



BE THE BODY OUTREACH

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DEFINED

Actively looks for and engages opportunities to reach others with the good news of Jesus Christ.

"To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in this world. And with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new heaven here on earth."

- C.H. Spurgeon

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DESCRIBED

We, by nature, want to share the things we love. We tell our friends about the best hamburger joint we've found. We share videos and photos we love with the world through social media because we just can't keep them to ourselves. Kids can't wait to tell their parents about the awesome thing that happened at school. This part of us is what should drive our desire to share Christ. We love Him and think He's the best thing that's happened and could possibly happen to anyone. So, out of thanks for what He's done for us, we share Him, and out of love for others, whom we want to have the best things in life, we share Him.

So, why don't we share Him as much as these other things we love so much?

Our current culture views evangelism (sharing one's faith) as intolerant, pushy, or judgmental, which doesn't make this easy. However, if we truly love people, we will want them to discover Christ. We will want them to know and understand the forgiveness and freedom we ourselves have experienced. We will want them to be reconciled to God. We will want them to know the power of God's presence in daily living, and the hope we have for all eternity. To withhold all of this is both negligent and unloving. As D.T. Niles aptly said, "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another where to find bread."

Paul exhorted his listeners to *"Be reconciled to God"* (2 Corinthians 5:20). He did this not for his own gratification. He did it, he said, because *"the love of Christ compels us"* (2 Corinthians 5:14). Paul's love for Jesus was so great, and Jesus' love for him so intense and so lovely, he couldn't help but share it. It was the very heartbeat of his life.

One of the greatest inhibitors to outreach is the negative exposure people have had to tactics not driven by love. There are many unloving reasons a person might share Christ with someone. They may be seeking to condemn someone's moral behavior, win an argument, or impress their religious communities. Jesus' approach to those far from God was different. He was referred to as *"a friend of tax collectors and sinners"* (Matthew 11:19). He dined with those others would avoid (Mark 2:15) and welcomed those they would not even touch (Luke 7:38). He did all of this and more, despite the criticism, explaining that *"it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."* (Matthew 9:12). Jesus modeled intentional and loving relationships with those separated from God. He did this because He came *"to seek and to save the lost."* With that in mind, it's instructive that when returning to the Father, He told His followers, *"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you"* (John 20:21b). We, as His followers, continue this mission in the world.

If we are to walk as Jesus walked, we will be sent as He was sent. We, too, will *"seek and save the lost"* as we lovingly and intentionally pursue our neighbors, co-workers, family, and friends, and help them discover the Good News of Jesus.

EVIDENCE OF THIS SPIRITUAL OUTCOME IN A PERSON'S LIFE

- Can confidently and clearly articulate the Gospel.
- Knows how to lead someone to Christ and seeks opportunities to do so.
- Can clearly articulate the story of their own personal experience with Christ and seeks opportunities to share it.
- Understands barriers and objections to Christ in their current culture and knows how to address them.
- Can name at least three people they are actively praying for and working toward their coming to Christ.

GUIDANCE

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

MATTHEW 9:35-38

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you see those far from Christ, what do you see?

MATTHEW 28:18-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does this passage inspire you? Why or why not?

MARK 2:13-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: How does your life reflect Jesus in this passage? How does your life reflect the Pharisees in this passage?

LUKE 15:1-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently living out these parables? How could you currently live out these parables?

LUKE 19:10

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you intentionally sought out those who are lost over the past year? How could you intentionally seek out those who are lost over the next year? Does the thought of this inspire you or burden you? Why?

ROMANS 1:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family know you follow Christ? Why or why not?

ROMANS 10:9-15

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you think about telling others about Christ, do you view yourself as helping them and doing good in the world? Or, do you view yourself as a bother?

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23

Observations:

Discernment Question: What do you do or could you do to meet people where they are at?

1. PETER 3:15

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you able to explain why you have hope in Christ? How do you or would you do it? What could you do to be increasingly prepared?

2. PETER 3:9

Observations:

Discernment Question: How much does your heart reflect God's heart? Why?

