



North Village Men's Study

Throughout the last 50 years the local church has been reduced to a feminine context that has become void of masculinity. As a result, masculinity is severely missing from the local church and it is trickling down into the homes, the communities, and the work place.

In an absence of biblical direction masculinity has been reduced to:

- Financial Prosperity
- Sexual Promiscuity
- Avoiding Responsibility

Something has to change!

2 Timothy 4

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Our vision is to be a church that is living on mission (*being poured out*) and without the men of this community committing to this vision (*fighting the good fight*) it will never happen. Through Jesus Christ (*keep the faith*) the men will be called to shape the home, the workplace, and our community (*crown of righteousness*).

Over the next **12 months** Jesus is going to bring a variety of people into our lives on Sunday morning and throughout the week. The most effective thing we can do is be prepared to meet with anyone off the street and be able to “pastor” them to a greater understanding of Jesus Christ. Too often, the church has relied on “professionals” and as a result we limit our ability to effectively care for the needs of the community.

Over the next six weeks we will briefly look at some of the top challenges for men today and the areas that distract the men of our community from living on mission.

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The Bible

Often times the Bible can be intimidating, however, it is a powerful source from God that we should take advantage of when possible because of the central message of the gospel from Old Testament to New Testament. Below is a useful tool:

- 66 Different Books
- 40 Different Authors
- 3 Different Language
- 3 Different Continents

Written over 1,500 years and communicates 1 central message: faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹

In the end, when we spend time with people we want them to see and understand that the Bible was designed by God to radically change their lives. If they take one thing away from us it would be to have a greater affection for spending time reading and applying scripture.

Power Through Scripture

For us to even come close to making a dent in life transformation, it must take place through scripture. Far too often we rely on our wit, cleverness, or eloquence, however, our greatest attempt for life change will only take place through the power of God's word.²

2 Timothy 3:16

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Colossians 1:28-29

28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Hebrews 4:12

12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

¹ 30 Days To Understanding the Bible by Max Anderson

² According To Plan by Graeme Goldsworthy

Write down **25 discoveries** from the previous verses that capture the power of scripture:

As men we must feel **competent** and **comfortable** with scripture so that we can communicate a **clear** message of what Jesus accomplished at the cross. The most effective way is to simply begin devouring scripture.³

Any time we have a chance to sit down with others we should look to lead them to scripture and interact with it on a personal level. It might feel a little scary. There might be potential for landmines or rabbit trails, but it would still be better to interact with scripture and trust that the Holy Spirit is greater than our worse landmine or rabbit trail.

On the next page is a simple outline in which all of us can begin to read scripture with others⁴:

³ Personal Disciple-Making by Chris Adsit

⁴ The Lost Art of Disciple Making by LeRoy Eims

Discovery: When we sit down to look at scripture we need to approach it as an adventure. We become like Sherlock Holmes and approach the passage with patience as we step into the pages to better understand what God is saying.⁵

Objective: Ask questions

What, When, Where, Why, How? Nothing is in scripture just to take up space so we need to take the time to ask questions about every word in the passage to help train our eyes to see more!

Understanding: Often times the fear of looking stupid keeps us from understanding. It stops us from listening to the Holy Spirit. It hinders us from waiting for God to speak to us so we quickly read a commentary, a footnote, or a study guide; and although these things are not inherently bad, they tend to hinder us from interacting with the Holy Spirit. Instead of running to resources look through the passage to answer questions. There will be some cultural cues that we will need help in understanding in scripture, however, we might be surprised at what we figure out if we just waited a little longer to hear from the Holy Spirit before we opened a commentary.

Objective: 2-3 word timeless principle

After asking questions we want to take the time to summarize 5-10 verses into 2-3 words. In the end, when we seek to understand we are seeking to find the timeless principles. A timeless principle is true in 2009 and 909 and 909 BC.

Application: If we do our homework on “discovery” and “understanding” it will make application easy. If the timeless principle is to “love your wife” then there are a 100 different ways in which it can be applied.

Objective: So what?

Each time we look at scripture we need to end asking how we can apply that truth today. We can apply it to our work context, our church, our home, our relationships or our understanding of the gospel, but it needs to be applied.

