingness. We don't want to leave our nets!

Maybe your nets are comfort, control, certainty or self-protection. We like confidence before obedience. We like to know how everything will go before we step onto the field.

Maybe you are right there, waiting until you feel fearless, and **all the while Jesus is inviting you to just be faithful.**

The world is full of bad news, but disciples of Jesus carry Good News. We are ordinary people carrying an extraordinary hope. That hope has a name. His name is Jesus.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let’s stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

- (1) **How are you experiencing being Stagnant? Starved? Spectating? Do you personally resonate with any of what has been shared in this chapter?**

- (2) **What fear(s) create barriers to you living ON MISSION? What do you think is the source of that fear?**

What is a Bible verse that speaks to this fear? If one doesn’t come to mind, you may need to go and find one. Ask a friend (or even Google) for some ideas. Read some options and choose one that speaks to you.

VERSE =

(3) What does surrender look like in light of these fears? What is one small step you can take this week?

(4) How might living ON MISSION give you a greater sense of purpose in the everyday aspects of your life?

PRAY:

Set the timer for two minutes. Pray that when you feel afraid the Spirit would empower you with confidence in His power and remind you of this Bible verse.

YOUR MISSION FIELD

SECTION TWO



2.1

DISCIPLESHIP IS A JOURNEY.

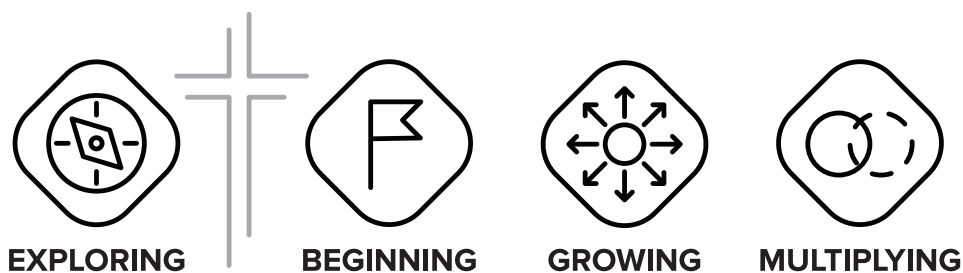
DISCIPLESHIP is the ongoing spiritual process of becoming more like Jesus and helping others do the same.

Said differently, discipleship is not primarily about arriving somewhere. It's about becoming. As we follow Jesus, He changes us over time, shaping our hearts, our character, our priorities and our lives. As He changes us, He invites us to help others follow Him as well.

The late Maryland Pastor Eugene Peterson called it, “a long obedience in the same direction.” The key word is direction, not destination.

We live in a culture obsessed with destinations. We want quick fixes, instant results and overnight transformation. We want growth to be fast, measurable and predictable, but discipleship rarely works that way. The Father is much more patient than we are. The Spirit works over months, years and decades as He forms us into the image of The Son. None of us have arrived. Whether you have been a follower of Jesus for nine minutes, nine months or ninety years, we are always learning, always being formed, always falling short and always forgiven. This is the journey we are on as we walk with Jesus for the rest of our lives.

While every person's story is unique, most spiritual journeys can be understood through four broad stages: **EXPLORING**, **BEGINNING**, **GROWING** and **MULTIPLYING**.



Many people we know are **EXPLORING** faith: they are asking questions, investigating Jesus, and trying to make sense of what they believe. Some are **BEGINNING**: they have recently placed their faith in Jesus and are learning what it means to follow Him. Others are **GROWING**: they are developing spiritual maturity as they learn to follow Jesus in every area of life. A few are **MULTIPLYING**: they are helping others grow as they continue growing themselves.

These stages are not rigid categories, nor are they a scorecard for measuring spiritual success. They are simply a reminder that discipleship is a process and that everyone is somewhere on the journey.

NOT ALL EXPLORERS ARE THE SAME

What does EXPLORING actually look like? The Bible gives a surprising answer. Not all people who are exploring faith are the same.

One of the clearest examples of this comes from Paul's visit to Athens in Acts 17. After reasoning with philosophers and speaking at the Areopagus, Paul proclaims the resurrection of Jesus.

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him, but others said, "We'd like to hear from you again about this." So Paul left their presence. However, some people joined him and believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. (Acts 17:32-34 CSB)

Luke recorded three very different responses. Some mocked, some wanted more information and others believed. The same message from the same preacher led to three very different responses. Why? Because people were in different places spiritually.

As we search the Bible, we can see that this isn't unique to Athens. People encounter Jesus from very different starting points. Some seem **CLOSED** to Him. Others are **CURIOUS** about Him. Others are wrestling and **CONSIDERING** a decision to follow Him.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CLOSED?

Look at Jesus' visit to Nazareth in Luke 4. At first, the people speak well of Him and marvel at His teaching, but when Jesus begins challenging their assumptions, the crowd turns on Him. Before long, they are attempting to drive Him out of town. The problem wasn't a lack of information. They thought they already knew Him: where He grew up, His family, or even who He was, but their assumptions prevented them from seeing Him clearly.

This is often what a **CLOSED** person looks like. **CLOSED** does not always mean hostile. When many Christians hear the word closed, they imagine someone who is angry, combative, argumentative or thinks that faith is a fairy tale. Sometimes that is true, but often **closed simply means uninterested, distracted, misinformed, wounded, skeptical or convinced they already know who Jesus is.**

Others are **CLOSED** because they have inherited assumptions about Jesus and they have never taken the time to examine those assumptions for themselves. They may have heard that following Jesus is anti-science, judgmental, hypocritical, political, outdated, oppressive or irrelevant. They may have had a painful church experience or known Christians who did not look much like Jesus. They may have been introduced to a version of Jesus that was mostly rules, shame, pressure or performance. These realities matter because **an improper introduction leads to an improper conclusion every time.**

This should actually make us hopeful! If someone has never been properly introduced to the real Jesus, it shouldn't surprise us if they have reached the wrong conclusion about Him. This leaves an opportunity for the Good News Person.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN SOMEONE IS CURIOUS?

Next we can look at Nicodemus in John 3. Unlike the crowd in Nazareth, Nicodemus comes looking for Jesus. He arrives under the cover of darkness with real questions. He doesn't understand what Jesus says, and he wants to know more. He's investigating. **EXPLORING**, as one might say. Nicodemus is trying to make sense of what he's seeing. He's not ready to follow Jesus yet, but he isn't dismissing Him either. He is **CURIOUS**.

We know people like this too. They're not yet convinced, but they're open. They're willing to look. **They are not ready to trust Jesus, but they are willing to learn more about Him.**

Being **CURIOUS** begins when something in them seems to open. Perhaps a conversation turns to questions about faith and worldview, or a person who once seemed indifferent begins to wonder. Maybe they've just met a Christian they respect. Maybe they are going through a season of suffering or wrestling with things like meaning, purpose, identity, death, anxiety, loneliness or hope. Maybe something about your life has created a question they cannot quite shake.

In the next chapter, John 4, we encounter another picture of someone exploring: the woman at the well. She begins with questions and skepticism, pushing back and changing the subject, but she stays in the conversation with Jesus. Little by little, something begins to change. Her questions become personal and the conversation moves from information to implication. She is no longer simply asking, "Who is this man?" but rather begins to wrestle with what His identity means for her life.

CLOSED people become **CURIOUS**. **CURIOUS** people start **CONSIDERING**. Questions become personal. Exploration becomes an encounter. Learning about Jesus becomes wrestling with what to do with Jesus.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN SOMEONE IS CONSIDERING?

That is exactly what we see in Acts 16 with Lydia. When Paul meets her outside Philippi, she is already seeking God. Luke told us that, "the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul" (Acts 16:14 CSB). Paul did not create spiritual interest in Lydia's life; he simply discovered where God was already at work.

Lydia seems to be standing at the edge of belief. She isn't merely curious anymore; she is seriously **CONSIDERING** what it means to respond to Jesus and decide to follow Him.

CONSIDERING is different from being CURIOUS because the questions become personal. The issue is no longer, "What do Christians believe?" The issue becomes, "What do I believe?" and even, "Should I follow Jesus?"

A person who is **CONSIDERING** may be reading Scripture, asking deeper questions, processing objections, praying for the first time in years, wondering about baptism or even attending church occasionally. The commonality is that they are wrestling with what it would mean to trust Jesus. They may be counting the cost or considering what would need to change in their life. They may feel drawn toward Jesus and afraid of what following Him might require.

This stage can be exciting, but it can also be uncomfortable. Following Jesus involves trust and

surrender. It involves turning away from a former way of life and to a relationship; it's a new way of seeing everything.

Even if someone starts to consider Jesus, the outcome is not guaranteed. The rich young ruler in Mark 10 provides a sobering counterexample. He comes to Jesus sincerely, asking good questions and appearing eager to learn. However, when Jesus invites him to surrender the thing he loves most, he walks away grieving.

Now compare him to Zacchaeus in Luke 19. Like the rich young ruler, Zacchaeus encounters Jesus personally and is confronted with the reality of who Jesus is. His response is completely different. One walks away, one follows. One resists, one receives.

As we study these stories, we begin to see that once we understand where someone is at in their spiritual journey, it becomes much easier to understand what they may need next. Some people need their assumptions challenged while others need their questions answered. Some might just need an invitation and a nudge to take a step of faith.

Real people are always more complicated than frameworks and neat categories, but Scripture consistently shows us that people approach Jesus from different places, ask different questions, carry different assumptions and take different steps.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

We just read about the three stages of people exploring faith: closed, curious, considering. Take a moment to reflect on each. What is a helpful way for you to remember each one? How might you describe each in your own words? **Is there anyone in your life who fits into this category?**

People I have in mind =

- (1) What does it mean to be CLOSED? How would you recognize someone who is closed off to Jesus? What characteristics, attributes or behaviors might you recognize? Who do you know that is CLOSED to Jesus?

- (2) What does it mean to be CURIOUS? How would you recognize someone who is curious about Jesus? What characteristics, attributes, or behaviors might you recognize? Who do you know that is CURIOUS about Jesus?

- (3) What does it mean to be CONSIDERING? How would you recognize someone who is considering faith in Jesus? What characteristics, attributes, or behaviors might you recognize? Who do you know that is CONSIDERING Jesus?

PRAY:

Set a timer for a few minutes. Pray that the Spirit would help us to see the heart of people who are exploring and teach us to see them as God sees them so that we can meet them where they are.

ONE STEP CLOSER.

Like we've said, real people are always more complicated than categories. Someone may be curious about Jesus intellectually while remaining closed emotionally. Someone may be considering faith while carrying deep wounds from a previous church experience. Someone may seem completely uninterested on the surface while privately wrestling with questions they have never shared with anyone. Others may move back and forth between stages over time.

Spiritual journeys are rarely straight lines. As we studied the stories in the previous chapter, we saw that Jesus consistently met people where they were and helped them take a step of faith.

If everyone is in a different place and needs different things, how can we know if we're succeeding? It can be tempting to measure evangelism by outcomes. Did we say the right thing? Did the conversation "work"? Did someone make a decision? Those questions are understandable because we care deeply about people knowing Jesus.

When we define success only by visible results, discouragement isn't far behind. We begin to judge every conversation by whether someone came to faith, and if they don't, it's easy to feel like we failed. We can miss the reality that God is often at work in ways we can't yet see. So, if outcomes aren't the measure, what is? Faithfulness. **Our role is not to manufacture a response but to faithfully join Jesus in helping people take their one next step closer to Him.**

Discipleship is the ongoing spiritual process of becoming more like Jesus and helping others do the same. Many people are EXPLORING. Some are BEGINNING. Others are GROWING. A few are MULTIPLYING. When we see people through the lens of this journey, our responsibility becomes clearer: meet people where they are and help them take one step closer to Jesus.

Sometimes that step is big. More often, it's small. But every step matters. As you join Jesus in His mission, you'll discover that it isn't about getting someone to the finish line. Instead, we have the privilege of faithfully joining Jesus where He is already at work and helping the person in front of you move one step toward Him.

HOW DO I WALK WITH EXPLORERS?

Throughout Scripture, God often uses agricultural imagery to describe spiritual growth. That would have made perfect sense to the Bible's original audience because farming was a part of their life. The agricultural world was rich with images connected to their everyday realities which made spiritual truth tangible, visual, and memorable.

For example, Jesus compared people's hearts to different kinds of soil and God's Word to seed (Matthew 13:1-9). Isaiah described God's Word like rain that waters the earth and produces growth (Isaiah 55:10-11). Jesus spoke of fields that were ripe for harvest. These were invitations to see spiritual transformation through something people experienced every day.

That same imagery gives us a helpful framework today. Just as every field requires different care, every person is in a different place on their spiritual journey. Some hearts need to be cultivated while others are ready to receive the seed of God's Word. Others may need encouragement as their faith begins to grow. And eventually, there is a harvest.

The harvest isn't another stage of the journey, it's a response: the moment someone chooses what they will do with Jesus. When someone places their trust in Him they move through the doorway from exploring faith to beginning a life of following Jesus.

