



The Titus 2 Life at Sanctuary

Titus chapter 2 shows us a biblical model of what it looks like to grow in maturity as a follower of Jesus, and be intentional about advocating growth and maturity in one another. It charges older men and women to grow in maturity and character, and intentionally teach and invest in those who are younger in age or spiritual maturity. In this chapter, Paul is reinforcing the importance of this to Titus and the church at Crete, and models how it should be lived out in the church body.

We want this to be true about us at Sanctuary and *The T2 Life* is designed specifically for that! *T2* is not a program of the church but a vision to instill an advocate (mentoring) culture at Sanctuary that is part of disciples making disciples in every aspect of ministry at our church. This process is not formal, nor is it formless. *The T2 Life* will help us take an intentional step in living out the normal and natural implications of life in Christ.

Our desire is to follow the Biblical model of older, mature followers of Christ intentionally investing and advocating for the younger and less mature in the faith and for this to be replicated in every aspect of our Faith Family.

Titus 2

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. ² Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness⁸ and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰ and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Great Commission – Matthew 28.16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

The Shema – Deuteronomy 6.1-9, 20-25

This is the commandment, the rules and regulations, that GOD, your God, commanded me to teach you to live out in the land you’re about to cross into to possess. This is so that you’ll live in deep reverence before GOD lifelong, observing all His rules and regulations that I’m commanding you, you and your children and your grandchildren, living good long lives.

Listen obediently, Israel. Do what you’re told so that you’ll have a good life, a life of abundance and bounty, just as GOD promised, in a land abounding in milk and honey.

Attention, Israel!

GOD, our God! GOD the one and only!

Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that’s in you, love him with all you’ve got!

Write these commandments that I’ve given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates.

The next time your child asks you, “What do these requirements and regulations and rules that GOD, our God, has commanded mean?” tell your child, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in

Egypt and GOD powerfully intervened and got us out of that country. We stood there and watched as GOD delivered miracle-signs, great wonders, and evil-visitations on Egypt, on Pharaoh and his household. He pulled us out of there so he could bring us here and give us the land he so solemnly promised to our ancestors. That's why GOD commanded us to follow all these rules, so that we would live reverently before GOD, our God, as He gives us this good life, keeping us alive for a long time to come.

It will be a set-right and put-together life for us if we make sure that we do this entire commandment in the Presence of GOD, our God, just as he commanded us to do.

Incarnational Story

Historically, the patriarch always tells the story. The patriarch of the family always tells the story incarnationally. When Jews today practice the weekly Sabbath, the patriarch tells the Exodus story as if his family was a part of the escape and entrance. "And we arrived into the Promise Land just as God had said."

John 1.1-5, 14.

In 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 all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*Gospel is a true and good form by which we live well, storytelling creates a world of presuppositions, assumptions, and relations into which we enter. Stories invite us into a world other than ourselves and, if they are good and true stories, a world larger than ourselves. Gospel invites us into a world of God's creation and salvation and blessing. God in human form in action of the very ground on which we live. It's an incarnational story, that is a flesh-and-blood-on-the-ground story; a story worked out in actual lives and places, not in abstract ideas or programs or inspirational, uplifting anecdotes, but a story in which we recognize the action of God in the everydayness of a local history in our stories. Eugene Peterson, *The Pastor**

As a Faith Family, we are constantly leaning into the livable reality of the Word of God. God's Word is very much for the here and now, seeing each story as our story, seeing each invitation as personal, finding our story in His.

Stewards and Sowers of the Story

Not only does the patriarch tell the story, but he becomes the primary steward and sower of God's story. The Biblical model consistently portrays older believers sharing their lives with

others, especially the younger generations. This inclusive model can be seen throughout Scripture, the following are just a few brief examples.

Psalm 145.3-13

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;

His greatness no one can fathom.

*⁴ One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.*

*⁵ They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.^[b]*

*⁶ They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.*

*⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*

*The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.*

The LORD is good to all;

He has compassion on all he has made.

*¹⁰ All your works praise you, LORD;
your faithful people extol you.*

*¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,*

*¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*

*¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.*

Psalm 71.17-18

*Since my youth, God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.*

*¹⁸ Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, my God,*

*till I declare your power to the next generation,
your mighty acts to all who are to come.*

