

Living as Christ's Ambassadors

I. INTRO

A. Discipleship is helping people to follow Jesus. It is that simple in concept. We tend to overcomplicate it. We've been looking at some key concepts in this process, but try to think of it through this lens, "How can I help X follow Jesus better?" If you keep that question in mind, it simplifies the process. Some people need encouragement. Others need training. Some need to learn to evangelize. Others need help reading the Bible or praying. WE need different things at different times. This is discipleship - helping one another to follow Jesus better.

B. **Looking back:**

1. Importance of the next generation
2. Owning the gospel personally
3. Predictable rhythms or patterns of living up, in, and out (Loving God, his family/church, and your neighbor near and far)
4. Discipleship moments (seeing, seizing, and speaking the Word into them)

C. **Check In:** Have you had a chance to process through any of this? Share testimonies briefly or a conclusion your family came to

D. **Today:** Developing Missional Rhythms w/ your family or DG

II. 2 Corinthians 5:9–21

A. 9 So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. 10 For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body. 11 Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others.

1. Knowing that all will appear before the judgement seat of Christ and given account, Paul lives his entire life in light of a desire to please God.
2. Now as we are going to see in the next verses, Paul does not think (nor is he suggesting) that you can earn your way to heaven by doing good (as some might falsely claim).
 - a) Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and his gospel is what provides a way for people to stand before the Lord righteous
3. Knowing that Jesus is the ONLY way to stand before God and not face judgment, Paul lives and works to persuade people of that truth.

B. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. 12 Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. 13 If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. 14 Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. 15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

1. As some backstory to 2 Corinthians, there were some other teachers who were flashier and more talented than Paul. They claimed Paul was a fraud and they shouldn't waste their time listening to him at all.
 - a) They said his fraudulence was proven by his weakness (poverty, persecution, lack of impressive skill)
 2. Paul is writing this letter, in large part, to explain to the church in Corinth that weakness is not a sign of immaturity but an opportunity for the power of Christ to shine through all the more.
 3. So here, Paul is saying that he is sincerely desirous of them and wants them to think fondly of him. They have reason to be proud, not ashamed of Paul
 4. His conclusion, however, is that even if they don't appreciate his work, he doesn't mind b/c the love of Christ compels him to serve them
 5. None of this is about his empire, but about God's kingdom.
 6. Why does Paul live for Christ? Christ died for Paul (and for everyone) so that those who receive his new life by faith would no longer live for themselves but for God (and therefore others in sacrificial love)
- C. 16 So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. **The old life is gone; a new life has begun!***
1. What would cause someone to think so differently about their life and about those around them? What would cause a person to stop caring about the opinions of others? What would cause someone to look at an adversary with pity and prayer instead of rage and hatred?
 2. Nothing short of a miracle! No self help book, no guru, no meditative state will change you enough. That kind of change isn't change at all - it is metamorphosis. The old must go and the new must come.
 3. I love how in the NLT it says the new life has begun. Literally "come about" → the process of transformation from birth to maturity is in motion
 4. Part of the impact of this new life is looking at God differently and looking at people differently.
 5. What do I have to do to get this kind of transformation? You can't do anything! Look:
- D. 18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ.*
1. This transformation is a gift. You didn't do anything to earn it anymore than your child did something to be born.
- E. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"*

1. God has given us a gift of new life AND a task - to proclaim the Good News
 - a) What a privilege → Imagine the splendor of being able to announce the greatest of good news to the world
 2. What is that great news?
 - a) Our relationship with God was destroyed in Gen 3
 - b) In Christ's death/resurrection, God is restoring relationship
 - c) Those who believe are forgiven and God no longer counts their sins against them at all
 - d) Then, he gives us purpose by telling us to share this great news
 - (1) We shouldn't be ashamed of it. We should be thrilled.
 3. We go as his ambassadors.
 - a) As an ambassador represents his nation all the time as he lives abroad, we are representing and furthering King Jesus' kingdom and best interests as we live.
 4. What is the appeal we proclaim? Come back to God!
 - a) Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved! Come and have your sins forgiven. Come and have a relationship with God restored. Come and find purpose as you too become an ambassador of your King.
 5. All of this sounds too good to be true. How is it accomplished?
- F. *21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.*
1. Herein lies the essence of the gospel: Without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness for sin. So great was my sin and yours and the sins of humanity that Jesus Christ, the God who was man, became the offering of sacrifice for us.
 2. In the shedding of his blood, we can be made right with God. That's good news!