NEXT STEPS

What are practical next steps you will do based on what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture about sharing Christ with others? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life, as well.

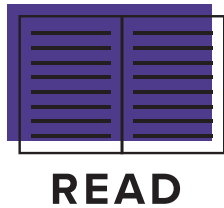
MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:10, NIV

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

2 Corinthians 5:20, NIV

We 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.



BE THE BODY OUTREACH

WHO, ME?

No, not me. I'm not the one you're looking for.

Yes, I heard Jesus' job description...

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor... (Isaiah 61:1-2)

And I heard how that job description is transferred to me ...

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. (John 20:21b)

I can't do this. For starters, I'm untrained. I don't know what to do or how to do it. I don't know the Scriptures. I don't know how to answer probing questions about the cross or why I believe what I believe. I don't know how to talk to people about their problems and hardships. I might be able to put up a front, but it won't take but a few questions to punch holes in that front and display my inadequacies. Even more, if I do know answers to other's questions, I'm notoriously impatient. I'll tell them what I know, but people won't do it. There are others who know what to do, how to do it, and have the patient disposition needed to get it done. I'm not one of those.

There's more.

I'm broken. Yes, I know, everyone's broken, but there's more to it than that. It's not just that I'm broken; it's that as much as I'd like to think about God's grand plans, I can't think past my own worries and wounds. Sure, I'd like to invest my life toward an eternal cause, and maybe one day I will. For now, I'm tangled up in my own mess, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. I'm just not in a place where I can easily think about others. I don't have my *own* life figured out. I know some things, and I don't expect to know all things, but I do expect more than I'm experiencing right now. I expect greater clarity, greater focus, a greater sense of living my life well. I suppose some of that might come by thinking about others, but I've done that, and it was OK, but it wasn't great. Thinking about others and serving others can get messy very quickly. I've got enough struggle in my own life.

And let's be clear. This is not an effort to squirm my way out of responsible living so I can do what I *really* want to do.

This is reality.

I have weaknesses. I have shortcomings. I have obligations. I have struggles. I have hardships. I have flaws.

This is not whining and grumbling. This is an honest assessment of how many of us feel, to which Scripture offers a surprising response.

RESPONSE

The response is not found in an isolated passage of Scripture. It's no minor theme or obscure verse. The response is found in the whole Bible. From beginning to end, Scripture speaks to these very objections. In passage after passage, through story after story, through the twists and turns of the unveiling of God's message to humanity, we discover that all of the above is not an inhibitor to participating in the mission of God in the world, but a prerequisite — a requirement. Deny the above assessment of reality, and it's unlikely you're ready. Embrace the above, and life could get very interesting.

Let's roll back the clock, find an early starting point, and bring our thoughts, step by step, back to the present day.

ABRAHAM

Let's go back to Abraham.

A vision was given to Abraham of worldwide impact. God spoke to him saying,

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing (Genesis 12:2).

God dropped this vision into Abraham's view, not as a young newlywed hoping to start his family, but when the man was 75 years old. Sarah, his wife, was 66 years old and childless. To say Abraham would father a nation bordered on ridiculous.

The situation then went from bad to worse.

Time passed and 19 years later Sarah was still childless. That initial vision must have seemed like a cruel joke. Somewhere around Abraham's 99th birthday, God spoke to him again, saying, "*I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you*" (Genesis 17:6). Abraham's response was predictable: "*He laughed and said to himself, 'Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?'*" (Genesis 17:17)

It was as if God not only wanted to influence the world through this couple but wanted to do so in a manner that sent a message.

The message...

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9b).

MOSES

From Abraham, let's step forward in time. Consider Moses.

By the time of Moses, Scripture tells us that Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, "*were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them*" (Exodus 1:7). At the time of Moses, however, this multiplied family was in a precarious situation. The nation of Israel was without a home. They lived in the land of Egypt and were subject to the Egyptians as slaves. Time and again they cried out to God begging for deliverance. It was a difficult existence, but God heard their cries and took action.