⁵ Living By The Book by Howard Hendricks

Discussion Questions:

1. When you first started reading the bible what was the experience like?
2. What are you learning in your Bible right now on a personal level?
3. On a scale from 1-10 (10 being the most confident) how confident do you feel interacting with scripture? What has caused confidence or lack of confidence?
4. What are some creative ways we can interact with scripture?
5. When is the last time you sat down and read through scripture with someone in a way where both of you were able to interact with scripture?

Practical Lesson (Work on together as a group)

Proverbs 24:

30 I went past the field of the slaggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; 31 thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. 32 I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: 33 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-34 and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

Discovery:

- What stands out? What doesn't make sense? What is new?
- When in history was this written? What was their economy built on?
- Who are the people identified? Why are they important?
- What is the tone of the passage?

Understanding:

- What is a slaggard? A vineyard? Why are weeds important?
- Why is the wall important?
- What is the result?
- What is the timeless principle in 2-3 words?

Application:

- What does this mean for our relationships (wife, children, Jesus, etc.)?
- How does this apply to our church?
- What does it mean for our work?

The Gospel

The gospel is central to all of scripture, humanity, and eternity and whenever possible we need to bathe in the gospel. Too often the gospel is simply reduced to a presentation of salvation so that we can spend eternity in heaven, however, there is a bigger perspective that shapes all of humanity.

In Scripture

Genesis 1: Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- All of creation was knit together in a loving relationship with creator and in the first few words of scripture we see a description of a God who is: benevolent, loving, and compassionate.
- Humanity is created in the image of God and as a result has been given intrinsic value, purpose, and meaning.
- Humanity is given responsibility to care for all of creation.

Genesis 2:

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

- As creator God knows what is best for us and knows it is not best for humanity to know the “knowledge of good and evil” and instructs us that if we disobey we will experience a physical death and a spiritual death.
- We see evidence of our physical death in our funerals and we see evidence of spiritual death in the tragedy that takes place in the news.

Genesis 3: Fall

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

- Throughout history Satan has whispered into the ears of humanity “Did God really say?” As a result we don’t trust God, we don’t trust scripture, we don’t trust others and there is a disruption in our relationships with others, God, and self.
- When we enter into relationships with others we will see the evidence of that whisper and the evidence of that death, however, in God’s compassion He doesn’t leave us in this condition.

Genesis 3: Redemption

21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

- As a result of our sin we already see a foreshadowing of the shedding of blood in verse 21 when the Lord God covers them with the garments of skin and clothes them to cover their sin and shame. Hebrews 9:22 teaches us, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" and in Genesis 3 we see the Lord God in His sovereign plan showing us that sin leads to death.
- This shadow of redemption takes place throughout scripture:
 - Exodus: When the Lord God instructs them to take the blood of an animal and mark the door posts so that when the angel of death comes in the middle of night those who are covered by the blood will be saved.
 - Leviticus: As the Lord God begins to model sacrifice in the Old Testament He teaches them about offerings. One particular offering was that of a sin offering. Where a young bull is taken who is without defect and is placed on the alter as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Hebrews 9, "27Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

1 Corinthians 15: Resurrection

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

- It is important for us to see that Jesus not only died for our sin (our spiritual and physical death of Genesis 2:17) but that He resurrected from the dead. Death had no victory over Jesus and couldn't contain Him.
- Not only did Jesus die for our sin and conquer our sin by raising from the dead scripture teaches us that He ascended to the right hand of the Father and is being patient so that all of creation might experience restoration. Our hope is that one day Jesus will return as rightful King and every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

Galatians 3: Faith

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- All of this (creation, fall, redemption) takes place through faith. Faith is often times difficult to explain and we will use words like "trust" or "asking Jesus into our heart". Some will even base faith on knowledge or emotions, however, our faith is resting securely in Jesus' work of death, burial, and resurrection.

The Bridge

This illustration is one of the easiest ways to share the Gospel and can take as little as 2 minutes.

Step 1 - God's Love and His plan

God created us in His own image to have a holy and loving relationship with Him... to experience abundant life here on earth.

- Jesus said, "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10b)

Since God planned for us to have peace and abundant life right now, why are most people not having this experience?

Step 2 - Our Problem: Separation from God

We chose to disobey God and go our own willful way. We still make this choice today. This results in separation from God.

- *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)*

On our own, there's no way we can attain the perfection needed to bridge the gap to God. Through the ages, individuals have tried many ways...without success.

Step 3 - God's Remedy: The Cross

Jesus Christ is the only answer to this problem. He died on the cross and rose from the grave, paying the penalty for our sin and bridging the gap between God and people.