That doesn't mean every question has been answered or every doubt has disappeared. It means that despite the existence of those things, they've encountered Jesus and chosen to follow Him. The lifelong journey of discipleship continues, but it begins with that decision.

Let's consider for a moment how we can help others take steps of faith. Using some agricultural metaphors, we'll explore simple ways we can meet people where they're at and partner with God in the work of moving them one step closer to Him.

FOR THE CLOSED: CULTIVATE SOIL

The heart is soil. And when someone is CLOSED, that soil is hard, dry, and nutrient deprived. It's barren, and nothing can grow in it. **In order for something to be able to grow, we need to tend the soil and create a field where something can grow.**

How might we help? When someone is closed to faith, resist the urge to convince them. One of the important ways that we can do this is by **helping them question their assumptions**. We've said that someone who is CLOSED might be uninterested, distracted, misinformed, wounded, skeptical or convinced they already know who Jesus is. They've had an improper introduction to Jesus. So we kindly and gently help them question their own assumptions.

There also may be assumptions hidden in their world view. For example, coming to know one true God would be next to impossible if someone doesn't believe in universal truth. The churn from our questions tills and cultivates the soil of their heart. What questions might you ask? It might sound like...

- *"Where did you come to believe that?"*
- *"Why do you think that is true?"*
- *"Have you ever looked into it yourself?"*

What else can we be doing? **Focus on building a relationship with them.** Pray for them, listen well, care for them consistently, and look for opportunities to demonstrate the love of Jesus through your life. Invite them into community without pressure, and trust that God is at work long before you see a response. This caring demonstration of God's love in friendship CULTIVATES their soil by introducing the nutrients they have been lacking.

FOR THE CURIOUS: PLANT SEEDS

Their heart's soil has been cultivated. **Now they are ready for planting, so the next step is to plant seeds.**

How might we do this? As we saw, someone in this phase is open to learning about Jesus. The main thing we can be doing in this phase is helping them ask and respond to great questions. Create space for real questions and listen with humility.

When those questions arise, **give them nuggets of truth.** Be willing to say, "I don't know" when you don't have an answer. You don't need to tell them everything about Jesus, but you can share something about Him that would intrigue them and invite them to know more. **The goal is to provide some answers in a way that helps them ask additional questions and leaves them interested in knowing more.**

Curiosity and openness are opportunities to explore, not a sign for you to speed up the process. Therefore, share your story. Tell them about Jesus, who He was, and what He did. Open the Bible together to read the real first-hand accounts of Jesus. Help them to build an understanding of the Story of Jesus. Your role isn't to know how to answer every question but to help them keep taking the next right step by continuing to point them to Jesus. When you caringly share about Jesus, scripture, and stories, you PLANT seeds of truth.

FOR THE CONSIDERING: WATER SPROUTS

Some of the seeds we've planted are beginning to sprout. They're delicate, not yet taking root. We don't know if they will make it, but there is movement. **They haven't been formed into a plant yet, but there are signs of life, so we water and nurture the sprouts.**

How do we water? First, identify the signs of life. Next, **encourage them to go deeper.** We might see some of those nuggets of truth really take hold. It might be an aspect of our story that they want to understand more. It could be some of the stories about Jesus that seem to fascinate them. Notice what is connecting with them, and then encourage them to press in. If they connected with one story about Jesus, for example, help them find another.

Then press deeper, asking them to consider who Jesus is in light of these stories. It might sound like...

- *"Have you ever heard a story like that before?"*
- *"What kind of person do you think would do that?"*
- *"Why do you think that the people in the story came to that conclusion?"*

Next, we help them turn their questions towards themselves. This might sound something like, *"That's what they thought; what do you think?"*

What else can we be doing? As someone begins seriously CONSIDERING Jesus, help bring clarity to the gospel and create space for deep conversation. Ask thoughtful questions, address barriers with grace and don't be afraid to invite them to respond. There's a difference between pressure and invitation. Pressure tries to manufacture a decision; invitation simply offers the opportunity to take a step of faith. Trust the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do! WATER what God is already growing in them.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

We just read about how we might walk with people EXPLORING faith in Jesus. Take a moment to reflect on what you've learned about how we can CULTIVATE, PLANT, and WATER. How might you describe each in your own words?

(1) What does it mean to CULTIVATE soil? What might you do to help them take one step closer to Jesus?

(2) What does it mean to PLANT seeds? What might you do to help them take one step closer to Him?

(3) What does it mean to WATER sprouts? What might you do to help them take one step closer to Him?

PRAY:

Set a timer for a few minutes. Pray that the Spirit would help us to see opportunities to plant seeds and give us the words to speak.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

INSTRUCTIONS:

Not all people exploring faith are the same. The framework is simply a tool to help us understand how we can help them take one step closer to Jesus. Let's take a moment to pull together all that we have learned so far. Fill in each empty box. (1) Copy your personal definitions of these three stages of exploring from the previous chapter (pages 20-21). (2) Then based on what you wrote on the previous page, what are one or two questions that you could ask someone in that stage to help spark a spiritual conversation?

THE EXPLORERS MAP

	CLOSED	CURIOUS	CONSIDERING
What defines this stage?	Not looking for a God. Often indifferent, uninterested, skeptical, wounded.	Open to exploring Jesus. Questions are emerging. Interest is growing.	Questions have become more personal. Know of Jesus but hasn't decided to follow Jesus.
What might they think?	"I don't see why God matters."	"Tell me more about this Jesus."	"What am I going to do with Jesus?"
My definition for this phase...			

MY ROLE WITH EXPLORERS

CLOSED	CURIOUS	CONSIDERING	
CULTIVATE SOIL	PLANT SEEDS	WATER SPROUTS	My Role
Understand their story. Prepare the soil. Cultivate genuine relationship. Be in their life. Ask questions. Challenge assumptions gently. Listen well. Create curiosity.	Seek to understand more of their story, specifically their spiritual journey. Share parts of your story following Jesus. Introduce them to Jesus. Plant seeds through Scripture, stories, questions, invitations, and experiences.	Look for signs of life and lead them deeper. Clarify the Good News. Remove obstacles. Make the invitation. Continue pointing them toward Jesus. Explore answers to question's together. Invite to church.	What does that mean?
			My questions to ask at this phase...
Giving answers before creating curiosity. Oversharing about Jesus and the Good News.	Talking more than listening. Trying to rush the process. Never sharing about Jesus.	Never sharing the Good News. Avoiding the invitation because it feels awkward.	Common Mistakes
Nazareth (Luke 4)	Nicodemus (John 3) Woman at the Well (John 4)	Lydia (Acts 16) Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10) Zacchaeus (Luke 19)	Biblical Examples
Move toward openness.	Move toward encountering Jesus.	Move toward responding to Jesus.	Goal

JOINING JESUS...

For many of us, when we hear the word “MISSION” we first think of somewhere far away. Mission and leaving the country can become synonymous, and we can think living ON MISSION can only mean getting on an airplane to somewhere else.

As we grow our muscles as Good News People, we learn to see that “MISSION” happens here, not just over there – that changes everything. Instead of asking, “Where should I *go*?” we begin asking, “Where is Jesus *already* at work? Where does He want me?” More often than not, the answer is right where you already are.

WHERE IS GOD WORKING?

Before we learn how to care well, share well, or invite someone to follow Jesus, we first need to learn to pay attention and become in tune with where God is already at work. We call the ability to see God’s mission around us “**MISSIONAL PERSPECTIVE.**”

Good News people are ON MISSION with Jesus where we live, work, play, and learn. To live ON MISSION locally, we have to train our eyes. Jesus was always in tune with the missional opportunities around Him. The way He saw the world around Him informed how, and with whom, He spent His time. Like Jesus, we need eyes to see what God is already doing and the courage to step into it. The invitation is simple: slow down, pay attention, and participate.

When we think about our local mission, there are two different and complementary ways that God tends to work. God tends to put us in **FIELDS**. **Fields are places you regularly go where you have opportunities to build new relationships with people who don’t yet know Jesus.** These are places where God has placed us intentionally. This could be your neighborhood where you live, the office where you work, the pickleball courts, the playgrounds where you and your kids play, or the school where you or your kids learn. As we grow in our intentionality as a Good News Person, we begin to see FIELDS as opportunities and missional spaces.

The second way God tends to work is by placing people in our life. God gives us **FRIENDS! These are people that we know that don’t yet know Jesus.** These can also be missional opportunities.

We begin paying attention to the people God has already placed in our lives: the coworker down the hall, the neighbor across the street, the parent beside us at a game, the cashier we see every week, or the friend we’ve known for years. As Good News People, we see that God is already at work around us. We take notice and join Him.

As we build up our “MISSIONAL PERSPECTIVE,” we start to see FIELDS & FRIENDS everywhere! It’s no longer just another meeting at work, dinner with friends, or conversation with a neighbor. Every space and person becomes an opportunity for God to work.

Being a Good News Person isn’t about adding more to your calendar but about approaching the moments already on your calendar with greater missional intentionality. As we learn to see the mission around us, we can join Jesus where He’s already at work.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

BUILDING MISSIONAL PERSPECTIVE

We are Good News People in a world full of bad news! In this field guide, we are growing in our intentionality in living *ON MISSION* in the places and relationships that make up our everyday lives.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Thinking about where we live, work, play, and learn through the lenses of *FIELDS & FRIENDS* helps us to take an appraisal and build a *MISSIONAL PERSPECTIVE*. Where is God already at work? What opportunities do I have to join Him? Where are your *FIELDS*? Who are your *FRIENDS*? Take a moment and fill out the map for yourself. *FRIENDS* may be acquaintances, a close colleague, a personal friend, or someone you see regularly but don't even know their name yet.

What is a disciple?



***Someone who follows Jesus,
is being changed by Jesus
and is on mission with Jesus.***

	<i>FIELDS</i>	<i>FRIENDS</i>
<i>Where I LIVE...</i>	PLACES: Where do I regularly go where I have opportunities to build new relationships with people who don't yet know Jesus?	PEOPLE: Who do I know that doesn't yet know Jesus?
	<i>Example: President Street in Eastport (my neighborhood)</i>	
<i>Where I WORK...</i>	<i>Example: United States Naval Academy (my workplace)</i>	
<i>Where I PLAY...</i>	<i>Example: Planet Fitness (my gym)</i>	
<i>Where I LEARN...</i>	<i>Example: Windsor Farm Elementary (my kids' school)</i>	

PRAYER
SECTION THREE



3.1

WHY PRAYER COMES FIRST.

If Prayer, Care and Share are the three markers of an intentional Good News Person, it's worth asking why prayer comes first. If relationships are often the bridge to spiritual conversations, shouldn't care come before prayer? If our goal is helping people encounter Jesus, shouldn't we focus first on learning how to share our faith? Yet throughout Scripture, prayer consistently appears before all else. That pattern is not accidental. Prayer comes first because Jesus made it first.

One of the most striking observations in the Gospels is how often Jesus prayed. Time and again, Jesus withdrew from the crowds to spend time with His Father. Before major decisions, significant moments of ministry, after demanding seasons, and even in moments of deep personal anguish, Jesus prayed. **Prayer was a defining rhythm in Jesus' life. His ministry was marked not only by teaching, healing and serving, but by a continual dependence upon His Father through prayer.**

Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than at the beginning of His public ministry. Before preaching a sermon, performing a miracle, calling His disciples or traveling from town to town proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness fasting and praying. If anyone could have skipped that season of preparation, it was Jesus! Yet before beginning the ministry that would change the world, He devoted Himself to prayer. Jesus never let the work of ministry replace dependence. Before stepping into activity, He first spent time with His Father – and so should we.

Prayer is first because Jesus MODELED it.

Prayer was not only modeled by Jesus, it was also prescribed by Jesus. One of the clearest examples appears in Matthew 9. Jesus had been traveling throughout the region teaching, proclaiming the Good News and healing the suffering. Everywhere He went, crowds gathered. The needs were overwhelming and the opportunities for ministry seemed to stretch in every direction. Looking at the people around Him, Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few." (Matthew 9:37 CSB)

Jesus is making the point that there are more missional opportunities than there are workers. There are more people in need of Jesus than people willing to talk about Jesus. The fields are overflowing in abundance; the harvest is waiting.

What does that have to do with prayer? What makes the passage so relevant is what Jesus says next. We might assume Jesus would tell His disciples to recruit more workers, develop a strategy, create a plan, organize the crowds or launch a new initiative. Instead, Jesus says, "Therefore, **pray to the Lord of the harvest** to send out workers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:38 CSB)

Prayer is first because Jesus PRESCRIBED it.

Before Jesus tells His disciples to go into the harvest, He teaches them to pray. In a culture that values productivity, efficiency and measurable results, prayer can feel like the least practical response imaginable. It doesn't feel like taking action or enacting a winning strategy that will lead to progress in bringing people to Jesus. **Prayer feels like inaction. Yet, prayer is the action that Jesus repeatedly points His followers back to.**

*“You can do more than pray after you have prayed,
but you cannot do more than pray
until you have prayed.” – John Bunyan*

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

- (1) Take a moment to reflect on your prayer life. What do your prayer rhythms look like and what do you typically pray about?