God tapped Moses, an unlikely subject, a fugitive from the law who years before had murdered an Egyptian. The murder had driven Moses to the desert where he was now tending sheep. While Moses was tending sheep, God spoke to him, calling him to fight for his people's freedom, saying, "*The cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people*

the Israelites out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:9-10).

Of course, this all sounds reasonable to our ears. This is Moses, after all- the legendary figure of Jewish history. Consider, though, that not only was Moses a fugitive from the law, but he battled insecurity, feeling totally inadequate for the job. Moses had seen leaders, and he wasn't one of them. He told God,

"Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11)

The conversation continued, and Moses' objections got specific...

"Pardon your servant, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." (Exodus 4:10)

One might expect God to correct Moses' view of himself, "No, Moses, you're a great speaker. You can rally the troops and motivate the masses. Don't be so hard on yourself, Moses." But God doesn't do this. Rather, God tells Moses,

"Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:11-12).

It was as if God not only wanted to liberate the Israelites through Moses but wanted to do so in a manner that sent a message.

The message...

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

GIDEON

From Moses, let's step forward in time. Consider Gideon.

The people of Israel were liberated from Egypt, but as is common in humanity, they wandered in and out of closeness to God. In a season of wandering they were oppressed by a neighboring nation, the Midianites. Scripture tells us that *"Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds" (Judges 6:2).*

In the midst of the oppression, the Israelites changed their ways and again cried out to God. Because of their repentance, God tapped Gideon, through whom He planned to restore Israel's freedom.

Gideon was reluctant to accept God's call to action, but his follow-through was impressive. This man kicked into high gear and rallied 32,000 Israelites to take up arms against the Midianites. Now, one might think that this display of leadership would impress God. God's response, though, was unexpected:

You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands ... (Judges 7:2)

Too many?! Isn't that the idea?! Should Gideon not seek to overpower the Midianites, to ensure their victory, to protect his fellow countrymen from getting routed?!

God explained His statement. Not only did He want the Israelites delivered, but He wanted to ensure they would not *"boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.'" (Judges 7:2).*

So, the 32,000 warriors were reduced to a small band of 300 men. They were less than one percent of their previous size, and through this tiny army, God delivered the Israelites.

It was as if God not only wanted to liberate the Israelites through Gideon but wanted to do so in a manner that sent a message.

The message...

"My power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

DAVID

From Gideon, let's step forward in time. Consider David.

David was young, and Saul was king. It was during this time that Israel squared off against the Philistines. The events that followed are legendary. Goliath, the mammoth-size Philistine, taunted the Israelites, challenging any one of their warriors to represent their entire nation and take him on in a man-to-man battle. This challenge from Goliath put Saul's perspective, and the perspective he had nurtured in his warriors, on display. Listen carefully to how Saul and his army are described:

On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.
(1 Samuel 17:11).

David, on the other hand, had a radically different perspective. Too young to qualify for the Israelite draft, David is merely visiting his brothers at their military outpost. He hears Goliath's taunts, and, rather than cower in fear, he rises in courage. Compare the just-mentioned description of Saul and his army to David's war cry against Goliath:

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (1 Samuel 17:45).

Both Goliath and Saul trusted in human strength and human competencies. They worshiped their swords and their spears. David, on the other hand, worshiped Almighty God, and His God whipped their god. It was as if God not only wanted to defeat the Philistines but wanted to do so in a manner that sent a message.

The message...

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)

THE APOSTLES

From David, let's step forward in time. Consider Christ's Apostles.

Jesus enters the scene and pours into the lives of 12 unlikely Apostles. These 12 Apostles follow Jesus from town to town, witness His power, and are trained by His life and teaching. They didn't realize that Christ was preparing them.

Within a few short years, He would entrust the advancement of His Kingdom to these unlikely candidates. In one place, Scripture refers to Peter and John as *"unschooled, ordinary men"* (Acts 4:13), a description generally reflective of the entire group. Jesus did not choose them for their charm and charisma. Even more, His training was not in how to impress the nations with their own insight and intellect. As they traveled from town to town, teachable moments emerged that enabled Christ to point these early followers to the true strength that would empower their influence.