- *"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God..." (1 Peter 3:18)*

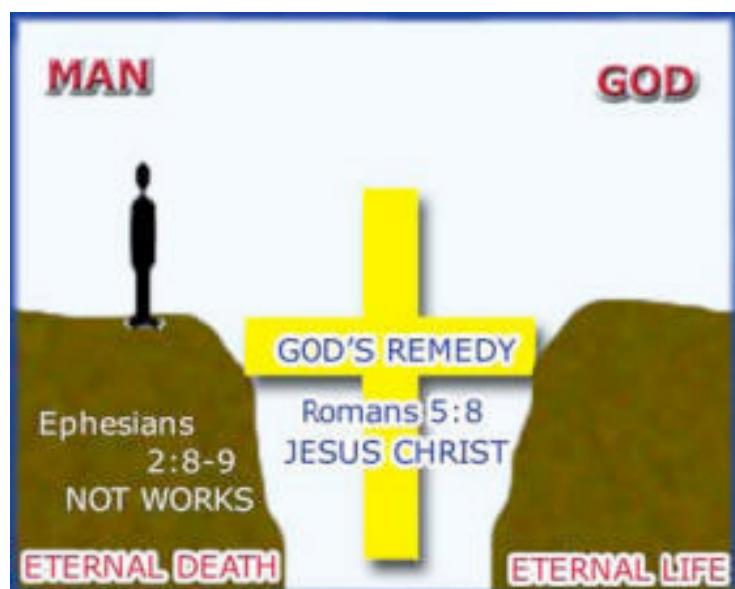
The death and resurrection of Jesus gives us the opportunity to be restored into a right relationship with God. All we have to do is respond by simply believing in Jesus.

Step 4 - Our Response

Believing means trust and commitment - acknowledging our sinfulness, trusting Christ's forgiveness and letting Him control our life. Eternal, abundant life is a gift for us to receive.

- *"I tell you the truth, whoever **hears** my word and **believes** Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)*

Would you like to respond by believing in Jesus today?



Come prepared to discuss the gospel in scripture and practice with your neighbor next to you about how to walk someone through a simple gospel presentation.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it feel like or make you think to see the gospel in the Old Testament?
2. Why is it important to continually direct others, as well as ourselves, back to the gospel.
3. Tell us in 2 minutes about the last spiritual conversation you had with someone?

Practical Lesson

Take turns with the person sitting next to you to share the bridge illustration on a piece of paper.

What about other religions?

John 14

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Is Jesus really the only way? In an environment of such plurality and diversity this really seems an implausible or even arrogant claim of Christians. When confronted with the exclusive claims of Christianity, the question on many people's minds is how can Christians be so narrow as to believe that all non-Christians will be excluded from heaven? There are plenty of good people who are not Christians. Do Christians think they are better than others? ⁶

Objection #1

Don't all faiths basically point to the same God?

There are similarities in all religion; however, this doesn't mean that we should overlook them entirely. Mortimer Adler, editor of the Encyclopedia Britannica made the observation, "there is a common core of sound morality and perspective truth in all major religions."⁷ In addition scripture teaches us that God's **moral law** was written on our hearts, which indicates why there are so many similarities in every culture and every religion. When they are all taken into account there is a similar message of don't harm one another, honor your mother and father, be kind to others, don't lie, etc.

By simply watching the news we see that all of humanity has missed the mark and Christianity isn't saying all are wrong and *Christians* are right but that all are wrong and *God* is right!

Objection #2

Isn't "truth" culturally and historically conditioned?

This argument simply concludes we are all a product of our social conditioning and because I am born in a culture that values Christianity then I am likely to be a Christian. That is true, however, the validity of something isn't determined by its cultural and historical conditioning. That question presumes that culture and history dictates truth. Gravity is true in North America and Asia. ⁸

⁶ No Perfect People Allowed by John Burke

⁷ Truth In Religion by Mortimer Adler

⁸ Reason For God by Tim Keller

Objection #3

Isn't it arrogant to imply others should believe it?