- (2) Where or when are you most tempted to skip prayer? What do you prioritize over giving space for pray? Planning? Productivity?

- (3) What can Jesus' dependence on prayer teach you about what your own prayer life could look like? What prayer rhythms would you want to establish?

PRAY:

Set a timer for five minutes and pray about anything on your heart.

3.2

PRESSURE WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO CARRY...

When it comes to sharing our faith, we tend to assume far more responsibility than Scripture places on us. We feel pressure to say the right thing, answer every question, overcome every objection and somehow convince another person to follow Jesus. We carry the weight of outcomes on our shoulders as though someone's salvation ultimately depends upon our performance.

Most of us would never say that out loud. Theologically, we know better. We know that salvation belongs to God. We know that only the Holy Spirit can change a human heart and that faith is a gift from the God who lovingly draws people to Himself. Yet functionally, many of us live as though everything depends on us.

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul addressed a church that had become obsessed with personalities, influence and who should take credit for the outcomes. Some Corinthian Christians credited Paul, while others preferred Apollos. They were measuring spiritual success by human leaders and human performance. In response, Paul intentionally redirected their attention away from people and back to God.

For whenever someone says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not acting like mere humans? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, and each has the role the Lord has given. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's coworkers. You are God's field, God's building.
(1 Corinthians 3:4-9 CSB)

Notice the humility in Paul's response. He doesn't place himself at the center of the story, nor does he elevate Apollos. Both men had important roles to play, but neither possessed the power to change lives. To understand this better, we can look deeper at the agricultural illustration Paul used: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." A farmer can prepare the soil, sow the seed and water the field, but a farmer cannot create life. New life remains a gift from God.

Both Paul and Apollos participated in God's work meaningfully, but neither was responsible for the outcome. The same is true for us today.

That distinction is incredibly freeing because it removes a burden we were never meant to carry. We are not responsible for saving people, changing hearts or producing spiritual results. **We are responsible for faithfulness. If growth belongs to God, hope remains, because He is responsible for the results and He can be trusted.**

This is where prayer comes in. Prayer is a part of the means that God uses to accomplish His greater purposes, and this applies to evangelism as well. Many Christians treat prayer as though it's the soft part of evangelism or the preparation step before *real* evangelism can begin. We make prayer the warm-up before the real work begins. Jesus saw things differently. **Prayer is the primary way God invites us to participate in work that only He can do!**

One of the most profound truths in Scripture is that God is totally and completely in control. There is not a maverick molecule in the cosmos that is outside of His reign, authority, and control. If that's true, God not only ordains the ends, He also ordains the means. In other words, God not only chooses how it will end, He also chooses how it will happen. When we pray, we are acknowledging this reality and coming alongside His plans rather than working toward our own.

Prayer is not only part of how God chooses to involve us in His plans for *other* people, it's also how He works in our *own lives*. Prayer draws us deeper into dependence on the God of the universe who cares about our deepest desires and longings. Prayer is how we cultivate a life of worship and align our hearts and wills with God's. Prayer reminds us that we are participants, not saviors – both for ourselves and others. It's what constantly draws us back to the fact that God's power – and not our performance has given us every story of salvation.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

THE PRAYER BOOKMARK

Write the names of
seven people who
don't yet know Jesus.

Pray for them by name.

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

This is a simple tool with the goal of forming a lifelong practice of praying by name for the people in your life who don't yet know Jesus personally. We pray because God loves people long before we do, because He is already at work in their lives and because prayer, both changes us and the people we're praying for.

Of course, good intentions are easy. Consistent habits are much harder. That's why we created THE PRAYER BOOKMARK. Think of it as a gentle reminder that appears throughout your week to pray for those in your life who don't yet know Jesus. Slip it into your Bible or copy of Chapter A Day, leave it on your nightstand, tape it to your bathroom mirror, keep it on your desk or in your car. Put it somewhere you'll see it often enough that you'll be nudged to remember: *Who am I praying for today?*

The bookmark includes space for seven names: one for each day of the week. Start with people you already know who don't yet know Jesus: family members, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, teammates or the barista who knows your coffee order by heart. These are your FRIENDS from the FIELDS & FRIENDS exercise that we did.

Don't worry about building the perfect list. God may place new people on your heart over time, and that's okay. Even if the names change, the practice stays the same. If seven feels like too many, begin with one. The goal isn't filling every line on the bookmark, it is faithfully praying for the people God has already placed in your life.

INSTRUCTIONS:

If you haven't done so already, get and fill out a Prayer Bookmark, make a list on a piece of paper, or create a note in your phone.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

Look back at your FIELDS & FRIENDS exercise. Whose names did you write down?

PRAY:

Take a few minutes and pray over who the Lord would want you to add to your bookmark. Then, write those seven names on your bookmark

One more thing. People often ask: "What should I pray?" The truth is you could pray anything! But if you don't know where to start, here are some options:

Pray for **openness**. Ask God to soften their heart and help them become open to Jesus.

Pray for **awareness**. Ask God to help you notice where He is already at work in their life and to give you eyes to recognize the opportunities He is creating.

Pray for **wholeness**. Ask God to bring healing, peace, hope, wisdom and stability into the places where life feels broken.

Pray for **relationships**. Ask God to surround them with people who genuinely reflect the love and character of Jesus. Ask God how to take the next step of friendship.

Pray for **timing**. Ask God to open the right doors, close the wrong ones, and prepare both of your hearts for the conversations He wants you to have.

Pray for their **next step**. Don't feel like every prayer has to ask for immediate conversion. Ask God to help them take one step closer to Jesus.

Finally, pray with **gratitude**. Thank God for this person. Thank Him for the privilege of knowing them and for inviting you to participate in what He is already doing in their life.

At the end of the day, don't worry about finding the "right" way to use the bookmark. Pray during your morning coffee. Pray while driving to work. Pray on your evening walk. Write a one-sentence prayer in a journal. Pray a verse of Scripture over someone's name. Ask your community group, "Who's your Thursday person?" and then pray for one another's people. The specific method matters far less than the consistency of the habit.

You'll probably miss a day. Maybe even a week. Don't let that discourage you! Every time you remember, simply begin again.

SEEING AS JESUS SEES.

Over time, something really cool happens when you consistently pray for people by name. They stop becoming “the lost ” or “that coworker.” They become Sarah. Mike. Emma. Your neighbor. Your friend. It’s difficult to faithfully pray for someone without beginning to care more deeply about them. That’s because prayer aligns our hearts with God’s and changes our vision for people, allowing us to see them as God sees them. A great example of this comes from the life of the Apostle Paul in Acts 18. Paul arrived in Corinth and began doing what he usually did: teaching, reasoning with people in the synagogue and sharing the Good News of Jesus. Some believed, but many opposed him; tension and conflict began to arise. Paul responded like this:

When they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his clothes and told them, “Your blood is on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”
(Acts 18:6 CSB)

Paul was experiencing the fear, frustration and very real danger that comes from rejection. Most of us know what that feels like. Maybe not on Paul’s level, but we know what it is like to become discouraged by people. We know what it feels like to invite someone repeatedly only to be declined every time. We know what it feels like to have spiritual conversations that seem to go nowhere.

Eventually, it becomes tempting to give up. And that is exactly where Paul found himself in this passage. But then God showed up:

The Lord said to Paul in a night vision, “Don’t be afraid, but keep on speaking and don’t be silent. For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city.” (Acts 18:9-10 CSB)

What a thing for God to say in this moment! “I have many people in this city.” When Paul looked at Corinth, he saw opposition. But, the Lord saw His people. Where Paul saw hostility, The Lord saw the harvest. Paul saw reasons to leave. The Lord saw reasons to stay. So, what happened next?

He stayed there a year and a half, teaching the word of God among them.
(Acts 18:11 CSB)

Instead of leaving, Paul stuck around! God knew that if Paul could see people not as frustrating or threatening obstacles, but as people ready for the Good News, then it would open a new door for Paul to join the mission. Once Paul could see what Jesus saw, it changed everything for him.

The same thing happens to us in prayer. **Prayer postures our heart to see people the way that Jesus does.**

So how does Jesus see people? Look back at Matthew 9, right before Jesus prescribes His disciples to start with prayer:

When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36 CSB)

Jesus didn't just see a crowd. He saw people and all their pain, confusion and need for a Savior. And what He saw moved Him to compassion. The more time we spend with God in prayer, the more He shapes our hearts.

Mission without compassion becomes obligation. It becomes something we do because we know we should. People become projects, conversations become tasks, and evangelism becomes another responsibility to manage among many. But when we begin seeing people through the eyes of Jesus, compassion replaces frustration, love replaces obligation, and concern replaces indifference. We stop viewing people as interruptions to our schedules and begin viewing them as image bearers deeply loved by God!

Prayer gives us a *new* vision. It changes our perspective and postures our hearts to see people as Jesus sees them.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PRAYING WHERE YOU LIVE, WORK, PLAY, AND LEARN

It's one thing to pray *for* a place. It's another thing to pray *in* that place.

Most of us pray for our neighborhood from the kitchen table. We pray for our workplace while driving home. We pray for our school from the comfort of our couch. And that's if we remember to even pray for them at all. Those are good prayers. But something else happens when we actually show up in those places. **Presence produces perspective.**

One of the simplest practices that has shaped followers of Jesus for generations is *PRAYER WALKING*. Prayer walking is simply walking through a place while talking with God. There is nothing special about the walk itself. The value is found in slowing down long enough to notice what you would normally rush past. Throughout His ministry, Jesus intentionally moved toward people. He entered homes, shared meals, stopped for blind Bartimaeus, and looked up to notice Zacchaeus when others passed him by. Jesus didn't minister from a distance, He met people where they were.

When we begin praying in the places where we live, work, play and learn, our perspective begins to change. You stop seeing familiar places as routine and start seeing them as your mission field. The people you pass every day become more than faces in the crowd. They become people Jesus knows, loves and is already pursuing.

Distance can produce assumptions. **Presence unlocks understanding.**

Missionaries overseas spend time learning the people and culture where God has called them. The same is true for us. Before we can faithfully love our neighbors, coworkers, classmates and community, we have to slow down long enough to notice them and to know them.

We don't pray in a place because God needs information about it. We pray there because *we* do. Prayer helps us recognize what He's already doing and join Him in it. So as you pray, ask a simple question: **"Jesus, what are You already doing here?"** That question shifts our focus. Instead of asking God to show up, we begin recognizing that He's already there and already at work all around us.

As you walk, pray for the people and things you see. Pray for the conversations happening behind front doors and office walls. Pray over the people in the homes, businesses, schools, parks and gathering places you see. If you know someone's name, pray for them by name. If you don't, pray anyway.

YOUR FOCUS FIELD

We cannot be in all places at once. We can't meet everyone's needs, and we certainly can't solve every problem. Saying YES to joining the mission with Jesus is critical! But saying NO to protect your YES is equally important. Having a focus is the best way for us to strategically join what God is doing.

INSTRUCTIONS: If you haven't done so already, choose one of your "FIELDS" where you live, work, play or learn to focus on in this season of life.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

Look back at your FIELDS & FRIENDS exercise (pages 30-31). We remember that a MISSION FIELD is a place you regularly go where you have opportunities to build new relationships with people who don't yet know Jesus.

PRAY.

Where, Lord, do you want me to focus on being a Good News Person? Where are you asking me to live ON MISSION more intentionally? Before moving on, choose one field. Don't over analyze it, but pray and ask Jesus to help you choose. For example, it could be your workplace. There are people who don't know Jesus there that haven't yet become your friends. Or your neighborhood, volleyball league, or other parents of the soccer team. For the rest of this Guide, this will be your "focus FIELD."

MY FOCUS FIELD =

Rather than trying to pray everywhere, commit to returning to your FIELD again and again. Learn its rhythms. Learn its people. Let this become the place where you practice everything you'll learn in the chapters ahead. The more often you show up, the more clearly you'll begin to recognize where Jesus has been at work all along, and the more naturally you'll discover your place in His mission there.



CARE

SECTION FOUR



4.1

THEY DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW...

NOTE: This chapter contains many scripture references. We encourage you to read this chapter side by side with your Bible. If you encounter an unfamiliar Bible verse, look it up. Read it. Reflect on how it contributes to the story.

Most people don't come to faith because they lost an argument or were finally given enough information. Instead, they come to faith because someone cared enough to be part of their lives. Someone listened, invested time, stayed through the tough times and loved them long before they knew Jesus.

That reality is captured in a familiar phrase: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Like many sayings, it's been repeated so many times that it can lose some power. Still, beneath the cliché lies a truth: before many people are willing to listen to what we know, they need to experience genuine care from us.

When followers of Jesus hear the word "care," we often think of serving others through things like volunteering, donating, feeding the hungry or helping families in need. These are great ways to show Jesus' love, but care is not just about what we do for people. It's about how we relate to them.