On one such occasion, Christ attracted a crowd of more than 5,000 people. They were in a remote place, and there was clearly no source of food sufficient to feed the entire group. The story is no doubt familiar to many, but an insight into Christ's perspective is often missed. To Philip, Christ asked, *"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"* (John 6:5). John then records this observation:

He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

In other words, Christ wanted to see if His Apostles were getting it. Would they be mesmerized by their inadequacies, or would they see these inadequacies as an opportunity for God to display His power? A few moments later, Christ is dividing five small loaves of bread and two small fish, and it is from this pathetic supply of resources that He feeds the entire mob of people with plenty left over.

It was as if God not only wanted to care for a group of hungry people but wanted to do so in a manner that sent a message.

The message...

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

EARLY CHURCH

From the Apostles, let's step forward in time. Consider the early church.

After Christ's death and resurrection, He commissioned His followers with orders that stand to this day.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

In other words, their mission would not be to wrestle political control from Rome or any other earthly power. Their mission was to carry the astounding news of Christ to every corner of the globe. It's as if He were saying "Don't limit your work to Israel. Don't limit your work to familiar roads and familiar people. Go beyond the horizons and explain to the world that God can be their God through the grace and power of the cross."

In Christ's final days on earth, after the resurrection, He gave them this command:

"Do not leave Jerusalem ..." (Acts 1:4) Why?

If in one breath He tells them to "make disciples of all nations," why in the next would He tell them to not leave Jerusalem? Today, this might make sense. Maybe they would reach the world through media, books, and the Internet, but this is the ancient world. If the message is going to ring out from Jerusalem, they would have to leave Jerusalem.

Christ explains:

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5).

Days later, He goes further:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

They would wait because the Spirit would empower their ministry. To leave Jerusalem without the Spirit would be to leave Jerusalem in their own strength. Human strength would not change hearts. Human strength would not open eyes and ears. Human strength might be able to trick people or manipulate people, but human strength would not inspire or equip inside-out transformation.

Weeks later, during the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit is poured out on these early followers and their lives and ministries now had power. By the power of the Holy Spirit, about “*three thousand were added to their number that day*” (Acts 2:41). How many followers could they have manipulated through their own strength and cleverness? Who knows, but such manipulation would have been worthless. They might have gained a following, but these people would be inauthentic without the Spirit granting new hearts.

It was as if God not only wanted, and wants today, to reach people with His astounding news but wants to do so in a manner that sends a message.

The message ...

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

TROUBLING

That’s all good. We get it.

Sort of.

There’s something in it all that simultaneously inspires but still gives cause for pause. What are we to do? Pick a direction, wave the magic prayer wand, and then expect everything to go perfectly? There are other stories in Scripture. What about the stories of intense failure?

And by failure, we’re not just talking about something that was attempted and didn’t work.

That happens. We get that. We’re talking about intense failure, people-get-hurt failure, the kind of failure that follows the withdrawal of God’s blessing. Does God withdraw? Does He withhold His blessing?

Roll back the clock. Consider the battle of Ai.

Somewhere between the times of Moses and Gideon, the people of Israel believed they were following God by battling the people of Ai. They had just defeated the people of Jericho in a miraculous battle. God was with them. They were certain of it. When considering the upcoming battle with Ai, the commanders informed Joshua, Israel’s leader, that they need not send the entire army to Ai. They said, just “*send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there*” (Joshua 7:3).

Then the shocker.

So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water. (Joshua 7:4-5).

Why? What happened? The people of Ai were known to be an evil people. The people of Israel were following God’s commands, were they not? They had experienced success after success. God was showing His power through their weakness, and now they were routed by an army perceived as not even worthy of their entire effort.

Scripture tells us that Joshua tore his clothes, fell down before the ark of God, and cried out in prayer. He and the others were deeply disturbed and deeply confused. God was forthright in His response to these prayers.

The LORD said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction” (Joshua 7:10-12).