Again, that question views Jesus' claims as one out of many claims that are to be considered. Therefore, it is arrogant for it to metaphorically stand up and say, "I am the best"! However, Jesus' claim isn't one out of many, but one that was established from the beginning of humanity when all of humanity was separated from God and as a result we see conflict with ourselves, others, and God.⁹

In the end, Jesus doesn't make this claim out of arrogance but out of compassion. He is supreme creator of all things and the greatest act of compassion done on the cross wasn't done in secret, but up on a hill for all to see His atoning work take place on the cross. Romans 3, "*25whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;*"

On your own take a minute to read through the passage and consider how Jesus would respond to the question, "Is Jesus the only way?"

Matthew 19

16 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"
17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." 18 "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother, and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" 20 "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

1. How does Jesus respond to the question about eternal life?
2. How much of the commandments / law does Jesus require that we keep to inherit eternal life?
3. What did we learn from Genesis 3 and we read in Romans 3:23 toward humanity's ability to keep the commandments? See also Romans 3:10-18.
4. How does the man respond? How is his response similar to our response today about being a good person?

⁹ Genesis 1-3

Discussion Questions

1. Which one of the “objections” do you hear the most from people?
2. Which one are you most comfortable with? Which one are you least comfortable with?
3. Sometimes when we talk about these topics we will get “excited” or even “angry”? Why do you think that is?
4. What is the best thing we can remember to do when we are having a spiritual conversation?
5. What is the worst that can happen from a spiritual conversation? What is the worst that can happen from a spiritual conversation that never takes place?
6. What are some other common objections that we hear to the gospel?

Practical Lesson

As a group we will brainstorm the practical ways to help others identify the illusion of “goodness” that exists in our culture:

Purity

We are part of a culture that spends more money each year on pornography than country music, rock music, jazz music, classical music, Broadway plays, and ballet combined. In Paul's day, he accused some people of worshiping their stomachs as their god, and in our day it appears that our god has simply moved a short distance south.¹⁰

Genesis 2

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. 25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

In our culture today it is overwhelmed with shame and guilt when it comes to sexuality. It is a dark cloud that hangs over our head and is largely responsible for the vacuum that exists in the local church today.

A large reason men are turning to pornography today is because of the emptiness that exists in their lives today and as a result turned to empty man-made jars that continually leak.

Jeremiah 2

13 "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

The church has responded by silence, however, when we look at scripture we see that God is intimately concerned and involved in our purity. Therefore, as we approach this topic there are some questions we need to begin with.

Do I experience a fear of the Lord?

Proverb 1

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Am I aware of the holiness of God?

1 Peter 4

3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.

1 John 2

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

¹⁰ Porn Again by Mark Driscoll

1 John 3

9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Clearly, while no man of God can become perfect in this life (1 John 1:8), God does promise that Christian men have the ability to walk away from habitual sins of all kinds, including sexual sins, which are commonly accepted as undefeatable foes. Practically, this means that sexual sin should not be managed, but rather put to death because Jesus died for it.

Why is it that we have become so comfortable with our sin? Why is that we are more surprised when we don't sin, instead of when we do sin? Our attitude toward sin and purity should be different!

Common Questions:

- Is pornography a sin?
- Is it okay if your wife is okay with it?
- What "counts" as pornography?

How do we combat pornography?

First: Tell someone. Tell someone besides your wife or girlfriend and get accountability. Satan will tell you that you can't trust anyone, you can do it yourself, they won't understand, it's not that big of a deal, you deserve it; the list goes on and on. Tell someone.

Second: Stop it! Seriously. Stop it in every way possible. Get rid of what ever trips you up. Get rid of cable, get rid of the inter-net, get rid of magazines; get rid of what ever is causing you to stumble. This doesn't mean we can transform our heart by simply behavioral modification, but it does mean we can be on guard.

Third: Combat it with prayer and grace. Scripture teaches us there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus and Satan is a deceiver and a liar. He will tell you it isn't that bad and then the minute you do it he will cast judgment and condemnation. Confess it to Jesus, receive His grace and walk away from it. It isn't who you are. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus and the old things have passed away and new things have come.