We can try to show that we care by sending flowers, preparing a meal, giving generously, serving at a shelter or helping at a food pantry, but these actions matter most when they come from real relationships. You can give someone a meal without knowing their name, volunteer regularly without hearing someone's story or meet real needs while staying emotionally detached. **At its core, however, care is about relationships.**

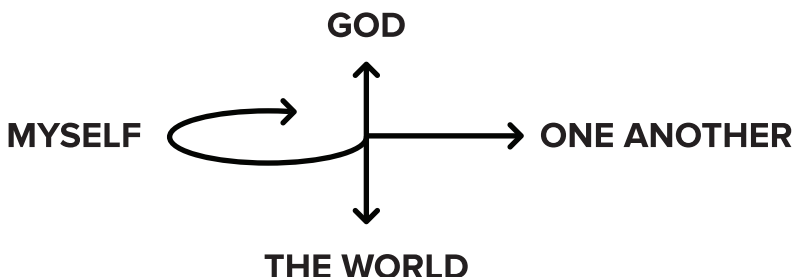
The most caring thing that we can do is love someone! When we learn their names, recall details about their lives, share meals with them, ask meaningful questions, celebrate their successes, bear their burdens, and show up even when it's difficult. We show love through an intentional decision to connect.

Before there was a world to create, sin to redeem or a mission to accomplish, there was relationship. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have existed in perfect love and unity throughout eternity. Jesus gave us a glimpse of that eternal relationship when He prayed to His Father and said, "...you loved me before the world's foundation" (John 17:24 CSB). Relationship is not something God invented after creation it is a part of who He is.

This is why Genesis begins as it does. God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness" (Genesis 1:26 CSB). Humanity was created to reflect the character of a relational God.

Everyone wants to know and be known, to love and be loved, and to belong and feel accepted. It's deeply human. It's part of our being made in the image of God. While sin may damage our relationships, it never takes away our longing (and need) for them.

God created humanity to flourish in four relationships: (1) with Him, (2) with ourselves, (3) with one another, and (4) with the world He made.



In the beginning, humans lived in right relationship with God, with themselves, with each other and with creation (Genesis 1-2). In Eden, these relationships were whole and healthy. People trusted God, knew who they were, lived in peace with one another and wisely cared for creation.

Then the first humans chose independence over dependence, choosing to go their own way over trusting God's way. This act of deciding right and wrong for ourselves broke our relationship with God, our Creator and life-source (Genesis 3:1-6, 8-10). This sin brought brokenness and rebellion into every part of life. It damaged our relationships with ourselves (Genesis 3:7), with each other (Genesis 3:12), and with creation (Genesis 3:17-19). Since then, sin has sent the world spiraling, leaving us disconnected, anxious, divided and deeply broken. When we became disconnected from God, we became confused about ourselves, wandered without an identity (Isaiah 53:6), struggled to trust one another and exploited creation (Romans 8:20-22). The brokenness we see today through things like anxiety, injustice, loneliness and war began from that deep relational rupture (Romans 1:18-32).

Through Jesus, God has begun to rebuild what was lost (Romans 5:1-2). By His life, death and resurrection, He makes reconciliation with God possible again (1 Corinthians 15:1-28).

God chose to use people like you and me in His work of restoration (John 20:21, Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:48). Our role is to help others be reconciled to God through the Holy Spirit, grow into who they are meant to be, and live as restored people who help restore others.

For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion, that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.

From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:14-21 CSB)

Sometimes we talk about salvation as if God's main goal is just to get people into heaven. The Bible tells a richer story. Paul writes, "God... reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18 CSB). Reconciliation is fundamentally about relationships.

In the world of Jesus and Paul, "righteousness" was a social term. It meant being "in right relationship with." The Good News is that God is restoring people to a right relationship with Himself, not because of anything they have done, but because of what Jesus has done. Jesus is the only human who ever lived in perfect relationship with God, and it is through Him alone that we can be restored.

Jesus says the same when He defines eternal life: "This is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ" (John 17:3 CSB). God's goal isn't just for people to know certain facts, behave better, or go to church. God wants people to know Him personally. *That* is eternal life.

To Jesus, relationships are the main way of accomplishing God's Mission. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. That's not just good psychology, it's good theology.

A relationship with Jesus is the message and the mission. Not only that, but relationships with others are the medium of that message. Following Jesus' model, the pattern continues. Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-42). Philip simply said to Nathanael, "Come and see" (John 1:46). The Samaritan woman invited her village to meet the man who changed her life (John 4:39-42). Matthew gathered his friends for a meal (Luke 5:29-32). Lydia opened her heart and her home to the gospel (Acts 16:11-15). The Philippian jailer brought his whole household to hear the Good News (Acts 16:25-34). The list goes on and on.

The Good News of Jesus' victory over sin and death began to spread through everyday relationships, and it still does today.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let’s stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

- (1) Do you agree with the sentiment “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”? Why or why not? How have you seen this play out in your life?

- (2) What does it mean that our relationships with God, ourselves, others, and creation are interconnected? How does brokenness in one relationship affect the others?

- (3) Have you previously considered that mission moves through relationships? How has this section expanded or challenged your understanding of what it means to share the Good News?

PRAY:

Set a timer for 5 minutes. Take a few minutes and pray over the relationships in your life.

4.2

PEOPLE WHO CARE SHOW UP.

If relationships are central to God's mission, this raises a question: **What do caring people do? In short, they show up!**

This might seem obvious, but it matters more than we realize. In a world full of distractions and isolation, one of the best ways to show care is to be *present*. Before sharing our faith or answering tough questions, we need to learn to move toward people just as Jesus did.

God's heart for people is seen most clearly in the incarnation. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14 CSB). That word *dwelt* literally means "to tabernacle." Jesus tabernacled with us. He pitched His tent next to ours. As Pastor Eugene Peterson put it, Jesus "moved into the neighborhood."

Jesus modeled this throughout His ministry. He didn't love people from a distance, He entered their lives. Take Zacchaeus. While others saw a corrupt tax collector, Jesus saw someone worth pursuing. He stopped, looked up and invited Himself into Zacchaeus' home.

The order matters. Jesus' grace moved toward Zacchaeus before he had responded. Relationship came before repentance. Before transformation, presence. Jesus moved toward Zacchaeus and that relationship became the doorway for change.

Most opportunities God gives us to influence others spiritually don't begin with a perfect conversation or the right answer. They begin with presence. They grow through relationships built over time through shared experiences, meals, conversations and moments where people feel seen, known and loved.

God has placed people around us where we live, work, play and learn. The question isn't whether opportunities exist; it's whether we are willing to move toward them.

Sometimes that looks like staying after a game instead of heading home, saying yes to a dinner invitation, inviting a neighbor over for coffee or showing up in moments that matter. These moments may not feel spiritual at the time, but relationships are built through consistent presence.

People who care show up. We move toward others because God first moved toward us.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PRACTICING MISSIONAL PRESENCE

We show up because we care! But what does that actually mean? When we talk about “showing up,” we mean more than just being there physically or even being mentally and emotionally present. At the heart of it, we are talking about practicing “MISSIONAL PRESENCE.”

As Good News People, we are ON MISSION with Jesus wherever we live, work, play and learn. This begins by showing up *fully*—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually—so we can participate in each moment like Jesus did. We call this ongoing effort to truly “show up” in our neighbors’ lives “MISSIONAL PRESENCE,” but our neighbors just call it friendship.

“MISSIONAL PRESENCE” means intentionally building relationships by connecting with people in their daily lives, just as they are. The main idea is to step into their world, share in their interests and struggles, and offer genuine friendship not to treat people like projects we are trying to “fix.” This relational ministry is about earning the right to be heard rather than imposing a message. It’s not a one-time interaction. Instead, it is an ongoing investment in others’ lives, showing and sharing Jesus’ love through relationships.

STAGE ONE: TO SEE AND BE SEEN

This first stage of MISSIONAL PRESENCE is about regularly making public appearances in your MISSION FIELD. In your neighborhood, it could mean taking regular walks, spending time outdoors, attending community events or simply saying hello. In your office, it could be working from home less. The goal here is to show up and let people know you’re there.

Jesus intentionally participated in His community’s public spaces. He was accessible and recognizable. We want to live like Jesus, but would our neighbors or co-workers even recognize us? Would we recognize our neighbors?

What does it look like to intentionally participate in public spaces like Jesus? It might mean deliberately spending time on your front porch. You might join a community pool rather than building your own. You could run in your neighborhood rather than just exercising at the gym. Maybe you intentionally walk your dog when everyone else does. You might attend a local sporting event or become a regular at a community coffee shop. **It’s different for everyone, but the invitation is the same: live life to the full like Jesus. Learn to participate intentionally in your community’s public spaces to see and be seen. Places were you live, work, play, and learn.**

STAGE TWO: TO KNOW AND BE KNOWN

At this stage, you're moving beyond being just a familiar face. Strike up conversations, learn names, hear stories. This is where real connection starts, as you talk with your neighbors and begin to share a bit of life together.

What does it look like to know someone? A simple way to think about it is:

- (1) **Know their name.**
- (2) **Know something about them.**
- (3) **Know something they care about.**

Remembering their name and a fact about them shows them you cared enough to actually listen. Knowing one of their interests allows you to have a conversation with them about something they likely want to discuss. Most people go through their day without being invited to share their passions and interests with others. **Learn what it takes to make people feel known.**

STAGE THREE: DO THINGS TOGETHER

The deepest level of MISSIONAL PRESENCE involves actively participating in shared experiences. It's doing a fun activity together. Whether you host a neighborhood barbecue, lend a hand on a project, or invite someone to join you for coffee, you are doing life together. This fosters a deeper sense of belonging and opens the door to more meaningful conversations and ministry opportunities.

During Jesus' three years of earthly ministry, He shared hundreds of meals, walks, errands, and late-night chats with His disciples. He experiences with them and they made memories together. We are invited to do the same as we live ON MISSION with Jesus.

HOW DO THESE STAGES WORK?

These stages of MISSIONAL PRESENCE apply to whole communities or to each person you meet. For example, you might be a familiar face in your neighborhood, but to the new person you are a stranger.

With your neighbor down the road, you might be at STAGE THREE: Doing Things Together. But your neighbor across the street might not even recognize you at the grocery store. With this neighbor, you're at STAGE ONE: To See and Be Seen.

The stages build on each other, but you never really complete any of them. In relationships, you can go deeper, but you can't skip the steps that got you there. You still need "To See and Be Seen" even when you "Do Things Together."

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

- (1) How can you practice MISSIONAL PRESENCE where you live, work, play and learn? With your one “focus FIELD” in mind (page 40), what are some ideas about what it might look like to intentionally show up “To See and Be Seen?”

- (2) Now think about moving to the next stage of MISSIONAL PRESENCE: to know and be known. Think about the people you regularly see. Do you know someone's name but not their story? What might it look like to move one relationship beyond simply recognizing each other?

- (3) How can you practice MISSIONAL PRESENCE with your friends? Look at the names on your bookmark. What are some ideas about what it might look like to intentionally invite one of them to “do things together?”

PRAY:

Lord, give me the energy and courage to join your mission. Help me be more intentional. Guide me as I try to show up in people's lives, as you do.

4.3

PEOPLE WHO CARE LISTEN WELL.

When caring people show up, what should they do once there? Well, we tell others what we believe, right? If we have Good News, shouldn't we want to share it?

Of course we should. But when we look closely at Jesus' life, we see that before He spoke to people's problems, He first listened to their stories.

Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived. His sermons changed history. He spoke about the Kingdom of God and taught with a unique authority the world had never seen. But He also spent a lot of time asking questions, listening and gently drawing people out.

There are four short biographies (gospels) about Jesus. In them, they show Jesus asking 307 questions. That's a lot, and it's especially remarkable because He already knew all the answers! He knew what people were thinking before they spoke a word and understood their motives even better than they did. He could see beneath the surface, into the deepest parts of the human heart. Still, instead of always telling people what He knew, He started with questions.

We follow in Jesus' footsteps. Listening is a practical way to show people that you care about them. People feel loved when they feel understood. In our noisy world, everyone has something to say, but few people feel truly heard. Most people carry stories, fears, disappointments, hopes, questions and wounds that others rarely see. **Giving our attention to the person in front of us is one of the greatest gifts we can offer.**

When people feel heard, they feel valued. When they feel valued, trust begins to grow. Trust creates space for deeper conversations.

A clear example of this is found in John 4. As Jesus travels through Samaria, He stops at a well and talks with a woman drawing water. At first glance, she seems an unlikely choice for a spiritual conversation. She is a Samaritan woman with a complicated past. Normally, someone like Jesus would not talk to someone like her — cultural, social, and religious barriers stood between them. Still, Jesus moves toward her and takes time to talk with her.

The conversation unfolds slowly. Jesus asks questions and listens to her concerns. He lets her share her beliefs and how she sees things. Instead of rushing, He patiently stays with her. Many of us find this difficult. We want to give answers before we understand the questions. We want to share what we know before we know what others carry. We tend to speak quickly and listen slowly. Jesus took time to truly understand the person in front of Him, then He pointed her to something deeper. For anyone wanting to follow Jesus, this model is a good place to begin.

