



To Make God Known

Reviving Our Passion for the Lost

Journal and Guidebook

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To Make God Known

Introduction

Earlier this year, the church participated in our first-ever mission statement workshop, which focused on the section of the mission statement that reads, “To Know God”. Weeks later, our members are still talking about their insightful journaling experiences. Therefore, in order to make the second mission statement weekend equally meaningful, we will be doing more journaling, albeit of a different nature. This time we will focus on the ending phrase of our church mission statement, namely, “To Make God Known”. This material will hopefully help all of us, as disciples of Jesus, to grow in an area which for some was a strength in the past but has become a weakness for most in the present. We all know that it is God’s will for Christians to influence rather than be influenced by the world. *To make God known* to people is more than distributing leaflets. This means being a disciple whose light will shine in the darkest of places and who will be bold enough to even appear foolish in order to make God known to others. This conviction is not one which necessarily comes naturally, but it is the hope of the leadership that this journal will help you to shift your spiritual thinking, to see God’s heart through the pages of His word, and to motivate you to want to invest in people’s lives. Please decide to commit yourselves to this journaling exercise. It will not be easy but we are confident that you will come out changed. It will demand great courage and giving your heart. However, with us helping one another, we will all no doubt make great progress. Isn’t it time to not just be good by the standards of this world or lukewarm Christianity, but to become the salt of the earth and a light to the world? Get ready, turn the page and change as we strive *to make God known*.

With love,

John & Karen Louis and the staff

SECTION ONE

Day One

Read 1 Co 5: 1-11

¹It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. ²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ³Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. ⁴When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature^[a] may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? ⁷Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

What problem was Paul addressing with the Corinth church?

We all have non-Christian acquaintances, and we also know that the people we should be the closest to emotionally are other followers of Christ. Sometimes disciples may then worry about whether or not they should pursue relationships with non believers, wondering if it is God's will for them to have non Christian friends. The Pharisees and even some members of the early church also battled with this issue. Apparently, they misinterpreted Paul's words and thought that they had to separate themselves from *all* immoral people and stay *completely* clear of people who did not know God.

How are you doing in this area? Have you maintained a relationship with your old friends? Are your close friends *only* fellow Christians? Look at the time you spend with people in a normal week - What % is with non-Christians? Make a judgement here.

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

Perhaps you are on the other extreme and are too close to non-believers. Are you? One way to test this is to ask yourself, "Who is influencing whom?" Journal your thoughts here.

Who else will reach out to your family/friends/acquaintances if you come out of the world and hide?
Journal your thoughts.

What is in your heart? Read Prov 27: 19.

*19 As water reflects a face,
so a man's heart reflects the man.*

Are there dark things that keep you from living and leading in a way that will draw people to Christ?
What do you feel guilty about?

What are you going to do about it?

Day Two

Read Jer 32: 17-22

¹⁷ "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. ¹⁸ You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the LORD Almighty, ¹⁹ great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. ²⁰ You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. ²¹ You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. ²² You gave them this land you had sworn to give their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

How did God make the heavens and the earth?

How did Jeremiah view the purposes and deeds of God? How do you think having such a view impacted the way he lived?

Does it matter that you become a person of some influence? As followers of Jesus, who are supposed to walk as Jesus did, should we be satisfied with having *small dreams*? Small dreams are ok if you are not interested in changing and moving beyond your status quo. Small dreams are ok if you enjoy mediocrity. If your ambition is to just be a "good" person, then go on and dream a tiny dream. However, ask yourself: Is it a God-sized dream? Is that really what God envisions for you and your life here on earth? How big is your God? This has everything to do with whether or not you become a person of influence.

Write down what you think about God's greatness and his plans for your life.

Day Three

Read Acts 8: 1-3

¹And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ²Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison."

and Acts 9: 1-6

¹Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Who or what was Saul trying to destroy by persecution?

According to Jesus' question in verse 4, who was Saul *really* persecuting? What do you think is significant about this answer?