Proverbs 27.10-17

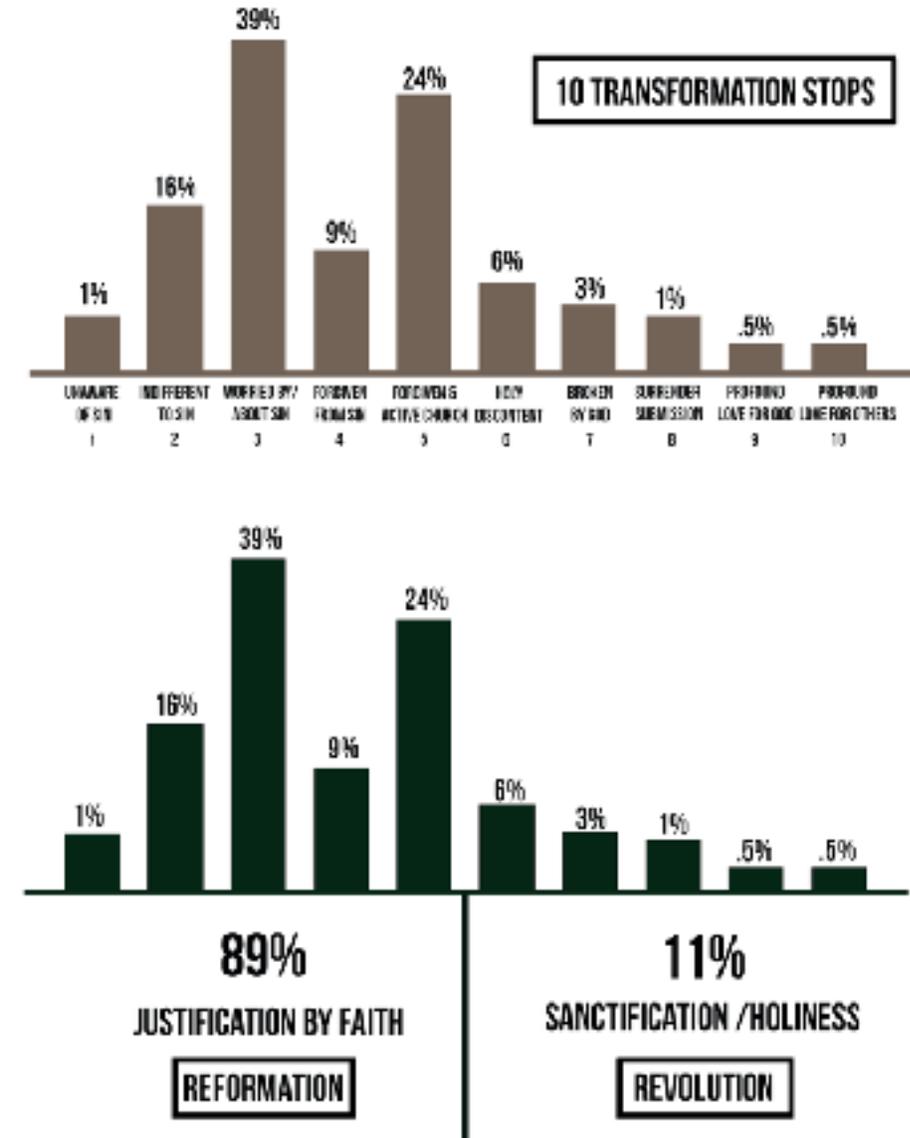
*Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family,
and do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby than a relative far away.*

*Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart;
then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.*

*The prudent see danger and take refuge,
but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.
Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if it is done for an outsider.
If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning,
it will be taken as a curse.
A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping
of a leaky roof in a rainstorm;
restraining her is like restraining the wind
or grasping oil with the hand.
As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.*

“In the process of storytelling, when we recognize it as a living part of the development of the tradition we’re watching them define Jesus for themselves. At that moment, we have caught an authentic and maybe one of the most historically significant parts of the development of Christianity.” Helmut Koester, Harvard.

10 Transformational Stops – George Barna, *Maximum Faith*



Personal Reflection

- Locate yourself on the graph and answer the following questions:
- How long have you been at this point?
- What kind of fruit is being produced in you and through you?
- What would it take for you to continue to move toward maturity?

“Many people will follow the Lord half way, but not the other half. They will willingly give up possessions and property and wealth but it touches them too deeply to disown themselves.” Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf.

Galatians 6.15

It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.

Knowing the purpose of the journey is critical. You're not likely to experience full transformation if you don't know what it is and are not devoted to its pursuit...Most Christians mirror cultural goals, desiring happiness, comfort, security, belonging, and popularity. Surprisingly few are focused on completely cooperating with God to experience the kind of whole-life transformation described in the Bible and made possible only through a partnership with God. The lack of understanding of the goals of a truly Christian life prevents people from making the extraordinary life transition that are possible.” George Barna.