Take a look at the passage in your Bible and notice how Jesus sees what is really going on. The conversation starts with water, but it is not really about water. It moves toward topics like worship, identity, longing and the human search for God. Jesus understands that the

surface issue is not the real problem; the woman's objection points to something deeper. Her relationships with men reveal a painful wound, showing that her struggle is part of a deeper story marked by longing, brokenness and a thirst that water could never satisfy.

This is just one example of how Jesus names the deeper reality and then gently nudges people toward truth. He does not shame or manipulate people; He is not trying to win arguments or overpower someone. Instead, He lovingly helps people see what they can't see on their own.

People don't need us to arrive with all the answers. They need someone genuinely interested in their story. That requires real curiosity. What keeps this person awake at night? What are they afraid of? What are they hoping for? What experiences have shaped how they see God? What disappointments have influenced their beliefs? What questions are they actually asking beneath the questions they say out loud?

You can't fake that kind of curiosity for long. People know when they are being interrogated and when someone is genuinely interested. That is why listening is so powerful. Listening communicates, "You matter," "Your story matters," and "I care about you more than convincing you."

Caring people take time to learn others' stories. They listen long enough to find "the thing behind the thing" and then, when the moment is right, they gently give it a name and nudge them towards what they can't see, just as Jesus did!

Before Jesus spoke to people's problems, He asked questions and listened to their stories. Therefore, Good News People, ask good questions and listen well too.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS & LISTENING WELL

As we learn to live ON MISSION with Jesus, one of the lifelong skills to learn is the art of good conversation. Most of us worry about what we will say, but the core of this skill is listening to what others want to talk about and opening the door for them to share it.

Listening well is a challenge in our busy lives. Asking good questions can be hard in the moment. So how do we do this? How can I learn to listen well *and* ask good questions?

Listening is learned by doing. First, hear them, then paraphrase what you hear. Don't tune them out to dial up your response. **Listening is about understanding, not responding.** It's about making them feel heard rather than fixing things. Make eye contact and use engaged body language, such as facing them, leaning in and keeping your phone out of sight. You don't need a framework, but you might need practice.

Ask good questions. The hard part is knowing which questions are the right ones to ask. What are they interested in? How much do I already know about them? Did I ask them this same question last week? Is that too deep of a question for where our friendship is?

One helpful way to think about this is as a continuum of conversation, with a simple rule of thumb for asking appropriate questions in different environments. Here are three levels of conversation to consider.

ASK ABOUT THEIR... INTERESTS

At the beginning of a friendship, we are mostly learning about our new friend and their interests. We are having a CASUAL conversation to learn who they are and what they like. Here are some basic and obvious questions you might ask:

- *“What is your name?”*
- *“Tell me about your family.”*
- *“What did you do this weekend?”*
- *“Are you into any shows/sports/hobbies right now?”*
- *“What’s something fun you’ve got coming up?”*
- *“Tried any good food or coffee spots lately?”*

ASK ABOUT THEIR... STORY + VALUES

As your friendship grows, we aim to push past the surface and share parts of our story that don’t naturally come up. Here we are getting to the PERSONAL level. We are learning more about their experiences, what has shaped them, and the “why” behind who they are today. Some examples might be:

- *“If you could have any job in the world, what would it be and why?”*
- *“If you had a full day off to do whatever you want, how would you spend it?”*
- *“What’s been a high point (or hardest moment) for you this year?”*
- *“If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be?”*
- *“Where do you feel most alive and/or at peace?”*
- *“What was the journey to your line of work?”*
- *“Where did you grow up? What were you into as a kid?”*

ASK ABOUT THEIR... BELIEFS

As you grow deeper with a friend, you build trust and can talk about life’s deepest and most personal topics. This is where SPIRITUAL conversations can take place. Consider questions like:

- *“Do you ever think about whether there’s more to life than this?”*
- *“Has faith ever been a part of your story?”*
- *“How are God and faith a part of your life now?”*
- *“Where do you turn when life feels overwhelming?”*
- *“What do you think happens after we die?”*
- *“Do you feel like you’re searching for something bigger?”*

MOVING CONVERSATIONS DEEPER

Once you ask a good question and start a great conversation here are some things that you can learn from Jesus. You can do these at any level of conversation.

- (1) **NAME & NUDGE:** Name what you hear. Gently point out values, longings or gaps you notice, even if they haven’t noticed them before (“*It sounds like...*” / “*Have you ever thought about...*”). Then, nudge them deeper. Use that to help you ask a deeper-level question, like Jesus did.
- (2) **MENTION JESUS:** Find ways to bring Jesus into the conversation in a positive light. Don’t hide the fact that you’re a follower of Jesus. It is much better to make that known early in your relationship with them. The more time that goes by, the more disingenuous the friendship might feel, and the more challenging it can be for you to share it later. It could be as simple as mentioning that you went to church this weekend. Just find a way to mention Jesus.

PAUSE:

Let’s stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

Think of one or two people you are getting to know. What questions could help you learn more about their interests, story, and beliefs? Choose a few questions from above that feel natural to you. Rephrase them in your own words, or write some questions of your own.

People I have in mind =

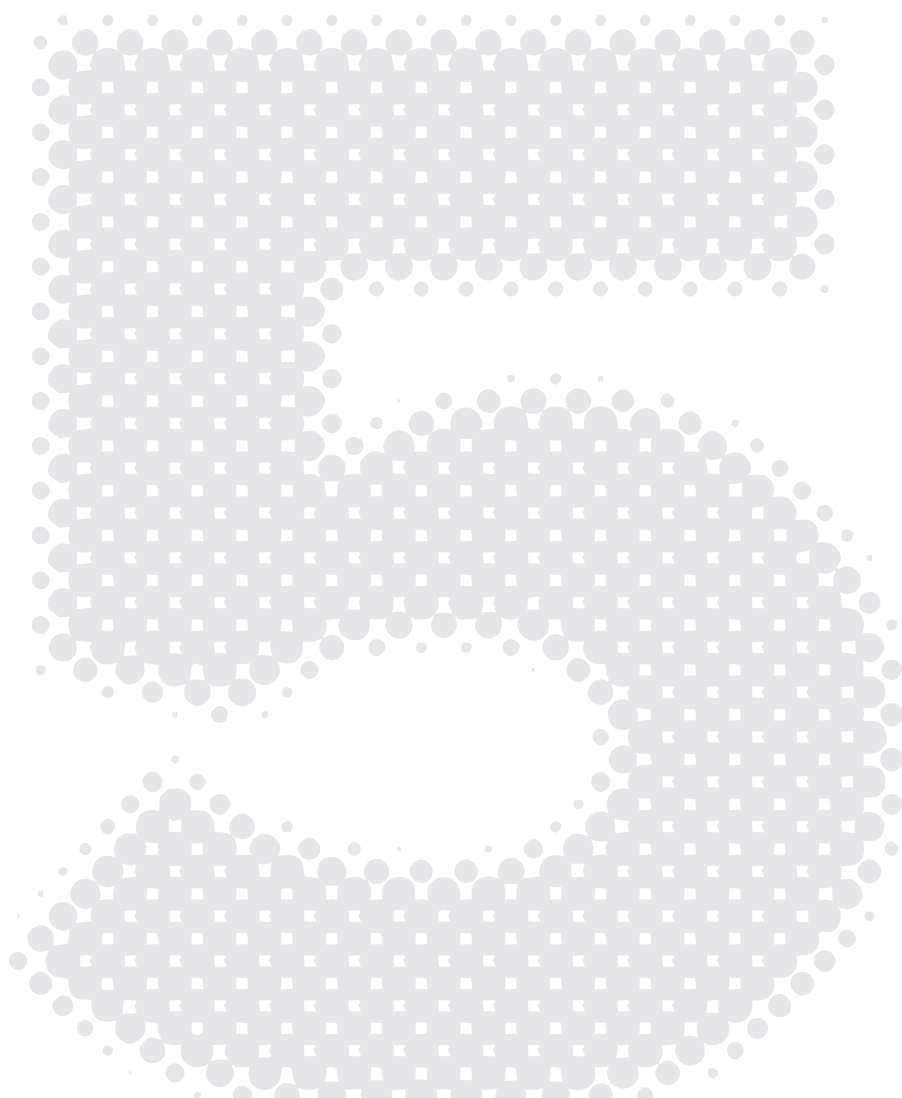
- (1) **INTERESTS:** What question(s) could help me learn about what they enjoy?

(2) STORY AND VALUES: What question(s) could help me learn about their story and what has shaped them?

(3) BELIEFS: What question(s) could help me learn about what they believe, hope for, or long for?

SHARE

SECTION FIVE



5.1

ONE THING I DO KNOW...

Many followers of Jesus find it intimidating to share our faith. We worry about being asked questions we cannot answer, facing tough Bible passages, or having our beliefs challenged. Deep down, we assume that sharing Jesus is only for experts.

We often picture pastors, theologians or people with special training and strong speaking skills. This makes us think we have to learn more and prepare more before we can talk about Jesus.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He told His disciples, “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48 CSB). He did not call them experts. Experts are supposed to know everything and answer every question. Witnesses have a different job. They simply share what they have seen, heard and experienced.

This difference is freeing. Jesus never said His followers had to know everything before talking about Him. He just asked them to share what they had experienced.

John 9 gives us a great example. Jesus meets and heals a man who was blind from birth. Afterward, the religious leaders question the man. They want detailed answers about who Jesus is and how the healing happened. But the man doesn’t know much. He is not a Bible scholar, a religious leader or a trained expert. As the leaders continue questioning him, it’s clear he can’t answer most of their questions.

Sometimes followers of Jesus fear spiritual conversations because we picture ourselves in exactly that situation. We imagine someone asking a difficult question, the conversation taking an unanticipated turn, or a topic we haven’t studied. Suddenly we feel exposed and inadequate.

Let’s look at what the blind man did. He didn’t pretend to know what he didn’t know. Instead, he offered one of the most powerful statements in all of Scripture: “One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!” (John 9:25 CSB).

The religious leaders wanted a debate, but the man gave a testimony. They wanted theories, but he shared an experience. They wanted an expert, but they got a witness, and that is exactly what Jesus calls us to be.

A witness simply tells the truth about what he or she has experienced. If you’ve encountered Jesus, then you have a story to tell. You know what your life looked like before Him. You know how He met you and changed you. You know the hope, peace, forgiveness, purpose and new life you have found in Him. No one can tell your story better than you because no one else has lived it.

That’s why sharing your story matters. It serves as a signpost that points to Jesus. The goal is not for people to be impressed by what happened to you, but for them to become curious about the One who changed you. In that way, your story helps people see what the grace of God looks like in an ordinary human life.

Every follower of Jesus has a story. The details and circumstances may be different, but the truth is the same: Jesus has met us, forgiven us, changed us, healed us, helped us and given us hope.

Some stories have a lot of moving parts, while others are quiet. Some show sudden change, and others happen slowly over time, but every story shows the same truth: Jesus changes people. That's why God loves to use ordinary people to point others to an extraordinary Savior. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can say is, *"One thing I do know..."*

ON MISSION PRACTICES

STARTING GOOD NEWS CONVERSATIONS: SHARING YOUR STORY

Throughout this field guide, we've reflected on the power of showing up, listening well and asking good questions. As we build trust with others and hear what is happening in their lives, we begin to recognize when deeper conversations might be possible. Eventually, listening may lead to speaking. That can be the moment we begin to wonder, "What do I actually say?"

Remember that Jesus doesn't ask us to be experts; He asks us to be witnesses. Being a witness just means telling the truth about what you've seen, heard, and experienced.

However, putting our experiences with Jesus into everyday words can be harder than we expect. Maybe you've followed Jesus for so long that you've forgotten how to talk about your faith. Maybe you feel awkward or like you're delivering a speech. That is where the framework FELT - FOUND - FEEL can help.

FELT - FOUND - FEEL isn't a script to memorize. It's a way to help you organize your thoughts and talk about your experiences with Jesus. It provides a way to naturally talk about Him with real people in real conversations. It has three simple steps: I FELT hopeless and helpless. I FOUND Jesus. Now, I FEEL peace that passes all understanding. FELT - FOUND - FEEL.

(1) FELT — Where was I?

Set the scene. Tell them what was happening in your life and, more importantly, what was happening inside you. What were you experiencing, thinking, feeling, fearing, wanting or believing? This step helps you avoid just listing facts and dates. You're not giving someone your spiritual résumé but inviting them into what you've experienced.

(2) FOUND — Where did Jesus meet me?

Next, share what you discovered about Jesus and what He did in your life. What did Jesus reveal to you? How did He forgive, change, challenge, comfort, heal or help you? This step is where Jesus comes into the story. Ultimately, the goal isn't just to tell an inspiring story about how you became a better person or figured out your life. We're witnesses to Jesus — He's the hero of the story.

(3) FEEL — Where am I now?

Finally, share the difference Jesus made. What do you know now that you did not know before? What hope do you have? What has changed?

That is FELT - FOUND - FEEL. **Where was I? Where did Jesus meet me? Where am I now?**

You don't need years of theological training or a dramatic life story to answer these questions. You don't even have to be a great speaker. You just need an experience with Jesus and the willingness to share it.