In looking at Acts 8: 1-3, when Paul was persecuting the church, notice that this did not mean that he was destroying the facilities or painting graffiti on walls. He wasn't burning down buildings. He was dragging people to prison. In Acts 9, he had an encounter with Jesus and heard a voice saying "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Persecute *me*? Jesus was already dead, alive again and gone. Saul never even met him. How could Saul be persecuting Jesus? It seems that the answer is that Jesus was so closely associated with the church that when Saul was persecuting the Christians, he was persecuting Jesus himself. The church is therefore an extension of Jesus. That means that the church should reflect the personality of Jesus. It should have this same purpose. Jesus' purpose was clear, as seen in Luke 19: 10

¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

, "to seek and save the lost." This should therefore be the purpose of the church. Our task as Christians is to reflect the personality and purpose of Jesus to the world in which we live.

Do you have this view of the church? What was your view of the church before?

In at least nine places in the Gospels, Jesus is shown sharing a meal with a person or group of people other than his disciples. In seven of those nine, Jesus is eating with people who were considered the worst sinners of their day - tax collectors and prostitutes. Only twice do we see him eating with religious people. What does that tell you about the personality of Christ? Is this reflected in your lifestyle?

Day Four

Today in churches there are many programs presented, books written and events organized to help influence or “convince” people who do not know God to become Christians. In our ministries there have been many such gatherings. We have had bar-be-ques, fun events, sporting events, meals, special services, but are we successful? If success is defined by the number of bodies that have consumed chicken wings, then the answer is yes. But if we define success as individual lives being impacted, we have a long way to go.

Often people who do not know God have a distorted picture of God. Their view of God is negative and our task is to help them to change that picture. Read look in John 1: 1-18.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood^[a] it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.^[b]

¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children born not of natural descent,^[c] nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,^[d] who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' " ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only,^{[e][f]} who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

What do you think is the significance of God becoming flesh?

What did the disciples experience as a result of God becoming a man?

What do you think is meant by “his glory”?

Day Five

If we are to go and make disciples and bear witness to the power of God to forgive, liberate and transform human lives, then we need to be alive in that power ourselves, not just talk about it.

Read 1 Corinthians 4: 20

²⁰For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

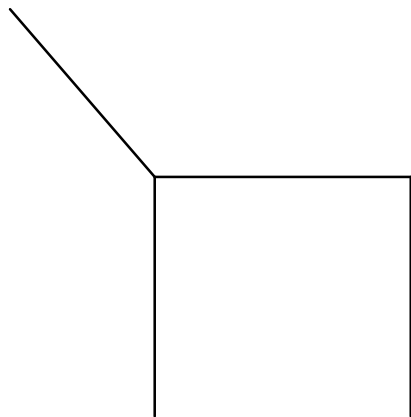
We must truly make Jesus the Lord of our lives before we go out and share the gospel.

Read 1 Peter 3: 15.

¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

What does it say we have to do before we bear witness to others?

How would you complete the drawing to illustrate where Christ is in your life? What or who occupies the seat? Mark where you (Y) are and where Christ (C) is in the picture.



Day Six

Read 1 Peter 2: 11-12

¹¹Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. ¹²Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

What does Peter say about our citizenship?

How are we supposed to live? What will be the result?

How will they know which god to glorify?

Incidentally, the word in Greek for *see* means “careful watching over a period of time.” The fact is that we ought to live lives characterised by good works and deeds, prompted by our love for God and our compassion for people, our lost friends will take notice. They will recognize that your life is different from the lives of the other people that they hang around with. In short, you will be influencing them. This is God’s will for all of us.

What difference do your friends see when they compare your life to the lives of their other friends (and to their own). Take time to think and journal this down.

Think about it - even in our busiest moments, as we interact with others, we can always be extra polite and take an interest in other people’s work, not just ours. We can offer to help them in certain places, we can remember their birthdays, invite them for meals at our homes, go and see movies with them (and their spouses, if married), invite them to services, have lunch appointments with them, etc.

Knowing this, is it really fair to God and to the lost to use work as an excuse for not being able to shine as a Christian or to share you faith?

What can you do to make the Gospel more attractive?