III. In the moment of our regeneration and transformation, we receive two new realities, two identities. **One is a gift and one is a task.**

- A. **THE GIFT → A new creation. The old life is gone; a new life has begun.** In Jesus, we are born again in the Spirit and made new.
 1. As babies grow, we grow too, and as Jesus becomes more important to us, we change. Contrary to popular assumption, often the change is not always *what* we do, but *how* and *why* we do them.
 2. As we change, the focus of our lives shifts from ourselves to God and His mission. Instead of serving ourselves and building our own kingdoms, we bless others and seek Jesus' kingdom.
 3. As this happens, you *want* to start to live the ordinary rhythms of everyday life with gospel intentionality. Which leads to...
- B. **THE TASK → Ambassador for Christ.** In everything you do, God is present. Everywhere you go, you are a child of God, a servant to Jesus, and one who is

sent by the Spirit as his representative. Everything counts. Christ plays in the everyday stuff of life.

1. Going to the beach, the soccer field, your work, vacation, all of it
2. Every believer is an ambassador for Christ (good or bad). They represent him. They are commanded to proclaim him.
3. As a new creation you have changed and you start to think more and more about your role as an ambassador. You start caring about God's glory and the lost. You care what people think of Jesus.
4. So what do we do? Quit our jobs and go and move to the jungle?
 - a) It's not always about quitting your job and being a missionary.
 - b) It's about gospel intentionality - doing the ordinary activities of life under the reign of Jesus, for Jesus, and by the Spirit's power!
 - c) Which is what missionaries are just doing as well, by the way
5. The question isn't always, "Well how do I go and DO ministry?" or "When are we going to evangelize?" (This is ALWAYS our churchianity default)
6. The question becomes: How does grocery shopping, commuting, lunch breaks, bill paying, vacation going, work, sports, skating, dance mom'ing, soccering, swimming, and all the other stuff of life change because of Jesus? How do I function as an ambassador in all those areas?

C. THE B.L.E.S.S. RHYTHMS?

1. **Bless:** We intentionally bless others through serving, encouraging, giving, and thinking of those around us. Instead of focusing on ourselves, we focus on others.
2. **Listen:** We intentionally listen to others through questions, focus, and attentiveness to their story and who they are. This guides our prayers and our response to them as we hear their heart.
3. **Eat:** We intentionally eat through sharing our meals, drinks, and moments around the critical necessity of nourishment. These are things we would already be doing. By doing these things with
4. **Speak:** We intentionally speak the truths of Jesus by graciously and boldly proclaiming the gospel in all scenarios of life. We read the Word with people so that they can hear the truth of God as well.
5. **Sabbath/Rest:** We intentionally work, but we also intentionally rest and enjoy the fruit of the gospel and fruit of God's creation. When we do this, we celebrate God's goodness to us and are joy-filled people and not just overbearing, dutiful people.

D. Vision Casting

1. We talked two weeks ago about Revolve's local vision being to saturate the county with healthy disciples and groups of disciples and equipping and empowering you to that end.
2. That will never happen through church events and organized outreaches alone. It will happen when every man, woman, and child begins to live out their new identities of new creation and ambassador where they live, work, learn and play.

3. Use the BLESS acrostic tool to help you think through being intentional with your family or DG.
4. If as you are living with this kind of intentionality God opens up a door with someone who doesn't yet know God, invite them to read the Bible with you through one of the bookmarks and LET US KNOW!