

firstmbchurch

my **PATH**

A discipleship plan for developing  
**fully devoted followers of Christ.**

Group Study Guide

3 VALUES | 1 MISSION | 6 PRIORITIES



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A discipleship plan for developing  
**fully devoted followers of Christ.**

# myPath

Written by James Burkett.  
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*In case you get lost.*

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# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

*Before you get started...*

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**This study was designed to be completed in a group setting.**

Your group leader or class teacher can decide how they would like to use this guide. Maybe they will choose to **read the chapters aloud together** in your meetings, or you can choose to have each member **read the sections before the meeting** and simply go through the discussion questions together.

We don't have a strong preference of *how* you go through the study; we're just excited to have you go through it together however it fits best in your group setting! Remember: We are going through this study together as a church family, but it is still *your* "path" to maturity in Christ, so use this guide however it works best for you!

One more thing before we get started: We want you to understand *why* this is so important, so let's begin by talking about our **mission, values,** and **priorities** on the next page.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Welcome to MyPath!*

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Within most organizations there is a singular mission guided by core values for the purpose of supporting the organization's priorities. This may sound really confusing until it is written out.

At First MB we have a singular mission of **helping people find and follow Jesus**. Any mission guides what an organization is about. In Luke 19:10 we see Jesus' mission on earth was to seek and save the lost. At First MB, the heart of our mission is for everyone regardless of race, nationality, or financial background to come into a loving relationship with Jesus. We are a church for all people gathered together to help each other find and follow Jesus. It is our desire for you to join us on our mission.

At First MB our values represent what we aspire to be. We desire to be **real people, with a real faith, making a real impact**. We don't want to be the kind of church where you pretend everything in life is okay when you come on Sunday. We know life is full of ups and downs. As a group our aim is to celebrate the ups and support each other when life is down. This is what it means to be **real people**.

We long for everyone to have a **real faith**—a relationship with God that is more than a checkmark on your weekly to do list. First MB is not just a spiritual gas station where you come to get filled up on Sunday to make it through the week. Having a real faith means

seeking God daily. Your faith defines who you are and affects every aspect of your life.

God has created only one version of you. We hope you'll choose to use your gifts, talents, and abilities to have a **real impact**. This can be through serving inside or outside the church. It can also be sharing your faith here locally or on a mission trip.

Our mission is what we are all about. Our values define who we want to be. At First MB **our priorities are what we want you to do**.

We want you to **connect with a group of believers** because we believe life is best lived in community. We want you to **spend time with God every day** because we know this is how you will deepen your faith. We want you to **live a life of worship** because God deserves our best. We want you to **engage in missions** because it will help you better understand God's love and His plans for the world. We want you to **serve somewhere** because God has specifically designed you for a purpose. We want you to **share your faith somehow** because everyone needs to hear about Jesus.

MyPath is our strategy for helping you to grow spiritually. Join us on this journey as we seek to grow together. One easy way to remember all of this is 316. We have 3 values, 1 mission, and 6 priorities. With this strategy we are looking to have an impact on Wichita and beyond.







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## LESSON 1

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# CONNECT WITH A FEW

*... because we live best in community.*

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### REMEMBER 3-1-6

We have three values, one mission, and six priorities.

**Our mission:** First MB Church exists to help people find and follow Jesus.

**Our values:** We aim to be real people, with a real faith, making a real impact.

**Our priorities:** To fulfill our mission and values, we believe we should:

- 1) Connect with a few, 2) Spend time with God, 3) Live a life of worship,
- 4) Engage in missions, 5) Serve somewhere, and 6) Share somehow.

What do you think of when you hear the word *community*?

For many of us we associate the word with the city we live in or our neighborhood. By definition this is a form of community. A general definition is “a group of people living in the same place.”

This is a very lonely definition.

It requires little to no interaction with anyone around us. This definition allows you to be in community with your neighbors for years without even knowing their names. God has placed the insatiable need for community in our hearts. Just living in a neighborhood doesn't meet this need. There needs to be a deeper, richer definition of what it means to be in community.

A second definition of community is a feeling of fellowship with others which comes by sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. This is still a shallow sense of what it means to be in community.

Common attitudes and goals can be something as simple as talking to fellow parents at your kid's soccer game. You come together weekly for team practices and games. You each share the goal of wanting your team to win. You talk for an hour about miscellaneous things then you go home.

With this definition you could move to another state midseason and everyone would just think your kid dropped the team. There would be no calls to see how you are doing. No one reaching out to make sure your family is okay.

**Are you satisfied with this level of community?** It is God's design for us to experience a more meaningful, fulfilling sense of community. True godly community should quench the desires of your soul. You should find a place of belonging where people truly care.

## **God's Community.**

What does God's definition of community look like? We can find this definition in Acts 2:42-47 which reads:

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with a joyful and humble attitude, praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved.”

This early Christian community devoted themselves to learning and fellowship. Part of belonging to this community meant more than just showing up. They studied together and did

life together in fellowship.

Today we like being autonomous. We want to give the least amount of commitment with the biggest amount of reward. This has never been nor will it ever be God's intent for community.

These early Christians had everything in common because they spent so much time together. In the passage it says they met together daily. They met together corporately at the temple and in small groups in each other's homes.

Other than your immediate family, try to think of five people you have everything in common with. People who know you personally – your goals, struggles, and celebrations. This idea of knowing and being known by others seems incredibly foreign in our society today.

As this close community got to know one another they also helped out the poor around them. This is something which is often overlooked as part of the early Christian community. These new believers went all in when it came to experiencing God's design for community. It required them to be relationally vulnerable with others around them. Are you someone who is willing to break societal barriers and allow yourself to be known by others? They had to be willing to share their lives with fellow believers. As a group they were able to have an impact in their city.

## Being Known

How did we get from a group of believers knowing and being known to the church today? Simply put, we changed God's definition of community. In Greek the word for church means: "A group or assembly of persons called together for a particular purpose."<sup>1</sup>

When most people think of a church today they think of a building. Church has switched from being an in-depth community to a building. This is why some people can go to church and still not be a part of community.

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1 Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In Tyndale Bible Dictionary (p. 281). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus states:

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it.”

Jesus was not talking about a building or a group of people who just met together for one hour on Sunday. He was referring to believers who know one another and who are personally known. Does this definition fit your idea of church?

Being in community can be hard, but being outside of community is even harder. We have an in-it-to-win-it mentality when it comes to life. We think life is just too busy to be involved in community. Dealing with people, situations, and relationships can be messy. Why listen to someone else's problems when you have plenty of your own?