You probably have far more stories to share than you realize. Your story of salvation is an important story, but it's not the only one. Imagine talking to someone who has been married for twenty years. Every time you ask about his wife, he tells you how they met, what happened on their first date, or what their wedding was like. How strange would that be? Those details are great, but what else has happened in the last twenty years? How is she today? Have you done anything fun together recently?

We often talk about Jesus that way: focused on the origin story but not the journey we've been on with Jesus ever since. Yes, Jesus saved us! But He's also met you in joy and grief, success and failure, relationships and decisions, answered prayers and lingering questions. **You have many stories.**

So instead of *What is my story?* begin asking, *Where has Jesus met me? How has Jesus helped me, healed me, taught me?*

Where has He met you in fear, disappointment or success? What has He taught you about forgiveness? Where has prayer become real to you? Where has Scripture changed you? What do you understand about Jesus today that you did not understand five years ago?

As you share these stories, the framework FELT - FOUND - FEEL can be as short or as long as you need. Think of FELT - FOUND - FEEL like an accordion. It expands and contracts without becoming a different instrument. If you have thirty seconds, it might be just three sentences. If you have three minutes, those sentences can become paragraphs. With more time, you can add details about people, situations, conversations, Scripture and moments that help someone experience the story with you.

There are three common ways you can use FELT - FOUND - FEEL. You can **RESPOND** when someone's story connects with yours. You can **REDIRECT** when a question or challenge about faith allows you to share what you have experienced. And you can **REVEAL** when you intentionally choose to share one of your stories about Jesus.

Different situations. Different stories. Different amounts of time. The same simple framework: FELT - FOUND - FEEL. Let's take a moment and expand on each one.

RESPOND: WHEN THEIR STORY CONNECTS WITH YOURS

Spiritual conversations do not always begin with spiritual questions. They usually begin with people talking about their lives.

A coworker says, “I thought getting this promotion would make me happier than it did.” A friend tells you her son is struggling. At first, neither of those statements may sound particularly spiritual. But beneath the surface, you can hear people wrestling with fear, identity, purpose, control, forgiveness and hope.

Learn to listen for the moment when someone moves from telling you *what happened* to telling you *what it means to them*. Your co-worker says he did not get the promotion. Then he says, “Honestly, I feel like I’ve wasted the last ten years of my life here.” The conversation just moved. Your friend says, “I keep wondering if I did something wrong as a parent.” The conversation has moved. When an opportunity seems to be there, ask yourself, “*Have I ever felt something like that?*”

Your circumstances do not have to match. You may have never lost your job, but you know what it feels like to have an uncertain future. Your child has never made the choices your friend’s child is making, but you know what it feels like to love someone you cannot fix. With that in mind, here’s how you might respond.

FELT: “I’ve had seasons where I felt like everything depended on me, and if I couldn’t keep everything together, I was failing everybody.”

FOUND: “Jesus has been teaching me how much of that comes from trying to carry things I was never meant to carry alone. Prayer has become a place where I can actually admit, ‘I can’t handle all of this.’”

FEEL: “I still get overwhelmed, but I don’t feel nearly as alone in it anymore. There’s a lot of peace in remembering that everything doesn’t ultimately depend on me.”

Your goal isn’t just to deliver information. It’s to have a real conversation with someone you care about.

PRACTICE:

Think about a conversation from the last few weeks when someone shared a fear, struggle, disappointment or longing. What might have been underneath what they said? What question could you have asked? Where does their experience genuinely connect with yours? Where has Jesus met you there? Write a short FELT - FOUND - FEEL response. Then say it out loud.

REDIRECT: WHEN THE CONVERSATION TURNS TOWARD FAITH

Sometimes you will respond to someone sharing; other times you will have the opportunity to redirect the conversation. Sometimes the opportunity comes through a tough question or challenge about faith: “Christians are hypocrites.” “How can you actually believe Jesus is God?”

These moments can feel like a test. We start searching our memory for the perfect Bible verse or argument. Remember the blind man in John 9? The religious leaders wanted answers about Jesus that he did not have. He never pretended to know what he did not know. He returned to what he had experienced: “One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!”

They wanted a debate. He gave them a story. That is the heart of REDIRECT. REDIRECT doesn’t mean ignoring the question or disengaging; it means pausing and getting curious. Don’t rush to respond. Rather, prioritize truly understanding what the person means by their comment.

“Prayer doesn’t work” might mean I prayed for my dad, and he still died. “The church is full of hypocrites” might mean someone I trusted in a church hurt me.

Ask questions like, “*What makes you say that?*” “*Have you always felt that way?*” or “*Was there something that happened that made you think that?*” This will often open up the story behind the story.

Stay curious. If someone speaks with frustration or hostility, don’t match their intensity. Stay calm and remember you’re talking to a human, not fighting an argument.

After you’ve asked some clarifying questions, use FELT - FOUND - FEEL.

Imagine someone says, “I just don’t understand how you can pray. It feels like talking to yourself.” You might ask, “Have you ever tried praying?”

Then perhaps say:

FELT: “You know, I used to feel that way too. It took me a long time to become comfortable praying.”

FOUND: “A mentor of mine showed me that the Bible teaches that prayer is like a conversation with my Father.”

FEEL: “So now, prayer is the most important anchor in my life. It keeps me steady even when everything around me is falling apart. I know that no matter how bad it gets, I can always talk to my dad about it.”

Then, stop. The person may ask another question, or the conversation might end. Either outcome is okay.

Here’s another example. Imagine someone comes to you and says “The Bible is just another book. It’s stupid to me that Christians believe it came from God.” How might you redirect that comment?

FELT: “Hey man, I had a time in my life when I felt that too.”

FOUND: “A few years ago, someone pointed out to me that I had a lot of opinions about the Bible but had never owned one or even opened one. They told me the Bible was a special book to them, but not to take their word for it and to try it for myself. When I did, I FOUND there was something different about the book. It’s almost like it reads you as you read it.”

FEEL: “It’s still hard for me to understand how the book came from God. But I am a believer. However, you shouldn’t take my word for it; you should try it for yourself. I’d love to talk to you about what you read.”

Sometimes FELT might be, “I understand why that sounds strange,” or “I’ve wrestled with that too.” Be honest. Don’t invent a skeptical past to sound relatable and don’t feel the pressure to make your experience prove more than it does. You don’t need to say, “Prayer always works.” Just say what’s true: “Prayer has become an anchor in my life.” You are planting a seed.

PRACTICE: Imagine someone says, “Don’t you feel silly reading the Bible? It’s just a bunch of myths.”

Before responding, what would you want to understand about why they feel that way? What has your experience with Scripture been? Where has Jesus met you through it? Write a short FELT - FOUND - FEEL response.

Next, write down the question about Christianity you are most afraid someone will ask. What do you honestly know? What do you honestly not know? Complete this sentence:

“I don’t know everything about that, but one thing I do know...”

REVEAL: PLANNING TO SHARE YOUR STORY

The third way is to use FELT - FOUND - FEEL is to REVEAL by sharing one of your stories about Jesus in a planned and proactive way.

Sometimes someone might ask you spiritual questions, or maybe you're invited to speak in a group or share from stage. However, these questions or opportunities don't always come. Living ON MISSION means we don't have to wait for someone else to start the conversation. Sometimes you take a small relational risk. "We've known each other a long time, and I realized I've never really told you why Jesus matters so much to me. Can I tell you about that sometime?"

In this moment, you might be tempted to try to summarize your entire relationship with Jesus. Instead, focus on a specific theme, idea or moment by reflecting on where Jesus has met you. Maybe it was in fear, grief, failure, work, marriage, parenting or forgiveness.

Your story doesn't need to be flashy; it just needs to be true. Ordinary stories matter. Do not confuse drama with power. A story about Jesus changing the way you respond to your teenager may connect deeply with another parent. A story about learning that your worth is not your career may matter to someone exhausted from trying to prove himself.

Choose one story with one main point. Then shape it in our framework...

FELT — Where was I?

FOUND — Where did Jesus meet me?

FEEL — Where am I now?

Know the beats, not the script. Practice saying it out loud. Tell it once in thirty seconds. Then tell it in three minutes. If someone asks for more, expand it.

The goal isn't to be polished, but rather to know your stories well enough that you can stop worrying about the words and focus on the person.

You do not need to remove words like Jesus, prayer, Bible, sin or forgiveness, but it is helpful to explain what you mean.

Practice using normal language. Instead of only saying, "I surrendered it to God," explain what happened: "I finally admitted to Jesus that I couldn't control what happened next and asked Him to help me trust Him."

Finally, be honest about loose ends. It might sound like saying, "I still struggle with this, but..." "That didn't fix everything. What changed was..." "I still don't understand why that happened, but what I found was..." You're not trying to convince someone that following Jesus makes life easy or perfect. You're showing them what His faithfulness looks like in real life.

When you finish, invite conversation back. You might ask, "*Does any of that connect with you?*" "*Have you ever had an experience like that?*" or pause and let them decide where the conversation goes.

PRACTICE: Think beyond the first time you came to Jesus. Identify three places Jesus has met you since then. Choose one and write its FELT - FOUND - FEEL.

(1) Now, tell it out loud in thirty seconds.

(2) Next, tell it again in three minutes.

**(3) Finally, think of one person in your life who does not know that story.
What would be a natural way to share it?**

FROM TOOL TO WAY OF LIFE

FELT - FOUND - FEEL is not ultimately about becoming a great storyteller. It is about becoming someone who lives *ON MISSION* with Jesus: someone who notices people, listens carefully and is increasingly willing to speak about Jesus.

Sometimes you will *RESPOND* when someone's story connects with yours. Sometimes you will *REDIRECT* when you need to get to the heart of things. Other times you will *REVEAL* your story to someone you care about who needs to know what Jesus has done in your life.

Remember, FELT - FOUND - FEEL is a framework, not a formula. Real conversations are messy. People interrupt and ask unexpected questions. Sometimes you will only get through part of your story. Sometimes the best thing you can do is stop talking. The framework is there to help the relationship, not control it.

You might never feel completely ready. The first conversation might feel awkward. You may stumble over your words, and that's okay. You don't become someone who shares Jesus just by thinking about it. At some point, you have to begin. Someone in your life does not need you to know everything about Jesus.

They need someone they trust to share their experiences. *"One thing I do know..."* is enough to start a conversation.

5.2

ALWAYS BE READY.

Jesus told His disciples, “You will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). Being a witness means sharing what you have seen and experienced. Every follower of Jesus has a story — we have all received His grace. Your story is unique, and only you can tell it in your own way. Sharing your story can be a natural way to start talking about the Good News.

Telling your story is just the beginning. Every witness eventually points to something greater than themselves.

Think about a witness in a courtroom. The witness is not the main focus of the trial. If people leave talking about the witness instead of the evidence, something is wrong. The same is true for us. Our story is not supposed to be the center of attention. It should point to something greater.

Your story can become a bridge to that good news. Sometimes one conversation will only hold a story. Another may go further. When someone asks, “Why do you believe Jesus can actually do that?” or “What do you mean when you say Jesus forgave you?” the door may be opening to share more clearly about Him. When that door opens, walk through it.

John the Baptist understood this idea. When people began to follow him, he pointed to Jesus and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29 CSB)! As Jesus’ ministry grew, John’s role became less important. John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30 CSB). This is what it means to be a witness. **Our story can open hearts and point people to Jesus, but eventually, we move from sharing what Jesus has done for us to sharing what He has done for everyone.**

Why is this important? Because our story alone cannot save anyone. Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16 CSB). The Good News is what has the power to save. It doesn’t diminish the value of our story. Our story may encourage someone, build trust or even awaken genuine curiosity about Jesus. But our story can’t forgive sin, reconcile anyone to God, defeat death or grant eternal life. Only Jesus can do that. Only the Good News of Jesus’ victory has the power to save. Our story is evidence that Jesus changes lives, but not the reason lives are changed. Our story explains what Jesus has done in us, and the Good News announces what He has done for everyone. Our story didn’t create the Good News; it’s the Good News that created our story.

This is what makes Christianity different from any other message. At its core, Christianity is Good News!

In ancient times, “Good News” meant telling people that a great battle had been won, that the king had come back victorious, and that his victory changed everything for his people. The messenger was not asking people to help win the battle. He announced that the victory had already been won.

This is what Christians share. We announce the Good News of Jesus's victory over sin and death. He has broken the power of evil and opened the way back to the Father. This is not just one person's experience. It is the life-changing truth of the Good News.

We start with our story because it's personal. It helps others see why we have hope and can open the door to a conversation about Jesus. But we don't stop there. Our story was never meant to be the destination. We share what Jesus has done in our lives so that, eventually, people can see Jesus for themselves.

Share your story. Share it often. Let others see how Jesus has changed your life, but don't stop there. Your story might open someone's heart and point them to Jesus. Still, the ultimate goal is to help people meet Jesus. Only the Good News of Jesus invites people to trust Him, and only the Good News has the power to bring people from death to life.

Let's explore together how we might clearly share the story of what Jesus has done for us.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS: THE STORY OF JESUS

For many of us, the hardest part of sharing the Good News is feeling unsure how to explain it. If someone asked what Christians believe, many of us might not know how to start. That's why it helps to have a simple tool.