Reality of Pornography

This point hit home for me in a painful and personal way many years ago. While on a radio program a male caller was speaking about his enslavement to pornography and how he did not feel too badly about his sin because the women in his magazines were getting paid and probably had fun being sex objects. During the commercial break, a young woman from my church who was working for the show came in to say hello and ended up telling me her story. She explained that she had been repeatedly sexually abused by her uncle as a young girl and came to see herself as a dirty girl. She embraced her filth and became a very promiscuous young woman who had sex with older men. When she was old enough she began stripping at a seedy club and because of her beautiful body she made piles of money

and was soon solicited by men for prostitution, which she obliged to make even greater sums of money. Since an older man had abused her for so many years, it made sense in her mind to at least pay her bills from the act. Eventually, she was offered a job as a porn star and began making adult films. But the entire industry was so sickening, degrading, and animalistic that she would get high and drunk before each movie shoot just to endure the violations. She then explained to me that none of this stopped until she met Jesus. As she spoke I couldn't help but wonder if there were men from my church out renting her videos to take home and masturbate to without knowing that she would be sitting in church next to them and singing songs to Jesus the following Sunday. Indeed, God's men should treat every woman in the same way we would treat our sisters.¹¹

What about masturbation?

The question remains, is it permissible for Christian men to masturbate? Yes, and no. It must be noted that the Bible does not condemn masturbation outright. Though the practice is as old as the Scriptures, the Bible's silence on the matter should cause us to avoid calling something a sin that God does not. So, we must examine the issue principally with the following questions:

Question #1: Can you masturbate without lust (Job 31:1)?

Question #2: Can you masturbate in a way that builds oneness with your spouse, pulling you together more intimately through the act (Gen. 2:24)?

Question #3: Can you masturbate without experiencing shame (Gen. 2:24)?

Question #4: Can you masturbate with a clear conscience (Titus 1:15)?

Question #5: Can you masturbate without capitulating to the cravings of your sinful desires and thoughts (Eph. 2:3)?

It is most certainly possible that a man could masturbate without violating these simple biblical principles, but highly unlikely. Though masturbation is biblically permissible, the question remains whether or not it is beneficial for you (1 Cor. 10:23). God's men are quite divided on this matter, as many find it to be very beneficial to them before they are married, during seasons of their marriage when they are away from their wife, etc. Conversely, other men claim that masturbating is not beneficial for them because they become mastered by it and unable to keep it under control (1 Cor. 6:12). This is biologically caused by the fact that masturbating does temporarily relieve sexual urges and frustrations, but also causes greater and more frequent biological urges for additional ejaculations. Practically, as the body emits semen it then quickly produces more so that supply can keep up with demand. So, a man who masturbates to ejaculation will find himself masturbating with increasing frequency as his body continues to demand more frequent relief, thus negating his original goal of masturbating to relieve sexual frustration.

¹¹ Porn Again by Mark Driscoll

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you in the material?
2. On a scale from 1-10, where are you in the area of purity?
3. How do you personally stay on guard against sexual temptations?

Practical Lesson

If you are married, enjoy the intimacy of your marriage this week:

- Be creative
- Be romantic
- Write a note

If you are single, work towards getting married:

- Get a job
- Embrace responsibility
- Ask a girl out on a date ☺

Living On Mission

We have a Creator who is on mission. From the point sin enters into humanity God is on a mission to restore and reconcile all of creation. He begins by giving a promise to all of humanity.

Genesis 3

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

What is enmity?

Who is the “you”?

Who is the “woman”?

Theologians refer to this as the proto-evangelion (first gospel). It is from this point in scripture that God continues to pursue us to restore and reconcile all of humanity through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It started in Genesis 3 with a promise and continued with the establishment of Israel, the establishment of prophets, priests, and kings; and ultimately fulfilled in the incarnation when Jesus enters into human history to willingly lay down His life on the cross for our sin.

After His resurrection He stands before the disciples and commissions:

Matthew 28

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

Jesus stood before the disciples and commissioned them to live on mission of glorifying God by proclaiming a message of reconciliation, which took place at the cross.

WHERE IS YOUR MISSION? (Engage)

Acts 17

26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

Scripture teaches us that God has determined the exact times and places we should live. God designed your life to be intentional – where you live, what job you have, what school you attend, who you encounter each day – everything has a purpose.

That purpose is the Gospel being displayed in your life so that people would encounter the grace of Jesus. God has determined who you are and where you live so that people would come to know the salvation found in the cross of Christ.

How Do You Live On Mission? (Enter)

Sometimes the church will call the Christ-follower to dedicate a specific amount of hours to “church” and neglect to take advantage of where we are already spending our time. Take time to write down the top 5 spheres of influence that you function in a weekly basis? (Work, school, home, hobbies, etc?) Where are you already spending your time?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What would it look like to live on missions in each of those contexts? Take a few moments to begin writing down specific names of people in each category. Who could you start praying for in each sphere of influence? (Write some notes below)

What is the first step? (Express)

By this point you could easily have a list of 20-30 names of people you interact with on a daily basis and we have a God that is intimately dedicated to connecting with each of those people and He has placed you next to them! The first step is to begin to connect with them spiritually and relationally.