Hebrews 12:1 states:

“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us.”

Unfortunately we give little thought to those running beside us. Life is not a race to run on your own. Some of the best stories that come out of sports are when an athlete will stop competing and help out a fellow competitor. These are the stories which are remembered. In your life who would stop for you?

## **LifeGroups**

At First MB we encourage everyone to get into a LifeGroup. We consider LifeGroups a great way of doing life together. We were not meant to run the race of life alone. We need fellow believers when hard times come. Both the good and bad seasons of life are better when done in community. Christian community celebrates the

good times and brings comfort and endurance during the bad. All of us need people to provide support and hope when everything in life seems to be going against you.

In Hebrews 12 we are reminded about being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. Have you thought about who will be in your cloud of witnesses? Who have you slowed down the pace of life for to provide hope and encouragement? Who in your life has slowed down themselves to provide hope and encouragement for you? God's design for community is to help each one of us cross the finish line well.

What now? We have defined Christian community. We have explained the reasoning behind being involved in Christian community. Are you ready to get involved? Your willingness to be vulnerable to others will equal your amount of connection. This could be your time to join or start a LifeGroup, Sunday School class, or accountability group. Step out of your comfort zone and embrace this amazing gift God has given you called community.

## LifeGroups at First MB

LifeGroups generally meet in people's homes throughout the week to study Scripture, pray, and encourage one another. These group members become close, trusted friends you can count on during tough stages of life and to celebrate and hang out with on good days.

Having a group of friends like this is one of the best ways to have a meaningful community that fosters growth. If you'd like to join or start a new group, get started by contacting James at [jburkett@firstmbchurch.org](mailto:jburkett@firstmbchurch.org) or visit [firstmbchurch.org/lifegroups](http://firstmbchurch.org/lifegroups)

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## Did You Know?

The phrase “one another” occurs 100 times in 94 verses in the New Testament. Here are some of them:

**Mark 9:50** -- “Be at peace with one another.”

**Romans 15:5** -- “Be of the same mind as one another.”

**John 13:34** -- “Love one another.”

**Galatians 5:13** -- “Serve one another.

**Galatians 6:2** -- “Bear one another’s burdens.”

**All of these “one anothers” cannot be done alone.**

## Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the difference between God’s design for community and how society today defines community.
2. What obstacles do people face when it comes to getting involved in meaningful community?
3. Acts 2:42 reads: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.” The early church committed themselves to teaching, fellowship, having meals together, and prayer. In what ways is this similar or not similar to what believers do today? What importance do these four activities have in creating community?
4. Why can’t we do this Christian life alone? Why do we need other believers in our lives?



5. John 13:34-35 reads: "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." How does the way Christians love one another show they are disciples of Jesus?
6. Acts 2:47 reads: "praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved." In what ways does a church living in God's design for community bring favor from even those outside the church?
7. How can loving one another help the church grow?
8. Read Hebrews 12:1. Do you sometimes feel like life is a race? How does our society promote the "in it to win it" mentality?
9. Discuss a time when you have personally slowed down or someone else has slowed down their pace to help each other out.
10. Why is it important to help others finish well?



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## LESSON 2

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# SPEND TIME WITH GOD

*... because we grow deeper on purpose.*

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### QUICK REFRESHER...

We have three values, one mission, and six priorities.

**Our mission:** First MB Church exists to help people find and follow Jesus.

**Our values:** We aim to be real people, with a real faith, making a real impact.

**Our priorities:** To fulfill our mission and values, we believe we should:

- 1) Connect with a few,
- 2) Spend time with God,
- 3) Live a life of worship,
- 4) Engage in missions,
- 5) Serve somewhere, and
- 6) Share somehow.

Life can be described as a race. Everyone seems to be extremely busy with very full schedules. Between work, family, and activities, the days seem to just fly by.

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, where do you find time for God? It is good to prioritize, although there can be a danger in it. If all you do is say God first, family second, and work third then **God can become more of an activity to be done than a relationship to be grown.** Developing your relationship with God shouldn't be just another duty on your "to do" list for the week. God wants to have a deep, personal, meaningful, and loving relationship with you.

Matthew 7:21-23 reads:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of

My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!'

This is a somewhat difficult passage to understand. Some people in this passage spent their whole lives being *fans* of Jesus, but not *disciples*. **They chose activity over relationship, while Jesus wants relationship over religion.** There is a lot of religious activity listed in this passage, but all of it doesn't amount to anything unless you know (have a relationship with) Jesus. Despite all the activity, Jesus clearly states the people never knew Him. This is the difference between being a *fan* of Jesus and being a *disciple*.

## Discipline.

"It is important to maintain this 'discipline' even when I'm not 'feeling it,' because real growth happens by a 'long obedience in the same direction,' not short spurts of inspiration and goose bumps.

**J.D. Greear**

When Your "Quiet Times"  
Get Stale. PERSONAL  
PASTOR J.D. MAR 6, 2009

## Disciples.

In the Great Commission Jesus states "Go, therefore, and make disciples."

He doesn't say anything about going and making more fans. A lot of people *know about* Jesus, but very few are actually devoted disciples. What is the difference between a fan and a disciple? A very basic definition of a disciple is someone who loves and follows Jesus. A disciple doesn't just follow or do activities. A disciple seeks to have a relationship with Jesus.

Many people who followed Jesus throughout His ministry were more interested in what *He* could do for *them* than what *they* could do for *Him*. Today there are plenty of people who know about God,

but do not have any relationship with Him. They might periodically try to kindle the relationship, but it is usually out of wanting something (job, finances, better health, etc.). Fans practice religion. They see the blessing in what God can do for them rather than God being the ultimate blessing.

God doesn't just want fans.

He wants disciples who follow and love Him.

## Follow & Love.

How do you follow and love God? At First MB we believe that kind of relationship is developed by spending intentional, one-on-one time with Jesus (sometimes we call that a "quiet time").

A quiet time can take many avenues. It would be easy if all the church had to do was tell you to love God. If this is all it took then making disciples would be simple.

Relationships take time and investment. The church's role is to develop an atmosphere and avenues for you to develop your relationship with God. Your role is to invest the time and energy into that relationship.

At first your relationship with God might look like just following rules. You might start out by obeying a list of "thou shall nots." For some their relationship with God is solely based on a list of does and don'ts. **It is okay to start here, but it is not okay to stay.** Remaining in this state can lead to doing a bunch of religious activities out of mere duty.