The following day, a prayerful search was conducted. It was discovered that Achan, an Israelite warrior, had violated the command of God in the previous battle against Jericho, and had kept stolen loot for himself. Achan explained, *"I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath"* (Joshua 7:21b).

Achan didn't trust. He didn't believe God would truly provide for him, so he took control. No more waiting on God to give him what he needs. He would do what he wanted to do and bury the evidence in his tent.

Are there people still doing this today?

Confessed sin, sin that has been brought into the open and dealt with before God and others, is never held against a person in Scripture. But high-handed disobedience, sin that is buried in one's tent, is a breach of the trust that unleashes God's power. Throughout Scripture, we do not see God pointing to His people's inabilities, shortcomings, or failures. We do see an uncompromising expectation of trust. If, like Achan, a person's present actions display lack of trust through buried and continued rebellion, that person should have very low expectations of God's presence in his actions.

US

Consider the present day.

The Garden of Eden is behind us. The New Jerusalem is before us. We are somewhere between the two and we are invited to participate in the creative process. To do so is to adopt the previous job description Jesus embraced and passed along to us. This is no minor calling. Consider it line by line from Isaiah 61:1-2:

...he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

...he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

...to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

This is a calling to enrich the lives of those spiritually and physically impoverished. It is a calling to be healers — physicians of the soul — a people who restore the brokenhearted. This is a calling to be liberators from oppression — freedom fighters — a people who engage the spiritual battles to break others free from the entanglement and enslavement of sin. It is a calling that takes anyone interested in participating far beyond his or her natural and limited abilities.

That is why the very first line is so critical ...

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me
(Isaiah 61:1).

If we are to be physicians of the soul, freedom fighters, liberators from enslavement, we cannot be self-sufficient. We must acknowledge our weakness in order for God to do the work and show His power. Our lives can contribute to something grand, but participation is not something to take lightly. Participation in the body of Christ is not a call to add a little volunteerism to our lives. It's not a call to simply sign up for a service project or throw a few dollars toward our favorite charity.

Participation in the body of Christ is a call to a life entrusted to God and empowered by His Spirit. Consider the following promise, spoken from the early church, with faraway lands and distant generations in mind:

"And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39).

The power of the Holy Spirit was not just offered to the early church to get things going. To those early listeners it was promised that the Holy Spirit is for “*you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.*”

That’s us.

A power is available that takes us beyond our natural abilities. From generation to generation, God has made a habit of taking His followers beyond their expectations.

Empowerment by the Spirit means we will likely be called to step outside of our comfort zones. We will feel foolish like Abraham, who was both elderly and childless, but believed he would father a nation. We will feel vulnerable like Gideon, who obeyed God and whittled his earthly security to one percent of its previous strength. We will feel weak like David, who was small in stature but mighty in spirit. We will feel unqualified like the Apostles, who were recognized as both unschooled and ordinary.

Yes, we have limitations. We have weaknesses. We have shortcomings. We have obligations. We have struggles. We have hardships. We have flaws. If we’re expecting that a prerequisite to participating in the body of Christ is the removal of these limitations, then we’ve missed the message of Scripture altogether. Our limitations are there for a reason. God not only wants to see His kingdom spread from person to person throughout the entire world, but He wants this to happen in His power, with His strength, by His Spirit, not by our craftiness and control.

Remember that weakness is central to the Good News itself. Jesus' "weakness" through putting on flesh and facing a humiliating death on the cross, was the very power that overcame sin and death for the whole world. It’s as if God not only wants us to participate in the re-creation of the new earth and New Jerusalem but wants us to do so in a manner that sends a message.

The message ...

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).



BE THE BODY OUTREACH

My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

We all know that we have weaknesses and that there are others who have strengths that we don't have. But, God made you for a reason. He has you in the place that you are for a reason. Be you, and trust that God is going to do what He says in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

That's all well and good to say and believe, but unless we do something, it's meaningless. So, let's DO SOMETHING!

We need to be stretched, to take the challenge to *"proclaim good news to the poor, bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, and to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor"* (Paraphrase from Isaiah 61:1-2).