Day Seven

Read 1 John 3: 16-18

¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

When a stranger smiles at us, we (if we are like most people) automatically smile back. If we are warm to people, it generally (though not always) provokes a response from them. This is a simple principle that illustrates the point of influencing people in that we have a tendency to think that if someone gives us something and we accept it, we are obligated to give something back. However, with reaching out to people, expecting something back can be a dangerous thing. People will feel that you have an agenda. The challenge is for us to love people without any condition. Read the following passages, like Jeremiah 31: 3

*³ The LORD appeared to us in the past, ^[a] saying:
"I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with loving-kindness.*

and Romans 2: 4.

⁴Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

A heart simply cannot resist true kindness and unconditional love. It's virtually impossible. If you love your friends unconditionally you will gain a degree of influence among your peers that will stand the test of time and pressure.

Do you love your unbelieving friends unconditionally? Or are there strings attached to some of your relationships? Be honest and write down what is in your heart.

Day Eight

Read Matthew 6: 22-23

²²"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.
²³But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Why are your eyes, in the context of this passage, so important?

What do your eyes have to do with your ability to influence others?

How do we usually acquire new ideas and behaviours? Often it is by watching what other people do and then modelling them. However, modelling has two drawbacks. The first is that people can learn bad examples through this. Secondly, if this goes on for a long time, people can lose their perception of what's right - they have damaged their sensitivity to truth. Sensitivity to truth, like sensitivity to light, deteriorates gradually, almost without notice.

Can you see why it is important for you to be a visible and viable influence in the lives of your unbelieving friends? Modelling is very effective. Talk is cheap. What is needed is a consistent, compassionate, and godly life lived out before your friends and family day after day.

If you have a dog and you feed it canned food, what happens every evening when you pick up the can opener? The animal comes running, even if you are opening a can of baked beans. The dog has associated the opener with its food and has been conditioned to respond that way. Conditioning works with people too. Have you ever thought about how it is usually easier to talk to a stranger about God than it is to talk to a family member because it is so uncomfortable speaking to them about spiritual matters? That is because of conditioning as well.

How your lost friends see you and respond to you can also be a matter of "conditioning". Think about it. Are you the first person your lost friends run to when trouble or tragedy strikes? Consider the numerous stories in the Gospels of people who, in the most desperate of situations, sought out Jesus. Why did the Roman officer come looking for Jesus when his servant was dying? Why did the lepers and paralytics look for him? Because in many ways, Jesus had conditioned them to do so. The life he lived everyday in their midst had convinced them that he was compassionate, available, accepting and capable of offering help that no one else could.

Day Nine

The word for church in the New Testament is *ekklesia*, which means “the called-out ones.” The focus of the church is always on the people whom God has called out for service in the Kingdom, not on a building.

Several images are used in the bible to depict the church - a holy nation, a royal priesthood, the new Jerusalem, the new Israel and even the branches of the true vine. The most common used metaphor for the church is the human body.

Read the following passages.

Col 1: 16-20

¹⁶For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Eph 4: 11-16

¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Eph 3: 10

¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms

The head of the body is Christ; there is no other. He holds all things together. He is at work in us as his body to reconcile all things and all people. His mission, and therefore the ministry of his body, is reconciliation through his cross. *The church is the living, working hands and feet, eyes and ears, mouth and muscles of God for this planet and for all creation.*

As the church is Christ's body filled with his spirit; therefore, it stands to reason that the church must be about the same task that Jesus was committed to when he was here in his body. He came to bear witness to and inaugurate the kingdom of God, the new covenant and bring us to eternal life. Our task is to reveal this new community of divine love and to invite all who would acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and Son of God to join us as his beloved bride.

These actions mean that the church is the ultimate evangelist. We, the church, are witnesses to more than just the message about God's saving love; we also are the message. If the church fails to live out its true identity, the gospel is seriously hindered, if not destroyed.

Has the word sounded from your church? Read 1 Thess 1: 7-8.

Read 1 Thess 1: 7-8.

¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms

What did the church in Thessalonica do with the simple message of the gospel to others in the region?

Read Matt 28: 18-20.

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Here Jesus said to go. What comes to your mind when you see this word "go"? Does it mean as disciples we go towards them or we wait for them to come towards us?

Look at how the early church was a great model of this. Beginning right after her birth on the day of Pentecost, the church continued in her fervour and was obedient to Jesus' command to take the gospel to their surrounding region.