Spiritual Connection

We connect with others spiritually through prayer. How can you more specifically pray for them? What is their family background? Where did they grow up? What are their hobbies / interests? What is important to them?

Relational Connection

How can we begin to spend time with them? Maybe it starts with a casual conversation at the water cooler and gradually lasts a little longer as you start to learn more about who they are as people. Through the conversations you are able to pray more specifically for them and ultimately speak more directly into their lives. All from a water cooler conversation! It starts at the water cooler and then maybe a lunch, then a dinner, maybe a weekend activity, and slowly you begin to develop relationships.

It is in the midst of those spiritual relationships that we will begin to be able to express spiritual truths and have spiritual conversations. This may take weeks or months and through the power of the Holy Spirit it could take hours. We have no idea what God is doing other than He is on mission and inviting us to be involved!

Where Do We Go Next? (Explore)

The next step can take a lot of different shapes. It might continue to be a relationship that develops over time but the objective is to (through the discernment of the Holy Spirit) be able to sit down and explore scripture, explore spiritual questions, and invite others to participate in this eternal story!

It is best if we can invite others into our relational connections that already exist.

Neighborhood gathering (small group)

Activity gathering (hobby)

Weekly / bi-weekly lunch

Dinner club with other couples

Sporting events

Relationships take time and the reality is that people are no longer going to churches or “professionals” to seek spiritual answers. Through God’s sovereign plan He has already brought the church to them and every day gives us eternal opportunities. Do you see Him working? Do you see the opportunities? It starts today!

Why Do We Do This? (Equip)

There is an urgency to the gospel that is often times left out of the gospel, but there is a seriousness that Jesus will come and scripture tells us it will be like a thief in the night. That we will neither know the hour or the day, but that He will return.

Therefore, everyday matters and everyday counts. We aren’t inviting people to simply get to heaven one day, but to participate in this eternal mission as well. The relationship doesn’t stop. We continue to spend time with people and help them understand and engage the mission. All for His glory!

Discussion Question

1. When you think of missionaries what do you think of?
2. How would you define a person who is living on mission?
3. Do you believe it is important to develop relationships with non-believers?
Why or why not?
4. Answer the following question:
 - a. When I think about having spiritual conversations with my neighbors, co-workers, friends it makes me feel...?
 - b. I would have more spiritual conversations if...?

Practical Lesson

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 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. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Discovery:

- What words stand out? What are these words important?
- What was Paul's relationship with the Corinthians?
- What is scripture making this point?
- What is the tone of the passage?

Understanding:

- What does he mean by "worldly point of view"?
- How do we become a "new creation"?
- What is the timeless principle in 2-3 words?

Application:

- What does this mean for our relationships (wife, children, Jesus, etc.)?
- How does this apply to our church?
- What does it mean for our work?

The Local Church

Ephesians 3

10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is through the church that God intended to make known His manifold wisdom. It is messy. It is frustrating. Even disappointing at times, and yet the church is the avenue by which His message of redemption is declared to the entire world! What a responsibility!

State Of The Local Church

In the United States in the 1950's there were 17 churches for every 10,000 Americans; in 2000's there were 12 churches for every 10,000; and in 2004 there were only 11 churches for every 10,000, according to North American Mission Board statistics.

Ed Stetzer, director for research at SBC's LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tenn., claims more than 50,000 churches were planted in North America between 1980 and 2000, but that church planting today is only half what it was in the 1950s.

In the last 100 years the local church has experienced serious decline, however, people are still asking spiritual questions. People are still wondering about life after death, have questions about God, who the person of Christ is, however, the local church has become one of the last places where people go to find answers. With the inter-net people are looking to find answers on their own, however, they are still left unsatisfied.

This is the state of our culture today. A people who are filled with spiritual questions, however, the local church is no longer the place where people go to find answers. What if it was different?