There are lots of good ways to share the Good News. In this Field Guide, we'll focus on one method: TWO CHAIRS.

TWO CHAIRS illustrates the story of our relationship with God. It helps us see what we were made for, what went wrong, how God has fixed the problem, and how we might respond.

At its most basic, this tool breaks down into five movements and uses two chairs to visually represent...

- (1) "We were built for relationship with God...***
- (2) but we turned away.***
- (3) Our sin created a barrier that...***
- (4) Jesus removed and...***
- (5) invited us back into relationship with Him."***

You don't need to memorize a script. It's not a presentation tool but a conversation framework. You can share Jesus' story in a few minutes or a few seconds. You can use one Scripture or several, and it still works if you can't remember any. You don't even need actual chairs! Coffee mugs, water bottles, shoes, or almost any two objects will do. You can draw it on a napkin. It's a flexible framework designed for you to personalize and customize to the conversation at hand.

TWO CHAIRS isn't the Good News itself. It's simply one way to help explain it. You will not be able to fit everything we believe about God into these five movements and you are not supposed to. The goal is to help someone understand the central story of the Good News: how sin separated us from God, how Jesus defeated sin and death, and how His victory makes a restored relationship with God possible.

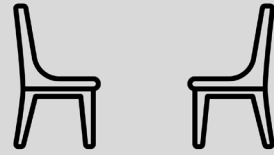
THE TOOL

FACE TO FACE

Two chairs seated face to face signify that **God made us for a relationship with Him.**

Genesis 1:31: “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.”

FACE TO FACE.

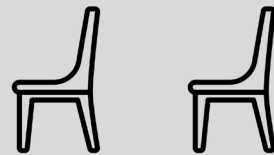


TURNUED AWAY

Face one chair away from the other to signify we **turned away from God and chose our own way.**

Isaiah 53:6a: “We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way.”

TURNUED AWAY.

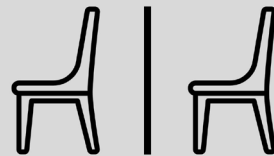


ADD BARRIER

Place an object between the two chairs as a barrier to illustrate that **our sin separates us from God and leads to death.** We can't fix it ourselves.

Romans 6:23a: “For the wages of sin is death...”

ADD BARRIER.



REMOVE BARRIER

Replace the barrier with a cross (or simply remove) to signify that **Jesus died and rose again** to do for us what we could never do for ourselves and bring us back to God.

Romans 6:23b: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

REMOVE BARRIER.



TURN BACK

Turn the chair back around to illustrate that **Jesus invites us to turn back, trust Him and follow Him.**

Romans 10:9-10: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

TURN BACK.



LEARN THE STORY, NOT THE SCRIPT.

Don't worry about memorizing everything. Learn it step by step. First, learn the picture:

Face to Face → Turned Away → Add Barrier → Remove Barrier → Turn Back

Then, learn the meaning: God made us for relationship with Him. We turned away. Sin separates us and we can't fix it. Jesus died and rose again to bring us back to God. He invites us to turn back, trust Him and follow Him. Lastly, add Scripture. Start with one key verse for the whole story. Then you might memorize one for each movement. Pick verses that mean something to you.

The goal isn't to memorize a presentation. **It's to know the story well enough that the picture becomes a guide in your mind.**

WHEN WOULD I ACTUALLY USE THIS?

TWO CHAIRS works best when a conversation has already created room to talk more clearly about Jesus. Maybe you share one of your stories using FELT - FOUND - FEEL and someone asks, "So what do you actually believe about Jesus?" Or you've been having spiritual conversations for months and finally ask, "Could I ever share with you what Jesus has done to change everything for me?" Sometimes you can offer it to help clear up confusion: "Can I show you a really simple picture that explains how I understand the Good News?"

Keep in mind this is a conversation, not a speech. You don't need to rush through five points before the other person can talk. The picture gives you direction, but the person you're talking with sets the pace.

MAKE IT A CONVERSATION

Knowing the five movements is just one part of learning TWO CHAIRS. Always remember, the person you're talking with matters more than finishing the tool.

Take your time. If someone asks a question while you're working through each movement, stop and talk about it. If something isn't clear, explain it another way. If they disagree, listen to them. You don't have to finish all five movements for the conversation to matter.

Ask questions because you genuinely want to know what they think...

At **Face to Face** you might ask, *"When you think about God, does this seem like what He would want for people?"*

At **Turned Away**, *"Do you think this is a fair picture of what people have done with God?"*

At **Add Barrier**, *"What do you think people usually try to do to close that gap?"*

That last question can be especially helpful. People may talk about trying to be good, religion, spirituality, success or simply doing more good than bad. Listen to their answer. You may learn what they believe they need long before you tell them what Christians believe they need.

These questions are helpful, but not required. Let the conversation flow naturally.

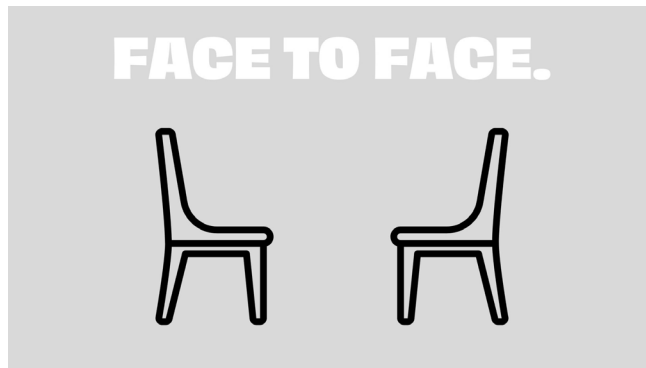
When you reach **Turn Back**, slow down again. Depending on the conversation, you might discuss: “*What do you think about that?*” “*What questions does that raise for you?*”

Think of the follow up questions this way:

What do you think? → Where are you? → Do you want to respond?

WHAT WOULD I REALLY SAY?

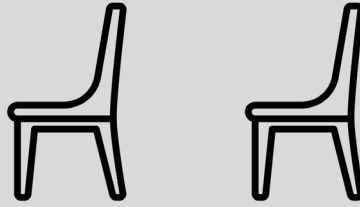
The goal is to memorize the story, not the script. However, you might be someone who wants to dig in deeper and learn more of what this could sound like in real life. In this following section, you can dive back into TWO CHAIRS with some expanded language to help you better prepare.



God made a good world and created people in His image. We weren’t created apart from God or trying to find our way to Him. We were made to know Him, live with Him and enjoy life in relationship with Him. Knowing God wasn’t an extra spiritual part of life; it was what we were made for from the beginning. The two chairs facing each other give a simple picture of that relationship: **God with us and us with God.**

- **Genesis 1:31:** “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.”
- **Psalms 100:3:** “Acknowledge that the LORD is God. He made us, and we are his.”

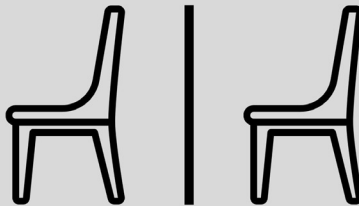
TURNED AWAY.



Something went terribly wrong with God's good creation. Instead of trusting God and living in relationship with Him, humanity turned away. That's the heart of sin. Sin includes the wrong things we do but goes deeper than breaking rules. We reject God's authority and choose our way instead of His. We decide for ourselves what is good, what is right, and how we want to live. The turned chair shows what happened in the human heart: **we were made for relationship with God but turned away from Him.**

- **Isaiah 53:6a:** "We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way."
- **Romans 3:23:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

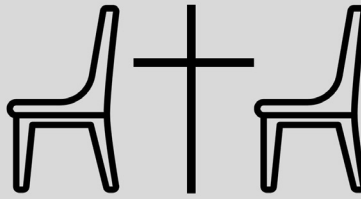
ADD BARRIER.



Turning away from God has real consequences. Sin separates us from the God we were made to know, the source of life. That broken relationship changes everything—our connection with God, others, and even how we see ourselves. In the end, sin leads to death. We can't fix this by trying harder. Being moral, religious, successful, sincere or spiritual can't undo our rebellion or fix what sin has broken. **We don't just need to improve ourselves. We need to be rescued.**

- **Romans 6:23:** "For the wages of sin is death..."
- **Ephesians 2:1:** "...you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

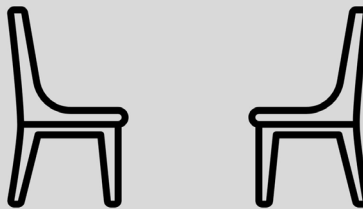
REMOVE BARRIER.



This is the center of the Good News. God didn't leave us separated from Him or tell us to find our own way back. He came to us as a human: Jesus. Jesus lived without sin, died on the cross for *our* sin, and rose from the dead in victory over sin and death. He took upon Himself what our rebellion deserved so we could receive what we could never earn: forgiveness, reconciliation and life with God. **Jesus dealt with the barrier we could never remove.**

- **1 Peter 3:18:** "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God."
- **Isaiah 53:6:** "We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all."
- **Romans 6:23:** "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

TURN BACK.



The battle has been won and the way back to God is open. But here's something important: our chair is still turned away. Jesus has done His part, but He doesn't force us to follow Him. Jesus invites us to turn from our own way, trust what He has done for us and follow Him as Lord. The Bible calls this repentance and faith. We don't earn our way back to God. We receive the gift Jesus already made possible. **Through Jesus, we can have the relationship with God we were created for.**

- **Romans 10:9-10:** "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation."
- **Ephesians 2:8:** "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift..."

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

INSTRUCTIONS:

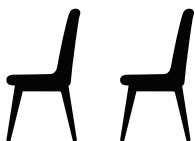
Take a few minutes and make some notes that make sense to you. What would you call each movement? How would you explain that part of the story? What would come naturally to you? What scripture from our list or choosing your own do you like best to anchor the story? What is a natural question you could ask to prompt discussion about that movement?



MOVEMENT ONE: _____

SCRIPTURE: _____

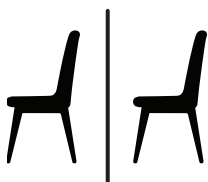
QUESTION: _____



MOVEMENT TWO: _____

SCRIPTURE: _____

QUESTION: _____



MOVEMENT THREE: _____

SCRIPTURE: _____

QUESTION: _____



MOVEMENT FOUR: _____

SCRIPTURE: _____

QUESTION: _____



MOVEMENT FIVE: _____

SCRIPTURE: _____

QUESTION: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Finally, practice having real conversations.

(1) Grab two chairs or two objects and walk through the five movements with this book open. Physically move them as you explain what each movement means. Then close the book and try again using your own words. Focus on the movements of the story. How do I explain what the chairs represent? How do I explain what this means? Don't spend time memorizing verses yet. Focus on the basic movements of the "Two Chairs."

(2) Once you can do that, add Scripture. Then try it with another Christian. You can tell them to interrupt you, ask questions and make you explain something differently.

PRAY:

Take a moment to pray for the courage to be bold and try "Two Chairs" when the opportunity arises.

5.3

COURAGE TO INVITE.

You just learned TWO CHAIRS as a method of sharing the gospel. The next thing we need to tackle is what happens after you've shared that with someone. This is where invitation comes in.

Remember, your goal isn't just to finish a presentation. It's to help someone meet Jesus. The Holy Spirit changes hearts, but our job is to share the story and invite people to respond with love.

At this point, try asking the most important question: *"Where do you see yourself in this story?"* Invite them to see their place in God's story. Ask them, *"Would you like to begin a relationship with Jesus today?"*

This is where we might get stuck. We pray, care, show up, listen, share our stories and talk about Jesus. But we rarely ask the most important question: What do you think?

For many followers of Jesus, this is when fear returns. We might feel comfortable praying for others, building relationships, and having spiritual conversations. We might even be fine sharing what Jesus has done for us. But when it's time to invite someone to take a step toward Jesus, we hesitate.

What if they say no? What if things get awkward? What if I read the moment wrong? What if I hurt the relationship? What if they think I'm being pushy?

These fears are real and most Christians have felt them. We don't want to manipulate anyone or pressure them into a decision they don't understand or even want. However, our fear of being pushy makes us passive. We might spend years praying, caring, building relationships, listening and sharing, but never give someone the chance to take a step toward Jesus.

Out of love, Jesus invited the people He encountered to respond: "Follow me." "Come and see." "Repent and believe." Jesus steered conversations toward a decision.

One of the most revealing moments in Jesus' ministry happens in Matthew 9:

Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:35-38 CSB)

We looked at this passage earlier in our conversations about prayer for the harvest. We noted that where the disciples saw crowds and interruptions, Jesus saw people and opportunities.

We assume people are farther from starting a relationship with God than they really are and nobody is interested. We don't think anyone is asking spiritual questions. Jesus saw something different. He saw people who were searching, hurting and spiritually hungry, many of whom were much closer to deciding to follow Him than anyone realized.