## The Source.

If you want to get warm,  
you must stand near the fire;  
if you want to be wet,  
you must get into the water.  
If you want joy, power, peace,  
eternal life, you must get close  
to, or even into the thing that  
has them. They are not some  
sort of prize which God could, if  
He chose, just hand out to  
anyone. They are a great  
fountain of energy and beauty  
spurting up at the very center of  
reality. If you are close to it, the  
spray will wet you: if you are not,  
you will remain dry.

Once a man is united to God,  
how could he not live forever?  
Once a man is separated from  
God, what can he do but wither  
and die.

**C.S. Lewis**

*Mere Christianity*

An entire group of people in the New Testament called Pharisees had perfected practicing religious activities. The Pharisees were really good at following rules, but lost their love in their relationship with God. For them it was a *religion*, not a *relationship*.

How do you grow in your relationship with God? At First MB we believe a beginning step is to set aside time. We call it “15 minutes in your chair.” We are recommending this as a base. This merely means finding a time and a place where you can read your Bible, pray, listen, and spend time with God.

It is during this time you set aside activity and seek relationship. Jesus states in Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

The Pharisees had burdened themselves and others with religious activities. Jesus is inviting everyone into rest. Would you describe your relationship with Jesus as restful?

Discovering the right place and time can be a little challenging. Everyone connects differently. What works for one person doesn't work for someone else.

For some going on a walk while listening to their audio Bible is the best way for them to grow in their relationship with God. Others need a quiet room. Typically it is best to try to eliminate distractions. This is your time with God. Figure out what works for you and connect.

## SOAP

When you do find your time and location, we recommend **SOAP** as an option for connecting with God. SOAP stands for **Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer**. Begin by asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you read a passage of **Scripture**. Think quality versus quantity. If you read a passage and one verse

really impacts you, then stop and reflect on it. It is better to reflect on a few passages than to read multiple chapters without reflecting on anything.

Next, make some **observations** about what you have read.

Was there anything in the passage that stuck out to you? This can be something you just found to be interesting. It can be inspirational or convicting. Look throughout the passage for something that speaks directly to you. No one will be grading your observations. This is between you and the Holy Spirit. Don't be worried if your observations are obvious. As you practice the art of making observations they will become increasingly deeper. Your observations on the same text will change depending on your life circumstances.

The third step is **application**. How does the particular passage apply to your life? Just like the observations, the application might change depending on your current circumstances. The application should have an impact on your thoughts, feelings, or behavior. Application is of little use if it doesn't initiate some level of change. The Holy Spirit may be prompting you to a specific action or a confession you need to make. Change doesn't usually happen overnight. Set up a time frame to put the application to work in your life. In some way the application should strengthen your relationship with Jesus.

The last step is **prayer**. This whole process should be bookended with prayer, but then it wouldn't spell SOAP. Prayer is the process by which you are connecting your heart and mind to

## YouVersion

If you're not sure where to start in your quiet time with God, we recommend using a mobile app called YouVersion. This app is a free download on any device. Here you can read dozens of translations of the Bible, and you can also take advantage of Bible reading plans that will help keep you accountable and provide some structure. You can choose a plan based on a particular topic, book, or season, or you can choose to read through the entire Bible.

God through the Holy Spirit. Take the observation and application from the passage and use them as a basis for your prayer. Jesus invites you to speak to God as your Father. Use the Scripture as part of your prayer. Do you pray as a child speaking to their father? Do you take time to stop and listen in your prayer time? Pray knowing He is listening and wants to speak to you.

Fifteen minutes in your chair and SOAP can be the beginning of your quiet time with God. Real faith isn't about checklists and legalistic rules; instead, seek a relationship with Jesus today by spending time with Him.



## Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe quiet time with God is a necessary discipline to have a relationship with Him? Why or why not?
2. Discuss the difference between religious activities and having a relationship with God.
3. Read John 15:1-4. How do you plan to remain connected to Jesus?
4. What are some obstacles keeping people from having a quiet time with God?
5. Read Colossians 2:6-8. Use the SOAP method on this passage.
6. What are the most meaningful ways for you to connect with God? Do you have a specific time, location, or method that you seem to prefer?
7. Do you personally feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Why or why not? If He's speaking into your life, how can you learn to hear Him?
8. Read Matthew 11:28-30. How do you find rest in your relationship with Jesus?



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## LESSON 3

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# LIVE A LIFE OF WORSHIP

*... because we owe God our best.*

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### THIS SHOULD LOOK FAMILIAR.

We have three values, one mission, and six priorities.

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- 4) Engage in missions,
- 5) Serve somewhere, and
- 6) Share somehow.

Sunday morning has finally arrived. You get up, get ready, put on your Sunday best, and head off to church.

For those who have young children this can be an agonizing time.

Realizing you are five minutes late, you speed a little on your way. You frantically park the car and run into the building. Someone greets you at the door with a friendly, “Hello! How are you?” You respond with, “Blessed and highly favored!” even though you feel worn out and stressed.

You walk into the service with the music already playing. Worship is in full swing. The words are on the screen and people are singing. As the music plays you slowly begin to join in. Is this what it means to worship?

## Why?

Why do we worship? In part **we worship because we are wired to**. We are created to worship. It is part of who we are.

We are all worshipping *something*. The question—and the choice in front of us—is *who or what will we worship?*

Scripture teaches that we are to CHOOSE to give our worship to God, and to nothing, and no one, else (see Exodus 20:2-4). To help us with this, the entire Bible is full of worship. Passages throughout all of Scripture refer to worship. Worship is not an option even though there can be different expressions of it. The Psalms are a good example: Psalms 66:4 says, “All the earth will worship You and sing praise to You. They will sing praise to Your name.”

Louie Giglio states: “Worship is our response, both personal and corporate, to God for who He is, and what He has done; expressed in and by the things we say and the way we live.”<sup>1</sup>

Worship is a response. Worship helps you keep perspective to who you are in relationship to who God is. It is something you do both privately and corporately.

The ‘corporate’—or community—expression of worship is what we do together every Sunday. During this gathered time, praise is being offered to God in many different ways.

Music is the most obvious tool we use in worship. In Scripture, singing isn’t given as an ‘option,’ it’s *assumed* to be an expression of praise. There is power in the use of music that transcends simple spoken language, and *you* didn’t invent that power. When we gather and sing, we aren’t prepping each other for a message or doing karaoke; we are inviting each other to re-dial our focus. We are taking the ‘playlist’ away from the enemy for a minute. We are building faith, illuminating God’s faithfulness, underscoring theology, and announcing God is alive!