Read and meditate on the following passages from the book of Acts where we see the early disciples, not the pillar leaders, being zealous in the spreading of the gospel (see map of their route below)

Acts 2: 46-47

⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

Acts 4: 4

⁴But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

Acts 4: 23-31

²³On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

" 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. ^{[a] [b]} ²⁷Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people ^[c] of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 5: 16

¹⁶Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil ^[a] spirits, and all of them were healed.

Acts 6: 1, 7

¹In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 8: 3-4

³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

⁴Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Acts 9: 31

³¹Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Acts 11: 19-21

¹⁹Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

Acts 12: 24

²⁴But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

Acts 13: 49-52

⁴⁹The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 16: 5

⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

BARNABAS AND SAUL IN ANTIOCH



Acts 11:19-26

Persecution scattered the believers into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and the gospel went with them. Most spoke only to Jews, but in Antioch, some Gentiles were converted. The church sent Barnabas to investigate, and he was pleased with what he found. Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring Saul (Paul) back to Antioch.

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How can you help the church to become more faithful to its calling?

Look at the four quadrants below reflecting four different types of models of church philosophies.

<p>1. Goal: Saving the lost Method: Small groups – Aggressive Feedback and close relationships. Teaching on truth. Belief: Changed individuals lead to a changed world.</p>	<p>2. Goal: Growing as individuals, saving the lost and serving community Method: Small groups with good feedback and saving the lost, teaching on grace and truth Belief: Changed individuals leads to a changed world and maturity in Christ</p>
<p>3. Goal: Be happy, focus on God Method: Emphasis on worship services; loose relationships and little feedback, take care of self and community services. Teaching on grace Belief: God will bring increase in His way as we shine.</p>	<p>4. Goal: Take care of self, serving community. Method: Traditional services, teaching on grace, optional relationships to foster personal growth Belief: Spirit will work in due to time to stir the hearts.</p>

Which of the above quadrant does your ministry reflect? Journal your reasons.

As a church we should strive for which quadrant?

Day Ten

There is a saying, “If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.” When we have a standard, it helps us to achieve other things that we would not be able to if we did not have that standard.

God is all for freedom. In the perfect world of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve 99% freedom and only 1% rule. God definitely prefers freedom to rules. God actually does not want us to be restricted of the right types of freedom. Think of it like this. If you want to be free to see pornography it will restrict your freedom to have a guiltless conscience. Who is more free? A person enslaved to pornography or a person who is not? A person who smokes or the person who does not?

When you choose to live by godly standards, you aren’t losing your freedom; you are protecting it. Maximum freedom is always doing it God’s way. If you follow the ways of the world, the freedom to do and/or to enjoy other things is restricted. Which one will you choose?

Read Eph 5: 3-4,

³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Eph 5: 8-12.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

Do you have a “hint” in your life of any of the things Paul mentions?

How is darkness exposed? What does this passage says about how you can expose darkness without offending or judging your lost friends?

Day Twelve

Read 1 Timothy 4: 12-16

¹²Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

¹⁵Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

In what areas was Timothy to set an example for others?

Do you think that your age stops you from influencing others?

When we have been disciples for a long time, it is so easy to be *part of a culture* and not influence others. In other words, we all have three alternatives:

1. We can surround ourselves with Christians and eventually become lazy, unbalanced, spiritually bored people.
2. We can immerse ourselves in the “lost world” lifestyle and let our lost friends lead us to destruction.
3. We can commit ourselves to making an impact in our sphere of influence by developing balanced friendships with unbelievers according to God’s guidelines.

As true as it is that friendships with non-believers can help us spiritually, the opposite is also true. There is a thin line between the two. If we develop friendships with the lost world but ignore God’s standards, we will go down. However, if we do it God’s way, we can build effective relationships and make God known to them. As a result we must learn to derive and arrive at convictions that become standards in critical areas of our life. In other words, we must be the type of people who are able to articulate our standards and live by them.

What standards are you setting for others in the areas of speech, life, love, faith and purity? Apply them to the situations that you typically find yourself in, like dating, interacting with the opposite sex, internet surfing, entertainment and parties, company dances, travelling overseas, getting with clients and accompanying them out on the town. Write your thoughts here.