Table Talk

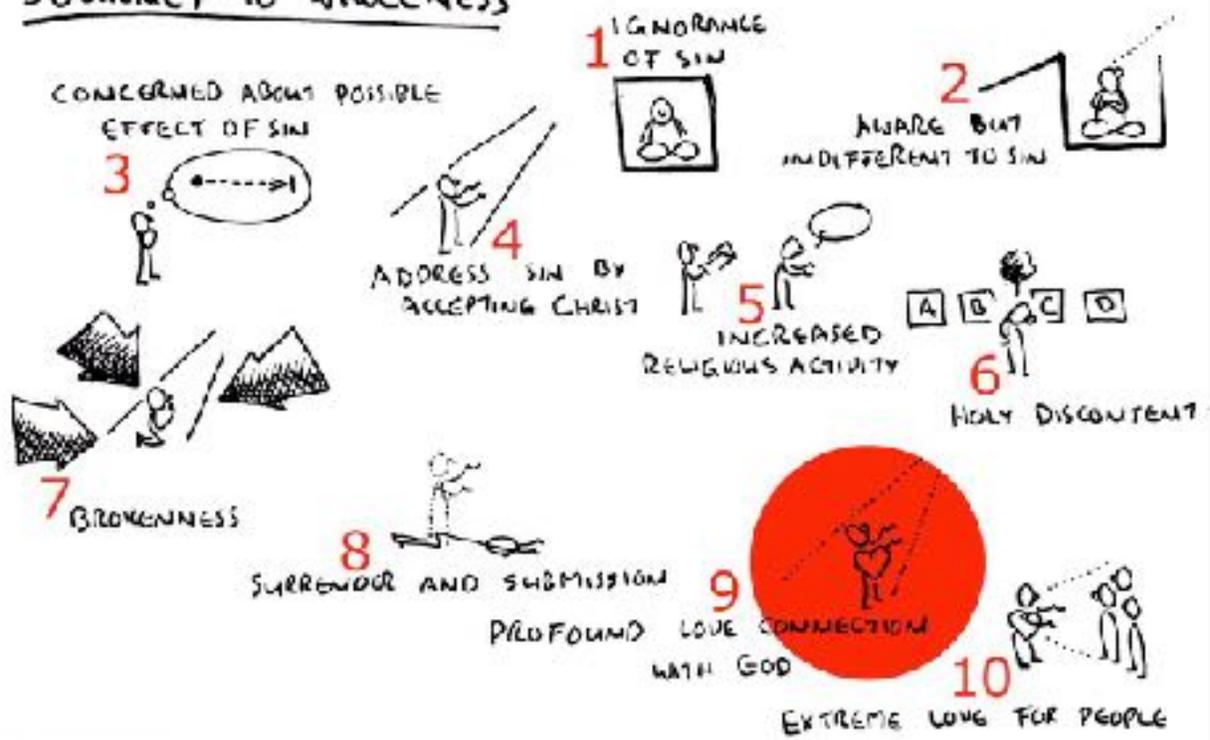
Read the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 and then respond to the following questions.

- Who has been a sower into your life? (They may or may not have seen the harvest of the seed they planted in you.)
- Using the language in the text describe the condition of your soil – your ability to receive what's being sown?
- What are you doing and how are you praying in ways that are generational in scope?

Pray

As you pray in your band, thank God for those He used to grow you and invite Him to stretch your view. Ask God to reveal to you people in your sphere of influence where sowing is already taking place. Ask God for courage to be intentional in taking a step toward discipleship.

JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS





The T2 Life – Part Two

Because we find ourselves at a crossroads as a Faith Family. As we look at the landscape of the Church and look deeply at our own church we are recognizing that without intentionality we may manage to grow our church without growing people.

The core conviction of *The T2 Life* is the Church only grows as her people are growing. As J.D. Walt says, “You can grow churches without growing people but you can’t grow people without also growing the church”.

The T2 Life is all about growing people into mature disciples who are becoming disciple makers. There is nothing groundbreaking here, these are not new ideas, but we do believe this is a new wineskin for us at Sanctuary. We’ve always believed that new programs, or a new class won’t produce disciples who make disciples. We’ve bet the farm that it’s relationships that God uses most in growing people. *The T2 Life* is going to take courage, vulnerability and humility. It’s going to take brothers banding together in order to sow for a great awakening in our neighborhood and the nations. If you are looking for a new program, or a snappy study, or a quick fix, this isn’t the ticket. Soul work is slow work. Today we’ll take another step.

We’ll use 2 Corinthians 3.17-18 as our foundation

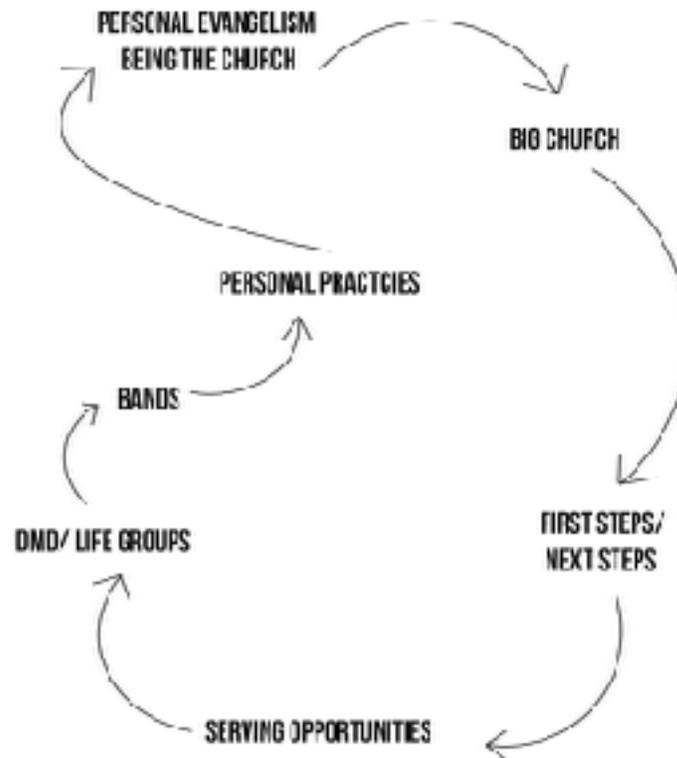
“Now the Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

The Gospel doesn’t just save us. The Gospel heals us. And, the Gospel changes us. Change is long. Change is hard. Change is slow. Change is glorious.

Personal Reflection

- How are you learning to live with an “unveiled face”?
- How would the rest of your table know if you were wearing a mask?
- Describe one area in your life where you see transformation occurring?
- What’s one area in your life where you are desperate for transformation to occur?

Sanctuary's Discipleship Journey



“Everyone is in a process of spiritual formation. We are being shaped into either the wholeness of the image of Christ or a horribly destructive caricature of that image-- destructive not only to ourselves but also to others, for we inflict our brokenness upon them . . . The direction of our spiritual growth infuses all we do with intimations of either Life or Death.” M. Robert Mulholland Jr. Invitation to a Journey

Our desire is to grow smaller so we cultivate a culture where being conformed to the image of Christ is the norm. Without intentionality, we may gain lots of knowledge and maybe even make friends, but we may not mature into the church where people actually live and love like Jesus.

Sanctuary is a safe place for many wounded souls. Many people who come to Sanctuary are drawn in by our authenticity but find it difficult to become authentic themselves.

We are learning that it's imperative for us to help people see that what is authentic about Sanctuary is not just its people, but foremost the authenticity of the Gospel. It's the authenticity of the Gospel being lived out in our everyday, ordinary lives that people are attracted to. It's the genuineness of Jesus that people are magnetized by. Our great temptation would be to offer a method, or a pre-packaged program to meet a felt religious need. *The T2 Life* offers a space for us to be our real selves with those around us who refuse to settle for a manufactured religious life and fully embrace the Jesus Way that leads to Life!

Mutuality

One of God's greatest works of art is how He uses people to grow people. Last week we took a glimpse of the way older guys "told the story" to younger guys. We looked at the normal and natural way of discipleship. One of the most magnificent dynamics is the mutuality that occurs in relationship. It's not just the older more mature believer that passes wisdom on to the younger man, but the mutual benefit of this intentional relationship. Everybody grows when we live The T2 life, whether mature believer or a guy at the starting line.

Our basis for *The T2 Life* is creating an intentional community where the shared love for Christ prevails. Where we recognize "we are one in Christ" (Galatians 3.28). Using a picture C.S. Lewis paints, Jan Johnson helps us embrace what this looks like in our context.

"In The Four Loves C.S. Lewis writes, 'Eros, is represented by two people looking at each other. At first, it's novel to meet people we don't know and we notice things we like about each other. After a while we notice things we don't like or may even become bored. But phileo is represented by two people sitting side by side, looking forward together at the same thing.' Our focus is not so much on each other, but at the thing we look at together, in this case, Christ. As you and I focus on Christ together, you may notice things I don't notice and point them out to me. I'm glad because I needed to hear what you see. I appreciate you so much! As Christians, we are looking at the story of God, the love of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit here on earth.

Micro-Community Discipleship

In 1738, John Wesley began calling these little groups "bands". David Thomas describes a band this way,

"A trusted safe, empathetic, honest friendship. Banded discipleship is the womb, the fertile soil, where love can live, where love can love."

A band is people:

A people where I am _____.

A people where I can _____.

A people where it's safe to acknowledge _____.

A people where I can be reminded that _____.

Christ's love lives in me.

His Spirit is alive in me.

A band is small:

Small enough to _____.

Small enough to _____.

Small enough to _____.

Small enough to reveal our false & true selves.

“When we open our heart's experiences to each other in trust, we are entering on holy ground where there is no place for comment, criticism, or correction, but only for a response of loving acceptance. On this holy ground God-in-you is listening to God-in-the-other.” Margaret Silf

The Biblical Mission Statement for Bands

*I pray that out of his glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3.16-19*

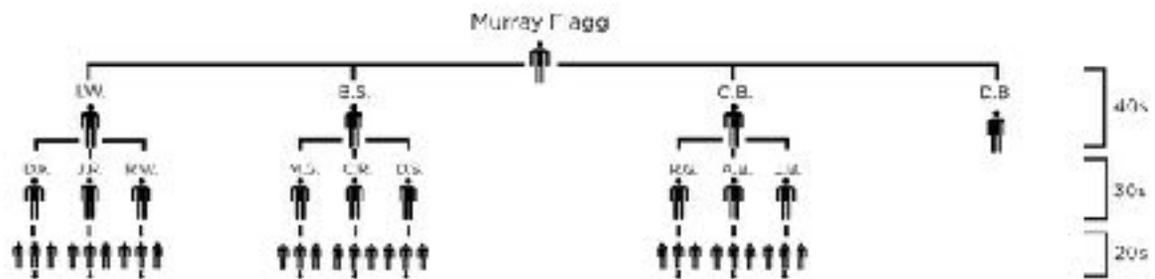
Interwoven into every Life Group, DMD group, or class at Sanctuary are these three specific aspects of Ephesians 3.16-19:

1. It's God's Word. We read together. We are people of the Book. *“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of God will stand forever.”* Isaiah 40.8. add: 2 Timothy 3.16-17.
2. It's prayer. *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”* Colossians 4.2; Ephesians 3.16-19. Our commitment is to watch over one another in love, to be for one another, and to encourage one another and build each other up. Prayer is fundamental and foundational and the most primary way to nurture these commitments.
3. It's relational. *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* Hebrews 10.23-25.

With the all-consuming goal of being *“filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

Bands may come in all shapes and sizes. Biblically we can see the necessity for having someone older and more mature advocating for us, and someone younger whom we are advocating for.

That means we are invited to give and to receive. The graphic below is just one example of banded discipleship.



Personal Reflection

- What’s your greatest fear as our Faith Family steps toward “small”?
- How do you resist the temptation of feeling like you are not mature enough to be a “sower”?
- What would it look like, sound like, feel like, love like if you were able to understand that you are “filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”?

Jesus & Mutuality

Jesus specifically invited twelve men to be His disciples. Over the course of His ministry other disciples would eventually be added. Acts 1.15 numbers 120 disciples. Yet throughout His ministry Jesus routinely pulled three of His disciple’s closer still.

Peter, James, and John seem to have a unique relationship with Jesus. These three are mentioned on multiple occasions as being the only ones who were present or whom Jesus took with Him when an extraordinary manifestation of His power or glory occurred. (Mark 5.37; Luke 8.51; Matthew 17.1; Mark 9.2 and Luke 9.28)

Scripture doesn’t conclusively say why Jesus chose Peter, James and John. In the Garden of Gethsemane, as Jesus is at His most vulnerable place in life, He invites Peter, James, and John into the deepest parts of His soul. Matthew records the scene this way,

Matthew 26.36-46

Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled.³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” He asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So He left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then He returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Table Talk

It wouldn't be a stretch to see the “band” concept at work in the lives of Jesus and His closest disciples. Regardless, Jesus revealed the condition of His soul and asked for specific prayer.

- What is the core of Jesus’ struggle?
- How does Jesus’ example in the Garden encourage you?
- What words or phrases does Jesus use to describe the condition of His soul?
- When requesting prayer from your brothers, how do you resist the temptation to offer safe prayer requests – those that withhold/protect the true condition of your soul?

As you pray give God thanks for His work in your life. Ask Him for the courage to pursue small, to receive, and to give.



T2 LIFE

The T2 Life – Part Three

We've said often at Sanctuary that our greatest desire is to be fully seen, fully known, and fully loved. While our greatest fear is to be fully seen, fully known, and fully loved. *The T2 Life* is a life that refuses to be paralyzed by fear. Even the fear of being known as a sinner.

The truth is Jesus loves you as a sinner before He ever loved you as saint. Jesus made the first move. He is the Divine Initiator. Paul reminds the church at Rome, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5.8

God's love redeems us, restores us, and then His love calls us to change. Paul continues in his letter to the Romans to highlight the ongoing work of God in the life of the believer. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified". Romans 8.28-30

The transformation of your character to the image of His Son is the work of the Spirit in your life. The Spirit invites you to partner with Him in His transformative work in you. Jesus instructs us to "Take up your cross and follow me." His invitation is to follow Him into spaces and places of your life that have yet to be transformed. It may be that certain parts of your life such as generosity or loving your children are completely surrendered to God, and yet other parts are closed off and mired in bitterness and resentment. In *Invitation to a Journey*, M. Robert Mullholland, Jr. writes,

Our cross is the point of our unlikeness to the image of Christ, where we must die to self in order to be raised to God into wholeness of life in the image of Christ...So the process of being conformed to the image of Christ takes place right there at that point of our unlikeness to Christ.

It's with a few trusted, committed, and safe friends where we can give voice to those places of unlikeness to the image of Christ. It's with a group of people who want nothing more than the wholeness of life for you where you have the freedom to be a sinner and yet totally, wholly, and completely made a saint.

Alone in Sin

Too many men desire for a place where we can contemplate His grace, but are paralyzed by fear of religious judgement and failure. James writes, “Confess your sin one to another, and pray for each other, that you may be healed.” James 5.16. But if we cannot meet together, we cannot confess together. If we cannot meet together, we cannot pray together. If we cannot confess together and pray together, we may not be healed. There is a communal aspect embedded in the Christian faith, and James 5.16 is no exception.

In what is considered to be one of the finest books on community, *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes the following:

He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone. It may be that Christians – notwithstanding their corporate worship, common prayer, and all their fellowship in service – may still be left to their loneliness. The final break-through to fellowship does not occur, because, though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners.

The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So, everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So, we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy. The fact is that we are sinners!

But it is the grace of the Gospel, which is so hard for the pious to understand, that confronts us with the truth that says: ‘You are a sinner, a great, desperate sinner; now come, as the sinner that you are, to God who loves you. He wants you as you are; He does not want anything from you, a sacrifice, a work; He wants you alone.’

God wants you as you are, He wants to be gracious to you. You do not have to go on lying to yourself and others, as if you were without sin; you can dare to be a sinner. Thank God for that!

Confession & Blessing

Confession and blessing are inextricably linked. Through confession, we are forgiven. Through confession, we are healed. Through confession, we are blessed. Notice the gift of blessing in the midst of confession as David prayed in Psalm 32.1-5

*Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.*

*Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit, is no deceit.*

*When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.*

We do not need a mediator for repentance and confession. We can stand fully as a sinner in the sight of God approaching His throne boldly. Yet, confession in the midst of trusted friends allows for the experience of God's grace to be mediated by another human being – here, we are blessed in the midst of our confession.

In a recent DMD gathering a man came vulnerably to confess. He said there were certain patterns, deep seated attitudes, and coping mechanisms, even trust structures that needed to be transformed. He said, "If I could shed this, I could be free." His confession and blessing resulted in his ultimate freedom. He was renouncing sin, publically, saying, "I intend not to behave this way again." His brothers were blessing him saying, "You are free in Christ. 'For if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed.'"

The goal is not behavior modification. We do not desire to ascribe to "sin management." Some wounds are so deep and have been so covered in layers of self-protection that transformation of the heart and mind will take time, even seasons. Forgiveness is instantaneous, learning to live as free men takes time. Working together, doing life together, praying together, even pleading desperately together continues the work of transformation in the deepest and darkest places. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let's not give up meeting together." For one day, full healing will come.

Personal Reflection

- What is one area in your life that you desire to be transformed?
- How does the connection between confession and blessing get lived out in your heart? How does it get lived out in your home? Are your children free to confess their sin, knowing the outcome will be blessing – prayer and healing?
- Where in your life do you practice confession? Where do you regularly receive blessing for the human being you are?
- How have you been healed by confession and prayer?

- How are you currently welcoming a “sinner”?

A Personal Beginning – Psalm 139

It’s through our personal relationship with Jesus where conviction always comes. It’s His voice that speaks through songs, sermons, nature, or people. His voice is most clearly heard in His Word. To be a student of His Word is to be in the midst of transformation. Allowing His Word to speak, guide, rebuke, affirm and encourage promotes spiritual growth and healing.

We’ve recently learned about incarnational storytelling – allowing God’s Word to find us right where we are, and putting ourselves fully into the story right where He is. As an example of confession and blessing we’ll use Psalm 139 for personal reflection and remembrance. Read the Psalm incarnationally finding yourself in the story.

*You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.*

*² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

*³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.*

*⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.*

*⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.*

*⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.*

*⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?*

*⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,*

*¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.*

*¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,”*

*¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*

*¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.*

*¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,*

I know that full well.

*15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.*

*17 How precious to me are your thoughts God!
How vast is the sum of them!*

*18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.*

*19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!*

*20 They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.*

*21 Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?*

*22 I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.*

*23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- Reading incarnationally, where do you see yourself in the text?
- In the Psalm, where do you see an awakening to the presence of God?
- Where do you see God's unconditional love toward you?
- Where do you see confession and blessing?
- Reread verse 23-24. Note what God brings to mind. What areas of your character are yet to be conformed to the character of Christ?
- How willing are you to bring these unconfirmed areas to your brothers for confession, prayer, and healing?

A Confession Liturgy

Too many times in our Faith Family, confession comes after being caught. Creating a culture where confession is always linked with blessing that promotes healing frees us from utter aloneness that leads to sin. Regular, corporate, and personal confession is the Biblical norm. There is no prescribed method of confession or blessing. Sometimes free-flowing conversation leads to honest and open confession and blessing. For others a more formal, even liturgical process is helpful. In our Faith Family, both are welcome.

The following is a sample of confession liturgy.

Leader: Before God, with the people of God,
I confess to my brokenness:
to the ways I wound my life,
the lives of others,
and the life of the world.

All: May God forgive you, Christ renew you,
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.

Leader: Amen.

Individual: Before God, with the people of God,
I confess to my brokenness:
to the ways I wound my life,
the life of others,
and the life of the world by....

All: May God forgive you, Christ renew you,
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.

Individual: Amen

Affirmation from Scripture – 1 John 1.5-9

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all^[b] sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Leader: This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you,
that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.

All: If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just
will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Thanks be to God.

Table Talk

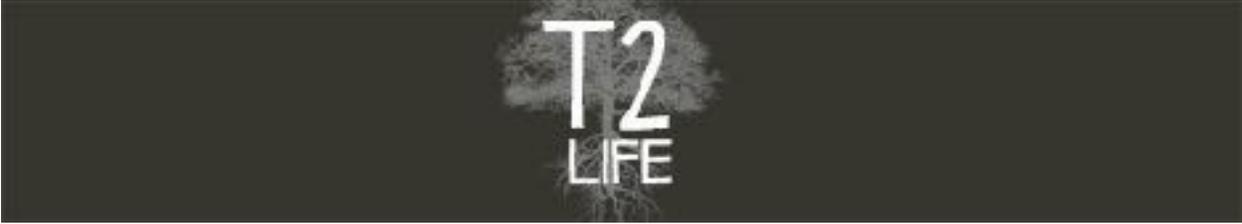
One of the great hesitations to men entering into true banded relationships is because of past hurt in similar type groups. Many men in our Faith Family have a “been there, done that” mentality. We’ve been courageous in the past and have gotten hurt.

We are not alone.

Job was hurt by his friends. They did not speak truth to Job. There was no true confession or blessing. At the end of Job’s story, God asks Job to offer a sacrifice on behalf of his not-so- great friends. “My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.” Job 42.8b

- What’s your greatest hesitation in stepping into this type of confession-blessing relationship?
- What’s your greatest hope in stepping into this type of confession-blessing relationship?
- If necessary, would you be willing to go back and pray for the “folly” of your friends?
- What will it take for you to entrust your heart to God, and to the men in your band?

As you pray, continue to ask God for courage to trust Him and His people with your truest self.



T2 LIFE

The T2 Life – Part Four

“Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Jesus and for Jesus. ¹⁷ Jesus is before all things, and in Jesus all things hold together. ¹⁸ And Jesus is the head of the body, the church; Jesus is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything Jesus might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus, ²⁰ and through Jesus to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through Jesus’ blood, shed on the cross.” Colossians 1.15-20

In our day at Sanctuary, we regularly hear these representative questions: *Is there more to the Christian life than being active in a Christian community, affirming a certain set of beliefs, adopting a particular behavior pattern? Is there life beyond the religion of performance?*

The Biblical answer is “Yes.” The purpose of the Christian life is to be like Jesus.