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1 Giglio, Louie. *The Air I Breathe* (p. 53). 2003. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books.

## But That's Not All.

But singing isn't the only expression of worship. During our community church gatherings, prayers are offered on behalf of the group. Gifts and offerings are shared. Stories are told about what God is doing. Truth from the Bible is taught. We express adoration, praise, submission, thankfulness, joy, reverence... all of it.

And there is something that happens spiritually when we do this that cannot be replicated when we are alone. The Spirit of God moves powerfully through His children when we set aside these times to be together. **The goal of corporate worship is to proclaim truth about God as beautifully and effectively as possible and follow God's voice.**

Sometimes when life is rough and your own sense of worship is waning you need to be surrounded by worshipping believers. Corporate worship can lift you up when you cannot lift up yourself. Think of a time when life was particularly hard. What does it do for your spirit to be actively engaged in corporate worship?

## Private, Too.

What about private worship? Remember: *worship is not an option*. If you have breath in your lungs, you have a purpose. **You are made to worship**. This may mean broadening your definition of worship from Sunday mornings to a way of life.

In John 4 the Samaritan woman was questioning Jesus about

### Reasons for Corporate Worship

1. **We need encouragement** as we live out our faith. We aren't alone.
2. **God values community** over "lone-rangers."
3. **We can rejoice** with those who rejoice and **grieve** with those who grieve.
4. **Recalibrate** our view of God.
5. **Redirects** and **refocuses** each of us.
6. **Builds our faith** as we experience God.
7. Gives us a vision of **heaven**.

the location to practice true worship. Jesus responds in John 4:23-24 by saying,

“But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

It is interesting in this passage the true worshipers are ones who worship in spirit and truth. This is who God is looking for.

**You don't have to be a Biblical scholar.**

**You don't have to perform some mighty act of faith.**

God is searching for people who worship Him internally with their spirits. The very core of a worshiper is to bring praise to God.

Through the act of worship you become attached to God. This can be done in a wide variety of ways. You can be bowing down in reverence, adoration, and submission. You can be expressing joy, thankfulness, and praise. You can be listening for God to open a door to serve someone, and then take the risk and do it!

However the act of worship is displayed, it is important to remember **this is a lifestyle to be lived, not an activity to be done.** Living a life of worship means arranging your life so you can cultivate the space where you connect with God AND regularly gather to worship God with a community of Jesus-followers.

## Why Not?

What keeps you from worshipping?

**Pride.**

You forget you are worshipping for an audience of one. It doesn't matter what the person beside you or behind you thinks. You are not seeking their approval. When you are worshipping in spirit and truth, it doesn't matter what people around you think. Too often more credence is given to people's opinion than about what God seeks.

### **Hardness of heart can prevent worship.**

Life can be tough. Rejection, disappointment, and loss of a loved one all can harden a heart. Instead of lifting up hands of praise, you lift up fists of frustration. You seek to worship God on your terms. It seems a lot easier to shut your heart off than to possibly have it hurt again.

### **Often times worship is tied to tradition.**

You tend to be the most comfortable worshipping with the way you grew up. This can be taken a step further. Some think their personal tradition of worship is the only correct form, and somehow all the others ways of worshipping have fallen short. Worship is all about drawing closer to God. This can be done in a variety of ways. At the end of this lesson there will be a list of different ways people connect with God. Read over the list and figure out which one resonates with you.

## **Two Worshipers**

Luke 7:36-50 records a story of a woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears. Jesus had gone to eat at the house of a local Pharisee. While there this woman came in and poured out her alabaster jar of perfume on Jesus' feet.

During this time period an alabaster jar of perfume was more than likely a family heirloom. The Pharisee starts judging not only the woman, but Jesus. The Pharisee thought if Jesus were a prophet He would know who is touching Him. She was a sinner.

This could be titled the story of two worshipers. The Pharisee is sitting back with his arms crossed judging how people come to Jesus. The woman pours out her most valuable possession and uses her hair and tears to wash Jesus' feet. The Pharisee should have known how to worship, but didn't. The woman just recognized who she was in perspective to who Jesus is and what He has done. Only one was worshipping in spirit and truth. Which side of the story do you find yourself on?

It is possible to worship externally and not internally. The Pharisees mastered this type of worship. Matthew 15:8-9 (NIV)

reads, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

When you worship, **where is your heart?** Are you living a life of worship or are you just honoring God with your lips?

There are three characters in the story of the woman with perfume: Jesus, who is to be worshiped; the Pharisee, who should have been worshipping; and the sinful woman, who poured her heart out to God.

**All of us worship something.** It is a reflection of where you spend your time and money. Where are *you* in this story?



## Nine Types of Worshipers

For further study, read the book *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas to learn how you most easily connect with God. Out of these seven types, which do you identify with the most?

- 1. Naturalists: Loving God Outdoors.**  
These people are moved by God’s creation.
- 2. Sensates: Loving God with the Senses.**  
These want to be filled with signs, sounds, and smells that overwhelm them during worship.
- 3. Traditionalists: Loving God through Ritual and Symbolism.** They are fed by the “historic” aspects of faith.
- 4. Ascetics: Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity.**  
Leave them alone to pray in silence and simplicity.
- 5. Activists: Loving God Through Confrontation.**  
They worship by standing against evil and injustice.
- 6. Caregivers: Loving God by Loving Others.**  
Their faith is built by interacting with others.
- 7. Enthusiasts: Loving God with Mystery and Celebration.**  
These want to experience, feel, and celebrate joyful worship.
- 8. Contemplatives: Loving God through Adoration.**  
They seek to love God with pure, deep, and bright praise.
- 9. Intellectuals: Loving God with the Mind.**  
“Faith” is to be understood as much as experienced.



## Discussion Questions

1. How would you define worship?
2. What does it mean to live a life of worship?
3. What are some obstacles to worship in your life? How do you overcome them?
4. Read Luke 7:36-50. What is the main difference between the ways the Pharisee and the sinful woman approach Jesus?
5. Read Psalm 148. All of creation was made to worship. In what ways can you look at creation and see it was made to worship?
6. How have different worship styles affected the church?
7. Which comes more easily to you: participating in corporate worship, or worshipping God on your own? Why do you think that is?
8. Why do you think God wants us to prioritize worshipping Him?



# ENGAGE IN MISSIONS

*... because we understand God best with perspective.*

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## DO YOU REMEMBER? GIVE IT A SHOT.

We have three values, one mission, and six priorities.