Speaking of setting an example in our “life”, what about your example at work? We have always talked to students about doing well in their studies and shining among their fellow students; how about your “work ethic”? Would your boss be attracted to Christianity because of your example at work? Or would they feel like they would rather hire a non-believer because they will work harder and not have their head in the clouds?

If you are not willing to develop standards then you probably are not mature enough to have relationships with people who are lost. If you find that you are very weak-willed when with non-Christians, please seek advice from a mature believer.

Day Thirteen

Read Matthew 5: 13-16

¹³"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Why do you think Jesus compared his followers to salt and light?

What happens when salt loses its saltiness or when a light is put under a bowl?

Many of us with a large circle of friends take pride in not sharing their faith and find many reasons for procrastinating.

Here are some of the excuses we may use:

1. "If I don't lower my standards then they will think I am boring or a religious nerd."
2. "I have to work on the friendship first before talking to them about coming." Bear in mind that God wants us to be friends as Jesus was when he was on earth. However, are we using this as an excuse all this while and years have gone by?
3. "If I talk to him/her, then I may lose my job status." Perhaps he/she is your boss and you care more about climbing the corporate ladder than you do about saving him/her.
4. "I am not right myself and I feel like a hypocrite." Well, how long do you think it will take for God to forgive you if you repent? Why is it taking you so long to change? Perhaps, you are so comfortable that you do not want to change. Get honest, is that the case?
5. "I am afraid that if they come, they may fall away - after all that is my track record." History can change. People who fall away are responsible for their own salvation, but our duty is to be a faithful watchman. Are you?
6. "I do not believe that God will use me." Stop doubting and believe.
7. "He does not look open anyway." Don't be worldly.
8. "I need to be sensitive." Don't confuse between sensitivity with cowardice.
9. "We are not saved by works anyway." True, but we shouldn't be doing this to be saved – we should be doing this *because* we are saved! Does not grace motivate us to want to tell the good news to others? Also, aren't we supposed to obey Jesus' command to make disciples?

10. "My heart is not in it. I feel lousy." Well, sometimes we need to deny ourselves and do the right thing. Joy and gratitude will flow always when we strive to please God, not men. Or redo the journaling from the previous workshop and get your heart right!

Of the above excuses which ones do you relate to the most? Journal your thoughts.

Day Fourteen

Read Colossians 4: 6

⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

and Ephesians 4: 15

¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

What do you think it means for your conversation to be “full of grace” and “seasoned with salt”?

What do you think it means to speak the truth “in love”?

Day Fifteen

The Accountability Principle - Making Sure Someone “Has Your Back”

Imagine yourself standing between the lost and the saved, on a fence that was separating them. You are in the middle. On the side where the lost are, you are stretching your hands as far as possible to reach them, while the saved people are strapping your feet to the ground so that you will not fall over and that you will be able to bring as many out as possible. This is a good analogy of evangelism. God clearly wants you to lean into the dark and pull your friends to safety. But without effective accountability the likelihood that you will fall over the fence is pretty high. You must have someone – or many someones – who will strap you down. You must have accountability relationships with mature Christians that will ask you the tough questions. Friends who will not let you drift away. Friends who will make sure you keep your relationship with Christ the priority. This is nonnegotiable– it is a must. If you want to effectively make God known then arranging some kind of accountability for yourself is a must.

Read Jude 22-23

²²Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

The verse here uses the word *snatch*. In the context of saving others, what type of attitude does that word suggest that we need to have?

Read Exodus 17: 8-16

⁸ The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

¹⁵ Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. ¹⁶ He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The ^[a]LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

What role did Aaron and Hur play in Moses' life?

What happened as long as Moses' arms were lifted?

Accountability has a negative stigma with many Christians. It was sometimes misused in the past but it also has helped many disciples to be more like Jesus. While avoiding the mistakes of the past, it is crucial to understand the power of accountability when used correctly.

Accountability means giving an individual or group permission to question you in one or more aspects of your life and committing yourself to total honesty with that individual or group.