Jesus, “In Jesus, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” (Col. 1.19)

Jesus, “The Word, which is God, became flesh.” (John 1.1, 14)

Jesus, “God in Christ.” (2 Cor. 4.4)

Jesus, “The One who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14.9)

Jesus, “The One who is one with the Father.” (John 10.30)

Jesus, “The Father is in me and I am in the Father.” (John 10.38)

Jesus, “The reflection of God’s glory, and the exact imprint of God’s very being.” (Heb. 1.3)

Jesus, “The One God sent into the world so that we might live through Him.” (1 John 4.9)

Jesus, “The One who made us alive, together with Christ.” (Eph. 2.5)

In week two of our study, we were reminded that the all-consuming purpose of life is to be “filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Paul is praying that we would be like Jesus.

Two more representative questions: *What have we been saved from? What have we been saved for?*

We have been saved for the profound love of God to flourish and bear much fruit in our lives for the glory of God and the sake of others. We have been saved for a life filled with all the fullness of God. We have been saved that we might live life through Him!

We have been saved for the kind of life that is so powerful and good and beautiful that it would have never occurred to us to conceive of as even possible.

What was once impossible has now become gloriously possible.

“Follow me, as I follow Christ.”

Follow Me

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Philippians 3:17-21

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:7-8

A simple incarnational observation of these verses might send us away shaking our head. “There’s no way. No way. I can’t do that. I won’t do that.” Pursuing the kind of life that lives for the deeper things, sows with tears, confesses when sins, claims the intergenerational ministry of reconciliation, and seeks to live and love like Jesus, lives as an example for others to see and emulate. Whether you invite others to “follow me” or not, the reality is people are following you all of the time. People are watching, waiting, even longing for something – someone who chooses in faith to follow Christ.

Follow Me Here, There and Everywhere

Over 100 men have journeyed through a DMD study together. This “follow me” truth is discussed in Module 9, week 33. Invariably during a discussion on the text, a man will ask something like, “What exactly do I invite someone to follow me doing?” The typical response that follows is “everything.”

Here are five specific dynamics in the “follow me as I follow Christ” invitation.

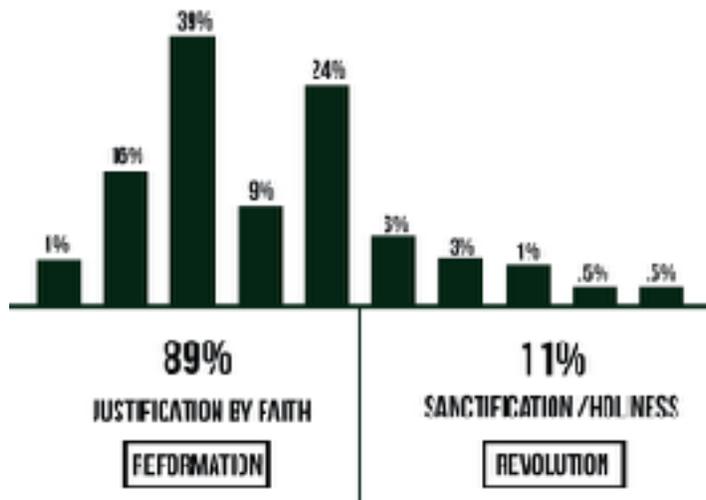
- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ, in confession, blessing and living and loving like Jesus.
- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ, into the places where I have an incapacity to love, beginning with my wife, and my kids.

- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ, in seeking to know my truest self and your truest self, and settling for nothing less than perfect love for both of us.
- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ to a place, a people, where you can begin to understand and really believe the depth of the Father’s love for you.
- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ in loss, suffering, betrayal, hope, grace, and love. I’m inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ into life.

The context for each of these invitations are varied. Here is just one layer of context for each invitation:

- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ, in confession, blessing and living and loving like Jesus.

In the first week of our study we examined Barna’s *10 Transformational Stops*. Our invitation to others is to join us in the journey to the second half – the place where only 1% of surveyed Christians are now residing: to live and love like Jesus.



- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ, into the places where I have an incapacity to love, beginning with my wife, and my kids.

Last week taught us that Christ-likeness begins in the places of the heart where there is unlikeness to Christ. For many men, the most challenging place to follow Christ is at home. A truth gleaned from our W(rest)le study is there are places where we have an incapacity to love. As Richard Rohr noted, *“In faith, there is no possibility of an uninterrupted success story. The only way you’re going to face your wild beasts and your shadows is by failure and rejection, by people not loving you, by having to learn how to*

love your wife and your children and those who hurt you—the enemies—those who make you aware of your own incapacity to love.” (Four Loaves)

- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ, in seeking to know my truest self and your truest self, and settling for nothing less than perfect love for both of us.

So, I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.²² For in my inner being (TRUE) I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me (FALSE), waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law (TRUE), but in my sinful nature (FALSE) a slave to the law of sin.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. Romans 7.21-8.2

- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ to a place, a people, where you can begin to understand and really believe the depth of the Father’s love for you.

