

[Pastor John Lawley]

God is good. Amen? How are you guys doing? How was your vacation holiday? Good. Anybody nervous about this afternoon? All right. We won't talk about that much today.



So, my name is John Lawley, I'm one of the pastors here, I'm gonna be bringing you the Word this morning. If you want, turn to John Chapter 1, we're gonna be in verse 35. We're starting a new series called NEXT and the series is all about, really, discipleship. And so the series is going to challenge many people in this room in many different ways, but really at the core of it is to take your next steps with the Lord and it's to challenge you with—Are you taking your next steps?—so regardless of where that looks like for you. And in my life I've had people all throughout my life who've discipled me in many different ways. People that have come alongside of me and discipled me for years and we're going to talk a little bit about what discipleship means. And some of you like, “What is discipleship?” We're talk about that. But they have mentored me for years and some have mentored me and discipled me for moments and I want to tell you a little bit about a story of a man who discipled me just one moment but it really made an impact in my life.

And so I was a freshman in college and I just was recently walking with the Lord. I grew up in church, I had a lot of knowledge of God—but I want you to hear me here—I didn't walk with the Lord until I was a senior in high school and I gave my life to the Lord and said, “You are my Lord. Help me, direct me in the steps I need to take.” So I was just new to my faith. I knew though, because I grew up in the church meaning I attended on Sundays with my family, I knew the Christian lingo enough to like have a conversation and like if we were doing a prayer, enough to kind of hold my own. Anybody? Like, to hold my own, could kind of say what I needed to say and not look weird. That was kind of my level. Okay? And so I was a single at the time and I was looking for a lady. Okay? That's where I was. And so I wanted somebody who loved Jesus and so I heard about this Bible study, this older couple was having this Bible study at their house and it was like really popular with young adults and I'm like that's where I want to go, I want to go there to scope it out. And so I went to this Bible study and I was in a group with the guy, and his wife had another group, but I was with this group and I was with this older gentleman and we were in his living room and the group was all girls but me. [Laughter] and so we were like in a good spot. We were in a good spot and I was gonna bring my, like, Christian charm and get some numbers. Right? That was the goal.

And so I remember he turned to the book of Ephesians and he started talking about the book of Ephesians. And I was like this is my moment—Right?—this is my moment to, like, look spiritual. And so it sounds funny but we do that, don't we? And so he asked me a question and let me just give you a backdrop here. Some of you who grew up in the church you know what I'm talking about. If you have a question that a grown up asks you, if you say God, Jesus, or the Bible in some way, you know, even if it was an incoherent answer and you don't know what you're talking about, they'll like tolerate it. They'll be like, “Yeah that's a good, that's a good answer.” And they'll just like have pity on you. So this is kind of what I understood; like, I knew the Christendom culture. Right? So he asked me a question and I'm like I have an answer, the Bible, God, Jesus, some sort of, and he turns to me—this is a true story—and he says, “You don't know what you're talking about.” He says, “You're not in your Word.” And I was like, *Dude, you're embarrassing me front of these Christian ladies.*

And I remember driving home and I was like angry, I was like angry at him, like, how dare he say that. By the way, he was a hundred percent true. It was true. I didn't know what I was talking about. I was pretending to love Jesus, but I didn't walk it. I didn't know what the

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Word said. I pretended to know it and he called me on it. A godly man called me out on it and I remember that moment, it changed my perspective on my faith. It challenged me to grow. Am I who I say I am? Is God the Lord of my life? And that literally led me to say I don't know what the Bible says. God wants me to make disciples. God wants me to share my faith. I don't know what the Bible says. And so it led me to literally to leave a college, go to a different college that was a Christian college.

First time I ever went to a Christian college I was a secular all the way. Like, Christian college I got to see some strange individuals, there's—and I'm just going to be honest, like, a homeschool. I homeschool my girls, no harm, a homeschooler whose parents are also homeschoolers, who's like a single child, that's a different creature right there. And so I got all these people that I started to interact with but they all knew the Word and so I was fed and I loved the environment. I had these godly professors that poured into my life.

That conversation with that old man led me to Bible college, which led me to be called to ministry, which really changed the course of my life. And all he did was challenge me on what was true in my life. And so I say that to say this, this is why I have a passion towards spiritual growth, a passion towards discipleship. My goal this morning is to challenge some of you. It is. It's to say you are apathetic about your faith and you need to grow up. And for some of you who are growing up, I'm going to challenge you to start to have disciples in your life. So how does that look like to have disciples, and how to disciple somebody? And these are our goals.