FOUR PRACTICES WHICH PROMOTE HEALTHY ACCOUNTABILITY:

1. *Consensual - Permission* is the key word. If you try to hold a person accountable without their permission, or in areas that he or she does not yet feel comfortable talking about, it will be negative accountability. James 3:17

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

2. *Mutual* - These relationships need to be two way, not one way. If one person views him/herself as being unable to ask the other person the same type of questions, it will promote negative accountability. See James 5:16.

¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

3. *Confidential* – Too often in the past, a person's sins were known by many because the person with whom they had shared things in confidence had discussed those private things openly with others. This was usually done with a spirit of family – that we are all in the same family so it is ok. It was sometimes done just out of gossip and showing off. No matter what the reason, it is ungodly and is a sure sign of negative accountability. Proverbs 11:13

¹³ A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.

4. *Personal* – Just as we all speak different love languages and different learning styles, we too have different ways of being motivated. The writer of Hebrews referred to this in Hebrews 10:24 when he wrote,

And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds...

Why use the word, “consider”? Because God knows that we are not all spurred on the same way and therefore whoever is doing the spurring needs to do some homework! Obviously, it is helpful if the two parties, or the group, discuss **how** to hold each other accountable.

We would all do well to remember the words of Titus in Titus 3:1-2

¹Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

In an effective accountability relationship, you should be able to share anything – your biggest temptations, your deepest hurts, your greatest frustrations, what areas you have fallen short in, what goals or dreams you said you would work towards but have lost motivation to do so. This requires a commitment on your part to total honesty. You have to be real about who you are and what you are going through. An accountability relationship built on lies eventually dies. Psalm 32 of the NLT.

A psalm of David.

¹ Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!

² Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

³ When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long.

⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Interlude

⁵ Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

Interlude

⁶ Therefore, let all the godly confess their rebellion to you while there is time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.

⁷ For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

Interlude

⁸ The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.

⁹ Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

¹⁰ Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD.

¹¹ So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

What are your thoughts about the above?

To whom have you given permission to hold you accountable? Write down their names.

Day Sixteen

Read Galatians 6:1-2

¹Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

and Luke 17: 3-5

³So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

According to Jesus, how should we approach other Christians who have fallen into sin?

Why do you think the disciples responded, "Increase our faith"?

Whenever we teach accountability, inevitably there will be those who will say, "I don't need to have someone in my life to hold my accountable. My relationship with God is between me and God – and no one else."

Yes, a relationship with God is personal, but it is not private.

There's a big difference. At no point does intimacy with God relieve you from being personally accountability to the body of Christ. We are accountable to one another. Jesus commands us to do, that is what Luke 17:3-4 is all about.

Accountability is my responsibility but it is also yours.

Journal your thoughts about the statement "Your relationship with God is personal... but it is not private."

SECTION THREE

Day Seventeen

Read 1 Co 12: 12-27

¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by^[a] one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Based on the above verse, how would you describe the way the body of Christ is intended to function?

How does accountability benefit "one another relationships"?

The same principle applies here. You need the rest of the body in order to find and fulfil your God given purpose. We need each other.

Do you think that you need greater accountability? Journal your thoughts.

Day Eighteen

Read Eph 6: 13-17

¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

What areas of the body does the armour of God cover? Why do these areas need to be protected spiritually?

Most of us do better when someone is checking up on us. In almost every facet of life, what is *expected* is connected to what is *inspected*. Would you study in school if there were no tests? Would athletes practice hard if there were no coach?

The armour that was talked about basically protects your entire portion of your body. But that leaves one critical area exposed - your back. And that's where most of the enemy attacks will come. Therein lays the beauty of accountability.

Who has your back? (Names of people)

Can you think of an instance in your life when accountability could have saved you from hurt or negative consequences? Journal your thoughts.

This emphasis on accountability in no way negates all of the emphasis that has been placed in recent years on taking personal responsibility for your own growth. Journal your thoughts here about how you have grown because of taking more personal responsibility in your walk with God.

Day Nineteen

Read 2 Chronicles 10: 1-19

¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king. ² When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. ³ So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and all Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: ⁴ "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

⁵ Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days." So the people went away.