As a man of unclean lips who lives among men of unclean lips (Isaiah 6) I am inviting you to be fully known and fully loved. Tim Keller writes, “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.” (Meaning of Marriage)

- I am inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ in loss, suffering, betrayal, hope, grace, and love. I’m inviting you to follow me as I follow Christ into life.

John 17.20-23

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

We are being transformed from our unlikeness to Christ into His likeness. Robert Mulholland’s says, “All this suggests that when Jesus says that He has given us His glory

that God has given to Him, He is indicating that He has made it possible for us to once again be formed in the image of God, to share God's nature as we were intended. Jesus is saying that He has imparted to us God's nature that dwells in Him. He has made possible the restoration of union with God – garden life in the here and now.”

Will You Join Me?

The seriousness of what is at stake means great discernment is necessary in inviting others to join you on this journey. Scott Kiser suggests an invitation discernment process that looks for those that would “know Christ” (Phil. 3.10), “thirst for righteousness” (Matt. 5.6) and agree with the “teaching that is accordance with godliness (1 Tim. 3.6). While all excellent characteristics for a potential group member, those that might need a hand the most are those who don’t always thirst for righteousness, and only know a superficial version of Jesus, not Jesus Himself.

Jesus, who is our example in everything, gave us a beautiful model of how to begin the process of inviting others. Before Jesus began to call His disciples, He spent all night in prayer. (Luke 6.12) It’s only after an all-nighter that Jesus begins calling the twelve to follow Him.

It would probably seem much easier if Sanctuary would create a “Follow Me” app where those who wanted to follow someone could be matched with those whom wanted to lead. That actually might work initially, but because of the low investment in such a transaction, depth and intimacy may be hard to discover and develop. The most appealing invitation is a personal one. An invitation from the heart. Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, “*Come, follow me,*” *Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’*” (Matthew 4.19) Instead of waiting for some to sign up, a more Biblical approach is follow Jesus’ model, and message, “Go out, and compel them to come in.” (Luke 14.23) Sowers, then set a time. Then set a place. And then clarify expectation.

In his comments on Jeremiah’s call, Eugene Peterson offers a bold invitation.

I called you to live at your best, to pursue righteousness, to sustain a drive toward excellence. It's easier, I know to be neurotic. It's easier to be parasitic. It's easier to relax in the embracing arms of The Average. Easier, but not better. Easier, but not more significant. Easier, but not more fulfilling... What is it you really want...Do you want to shuffle along with this crowd, or run with the horses?" Eugene Peterson

Small Seeds. Epic Harvest.

*Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.*

Psalm 126.5-6

We sow. We show up and sow. Our job is to follow Him as He leads us to land – to a people. God is faithful to lead us. If we'll wait on Him, He'll send us to whom we shall go. Scripture consistently reminds us of the ongoing leading and instruction of our Good God.

*“He'll show us the way He works
so we can live the way we're made.” Isaiah 2.3*

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Psalm 32.8*

Once there, we begin to cultivate soil. We prepare the soil, till the soil, and protect the soil. Our role is to be faithful to where He has lead us, and to whom He has lead us. God's job is to bring the sun and the rain and cause fruit to grow and flourish. His job is the crops, our job is to tend to them.

Sowers & Stewards of the story – A sample (Table Talk)

Our band gatherings consist of three parts: God's Word, prayer, and relationship – with the all-consuming goal of “being filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

God's Word: Begin by reading Proverbs 7 incarnationally.

*My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.
2 Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,”
and to insight, “You are my relative.”
5 They will keep you from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words.
6 At the window of my house
I looked down through the lattice.
7 I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the young men,
a youth who had no sense.
8 He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house
9 at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.
10 Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.*

11 *(She is unruly and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;*
12 *now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)*
13 *She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:*
14 *“Today I fulfilled my vows,
and I have food from my fellowship offering at home.*
15 *So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!*
16 *I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.*
17 *I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.*
18 *Come, let’s drink deeply of love till morning;
let’s enjoy ourselves with love!*
19 *My husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.*
20 *He took his purse filled with money
and will not be home till full moon.”*
21 *With persuasive words she led him astray;
she seduced him with her smooth talk.*
22 *All at once he followed her
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer^[a] stepping into a noose^[b]*
23 *till an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare,
little knowing it will cost him his life*
22 *Now then, my sons, listen to me;
pay attention to what I say.*
25 *Do not let your heart turn to her ways
or stray into her paths.*
26 *Many are the victims she has brought down;
her slain are a mighty throng.*
27 *Her house is a highway to the grave,
leading down to the chambers of death.*

Prayer:

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”

I surrender myself to you.

I surrender my desire for security/survival

I surrender my desire for approval/affection.

I surrender my desire for power/control.

I surrender my desire to change (any situation, person, event, feeling or emotion)
I pray not for what I want, but for what you know I need.
I pray for courage to follow You as You lead me, in the way of everlasting.

Relationship:

- Who is she? What is she? Where is she?
- When were you with her last?
- What makes her so attractive? How is this story part of your story? What wound leads you down her street?
- What does she cost you? What has she cost you? What will she cost you?
- How is God healing you and growing you to change (transform) the desire for her?
- What fruit is being produce through your healing? How is God using your story to encourage others?
- How would you like your band to pray for you in this moment?
- With whom can you share this Proverbs 7 truth?

Closing Prayer:

“Now where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we who, with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness, with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is Spirit. Lead me, Lord Jesus I pray. Amen.”