So turn with me to John Chapter 1, we're going to pick it up in verse 35. This is a situation where John the Baptist is here, Andrew, Peter, and Jesus, this is an exchange here when they first met when Jesus was first gathering His disciples. Pick it up in verse 35 of John Chapter 1:

*<sup>35</sup> The next day again John*

— this is John the Baptist —

*was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). <sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).*

~ JOHN 1:35-42

And I just want to stop here. We're gonna talk a little bit about Andrew and we're gonna use Andrew as a kind of our figure here as we talk through spiritual growth and discipleship. So Andrew, a little background on Andrew. Okay, Andrew sometimes is missed in Scripture because he's an awesome, awesome person who fell in love with the Lord and it changed his life. Andrew was a disciple of Jesus, we see this, but he was also a disciple of John the Baptist, and Andrew was brother to Peter. Right? Peter stands in front of thousands, he was his brother, he was one of the main twelve disciples, Andrew. And Andrew was really that one of the first to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. He had a heart for the

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Gentile people. In fact, it cost him his life, but that's Andrew. Andrew was a fisherman like his brother. What we know about fishermen were they didn't really do well in school. And so they didn't stay in school very long and they were working with their hands, they were hard-nosed, working men and women, probably not highly educated. They had to work in order to make a living so they would have to stay out until they had enough fish. I mean, they've had kind of a grueling lifestyle. But what we also know about Andrew is that Andrew was seeking after Jesus. Why? Because John the Baptist was discipling them.

John the Baptist, for those who don't know, he's one of the most significant theological figures in Scripture outside of Jesus. He's huge. And John the Baptist's lived a very unorthodox life. He was kind of a caveman, wilderness-type person, wore crazy clothes, would be in the wilderness and kind of disappear and then pop up and talk about the coming Messiah and baptize people, and prepared the way for Jesus. This is why John the Baptist is so key. And so what we know of Andrew is that he was being

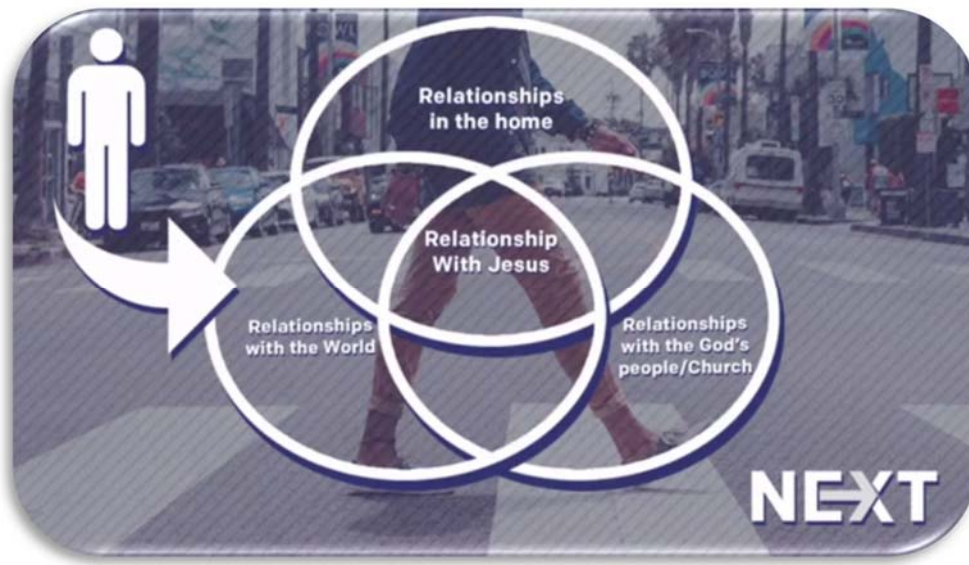
**Head**  
**Heart**  
**Hands**

discipled by this crazy wilderness guy. So think about this. Andrew had a desire to know Jesus. He heard this crazy man talk and for whatever reason he made that relationship connection and he said teach me about this person Jesus. And so I want you to remember three things during this talk. Okay? Head, heart, hands as it relates to discipleship, head, heart, hands.

Andrew sought after Jesus [*he points to his head*]. He wanted to know about Jesus. We get this from this simple passage in John, and we know that John the Baptist did a great job preparing Andrew to meet Jesus. Andrew didn't meet Jesus yet, he was going to meet Him here, but when he did he recognized Jesus. And so I want to stop here and I want to talk about how does it look to prepare people in your life to meet Jesus. Some of you, you are called—you've been walking with the Lord for a long time—you are called to make disciples. That is literally the purpose of your life. When Jesus says this is what I want you to do, the great commandment, He says go and make disciples, but here's the tough part. When I ask that question in the church most of us aren't and some of us don't know how to make disciples or even what that looks like, and so we're just stuck being maybe mentored occasionally on a Sunday morning but we're not doing much outside of that. And so I'm gonna challenge those who have been in love with Jesus, who have been walking with the Lord, who have learned a lot about Jesus, here's how you disciple somebody.

I'm gonna put a very simple picture of how it looks knowing that, listen, I have a resume here. I've discipled a lot of students over the years and this works because this is who we are. And so I want to start with this: If you want to disciple somebody you have to understand that we are relational people. Here's why I know that. Everyone in this room is relational. You are created by God who is a relational Being. Again, I don't actually care about what you think about how you got here, you were created by God—this is important because we have to separate our feelings from the truth—you are created by a relational Being and you are an image-bearer of that Being. So guess what? You're relational, you need relationships in your life. And so what makes up you has a lot to do with these relational components in your life. And to disciple somebody you need to step into those things and here's the goal: You step into the relational areas of somebody's life and you point them back to Jesus, John 15, in all these areas of their lives.

And so what are some of those areas? I'm gonna throw up a graph behind me. When you disciple somebody you are gonna step into relational areas in their lives and the first one that you're gonna step into is their relationship in their home. When are you coming alongside of somebody and you want to teach them and talk to them about Jesus, prepare them to meet Jesus, you have to ask the question:



What is going on in your home? How did you grow up? What did that look like? For some of you, you grew up in a family that didn't go to church. You don't have any background when it comes to God or Jesus and so it's all new to you. Some of you, you grew up in a church that maybe it was very liturgical and you didn't really talk about spiritual things growing up at the dinner

table or Thanksgiving, and so even having spiritual conversations is kind of uncomfortable and kind of awkward for you. For some of you, you have a home life where your spouse doesn't love Jesus and so when I say, "Hey, hey you need to grow in your faith," one of the good ways of doing that is starting to read your Bible. The reality is, is for some of you, even some people in this room who come, if your spouse started to read the Bible you'd make fun of them. And for some of you that's the life you live.

Some of you, your children don't know Jesus and you're the only one in your family that's pursuing and that's difficult and that's hard. Some of you, you come out of abuse and the people that you were called to trust abused that trust and now we're asking you to trust your life to the Lord—that's hard for you to trust anybody. Some of you grew up in a home life where you actually went to church all the time but you were never told about the Gospel. You were told about how, remember Pastor Lee, the little cones? You were told about how a Christian should act and live and speak, but you never were talked about Jesus, just about the rules and so you grew up in a home where it was full of hypocrisy where your family would drive here on a Sunday morning or drive to your church on a Sunday morning—follow me—and you would fight all the way here, you would walk into your church and pretend to be perfect, get in your car and then fight on the way back. And that's what you grew up in. And so for me to come alongside of somebody and say, "Hey, you need the church and you need to grow in your faith," all you think about is the hypocrisy in your past and you think, "I don't want anything to do with that." Am I wrong?

And so that matters when you disciple somebody. How do they approach Jesus when it comes to how they were raised? What do they think He is because there's a lot of lies that we've been told, even by the people that we are called the trust. So what does it look like? You need to come alongside that relationship with the home.

Another one is the relationship with God's people. What's their background in church? Did they grow up in the church environment where you're not even supposed to stand up unless somebody says to stand up and you're not supposed to ask questions, you're just supposed to allow somebody to tell you what's right and wrong and you're never supposed to challenge it. Maybe that's how some of us grew up. Maybe we grew up and we said church is just something we attend, it's not a body. Do you know that the church is a body? That the building is not the church, that the people of God are the church, and that we're made up of different gift sets. You have intrinsic gifts, the gifts that you were born with, and you

have been given spiritual gifts, gifts that God's given you for His mission, for His kingdom. Know that the church, it's cause, is something that you need to own because it's about unity and purpose, it's not about attendance and hearing. That matters when we say grow in your relationship with the church family because how you see church matters. For some of you community does not exist in church. Community exists in the bars or with your sports teams or with your school that your kids attend and their parents, that's where your community exists. You just come to church because you want to come to church and check that box and that's where we are and that's important to talk about. How do you see church? How do you see God's family? What do you think the purpose is of us gathering here?

Another area that you need to talk through is their relationship with the world. This is important when you talk about discipleship because how they have shaped their world will shape the way that they respond when you say that you are to place your faith in Jesus and grow in godliness, and here's what I mean. Let's say I talk to a man and I say, "Hey, you need to spend more time with your children. God's calling you to lead and love your family." And they say, "Hey, listen, I have a job and I travel all the time. I don't have a lot of time to spend with my kids the way that somebody maybe that would work from home does." Okay. Thanks for being honest. Let's start there. What does that look like for you?

For some of you, you have a job where you have to make moral decisions every day that are not godly but if you don't you'll lose your job. How do I make disciples when I am even convicted about my own job and the decisions I have to make there? It's a good question. For some of you, you have a humanistic worldview and you don't even know it. For some of us, we have surrounded ourselves with people who are spiritually dead—look at me—who do not love Jesus and we are being disciplined by them. And so we think we know Jesus but we live according to how the world lives and we're being disciplined by those that are spiritually dead. Look at me—you cannot learn from a dead person. You will not grow in faith from a dead person. And so for some of us our world is surrounded by decisions we've made that are worldly decisions and not Kingdom decisions and we gotta start there.

So to disciple somebody it's very simple, it's coming into their world, talking about all of those things, you ask a lot of questions, and here's the goal: You point them back to Jesus. I'm gonna give you a practical example here. Okay? I have a good friend of mine that lives down south in Georgia, that's where I went to school, and he calls me up just last week and he's complaining about his wife. He's complaining about how she treats him and how she treats the kids and that she's lazy and she's not the same woman that he married and he's angry and he's bitter and he's calling me, talking to me, and all the while I'm hearing him I'm praying to the Lord, I say, "Help me guide him towards righteousness." What does that look like? I don't know, and I'm praying, I'm praying, and then God laid on my heart a lot of things to say to him that had nothing to do with him. It was this: Jesus calls you to love your wife unconditionally—what does that look like? All you've done, brother, is give me conditions. God says they are not to stop you from loving them, what does that look like? What did I do to my friend? I disciplined him. Why? Because I pointed him to Jesus. I pointed him to something greater than himself because I don't have anything to offer. When I disciple somebody it's me standing in front of the lies of their world and pointing them to Jesus.

And then here's how you know if you did a good job discipling, when all of a sudden they start saying the things that God says. "Hey, hey, John, my wife, man, it's a struggle to love her but I'm gonna love her anyway because God told me to love her." Good job, buddy. I'm praying for you, keep doing it. "Hey, hey, should I... should I...?" N-n-n-no, this is what Jesus says and this is what we're going after. That's what discipleship looks like, it's pointing people to Jesus in all relationships in their life. "Hey, my job, it doesn't seem like I can lead my family in righteousness if I have that job." Okay, maybe you

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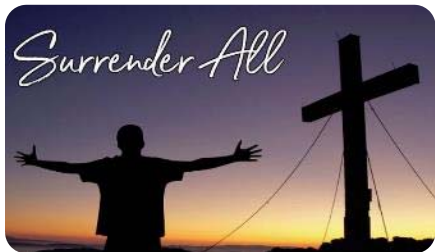
need to stop that job. Maybe you need to redeem it. I don't know, but how do you move it towards godliness? That's what it looks like to disciple somebody. It doesn't mean you need to know all the Bible verses. All discipleship is that you know the Hope of the world and you're reminding people of that Hope—Jesus. You need Him in every area of your life.

So what we need right now is we need to talk about discipleship. We need to talk about how did John prepare Andrew to recognize Jesus? And so here's the question: How do you grow in your faith? And so I'm gonna give you some application. I'm gonna disciple you as the church here for the next five minutes. For those who are spiritually dead, here's what this means—is you may know of Jesus but you've never met Him, and I promise you there's a difference. If you think here that everyone's in the same ballpark of saying there isn't just, like, a personal relationship, it's just kind of knowledge of Him, I'm telling you you're wrong. There is a difference between knowing Jesus and meeting Jesus.

I didn't know that until I met Him. Amen? And so for some of you, you know of Jesus but you're dead, you're spiritually dead. And here's what I want to challenge you to: You need to place your faith and hope in Jesus. You need to understand that the Gospel is for you and that the Gospel calls you to respond. The Gospel says that God has rescued you from your sin by sending His Son to die in your place, that you need to see yourself as sinners and you need to place your faith in Jesus. He is your Lord. He is your hope. And if you do that the Bible says you are born again.

We have “Gospel changes everything” cards all throughout this church and we have engagers all throughout this church that would love to lead you towards receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ and take that step. And so for some of you, maybe you need to write in the seatback card in front of you, “I want to take that step. I want to say yes to Jesus. Help me to do that.” That's your step. You need to move from a spiritually dead person to spiritually alive, born-again in Christ Jesus. You need to change your allegiance. That's where you are because you have never met Jesus, and that's the only difference, honestly, between a spiritual infant and spiritually dead is the one met Jesus and the one knows of.

And for some of you who are spiritually infant, let me tell you what that is, again, this isn't a legalistic thing because, by the way, the Holy Spirit is needed to do any of this. So this is a surrender thing, but for those that have met Jesus, who have given their life to Jesus, have been baptized, have confessed their faith, some of you if that's your moment and then the rest of your life has been apathy, you are a spiritual infant. You are a child, meaning you only get fed when somebody feeds you and you have no desire to grow on apart from yourself. Here's your next step if that's you, if you don't know a lot about the Bible, you don't know a lot about the church, you just know that Jesus saved you, you need community. This is what you do.



Women, you need to sign up for our Wednesday Night Women's Bible Study starting all up just in a couple weeks. You can sign up at our blue wall, big blue wall in the lobby. In this, this is what happens here, it's not just a program, it's intentionally something the church gives you to say this is what will help you grow. You sign up for that, it's on a Wednesday, you can come in the morning and have childcare, you can come in the evening if you work, and all throughout you're gonna have spiritually, godly women, Stephanie and the other women, speak the Bible into your life, bring application to it. It's gonna help you learn more about Jesus, but you're also gonna be surrounded by women in a table and some of those women are spiritual parents who love Jesus. And this



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is what you need to do, girls, you need to ask them to coffee, you need to ask them to lunch. And then here's what you do, you set up appointments with those women, you go home and you take your Bible, you buy a journal—I'm telling you, I'm giving it to you, you read your Bible, you have a journal and you write questions. *I don't know what this means.* Great, write a question. Read, write questions, read, write questions, then guess what I'm going to tell you to do? Take that journal, take that Bible when you meet with that spiritual parent you ask them these questions, *What does this mean? What does this mean?* And if they're good, they'll be able to answer some and the rest will just be like, "Let's go the Bible together." Or maybe, "I don't know. Let's learn together," but you ask them questions; you read, you write questions, you ask.

Men, same thing. If you are new to the faith you need parents, you need to grow, so join the No Regrets Conference that's coming up in the spring. Go that weekend, get intentional discipleship from godly men, and find godly men in that group and ask them out to lunch. If you are a father of young children, find a father with teenagers where their teenager and their wife loves them, don't find a man who *says* they love Jesus, find a man that the fruit proves it. You hear me? And then ask them to lunch and say, "How did you do that?" And I guarantee you they're gonna say, "That's a lot of prayer, a lot of patience, and a lot of God." And you need to grow and you need to ask questions.



For some of you, your world made you decide to make poor decisions chasing after stuff, so you have a house that you can't afford, a car you can't afford, and you're in debt and you're drowning. And I say give to the Kingdom, and you say, "I got nothing to give." Here's what you need to do, you need to step out of yourself and the way that the world sees finances and you need to change the way you see those things. I'm going to invite you, sign up for our Financial Peace class coming in January. That class is going to teach

you how to be good stewards with the money God has given you; to take it from an idol in your life and make it something that God can use. Step into wisdom and learn what the Bible says about money. Some of you desperately need that because you tried the world's way and it leads to death. And so what is your next step?



For some of you it's simply entering into a community that fits your calendar. You are at-capacity people; you are intelligent, you are high capacity in the sense of your jobs and children and baseball practice and football practice and you're at

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capacity. So my advice to you is to go onto our apps called Church Center.



Okay? And I'll give you that list here, it's called Church Center and it's a little picture of a church and it will give you groups.



There will be an icon at the bottom that will say Groups, Events, click on the Groups and you're going to see categories of groups. And we do that to say listen, we don't want you to have any excuse. If you have a young family and you just are desperate for some childcare midweek and some adult conversations, we've got you. If you're somebody that's like, you know what, maybe my first entrance is doing softball this spring. We've got you. Maybe you like badminton, we've got you. Maybe you like motorcycles, we've got you. And so you go here and you pick a category that fits and



you join that community and you connect with people who love the same things you love but they love Jesus and you start to have conversations with them. That's some of you, that's your next step is to get into community. I cannot tell you how many people, here's their story, they've come to this church—and the reason I'm so passionate about this is because God wants so much more for you.

You come to this church and you love this church, and we love that you're here, but you sneak into the balcony, I'm gonna call you out, I love you, or you sneak into the back—am I wrong?—and then you sneak out. And then you look at your life and you think, *Man, why are we struggling?* when you're running from the very community God's placed in your life. And the reason I know that is because my small group is made up of those people and do you know what they say? “I can't believe I waited so long, this is awesome! You guys love us.” Yeah, we do! We want a relationship with you, we want community with you. You're telling me you have a crazy child, too? Yep, let's deal with it together. Here's what we're doing, we're trying to survive. Good luck. No. [Laughter] What does it look like to be in relationship?

And so I want to move on. So Andrew knew of Jesus very well. He put people around himself, John the Baptist, to teach him the characteristics and the qualities that were correct about Jesus so that when Andrew met Jesus he knew who He was. And so my question then changes to: How do you meet Jesus? What does that look like to meet Jesus in your life? Now Jesus is at the right hand—and I want to say this—Jesus is alive. Like, we forget this. He's not dead. Amen? He's alive and so through the Spirit of God we can grow an intimacy with Him. What does that look like to grow? Rather than just saying, “I'm saved by” you can say, “I know Jesus. I have a relationship with Him. I experience Him all throughout my day.” What does that look like? How did Andrew meet Jesus and what does that change? Look at Acts Chapter 2 with me, Acts Chapter 2, verse 37. We're going to experience just the qualities of people who have met Jesus and what they have done in response to that. Here's what it says in verse 37 of Acts 2:

*<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” <sup>40</sup> And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” <sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

— and then watch how they responded and pursued Jesus —

*<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their*

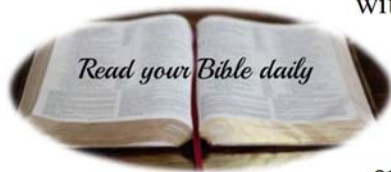


*food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

~ ACTS 2:37-47

And so how do you take knowledge of Jesus and meet Jesus? Well, the first thing, and I just talked about it, you need to repent of your sins. If sin has not been atoned for, you cannot have a relationship with the Lord, so you need to confess that that sin has separated you from God and you need to place your faith in Jesus. That will restore your ability to have a personal relationship with the Lord. You need to know God and it's through Jesus, the blood of Jesus. So the first step for some of you is to put your faith in Jesus; and for others, here's what it says, that when you place your faith in Jesus you are now given the Holy Spirit of God. And the Holy Spirit of God is the agent in which God will grow you. He will grow your affections towards the Lord and your affection towards God's people in the lost and broken world. Through the Holy Spirit, through surrendering your life, through giving your life to Jesus and saying, "Father, you are now the Lord," He is going to give you a change agent which is the Holy Spirit who's gonna set a path for you to grow.

And then look at what it says that they did; the first thing he says they did was they devoted themselves to the teaching. We just talked about this, which means if you want to grow you need to spend time with people who love Jesus and you need to ask them a lot of questions as they teach you the Word of God—correctly—the Word of God.



You know, one of the things that I am challenged with here which I think is really huge for a lot of us, it's like if you are looking at your life and you say, "Okay, I want to grow." Like, New Year's resolutions is always something like I want to get rid of the toxic people in my life. Anybody? And so why do you say that? Because you look around in your life and you're like there are people in my life that when I hang out with them I become the person I don't want to become. Look at me. You're right. But here's what God has given you in His favor, that He has provided you a church with people that when you hang out with them they inspire you to be the person that God wants you to be, and that's important and you need it. And so do you need to step away from unhealthy community? Sometimes, yeah. Do you need to redeem some of those relationships that are close and that you've built over the years? Yes. We need to change what they're about, so maybe you need to change your environment.

Here's a clear cone, ready? If it's an idol, cut it off. So if anything in your relationships with people is an idol, you cut it off and you replace it with something that's going to pursue the Lord in your life. And that means relationships, that means hobbies. If it's an idol, you cut it off. That's the standard. I don't know what that looks like for you, but I'm challenging you. It says if you want to grow in your relationship with the Lord, you need teaching, good teaching. People in your life that love Jesus and they're gonna help you love Jesus. And two, you're gonna need fellowship. It says that they were in fellowship with one another. This is why we reference our groups all the time.

Here's the powerful thing about small groups. For some of you, when you have an image of small groups, here's what you think. You think you're gonna knock on some stranger's house and you're gonna walk into that stranger's door or there are gonna be a bunch of strangers and you're going to sit in the corner being all strange, them being all strange, maybe you'll grab a little piece of cheese, [Laughter] and then you're like looking at your clock, "Aw, I gotta get out of here. I've only got so much free time and I gotta work tomorrow." That's what you think. And here's the truth, okay? Some people are gonna kill me now. If that's the community you went to, go to a different one. Go to a different group.

Here's what you need and here's what's available; you need people that are gonna love you, that are gonna invest in your life. “Hey, tell me about how you guys met?” “Hey, tell me about your church background.” “Hey, tell me about your job.” “Hey, tell me about your children.” “Tell me about your struggles.” And they're gonna pray for you and they're gonna lead you in how they are also pursuing Jesus, and they're gonna inspire you to love your spouse more, love your children more, love your job more, find purpose in the things that maybe you were struggling to find purpose in. They're also gonna bring you food when you're sick and when you have a baby. They're also gonna help you move. They're also gonna love on you when you need prayer. They're also gonna visit you in the hospital. And I guarantee you there are communities here that will do that and you need that. They're gonna love you unconditionally the way Jesus loves you and it's gonna inspire you to grow in your faith. You need that. My family, my wife, desperately needs that. My small group has inspired me to love my wife, my children, and my God more. I'm grateful for that.

Here's another thing that they did was they also served, so for some of you, here's the truth, I'm gonna give you some truth. Right? The band behind me is wonderful, it's wonderful. Right? Right? They are. But there's not tons of them so for some of you, you look at the band and you see the bass player and the drummer like they're all set. They're not all set. They need more people. They need drummers, they need basses, they need people that love music and so here's what you need to do. You need to serve in the areas that you're gifted in for the Kingdom of God, and here's what's gonna happen. When you do you actually find community with those people. Our tech team, we actually are reaching way more people than we thought on Livestream. It blew us away. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people are hearing about the Gospel through our Livestream, so we are adding cameras, we are upgrading our tech. So guess what? We need people who love that and are skilled in that. We need people there, so we need you to sign up as a next step and when you sign up and you serve in this church you also are going to be in community and that's a great next step for some of you.

Here's the last thing I want to do is I want to talk about the last point that it says is they sold all their possessions and belongings and distributed all the proceeds to all. So sell all your possessions and you're—no. Nah, I'm just kidding. Some of you maybe, but here's what I want to apply this. Okay? They changed their patterns. So they change their time and their energy and their resources from the things of this world to the things of the Kingdom. Here's what I mean. Most of us, including me, we struggle with spending all of our energy and time on our comfort and our entertainment. I want you to feel that conviction. That is not what we're called to do and why we're here.

And so when we spend hours in front of a television screen we're not going to find satisfaction for our souls there. When we spend our money on material things that are gonna rot—look at me—that aren't necessary, we're not going to find satisfaction in those things. And so what did these people do in response of meeting Jesus? They changed their pattern in response to who they met because their purpose changed. Your purpose is not to store up treasures only to have them not follow you to the grave. That's not your purpose. Your purpose is to take your money, your resources, your time, whatever you have available, and you move it towards Kingdom things with the people and the position that you've been given. That's what they did. They started meeting needs because they realized their purpose was greater than this world. If you want to grow, you need to change how you live in order to see God work.

I'm gonna give you this practical example. If you want God to be real for you, if you want to know that the Holy Spirit is real or if we're just making things up because we're afraid of death, if you want to know if Jesus is real here's what He says—go to the places I am. And here's where He says He is, He's

with the poor, He's with the sick, He's with the broken, He's with the widow, He's with the orphans. You don't believe me? He says I'm there and so here's the dilemma, right? We want to grow but we are entertained and comforted rather than challenged in obedience. And I want to talk to you about how this changed my life. When you go to the places where God is you're gonna see God. You're gonna see His Holy Spirit use you. You're gonna see Him use you for His Kingdom and His glory and you're gonna be overwhelmed by it. I'm just gonna lay out examples for you because I'm not even saying this, this is really true in my life. Okay?

When I saw my best friend, 17-year-old, die right in front of me in the hospital bed I said, "God, I believe that there's something after death. Okay, now I know it." And then I go to college and I go into prison ministry and I don't know anything about the Bible but God says go, and I start reading the Bible and I look and all these prisoners are on their face giving their life to Jesus. I say, "God, I believe You're powerful. I know You're powerful. I know You're powerful because I'm not and I don't know how this happened." And then all of a sudden my first year in ministry, first year in ministry, not even qualified, a church in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, a kid in my ministry, 16-year-old kid dying of leukemia, first week on the job, I get called to go to Hershey Medical to pray for him and his family. And I'm in a parking lot thinking, *What am I gonna say to these parents? What do I have to say to them? God, if I'm gonna be used it's going to be You. I know, I know You want to use me, but You gotta use me.* So I go up there and I say, I don't even remember, and God uses me to bring comfort. God I know You used me to bring comfort and hope to people through your Spirit. Lord, You bring comfort and hope.

You go to underground church in China, all they have is one piece of paper that has wrong Scripture verses on it, not even accurate information, and you have this group of people who meet every day and read this paper over and over again and pray. They don't have Bibles. Lord, I know, I know that You are a God who's given me wisdom and insight about who You are, but then I see this and I see that they love You more than me, God it's more than just my knowledge of You. I want to love the way they loved.

You pray over sick kids and everything inside of you says *I don't understand why this is going on. I don't know why this is happening.* And you're holding a deformed child whose mother and father has abandoned them and all of a sudden you get joy because you realize that God's there and He's with them. God, You're real. I don't think You're real, I see You're real. I see You in the eyes of somebody who's dying. I see joy in them. Lord, You're there with the sick. And so if we want to see the Lord in our lives we gotta do the things that God's calling us to do. We have to or we miss it, because every one of these experiences, every one of these experiences—guess what that did to me? It made me fall in love with my Savior more because it's not just about coming and listening to some guy talk to you about Jesus. It's about experiencing Him and His power and His goodness upon your life. This is why this is so important. This is why we have to get it from our head to our heart.

Andrew learned about Jesus. Think about this, he meets Jesus and immediately he says, "I'm in," and then what does Andrew do? Hands—remember?—head, heart, hands. He goes to his family, goes to Peter, and he says, "I found the Messiah." He shares. He moves. Based on that response it changes Andrew's life. Listen to me, there'd be no Peter without Andrew. Andrew gets forgotten but Andrew led Peter to Jesus, so there would have been no thousands giving their life without Andrew's obedience. And by the way, Andrew, here's a testimony of him. He's one of the first missionaries to the Gentiles. He gets murdered, he gets executed, really, he gets crucified because he would not worship false gods. Andrew was done with that. Why? Because he met Jesus. He was done with the false god thing.

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## HOW TO FIGHT APATHY IN MY FAITH

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Peter said I'm not worthy of being hung the same way Jesus was, so he was hung upside down. And guess what Andrew was doing when he was getting put to death, worshipping the Lord. That's how Andrew died. You know why? Because Andrew met Jesus. Different. Everything changed. Everything changed for him.

And so here's my point here. For some of you it's a "head" step. You need to learn more about Jesus. You have questions before you give your life to the Lord. That's okay. Christianity, the Gospel, is different than all the religions because we're not afraid of your questions because we have truth. Bring your questions on. God is greater than. My testimony, thousands of questions, met Jesus, didn't matter. And so ask your questions, ask your questions, keep asking and you're gonna meet Jesus. It's going to be a game-changer. It'll be over for you.

Head  
Heart  
Hands

Some of you it's a "heart" thing. You've come to church your whole life but you do not know Jesus. You need to step into community with people who do and ask them questions. What does it look like to walk in relationship with Jesus? And some of you, it's a "hand" thing. Some of you need to start to disciple, start to lead others towards Jesus, start to take the Peter's in your life and start to share about the hope of Jesus because you've been apathetic about that. And though you've been saved and your life's been transformed, you have not given that hope to the people around you and you're called to.

And so I don't know where you are, but listen, that old man, he passed away two years later and I didn't have any chance to tell him what he did in my life, but I'm so grateful for him. And my prayer all throughout this series is that I would be kind of that person in your life where you would say, "Hey, listen, there was this guy and I didn't really know him but he challenged me on my faith and the Holy Spirit used it and set me on a direction to know Him. That's my prayer. It's like I would just stir up something inside of you to say, "Yeah, I need to grow." And so maybe it's signing up for a Bible study or No Regrets Conference on the blue wall, maybe it's using the cards in front of you taking your next step. If you don't like any digital stuff, just sign a card and we'll follow up with you.

But we're going to move into a time of offering here to close and talking about discipleship, I don't really have to say much about offering because here's the truth, is if you struggle to give it's an issue of trust. God says to give not because the corporate church needs your gifts, because we serve a God who created everything. His will *will* be done, that's why we have faith, but you will not experience God's faithfulness in your life unless you walk in obedience. And one of the ways He says that is listen, money is an idol for us, and so He calls us to give to remind ourselves that we do not worship money. It's an act of obedience and so we do that every week not because we're saying, "Oh, we hope you give." It's because God calls us to and we love Him, and so we're going to enter into a time of giving and I'm gonna ask you, for some of you if you want to use those cards to connect with us, we'd love to have you fill those out and drop them in the offering bucket. But let me pray for our service, let me pray for you, and then our giving time as we worship.

*Father,*

*We love you and we thank you that You are a God who does not just save, but You are a God who saves, redeems, transforms, sets us free, that You give us the Spirit of God to grow in our likeness and image of Jesus. And so Lord, help us to get out of our apathy, get out of our laziness. Lord, help us to step into your purpose in our lives. Help us to grow in godliness, Lord. Give us the boldness to share your hope with those around us. Help us to make disciples*

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## HOW TO FIGHT APATHY IN MY FAITH

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*and to be disciplined for your glory and your honor. Lord, use these gifts for your Kingdom. Let it be glorifying to You and let us do it joyfully.*

*In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.*

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Keywords: community, next step, growth, discipleship, relational, relationships



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