⁶ Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

⁷ They replied, "If you will be kind to these people and please them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

⁸ But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁹ He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell the people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter'-tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. ¹¹ My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.' "

¹² Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." ¹³ The king answered them harshly. Rejecting the advice of the elders, ¹⁴ he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions."

¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from God, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

"What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son?

To your tents, O Israel! Look after your own house, O David!"

So all the Israelites went home. ¹⁷ But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

¹⁸ King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, ^[a] who was in charge of forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

Who were the two "accountability groups" in Rehoboam's life? Which group do you think he should have listened to?

What was Reheboam's mistake? What were the consequences?

Choosing the wrong person to help you is as dangerous as not being held accountable. Here are some guidelines for choosing the right type of person or group:

1. Choose someone you can trust.
2. Choose someone who is worthy – Pick someone who will actually hold you accountable, not someone who is just your buddy or a person you feel comfortable sinning with, but someone who can hold you up to the standard you need.
3. Choose someone of the same gender.
4. Choose someone based on your particular accountability needs.

Clearly, accountability is in every Christian's best interest. Why do people resist it? Confrontation. People hate confrontation. We do not like to confront someone because we are more concerned about what the person thinks about us than we are about his or her spiritual life. We want to maintain a friendship relationship at all costs. We do not want to risk someone being unhappy with us. Imagine going in a jungle trip with a team, how would you feel if you were paired up? Would you rather be left alone? Why?

Which has a higher priority in your relationship? True Love or feeling accepted? What does Proverbs 27:6 mean to you?

Extra note: Remembering that Eph 4:15 says that we should "speak the truth in love", let's examine what it might mean to "listen to the truth in love". In other words, some of us are better at giving input than taking it. Examine here how you normally do in this area, and ask you closest relationships what they sincerely think. (You might have to ask them several times to get the truth!)

Day Twenty

Read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

What are the characteristics of true biblical love?

Which of these comes easiest to you? Which ones do you struggle with the most?

Read Matthew 5: 43-48

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor^[a] and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I tell you: Love your enemies^[b] and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

What was the common wisdom of Jesus' day regarding who you should love? What did he teach that was radically different?

Why should you love people who give you a hard time? Journal about some of the people in your life who are harder to love.

Day Twenty One

Read 2 Corinthians 5: 11-21

¹¹Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹²We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin^[a] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

What is the message of reconciliation? What is the ministry of reconciliation?

What does it mean to you to be Christ's ambassador?

Reconciliation means “making two conflicting things compatible.” And that is your job: to make your lost friends, who are in conflict with God because of their sin, compatible with God. Your unconditional acceptance is the relational bridge that connects one side to the other and allows reconciliation to occur.

The goal of reconciliation is to develop a relationship built upon acceptance – despite a friend's past. Despite a friend's lifestyle. Despite a friend's flawed ideas about disagreements with God. Your willingness to love and accept your friends unconditionally is the one thing that paves the way to reconciliation, relationship, and ultimately influence for the sake of Christ. Yes, reconciliation can be messy. It takes time. You have been given a ministry as an ambassador for Christ. God is making his appeal through you.

God wants people only to repent and enter into a relationship through baptism and then to stay faithful. Sometimes we have a higher standard for our friends than God, like getting them to like you and share the same interests with you. Many people will not do that; we are all different. However, we talk as if that is the condition that they must fulfil before we accept them and reach out to them. Remember this formula

Reconciliation + Relationship = Influence

When it comes to reconciliation, do you have a higher standard than God?
Journal your thoughts here.

Day Twenty Two

Read John 8: 1-11

¹But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

¹¹"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

How do you think this woman caught in adultery expected Jesus to respond to her when she was first brought to him?

How was his response different from what she expected? How do you think this affected her?

One of the ways to be effective in making God known to your friends is to startle them by your reactions to certain issues. Our job is to make them realize that something in their hearts does not measure up. Look at how the woman felt when Jesus treated her this way. Are you creating this in the people with whom you interact? Journal down your thoughts.

Day Twenty Three

Read Romans 10: 14-15

¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

What is the process that Paul lays out for someone to become a Christian?

To whom does the word beautiful refer to?

What is your role in this process?

Whose beautiful feet are you grateful for?

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