**Our mission:** First MB Church exists to help people \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ Jesus.

**Our values:** We aim to be real \_\_\_\_, with a real \_\_\_\_, making a real \_\_\_\_.

**Our priorities:** To fulfill our mission and values, we believe we should:

- 1) \_\_\_\_ with a few, 2) \_\_\_\_ with God, 3) \_\_\_\_ a life of \_\_\_\_\_,
- 4) Engage in \_\_\_\_\_, 5) \_\_\_\_\_ somewhere, and 6) \_\_\_\_\_ somehow.

At some point most people will ask the question, “What is God’s will for my life?” Although this is a good question, it can be misleading.

God’s will is not some hidden, mysterious, heavenly agenda item God is keeping a secret. David Platt in his book *Follow Me* wrote,

“What if God the Father has not sent His children on a cosmic Easter egg hunt to discover His will while He sits back in heaven saying, ‘You’re getting colder . . . warmer . . . colder . . .’? And what if searching for God’s will like this actually misses the entire point of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?”

The simple truth is there are two parts to God’s will for

your life. First, He wants you to believe in and accept Jesus as your personal Savior. Second, He wants you to live a life on mission.

## **On Mission.**

What does it mean to live a life on mission? In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build My church." When reading this passage it is easy to focus on Peter's confession of Jesus being the Messiah along with the forces of hell not being able to defeat the church. What often gets overlooked is Jesus being the architect and builder of His church.

**He can use you in the building of His church, but it is not up to you to do the building.** Your job is to make yourself available.

Too often when it comes to living a life on mission, you can get your role confused. You might think it is your job to help Jesus build the church, when in actuality it is Jesus working through you. One of the first aspects of living a life on mission is realizing **it is not about you.**

## **Not So Simple.**

Living as if it is not about you can be especially challenging in our American culture. You like to say it is all about God, but deep down you still struggle with wanting things your way. Seeded within the American culture is a sense of narcissism. This is an overinflated sense of self-importance, placing your desires over God's mission.

God's purpose on earth is greater than your preferences in life. The American dream in many ways is everyone pursuing their own definition of happiness. What if a white picket fence, 2 ½ kids, and a six figure salary was not God's ultimate purpose for your life? None of these are bad, but **what if God's purpose was for you to set aside your own preferences, take up your cross, and follow Him?** What if it

was God's will for you to live a life on mission?

Ephesians 4:4-6 reads:

“There is one body and one Spirit —just as you were called to one hope at your calling— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

Declare His glory among the nations, His wonderful works among all peoples.

**Psalms 96:3**

We are all part of one body of believers, whether that is here locally or on the other side of the world. God's one mission is to seek and save the lost.

At First MB, we want everyone to have a one church global perspective. This means a non-believer in the middle of Africa means just as much to God as your unsaved neighbor.

**One of the best ways to break free of a self-important attitude is to experience another culture.** This can be accomplished at First MB on one of our trips to France, Africa, Thailand, or Mexico. Going on a trip will give you the opportunity to experience Jesus from a different culture. You can see how there is one faith being expressed in a wide variety of ways. **All believers worship as one body through one Spirit to our one Lord.** The direction of the worship toward God is what matters, not the language.

## Great Commission

There are numerous verses about living a life on mission found in the Bible. The ones which are probably the most well-known are in Matthew 28, and known as the Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-19 reads:

“Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus is giving this commandment with “all authority.” He is the head of the church and His desire for the church is to go and make disciples.

Unfortunately, you might find yourself believing that mission work is for the “varsity level Christian,” that there is no way a “regular” believer can be on mission for Jesus, or missionaries must have some super special level of spirituality to go and make disciples.

This is not the case anywhere in the Great Commission. **If you are a believer in Jesus, you have been called to be a part of His mission.** You are meant to do the Great Commission *with* God, not *for* God.

If you struggle with fear and doubt, you are in great company. Directly before the Great Commission, we find Matthew 28:17 which reads: “When they saw Him, they worshiped, but some doubted.” Jesus is giving His final statement to His disciples and still some of them doubted. They had witnessed Jesus’ miracles, death, burial, and resurrection, but doubt still lingered in their heads.

When you think about living on mission and possibly going on a mission trip, fear and doubt might try to hold you back. If this is the case, realize you are still an amazing disciple. You can persevere just like the original disciples did.

## Going, Going, Gone

Jesus is telling His disciples to go. A better translation of this would be “as you are going.” Jesus wants them to be on mission wherever they are, not just in one particular location.

It is more about *who* you are than *where* you are. Where God has placed you and the people He has put around you is not by accident. You can live on mission in your

neighborhood just like you can across the world. There are opportunities within Wichita to reach across cultural boundaries and share God's love.

Here locally First MB is involved with World Impact, Family Promise, and Youth Horizons. These are all great opportunities for you to expand your realm of influence locally. Cultural differences are not a barrier, but an opportunity to learn from other believers. Don't stay within your comfort zone and miss out on the beautiful cultural diversity God has created.

In Revelation 7:9 the Apostle John records "there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language." God is the author of diversity. It is part of the church on earth and will be part of all believers in heaven.

Expand your cultural experiences and live on mission.

## Your Mission

The Mission has begun. Jesus tells His disciples in Acts 1:8, "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." They started locally then gradually expanded. The first church grew exponentially, but only in Jerusalem. It wasn't until the death of Stephen at the end of Acts 7 believers went beyond Jerusalem. Acts 8:1 reads:



"We're not continuing to write the Bible — that is complete — but what Jesus 'began' to do in his three-year earthly ministry and 'continued' through His church in Acts He continues through us today. We are the next episode. We're still in the same season, and the finale is still to come. Every believer now has a part of the story to write."



**J.D. Greear**

Gaining By Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send

“On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria.”

It was on this day the gospel message went out from Jerusalem, except the apostles stayed behind. The Great Commandment had started outside Jerusalem and it wasn't with the church leaders. You don't have to be a church leader to live on mission.

The record of those persecuted in Acts 8 starts again in Acts 11:19-21 which reads:

“Those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, Cypriot and Cyrenian men, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Hellenists (Greeks), proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.”

The church in Antioch was started by unnamed believers who lived on mission. It was in Antioch where believers were first called Christians. This church was doing so well that Paul and Barnabas went and spent a whole year with them. **You can have an impact for God's Kingdom and it doesn't matter your vocation, education level, or income. What matters is making yourself available.** The Antioch church started because some unnamed believers were obedient to God's call to live on mission.



## Obstacles

What obstacles do you have that keep you from going on a mission trip? It doesn't have to be a completely open door for it to be the right mission.

Throughout the book of Acts the Apostle Paul experienced tremendous persecution during his missionary journeys. He was insulted, run out of town, flogged, stoned, and put in prison. Instead of quitting, he relentlessly kept on God's mission. Acts 14:19 reads:

“Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and when they had won over the crowds and stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead.”

Here Paul has been stoned and his body dragged out of town. The stoning involved Paul's head and body being beaten to a bloody mess. Acts 14:20 reads: “After the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the town. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.”

Paul got up and went back into the very town where he was just stoned. He could have left the area, but instead he went back into town. Paul was living on mission. He wasn't going to let a stoning, flogging, or prison get in his way.

What is in your way? Lack of time or finances? Are you too busy? Take some time to think of what keeps you from stepping outside your cultural comfort zone and living on mission.

What is your role in missions? Not all the apostles went on the missionary journeys like Paul. Everyone's role might be different but the mission is still the same: seek and save the lost.

Maybe your role is to get involved here locally with one of First MB's ministry partners. At First MB we want everyone who is able to experience a mission trip to a different country at some point in their life. Go to [firstmbchurch.org/missions](http://firstmbchurch.org/missions) to

learn more. Actively pray and get involved with the current missionaries First MB is supporting. Ultimately your role is to live a life on mission.

### The “10/40 Window”



Approximately five billion people in 8,633 different people groups live in the “10/40 Window,” an area between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees south latitude. 5,935 (68.7%) of these people groups are considered unreached and have a population of 3.05 billion. This means approximately 61% of the individuals in the 10/40 Window live in an unreached people group. The 10/40 Window is home to some of the largest unreached people groups in the world such as the Shaikh, Yadava, Turks, Moroccan Arabs, Pashtun, Jat, and Burmese.

[joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10\\_40\\_window](http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10_40_window)

## Discussion Questions

1. Read Romans 1:14. The Apostle Paul felt a deep obligation to share the gospel message with everyone. What obligation do you feel when it comes to world missions?
2. In what ways can experiencing another culture through missions help grow your faith?
3. What comes to mind when you think of a missionary? Do you believe anyone can become a missionary? Why or why not?
4. List out three practical ways you can get involved in mission work either locally or internationally.
5. What are some obstacles keeping you from getting involved in missions?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 11:22-28. Where would the church be at today if Paul let any of these obstacles stop his missionary work? In what ways is seeking the easiest path not always the right path?
7. How can becoming part of the Great Commission change your life?



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## LESSON 5

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# SERVE SOMEWHERE

*... because we have gifts designed to help others.*

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### ONE MORE TIME.

We have three values, one mission, and six priorities.

**Our mission:** First MB Church exists to help people find and follow Jesus.

**Our values:** We aim to be real people, with a real faith, making a real impact.

**Our priorities:** To fulfill our mission and values, we believe we should:

- 1) Connect with a few,
- 2) Spend time with God,
- 3) Live a life of worship,
- 4) Engage in missions,
- 5) Serve somewhere, and
- 6) Share somehow.

It should not come as a big surprise that society in general is becoming increasingly more self-centered. The nice way of saying this is to describe it as becoming more individualistic.

The rise of individualism and affluence tend to coincide. As you become more independent financially, it tends to impact how much you want to get involved in the lives of those around you.

So what is the big deal? What difference does it make if society becomes more self-centered? To a non-believer this is probably not a big deal. Christians, however, are not called to live self-centered lives. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 16:24: "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." Taking up a cross is not a self-centered activity. It means to set aside your needs and wants for the benefit of someone else.

You are not called to deny yourself just for the sake of denying yourself. Ephesians 2:10 reads:

“For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.”

**This means that every living, breathing person on this planet has a purpose.** Their purpose is not to arrange everything in their lives so the entire cosmos circles around them. If the only vision for your life is to take care of yourself then that is a very lonely path to walk down. It is too easy to get completely wrapped up on your own needs and never even look at the needs of those around you.

## **Eternity.**

Keep in mind you are the one and only version of you God created. There are not 1 million versions of you on this planet. You were created for a purpose for this life and for eternity. You were not created just for this life alone. You were created for eternity.

Having an eternal perspective helps bring focus and meaning to this life. God made you for a purpose and bought you with a huge price. **Your ultimate purpose is to bring glory to God.** One way this is done is by living a selfless life. Practice now for your eternity of selfless living in heaven. Now is the time to look for the connection where your life intersects the lives of those around you.

What is the meaning of your life? Why did God create you? Is life defined by your definition of success? Is meaning found in getting a job, house, car, 2 1/2 kids and a white picket fence?

The very essence of becoming a follower of Jesus is to deny yourself. **This doesn't mean to think of yourself as less, but to think of yourself less.** The whole world does not center on your needs. You were created to be the hands and feet of Jesus here on earth. Your actions now have an eternal impact. Fulfillment and meaning can be found in serving others.

Society spreads the lie that serving others and finding fulfillment for yourself go down two different paths. If you serve others like you were serving Jesus you WILL find meaning and

purpose. The paths of fulfillment and service are actually one and the same.

## Three Servants.

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 25:14-30 about three different servants. This parable emphasized the importance of the perspective you have in this life. Is your perspective self-centered living for the now or is it selfless living for eternity?

Matthew 25:14 reads:

“For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and turned over his possessions to them.”

Jesus was answering a question asked by his disciples back in Matthew 24:3 about when the end of the world would come. In answering this question, He tells a parable about a man (God) going on a journey and turning over all His possessions to His servants (believers).

The very first point Jesus makes in the parable is that **everything you have belongs to Him**. There is nothing you have from the shoes on your feet to the breath in your lungs that did not come from God. When it comes to serving and seeing the needs of others, the first step is to realize everything belongs to God. You are being asked to live a selfless life with everything God has given you.

Matthew 25:15 reads:

“To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to another, one—to each according to his own ability. Then he went on a journey.”

This is where it is easy to cry about life not being fair. Each

### Why Serve?

1. We serve out of **obedience**.
2. We serve out of **gratitude**.
3. We serve with our **giftedness**.

servant was given a different amount. The word “talent” meant a measure of money. But in this parable Jesus was not just talking about money. The master had entrusted these servants with His entire estate. Our English word *talent* comes from the Greek word in this parable, but the meaning goes much deeper.

Our English word *talent* encompasses different gifts and abilities. This is even a limited view when reading this parable. **Your entire being is a talent from God.** The country you were born in, education, ability to interact with people, health, etc... think about all the graces God has given you in your life that you did not earn.

## **No Excuses.**

Sometimes we limit talent to just special abilities people have like leading worship on a Sunday morning. The excuse becomes that if you just had a special talent, *then* you would serve. In this parable no servant was left without. Each servant was given a gift by the master before He left. It doesn't matter if God has given you 5, 2, or 1; we have all been given something.

Matthew 25:16-18 reads:

“Immediately the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. In the same way the man with two earned two more. But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.”

The first two servants immediately went to work with what the master had given them. Sometimes believers get caught up in good intentions and never actually get to work. Have you ever thought about serving somewhere or someone, but never actually get around to doing it? These servants took what was given to them and put it to work. They didn't just sit around with good feelings. **Denying yourself and living a selfless life means getting up and getting to work.**



Matthew 25:19-30 reads:

“After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. Look, I’ve earned five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!’

Then the man with two talents also approached. He said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. Look, I’ve earned two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!’

Then the man who had received one talent also approached and said, ‘Master, I know you. You’re a difficult man, reaping where you haven’t sown and gathering where you haven’t scattered seed. So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours.’

But his master replied to him, ‘You evil, lazy slave! If you knew that I reap where I haven’t sown and gather where I haven’t scattered, then you should have deposited my money with the bankers. And when I returned I would have received my money back with interest.’

So he took the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10 talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. And throw this good-for-nothing slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The master will return and accounts will be settled. One day everyone will have to answer for how they lived their life. The first two servants doubled the master’s possessions. They entered into JOY as a result of what they had done. They found fulfillment and

looked forward to the master's return. They didn't compare themselves to one another.

The two talent slave didn't wonder why he didn't have five. The five talent slave didn't brag about having so much. **They both did the best they could with what was given to them.** For them the day of the master's return was an amazing day. They started out by telling the master what they had done with the talents they were given.

This is an important perspective. They realized all they had was given to them. They didn't start by bragging about what they had done, but by acknowledging that the master had given them everything.

## What About You?

What are you doing with what God has given you? Your time, abilities, or opportunities to show God's love will all be settled one day.

The third servant went off and dug a hole and buried the master's possessions. What is odd about this parable is the third servant is called lazy. This servant wasn't lazy at all. In fact, the third servant might have actually worked harder than the first two servants. This servant had to go bury an enormous treasure. A talent was comparable to 20 year's wages. Imagine how large of a hole this servant had to dig to bury 20 years' worth of wages.

By the time everything was buried the master returned and the servant had to go dig it back up. This third servant did a lot of work, but it wasn't for the master. **It was done out of fear.** This servant knew about the master, but didn't really know the master. **How many of us know about God, but we don't really know God's heart?** Had this servant known the master just a little, he would have done something with the talent. God's heart is for you to live a selfless life--to take what He has given you and to use it for His glory.

How are you living a selfless life? How are you taking everything God has given you and using it for His glory? Are you

finding a way to serve and use every idea, ability, and gift God has given you?

Your identity in Christ will be reflected in your activities. You are not saved by works, but your works will reflect God's grace in your life. Too many times people think their activities will change their identity in Christ. Your identity changes your activities.

Find a way to serve. It can be helping your neighbor mow their yard. Rocking babies on a Sunday morning. Helping someone at your work that is having a difficult time.

## S.H.A.P.E.

S.H.A.P.E. is a tool to help us discover how God made us and is an acronym for:

**S - Spiritual Gifts.** Special abilities God has given you to love and serve others. (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

**H - Heart.** Special God-given passions that inspire you. (Colossians 3:23-24)

**A - Abilities.** Natural God-given talents and skills. (Romans 12:6)

**P - Personality.** How God wired you to respond in life and relate to others. (Psalm 139:14-16)

**E - Experiences.** Your life experience (both positive and painful) that God intends to use for good. (Romans 8:28-29)



Take the SHAPE test for free at [firstmbchurch.org/shape](http://firstmbchurch.org/shape).

You have been given a talent. What are you doing with it? One day you will be held accountable.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do you believe God has called us to serve?
2. Discuss how finding fulfillment in life and serving somewhere or someone coincide.
3. Each servant in the parable was given a different amount. Do you believe this is fair? Why or why not?
4. In what ways does comparing ourselves to others stop us from serving altogether?
5. Read Matthew 25:26. The third servant is called evil and lazy. In what ways is it evil and lazy to not use your gifts and abilities to serve God?
6. What are some obstacles that keep people from serving? Discuss some ways to overcome these obstacles.
7. Go to [firstmbchurch.org/shape](http://firstmbchurch.org/shape) and take the SHAPE test. Make a plan within the next several weeks to use your SHAPE results to serve.
8. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. In what ways does the church as a whole benefit when everyone serves and gets involved?





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## LESSON 6

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# SHARE SOMEHOW

*... because we know the world needs Jesus.*

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### FILL IN THE BLANK!

We have three values, one mission, and six priorities.

**Our mission:** First MB Church exists to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Our values:** We aim to be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Our priorities:** To fulfill our mission and values, we believe we should:

1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_,

4) \_\_\_\_\_, 5) \_\_\_\_\_, 6) \_\_\_\_\_.

Life is full of questions. From a very young age we start asking questions to try and figure things out. When we were young our questions were very basic. Questions such as: “What is that?” or “Who are you?” As we get older our questions become more complicated, but are still asked for the purpose of learning. It could deal with life, work, family, or just driving directions.

One way to get an answer is to ask the question. In the book of Romans the Apostle Paul asks a series of four questions in a row with all of them having the same answer.

Romans 10:14-15 reads:

“But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent?”

The answer to all these questions is simple: “they can’t.”

Before explaining Paul’s questions, there are other questions that need to be asked. “How can you explain something you don’t understand? Why are there so many excuses for *not* sharing the gospel? What is it that qualifies you to share God’s message of grace with someone?”

The goal of this lesson is to present a clear explanation of the Gospel message and give practical steps for how to share it with someone.

## **What is the Gospel?**

If you feel inadequate or lacking when trying to share the Gospel with others, you’re not alone. It can be intimidating, and none of us have all of the answers to questions we don’t understand. However, next time you’re able to share the good news, consider starting by explaining what sin and brokenness are, and walk through the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis.

It would be difficult for a believer or non-believer to look at this world and not see its brokenness. There is not a single aspect of society which hasn’t in some way been impacted by sin.

Every day we get bombarded with news of death, disease, broken relationships, etc. The sin which causes all this brokenness can be traced back to the Garden of Eden. God placed Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them free reign to eat of any tree they wanted except for one.