Of course, we don't create the harvest; God does. We don't change hearts; God does. We don't save people; God does. Prayer has taught us this from the start. God gives the growth, the Holy Spirit opens eyes, and salvation belongs to the Lord. Knowing that God gives the growth doesn't mean we never invite people to respond, it just means we trust God with the outcome. There are times to plant, times to water and times to harvest. Good News People are willing to do all three. We know not every conversation is about harvesting. Some just plant seeds while others water seeds that are already there. Sometimes, God opens a door and gives us a moment when someone is ready to take a step.

In those moments, one of the most loving things we can do is ask: *“What do you think of Jesus? What would it look like to start following Him?”* These questions function like an invitation that respects a person's freedom and gives them a chance to respond.

Their answer might be **“yes,” “no” or “not yet.”** That part is up to God.

Our friends at Cru, an evangelistic college campus ministry, put it this way... *“There really is no wasted witness. We fail in witnessing only if we fail to witness. Success in witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God”* (Bill Bright).

Our role is to lovingly create the chance for a decision. And sometimes the most loving thing we can do is simply ask someone if they would like to start a life-changing, life-saving relationship with Jesus.

ON MISSION PRACTICES

RESPONDING TO THEIR RESPONSE

You've just shared the Good News of Jesus, possibly using TWO CHAIRS or another approach. You asked, *“Where do you see yourself in this story?”* and *“Would you like to start a relationship with Jesus today?”*

You wait and listen as they think it over or maybe pray. But then you wonder, what should I do next? How do I respond if they say yes or no? What happens now?

The Good News is you don't need a perfect script. You just need to know how to respond to the person in front of you. In most cases, these conversations end with “yes,” “not yet” or “no.” Each answer needs a different response, but none should make you worry.

WHAT IF THEY SAY “YES”?

If they say yes, celebrate! Heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7). This isn't the end — it's the start of something entirely new.

Someone who just started following Jesus is like a new seedling or a newborn. New life is exciting but also fragile. The next few weeks are important as roots start to grow. Jesus' parable of the sower shows that not every seedling grows deep roots (Mark 4:1–20). You don't have to be their pastor or answer every question. Your job is to help them build healthy roots as they begin their walk with Jesus.

One of the best things you can do is pray with them. Don't stress about saying the perfect words. Encourage them to thank Jesus for His love, confess their sin, declare their trust in Him and ask Him to lead their life. Then encourage them to keep talking with God every day. Help them see that prayer is one of their main ways to grow closer to God.

If they don't have a Bible, give them one. Suggest starting with the Gospel of John. John explains why he wrote: “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30–31 CSB). For new believers, reading about Jesus's life, words and ministry is the best place to start. If you can, read together. Don't just give them a Bible and hope for the best — walk through it with them.

Before you leave, make a plan to meet again. Exchange phone numbers if needed and set up another conversation soon. Invite them to church and introduce them to other mature believers.

Try not to overwhelm them. It's easy to give out books, send podcasts, start Bible studies and share lots of resources. More than information, they need a friend who will walk with them. Healthy roots usually don't grow alone.

WHAT IF THEY SAY “I DON'T KNOW”?

“I'm not sure” or “I don't know” can feel like rejection. But it's not. It just means that they are still wrestling with Jesus. Ask what questions or concerns they have and listen to them.

It's not our responsibility to answer every question or argue someone into faith. We will continue to pray. We will continue to care. We want to keep helping them encounter Jesus, to keep reading Scripture, and to continue asking meaningful questions. We point them to Jesus and let Him do the work. Our goal is just to help them take one step closer to Jesus.

If you can, set up another opportunity to spend time together. Choose a day and a place.

WHAT IF THEY SAY “NO”?

If they say no, begin by thanking them. Thank them for trusting you with an honest conversation and an honest answer. Talking about faith is personal, and their willingness to listen matters. Keep loving them; nothing has changed.

You don't need to pull away or make things awkward. They may have declined the invitation, but your friendship is still there. Keep showing up and keep caring.

Keep praying for them by name. Ask God to keep working in their hearts in ways you can't see

yet. A “no” today doesn’t always mean “no” forever. Many people who follow Jesus now once said no. God often works over months or years, through many conversations, relationships and experiences before someone is ready to respond.

WHAT SHOULD I REMEMBER?

If they say “**yes**”, walk with them as they start following Jesus. If they say, “**I’m not sure**,” keep walking with them as they explore their questions. If they say “**no**”, stay by their side as a faithful friend. The conversation might be over for now, but the relationship can continue.

In many ways, this is where everything in this book comes together. We keep praying for people by name, caring through relationships, and sharing the Good News of Jesus whenever God gives us the chance. We trust that God is still at work and will guide the path for the people in our lives. Discipleship is a journey to become more like Jesus and help others do the same. Walking that journey with someone else is one of our greatest privileges.

PAUSE:

Let’s stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

REFLECT:

(1) As you reflect on sharing your faith, what scares you most? What barriers, hesitations or anxieties hold you back? Take a moment to consider what might be underneath them.

What is a Bible verse that speaks to this fear? If one doesn’t come to mind, you may need to go and find one. Ask a friend (or even Google) for some ideas. Read some options and choose one that speaks to you.

VERSE =

(2) Think about someone you know who you hope will one day follow Jesus. Imagine you had the opportunity to share the Good News with them using TWO CHAIRS or another gospel tool. Think through each response: yes, I'm not sure, or no. How might you respond in each scenario?

PRAY:

Take a few minutes and pray over this area of your life. Pray for courage and clarity. Pray that the Lord would help us overcome our fears!

What is discipleship?

The ongoing spiritual process of becoming more like Jesus and helping others do the same. In other words, making disciples who make disciples.



LIVING ON MISSION

SECTION SIX



PRAYER. CARE. SHARE.

At the start of this journey, we said our goal was to paint a portrait of an intentional Good News Person. Not a perfect disciple (because that doesn't exist), not a professional evangelist, or someone with all the answers. The goal was to give a picture of an ordinary disciple learning to live **ON MISSION** with Jesus.

Along the way, we have returned to a conviction: if you are a follower of Jesus, you *already* are a Good News Person. You already carry the greatest news the world has ever heard! The question is not whether you have Good News; it's whether you will become intentional about sharing it. That word, intentionality, has been at the heart of everything we have discussed.

The goal has never been about trying harder, doing more or adding another activity to an already crowded schedule. The goal is intentionality. It is learning to recognize that God has already placed you in specific places and relationships for a reason, your fields and friends, as we've called them. You don't need a new neighborhood, a new job, a new hobby or a new social circle. Jesus has already *sent* you into the places where you live, work, play and learn. The invitation is to become more aware of what He is already doing there.

That is why we have spent so much time discussing Prayer, Care and Share. These are the markers of intentionality in the life of a Good News Person who is living **ON MISSION** with Jesus. They are habits, rhythms and practices that help us join Jesus in what He is already doing around us.

PRAYER teaches us dependence. Before we ever speak to people about Jesus, we speak to Jesus about them. Prayer reminds us that the mission belongs to God before it belongs to us. It frees us from carrying responsibilities we were never meant to bear. It reminds us that God gives the growth. It aligns our hearts with His heart and helps us see people as Jesus sees them.

CARE teaches us to move toward people. We move toward others because God moved toward us. We show up, listen well and invest in authentic friendships. We learn people's stories. We celebrate their joys and walk with them through their struggles. We care because relationships matter to God. Long before most people are interested in what we know, they notice whether we genuinely care.

And then there is **SHARE**. At some point, prayer and care create opportunities for conversation. Our relationships create space for words. People begin asking questions. They notice something different in the way that we live. They become curious about where our hope comes from. They share a struggle. They ask for prayer. They wonder why we see the world the way we do.

When those moments come, Good News People are willing to share. We don't come as experts, but rather witnesses who simply testify to what we have seen, heard and experienced.

That is exactly what ordinary disciples have been doing for two thousand years. Prayer. Care. Share. Three simple words. Three markers of intentionality. Three ways ordinary people can join Jesus in what He is already doing right where they already are. It is about ordinary people sharing our extraordinary hope.

LIVING ON MISSION WITH JESUS

Let’s pull together what we’ve learned throughout this field guide and create a “**cheat sheed**” for living On Mission with Jesus. This page is meant to be a quick reference guide you can come back to when you need a reminder of what we’ve learned.

INSTRUCTIONS:

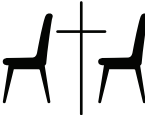
Go back through the field guide and fill in each section with what is most helpful for YOU. Write down key ideas, questions, people, places and practices that you want to remember. Personalize your answers. There are no “right” answers. This is your cheat sheet!

EXPLORING	CLOSED Not looking for a God. Often indifferent, uninterested, skeptical, wounded.	CURIOUS Open to exploring Jesus. Questions are emerging. Interest is growing.	CONSIDERING Questions have become more personal. Know of Jesus but hasn’t decided to follow Jesus.
	What can I ask?	What can I ask?	What can I ask?

MISSION MAP	WHAT IS A “FIELD?” PLACES where I go that there are people I don’t yet know that don’t yet know Jesus.	WHO ARE “FRIENDS?” PEOPLE I know that don’t yet know Jesus.
	MY FOCUS FIELD =	

MISSIONAL PRESENCE			CARE
To see and be seen	To know and be known	To do things together	
What can I do?	What can I do?	What can I do?	Pages 48-49

FELT	FOUND	FEEL	MY STORY
Identify with them and create a space of common ground.	Tell them something relevant that you have learned in your own life.	Last, tell them how you feel knowing what you know now.	
Pages 28-30, 40			

JESUS' STORY					
					
Verse:	Verse:	Verse:	Verse:	Verse:	
Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	Pages 66-71

6.2

THE GOOD NEWS IS A PERSON!

As we finish this guide, let's remember the most important truth: the Good News is a person.

Sometimes Christians talk about faith as if it's mostly about beliefs, doctrines, habits or values. These are important, but they aren't the heart of Christianity. **At the center of our faith is a person: Jesus.**

This is what the Apostle John wanted us to understand when he began his Gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before Bethlehem, the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb, Jesus already existed. He was not just a good teacher sent from God; He was God Himself.

John then tells us something we've looked at already and is still almost impossible to fully grasp: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14 CSB). God stepped into human history and wrote Himself into the story. God moved into the neighborhood.

Paul talks about this truth in Philippians 2. Even though Jesus was in the very form of God, He humbled Himself and became human. He did not stop being God; He added humanity to His divinity. The King became like a servant because He loves us, wants to rescue us, and wants us to know Him.

You can know facts about Jesus without really knowing Him, but God's invitation is always a relationship. We don't just believe things about Jesus; we know, trust, love and follow Him.

That's why Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6 CSB) Notice what He didn't say. He didn't say, "I know the way." He didn't say, "I can teach the truth." He didn't say, "I can show you life." He said, "I am." **Jesus doesn't just point us to the Good News. Jesus is the Good News!**

All through this guide, we've seen that people who care show up. They move toward others, build relationships and make room for the hope of Jesus to be shared. We do this because God first moved toward us. Jesus is the ultimate Good News Person, not because He brought Good News, but because He is the Good News. He is the way back to the Father. He is the Truth our hearts have been searching for. He is the life we were made to live. That's why the Good News is greater than forgiveness, though forgiveness is wonderful. It's greater than heaven, though heaven is amazing. It's greater than purpose, peace, hope, joy or transformation, though all are gifts of grace. The greatest gift of the Good News is God Himself.

The goal of salvation isn't just to have our sins forgiven. The goal is to know and enjoy Jesus forever. That's eternal life. That's what the Christian life is about. That's what all history has been leading to. And that's why we share.

The early disciples understood this. They couldn't stop talking about Jesus because they had lived with Him, walked with Him, learned from Him, watched Him die and saw Him alive again with the scars on His hands and feet. How could they stay silent?

The more we know Jesus, the more we love Him. And the more we love Him, the more we want others to know Him too.

In Isaiah 6, the prophet gets a glimpse of heaven's throne room. He sees the Lord lifted high and exalted. He hears the worship in heaven, and stands in awe of God's holiness and glory. Then, from the throne, a question is asked: "Who will I send? Who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8 CSB)

Isaiah doesn't answer out of guilt or duty. After seeing the King, he simply says, "Here am I. Send me."

Jesus is still King. He is still sending people to do His work. And He is still inviting ordinary people to join Him in what He is already doing. May we respond like Isaiah: "Here am I. Send me."

ON MISSION PRACTICES

PAUSE. REFLECT. PRAY.

PAUSE:

Let's stop here for a moment and take a deep breath.

PRAY:

Take a moment and tell Jesus, "Here I am! Send me." Ask Him for courage and boldness, obedience and intentionality, energy and opportunity.

REFLECT:

(1) Imagine your future self opening this guide again. What is one thing you most hope to have remembered from the On MISSION Field Guide? What is one thing you hope you've experienced in the last year or two?

(2) Now look back to your past self. Where were you at the beginning of this journey? How has God used this guide to shape and change you?

AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS FIELD GUIDE, I WAS...

NOW, I AM...

PRAY:

Take a moment and thank Jesus for the journey He’s taken us all on to become more like Him and help others do the same.



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