The Local Church Is A Sent Church

John 4

31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food? 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

Write down **25 discoveries** about Jesus describing His purpose here on earth:

Additional Scripture

John 5

*30 ... "I do not seek My own will, but the will of **Him who sent Me**."*

John 6

*38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of **Him who sent Me**."*

John 7

*29 "I know Him; because I am from Him, and **He sent Me**."*

John 8

*29 "And **He who sent Me** is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."*

John 9

*4 "We must work the works of **Him who sent Me**, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work."*

John 12

*49 "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the **Father Himself who sent Me** has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak."*

John 13

*20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives **Him who sent Me**."*

John 17

3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ **whom Thou hast sent.**"

John 17

18 "As **Thou didst send Me** into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

John 20

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as **the Father has sent Me**, I also send you."

Notable Authors

Alan Hirsch

When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible.

Ed Stetzer

It's possible to be a missionary without ever leaving your zip code.

John MacArthur

The church exists for the sake of the world....The ultimate goal of all ministry is to reach others for Christ.

Michael Frost

It is in the very being of God that the basis for the missionary enterprise is found. God is a sending God, with a desire to see humankind and creation reconciled, redeemed, and healed.

Leslie Newbigin

The Church is sent into the world to continue that which he came to do, in the power of the same Spirit, reconciling people to God.

John Piper

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity, But worship abides forever.

Robert Logan

To fulfill the Great Commission, we need to stop doing ministry by addition and start doing ministry by multiplication...planting churches that plant churches that plant churches.

Which quote or scripture stands out to you the most? Why

North Village Church Objectives

Below is a description of our objectives as a church:

- Connect to Jesus
- Connect to Others
- Connect to Community

Which objectives feel “natural” to you? Which objectives seem the most difficult?

North Village Church Core Values

Below is a description of our DNA and what we are trying to accomplish as a church:

- Gospel Centered
- Relationally Driven
- Focused Mission

Gospel Centered: We are big fans of the gospel and the gospel is encompassed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. All of life ultimately centers around faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and includes the following characteristics.

- Reliance on God's Word, *2 Tim. 3:15, Joshua 1:8, 2 Pet. 2:9*
- Stories of Life Change, *Eph. 1:18-23, 2 Tim. 2:3-4, 1 Thess. 1:8*
- Intentionally Missional, *Eph. 4:12, Col. 1:28-29, Jn. 20:21*

Relationally Driven: It is our conviction that the church is not limited to 2 hours on Sunday, but exists throughout the week and the primary avenue is through relationships.

- Discipleship Development, *Heb. 10:24, 1 Pet. 3:15*
- Leadership Development, *Phil. 3:20-21, Gal. 4:19, 2 Tim. 2:2*
- Spiritually Vibrant, *Is. 26:8, Rom. 12:10*

Focused Mission: Our mission is to be a people who are living on mission and everything we do will run through this grid. The questions we ask and the resources we dedicate will be put toward things that help us live on mission, individually and collectively.

- Anticipation and Expectation of Miracles, *Heb. 11:1, Luke 15, Matt. 28:19-20*
- Character of Prayer, *Eph. 3:18-20, Phil. 4:6-7*
- Sacrificial Living (Time, Resources, Finances, etc.) *Jn. 13:34, Mk. 10:42*

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about the state of the church today?
2. What do you think about the church being a “sent people”?
3. What ways can you begin or continue to live as a people who are “sent”?
4. How do you see yourself specifically participating in each of these core values?
5. In what specific ways can you participate in taking ownership of the vision of our church?

Practical Lesson

2 Corinthians 3

2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 4 Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Discovery:

- What words stand out? What are these words important?
- What is scripture making this point?
- What is the tone of the passage?

Understanding:

- What does Paul mean by “our letter, written on our hearts”?
- What is the timeless principle in 2-3 words?

Application:

- What does this mean for our relationships (wife, children, Jesus, etc.)?
- How does this apply to our church?
- What does it mean for our work?

Additional Readings

- Spiritual Leadership by J.Oswald Sanders
- The Church Impotent by Leon J. Podles
- Tally Ho The Fox! By Herb Hodges
- Disciples Are Made Not Born by Walter Henrichsen
- Dedication and Leadership by Douglas Hyde
- Taking Discipleship Seriously by Tom Sine
- From Eternity To Here by Frank Viola
- According To Plan by Graeme Goldsworthy
- Why Men Hate Going To Church by David Murrow
- Point Man by Steve Farrar
- Discipleship Essentials by Greg Ogden
- Spiritual Leadership by Henry Blackaby
- Future Men by Douglas Wilson