There could have been thousands of fruit-bearing trees to choose from. The odds were definitely stacked in their favor and yet they chose to disobey God and eat from the tree of good and evil. Instantly they realized they were naked and felt ashamed. Genesis 3:7 reads: “so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.”

The world’s first religion was born. On their own, Adam and Eve tried to cover their shame from God the best they knew how. There was nothing they could do in and of themselves to repair the now broken relationship. Only God was going to be able to restore



the relationship with Him.

**Have you ever tried to repair your relationship with God on your own?** This can take on many forms. Some believe if they just live a good life they will go to heaven. Others think they can just do enough good works to earn God's approval. Self-justification before God can be exhausting. What does it mean to be good? How many good works is enough? Trying to earn your way back to God will just leave you wondering if you had done enough.

Ephesians 2:8-9 reads:

“For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.”

**The Gospel message is a gift.** You cannot do enough or be good enough to earn salvation. Sin doesn't just make you sick in need of a doctor. Sin makes you dead in need of a Savior. Understanding the Gospel starts with understanding your position before God.

## **Brokenness.**

Starting with brokenness lays the foundation for everything else. Why fix what isn't broken? Non-believers need to understand God has a better and perfect plan for them. Any pain or suffering they have gone through was not in God's original design. The Apostle Paul does a good job describing the



If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped around their knees, imploring them to stay.

If hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.



**Charles Spurgeon**

brokenness of sin. Romans 3:10-12 reads:

“There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become useless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.”

These are tough words to read in a society where everyone is proclaimed a winner. One of the first steps to understanding the Gospel is to admit your brokenness before God.

An obstacle to admitting brokenness is categorizing your sin. Believers and non-believers like to put sin into different categories of badness. A list of possible bad sins might include murder, hate, sexual sin, stealing, etc. The middle category of sins include gossiping, lying, or pride. These are ones you know are wrong, but don't think they are bad enough to offend an almighty God. They certainly don't deserve hell.

The last category of sin are those that seem insignificant. These are things you think God just overlooks or gives you a pass on. This can be laziness or not keeping the Sabbath holy.

Everyone has their own list and way of categorizing sin in their life. This approach is wrong. There are no categories to sin. **All sin separates you from God.** Everyone approaches God from a position of brokenness. 1 John 1:8-10 reads:

“If we say, ‘We have no sin,’ we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, ‘We don't have any sin,’ we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

Evangelism starts with explaining how sin has broken everyone's relationship with God. If the relationship is broken, what can be done? The answer to this is simple: nothing.

**Only God.**

Non-believers need to understand there is nothing they can do to earn or repair their relationship with God. This is not the end of the story. What they cannot do for themselves God has already done. Romans 6:23a reads: “For the wages of sin is death.”

Someone needed to die for all sin. God offered His one and only Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for sin. Romans 6:23b reads: “but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Salvation is truly a gift. Everyone’s list of brokenness is different. The process for salvation is the same. Non-believers need to offer all their brokenness to God, ask forgiveness (repent), and believe that Jesus died in their place on the cross.

Once they put their faith in Jesus, they become justified. Justification is not a word that is used a lot today. It is a legal term of being declared not guilty. Understand the word “justify” like this: “just as if I” never sinned. God looks on all those who put their faith in Jesus as though they have never sinned. Romans 10:13 reads: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Once someone believes, the next step is baptism. This is an outward expression of the inward decision they just made. It represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

The gospel message is not complicated but there are a lot of excuses for not sharing. Some of the excuses are “don’t feel qualified,” “don’t have time,” “someone else will share,” or “feels awkward talking about Jesus.” You might have your own list of excuses.

The issue with the excuses is that it looks at evangelism as an activity instead of a lifestyle. Evangelism is intentionally living out the gospel during your everyday routines.



### **Remember:**

Evangelism is doing everyday life with gospel intentionality.



## My Five.

Who are you relationally connected with? At First MB we refer to this as “My Five.” Take some time and make a list of at least five names. Pray about them. You need to talk to God about your list before you talk to your list about God. How can you bring the gospel message to them? At the intersection between your life and theirs you need to be intentional about the gospel.

Sharing the gospel doesn't need to be long. It doesn't take long to share about your brokenness and how Jesus died for their sins. You could share your own testimony. Give them a quick summary of how Jesus affected your life before and after. Think of a few ways you lived, decisions you made, or feelings you had before putting faith in Jesus. After you believed, think about how all of those have changed or are in the process of changing.

Your testimony can be summarized in as little as fifteen seconds. Take some time to write down your before and after points and practice sharing a quick testimony to someone.

Are you qualified? 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 reads:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, ‘Be reconciled to God.’”

As an ambassador, you are an official representative of Jesus. God will use you to share the gospel message. **Do you believe others need the hope you have? The only way to give this hope is to share it.** A little act of faith on your part can change someone's life for eternity.

In Romans 10:14-15, Paul asked four questions that all had

the same answer: “they can’t.” Non-believers can and will hear the message if you live every day with gospel intentionality.

## “The Bridge Illustration”

If you find yourself in a conversation where you want to explain the Gospel message, try using this illustration. You can search Google and YouTube for further explanation of this method.

### Jesus



### Humanity

All humans have sinned (Romans 3:23). Because of that, we all deserve death (Romans 6:23). There is a wide chasm that separates us from God, and we have no hope of heaven or a good relationship with God on earth on our own. We are all destined for hell unless we could somehow be rescued.

### God

God is perfect and just. No sin can be allowed in heaven where He reigns forever. However, if we choose to follow Jesus and accept his gift of salvation, we are now righteous in God's eyes. Jesus “bridged the gap” when He took our penalty on the cross, and now we have access to eternal life.

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “evangelism”? What do you *feel* when you hear “evangelism”?
2. Write down five names of family, friends, or co-workers who you can share the Gospel with. Make several copies and put the list in several locations as a reminder to pray for them.
3. What are some excuses you have used before in the past for not sharing the Gospel? How can you overcome those excuses?
4. Who led you to faith? Do you think of yourself as an ambassador for Jesus? Why or why not?
5. Read John 9:25-30. Jesus healed a blind man. The blind man had a short testimony. He was blind, but then he could see. In what ways can your testimony be used to share the gospel message? Take time to write down a short testimony.
6. In the space below, write out a clear explanation of the gospel. If you have any difficulty, work on it as a group.
7. Do you truly believe someone needs to hear about the hope you have inside? What practical steps do you plan on taking to share your hope with someone else?





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