Let's start with something you can do TODAY. We are called to love our neighbors, right? So, let's start there.

Who is your neighbor? Look around you. Your neighbor is anyone God has put in your sphere of influence, including family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

We all know, though, that people don't care about hearing what you consider truth until they are in a real relationship with you. The following can help you be intentional with the relationships around you. This takes time. So, be patient and continue to engage intentionally!

Be a BLESSING

As you consider those in your life, look for and create occasions to do the following:

Begin with prayer (Ask God to lead)

Listen (Listen to their stories, their interests, and look for ways to connect)

Eat (Share a meal with them or Engage with them in a fun or meaningful way)

Serve (Once you've developed a relationship, you'll know specific ways to care)

Story (Look for an opportunity to share your faith story and THE story — Jesus' story)

Inspire service (Invite them to join you on a Sunday morning)

Network (Invite them to serve alongside you and introduce them to other Christ-followers)

Groups (Consider what other groups might be a good next step: possibly a restore group, serving group, or a life group)

STEP 1: Begin Praying

Pray and ask God to show you WHOM in your life He wants you to pursue intentionally. *Write their names here and pray for them:*

STEP 2: Listen to Their Story

Now, start engaging with those people so you can begin to hear their story. Here are some ideas:

1. Sitting by a co-worker at lunch or inviting one to lunch just to talk.
2. Hang out on your front porch or outside so you can say “hi” to a neighbor in the evening or invite a neighbor over for dinner.
3. Call a friend who doesn’t know Jesus to go get coffee, etc...
4. Schedule a time to hang out with a family member, other parents from your child’s sports team, etc.

Be curious — Ask questions, and let people talk.

Here are great questions to ask if you are just getting to know someone:

- What do they do for work and fun?
- How long have they been in the neighborhood?
- Family?
- Where are they from?

If the person God brought to your mind is someone you already know a little bit, then here are some next level questions to ask:

- Some great questions to consider are: “What do you do for fun? What is it about that activity that you enjoy?”
- If the topic of faith or God surfaces, ask: “Do you have a spiritual background?” If they say, “I went to church,” ask how their experience was?
- When you ask these questions, be ready for a return question. Use this as a chance to share a brief explanation of where you are with God right now or what you are talking to God about. The point is to communicate that God is real for you and that He’s relevant in your life.

What is your plan to start connecting and listening to those God brought to mind?

STEP 3: Eat and Engage

Realize that sharing a meal with someone or having fun and fellowship is just as important to growing relationally as studying the Bible or attending church. This certainly includes being entertained or eating!

Having fellowship, fun, and friends is godly at its core and can be a huge building block in creating relationships, trust, and community.

How will you invite the people God has put on your mind into FUN with you?

STEP 4: Serve

Once you have been praying for someone, listened to their story, and eaten with them, you will know how to serve them. Don't worry about being weird; step in to serve them in a way you know will bless them. This could be mowing their lawn, bringing a meal, picking up their kids, picking up a coffee, etc. ...

John 13:35 says, *"By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* Let's be known for our love and service to one another!

How will you serve this week? Or if you can't serve them this week, what could be your plan to serve them?

STEP 5: Share Your Story

As you pray, listen, hangout with, and serve the people that God brought to your mind, you have positioned yourself to be like no one else they know.

Use this as an opportunity to talk about where God has shown up in your life recently. (Tip: Don't be preachy ...be real.)

List some things here that God has done in your life recently that you can share:

For example: *"Remember how I told you that I was worried about that situation at work? Well I've been praying about it and asking God for wisdom to know what to say or do and you wouldn't believe what happened this week. It is amazing to me that when I'm overwhelmed and I pray about it, God seems to always help me work out the situation."*

At some point in your relationship with the people you are intentionally pursuing you will have the opportunity to share your story of coming to faith.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

For us to be people who answer this call we have to be intentional and start to engage those around us who don't know Jesus.

By living out B.L.E.S.S.I.N.G., you will become more intentional with the people around you and eventually have the opportunity to share Jesus with them.

Notes: