

LIVING MISSIONALLY



INTRODUCTION

In some ways, this is merely God's will. Nothing less, nothing more, nothing else, part II. God's will could be defined as a path, and there are plenty of places to walk where you are still in "God's will". God's mission is what He is doing, what He is up to. God's will is what God accepts for your life. Living missionally, however, is wrapping your life around what matters most to God.

Each gospel records what is known as "the great commission", the mission we join in on with God. (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-47, and John 20:21) This last passage is what we're going to examine because it so concisely expresses the central principle of the great commission.

*"...as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."
~ John 20:21*

Just as God the Father sent the Son into the world on His mission, so are we sent by Jesus into the world with His mission. It is precisely here that we need to understand how different being a Christian is from being a Christ-follower. Christians come in all different sizes, shapes and flavors, but a Christ-follower is a person who has set his heart on following the thoughts, desires, values, prayers, outreach, compassion and devotion on Jesus.

Our life, as Christ-followers, is meant to be a DARING ADVENTURE. In fact, if we're following Jesus, how can it be anything else?

*"Help me to fling my life like a flaming firebrand into the
gathering darkness of the world."
~ Albert Schweitzer*

“Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing.”

~ Helen Keller

“Give up your small ambitions. Come and save the world.”

~ Frances Xavier

- *Describe in your own words what you believe the difference is between being a Christian and a Christ-follower.*
- *What would it look like to go to a foreign country as a missionary? Describe what you imagine a missionary's daily life is like.*
- *Now describe how your life would be different if you lived as a missionary to this culture, maintaining your current job or status in life.*

This study has five parts. We will spend a little less time on each, but these topics are not five disconnected areas. If you understand (1) how the gospel changes everything, you (2) seek to serve the world around you. (3) As you serve people, you will have more and more opportunity to take risks for God. (4) As people are influenced by you, there will be a greater need for leadership as there will be more people to take care of. (5) Stepping into leadership will force you to receive greater mentoring so you can become effective. Then receiving mentoring will cause your understanding of the gospel to grow and the cycle starts over again, a cycle of growth from which we hope we will never escape.

PART 1: HOW THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING

The implications of the gospel being true are far reaching. If the gospel message is true, then God has invaded human history, which means God is immanent and can be experienced today, right now. This means God can provide anything I need. God took the worst thing that happened, the death of His Son, and made it the best thing that happened, our salvation. This means He is really, really big, and I really don't need to worry about most of the stuff I worry about. Therefore, we can passionately live for God and for people instead of all of our worries distracting us from that which we must seek first.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

~ Matthew 6:33

The gospel changes everything.

As E.M. Bounds writes, "Paul termed it 'My gospel'; not that he had degraded it by his personal eccentricities or diverted it by selfish appropriation, but the gospel was put into the heart and life-blood of the man Paul, as a personal trust to be executed by his Pauline traits, to be set aflame and empowered by the fiery energy of his fiery soul." In other words, Paul applied the gospel to everything.

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

~ 1 Corinthians 9:19-22

To religious people who talked about spirituality, Paul went where they went, to the synagogues and temple. He dressed like they dressed, wearing acceptable religious clothing for various ceremonies. He observed the practices and rituals of his Jewish upbringing, even though he was now a Christian, understanding these rituals to merely be the shadow of the reality with Christ being the substance. He had conversation on spiritual topics they were interested in and used words that they used. He did all of this to prevent anything from getting in the way of his unpacking the gospel message of God's plan for the Jews.

To unchurched pagans, Paul dressed down. He went where they went and dropped the religious rituals he had been brought up observing, realizing again that rituals don't make anyone right with God. To an unchurched pagan, he became like an unchurched pagan. He ate foods that as a Jew would have made him ceremonially unclean. He entered into homes and other places he would never have gone to as a practicing Jew. He had conversations on topics they were interested in and related these things back to Christ. He did all this to "win" them to Jesus.

23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

Notice his wording, "all things".

- *Both religious people and unchurched people need to be saved. What would it look like, in your life context, to pursue religious people in order to “win” them to Jesus? What would it look like to pursue unchurched people to “win” them?*
- *How is Paul’s example different than being a “chameleon,” a person who acts a certain way to gain the favor of those around him?*
- *How might the gospel affect where you work out? Who you eat with? What hobbies you pursue? How you work?*



24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”

~ 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

The above image and scripture is not meant to convey we are in competition with one another. It is meant to convey that one opportunity is to live our lives for Jesus, while another is to influence people. The Christian life is best conveyed as an Olympic race.

The apostle Paul changed his job and his calling because of the gospel. He changed his clothing to relate to unchurched people more effectively. He changed who he hung out with, who he invited into friendship. He changed how he thought and how he felt about people who didn't know God. He changed his view about himself, about the purpose of his life, where he would live, what difficulties he was willing to endure.

- *What kind of effort do you imagine Olympic athletes put forth?*
- *What would it look like for you to "run to win"?*
- *How is intentionality referred to in verse 26? What it would look like to be more intentional in what we give our lives to?*
- *How might one be disqualified from influencing others for Jesus? How is discipline needed in our lives then?*

For example, a believer actively serving in a gospel-centered church is offered a job that would require him to relocate. Should he move? A girl who loves Jesus is pursued by the hottest guy on the planet, but he doesn't love Jesus. What should she do? A guy who serves his church as a life group leader is offered a promotion that will effectively limit him to merely being a Sunday attender. Should he take it? These questions are not easy, and they're not black and white. The point is that our understanding and commitment to the gospel does color each of these decisions.

If we fully embrace how Paul applied the gospel to everything, we will never be the same.

PART 2: SERVING THE WORLD

The H2O mission is to "love God, love people, and serve the world". Yes, but how? More specifically, it is "to authentically live out our faith as a covenantal community of fully devoted Christ followers, serving our neighbor and bringing the gospel to the spiritually curious in Orlando and beyond." One of the most practical ways to live our faith is so simple that it is easy to miss altogether.

Missional living means identifying the needs of people around you and serving them by meeting those needs.

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...”

~ Philippians 2:3-5

This is one of the most encouraging verses in the New Testament, if understood it in the right light. Listen; you don't have to serve. You don't need to serve under obligation and set up chairs for some meeting or be an usher or fold bulletins. Someone will likely step up and serve because that's what people who are servants do. But get this; you are invited to think like Jesus thinks. You are invited to look at people and what their needs are, and step into meeting those needs. When you look out for people's interests in this way you are truly being Christ-like.

This changes everything because, knowing this, you can come to give, not to get. From now on, your primary motive for attending Christian gatherings can be to meet the needs of others. You will still receive, you will still “get” from Christian fellowship, from worship, from teaching, but coming to give is a game-changer.

- *Brainstorm different needs that a church has in its public gatherings. Now brainstorm what needs an individual has who is going to a church's public gathering. How can YOU help meet those needs?*
- *Now brainstorm different needs that a Missional community has in its gatherings. Now brainstorm what needs an individual has who is going to a Missional community gathering. How can YOU help meet those needs?*
- *Real practically, what would it look like in your life to come to “give” not to “get?”*

BEING MISSIONAL WHERE WE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

~ Matthew 5:13-16

Sometimes Jesus uses incredibly harsh language in order to provoke us to action. Here in this section, Jesus explains that, like salt, our “good works” of kindness, thoughtfulness, compassion, etc., make people thirsty for God. Our good works light up a dark world where people can see that we are different from the rest of the world, and if our Christianity no longer makes people thirsty or able to see, we are “...no longer good for anything...” This means we aren’t serving our God-given purpose. In contrast to the previous section, this section of scripture talks about serving our neighbor and the “spiritually curious”.

- *Brainstorm different needs that people from your work/school have. How can you meet those needs?*
- *Brainstorm different needs that people from your neighborhood/home have. How can you meet those needs?*
- *What makes our good works attractive vs. being repulsive?*

PART 3: TAKING RISKS

“22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It’s a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’ 28 ‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ 29 ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’ 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’”
~ Matthew 14:22-33

One cool thing about this story is that everyone ends up worshipping Jesus, even those who refused to get out of the boat and take a risk. Peter’s experience with Jesus, however, was certainly different than the rest of the disciples as a result of his risk-taking.

- *How do you feel about taking risks in general? Positive or negative?*
- *Why do you believe it is essential to take risks if we are to live missionally? How does the Great Commission demand risk-taking?*
- *What risks can you see yourself taking for Jesus?*
- *What prevents some people from getting out of the boat for Jesus?*
- *Why did Peter sink?*

Read each of the following quotes and relate them to risk-taking in missional living. What do you get out of each quote?

*“Here lies one whose soul sometimes burned with great longings.
To whom sometimes the curtain of the Infinite was opened just a little,
but who lacked the guts to make any use of it.”*

~ Malcolm Muggeridge

“The tragedy of life is what dies inside a man while he lives.”

~ Albert Einstein

*“Some men die in battle,
Some men die in flames,
Most men die inch by inch,
Playing little games.”*

~ anonymous

*“Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of
every virtue at the testing point.”*

~ C.S. Lewis

*“True Christianity is an all-out commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.
The Savior is not looking for men and women who will give their spare
evenings to Him--or their weekends--or their years of retirement.
Rather He seeks those who will give Him first place in their lives.”*

~ H.A. Evan Hopkins

*“The need of the hour is an army of soldiers dedicated to Jesus Christ,
who believe that He is God, that He can fulfill every promise He ever
made, and that nothing is too hard for Him. This is the only way we
can accomplish what is on God’s heart--getting the gospel to every creature.”*

~ Dawson Trotman

PART 4: STEPPING OUT TO LEAD

God is looking for servants, not for someone desiring the position or title of “leader”. His eyes still roam today for the man or woman whose heart is moved by the condition of this world, who says, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8). There is no greater work, no higher calling than to be a leader of God’s people. The purpose of this section is to clarify the need and the call to be such a man or woman of God.

“I looked for a man...who would...stand before Me in the gap on behalf of the land...”

~ Ezekiel 22:30

“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”

~ 2 Chronicles 16:9

Leadership stems from maturing character, not the absence of weakness. All of God’s leaders had significant weakness, yet God used them because they were willing to give to God their whole-hearted obedience and because they were willing to give to people their service.

“Both Scripture and the history of Israel and the church attest that when God does discover a man who conforms to His spiritual requirement, who is willing to pay the full price of discipleship, He uses him to the limit, despite his patent shortcomings.”

~ J. Oswald Sanders

- *What weaknesses did the following leaders have? Gideon? David? Jonah? Jacob? Peter? Jeremiah? Moses? What does this tell us about God? About leadership?*
- *What weaknesses in your life are the most burdensome to you?*
- *Can you imagine yourself as a leader of some aspect of the church someday? Why or why not?*
- *How does the Great Commission demand an ever-increasing pipeline of leaders?*

Leadership is influence, not a position. There is an ancient Chinese proverb that says “He who leadeth when no one followeth, merely taketh a walk.” In other words, if no one is following your leadership, you’re probably not a leader or you’re not stepping up to lead where you could.

H2O needs leaders, and it always will. We continually need people to step up and say, “I’m willing to own this, if you want me to, and if you think I’m ready.” That kind of servant heart is what must embody a true leader. As J. Oswald Sanders said, “True greatness, true leadership is achieved not by reducing man to one’s service, but in giving oneself in selfless service to them. And that is never done without cost.”

- *What sacrifices do you think you might need to make as a leader?*
- *What motivates a true leader to make and keep making these sacrifices?*
- *How does the Great Commission empower leaders to gladly make sacrifices?*

“Spiritual authority is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attained by the confessions of sin and much heart searching and humbling before God; by self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, deathless uncompromising, and uncomplaining embracing of the cross, and by an eternal, unfaltering look into Jesus crucified. It’s not gained by seeking great things for ourselves, but rather, like Paul, by counting those things that are gain to us as loss for Christ. That is a great price but it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be not merely a nominal but a real spiritual leader of men, a leader whose power is recognized and felt in heaven on earth and in hell.”

~ Samuel Logan Brengle

PART 5: MENTORING

Have you ever considered why Jesus launched His world-wide movement on the backs of 12 “untaught” men? I mean, these guys hadn’t gone through the religious schooling that the Pharisees of their day had gone through. Most of them were fishermen or worked other blue-collar jobs. Why did Jesus pick them? He picked them because they were teachable.

14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" 15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast... Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

~ Matthew 9:14-17

This parable shows us that there is a difference between the religion of the Pharisees and the Jesus movement. There is a difference between being "religious" and being a Jesus follower. Jesus explains that difference, that one critical, must-have element in this parable as being a "new wineskin". Here is what this means: wineskins are leather pouches that expand as the wine ages. Old wineskins lose their flexibility and, therefore, explode destroying the wineskin and ruining the wine. New wineskins, however, are flexible. They respond to the new wine of Jesus' teaching with an ever-increasing belief and application. In other words, the men who changed the world were teachable.

Consider for a moment all that God desires to do in your life. If God took Paul, the worst sinner, and made him the greatest saint, there must have been 10,000 lessons that Jesus taught Him, 10,000 moments when Paul said, "I will change."

Any Christian is "teachable". They are able to be taught because they have the Holy Spirit, but fewer are openly teachable or eager to receive instruction. Fewer still are "aggressively teachable", asking for the input they need to grow. A player on a basketball team who desires to be the best he can be will constantly ask his coach, "What do I need to work on? How can I get better?" Doesn't it make sense that if we are on mission, we will aggressively seek out those who can build into us?

"Learners will inherit the earth while the learned are equipped to face a world that no longer exists."

"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."

~ John Wooden

- *Comment on the two quotes above.*
- *Brainstorm a list of 50 things you think Jesus might want you to grow in. I'm not kidding...50.*
- *How teachable do you think you are? What prevents you from being aggressively teachable?*
- *How does the Great Commission relate to aggressive teachability?*

We've talked about a lot, but there is one more significant thought you need before we're done. We've talked about how the gospel changes everything, how to serve the world around you, the importance of taking risks for God, the need for more and better leaders, and the importance of aggressive teachability in a mentoring relationship so that we can grow. As we said, this has been Part II of God's Will: Nothing More, Nothing Less, Nothing Else.

As you give yourself to Jesus in an ever-growing reliance upon His Holy Spirit to fill you, work on you and work through you, YOU become God's will. You become the revelation of what He desires. Oswald Chambers said, "The Spirit-filled Christian, whatever he or she does, is God's will on earth." And that is powerful motivation to live a Spirit-saturated life.

WORDS FOR YOUR PRAYERS

1. God, show me Your will, nothing less, nothing more, nothing else.
2. Open my eyes, God, to the needs of those who are around me.
3. Let me, oh Lord, be the expression of Your will on this earth.
4. Lord, give me the lost. Here am I. Send me!

ASSIGNMENT

This week, take a good look at all the people in your life, and consider what it might look like to begin to recognize people's needs and meet them?